

# **IDF to Develop New Phone-Based Alert System for Civilians**

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has decided to invest some 100 million shekels (\$25.4 million) in developing a cellular phone-based alert system for Israeli civilians that will help guide Israeli citizens to safe areas during a missile attack. The system will be developed for use by the Home Front Command and is expected to improve the army's ability to direct the public in times of emergency and wartime.

The goal of the new system, which has already entered the developmental stage, is to allow the Home Front Command to alert people in a specific area under attack, so as not to "paralyze" an entire city or population unnecessarily.

The new alert system, which appears likely to become operational within the next year and a half to two years, will be predicated on determining the precise location where a missile will hit. Certain aspects of the system were already tried during the fighting in Gaza last summer, when the Home Front Command divided the country into over 200 missile impact areas.

The IDF has also finished developing the i0ref application, which provides alerts based on where the user is located and will allow the user to select three areas for which to receive continuous alerts. It joins another already existing "push" service that notifies smartphone users if they are in an area where a missile alert siren has been activated.

This technological development comes in the wake of an announcement last week that Israel's new missile defense system David's Sling has successfully passed several trials on the way to a final test.

Meanwhile, for the second time in two weeks, Israeli security forces have thwarted an attempt to smuggle unauthorized equipment, including advanced communication gadgets, into the Gaza Strip via the Kerem Shalom crossing.

The equipment included infrared cameras, radio communication devices and advanced remote controlled security cameras. It was hidden within an electronics shipment in an Israeli truck destined for Gaza, and was suspected to be en route to terrorist groups.

The unauthorized electronic equipment was found in a joint operation carried out by the Israeli Defense Ministry's border authorities, the Shin Bet security agency and the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories.

Defense officials will further investigate the incident, but the smuggling attempt follows a similar one about one week ago when border authorities found unauthorized motors hidden in a shipment of refrigerators and washing machines. According to the Defense Ministry, border authorities have thwarted more than 100 smuggling attempts into Gaza with prohibited items suspected of being headed to terrorist organizations.

In the meantime, on the Israeli side of the border with Gaza, residents of nearby southern Israeli communities remain concerned, but not surprised, after a *Sunday Telegraph* report revealed that Iran has provided the Hamas military wing with tens of millions of dollars to rebuild the tunnels that were destroyed by the Israel Defense Forces during Operation Protective Edge last summer.

Many residents of Gaza border area communities have sought to remind Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon and senior IDF officers about the dangers posed by cross-border tunnels. During the fighting last summer, terrorists from Gaza used such tunnels to carry out attacks inside Israeli territory on numerous occasions.

“Our basic assumption is that, absent a ‘reconstruction for demilitarization’ deal with the Hamas regime, Hamas’ offensive activities are continuing at all levels. The [Israeli] government must commit to two things—to find a quick technical solution to identify tunnels and to view an agreement on the reconstruction and demilitarization of Gaza as an Israeli interest,” said Alon Shuster, the head of the Shaar Hanegev Regional Council.

*With reporting by Dan Lavie, Gadi Golan, Shlomi Diaz, and Israel Hayom Staff*

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