

JANUARY 2024

MILITARY AFRICA

THE LEADING DEFENCE MEDIA IN AFRICA



**Egypt receives third Meko
A-200 frigate "AL-QADEER"**

THE CHOICE OF SUCCESS.

With the *Rafale fighter*, you are opting for operational and technological excellence that has been widely recognized in the field.



Editor-in-Chief
Sarah Lesedi

Editorial
Ekene Lionel

Creative Director

Correspondents

- Darek Liam
- Patrick Kenyatte
- Kazim Abdul

Publisher
Lionstar Technologies

Advertising and Editorial Enquiries
Email: Business@military.africa
Tel: +234 810 368 9898

Email
Business@military.africa
Africanmilitaryblog@gmail.com

Website
www.military.africa

Address:
Wuse district, Federal
Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria

© 2024 Military Africa. All rights reserved.

This material may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached, or otherwise used without the prior written permission of Military Africa.

For inquiries or permissions, please contact:
Business@military.africa

LAND

Burkina Faso buys Egyptian Buffalo MRAP



P: 6

NAVAL

Nigerian navy begins USV operations



P: 22

UNMANNED SYSTEMS

How DroneDefender protects EU HQ in Mali from aerial threats



P: 34

AEROSPACE

China markets its Y-20 strategic airlift aircraft to Nigeria



P: 4

INDUSTRY & BUSINESS

Algeria likely the customer of Rheinmetall Fuchs 2 components



P: 26

SECURITY

Indian Navy Rescues Hijacked Ship From Somali Pirates



P: 40



FEATURED

Egypt receives third Meko A-200 frigate AL-QADEER

The Meko A200 frigates will enhance the Egyptian Navy's capabilities and presence in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, as well as support its role in securing the Suez Canal and protecting its maritime interests.

CONTENT



Egypt receives third Meko A-200 frigate AL-QADEER

Darek Liam

The Meko A200 frigates will enhance the Egyptian Navy's capabilities and presence in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, as well as support its role in securing the Suez Canal and protecting its maritime interests.

ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems handed over the third in a series of four MEKO A-200 EN frigates to the Egyptian Navy at a ceremony held in Bremerhaven on 15 December.

Production work on the frigate named AL-QADEER began with the first steel cutting in autumn 2020, followed by keel laying in March 2021, launching in April 2022, and naming in October 2022.

The ceremony was attended by high-ranking representatives

from the Egyptian and German Navy. Oliver Burkhard, CEO of thyssenkrupp Marine Systems, emphasized the timely delivery of "AL-QADEER," completed six months after the handover of the second frigate, "AL-QAHHAR." He also noted the official conclusion of ship construction in Germany, with the fourth frigate Al-Jabbar set to be completed at Alexandria Shipyard in collaboration with thyssenkrupp Marine Systems.

Oliver Burkhard, CEO of ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems highlighted: "Just six months after the handover of the second frigate, 'AL-QAHHAR', another state-of-the-art ship was successfully delivered to the Egyptian Navy today. The handover marks the official completion of construction of the

ships in Germany, all in record time. The fourth frigate will be completed at Alexandria Shipyard in close cooperation with ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems."

Construction milestones for "AL-QADEER" included steel cutting in autumn 2020, keel laying in March 2021, launching in April 2022, and naming in October 2022. The frigate is scheduled to sail to Alexandria, Egypt, in the coming days.

Vice Admiral Ashraf Ibrahim Atwa, Commander in Chief of the Egyptian Navy, highlighted the expeditious receipt of the three MEKO A-200 frigates, "AL-AZIZ," "AL-QAHHAR," and "AL-QADEER," within a span of 14 months.

At the Egyptian Defense Exhibition EDEX 2023 in Cairo, the launch of the fourth frigate, "AL-JABBAR," was announced. The vessel is currently under construction at Alexandria Shipyard and is expected to be delivered in October 2025.

The collaboration between the Arab Republic of Egypt and thyssenkrupp Marine Systems began in 2018 when Egypt commissioned the construction of four identical ships. Germany approved the sales in April one year later. The first three units were produced in Germany and the fourth vessel was built by Alexandria Shipyard in Egypt, with the involvement of more than 1,000 Egyptian engineers and technicians.

Vice Admiral Ashraf Ibrahim Atwa, Commander in Chief of the Egyptian Navy said: "Within only 14 months, the Egyptian Navy received the three MEKO A-200 Frigates AL-AZIZ, AL-QAHHAR and AL-QAD-

EER. These repeated visits for the handovers are the actual proof of the extent of cooperation and friendship between the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Federal Republic of Germany. As much the Egyptian Navy is proud to acquire the MEKO A-200 frigates, ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems must also be proud for building them."

The Meko A200 is a multi-mission frigate with stealth features and advanced combat systems. It is 121 metres long and displaces 3 700 tons, with a top speed of 29 knots. It is armed with eight MM40 Block 3 Exocet and 32 VL MICA NG missiles, a Vulcano 127 mm main gun, four 20 mm cannon, and MU90 lightweight and DM-2A4 (SeaHake Mod 4) heavyweight torpedoes. It is also equipped with Thales Scorpion 2 electronic warfare system, NS-110 4D active electronically scanned array (AESA) radar, ALTSSE-H Communication Electronic Support Measures/Communications In-

telligence system, and Mirador Mk 2 electro-optical system.

The first-of-class ship Al-Aziz (908) was handed over to the Egyptian Navy in October 2022 and is already in service, while the second ship Al-Qahhar (909), meaning "The Subduer", was handed over in May 2023. The third ship Al Qadeer (909), meaning "The Powerful", was launched in April 2022 and is expected to be delivered soon. The fourth and final ship Al-Jabbar is scheduled to undergo sea trials and join the fleet by the end of 2024.

The Meko A200 frigates will enhance the Egyptian Navy's capabilities and presence in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, as well as support its role in securing the Suez Canal and protecting its maritime interests. The frigates will also contribute to the regional stability and security, as Egypt is a key partner of several countries in the Middle East and Africa.





Burkina Faso buys Egyptian-made Buffalo E10 (Temsah-2) MRAP vehicles

Darek Liam

Burkina Faso, a West African country facing security challenges from terrorist groups, has acquired a new batch of mine-resistant ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles from Egypt. The vehicles are the Buffalo E10, an improved version of the Temsah-2, which is Egypt's flagship locally produced armored vehicle.

The Buffalo E10 is a 6×6 MRAP that can carry up to 12 personnel, including a driver, a commander, and a gunner. It has a V-shaped hull that provides protection from landmines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), as well as ballistic armor that can withstand 7.62 mm armor-piercing rounds and shell splinters. It is powered by a 240 hp engine and has a maximum speed of 100 km/h. It also features a 360-degree turret, a central tire inflation system, and a fire suppression system.

Buffalo E10 (Temsah-2) MRAP Burkina Faso is the first foreign operator of the Buffalo E10, which is being promoted by the Egypt-based Eagles International For Defense Systems. The exact number and value of the vehicles acquired by Burkina Faso are not disclosed, but they are expected to significantly enhance the country's ability to respond to security challenges and protect its citizens.

Burkina Faso is not the only African country that has benefited from Egypt's defense industry, which has grown rapidly in the past decade with the support of the government and the military. Egypt has also exported its FAHD armored personnel carrier (APC) to Burkina Faso and France.

Egypt's defence industry relies on domestic supply chains and locally manufactured materials,



such as armor steel and bullet-proof glass, to produce its armored vehicles. This is partly due to the political stances of some European countries, such as Germany, which banned the export of armor steel and chassis of FAHD APCs to Egypt in 2013/14. Egypt has also developed its own production lines for Temsah armored vehicles, which are available in a wide array of variants, including a 4×4 troop transport and a 6×6 personnel carrier.

Egypt's defence industry produces a range of products, from small arms to armored vehicles and naval vessels. It has also signed co-production agreements with several countries, including the United States and France. Egypt aims to expand its export market and diversify its defence partners, especially in Africa and the Middle East.

Burkina Faso, meanwhile, has also acquired other types of armored vehicles and drones from China, UAE, and Turkey,

to bolster its defense capabilities. The country has been grappling with terrorist attacks and insurgencies, particularly in the northeastern region, where groups affiliated with ISIL and al-Qaeda operate. Burkina Faso has also declared its solidarity with Niger, its neighbor and ally, which is facing a similar threat from terrorist groups, and with Mali, have exited from ECOWAS, a regional bloc.

Burkina Faso army recently received a shipment of Emirati-made Isotrex Phantom mine-resistant ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles, according to images circulating on social media. The vehicles are believed to have been acquired from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a close ally of Burkina Faso.

The Phantom is a 4×4 MRAP that is designed to protect its occupants from mines, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and small arms fire. It is equipped with a V-shaped

hull that deflects the blast from mines and IEDs, and it has a crew compartment that is armored to withstand gunfire. The Phantom is also equipped with a variety of other features, such as run-flat tires and a fire suppression system.

Likewise, in January 2023, Turkey delivered the first batch of four Nurol Makina Edjer 6×6 armoured fighting vehicle to the Burkina Faso Army. The Nurol Makina Edjer 6×6 acquisition is part of a larger contract that includes a number of Nurol Ejder Yalçın 4×4 armoured vehicle which has since been delivered.

The acquisition of Egyptian-made MRAP vehicles by Burkina Faso demonstrates the country's commitment to strengthening its security forces and enhancing its regional cooperation. It also showcases Egypt's role as a major defence supplier and partner in Africa and beyond.





