

"The F-15I as the IAF's Strategic Aircraft"

Israeli Air Force

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18 years ago today, the F-15I "Ra'am (Hebrew for Thunder) landed for the first time in Hatzerim Airbase. Since then, the aircraft has conducted multiple missions as the IAF's strategic aircraft. What will happen in the F-35I era?

January 19, 1998: dozens of people filled Hatzerim Airbase and patiently waited to watch the landing of the new F-15I. "Because of the security situation days after the Gulf War and Iran's desire to obtain a nuclear weapon, the need for a combat aircraft that would suit the millennium came about. After observing multiple models, it was decided to purchase the American F-15I Strike Eagle that was improved by Israeli systems".

18 years after the landing of the aircraft in Israel, what will happen to the strategic aircraft in the F-35I era?



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Broadening the IAF's Flexibility

The integration of the F-15I is widening the gap between Israel and Arab countries. With the arrival of the aircraft, it became the leading aircraft in the IAF, took part in multiple operations

and different varied. "The F-15I is an aircraft with great worthiness, carrying capacity and integration abilities", explains Head of Aircraft Branch in the IAF. "The combination of these abilities allows it to reach great distances and as such it is utilized for unique missions".

The F-15I's broaden the IAF's flexibility and have an important role in conserving air superiority and defending Israel's skies. "The F-15I is suited for all the challenges in the Middle East. It is a reliable and proven platform, with a strong build and two engines", added Head of Aircraft Branch. "There is a reason it hasn't stopped flying and conducting missions after 18 years. As an aircraft that only operates with one squadron, it has every extreme ability we would want our aircraft to have".

In the coming years: a new radar for the F-15I

As stated, the F-15I is currently perceived as a high standard aircraft that fulfills many needs in the long arm of the IDF. Will the F-15I still have its unique stand in the IAF after the F-35I, the 5th generation JSF, will land in Israel?

"The F-15I will still be a strategic aircraft", Head of Aircraft Branch ruled. "The aircraft has great carrying abilities and is leading in the task field and unique weaponry. We must remember that it will take time for the F-35I to integrate weaponry".

Nonetheless, in the era of the F-35I, some of the F-15I's missions will be passed onto the F-35I in favor of the modern aircraft. Along with that, the IAF will continue to develop the oldest and most effective platform: "At the end of the day, when we want to reach far distances with few aircraft many arms - the F-15I wins", stated Head of Aircraft Branch. "With that, the F-15I's age requires maintenance and change of components and we will continue to improve its avionic systems. In the first stages they will conduct maintenance actives, especially in its computer systems and later we will work on changing its radar. In the next few years the aircraft will also integrate significant abilities in the fields of defense and attack".



In coming years the aircraft will integrate significant abilities in defense and attack | Archive Photo