

Beat: News

Israeli military strikes Gaza Strip after mortar attack, injuring 2

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USPA News - Two militants were injured Thursday when the Israeli military attacked targets in the Gaza Strip, coming just hours after Palestinian militants fired mortars at Israeli troops near the border fence, causing no casualties, Hamas and Israeli officials said. The first incident occurred at around 7:30 a.m. local time on Thursday when three mortar shells were fired from the southern Gaza Strip on an area where Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were engaged in routine activity on the Israeli side of the border fence.

There were no reports of damage or casualties. IDF spokesman Lt. Col. Peter Lerner said Israeli forces responded to the attack by targeting militants who were allegedly preparing to launch rockets at Israel, but few details were made available. He said farmers in the surrounding Israeli communities were as a precaution instructed not to enter their fields after the attack, but the advisory was lifted several hours later. The incident was followed hours later by an Israeli airstrike on a "terror site" in the southern Gaza Strip, the IDF said. The Gaza Health Ministry said two militants riding a motorcycle near the city of Khan Yunis were injured when they were targeted by an Israeli "drone," but it was unclear to which of the two incidents was being referenced to. "This ongoing conflict that we are facing on a daily basis cannot be endured by Israeli civilians," Lerner said. "It is the IDF's obligation to operate to the best of its abilities to prevent such malicious terroristic intentions from terrorizing Israeli civilians and assaulting IDF soldiers. We will continue in our activities to deter all threats originating in the Gaza Strip." Thursday's incident came less than a day after Gaza's health ministry claimed an Israeli drone killed a Palestinian militant near Shejaiyeh, but the Israeli military denied any involvement. The casualty of the explosion was identified as a 32-year-old militant of the Al-Quds Brigades, the armed wing of Islamic Jihad. Late last month, a 22-year-old Israeli man was killed by a Gazan sniper while carrying out maintenance along the Israel-Gaza border fence, prompting a series of Israeli airstrikes across the Gaza Strip that resulted in the death of a Palestinian toddler, making it the region's worst day of violence in nearly two months. The violence on December 24 marked the first killing of an Israeli civilian in the vicinity of the Gaza Strip since November 2012, when an Israeli offensive set off eight days of fierce cross-border fighting. At least 174 Palestinians and 6 Israelis were killed while hundreds more were injured until an Egyptian-brokered truce was reached with Palestinian militants.

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