Burkina Faso boosts its military arsenal with Chinese armoured vehicles

Ekene Lionel

Burkina Faso has received a shipment of new military equipment from China, including armoured vehicles, self-propelled mortars, and various weapons and ammunition. The delivery is part of a strategic equipment plan that aims to strengthen the country's security forces in their fight against jihadist insurgents.

The new equipment was unveiled on 12 January in a ceremony attended by President Captain Ibrahim Traoré, who seized power in a military coup on 24 January 2022. Traoré inspected six WMA301 fire-support vehicles, which are armed with 105 mm guns and made by Chinese company Norinco. He also examined eight CS/SM1 self-propelled mortars, which use a Dongfeng light tactical vehicle as a platform and have a caliber of 81 mm. These are the first of their kind to be seen in Africa.

In addition, Traoré was shown a series of shipping containers that contained a 60 mm WW90 mortar, mortar rounds, and rounds for RPG-7-type recoilless guns. According to Minister of Defence Brigadier General Kassoum Coulibaly, this was the first of five consignments that are expected to arrive over the coming months under the strategic equipment plan.

Traoré announced the plan in his televised speech on 31 December 2023, but did not provide any details, saying they would emerge over the coming year. He also said that a Special Rapid Intervention Brigade was being formed by bringing together the different rapid intervention battalions and a special forces group to help recapture territory from militants operating in Burkina Faso.

Burkina Faso is facing a worsening humanitarian and security crisis as jihadist armed groups have extended their control to around 40% of the

national territory. The country's junta-led government has pursued an aggressive military campaign against the insurgents. The acquisition of new military equipment from China, which is a major economic partner of Burkina Faso, may signal the junta's intention to consolidate its power and resist external pressure for a return to constitutional order.

Last year, French soldiers who have been fighting Islamist militants in Burkina Faso were ordered to leave the country, dealing another blow to Europe's presence in a region where Russia's influence is growing. France has 400 special forces soldiers stationed in junta-ruled Burkina Faso to battle an Islamist insurgency, but relations have deteriorated in recent months.

The failure to stop the jihadist violence and Russia's growing foothold in the region propelled this decision. Of having failed to quell the violence.

China's Poly Technologies gifts rocket artillery, armoured vehicles to Ghana

Ekene Lionel

China's defence company Poly Technologies Incorporated has donated a rocket artillery to the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) Battle Training Camp in Bundase.

The Division Director of Poly Technologies Incorporated, China, Mr Gu Jia and B&G African Trading representatives have handed over a newly acquired artillery and other equipment to Ghana Armed Forces Battle Training Camp, Bundase on December 7, 2023.

The newly-acquired system comprises 122 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS), 1 Reconnaissance Vehicle, 1 Command Vehicle, 7200 122mm rockets, spare parts and accessories.

The artillery system appears to be Chinese-made PLH-11 (SR-4), which has 40 launching tubes. It fires 122 mm artillery rockets. These are the same rockets, that were originally developed in the Soviet Union in the 1960s for the Soviet BM-21 Grad. Currently these are the most widely used artillery rockets in the world. Rockets with various warheads are available, including HE-FRAG, smoke, incendiary and illumination. Also there are cluster warheads with anti-tank or anti-personnel submunitions. Maximum range of fire is up to 50 km with Chinese newly developed extend-

ed-range rockets Full salvo of the PHL-11 covers an area of 0.8-1 hectares. The PHL-11 (SR-4) is based on a Shaanxi SX2190KA 6x6 heavy-duty military truck. This truck is in service with the Chinese army. It is powered by a Weichai WD615-77A diesel engine, developing 277 hp. Engine is mated to a 9-speed manual transmission.

At Least five MRLS system was seen in a picture posted by the Ghanaian Armed forces.

Deputy Chief of Staff (DCOS) in-charge of Administration at the General Headquarters, Air Vice Marshal (AVM) Michael Appiah-Agyekum expressed gratitude to the companies for their invaluable support in strengthening Ghana's Defence system. He emphasised that the equipment would help in improving and safeguarding the nation's sovereignty.

This recent donation is coming barely a few weeks after Zimbabwe has received a large shipment of military hardware from China, including new armoured vehicles, guns, and other equipment.

"The acquisition of some strategic equipment, platforms and the training of personnel in diverse fields among others are all part of ongoing efforts to effectively resource GAF operationally and produce needed welfare package for troops



while in service". He added.

He stated that the equipment has come at the time when terrorism and trans-organized crime were at all-time high within the sub-region. The equipment he said would increase the operational capability of GAF and position it in a better place to handle any aggressor force.

Beijing also recently redeemed a pledge it made to Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) with \$100 million donation which includes protective assault vehicles, military utility trucks, mine detectors, generators, personnel protective gear, tents, sleeping bags, beds and mattresses, computers, printers, cameras, conference furniture, projectors, sound systems and other accessories.



BAHRAIN INTERNATIONAL
AIRSHOW
IN ASSOCIATION WITH FARNBOROUGH INTERNATIONAL

A SPOTLIGHT ON GLOBAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY IN THE GULF.

Join aerospace and defence leaders from around the world at the gateway to the Middle East for an unmissable opportunity to meet new business connections, network with high-level delegations and discuss the industry's biggest topics in a prestigious environment.

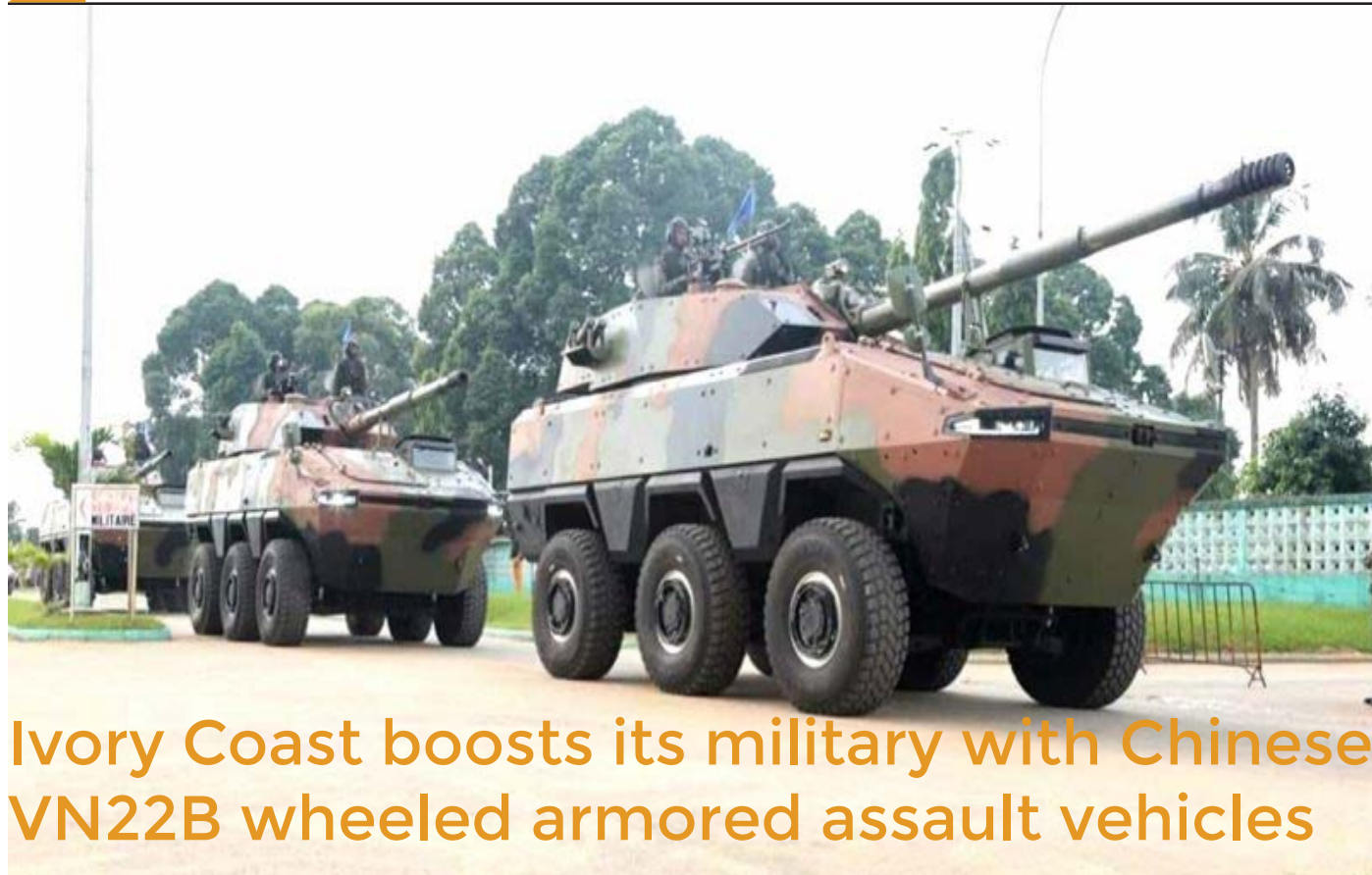
13 - 15 November 2024

Sakhir Airbase, Kingdom of Bahrain



Visit
airshow.bh
for more information





Ivory Coast boosts its military with Chinese VN22B wheeled armored assault vehicles

Ekene Lionel

Ivory Coast has received a batch of VN22B wheeled armored assault vehicles from China, according to a video posted on the Chinese social media platform Weibo. The video showed at least six of these vehicles arriving in the West African country, which is the second one after Senegal to acquire them.

The VN22B is a 6×6 armored vehicle developed by China North Industries Group Corporation Limited (Norinco), one of the largest defense contractors in China. It is armed with a 105mm gun that can fire various types of ammunition, including standard NATO rounds. The vehicle is designed to provide fire support to combat units and to engage enemy tanks and armored vehicles.

