Sappers neutralize incendiary balloon found in settlement north of Jerusalem

October 8, 2018

The Times of Israel

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/sappers-neutralize-incendiary-balloon-found-in-settlement-north-of-jerusalem/>

Israel Police said sappers neutralized an incendiary device attached to a balloon that was discovered Monday in the courtyard of a home in the West Bank settlement of Givat Ze’ev, just north of Jerusalem.

An investigation into the incident has been opened, the force said in a statement.

Police sappers arrived at the scene and after checking the device, took it away for further examination.

There was no damage reported in the incident.

Givat Ze’ev is located about five kilometers north of the capital.

The tactic of sending airborne incendiary devices into Israeli territory has been used almost daily by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip since the start of weekly border protests there in March, but it is unlikely this balloon device was launched from the coastal enclave.

Police reiterated a call for the public to be extremely careful around any such similar objects — balloons and kites — as they could contain dangerous explosive or inflammatory material.

Anyone who finds such objects should report it to the police call center and to leave handling of the device to sappers, the statement said.

Gaza protesters have launched incendiary kites and balloons into Israel, sparking fires that have destroyed forests, burned crops, and killed livestock. Over 7,000 acres of land have been burned, causing millions of shekels in damages, according to Israeli officials. Some balloons have carried improvised explosive devices.

There have been a number of incidents in which West Bank Palestinians appear to have copied the tactic, sending devices into Israeli settlements.

Last week a suspected incendiary balloon was discovered on a highway close to the Modiin industrial zone in the center of the country.