

# Counter-Drone Startup D-Fend Solutions Expects Public Debut

**Michael Bruno** March 29, 2022



Credit: D-Fend Solutions

D-Fend Solutions, a five-year-old Israeli counter-drone company with a growing North American presence, plans to become a publicly traded company, co-founder, Chairman and CEO Zohar Halachmi told Aviation Week in March.

Driving the company's value, as well as the whole counter-drone industry, will be the rising demand for total-package, adaptive, software-based services for the commercial market customers on top of government clients, he said. Both will seek to protect critical assets from UAV threats, of course, but increasingly they will be sensitive to the need to guard against collateral damage in the process.

"We see the problem a little bit different than most of the other companies," Halachmi said. "If you look at most of our competitors, they see drones as flying objects. Bottom line is flying objects need to be taken down from the sky. We define drones as viruses—just viruses with wings—and what we have actually developed is an anti-virus."

According to the chief executive, D-Fend's distinguishing contribution to the market is a software backbone that allows for rapid updates and inclusion of new UAV types to be added to the system's sense-and-respond solution. The approach differs from developing and marketing a single technology solution such as radio frequency jamming. D-Fend's EnforceAir takes over control of the potential threat UAV without jamming the frequency or kinetically shooting a projectile, then lands it in a safe zone.

"The threats that we saw in 2017 [when the company started] are different than the ones we have now, and different from what we will see in 2025," Halachmi said in an interview on the sidelines of the Wharton Aerospace 2022 conference. He noted that with a credit card, a non-state perpetrator can source UAV parts on common online purchasing websites and create a unique unmanned aircraft now.

D-Fend has started promoting a project from September 2021 to help protect Pope Francis during his visit to Slovakia. “A previously unseen do-it-yourself drone was detected by EnforceAir during the Mass,” according to the company. “The police decided to mitigate the potential threat and considered using a jammer-based solution. They quickly decided against it, as jammers could potentially disrupt communications systems operating in the area and they were concerned about halting media transmissions surrounding the Pope’s address during the Mass, as well as disrupting security base stations, which could be a security risk.”

The U.S. [Defense Department](#) was the company’s first customer, and Halachmi sees military and government customers dominating the market until mid-decade when commercial sector demands take over. [Airports](#) are expected to be a “huge” potential customer base, especially after awareness was spurred in late 2018 by drone sightings around London’s [Gatwick Airport](#), causing the major hub to close repeatedly and causing about 1,000 flight cancellations. Critical infrastructure, such as power and energy systems, as well as sporting events will further drive demand, Halachmi said.

The company, whose roots started in Halachmi’s garage in 2016, continues to build out its Western presence and opened its North American headquarters in McLean, Virginia, in October 2020 to address demand in U.S. and Canada. It counts 180 employees and 20 national customers.

Halachmi asserted the company will go public but not through a special purpose acquisition company. “I’m not considering any SPAC transition,” he said, promising to pitch a sustainably growing business.

The counter-UAS market is expected to reach \$4.67 billion by the end of 2027, with a compound annual growth rate of 25%, according to a February 2021 report from Market Research Future. “Even though the counter-UAS system is a new concept in the market, it shows substantial growth,” the report said. “The application of counter UAS in so many industries will boost its demand.”

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