The VN22B has a number of

features that enhance its protection and mobility, such as additional armor, automatic transmission, pneumatic suspension, hydraulic tailgate, and suspended seats. The vehicle can also operate in different terrains and climates, making it suitable for the diverse geography of Africa.

The delivery of the VN22B to Cote D'Ivoire is part of China's growing military and economic presence in Africa, where it has been investing in infrastructure, trade, and security cooperation. China is also a major supplier of arms to the continent, accounting for about 17% of the total arms imports to Africa between 2015 and 2019, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

The acquisition of the VN22B by

Cote D'Ivoire could also have implications for the internal security and politics of the country, which has experienced several episodes of violence and instability in the past two decades, most recently in 2020, when a disputed presidential election sparked protests and clashes that left dozens of people dead.

The VN22B could potentially enhance the capabilities and confidence of the Ivorian armed forces, which have been undergoing a reform and modernization process since 2017, with the support of the United Nations and other partners.

The Chinese VN22 6×6 wheeled armored Infantry Fighting Vehicles (IFVs) has also been exported to Senegal, as part of a larger deal which includes Turkish-made Otokar Cobra II and NuroI Ejder Yalçın.

Morocco buys 200 Cobra II tactical armoured vehicles from Turkey



Darek Liam

Morocco is set to acquire 200 Cobra II armoured vehicles from Turkey, a move that will enhance its defence and security capabilities in the region. The deal, which was announced by Turkish defence company Otokar in December, is valued at \$136 million and includes essential spare parts, maintenance support, and training for vehicle operators.

In April 2022, the Royal Moroccan Army (RMA) announced that it is seeking a replacement for its entire armoured vehicle inventory which is deemed too old to effectively operate in a challenging combat environment. Morocco is looking at options to replace its ageing armoured vehicle fleet, including VAB armoured vehicles man-

ufactured by French Arquus. Rabat land forces have over the years relied heavily on the VAB 6×6 armoured vehicles which entered service in the late 1970s.

The Cobra II is a 4×4 wheeled armoured vehicle that can carry up to nine personnel and perform various missions such as reconnaissance, patrol, convoy escort, and urban warfare. It has a modular design that allows for different configurations and weapon systems, such as machine guns, grenade launchers, anti-tank missiles, and remote-controlled turrets. It also features a high level of protection against ballistic and mine threats, as well as improved mobility and manoeuvrability.

According to Otokar, the delivery of the vehicles will start

by the end of 2024 and end in 2025. Some of the vehicles will be deployed as part of Morocco's contribution to UN peacekeeping operations, where they will provide enhanced security and mobility for the Moroccan troops.

The deal marks a significant milestone in the bilateral defence cooperation between Morocco and Turkey, which have been strengthening their ties in recent years. Morocco is one of Turkey's major arms customers in Africa, having previously purchased armoured personnel carriers, tactical radios, and drones from Turkish suppliers. The two countries also signed a memorandum of understanding in 2019 to enhance their military training and education cooperation.



South Korea donates MD500 Defenders helicopters to Kenya for U.N. peacekeeping

Patrick Kenyatte

South Korea has donated six retired 500MD helicopters to Kenya for U.N. peacekeeping missions, the defense ministry announced in December 2023.

The helicopters, which were used by the South Korean Army as light attack helicopters, were shipped from the southeastern port of Busan to the United States for necessary repairs and maintenance before being delivered to Kenya, the ministry said.

The donation is part of South Korea's pledge to provide 16 helicopters for peacekeeping missions during the U.N. peacekeeping forum hosted by Seoul in 2021. The remaining 10 helicopters will be delivered after close cooperation with the U.S. and U.N., the ministry added.

The 500MD helicopters, which were built by Korean Air's aerospace division under license from 1976 to 1984, are being

retired by the South Korean Army as it awaits the delivery of its new KAI LAH helicopters, which are expected to start mass production in 2024.

Some of the retired helicopters have been donated to technical schools and universities for educational purposes, while others have been shipped to Kenya, where they will be used for U.N. peacekeeping missions after consultations with the U.N.

The defense ministry said that the donation reflects South Korea's commitment to contribute to the global peace and security, especially in Africa, where many U.N. peacekeeping operations are taking place.

The 500MD helicopters, which have a maximum speed of 248 km/h and a range of 430 km, are capable of performing various missions, such as reconnaissance, air support, and transport. They can also be equipped with rockets, machine guns, and missiles for combat situations.

The defense ministry said that the helicopters will enhance Kenya's capabilities and readiness for U.N. peacekeeping missions, as well as strengthen the bilateral ties between South Korea and Kenya.

The Kenyan Air Force already fields older 40 MD500E, as well as 6 MD530F, an upgraded variant of the type which it received in 2020 from the United States.

In 2017, the United States approved the sale of 12 MD 530Fs along with FN Herstal .50 cal heavy machine gun pods and 70 mm rocket pods to Kenya to replace its aging MD 500s flown by the Kenyan Army's 50th Air Cavalry Battalion.

On July 16, 2020, an MD Helicopters (Hughes) MD500E scout and utility helicopter of the Kenyan Army on 13 July crashed at Kithyoko, Ma halos County. The crash, killed both aircraft pilot, with the cause yet to be ascertained.



Senegal to acquire FA-50 light combat aircraft from South Korea

Ekene Lionel

Senegal is reportedly moving forward with its acquisition of FA-50 Fighting Eagle light combat aircraft from South Korea. The exact number and value of the aircraft are not disclosed, but some reports suggest that Senegal may have ordered up to four FA-50s worth \$147 million.

The FA-50 is a supersonic, multi-role aircraft developed by Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) in partnership with Lockheed Martin. It is based on the T-50 advanced trainer jet, which has been in service with the Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) since 2013. The FA-50 is equipped with a Tactical Data Link, Precision Guided Munitions, and Self Protection subsystems, and can perform various missions such as air-to-air, air-to-ground, and air-to-sea combat.

Senegal's decision to acquire the FA-50 comes after its previous deal with Aero Vodochody for four L-39NG light attack aircraft fell through. General Sarr Pape Souleymane, the head of the Senegalese air force, said he was looking for a new supplier for four light combat aircraft and chose the FA-50s made by KAI.

Senegal currently operates 25 aircraft, most of which are helicopters, with the training mission performed using six Daher Socata TB 30s trainer aircraft. The FA-50 will enhance Senegal's air capabilities and provide a cost-effective and proven platform for its pilots.

Senegal is not the only African country interested in the FA-50. In September 2022, KAI announced that it was about to deliver FA-50s to an undisclosed first customer in Africa, which could be either Senegal or Egypt. Egypt has signed an agreement with South Korea for the local production of T-50/FA-50 aircraft at the AOI Aircraft Factory in Helwan, which previously licence-produced Chinese K-8E trainers for the Egyptian Air Force. Egypt's requirement for a new trainer could potentially be as large as 100 aircraft.

The FA-50 has also attracted attention from other countries in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, as demand for South Korean aircraft is on the rise, particularly from countries that need to beef up their self-defense capabilities or need to refill their depleted weapons stockpiles following arms support to Ukraine.

"As instability grows in a specific region, countries that feel their own security vulnerabilities are moving to increase defense spending and purchase military assets like fighter jets for stronger independent defense capabilities," Lee Bong-keun, vice president and general manager in charge of KAI's international business division told Yonhap News Agency.

"Clients are looking for mature, proven and cost-effective aircraft. The FA-50 has outstanding merits (in terms of those aspects) as the South Korean Air Force has made a number of flights with the aircraft," Lee said, adding dozens of FA-50s have been exported.

The FA-50 can serve as not only advanced trainer jet but as a light attacker with some weapons on it and comes at a modest price. That's why the Korean aircraft is preferred in developing countries.

The T-50 series, including the FA-50, are "multi-role" aircraft as they help dramatically reduce the time and costs in transferring pilots to higher-level fighter jets, such as F-16 and F-35, the Korean aircraft company said.

The FA-50 is expected to continue to attract more customers in the future, as KAI aims to sell 1,000 of the T-50 and its variants globally.



China markets its Y-20 strategic airlift aircraft to Nigeria

Ekene Lionel

China is eyeing Nigeria as a potential customer for its Y-20 E multi-role transport aircraft, the largest military aircraft currently in production. The aircraft, nicknamed “Chubby Girl”, was showcased to the Nigerian Defense Minister during his visit to Beijing in November 2023.

The Y-20 E is China’s answer to the US C-17 Globemaster and the Soviet Ilyushin Il-76, both of which are widely used by many countries for strategic airlift missions. The Y-20 E has a payload capacity of 73 short tons, which can be used to transport troops, vehicles, weapons, and humanitarian aid. The aircraft can also operate in diverse conditions, such as high altitude, hot weather, and rough terrain.

China has been increasing its production capacity of the Y-20 E in anticipation of export orders. The aircraft was first displayed at the Dubai Air Show in December 2023, where it attracted attention from many countries. The export version of the Y-20 E has some modifications from the domestic version, such as a different engine and avionics.

The Y-20 has been operational for about a decade, and China has focused on developing the Y-20 fleet to support longer-range military operations. The Y-20 was developed by China’s state-owned aerospace major, Xian Aircraft Corporation, and has an empty weight of 110 short tons, making it the largest military aircraft currently in production.

According to a report by the Chinese military magazine Ordnance Industry Science Technology, China hopes to establish deeper strategic relationships and cooperation with countries that purchase the Y-20 E, particularly those in Africa. The report also highlighted the advanced assembly lines of the Y-20 E, which use a “pulse line” to move parts along, similar to those used for the Lockheed Martin F-35 and the Boeing 787.

