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## Lebanon detains 36 spy suspects

Wed Jul 26, 2006 2:17 PM BST

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CHTOURA, Lebanon (Reuters) - Lebanese security forces have rounded up at least 36 people suspected of spying for Israeli intelligence as the Jewish state pounds Lebanon in a two-week-old assault, security sources said on Wednesday.

With the help of Hizbollah, security forces detained the informants, many of them former members of a now defunct pro-Israeli militia, in the eastern Bekkaa Valley and the south, which have seen heavy Israeli bombardment, they said.

Some of the former members of Israel's South Lebanon Army proxy, which collapsed when Israeli troops withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000, had served jail sentences for working with an enemy state but had resumed their contacts with Israel after their release, the sources said.

More than 20 suspected informants were arrested in Beirut and its southern suburbs earlier in the conflict, some accused of helping Israeli planes pinpoint Hizbollah targets.

Hizbollah, the Shi'ite Muslim guerrilla group now facing off against Israel, mounted a war of attrition through the 1990s that helped end Israel's 22-year occupation in Lebanon.

Israeli officials now say they want to create a new security zone in southern Lebanon that they will control by air but not through direct occupation, until international forces arrive to take over.

The current war was sparked by Hizbollah's capture of two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border attack on July 12.

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