

# Netanyahu rules out giving Ukraine Iron Dome anti-missile system

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Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ruled out supplying Ukraine with the Iron Dome missile defense system, reiterating Israel's concern that the vital technology could fall into the hands of Iran.

Netanyahu was asked during an [interview](#) with The Wall Street Journal published Wednesday about Israel's support for Ukraine, and how it is balanced with Jerusalem's need to maintain its ties with Moscow amid the ongoing Russian invasion of its neighbor.

Ukraine is seeking to obtain from Israel missile interceptor capabilities, but Jerusalem has so far refused as Israeli leaders seek to avoid overly antagonizing Russia. This hesitance appears largely linked to Israel's strategic need to maintain freedom of operations in Syria, where Russian forces largely control the airspace. Israel is one of the few countries that maintains relatively good relations with both Ukraine, a fellow Western democracy, and Russia.

Iran is supplying ally Russia with attack drones that Ukraine wants to shoot down with Iron Dome.

"I think it's important to understand that we're concerned also with the possibility that systems that we would give to Ukraine would fall into Iranian hands and could be reversed engineered and we would find ourselves facing Israeli systems used against Israel," Netanyahu said.

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He said the problem was not "theoretical" and pointed at anti-tank systems deployed by Lebanon's Hezbollah terror group that were supplied by Iran, which copied the designs from Western weapons.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks to The Wall Street Journal in an interview published June 29, 2023 (screenshot: YouTube. Used in accordance with Clause 27a of the Copyright Law)

Netanyahu said the reason Israel has not had many casualties, despite being "pelted with 20,000 rockets" from terror groups outside its borders, is Iron Dome's success at intercepting missiles heading for populated areas.

"Now, if that system were to fall in the hands of Iran, then millions of Israelis would be left defenseless and imperiled," he said.

Netanyahu noted that, nonetheless, Israel has provided Ukraine with a rocket and attack drone alert system.

"We are also helping Ukraine. We're helping them in civilian defense, an alert, civilian alert system that prevents, that will obviate the need to get half the country in shelters for every missile fired. So we're helping them with that."

The prime minister also pushed back against recent accusations from Ukraine's embassy to Israel that Jerusalem has chosen a "path of close cooperation" with Russia. The Foreign Minister said it has [summoned](#) Ambassador Yevgen Korniychuk for a clarification of the remarks.

"We're not neutral. We've expressed our sympathy and position with Ukraine, but I am saying there is a limit, limitations that we have and concerns and interests that we have," Netanyahu said.

"My first interest, regardless of sympathy and the steps that we take, is to ensure the security of the one and only Jewish state. We have the concerns that I told you. Also our pilots are flying right next to Russian pilots in the skies over Syria in order to block the attempts of Iran to establish a second Hezbollah front in Syria."

Israel has carried out hundreds of airstrikes in Syria aimed halting the transfer of advanced weapons to Iran's proxy Hezbollah. Russia also has a military presence in Syria, assisting the regime in putting down a bloody civil war.

Ukrainian air defense intercepts a Shahed drone mid-air in the third Russia aerial attack on the capital in 24 hours in Kyiv, Ukraine, May 30, 2023. (AP Photo/Evgeniy Maloletka)

Last week two US senators said that Israel was [preventing Washington](#) from transferring two US-owned Iron Dome batteries to Ukraine to boost Kyiv's air defense against Russia.

Republican Senator Lindsey Graham and Democratic Senator Chris Van Hollen wrote in a letter to the leaders of the Senate Armed Services Committee that providing Ukraine with the systems would save lives.

While funded by the US, the Iron Dome was developed by Israel, and Jerusalem has a veto over whether the US can sell the missile defense system to other nations.

Israel has blocked transfers to other countries due to fears the sensitive technology could fall into enemy hands.

While other air defense platforms such as Israel's Spyder system are capable of combating the Russian missile threat, Ukraine has repeatedly requested to purchase Iron Dome, and the Biden administration has been lobbying Israel to heed the call, according to a senior US official. Ukraine currently uses other air-defense systems that it claims have had some success at intercepting Russian rockets and drones.

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