The Y-20 E is part of China’s ambition to expand its foothold in the global aviation industry, as well as to boost its influence in Africa. China has been portraying itself as a partner of African countries, offering them economic and military assistance without interfering in

their internal affairs. China also has plans to support local production of military equipment in Nigeria, which has abundant natural and human resources.

Nigeria, as Africa’s most populous and largest economy, is an important market for China. Nigeria has been facing security challenges from various in-

urgent groups, such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province. Nigeria also has a large and diverse air force, which operates a mix of Western and Russian aircraft. The Y-20 E could provide Nigeria with a strategic advantage in terms of mobility and logistics, as well as strengthen the bilateral ties between the

two countries.

Nigerian air force current transport fleet includes around three operational C-130H Hercules, a single Aeritalia G-222 tactical transport, 16x Dornier 228/28s, and two EADS CASA C-295s on order.

Ethiopia unveils Sukhoi Su-30 fighter jet and Akinci combat drone

Patrick Kenyatte

Ethiopia has revealed its latest additions to its air force: a state-of-the-art Sukhoi Su-30 fighter jet and a sophisticated Turkish Akinci combat drone. The new weapons were officially handed over to the Ethiopian air force in a ceremony attended by top military officials, including the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Field Marshal Berhanu Jula, and the Air Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Yilma Merdassa.

The Sukhoi Su-30 fighter jet is a multirole combat aircraft that can perform air-to-air and air-to-ground missions. It is equipped with advanced avionics, radar, and electronic warfare systems. It can carry a variety of weapons, such as air-to-air missiles, air-to-surface missiles, bombs, rockets, and gun pods.

The Akinci combat drone is a high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle that can perform reconnaissance, surveillance, and strike missions. It is armed with high-precision laser-guided MAM-L munitions from Roketsan and possibly with the CATS electro-optical/infrared targeting

system from Aselsan. It can also launch other types of locally made munitions, such as the SOM cruise missile from Roketsan, and can also carry a wide range of weapons on an external suspension, including the MAM-L, MAM-C, Bozok precision-guided munitions developed by Rocketan, CIRIT and L-UMTAS guided missiles, MK-81, MK-82, MK-83 aerial bombs.

The Akinci combat drone can fly to an altitude of more than 11,000 m, with an endurance of 25 hours. It can be equipped with a Turkish AESA radar.

It is not certain how many Akinci drones Ethiopia procured under the terms of the contract signed with the Baykar firm. However, it appears that the Akinci to be acquired by Ethiopia is an A configuration. While the Bayraktar Akinci A has 900 HP total engine power with two 450 HP engines.

Field Marshal Berhanu Jula stressed the importance of the Su-30 fighter jet and the Akinci combat drone in defending Ethiopia from potential threats.

He said, “Having the best Su-30 and strategic drones in the world is crucial to thwarting attacks on our country.” He added, “The Federal Air Force is equipped with the most modern first round Su-30 fighter jets and strategic drones.” He did not specify the number of Su-30 fighter jets and Akinci combat drones that Ethiopia acquired.

Ethiopia has been expanding and modernizing its air force in recent years, with the purchase of other unmanned aerial vehicles, such as the Bayraktar TB2 from Turkey, the Wing Loong from China, and the Qods Mohajer-6 from Iran. Ethiopia has used these drones against the Tigray People’s Liberation Forces, a rebel group that has been fighting the federal government since November 2020. Ethiopia will likely deploy the newly acquired Su-30 fighter jet and Akinci combat drone for similar purposes and operations.

This acquisition, complementing the Ethiopian Air Force’s current fleet of 17 Su-27 models and preceding generations of jet fighters like MiG-23, MiG-21, and Su-25.



C-27J Spartan achieves 250,000 operational flight hours

LEONARDO PRESS

The military transport aircraft has been chosen by operators in 16 countries across all continents. Significant operational achievements through a wide range of defence and civil protection missions in the most challenging environments and operating conditions, where other aircraft can't be deployed.

A wide spectrum of aircraft configurations, including fire-fighting, Maritime Patrol (MP), C3ISR, and special operations.

Leonardo celebrates a major

operational milestone achieved by the C-27J Spartan global fleet, which has now logged 250,000 flight hours. Chosen by military operators in 16 countries worldwide, the C-27J has been deployed since its entry into service into the most challenging terrains, environmental and operating contexts, from the Andes to Afghanistan.

Dario Marfè, Senior Vice President of Commercial, CSS&T & Proprietary Programmes Business of Leonardo's Aircraft Division, said: 'The Spartan

embodies the very essence of the national security concept, proving to be the ideal solution for defence force operations and making a vital contribution to population support and civil protection tasks. In a world impacted by many emergencies, like the Covid-19 pandemic, the Spartan has sustained support to communities in need.'

The aircraft's capabilities, which have been extensively demonstrated in many challenging operations, with its modular design have grown over the years to meet evolving requirements

AEROSPACE

in the market, both in terms of technical characteristics and military/civil missions, leading to the latest standard, designated the C-27J Spartan Next Generation.

This configuration features state-of-the-art avionics and winglets for greater efficiency and enhanced operational performance. Core avionics include a glass cockpit with five multi-functional colour screens, a radar system for tactical transport missions and advanced communication systems.

The system architecture ensures interoperability with other transport aircraft. The addition of winglets further enhances the overall aerodynamics performance, by increasing the lift-drag ratio with benefits, including even better hot and high runway performance, increased payload, range, endurance and the overall deriving reduction in operating costs. The winglet design includes parts produced

with modern 3D Additive Manufacturing technology.

The inherent growth potential and versatility of the C-27J leverages a solid basic design, a wide-ranging in-service experience

as well as an established strong industrial know-how and expertise backing the type's ability to meet evolving market needs.

The C-27J can be provided with in-flight refuelling, self-protection, secure communications and ballistic protection systems to operate in high-threat environments.

With multiple roll-on/roll-off mission kits easily installed and transportable roll-on/roll-off mission systems, the C-27J can be quickly reconfigured into the configuration required for the current mission. A wide spectrum of mission configuration/versions also include fire-fighting, Maritime Patrol (MP), Command-Control-Communications, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C3ISR) and special operations versions.



C-390 MILLENNIUM

UNBEATABLE COMBINATION

MISSION-READY WITH THE PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE

We're delighted to announce the Portuguese Air Force now joins the Brazilian Air Force as a C-390 Millennium operator. The first Portuguese aircraft of the newly formed 506 Squadron is now in service at Beja Air Base, with four more aircraft to be added in the near future. A growing number of countries are choosing the C-390 Millennium (including Hungary, Netherlands, Austria and Czech Republic) attracted by its unbeatable combination of technology, speed, performance and multi-mission capabilities. Hungary will take delivery of their first C-390 Millennium in 2024 - another milestone for an incredible aircraft that has already achieved 10,000 flight hours with the Brazilian Air Force.

#C390UnbeatableCombination
embraerds.com



CHALLENGE.
CREATE.
OUTPERFORM.

AEROSPACE

Tanzania orders C-27J Spartan from Leonardo



Patrick Kenyatte

On 9 January 2024, Tanzania's Minister of Defence and National Service, Stergomena Tax, signed a contract with Leonardo SpA for the delivery of two C-27J Spartan transport aircraft for the Jeshi la Anga la Wananchi wa Tanzania (Tanzania Air Force Command).

The aircraft will be equipped with kits for carrying out humanitarian missions and Search And Rescue (SAR). The transporters will also be used for firefighting operations on Mount Kilimanjaro and in the East African region.

The Alenia C-27J Spartan is a military transport aircraft developed and manufactured by Leonardo's Aircraft Division (formerly Alenia Aermacchi until 2016). It is an advanced derivative of the former Alenia Aeronautica's earlier G.222.

The C-27J Spartans will be operated by the

Transport Squadron at Dar Es-Salaam/Julius Nyerere air base. A delivery date for the new aircraft was not revealed.

The military transport aircraft has been chosen by operators in 16 countries across all continents. Significant operational achievements through a wide range of defence and civil protection missions in the most challenging environments and operating conditions, where other aircraft can't be deployed.

In Africa, the C-27J Spartan has been acquired by Chad, Kenya, Morocco, and Zambia.

The aircraft's capabilities, which have been extensively demonstrated in many challenging operations, with its modular design have grown over the years to meet evolving requirements in the market, both in terms of technical characteristics and military/civil missions.



Nigerian navy begins USV operations

USVs are boats or ships that operate on the surface of the water without a crew.

Ekene Lionel

The Nigerian navy has recently acquired two SwiftSea Stalker unmanned surface vessels (USVs) from Swiftship, a US-based shipbuilder. The USVs are expected to enhance the navy's maritime security and surveillance capabilities.

The two USVs were formally handed over to President Bola Tinubu by the Minister of State for Defence, Mohammed Bello Matawalle, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja. The minister said that the USVs would help in the fight against insecurity on the waterways and the nation in general.

USVs are boats or ships that operate on the surface of the water without a crew. They can be remotely controlled or fully autonomous, depending on the level of technology and the mission requirements. USVs can perform various tasks such as reconnaissance, patrol, mine

detection, anti-submarine warfare, and anti-piracy operations.

The SwiftSea Stalkers are the latest innovative USVs by Swiftship, which has been designing and manufacturing highly specialized military surface vessels for over 80 years.

The SwiftSea Stalkers have a

speed of 45+ knots, a range of 400 nautical miles, and an endurance of 40 hours. They also have multi-modal situational awareness, threat-based object recognition, tracking, anti-collision capabilities, and data connectivity.

