

Ceasefire established in Mount Lebanon

A ceasefire was established Sunday between followers of the Druze leader Walid Jumblatt and opposition followers after clashes broke out on Jumblatt's stronghold of Mount Lebanon.

'A ceasefire was established,' Druze opposition leader Talal Arslan told DPA.

'I have been in contact with Walid Jumblatt and we agreed that his fighters will hand over their weapons to Lebanese army,' Arslan said.

Lebanese army trucks were seen heading to the areas of the clashes.

An army officer at the scene told DPA: 'We will start deploying in the area of clashes now.'

Fierce clashes erupted between Jumblatt's followers and Hezbollah militants in the axes of Aitat, Choufayet, Kayfoun, 20 km, southeast of Beirut.

Artillery fire was used in the fighting and black smoke was seen billowing from nearby valleys.

According to hospital sources, five people were killed, two in the fighting and around 10 people were wounded.

Jumblatt, who is also the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), called on his followers to restrain themselves.

Jumblatt asked Arslan, who is close to Hezbollah, to carry out the negotiations on behalf of the Druze community with the opposition to stop 'a bloodbath.'

Druze Information Minister Ghazi Aridi told DPA the situation was 'very, very dangerous and we have to stop this bloodbath before it gets out of hand'.

The latest deaths raised the toll to 22 Sunday.

Seventeen people were earlier reported dead when heavy fighting broke out at dawn between pro and anti-government supporters in northern Lebanon.

The situation eased after army soldiers were sent into Lebanon's second largest city, where overnight there was heavy fighting in two areas, Bab al Tabbneh and Jabal Mohsen.

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