



IMI unveils new long-range guided rocket

Israel Military Industries has completed development of its MARS long-range precision air-launched guided rocket.

(As published by Yuval Azulai in GLOBES - Israel business news, www.globes-online.com, July 2, 2013).

Israel Military Industries Ltd. (IMI) has completed development of its MARS long-range precision air-launched guided rocket. The multipurpose rocket weighs half a ton. IMI says that it has successfully undergone a series of tests at training grounds, with good hits on the targets predefined in the mission planning stage.

IMI's Rocket Systems Division has been developing the MARS system for several years. It is based on analysis of future battlefield needs, and will soon be offered to the IDF and other armies, subject to obtaining export permits from the Ministry of Defense.

To market MARS to foreign countries, IMI customized the system to wide range of fighter jets used by modern air forces. IMI says that the MARS can be used by the US-made F-15, F-16, and F-18, Russian-made MiG 25, MiG 29, Sukhoi 27, and Sukhoi 30, the Pan-European Eurofighter used by several NATO militaries, France's Mirage, and the Israeli-made Kfir 7. Although the Israel Air Force does not use the Kfir, it is in service in Sri Lanka, Ecuador, and Colombia, and by the US Air Force for training missions.

The MARS rocket is 4.4 meters long, has an estimated range of 100 kilometers, and uses GPS to navigate to its predefined target. IMI says that the rocket's high speed, long-range precision guidance, and fire-and-forget system enables it to be used against fixed and mobile targets, even if they are protected by anti-aircraft systems. This gives planes the ability

to target communications centers, radar stations, munitions bunkers, and airfields while staying out of range of anti-aircraft systems.

"In the case of MARS, there is capability to quickly and accurately silence a wide range of targets from a distance, which is already making the rocket very attractive for armies around the world which are showing exceptional interest in it," IMI VP and Rocket Systems Division general manager Yuval Sharoni told "Globes". "The rocket is ready, after successfully undergoing tests. Besides being supersonic, it carries technologies which different IMI divisions developed in recent years to meet the needs of the current battlefield, and which are expected to meet the needs of the future battlefield."

Development of the MARS rocket joins a number of major projects developed by IMI in the past few years, with the goal of refreshing and updating its products portfolio. IMI, a government company, targets its new products line to new foreign markets. In addition to the MARS rocket, it is offering a range of customized rocket and artillery, and munitions, which received their baptism of fire during the 2006 Second Lebanon War.