The acquisition of the USVs is part of Nigeria's efforts to boost



its defence industry and collaborate with leading US military firms. The minister revealed that he had visited NEANY, Swift Ships, and OCR Global, hi-tech military hardware producing companies in the US, and discussed the possibility of establishing advanced weapons production lines at the Defence Industry Corporation of Nigeria (DICON).

The minister also said that the USVs would be deployed in the

Niger Delta, Lake Chad Region, and other maritime regions of the country, where insecurity and criminal activities are rampant. He added that the USVs would complement the existing naval assets and personnel in safeguarding the nation's territorial waters and economic interests.

The Nigerian navy is also embracing artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies to enhance its operational ac-

tivities. The navy is undergoing a transformative journey by integrating AI into its operational framework. This strategic initiative aims to elevate the navy's capabilities and bolster its competitive edge on the seas.

By adopting these technological advancements, the navy is poised to adapt to the evolving challenges of the seas and maintain its commitment to security and stability in the region.

Booz Allen.

You have CONNECTIONS

Unlock the power of innovators who accelerate DOD's mission—across space technologies, command and control, AR/VR training, and JADC2.

We integrate. You accelerate.

BoozAllen.com/Defense

Unmatched capability



The KC-46A tanker delivers the world's most advanced capabilities today and evolves to meet the needs of tomorrow.

Learn more at [boeing.com/defense](https://www.boeing.com/defense)





Algeria is likely the customer of Rheinmetall Fuchs-2 components order

Darek Liam

Rheinmetall, a German defence and automotive company, announced that it has received a large order from an international partner to supply components for the Fuchs 2 (Fox) wheeled armoured vehicle. The order, worth a figure in the three-digit million-euro range, includes kits for production and conversion as well as spare part packages. The delivery of the kits will start in 2024 and will be completed in 2028.

Rheinmetall did not disclose the identity of the customer, but it is widely speculated that it is Algeria, the only country known to produce the Fuchs 2 under licence. Algeria and Germany signed a USD2.7 billion deal in 2014 to build the Fuchs 2 armoured vehicles in Algeria, as part of a strategic partnership between the two countries, with the first vehicle displayed in May 2015 when the Algerian Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Ahmed Gaïd Salah paid a courtesy Visit to the Republican Guard's Special Intervention Regiment.

tion Regiment.

Algeria has already built around 980 Fuchs 2 vehicles, which are used by the Algerian Republican Guard and the Special Intervention Regiment. Algeria also operates around 1,200 Fuchs 2 vehicles in total.

Similarly, in 2018, Rheinmetall received an order from an international customer to provide the parts needed to manufacture the Fuchs 2 (Fox) Armoured Personnel Carrier, in an order worth over hundreds millions of Euros is to be delivered from 2019 to 2020. It turned out to be Algeria.

The Fuchs 2 is an advanced version of the Fuchs 1, which has been in service with the German Bundeswehr since 1979. The Fuchs 2 has a larger interior, a more powerful engine, an updated chassis, improved modern protection, and a digital electrical system. The Fuchs 2 can be used for various roles, such as armoured personnel carrier, mobile com-

mand post, field ambulance, or NBC reconnaissance. The Fuchs 2 is a versatile 6x6 wheeled armoured vehicle that has been deployed by several countries in various missions, including Afghanistan.

According to Rheinmetall, the production facility in the partner country has seen an increase in added value in recent years as well as investments to ensure high-quality machining, welding and surface treatment. The company said that this long-standing strategic partnership is entering a new, promising phase, which could also include the potential export of Fuchs 2 vehicles produced in the partner country.

The order from the partner country is a testament to the success story of the Fuchs 2, which has been built in a total of 1,800 units to date. Rheinmetall said that the order will also strengthen its position as a leading supplier of military vehicles and systems.



Nurol Makina to export 13 armoured vehicles to Nigeria for border security project

Ekene Lionel

Nurol Makina, a Turkish defence industry company that produces armoured land vehicles, has signed a contract with Asisguard, a Turkish company that provides electro-optical and border security systems, to export 13 YÖRÜK 4X4 Light Tactical Armoured Vehicles to Nigeria as part of a larger border security project.

The contract was signed at Nurol Makina facilities by Asisguard General Manager Barış Düzgün and Nurol Makina General Manager Engin Aykol. Düzgün said that the contract was the result of 2.5 years of ongoing work in Nigeria, where they have been awarded a \$36.5 million project to provide an integrated border security solution for the country.

The project, which involves the overseas sales of products from HAVELSAN, STM, and approximately 10 Turkish companies, including Gürbağ Savunma and MILMAST, aims to secure a highway with security issues between Abuja and Kaduna,

the capital of Nigeria, using locally and nationally produced state-of-the-art technology systems and products.

Düzgün said that within the project's scope, they will provide reconnaissance and surveillance systems, rapid response and neutralization systems, command and control systems, as well as communication and energy infrastructure systems. He added that they decided to collaborate with Nurol Makina, the armoured vehicle manufacturer that has proven itself in Turkey and globally under the most challenging combat conditions.

STM, a Turkish defence company, has recently exported its TOGAN unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) to Nigeria. The TOGAN is a small, rotary-wing UAV that is designed for tactical-level reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence missions.

Also, Havelsan, a Turkish defence and informatics company, announced that it has exported its Sub-Cloud Unmanned Ae-

rial Vehicle (UAV) BAHA to an undisclosed African country. BAHA is a small, fixed-wing UAV that is designed for tactical-level reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence missions.

According to the contract, 13 YÖRÜK 4X4 vehicles will be exported as part of the Nigerian Road Safety Project. This will increase the number of countries where YÖRÜK 4X4 is used to 5. Aykol expressed their goal to complete the vehicle deliveries during the year. Chad recently acquired the type.

Moreover, the project will feature ASISGUARD's highly advanced Songar drones, which are equipped with advanced artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities and can be integrated with automatic machine guns and grenade launchers. Some Songar drones are already being used by the Nigerian Police and Army. In October 2022, the Turkish company supplied at least 10 Songar armed drones to Nigerian counter-terror forces.



China seeks to establish presence in Nigeria's defence sector

Darek Liam

China is looking to expand its military and economic influence in Nigeria, Africa's most populous and largest economy, by establishing its military industry in the country. This was revealed by the Ambassador of China to Nigeria, Cui Jian Chun, during his visit to the Minister of Defence, Muhammad Badaru Abubakar, in Abuja last November.

According to Chun, China wants to support local production of military equipment in Nigeria, which has abundant natural and human resources that can benefit Chinese corporations based in Nigeria. He said China has an interest in forging collaboration with Nigeria in the area of military operations, economic cooperation, and international cooperation.

"Nigeria is a large country just like China and we are willing to build our military industries in Nigeria to support local production of military equipment,"

Chun said, according to a statement by Ministry of Defence spokesperson, Henshaw Ogu-bike.

Chun also said the Chinese industries will not only boost the fight against insurgency and other related crimes in Nigeria, but also the Federal Government's drive on employment generation. He added that China and Nigeria have investments in security, education, and economy, and that Nigeria has great potential to develop a new economy.

The Minister of Defence, Abubakar, welcomed China's interest in Nigeria's defence sector and said the Federal Government would collaborate with the Chinese government in technology transfer, intelligence sharing, and military training in its quest to tackle insecurity in the country.

He said there has been a lot of working relationship with the Chinese companies on the

transfer of technology and talk on military equipment production.

The move by China to establish its military industry in Nigeria comes amid growing concerns about China's expanding naval presence in the Gulf of Guinea, a strategic waterway that hosts vital shipping lanes and oil reserves. According to a report by SBM Intelligence, China has been involved in counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Guinea and has conducted security exchanges with countries in the region.

China's push into Nigeria's defence sector also aligns with its broader ambitions to secure energy interests and expand its influence in Africa. China has invested heavily in Nigeria's oil and gas industry and aims to increase daily oil production. China is also Nigeria's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade reaching \$19.27 billion in 2019.



Nigeria sets sight on advanced weapons manufacturing with US firm

Ekene Lionel

Nigeria is seeking to boost its defence industry by collaborating with a leading US military firm, NEANY, to establish advanced weapons production lines at the Defence Industry Corporation of Nigeria (DICON).

The Ministry of Defence in Nigeria announced this plan after a two-day visit to NEANY's facilities by Dr Bello Matawalle, the Minister of State for Defence, who explored various areas of partnership with the company.

According to a statement issued by Mr Henshaw Ogubike, the Director of Press and Public Relations at the ministry, the primary objective of this collaboration is to create assembly lines dedicated to manufacturing cutting-edge military equipment, such as drones, radars,

and biometric systems, that can significantly contribute to Nigeria's fight against insecurity.

The initiative also aims to introduce innovative technologies that can augment the efficiency of the Nigerian military in tackling contemporary security threats, such as terrorism, insurgency, banditry, and kidnapping.

NEANY, a renowned US military equipment manufacturing company, and DICON, a Nigerian government firm specialising in the production of military equipment and hardware, are the key players involved in these discussions.

Dr Matawalle said that the collaborative discussions were centered on potential collaboration between NEANY and DICON to establish assembly

lines for the production of advanced military equipment to help in the fight against insecurity in Nigeria.

"This tour marks a pivotal step in fostering collaboration and integrating cutting-edge military technologies to strengthen Nigeria's defence capabilities," he said.

The minister further affirmed Nigeria's dedication to President Bola Tinubu's vision of modernising the armed forces to adeptly address evolving security threats.

The facilities visited by the minister during the trip included NEANY's Rapid Deployment Mobile RADAR system, Unmanned Water Vehicle, Drone Ground Control Station, and Compact Biometric Search-scan System, among others.

