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Gas Explosion at Odessa Region Cafe Injures 8

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An explosion ripped through a cafe in Ukraine's Odessa region, injuring eight people.

At least eight people were injured in an explosion that ripped through a cafe in Ukraine's Odessa region on Sunday, setting off a fire that nearly burned the building to the ground, news reports said.

Investigators said that the mid-afternoon blast on Sunday in the town of Izmail appeared to have been caused by an exploding gas canister, Interfax news agency reported.

Police have opened an investigation into possible fire safety violations, a regional Interior Ministry spokesman, Vladimir Shabliyenko, said on his Facebook page.

Six cafe employees and two customers have been injured, including four people who were transferred to intensive care units, he said. About 20 people were inside the cafe at the time of the explosion, Interfax reported.

Odessa has seen several explosions in recent months at businesses and volunteer

organizations known for their strong support of the government in Kiev.

It was unclear whether the explosion at the Izmail cafe was deliberate or politically motivated.

The city was also the site of violent clashes between pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian activists earlier this year, but has returned to a state of relative peace since then.

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