

Israel issues warning to Palestine and Syria
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Israel's Defence Minister warned Palestinian fighters that the Israeli military will respond to any attacks in its territory, after a rocket was fired from Gaza into Southern Israel and an attack from Syria.

Moshe Yaalon said on Wednesday that the military will not hold back if attacked and will not allow its civilians or armed forces to come under fire "in any form".

"We shall not allow in any form the establishment of a routine of sporadic firing on our civilians or on our forces," said Yaalon.

His warning was issued after fighters in Gaza fired a rocket at southern Israel, and also a Syrian mortar shell hit Israeli-occupied sector of the Golan Heights.

In response, the Israeli military fired from a tank across the Syrian armistice line, towards the source of fire and also launched three air strikes on Gaza.

Yaalon said Gaza's Hamas rulers were responsible for any fire directed at Israel from the coastal enclave, and in the same way, President Bashar al-Assad's regime was to blame for whatever fire emanated from Syria.

"In the Golan Heights, our policy is that we have no intention of allowing a daily routine of firing from Syria towards Israeli territory, whether it is stray fire or not, and we will respond to that with a firm hand," said Yaalon.

"The moment we identify the source of the fire, we will destroy it without any hesitation, as we did last night," he said.

Tuesday's incident was the first time Israel retaliated for Gaza rocket fire since an informal cease-fire ended eight days of cross-border fighting between Israel and the Hamas-ruled territory in November.

Palestinians in Gaza have fired several rockets since the informal cease-fire took hold.

Police say no damage or injuries were reported after the Israeli strikes on late-Tuesday but Palestinian fighters fired two more rockets at Israel.

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