

Ex-military chief says Israel 'was asked' to attack Islamic State in 2015

Eisenkot says jihadist group suffered hundreds of losses as a result of IDF strikes, in apparent reference to campaign in Egypt's Sinai Desert

By Emanuel Fabian 11 June 2023

Former military chief of staff **Gadi Eisenkot** on Sunday revealed that the Israel Defense Forces was asked by a third party to carry out operational attacks against the Islamic State jihadist group in 2015.

Speaking at an event hosted by the **Institute for National Security Studies**, Eisenkot — a current MK with the National Unity party — said that “Islamic State knows best how much the IDF operated in the Middle East: They paid a price of hundreds of killed and injured.”

Eisenkot said that “during 2015, there was an event in a certain place where we were asked to carry out an attack.” The IDF carried out “a relatively broad attack and harmed a great number of ISIS fighters,” he said.

The former IDF chief did not elaborate on who made such a request and where the activity took place, although he said the IDF operated against the terror group “in many more than one country.” He added that some of the IDF's activity “went under the radar” at the time.

“There are not many countries in the world who know how to locate targets the size of a podium and get a missile on a target within a 1,000-kilometer radius around Israel,” Eisenkot said. “Our enemies saw it, the Russians saw it, the Americans saw it.”

“[Many parts of the] army were involved in this campaign: Military Intelligence, Air Force, special units, foreign relations,” he added.

In 2018, it was reported that Israeli drones, fighter jets, and helicopter gunships carried out more than 100 airstrikes against Islamic State-affiliated terrorists over a two-year period in Egypt's Sinai Desert, close to Israel's border.

While security coordination between Jerusalem and Cairo is known to be close, the ties are unpopular in Egypt, despite nearly decades of official peace. In order to keep the cooperation under wraps, the Israeli aircraft were often unmarked and sometimes used indirect routes in a bid to cover up the origin of the strikes, The New York Times reported at the time.

In May 2022, Islamic State accused Israel of helping Egypt in assassinating a local jihadist group leader in northern Sinai.

Israeli and Egyptian officials have refused to confirm or comment on the reports.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/ex-military-chief-says-israel-was-asked-to-attack-islamic-state-in-2015/>