

Israel trials protected UGV scout in drive for enhanced reconnaissance capabilities

The Israel Defence Force (IDF) is planning to trial a new armoured reconnaissance unmanned ground vehicle (UGV) known as 'Advanced Guard' to scout for armoured columns in 2010, writes Yaakov Katz.

The vehicle is under development by G-Nius a joint venture started by Elbit Systems and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) to manufacture the Guardium UGV, which is currently in service along Israel's border with the Gaza Strip.

Like the Guardium, the new UGV will be able to accommodate

payloads of several hundred kilograms and will be equipped with fully autonomous driving and navigation systems as well as 360 degree day-and-night sensors offering the ability to provide all-weather, all-terrain surveillance and reconnaissance.

In basic configuration Advanced Guard will carry a number of video cameras, with the ability to connect to the IDF's Tsayad digital army programme network to transfer data between other assets. It will also be capable of carrying a variety of

lethal and non-lethal weapons. The manufacturers refused to comment on specifics of protection packages, but the vehicle will only be lightly armoured to ensure the best possible mobility.

"This will be a robust vehicle with a high survivability rate that won't be destroyed even if hit by a few bullets," an officer in the army HQ who is involved in the development of the UGV told *Jane's*.

The type of platform is still to be decided, but *Jane's* understands that an up-armoured

HMMWV is in the frame along with other 4x4 platforms.

The IDF is considering establishing UGV squads of three vehicles that will work together in asymmetric as well as conventional conflicts. A comprehensive test of the new vehicle is scheduled for later this year.

G-Nius and the IDF are also co-operating on creating an optionally manpacked command-and-control system that offers control on the move. In addition to the Guardium variants, G-Nius also produces the AvantGuard UGV. Based on Dumas' Tactical Amphibious Guard support vehicle, AvantGuard is in operational use with the IDF, and, like the Advanced Guard system, can carry offensive payloads.