IDF says it detonated large bomb placed on Gaza fence, foiling attack

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The Israeli military on Thursday detonated a large bomb that had been placed along the Gaza security fence by Palestinians during a recent riot, the army said.

The Israel Defense Forces said the placement of the improvised explosive device showed that the Gaza-ruling Hamas terror group was trying to keep up the clashes along the border, despite the reported ongoing ceasefire talks with Israel.

The large IED, which was placed inside a blue jerrycan, was found earlier this week by the IDF next to the security fence in the southern Gaza Strip.

On Thursday morning, the military destroyed the bomb in a controlled explosion, the army said.

“The cell of terrorists that planted the explosive device planned to injure IDF soldiers and interrupt the operations of forces working in the area,” the army said.

“IDF soldiers foiled the attempted terror attack. There were no injuries, and no damage was caused,” the military said in a statement.

According to the IDF, the bomb was placed along the fence during a riot earlier in the week.

“The planting of the explosive device by the terrorist cell under the cover of a violent demonstration is further evidence that the Hamas terror group is working to maintain the conflict in the fence area and to injure IDF soldiers, while using residents of the Gaza Strip as human shields and as cover for terrorist activities,” the army said.

On Monday, several thousand Palestinians rioted along the Gaza security fence, burning tires and throwing rocks at IDF troops on the other side, the army said.

In response, Israeli troops fired tear gas canisters and, in some cases, live gunshots at the Palestinian rioters, according to the IDF.

No significant injuries were reported on either side.

A surge of violence in Gaza began in March with a series of protests along the border that were dubbed the “March of Return.” The clashes, which Israel says are being orchestrated by Gaza’s Hamas rulers, have included regular rock and Molotov cocktail attacks on troops, as well as shooting and IED attacks aimed at IDF soldiers and attempts to breach the border fence.

Since the protests began, at least 127 Palestinians have been killed in clashes, according to a tally from The Associated Press. Hamas, which seeks to destroy Israel, has acknowledged that dozens of those killed were its members. Others have been identified as members of the Iran-backed Palestinian Islamic Jihad group, the second-largest terrorist organization in the Strip. During that time, a Gaza sniper killed an Israeli soldier.

During the demonstrations, protesters have also launched incendiary kites and balloons into Israel, sparking fires that have destroyed forests, burned crops and killed livestock. Over 7,000 acres of land have been burned, causing millions of shekels in damages, according to Israeli officials.