



ISRAEL DEVELOPS MARITIME IRON DOME

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In March 2011, Israel launched a new missile defense system and called it “The Iron Dome”. Jointly funded by the United States of America, this all-weather system was developed in partnership between Rafael Advanced Defense Systems and Israel Aircraft Industries. The idea behind the development of the “Iron Dome” was to intercept and destroy short-range rockets, artillery shells and mortars fired from distances of up to 45 miles, and to protect civilian and military installations in the path of such projectiles.¹

The “Iron Dome” project was initiated in 2006 after suffering defeat at the hands of Hezbollah. During the 34 days conflict which is also at times referred to as the Hybrid War of 2006, the Hezbollah rocket force fired between 3,970 and 4,228 Katyusha rockets at a rate of more than 100 per day into Israel. Out of these rockets approximately 23% hit cities and other important installations including military targets.²

Since its deployment, this highly effective system has successfully blocked thousands of rockets fired at Israel. With a success factor of approximately 90%, the “Iron Dome” has protected Israel from Katyusha rockets fired into its territory. In fact, due to this, Britain has acquired the Iron Dome technology from Israel for 78 million pound sterling to protect its

¹ Israel Defense Forces: Iron Dome Missile Defense System, “*Jewish Virtual Library*”
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/iron-dome-missile-defense-system>

² Mideast War, by the Numbers, “*The Washington post*” 17 August 2006
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/17/AR2006081700909_pf.html

assets in the Falkland Islands.³ There are also rumors that Australia and USA are also interested in acquiring this technology in the near future.⁴

Banking on the success of “Iron Dome”, in November 2017, Israel successfully expanded the sphere of its missile defense system and installed a new maritime component to its Iron Dome.⁵ This decision was taken after a number of its sea assets came under attack during the 2014 Gaza War. Apart from ensuring clear sea lines of communication, the Maritime Iron Dome will also protect the maritime assets of Israel that range from naval ships to gas exploration sites in the sea. The system, constructed on the missile ship’s helicopter pad, operates in tandem with the identification systems of the navy and air force. It needs to be noted here that the defense system was tested for well over a year before being incorporated into Israel military structure.

The Maritime Iron Dome was made operational just a few days before the announcement of President Trump for shifting of American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. With both the land and sea assets secured, the defense system now extends protection to Israel in case there is a backlash against it.

Israel is yet to tap into the maritime mineral resources. One of the main reasons for not carrying out large scale exploration at the sea was its vulnerability from rocket attacks. The Maritime Iron Dome will also allow Israel to expand its exploration activities in the sea without having to worry about rocket attacks. If Israel discovers more oil fields in its territorial sea, the benefits would not only cover the cost of Maritime Iron Dome, but would also make Israel self sufficient in its energy needs.

³ UK To Purchase Israeli Iron Dome Defense System To Defend Falklands, *“The Jerusalem Post”* 25 November, 2017 <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/UK-to-purchase-Israeli-Iron-Dome-defense-system-to-defend-Falklands-515160>

⁴ REPORT: US EYES PURCHASE OF ISRAEL’S IRON DOME TO DEFEND EUROPEAN BASES, *“The Jerusalem Post”* 10 September 2017, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Report-US-eyes-purchase-of-Israels-Iron-Dome-to-defend-European-bases-504699>

⁵ Israel’s Iron Dome Goes to Sea, *“CBN News”* 28 November 2017 <http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/israel/2017/november/israels-iron-dome-goes-to-sea>