

June 8, 2018

In worst blaze to date, Gaza fire kites destroy vast parts of nature reserve

A blaze set by Palestinian protesters along the Gaza border devastated a nature reserve inside Israel on Saturday, in what officials said was the worst day of fires since the demonstrators adopted the fire kite tactics in the last few months. Arson investigators at the Carmia reserve said the fire was most likely set by a fire kite, or possibly a balloon filled with chemicals that dripped flames along the area, Hadashot news reported. By evening, teams of dozens of firefighters and aircraft finally managed to bring the flames under control, but not before some 2,000 to 3,000 dunams (500 to 740 acres) of fields and parts of a nature reserve adjacent to Kibbutz Carmia were destroyed, as reported by the Times of Israel. In total, firefighters battled three large fires and several smaller ones along the Gaza Strip border, all believed to have been started by incendiary kites flown from the coastal enclave. Officials at the Israel Nature and Parks Authority estimated that at least one third of the Carmia reserve had been destroyed. They said it was likely the flames had caused massive damage to both the flora and the fauna in the reserve. Residents worked alongside with firefighters and soldiers to try to contain the fires, which have become almost daily occurrences since the start of the “March of Return” protests along the border at the end of March.

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