

Beat: Miscellaneous

Israeli aircraft strike targets in Gaza after rocket attacks

-, 24.06.2013, 19:54 Time

USPA News - Israeli forces carried out a series of airstrikes in the Gaza Strip on early Monday morning, destroying several buildings but causing no casualties, military officials said. The airstrikes came just hours after Palestinian militants fired several rockets at Israel.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said Israeli Air Force (IAF) aircraft fired at several sites in the Gaza Strip, including two suspected weapon storage facilities in the central Gaza Strip and a suspected rocket launch site in the southern Gaza Strip. "IAF pilots reported accurate strikes on the targets," a military spokesperson said. Monday's strikes destroyed several buildings but there were no immediate reports or allegations of casualties. It came just hours after Palestinian militants fired six rockets at southern Israel, including two rockets that were intercepted by the Iron Dome anti-missile system. The attacks were blamed by Israel on the Al-Quds Brigades, the armed wing of Islamic Jihad. "Last night's rocket attack is an intolerable act of aggression against Israel and its civilians. Hamas is held accountable for all acts of terrorism deriving from the Gaza Strip," Lt. Col. Peter Lerner said. "The IDF is determined to safeguard the State of Israel and will operate accordingly to do so." Speaking on IDF Radio, military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yoav Mordechai emphasized Hamas is capable of maintaining quiet in the Gaza Strip if it wants to. "The results in the field have proven that if they want, Hamas succeeds in restoring calm," he said. "We are not interested in internal [Palestinian] pressures. We see against whom it is proper to act and who bears responsibility." Mordechai said it is in Hamas' best interest to maintain quiet along the border between Israel and Gaza, warning that the Israeli military will not allow a resumption of rocket attacks on southern Israel. "We are prepared for every scenario, but we hope that this was an isolated incident," he said. The spokesman added: "Ahead of us are summer vacation and, on the other side, Ramadan. We hope they (Palestinian militants) also have no interest in escalating the situation. Last night and this morning, we held a situation assessment and we will examine [the situation] in the coming day." Following Sunday's rocket attacks, the Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) announced that the Kerem Shalom cargo border crossing will be closed until further notice. Israel's defense ministry said traffic through the Erez Crossing will be restricted until further notice. "Due to rockets fired from Gaza, the Erez terminal is open only for humanitarian cases, foreign passport holders and Arab citizens of Israel," COGAT said in a bulletin on its website. It gave no indication when the Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings may be fully reopened for all traffic. Israeli aircraft last targeted the Gaza Strip on April 30, when an Israeli Air Force aircraft fired at a motorcycle northwest of Gaza City, killing a top militant from the al-Qaeda-influenced group the "Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem." It marked the first deadly airstrike on the Gaza Strip since an Egyptian-brokered truce was reached with Palestinian militants in November 2012.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1167/israeli-aircraft-strike-targets-in-gaza-after-rocket-attacks.html>

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