

Israeli panel seeks to end Gaza attacks

by UPI

JERUSALEM -- The Israeli security council Wednesday instructed military leaders to develop a plan to end rocket attacks launched from the Gaza Strip. Security Cabinet ministers also told military officials to take action against known launching areas as well as centers where Qassam rockets are made and stored, Ynetnews reported. While the ministers approved the plans to damage the facilities in Hamas-controlled Gaza, actual attacks would require approval by defense and foreign ministers. While the Cabinet met, three rockets were fired into Israel, landing in open fields south of Ashkelon. There were no reports of injuries or damage. The ministers also said they would pursue coordination with Egypt and negotiations with the Palestinian Authority to weaken Hamas without creating a humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Israeli Vice Prime Minister Haim Ramon, saying the Cabinet's actions weren't enough, abstained from voting and called for a unilateral cease-fire, Ynetnews reported. Ramon said Israeli attacks on Gaza should be renewed only if Hamas rocket attacks were to continue. He said Israel should attack sites from which the Qassam rockets were launched, even if it meant striking populated areas.

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