

Roed-Larsen: There is Flow of Arms Through Lebanon-Syria Border

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The United Nations has information that arms are being smuggled in both directions between Lebanon and Syria, a U.N. Middle East envoy said Tuesday.

The envoy, Terje Roed-Larsen, said the Middle East is seeing a spiraling "dance of death" because of the conflict in Syria as President Bashar Assad confronts opponents.

"Based on information that we have there are reasons to believe that there is a flow of arms both ways, from Lebanon into Syria and from Syria into Lebanon," Roed-Larsen told reporters after briefing the U.N. Security Council about events in Lebanon.

"We do not have independent observers for this but we are basing our reporting on information which we are receiving from a variety of sources," he added.

Roed-Larsen did not give details but on April 28, the Lebanese navy intercepted three containers of weapons destined for Syrian rebel forces on a ship which arrived from Libya.

The cargo included heavy machine guns, artillery shells, rockets, rocket launchers and other explosives, a security official said.

Syrian diplomats allege other ships have been intercepted carrying weapons to Syrian rebels.

Roed-Larsen, the U.N. special representative on Security Council resolution 1559, passed in 2005 and calling for Syria to withdraw its forces from Lebanon, sees growing dangers in the Middle East.

"What we see across the region is a dance of death at the brink of the abyss of war," he said.

"If you look at the situation in Syria, which is maybe the most likely that might spill over, then in a way it reminds us of the situation in Lebanon and in its neighboring countries in the 1970s. And this is what I fear," said the envoy, a veteran diplomat in the Middle East.

Roed-Larsen said there was complete "uncertainty" over what will happen and that it was vital for the U.N. Security Council to be ready to take action.

The U.N. says it has registered more than 24,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon, while activists say there are more than 30,000.