

Israel Increases Secretive Nuclear Stockpile to 90 Warheads: Enough to Blow Up the Planet...

Israel is in possession of up to 90 nuclear warheads, which could represent an increase of ten since 2019, Swedish research institute says

By [Middle East Eye](#)

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Israel may have increased its nuclear stockpile from 80 warheads in 2019 to 90 in 2020, according to a new report by a leading global arms watchdog.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri) said in its [annual report](#) on Monday that Israel, one of the world's nine nuclear powers, could be in possession of up to 90 nuclear warheads.

The watchdog said that the true number could be higher as Israel does not officially comment on its nuclear capabilities.

“There is significant uncertainty about the size of Israel’s nuclear arsenal and its warhead capabilities,” it said.

“Israel continues to maintain its long-standing policy of nuclear opacity: it neither officially confirms nor denies that it possesses nuclear weapons.”

Israel is one of only three countries, along with India and Pakistan, not to sign the 1968 non-proliferation treaty (NPT), and is widely assumed to have the Middle East’s only atomic arsenal.

Sipri said that it believes Israel has around 30 gravity bombs that can be delivered by F-16I aircraft, and up to 50 warheads that can be delivered by land-based ballistic missiles such as the Jericho III - which, according to foreign reports, has a range of 5,500 km.

“It is possible that some of Israel’s F-15 aircraft may also serve a nuclear strike role, but this is unconfirmed,” Sipri said.

The report also said that the locations of the storage sites for Israel’s warheads, “which are thought to be stored partially unassembled,” are also unknown.

Declassified government documents from both Israel and the United States indicate that Israel began building a stockpile of nuclear weapons in the early 1960s, likely with the assistance of the US, Sipri said.

Some groups have estimated that Israel has a higher amount of warheads. In 2015, the

Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security said that Israel had produced at least 115 nuclear warheads.

More than 13,000 nukes worldwide

Sipri's latest report documented that the UK, China, India and Pakistan had also increased their nuclear arsenals in the last year, by between 10 and 30 warheads each.

Still, the watchdog noted that there were around 465 less nuclear weapons globally in 2020 when compared to 2019.

"The decrease in the overall number of nuclear weapons in the world in 2019 was largely due to the dismantlement of retired nuclear weapons by Russia and the USA - which together still possess over 90 percent of global nuclear weapons," the report said.

At the start of 2020, the 9 nuclear-armed states possessed an estimated 13 400 [#nuclear](#) weapons:

Russia 6 375
USA 5 800
China 320
France 290
UK 215
Pakistan 160
India 150
Israel 90
North Korea 30-40

Read more in [#SIPRIYearbook](#) 2020 → <https://t.co/nSYOHeZpkt>
<pic.twitter.com/5uQ0N6yIRI>

— SIPRI (@SIPRIorg) [June 15, 2020](#)

Currently, Sipri estimates that the nine nuclear-armed states - the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, Pakistan, India, Israel and North Korea - together possessed an estimated 13,400 nuclear weapons.

"Around 3,720 of the nuclear weapons are currently deployed with operational forces and nearly 1,800 of these are kept in a state of high operational alert," the group said.

The other 9,680 nuclear warheads in the world are believed to be undeployed.

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Featured image: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivers a speech on Iran's nuclear programme at the defence ministry in Tel Aviv on 30 April 2018 (Source: MEE)

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