

The Latest Technology Protects Israel's Skies

In February, members of the Homa Administration in the Defense Ministry's Administration for the Development of Weapons and Technological Infrastructure, together with the U.S. Missile Defense Agency, conducted the first test of the new Arrow 3 missile interception system.

The IDF website conducted an exclusive interview with Israel Air Force Col. Tzvika Haimovich, to discuss the development of the new system and the upcoming challenges for Israel's air defense.

As commander of the Active Air Defense Wing, Haimovich is responsible for the Iron Dome, David's Sling and the Arrow missile defense systems that protect Israeli skies against ballistic missiles.

"Monday's [February 25] test launch was part of a series in the development process for our weapons systems—Iron Dome, David's Sling and Arrow—what we call in the Air Force, the 'multi-tier concept'," Haimovich said.

Haimovich described the logic of the multi-tier concept in dealing with different types of rockets and the different threats that they pose.

"The upper tier consists of the Arrow system, dealing with long-range ballistic missiles, while the lower tier deals with short- or medium-range rockets," he said, describing the Arrow system as "the master defense weapon of the upper tier."

The Arrow missile defense system is considered the most advanced of its kind in the world. It is also the world's first national missile defense system, meaning it is capable of defending the whole of Israel from long-range ballistic

missiles. The system therefore plays a strategic role in countering long-range threats like those from Iran.

Col. Haimovich lauded the development of the third generation of the Arrow system as a breakthrough for Israel's air defense.

"It is a very significant milestone in the development of this new technology. In fact it is an absolutely new system—a new launcher, but also a new approach. It is a breakthrough into completely uncharted waters, stretching the range of interception to new heights, even into space. It also enables us to deal with more significant threats in the future," he said.

While he expressed satisfaction at the success of the recent Arrow 3 test launch, Haimovich emphasized that the road ahead is long until the system's newest generation is fully operational.

"The Arrow 3 is a multi-year project currently in development, and we are only at the beginning of its process. I see it being fully integrated into the (Air Defense) Command three to five years down the line," Haimovich said.

Meeting the need for constant advancement, while simultaneously implementing changes in operational activity is a fine balancing act.

"There is a constant tension in the active air defense sphere between the need to use and utilize the systems that we have operational here and now, while simultaneously improving them for the future; we have the same operators working on both developing the systems and operating them—that's our biggest challenge," Haimovich said.

It is during combat, however, that the systems are truly tested and the Air Defense Command is able to gain firsthand evidence of where it can make improvements.

“Naturally, when you gain operational experience with the system, you find out what additional needs it has and are thus able to make significant improvements. That’s why this process of missile defense development is an ongoing one,” he said.

Haimovich was clear in his emphasis of the human advantage, alongside the technological one, as a key component to Israel’s defense.

“I am confident in the systems’ capabilities, and moreover, in the soldiers operating them. We have people whose commitment to the defense of this county is outstanding. Therein lays our true strength,” he said.

The commander praised the level of cooperation with the U.S. military, which played a central role in the development of the Arrow system.

“It is a one-of-a-kind partnership that propels our capabilities to new heights. The cooperation succeeds not only due to the professional knowledge that the two militaries exchange but because of the great relationships between the people working together.”

For the original article, visit [.](#)