



IDF Details “Plan Gideon” an Expansive 5-Year Modernisation Programme

According to IDF Chief of Staff Lieutenant-General Gadi Eisenkot, “the IDF is going to look completely different in 2020.” The Lt. General made that statement during an October 2015 Press Conference when he revealed “Project Gideon,” an extensive 5-year modernisation effort.

Unlike previous modernisation plans, nearly 40% of the project’s estimated (\$21 billion US) budget is earmarked for upgrading combined arms maneuvering capabilities and combat readiness of dismounted soldiers and all ground forces.

The plan is to create sleeker, smaller, more efficient ground forces that can more effectively deal with current threats, like the use of subterranean tunnels by Israel’s enemies.

Details of the Plan

Plan Gideon has not yet been approved in its entirety, but some of its main objectives are to:

- Cut down the reserve force by 100,000 soldiers, cutting down artillery brigades and light infantry brigades. The reserve soldiers who will remain will be trained, equipped and qualified for a war.
- Cut down the commands by about 6%.
- Reduce redundancy by: Cutting down and adjusting systems which are not at the core of the IDF like the Education Corps, Military Rabbinate, Chief Reserve Officer, the chief of staff’s advisor on women’s affairs, Army Radio and the Military Censor, combining the Northern Corps commander with the Ground Forces command.
- Establish a cyber wing.
- Purchase surface combatants and introducing a submarine towards the end of the year.
- Purchase F-35 planes, introducing an unmanned aircraft lineup and multi-layer protection.



Photo: courtesy IDF.

Ground Horizon

One aspect of Gideon which is moving forward is “Ground Horizon,” an effort which aims to make ground forces much more effective than they were in the 2006 Lebanon war. Israeli Army, Maj. Gen. Guy Zur, who created the blueprint for Ground Horizon, says it has goals that stretch over the next “20 years,” beyond the 5-year plan of Gideon. In an interview with Defense News, Zur said, “Gideon will start from 2016 and run through 2020, but we’re all looking at least 10 years, sometimes 20 years ahead. My portion, which we call Ground Horizon, is a process that took about a year. With major modernisation plans, like tanks, big guns and troop carriers, we need to think how they’ll develop over 20 years since such a huge investment is required.”

He also said that a major part of Ground Horizon will be increased development and deployment of Active Protection Systems (APS). IDF has been at the forefront of using APS technology, such as the Trophy system developed by Rafael in its Merkava Mark-IV tanks. Trophy has proven to provide successful anti-missile countermeasures for tanks and fighting vehicles. Zur now wants to extend that kind of protection to dismounted soldiers, creating what he calls an “Iron Dome,” over the entire infantry. ■