

## **Pagers and Walkie-Talkies Used Against Hezbollah**

Lebanon has been rocked by a series of explosive attacks involving booby-trapped pagers and walkie-talkies, targeting Hezbollah members. On Tuesday, September 17, pagers exploded almost simultaneously across the country, killing at least 12 people and injuring nearly 3,000. The very next day, September 18, another wave of explosions struck, this time with rigged walkie-talkies, leaving at least 20 dead and 450 injured, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry.

According to the latest reports, Taiwanese company Gold Apollo manufactured the pagers involved in the explosions. However, the batch of pagers was obtained through a Hungarian-based company, which had a contract to use the Gold Apollo brand. A Lebanese security official stated that around 5,000 pagers were brought into the country about five months ago. The pagers, labelled as Rugged Pager AR-924, were new to Hezbollah and their origins were traced back to a Hungarian-based company, BAC, which has denied any involvement.

The timing was strategic: the pager explosions occurred around 1530 hrs on Tuesday, followed by the walkie-talkie blasts at approximately 1700 hrs on Wednesday. Both attacks targeted peak hours when public and work gatherings were at their highest, amplifying the impact of this asymmetric warfare.

The walkie-talkies used in Wednesday's explosions, which followed the pager blasts, were identified as the IC-V82 model, a discontinued product from the Japanese company ICOM. ICOM confirmed that this model was last produced in 2014 and stated that the devices used were likely counterfeit, as they had not been supplied by any recognized agent or vetted by security services. Reports suggest that the walkie-talkies were purchased by Hezbollah five months ago.

Both intermediaries obscure the true origins of the devices, pointing to a form of warfare aimed at sabotaging Hezbollah's communication supply chain. The Lebanese government and Hezbollah both blamed Israel for the attack, while the latter vowed to retaliate. Iran condemned the attacks as a "heinous crime" and reserved the right to take "necessary measures" under international law.

The chaos hampered emergency services, as ambulances struggled to reach the injured amidst the confusion. Hezbollah calls it the biggest security breach in the war with Israel.

Efforts by Qatar, Egypt, and the U.S. to de-escalate tensions between Israel, Hamas, and Hezbollah are now deadlocked, with these attacks adding new complexities to the fragile negotiations and increasing the risk of further escalation.