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Lebanon: All attacks targeting civilians must stop

In the wake of Tuesday's twin bomb attacks near the Iranian embassy in the al-Jnah area of southern Beirut, Amnesty International has urged the Lebanese authorities to ensure that investigations into the bombings are conducted in a prompt, independent and impartial manner and that those responsible are brought to justice in fair trials. At least 25 people were killed in the bombings.

On the same day as the attacks, Seraj al-Deen Zoreiqat, a Lebanese spokesman for a group that calls itself the "Abdallah al-Azzam Brigades", reportedly linked to al-Qa'ida, was reported to have claimed responsibility for what he called the "raid on the Iranian embassy" and referred to it as a "double martyrdom attack by two heroes of the Sunni people in Lebanon."

He added that such attacks would continue in Lebanon until two demands were met: the withdrawal of Hizbullah fighters from Syria and the release of prisoners apparently affiliated with his group from Lebanese jails. Zoreiqat's Twitter account has been suspended since Wednesday.

Amnesty International strongly condemns the attacks near the Iranian embassy, which is located in a residential area, and reiterates its call that no group should target civilians to send political messages. Deliberately attacking civilians and carrying out indiscriminate attacks are contrary to fundamental principles of humanity and cannot be justified under any circumstances.

The Lebanese authorities have announced that investigations into the bombings are ongoing.

Tuesday's bombings are the latest in a series of deadly attacks that have killed some 100 people and injured hundreds more since July of this year. On 15 August, a car bomb killed over 20 people in the crowded Roweiss neighbourhood in the Hizbullah-dominated southern suburbs of Beirut, and on 23 August around 47 people were killed when two bombs were detonated at two Sunni Muslim mosques, al-Taqwa and al-Salam, in the northern city of Tripoli just as the Friday prayers were ending. This led to renewed clashes between Sunni Muslims opposed to Syrian President

Bashar al-Assad and Alawite Muslims supportive of al-Assad in two neighbourhoods of Tripoli. Judicial proceedings into these events are ongoing.

Amnesty International strongly condemns all attacks targeting civilians and indiscriminate attacks and calls on all groups to refrain from conducting such attacks. The Lebanese authorities must ensure that investigations into who was behind these attacks are thorough and that those responsible are brought to justice in trials that meet international fair trial standards and without recourse to the death penalty. All those arrested and interrogated must be protected from torture or other ill-treatment.

Civilians were also the main targets in bombings and rocket attacks on Beirut's southern suburbs in May and July this year that did not result in any deaths.

For further information on previous attacks, please see *Lebanon: No excuse for targeting civilians*, 16 August 2013 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/lebanon-no-excuse-targeting-civilians-2013-08-16>).