

Israel Takes Up 'David's Sling' in Its Anti-Missile Defense

Just days after Syria launched a missile at Israel, Israel launched David's Sling, its middle-tier anti-missile defense battery.

David's Sling takes its place between the Arrow 3 missile batteries and the Iron Dome, designed to intercept short-range rockets, such as those launched from the Gaza Strip. David's sling can take out rockets, aircraft and cruise missiles with ranges between 65 and 125 miles.

Monday's announcement followed Israel's successful interception by the Arrow 3 of a Syrian surface-to-air missile (SAM) overnight Friday that carried a 200-pound explosive payload.

On Sunday, Israeli Minister of Defense Avigdor Lieberman sent a strong warning to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

"The next time the Syrians use their air defense systems against our airplanes, we will destroy all of them without thinking twice," Lieberman said.

Israel has never involved itself in Syria's civil war; its mission has been to prevent Iranian weapons convoys traveling through Syria from reaching the Hezbollah terror group.

On Monday, former director of the Counterterrorism Bureau Brig. Gen. (res.) Nitzan Nuriel told journalists, "the Syrian capabilities to respond are very, very limited."

"They can again open fire against the Israeli Air Force, but as our minister of defense already said yesterday that in that case we will destroy with the [anti-missile] batteries that

are threatening our aircraft so generally speaking the Syrian capabilities to respond are very, very limited," Nuriel said.

Israel has no interest, he said, in getting involved in the Syrian civil war, but it will take the security measures needed to protect its citizens.

"Let's say that Israel has zero influence on those five civil wars in Syria," he said. "We are mostly respond[ing] and take[ing] those security measures we need to protect ourselves."

Nuriel said Russia has received "all the messages they needed in order to understand that we will not let anyone, including Russia, steal or disturb or stop us from implementing our military mission."

With the addition of David's Sling, working alongside the Arrow 3 and Iron Dome, Israel is capable of protecting its population from rocket and missile attacks with potentially deadly payloads.

Israel's Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd. working in tandem with the U.S. Raytheon Co., developed David's Sling. The U.S. Congress has contributed significantly to Israel's three-tiered anti-missile defense systems. {eoa}

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