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### Israel, Algeria, Morocco to join NATO counter-terrorism patrols

By Reuters



RABAT - Algeria, Israel and Morocco have agreed to join NATO counter-terrorism naval patrols in the Mediterranean, the organization said on Friday in Rabat after its first meeting in an Arab country.

The U.S.-led defense alliance was meeting seven Mediterranean partners for talks, following regular political consultations that began in 1995 and were relaunched in 2004.

Previous sessions have been held in NATO countries.

NATO has been running patrols in the Mediterranean under the codename "Operation Active Endeavor" since shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.

"Algeria, Israel and Morocco have decided to participate in the Operation Active Endeavor," NATO's Deputy Secretary-General Alessandro Minuto Rizzo told a news conference.

Asked to give details, he said: "Naturally, the decision needs practical steps to be materialized."

Ambassadors of the 26-nation alliance ended the meeting with representatives of Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia with pledges to expand cooperation in fighting terrorism, illegal migration and the proliferation of prohibited weapons.

Israel has no diplomatic relations with Algeria, and Morocco suspended low-level ties with Israel in 2000.

Israel's ambassador to the European Union Oded Eran said: "Such a meeting helps in deepening understanding and trust between the partners. We have the same borders and we face the same security challenges."

"Several ideas have been discussed, among them setting up a training center in Jordan and creating a trust fund to finance cooperation activities," he told Reuters.