

**New sectarian kidnap in Lebanon: security source**  
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Gunmen from a Shiite clan kidnapped a man from a Sunni town in Lebanon on Tuesday in the latest incident of sectarian kidnaps related to the conflict in Syria, a security official said.

"Gunmen from the Jaafar clan kidnapped a man from the town of Aarsal," in northern Lebanon, the official told AFP.

The wave of sectarian kidnappings began on Sunday when Hussein Kamel Jaafar, 37, was kidnapped by unidentified assailants, and reportedly taken into Syria.

In revenge, members of the Jaafar clan have kidnapped eight people from Aarsal, two of whom have been released.

Residents say there were attempts to negotiate a settlement between residents of Aarsal and the Jaafar clan, but the bid fell through before Tuesday's kidnap.

The majority of Aarsal's inhabitants support the revolt in neighbouring Syria, while most of the population of Hermel and Baalbek, where the Jaafar clan is based, are Shiites who back Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

The conflict in Syria has exacerbated tensions in Lebanon. The Sunni-led March 14 political movement supports the rebels, while the powerful Shiite movement Hezbollah and its allies back Assad, an Alawite whose faith is an offshoot of Shiite Islam.

The latest incidents come seven months after dozens of foreigners, mostly Syrians, were abducted by another Shiite clan, Al-Muqdad.

Once dominated politically and militarily by Damascus, Lebanon is sharply divided over the war in Syria -- which the United Nations says has killed at least 70,000 people since March 2011 -- and has seen frequent violence linked to the conflict.

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