

U.S., Israel Complete Unmanned Naval Exercise in Gulf of Aqaba



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MANAMA, Bahrain – Forces from U.S. 5th Fleet completed a four-day exercise with Israel in the Gulf of Aqaba, May 11, that focused on unmanned systems and artificial intelligence integration into maritime operations.

The exercise, called Digital Shield, included members of U.S. 5th Fleet's unmanned systems and artificial intelligence task force, Task Force 59, as well as a MANTAS Devil Ray T-38 unmanned surface vessel. U.S. forces trained alongside Israeli counterparts during maritime awareness and vessel boarding drills.

“By working together to advance unmanned systems innovation we can enhance regional security and strengthen our collective ability to address emerging threats,” said Capt. Colin Corridan, Task Force 59's commander.

NAVCENT established Task Force 59 in September 2021 to integrate new unmanned systems and artificial intelligence into U.S. naval operations across the Middle East. Since its launch, the task force has operated a suite of new unmanned systems from regional hubs in Bahrain and Aqaba, Jordan.

Task Force 59 also conducted a Digital Shield exercise last September with Israeli naval forces. The task force regularly trains and operates with maritime partners in the Middle East to accelerate the integration of cutting-edge unmanned technology into daily operations.

U.S. 5th Fleet's area of operations encompasses approximately 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea, parts of the Indian Ocean and three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, Suez Canal and Strait of Bab al Mandeb.

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