

Lebanon's prime minister says 2,700 tons of ammonium nitrate sparked explosion



Beirut, August 5 (RHC)-- In Lebanon, a massive explosion at the port of Beirut sent a devastating shock wave through the Lebanese capital Tuesday evening, leveling buildings, overturning cars and shattering windows miles from the blast site.

More than 100 people have been reported dead, with hundreds still missing. Over 4,000 people were injured. The explosion carried the force of a 3.5-magnitude earthquake and was felt as far away as Cyprus, more than 100 miles off Lebanon's coast.

Videos of the explosion show a rapidly expanding shock wave engulfing entire high-rise buildings, leaving a pink mushroom cloud rising far above Beirut's skyline.

Lebanon's Prime Minister Hassan Diab called Tuesday's explosion a "national catastrophe." He said it was triggered by 2,700 tons of highly explosive ammonium nitrate, inexplicably left unattended in a warehouse for six years.

The explosion completely destroyed the Port of Beirut -- a main economic lifeline to Lebanon. Even before Tuesday's disaster, Lebanon's economy was in crisis, exacerbated by U.S. sanctions imposed by the Trump administration.

At the White House, President Trump told reporters that U.S. military generals believed the explosion was caused by a bomb.

President Donald Trump told reporters: "They would know better than I would, but they seemed to think it was an attack. It was a bomb of some kind." Trump offered no evidence for his claim, which was not supported by intelligence agencies. The Pentagon declined to comment and referred all press questions to the White House.

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