

Islamist Group Owns Up to Rocket Attack

A small Islamist group claimed responsibility for firing rockets on Thursday at an Israeli border town from the Gaza Strip during U.S. President Barack Obama's visit to the region.

The small Salafi group called Magles Shoura al-Mujahddin said in an Internet statement that it fired the rockets to show that Israeli air defences could not stop attacks on the Jewish state during the visit.

Police said there were no casualties but some damage in the attack on Sderot near the Gaza frontier.

"Responding to the bragging of the Roman dog and the war criminals of their so-called Iron Dome, we assert that all their military techniques will not stop God's destiny of tormenting them," the statement, posted on the Ansar al-Mujahideen website, which is used by Islamist militants, said.

It was referring to the U.S. president, who is on a visit to Israel and the West Bank and who had mentioned the town in a speech on his arrival in Israel a day earlier.

The group had previously claimed a deadly attack in June 2012 on Israel from Sinai.

The Islamist Hamas group, which rules Gaza since 2007, has conducted sweeps against the armed Salafis, who espouse an austere form of Islam and who often try to fire rockets into Israel defiance of de facto Palestinian truces.

(Reporting by Ahmed Tolba in Cairo, writing by Sami Aboudi; Editing by Alison Williams)

