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## Flaming Kites From Gaza Thwarted by Winds



The direction of the wind not only thwarted the kites, but
also blew copious amounts of Israeli tear gas and smoke
from the burning tires toward the protesters, chasing many away

## By Iyad Abuheweila and Isabel Kershner

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BUREIJ, Gaza Strip - Gaza's flaming-kite squadrons had worked for days to prepare for Friday's protest along the border with Israel, building hundreds of flimsy-framed sails with tails meant to carry crude incendiary devices, like rags soaked in gasoline. Their battle plan was to fly them in swarms into Israel with the aim of igniting the dry fields of the rural communities on the other side of the border fence. They were counting on help from a heavy heat wave to fan the fires.But the plan largely failed because of another quirk of nature: The wind was blowing the other way.Instead, the protesters claimed another David vs. Goliath kind of aerial victory, saying they had downed two Israeli military surveillance drones with stones hurled from slingshots. The military acknowledged losing two drones that were on documentation missions, saying they "fell in the Gaza Strip," but not how. After five weeks of deadly violence along the border, during which the Gaza Health Ministry has registered at least 45 Palestinians killed by Israeli sniper fire and hundreds injured, the casualties were less severe on Friday. By nightfall, the ministry had reported no deaths, but about 121 protesters had been wounded by live ammunition, rubber-coated bullets or shrapnel. It was not immediately clear if the drop in the casualties reflected fewer protesters or more caution by the military, which says it has been learning lessons from one week to the next.

