



Israel creates a new military branch dedicated to drones, robotics, and artificial intelligence

The new IDF structure is expected to be fully launched by early December and operate across the land, air, and maritime domains.

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Israel is accelerating the technological transformation of its Armed Forces and is preparing to establish a new structure entirely dedicated to **unmanned systems, robotics, and artificial intelligence**.

The initiative was announced by the Chief of Staff of the **Israel Defense Forces (IDF)**, Lieutenant General **Eyal Zamir**, who described the project as a historic step in the evolution of Israel's military instrument.

A new branch for AI and unmanned systems

«The battlefield is changing at a breakneck pace, and we are changing with it,» Zamir said during the graduation ceremony for the **153° Israeli Navy officer course**.

According to the general, the future of military operations will be characterized by the increasingly extensive use of **drones, robotic platforms, autonomous systems, and artificial intelligence-based tools**.

This assessment led to the decision to establish a new IDF branch, called the **Unmanned Systems and Artificial Intelligence Branch**, tasked with coordinating and developing capabilities currently distributed across different components of the Armed Forces.

The new structure is expected to become fully operational by the beginning of **December 2026** and will be responsible for integrating technologies deployable across the **land, air, and maritime** domains, promoting greater interoperability between autonomous platforms and traditional units.

Autonomous systems alongside conventional units

According to Zamir, unmanned systems will be able to operate alongside manned units or carry out **independent missions**.

The objective is to increase the operational capability of Israeli forces while at the same time **reducing service members' exposure to combat risks**.

«This is a once-in-a-generation transformation,» the Chief of Staff said, adding that Israel aims to maintain a leading position in the development and operational use of these technologies.

The role of the Israeli Navy

Particular attention will also be given to the naval sector.

Autonomous surface and underwater systems could be integrated into the future capabilities of the **Israeli Navy**, expanding options for **surveillance, reconnaissance, infrastructure protection, and operations in maritime areas**.

The initiative is part of the broader multi-year **Hoshen** plan, through which the IDF intends to reshape part of its organization and capabilities following the operational experience gained in

recent years.

Zamir identified the **maritime domain** as one of the priority sectors for preserving Israeli military superiority over the long term.

A process that began years ago

The creation of the new branch also represents the evolution of a process that began several years ago.

During the tenure of former Chief of the General Staff **Aviv Kohavi**, the IDF had already invested heavily in **battlefield digitalization**, real-time data sharing, and the development of new multidomain capabilities.

These programs were complemented by systems such as the **naval C-Dome**, **Sa'ar 6**-class corvettes, **Skylark** drones, and numerous projects focused on unmanned ground vehicles.

Lessons after October 7, 2023

However, the experience of more recent conflicts has also highlighted the limits of technological transformation when it is not accompanied by an appropriate balance between **innovation, conventional force readiness, and the ability to respond to sudden threats**.

Following the **October 7, 2023** attack, an intense debate emerged in Israel over the relationship between advanced technology, intelligence, and traditional operational capabilities.

The new structure dedicated to AI and autonomous systems therefore appears to fit into a different phase: not replacing the warfighter with technology, but using the latter to **multiply unit capabilities, accelerate information processing, and reduce risks to personnel**.

Israeli industry is also accelerating

Israel's industrial sector is moving in the same direction.

Elbit Systems recently unveiled **Fuse**, an architecture designed to coordinate numerous autonomous ground and air systems in real time through artificial intelligence-based tools.

The development of **drone swarms, autonomous munitions, robotic platforms, and systems capable of processing large amounts of information** is rapidly changing the way armed forces plan operations.

Israel now aims to transform these technologies from individual experimental capabilities into a structural element of its military organization.

The establishment of the new **Unmanned Systems and Artificial Intelligence Branch** is one of the clearest signs of this process: **drones, robotics, and artificial intelligence** will no longer be merely tools assigned to individual units, but will become an autonomous and coordinated branch of Israel's military establishment.

News link: <https://breakingdefense.com/2026/09/israeli-military-creates-new-branch-focused-on-ai-drones-and-robotics/>