Huge incendiary kite from Gaza lands on kibbutz power lines

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-strikes-gaza-cell-launching-incendiary-balloons-as-arson-attacks-continue/>

A large incendiary kite launched from Gaza landed on power lines near Kibbutz Sufa, sparking a quick operation by employees from the Israeli Electric Corporation to remove the device before a fire was started.

The 4-meter (about 13-foot) kite, which landed on Friday, caused a power outage at the kibbutz and in the surrounding area.

It was removed from the high-voltage wires by electric company workers using a crane.

The IEC released pictures of the kite on Saturday.

In another community near the Gaza Strip, police sappers neutralized an incendiary balloon flown over from the Hamas-run Palestinian enclave that landed next to a dining room in an Israeli community in the Eshkol Region.

In response, the Israeli military on Saturday afternoon said it targeted a cell responsible for launching incendiary balloons in the northern Gaza Strip. Reports in Palestinian media said two people were injured in the Israeli strikes in El-Bureij.

There were also Palestinian reports of a second IDF strike elsewhere in the Gaza Strip.

Earlier, another incendiary device sparked a fire in the Nir Am nature reserve. The blaze was largely under control by Saturday afternoon, according to the Parks Authority.

Southern Israel has experienced hundreds of fires as a result of incendiary kites and balloons flown over the border from Gaza in recent months. Over 7,000 acres of land have been burned, causing millions of shekels in damages, according to Israeli officials.

The arson attacks Saturday came on the heels of clashes along the Gaza border on Friday that saw three Palestinians killed, according to the Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza. Several thousand Gazans gathered in different locations along the border, setting tires ablaze and throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli security forces.

Several attempts were made to breach the security fence.

Israeli tanks struck two Hamas posts in the Gaza Strip Friday evening after a grenade was hurled at troops and amid intense violence during the mass riots. Authorities said nine fires broke out in southern Israel on Friday that were sparked by Gaza incendiary devices.

The violence that erupted over the weekend came after Hamas and Israel appeared to be honoring an informal cease-fire that ended two days of intense violence amid efforts by neighboring Egypt to negotiate between the two sides.

Hamas’s Al Aqsa TV channel reported late Thursday that the Egyptian-brokered deal took hold “on the basis of mutual calm.” It was at least the third such truce in recent weeks.

But Hadashot TV news reported on Friday that Israel denied making any ceasefire agreement with Hamas to end intense the Gaza rocket fire into Israel, which had prompted IDF response attacks Wednesday and Thursday.

A senior Israeli diplomatic official insisted to Hadashot that Hamas’s announcement that Jerusalem had agreed to a truce was a lie. A senior defense official backed up the claim, and added that the army did not see the confrontation as over.

The implication was that Israel had ceased its reprisal attacks in the Strip because Hamas had halted rocket attacks on Israeli communities, but did not see itself obligated to a truce.

Leaders of Israeli cities and towns near the Gaza border on Friday [criticized the government](https://www.timesofisrael.com/southern-mayors-say-gaza-truce-a-mistake-call-for-long-term-solution/) over the apparent ceasefire with Hamas and called for a long-term solution.

Hamas’s announcement of a truce late Thursday came after a 12-hour lull in fighting, following two days that saw the heaviest exchange of Palestinian rocket fire and reprisal Israeli airstrikes since the 2014 Gaza war.

Hamas said a ceasefire had been reached “on the basis of mutual calm,” and had gone into effect at midnight on Thursday. It said the deal was mediated by Egypt and other regional players. Israel denied there was a truce, but a senior Israeli official told Israel Radio that “quiet would be met with quiet.” There were no instances of violence reported along the border overnight Thursday-Friday.

Hamas, an Islamist terrorist organization that seeks to destroy Israel, seized control of the Gaza Strip in 2007.