

Beat: Miscellaneous

Israeli surveillance drone crashes in Gaza, cause disputed

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USPA News - An unmanned surveillance drone belonging to the Israeli military crashed in the northern Gaza Strip on Sunday, with the military wing of Hamas claiming responsibility for `shooting it down` while Israeli officials blamed the crash on a technical malfunction. The incident happened on Sunday morning when a `Skylark` mini-drone flew over east Jabalia, a Palestinian city located about 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) north of Gaza City.

A photo released by the Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, purportedly showed the drone that appeared to be undamaged. "Al-Qassam Brigades declares responsibility for shooting down an Israeli mini-drone [in the] north of Gaza Strip [a] few hours ago", the militants said on their official Twitter account. The tweet was later deleted, and subsequent posts did not specifically claim the drone had been shot down, but the group did not immediately respond to requests for clarification. A spokesperson for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), however, denied the claims. "Hamas lies: an IDF UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) crashed a short time ago due to technical issues. It was not shot down, as Hamas claimed", the military said, giving no other details about the crash. The Al-Qassam Brigades, which said it has the crashed drone in its possession, later rejected Israel's statement although it did not clarify whether the militants had shot down the aircraft. "Every time Al-Qassam seizes an Israeli surveillance aircraft, Israel's IDF claims that `technical malfunction caused the drone to fall`", the militants wrote on Twitter. Sunday's drone crash came just two days after Israeli forces carried out an airstrike on a tunnel in the southern Gaza Strip, killing three Hamas militants. The airstrike came hours after a Hamas militant threw an explosive device at IDF forces working to destroy a tunnel along the border, injuring 5 Israeli soldiers. The attacker was killed when IDF soldiers opened fire. Friday's violence in the Gaza Strip was the worst since November 2012, when an Israeli offensive set off eight days of fierce cross-border fighting. At least 174 Palestinians and 6 Israelis were killed while hundreds more were injured until an Egyptian-brokered truce was reached with Palestinian militants. Israeli aircraft last targeted the Gaza Strip on Monday, destroying two concealed rocket launchers but causing no casualties. On April 30, 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."

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1555/israeli-surveillance-drone-crashes-in-gaza-cause-disputed.html>

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