MISTRAL

TODAY'S THREATS, DESERVE APPROPRIATE ANSWERS.



Fire and forget, ease of use, maximum operational flexibility

Not only is Mistral the most versatile missile in the world, it is also the most efficient with over 96% hit success rate.



IMCO Group will provide additional electrical and electro-optic sub-systems for the IDF's Eitan AFV



IMCO PRESS

IMCO Group has received in Q3 an additional 28.5 million NIS (more than 7 million \$) order from the Israel Ministry of Defense Directorate of Production and Procurement (DOPP), for additional electrical and electro-optic sub-systems for the IDF's newest Eitan (8X8) Armored fighting vehicles (AFVs).

Eitan is a new multi-purpose 8x8 wheeled armored personnel carrier (APC) developed by Israel's Defense Ministry's Merkava and Armored Vehicles Directorate. It is an advanced, protected combat vehicle with high mobility and firepower capabilities. Combat proven, the Eitan APV is deployed by the IDF in the current war.

IMCO Group's subsidiaries, IMCO Projects, Nir-Or, ADTI, and EMT, will produce the platform electrical & electro optics sub-systems.

The sub-systems include IMCO Projects' electric power and control units, operational control panels, platform intercon-

nection cabling, platform main computing cradle unit, and illumination solutions. It also includes Nir-Or's various computer units and Video Management System, which provides a full video management suite for the vehicle, including a display with an intuitive control interface. Integrating real-time AI analytics, Nir-Or's solution presents all the needed information for the commander, driver, and gunner, allowing them to manage the mission smartly and effectively while sharing a joint situational awareness picture.

Altogether, IMCO's sub-systems ensure optimal performance and survivability of the APV, and enhanced situational awareness for the operating crew.

"IMCO Group is honored to be a trusted supplier of Israel's Defense Ministry's Merkava and Armored Vehicles Directorate, and to have an exclusive contribution to the production of the Eitan APV.

This additional order under-

scores the trust that the Israeli MOD has in our capabilities," said IMCO Group CEO, Mr. Ariel Kandel. He added: "Our advanced electrical and electro-optic sub-systems play a crucial role in ensuring the optimal performance and survivability of the IDF's newest armored fighting vehicle. We remain committed to contributing to the nation's defense capabilities, these days during the war as well as in the latest decades."

This new business is coming few weeks after IMCO Group was selected again by the Israeli Ministry of Defense to provide dozens of platform electrical sub-systems for the "Namer 1500" Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

IMCO Group's solutions are already installed and operational on various IDF armored vehicles, such as the Namer and Eitan (8X8) Armored fighting vehicles (AFVs) and the Merkava tank.



Mali boosts its drone fleet with new Bayraktar TB2s from Turkey

Kazim Abdul

The TB2s are expected to play an important role in improving Mali's aerial surveillance of its borders and ensuring comprehensive territorial coverage.

Mali, one of the African countries that use Bayraktar TB2 armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), has received six more drones from Turkey, expanding its fleet and enhancing its aerial capabilities.

The new delivery, which arrived on 4 January 2024, followed a previous shipment of TB2s in January and March 2023. The FAMA released a photograph showing one had the serial TZ-17D. The FAMA previously displayed TB2s with serials running from TZ-01D to TZ-06D. With the latest addition, Mali now has at least 17 TB2s in its inventory, making it one of the largest operators of the Turkish-made drones in Africa.

The TB2s are manufactured by Baykar, a leading Turkish company in the defense industry. The drones have a wingspan of 12 meters, a maximum takeoff weight of 650 kilograms, and a payload capacity of 150 kilograms. They can fly up to 24 hours at an altitude of 27,000 feet, and can carry various types of munitions, such as MAM-L laser-guided bombs and Roketsan Cirit laser-guided rockets.

The TB2s delivered to Mali are equipped with ASELSAN's CATS electro-optical system, which provides high-resolution imagery and target acquisition in day and night conditions. The CATS system is a replacement for the L3 Wescam MX-15 camera, which Canada banned from exporting to Turkey due to political tensions.

The TB2s have been used by the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA) for conducting air-

strikes against terrorist groups, such as al-Qaeda and Islamic State affiliates, that have been plaguing the country for years. The drones have also been deployed for reconnaissance and surveillance missions, providing valuable intelligence and situational awareness for the Malian troops on the ground.

The FAMA have expressed their satisfaction and pride with the TB2s, which they consider as sophisticated and effective systems. Chief of Staff of the Air Force Brigadier General Alou Boï Diarra praised the drones in his speech during the reception ceremony, saying that they have proven their worth in combat operations. He also reminded the audience that the drones are not a substitute for the hard work and sacrifice of the Malian soldiers, who still need support and equipment.

The acquisition of the TB2s is part of Mali's efforts to strength-

en its military capabilities and security, especially after the withdrawal of French troops from its territory and the end of Operation Barkhane, a counter-terrorism mission led by France in the Sahel region. Mali has also been cooperating with Russia, which delivered a number of Su-25 Frogfoot, and L-39C Albatross fighter jets, Mi-17 helicopters, and two Mi-35M attack helicopters to the country in August 2023.

Mali is not the only African country that has purchased TB2s from Turkey. The drones have also been sold to Libya, Nigér, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Togo and Burkina Faso, Djibouti, and

Morocco, making Turkey a major supplier of UAVs in the continent. The TB2s have demonstrated their performance and reliability in various conflict zones, such as Syria, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh, where they have changed the course of the battles and given Turkey a strategic edge.

Mali has indeed been facing a protracted struggle against Islamic insurgency, with the situation posing significant challenges for the country and its people. The threat of insurgency has had a profound impact on the stability and security of the region, leading to widespread displacement of

populations and hindering socio-economic development. The government's efforts to counter this threat have proven to be a complex and ongoing process, requiring a multifaceted approach that encompasses not only military action but also socio-political and economic reforms.

The TB2s are expected to play an important role in improving Mali's aerial surveillance of its borders and ensuring comprehensive territorial coverage. The drones will also help Mali in its fight against terrorism and instability, which threaten its sovereignty and development.

Senegal acquires Israeli Steadicopter Black Eagle 50H hybrid VTOL UAS



Ekene Lionel

Senegal has recently acquired several units of the Black Eagle 50H, a hybrid vertical takeoff and landing unmanned aircraft system (VTOL UAS) from Israel's Steadicopter, as part of its efforts to strengthen its unmanned capabilities and enhance its security and defence.

The Black Eagle 50H is the world's first hybrid-powered unmanned helicopter, which

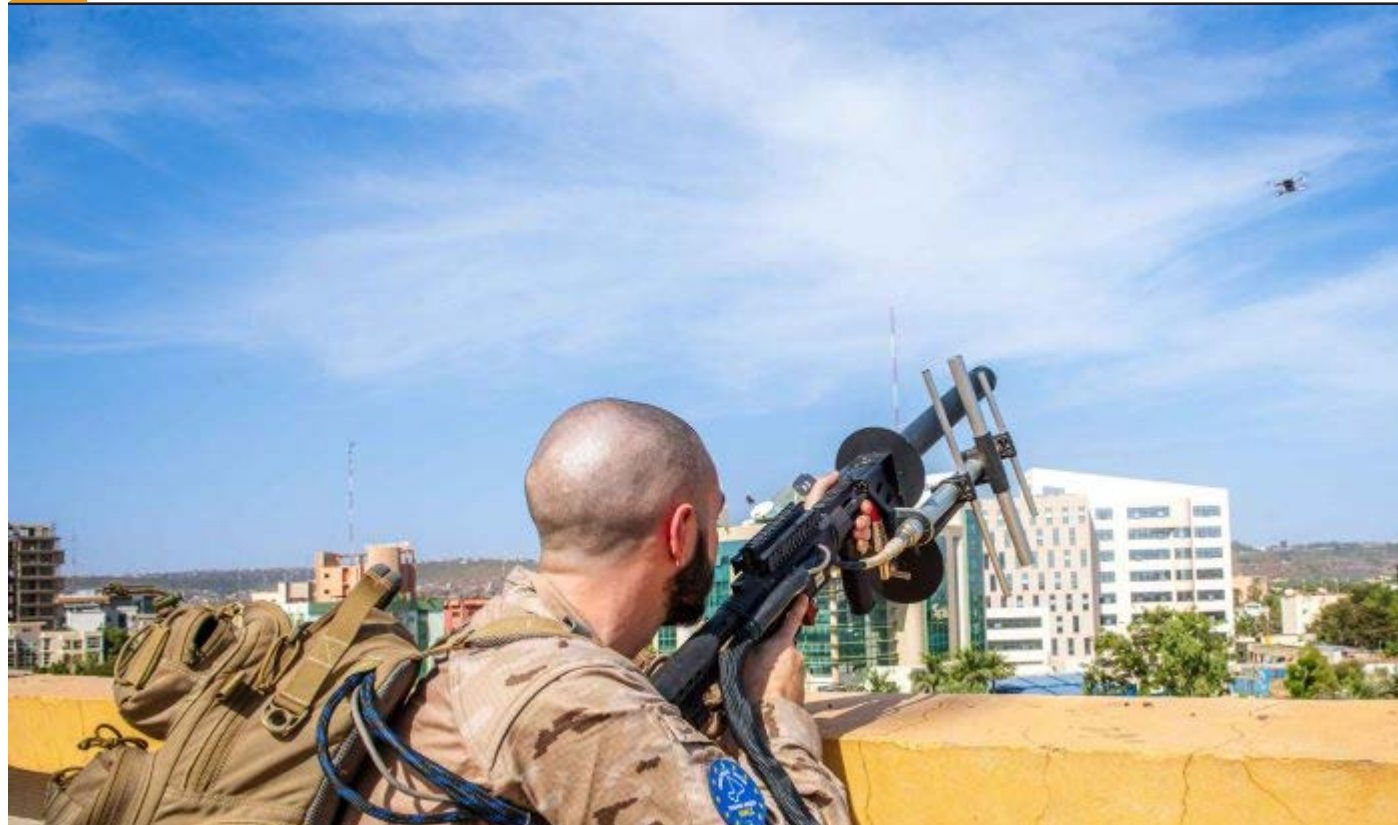
can perform a variety of missions in the domains of law enforcement, maritime, civilian and covert operations. The system has a maximum

takeoff weight of 50 kg and can carry multiple large or small payloads, such as cameras, sensors, radars, and weapons. The system can fly for up to five hours, which is much longer than other VTOL platforms in its class, and can operate in day or night conditions.

