



## Israel Establishes New 'Strategy and Iran Directorate' Under General Staff



Israel Defense Forces - Nahal's Brigade Wide Drill.

Source: Flickr via Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flickr\\_-\\_Israel\\_Defense\\_Forces\\_-\\_Nahal%27s\\_Brigade\\_Wide\\_Drill\\_\(1\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flickr_-_Israel_Defense_Forces_-_Nahal%27s_Brigade_Wide_Drill_(1).jpg), CC BY 3.0

**OE Watch Commentary:** On 18 February, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) announced the creation of a new directorate within the General Staff, called the "Strategy and Iran Directorate" to address growing Iranian threats and coordinate actions against Iran under one roof. The accompanying passages from local sources discuss this new directorate and subsequent changes to the structure of the IDF.

The first article from *The Times of Israel* describes the design of the new Iran Directorate. Currently, the IDF has Major General Amir Baram leading the Northern Command in overseeing operations and threats stemming from Hezbollah while Major General Herzi Halevi and the Southern Command oversee the fight against Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Similarly, the IDF will now have a major general overseeing operations and threats coming directly from Iran. This means that the responsibility for overseeing threats from and actions towards Iran is split between multiple different sections of the Israeli Military such as the Air Force, the Operations Directorate, the Planning Directorate, and Military

Intelligence.

The second article from *The Times of Israel* states the Strategy and Iran Directorate will not be responsible for overseeing threats from Iranian proxy forces but only Iran itself, even though Iran has ties to multiple organizations across the region. It reports that the directorate "will be responsible for countering Iran only, not its proxies, like the Hezbollah terror group, which will remain the purview of the IDF Northern Command." Brigadier General Tal Kalman, currently in charge of the IDF's Strategic Division, will be promoted to major general and will lead the Strategy and Iran Directorate.

The article from the *Jerusalem Post* describes the functions of the new directorate. In addition to cooperating with foreign militaries about strategy towards Iran, the new directorate will also be charged more broadly with maintaining connections with foreign militaries under the International Cooperation Unit. The IDF spokesperson Brigadier General Hidai Zilberman said, "We understand that it is important to make such changes in light of the emerging threat with Iran," and "we want someone to wake up in the morning and... focus... solely on Iran." The directorate intends to increase and expand the IDF's intelligence superiority over Iran and further utilize cyber assets both offensively and defensively. Lastly, the directorate wants to elevate the ability for IDF jets to strike Iranian targets. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fesen)**

***"We want someone to wake up in the morning and... focus... solely on Iran."***

**Source:** Judah Ari Gross, "In shakeup, IDF to create new general position to counter Iran," *The Times of Israel*, 18 February 2020. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-shakeup-idf-to-create-new-general-position-to-counter-iran/>

...Just as there is a major general whose primary mission is overseeing the fight against Hezbollah — head of the Northern Command Maj. Gen. Amir Baram — and one for countering Hamas — Southern Command chief Maj. Gen. Herzi Halevi — so too should there be a major general responsible for Iran.

"Currently, the issue of Iran is divided between various parts of the military: Military Intelligence, the Operations Directorate, the Planning Directorate, the Air Force and others."

**Source:** Judah Ari Gross, "Ex-fighter pilot tapped to lead fight against Iran with new General Staff role," *The Times of Israel*, 25 February 2020. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ex-fighter-pilot-tapped-to-lead-fight-against-iran-with-new-general-staff-role/>

IDF Chief of Staff Aviv Kohavi on Tuesday nominated Brig. Gen. Tal Kalman to lead the nascent Strategy and Iran Directorate...

Before he enters the position, Kalman, a former fighter pilot who currently leads the IDF's Strategic Division, will be promoted to the rank of major general.

The directorate will be responsible for countering Iran only, not its proxies, like the Hezbollah terror group, which will remain the purview of the IDF Northern Command.

**Source:** Anna Ahronheim, "IDF to make changes to General Staff as part of Momentum Plan," *The Jerusalem Post*, 19 February 2020. <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/IDF-to-make-changes-to-General-Staff-as-part-of-Momentum-Plan-617981>

The directorate will include the Strategic Division as well as the International Cooperation Unit and its commander...

"We understand that it is important to make such changes in light of the emerging threat with Iran," Zilberman said. "We want someone to wake up in the morning and whose focus will be solely on Iran."

The command will bolster the IDF's attack capabilities, including by technological means, for IAF jets to destroy enemy targets, increase the military's intelligence superiority and expand its intelligence gathering on the Islamic Republic, including by satellites, as well as bolster cyber (both defensive and offensive) capabilities.

According to Zilberman, there are three main reasons behind the changes, including the need to strengthen the IDF's multilateral force building, which is becoming more complex, the need to deepen the military's strategy in terms of international and interorganizational partners, as well as the need to strengthen the IDF's campaign against Iran.