Rocket fired from Gaza toward Israel; air force bombs Hamas arms factory

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/rocket-fired-from-gaza-toward-israel-intercepted-by-iron-dome/>

The air force bombed a Hamas weapons factory in the Gaza Strip before dawn Thursday after Palestinian terrorists fired a rocket at southern Israel, which was intercepted by the Iron Dome air defense system, the army said.

Rocket warning sirens wailed in the town of Sderot and other communities near the Gaza border just after 2:30 a.m. Thursday, sending residents rushing to bomb shelters.

The IDF said a single projectile was fired from Gaza and it was intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system. There were no reports of injury or damage.

Several hours later, the Israeli aircraft struck a Hamas weapons production facility in northern Gaza, the army said, noting it holds the terror group, which rules Gaza, responsible for all violence emanating from it.

Israel later announced it had restricted the permitted fishing zone off the coast of the Gaza Strip to 10 nautical miles in response to the rocket fire.

The incident comes a day after an Israeli aircraft fired at and hit an armed Palestinian who approached the border fence between the Gaza Strip and Israel, the military said.

The military said the Palestinian was spotted by IDF observation posts as he neared the security fence in southern Gaza.

Authorities in the Hamas-run Strip did not comment on the Palestinian suspect’s condition.

Footage of the incident, which was later distributed by the IDF, showed the suspect approaching the security fence armed with what appears to be an assault rifle. The video ends before the airstrike.

On Friday several thousand Palestinians protested on the Gaza border, with several hundred rioting and clashing with Israeli forces, as the coastal enclave’s Hamas rulers marked 32 years since the founding of the terror group.

The Hamas-run Gaza health ministry said five Palestinians were hurt in the clashes, which included the hurling of Molotov cocktails and other objects at IDF soldiers.

In addition to the border clashes, thousands took part in rallies in Gaza over the weekend to mark the 1987 anniversary of the Hamas terror group’s establishment.

Friday’s border demonstrations were part of the weekly March of Return protests that began last March and resumed earlier this month after a three-week hiatus following a large-scale battle in November between the IDF and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the second largest terror group in Gaza.