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LEBANON

One dead, 14 injured in explosion at Sidon plant

By Mohammed Zaatari

SIDON, Lebanon: One man was killed and 14 others were injured Sunday in an explosion at a plant used to process bananas in the city of Sidon. Yehya Sayyad died from his wounds after being transferred to a local hospital.

The explosion resulted from a reaction between chemicals used at the plant, where bananas are ripened before sale, in the city's wholesale vegetable market. The plant belongs to a merchant called Abdullah Ibrahim al-Hariri.

The casualties were of Lebanese, Syrian and Egyptian nationalities. The wounded included eight Lebanese: Samer Zaatari, Hasan Ghaddar, Yehya al-Sayyad, Nabil Kesrouani, Saadeddine Hammoud, Mohammad Khalil Hariri, Reda Mohammad Roumieh and Issa Issa. Egyptians Ibrahim Othman, Ahmad Farid Abu al-Maati and Ashraf Ahmad and the two Syrians Adib al-Samar and Abdel-Rahman Dalasha also succumbed injuries.

Several shops near the warehouse and three cars parked near to the blast scene were also damaged.

Workers were able to pull out four individuals critically wounded in the blast before Civil Defense and security forces arrived at the scene and rescued the others.

Members of the Red Cross transferred the wounded to local hospitals, while security forces cordoned off the market and began an investigation.

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