

Israel cites progress in laser that shoots down drones

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This undated handout photo, provided by the Israeli Ministry of Defense, shows a high-power Laser system installed on an aircraft at an undisclosed location. The prototype, developed with Elbit Systems, was mounted on a civilian plane and successfully shot down "several" drones in a recent test over the Mediterranean Sea, according to Brig. Gen. Yaniv Rotem, head of military research and development at the Defense Ministry on Monday, June 21, 2021. Credit: Ministry of Defense Spokesperson's Office via AP

The Israeli military said Monday it has successfully tested an airborne high-power laser that can shoot down drones, technology it hopes to deploy on a larger scale in the coming years.

Israel already boasts a large and sophisticated air defense system, which the military says had a 90% interception rate against thousands of rockets fired from Gaza during last month's 11-day war. The laser technology would complement that system.

A prototype, developed with Elbit Systems, was mounted on a civilian plane and successfully shot down "several" drones in a recent test over the Mediterranean Sea, according to Brig. Gen. Yaniv Rotem, head of military research and development at the Defense Ministry.

"The ability to intercept and destroy threats from the air is groundbreaking," he told reporters. "Israel is among the first countries to use such capabilities."

In the recent test, the system shot down drones from within a range of about 1 kilometer (0.6 mile). In the coming years, Israel hopes to deploy a ground-based system with a range of 8-10 kilometers (5-6 miles) that can intercept rockets, mortar rounds and drones.



In this undated handout photo, provided by the Israeli Ministry of Defense, an unmanned airborne vehicle going down in the Mediterranean Sea after being struck by a high-power laser, over the Mediterranean Sea. The Israeli military said Monday, June 21, 2021, that it had successfully tested an airborne high-power laser that can shoot down drones, technology it hopes to deploy on a larger scale in the coming years. Credit: Ministry of Defense Spokesperson's Office via AP



In this undated handout photo, provided by the Israeli Ministry of Defense, an unmanned airborne vehicle is struck by a high-power laser over the Mediterranean Sea. The Israeli military said Monday, June 21, 2021, that it had successfully tested an airborne high-power laser that can shoot down drones, technology it hopes to deploy on a larger scale in the coming years. Credit: Ministry of Defense Spokesperson's Office via AP

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