The hybrid engine and propulsion system of the Black Eagle 50H combines the advantages of both electric and gasoline power sources, making it cost-effective, simple, easy,

eco-friendly, and safe. The system can switch between generator and battery power modes, depending on the mission requirements and the level of stealth needed. The system also has excellent reliability and adaptability to high-altitude flights, thanks to the electric propulsion segment which is less affected by the ambient air pressure.

"The Black Eagle 50H is a true multi-domain, multi-mission and multi-sensor system, coupled with all the benefits of a covert, easy-to-maintain, highly-versatile electric-powered system," says Noam Lidor, VP Sales, Marketing & Business Development at Steadicopter. "Its ability to carry advanced payloads and its capability for extended time in the air ensure both mission success and flexibility."



How DroneDefender protects EU HQ in Mali from aerial threats

Kazim Abdul

The European Union training mission (EUTM) Mali is a military operation that aims to support the Malian armed forces in restoring stability and security in the country. The mission involves training, advising, and mentoring the Malian forces, as well as providing logistical and medical support.

However, the mission also faces various challenges and threats, especially from the air. Drones, or unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), have become a common tool for malicious actors who seek to disrupt, spy on, or attack the EU personnel and facilities. Drones can carry

explosives, cameras, or other payloads that can pose a serious risk to the mission's objectives and safety.

To counter this threat, the EUTM Mali has deployed a cutting-edge anti-drone technology called DroneDefender,

developed by Battelle, a US-based research and development organization. DroneDefender is a device that can disrupt the control and navigation of unwanted drones, rendering them harmless and preventing them from reaching their targets.



DroneDefender uses directed-energy technology, which means it emits a focused beam of electromagnetic energy that interferes with the drone's signals. It can disrupt both the remote control and the GPS signals of the drone, causing it to lose control and either land or return to its origin. DroneDefender does not damage or destroy the drone, but rather neutralizes it, minimizing the collateral damage and the risk of detonation.

DroneDefender is a lightweight, portable, and easy-to-use device that can be operated by a single person. It has a range of up to 400 meters and can operate for two hours on a single battery charge. It has multiple antennas that can target different types of drones, such as quadcopters and hexacopters. It also has a safety switch that prevents accidental activation.

The EUTM Mali's force protection unit, which is responsible for the security of the mission's headquarters and personnel, has been trained to use DroneDefender effectively. The unit regularly conducts drills and exercises to simulate drone attacks and test their response. The unit also coordinates with other security agencies and stakeholders to share information and best practices on anti-drone measures.

DroneDefender is a vital tool for the EUTM Mali's mission, as it provides a reliable and proven solution to counter the growing threat of drones. By using DroneDefender, the EUTM Mali can protect its headquarters and personnel from aerial attacks, ensure the continuity of its operations, and enhance its credibility and reputation. DroneDefender is a demonstration of the EU's commitment and innovation in supporting peace and security in Mali and the region.

The increasing accessibility of drones has raised concerns regarding their potential misuse for illicit activities, including espionage, smuggling, and terrorism. As technology advances, drones are becoming more affordable and easier to operate, giving rise to a new set of security challenges.

Despite the growing threat posed by drones in Africa, many African militaries are falling short in fielding adequate counter-unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) solutions, leaving security forces vulnerable to emerging threats.

The U.S. has been trying to counter China's influence by strengthening its partnerships and cooperation with African countries,

US Plans Drone Bases in West Africa to Counter China and Islamist Militants

Ekene Lionel

The United States is pursuing a new strategy to counter the dual threats of China and Islamist militants in West Africa by setting up drone bases along the coast, according to U.S. and African officials.

The U.S. is in talks with Ghana, Ivory Coast and Benin to allow American unarmed surveillance drones to use their airfields, The Wall Street Journal reported on Jan. 3. These countries, along with Togo, are relatively stable and prosperous, but face the risk of spillover from the Islamist insurgency that has plagued Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger in the Sahel region.

In the wake of a recent coup in Niger, the United States and France last October announced that they are actively exploring

alternative countries to host their drone bases for counter-terrorism and surveillance missions. The coup in the West African nation has led to a significant reevaluation of their military presence in the region.

As France is being militarily dislodged by its former colonies in the region, the US has been trying to fill the void to prevent Russia and China from establishing further military presence.

General James Hecker, commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Africa, stated, "There are several locations I'll say that we're looking at, but nothing's firmed up. We have talked to some countries about it." While the U.S. is actively considering new host nations, they are also closely monitoring ongoing diplomatic efforts

to address the situation, as a peaceful resolution is a preferred outcome.

The U.S. already operates military drones from a base in Niger, near the city of Agadez, which is considered its most strategic asset in sub-Saharan Africa. However, the landlocked location limits the range and reach of the drones, which are mainly used for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions.

By establishing drone bases closer to the Atlantic Ocean, the U.S. hopes to enhance its ability to monitor and respond to the activities of al Qaeda and Islamic State affiliates, which have expanded their attacks and influence in the Sahel in recent years. The U.S. also wants to deter and disrupt the plans of



China, which is seeking to establish its first permanent naval base on the Atlantic coast, in Equatorial Guinea.

China's military ambitions in West Africa pose a direct challenge to U.S. national security and interests, as its naval warships would be able to operate opposite the East Coast of the U.S., according to U.S. intelligence reports. China has been expanding its economic and military presence in Africa, offering loans, infrastructure projects and arms sales to various countries.

In a hearing of the U.S. House Armed Services Committee, earlier in March, former Commander of the African Command, U.S. Army Gen. Stephen J. Townsend stated the US and planned actions to prevent the formation of the Chinese Naval Base in Equatorial Guinea.

The U.S. has been trying to counter China's influence by strengthening its partnerships and cooperation with African countries, especially those that are democratic and respect human rights. The U.S. has also been providing security assistance and training to African forces fighting against Islamist militants.

However, the U.S. faces some challenges and constraints in its efforts to establish drone bases in West Africa. Some African countries are wary of hosting foreign military bases, fearing public backlash or sovereignty issues. In 2008, Ghana rejected a proposal to host a U.S. military base, after protests erupted in its capital, Accra.

The U.S. plans to use only unarmed drones for surveillance

MQ-9 Reapers at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan (USAF file photo)

purposes in West Africa, and not for lethal strikes, according to U.S. officials. The U.S. also intends to share the intelligence gathered by the drones with its African partners, to help them improve their own security and stability.

The U.S. hopes that by setting up drone bases in West Africa, it can achieve a dual purpose: to counter the threats of China and Islamist militants, and to support the development and democracy of its African allies.

The use of drones by the U.S. forces will likely enhance their ability to monitor the militant activities along the West African coast, and provide timely assistance to the local troops engaged in combat situations. This strategic move is aimed at improving the counterterrorism operations in the region, as France's role as a military partner is declining, evidenced by the withdrawal of its troops from Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali. The U.S. drone deployment also raises concerns about the stability of Niger after the coup in July 2023, and its reliability as a strong U.S. ally, given the existence of the U.S. Agadez drone base.

The U.S. response to the Niger coup was swift and decisive. It cut off aid to Niger's military and reduced its troop presence to about 650 soldiers. The U.S. Africa Command said that the drones from Agadez were mainly focused on protecting the remaining U.S. forces.

Nigerien Air Base 201," was constructed at a considerable cost of \$110 million, featuring a 6,200-foot runway tailored

to accommodate MQ-9 Reapers, MQ-1C Gray Eagle, and manned aircraft. Since its inauguration in November 2019, the base has played a pivotal role in the U.S. military's surveillance and intelligence operations in the region.

The coup in Niger in July disrupted the cooperation between the U.S. and its European partners and the country, which had been one of the largest beneficiaries of security and development assistance in Africa for the past ten years.

The Biden administration is now facing new and difficult challenges in its fight against the Islamist militants in Africa. One of the most important ones is how to resume operations at the U.S. Air Base 201, the most valuable military asset in a region that is becoming a global hotspot of terrorist activity.

The U.S. law requires the suspension of security and development aid to any country that experiences a coup, and the resumption of such aid only after democracy is restored. Therefore, while the U.S. officials have expressed their desire to re-establish security cooperation with Niger's government, they will have to navigate a complex diplomatic situation, as the former Nigerien president, Mohamed Bazoum, is still under house arrest.

