15 fires sweep south as kite terror continues

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<https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5293327,00.html>

Fifteen fires broke out in the western Negev on Thursday afternoon after a group in Gaza flew across the border incendiary kites and balloons, setting ablaze trees in the Shokeda Forest and the Be'eri Forest as firefighters scrambled to contain the flames.

The IDF confirmed Palestinian media reports earlier in the afternoon that Israeli jets shot at a group of incendiary kite and balloon flyers east of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. No one was injured in attack.

The latest fires add to the hundreds that have already swept through thousands of acres of Israeli landscape as tensions between the Hamas-ruled enclave and the IDF show little sign of waning.

Some 45 rockets and mortar shells were [fired at Israel from Gaza Tuesday night](https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5292044,00.html), some exploding in Gaza vicinity communities.

Seven rockets and mortars shells were intercepted by the Iron Dome air defense system, and at least three landed within the strip.

There were no reports of injuries, but damage was sustained. One mortar shell exploded on a pathway near a nursery in the Eshkol Regional Council.

Numerous sirens were sounded in the Gaza vicinity throughout the night in was the loudest night of Code Red alerts since Operation Protective Edge in 2014.

The IDF defined Tuesday night's barrage as “a serious rocket offensive against Israel’s home front,” saying that “Hamas is leading the Gaza Strip and its residents to deterioration and escalation.”

The escalation occurred on the backdrop of the “kite terrorism” and the incendiary and explosive balloons dispatched from the strip, which have sparked huge fires in the Gaza vicinity. In response, the IDF attacked three targets in the southern strip shortly after midnight Tuesday, and Hamas retaliated—and claimed responsibility.