Homes torched in West Bank settlement in apparent arson attack

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Three homes in the West Bank settlement of Karmei Tzur suffered damage Wednesday from a fire that the army said was caused by Molotov cocktails hurled at the Israeli town north of Hebron.

Police and firefighters managed to extinguish the fire in less than an hour, while residents from the area were evacuated without any injuries.

Karmei Tzur locals said the damage incurred to the homes was minimal but claimed the blaze very easily could have ended fatally.

Residents added that this was not the first such incident targeting Israeli communities in the area, citing a fire that broke out near the neighboring Gush Etzion settlement of Bat Ayin. That blaze similarly caused damage to a number of homes in the town, but no residents were injured.

At the time, firefighters did not refer to the incident as arson.

While an IDF spokesman asserted that Wednesday’s blaze had been caused by Molotov cocktails thrown at the settlement’s security fence, he was unable to confirm whether such materials were found at the scene.

However, security camera footage shows three men hurling firebombs at the settlement that were believed to have caused the blaze.

A statement from residents of Karmei Tzur called on Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman and IDF Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot to act against what they referred to as a recurring phenomenon.

“Unfortunately, the stuttering voices of containment that the State of Israel has been broadcasting to the terrorist organizations in Gaza are being heard clearly by terrorists in our region as well,” the residents said, slamming the government.