

# The Indian Air Force participates in



## Exercise BLUE FLAG 2017

*Since the early 2000s, the Israel Air and Space Force (IASF) has been increasingly involved in international exercises in Europe and North America. A few years ago, Israel started to invite allied partners to Israel to conduct joint military exercises. This time, the country hosted its third 'Blue Flag' multi-national exercise from 6-16 November 2017, the event turning out to be historic for a number of reasons, including Indian participation. Adrian Romang reports from 'on-the-spot'.*

Despite enormous efforts to make lasting peace with its Arab neighbours, Israel has so far only been able to sign peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan, and even these remain on shaky ground today. The overall situation in the Middle East is still extremely unstable and could plunge the region into total chaos at any given time. This is evident in the increasing rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which often disclose their respective interests and conflicts in or via third countries. Israel is often indirectly affected by these conflicts. Examples of this complex situation are the wars in Yemen and Syria, plus the constant tensions in Lebanon. Israel is keeping a close eye on the developments of the latter two, and does, where it deems necessary, intervene to protect its interests.

### Historic Exercise

Despite or maybe because of this serious security situation, it is obvious that Israel, the only real – albeit isolated – democracy in the Middle East, is keen to find partners for stability. “Against a network of enemies, we must share information and technology. If we don’t deal with the issues arising in the Middle East, they might reach the rest of the world,” explains Major General Amikam Norkin, Commander of the IASF since 14 August 2017.



*This Sikorsky S-70 Black Hawk helicopter, based in Palmachim, supported Indian-Israeli special operation exercise*