ISRAEL'S LEAD F-35 ENTERS FINAL ASSEMBLY

News / Manufacturer

Lockheed Martin has begun the final assembly of Israel's first F-35 Lightning II, having passed a key milestone at its Fort Worth site in Texas on 7 January.

The Israeli air force's lead example of the "Adir" – designated AS-1 – entered the mate process, where its four main structural assemblies are brought together.

"AS-1 is expected to roll out of the factory in June, and be delivered to the Israeli air force later this year," says Lockheed.

Israel has so far signed contracts for 33 of the conventional take-off and landing aircraft, via the US government's Foreign Military Sales programme.

"The F-35A Adir will be a significant addition to maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge in the Middle East, with the advanced capability to defeat emerging threats, such as advanced missiles and heavily defended airspace through its combination of low-observability and sensor fusion," says Lockheed.

Asset Image

Image type unknown

US Air Force

The number of Israeli-developed systems installed in the nation's fifth-generation fighter will be greater than expected when the contracts were signed. Some of the national-specific equipment will be integrated in the USA, and other elements in Israel. Its industrial involvement in the F-35

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project also includes companies such as Elbit Systems and Israel Aerospace Industries.

Israel expects to achieve initial operational capability with the F-35 in 2017 and the type will replace its ageing Lockheed F-16C fighters.

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