

# Lebanon: Syria's Likely Role in Beirut Bombing

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By Stratfor Today

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## Summary

A powerful explosion rocked a Christian suburb of Beirut, Lebanon, on Jan. 25, killing 11 people, including a senior officer in Lebanon's Internal Security Forces. In all likelihood, this bombing was orchestrated by Syrian military intelligence operating in Beirut.

## Analysis

A powerful explosion rocked a Christian suburb of Beirut, Lebanon, on Jan. 25, killing 11 people, including Capt. Wisam Eid, a senior officer in Lebanon's Internal Security Forces. Initial reports say the bomb, weighing about 88 pounds, was detonated under a bridge during rush hour in the Hazmiyeh district of Beirut. Based on preliminary information, this might have been a stationary bomb triggered remotely or possibly a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device.

In all likelihood, this bombing was orchestrated by Syrian military intelligence operating in Beirut. Immediate blame generally falls to Fatah al-Islam, the jihadist group that has been concentrated in Lebanon's Nahr al-Bared Palestinian refugee camp, but Syrian military officers also outsource much of their work to these groups. Eid reportedly had been involved in recent clashes in the camp, and he also reportedly was involved in the investigation into the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri.

Stratfor has been receiving information over the past several weeks that Syria was planning to step up its game in Lebanon through a series of targeted assassinations. In addition to ensuring the Syrian government gets its preferred candidate in Lebanon's presidential seat, the Syrians also are working to ensure that any investigation on the al-Hariri killing does not end up implicating the Syrian regime. Targeting Eid could have been the Syrians' way of delivering this message.

Syria is seeking to take out a number of individuals in Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora's Western-backed March 14 coalition. The names on the list that we know of are parliamentary deputies Samir Franjeh, Wael Abu Faour, Nayla Mouawad and Akram Shuhayyib; former parliamentary deputy Faris Said; and Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea. In addition to this potential assassination spree, the Syrian regime, working with Hezbollah and other allies in Lebanon, has put plans in motion to incite violent riots against the government over rising prices, runaway inflation and fuel prices to further destabilize Lebanon &mdash; and demonstrate to the country's Western-backed faction that Syrian influence in Lebanon cannot be fought.

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