



Airborne MG: IAI and SIG SAUER successfully test the "Fire Storm 250"

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Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and SIG SAUER have announced the completion of a major live-fire test of the **FIRE STORM 250**. During the trial, the VTOL drone – equipped with SIG SAUER's M250 machine gun – flew over a simulated battlefield, identifying targets through its onboard camera and successfully engaging them in single-shot and semi-automatic modes.

The companies disclosed the results on October 13 at the Association of the U.S. Army's annual meeting in Washington, where the drone had been unveiled for the first time exactly one year earlier. During the tests, conducted at various distances and altitudes, the system demonstrated its accuracy and the effectiveness of its integrated safety features. The aircraft is intended to provide small tactical units with a field-operable close air support and border-surveillance capability.

Technical specifications and endurance

The FIRE STORM 250 offers up to three hours of operational endurance while carrying 200 rounds of ammunition. Thanks to its vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) capability, crews can launch it from forward positions even where no runways are available.

The weapon is mounted on SIG SAUER's **MICROLIGHT** remote weapon station, described by the company as the world's lightest for airborne use: the station, weapon, and ammunition have a combined weight of just 53 pounds (about 24 kg). A sophisticated stabilization system keeps the machine gun perfectly steady while hovering, while the operator benefits from a unified display integrating sensor data and fire control into a single aiming screen.

Ammunition and human control

The M250 machine gun is the belt-fed light weapon developed by SIG SAUER for the U.S. Army's *Next Generation Squad Weapon* program (intended to replace the M249 SAW). Type-classified by the U.S. Army in May 2025, the airborne version can use both **6.8×51 mm** ammunition and standard **7.62×51 mm NATO** ammunition.

«We are proud of the new SIG SAUER M250, a technology that has proven itself in the field», said Sali Okanin, SIG SAUER's general manager for Israel.

The system ensures full human control (*Human-in-the-Loop*): the operator receives live video, target tracking, and engagement options from the drone, and **must explicitly authorize each individual use of the weapon** before it fires.

Internal combustion engine and operational employment

The aircraft is powered by a multi-fuel internal combustion engine, a choice that allows units in the field to refuel it using the same fuel already available to them, avoiding the wait for battery recharging.

IAI and SIG SAUER designed the system to operate alongside small units with limited personnel, providing close air coverage (*overwatch*) for moving troops or continuous surveillance of borders and critical sites. In addition, multiple drones can operate in relay to provide uninterrupted 24-hour surveillance and serve as an advance scout along the troops' route.