The United States had previously warned the Niger junta in August, stating that it might consider military intervention if the country's military rulers did not return to constitutional order. This warning prompted a response from Russia, caution-

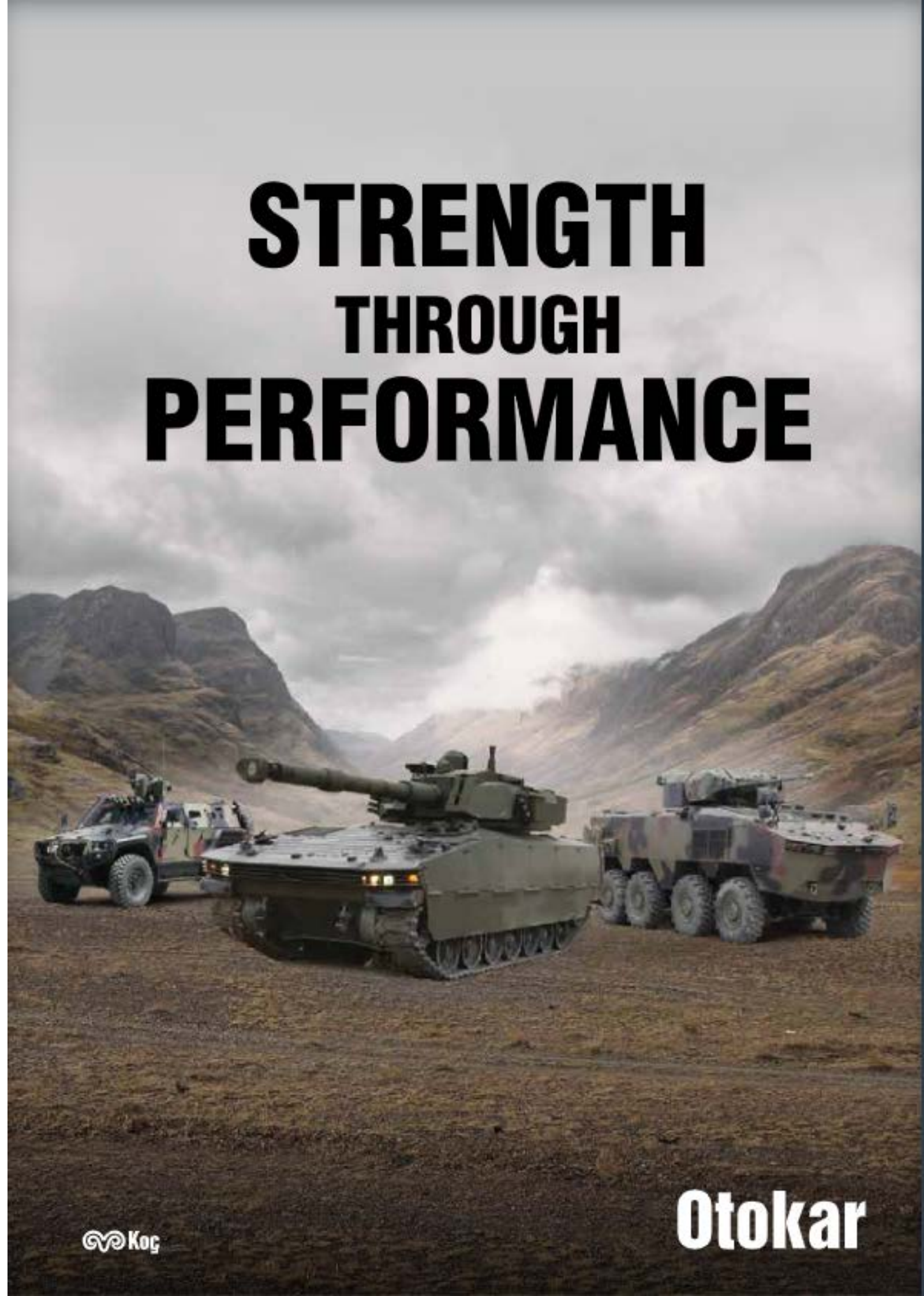
ing against military intervention by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), emphasizing that it could lead to a protracted confrontation and further destabilize the Sahel region.

For France, the coup has forced them to find a new mission for their MQ-9 Reapers from the 33rd Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Attack Wing of the French Air Force. These drones had played a crucial role in Operation Barkhane, which officially ended following the coup.

France is also considering the Middle East as a potential location for their future drone missions, building on their existing deployment of drones at the planned H5 Air Base in Jordan. These changes signal a shift in the dynamics of counter-terrorism and surveillance missions in the region, as the U.S. and France adapt to new geopolitical realities following the coup in Niger.

Another challenge for the U.S. is the growing influence of Russia in the region, which is eager to take advantage of any rifts between Niger and the Western nations to expand its regional clout. Russia, which has recently signed a new defense pact with Niger, is already the preferred security partner of two neighboring countries that are battling Islamist insurgencies, Mali and Burkina Faso. The three countries, which are all under military rule, have pledged to enhance their cooperation under a new security alliance.

STRENGTH THROUGH PERFORMANCE





Indian Navy Rescues Hijacked Ship From Somali Pirates in Daring Operation

Kazim Abdul

The Indian Navy has successfully rescued a ship hijacked by Somali pirates in the North Arabian Sea, in a daring operation that showcased its naval prowess and regional influence.

The ship, MV Lila Norfolk, was carrying 21 crew members, 15 of whom were Indian nationals, when it was seized by five to six armed pirates east of the Somali port town of Eyl. The crew members managed to send a distress signal to a UK marine agency, which alerted the Indian Navy.

The Indian Navy dispatched an patrol aircraft to establish contact with the hijacked ship, followed by the Kolkata-class guided-missile destroyer INS Chennai, which reached the vicinity of the ship on Friday morning. The navy issued a warning to the pirates to surrender, but received no response.

The navy then launched a team of marine commandos, who

boarded the ship and secured the citadel, the vessel's fortified area where the crew members had taken refuge. The commandos evacuated all the crew members safely and searched the ship for the pirates, but found none. It is unclear whether the pirates had fled or were hiding elsewhere on the ship.

The navy statement said that the ship and the crew were now under its protection and would be escorted to a safe port. The statement also praised the bravery and professionalism of the commandos and the crew members, who had endured a harrowing ordeal.

The rescue operation was hailed as a major achievement for the Indian Navy, which has been actively involved in anti-piracy operations in the region since 2008. The navy has also been expanding its presence and cooperation with African countries, as part of India's strategic and economic inter-

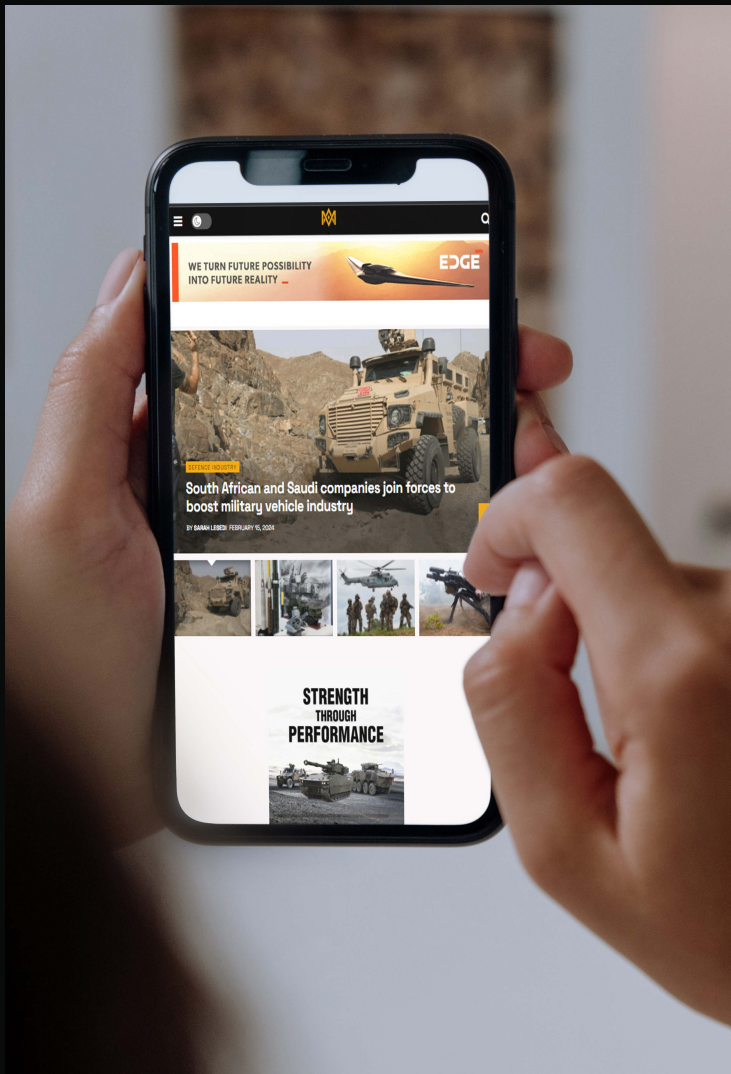
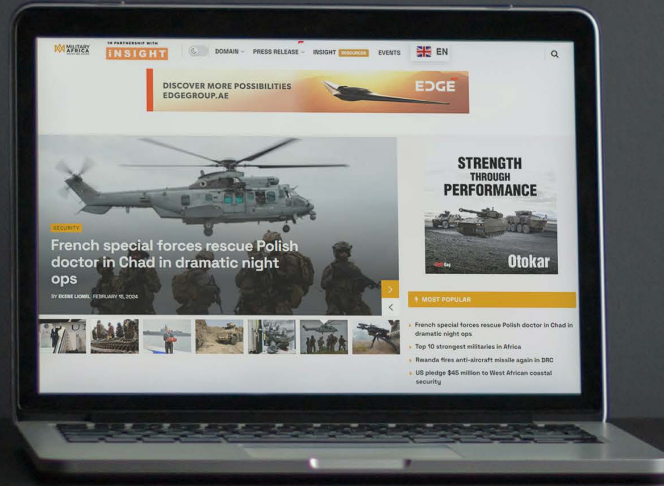
ests.

The navy has deployed one of its most advanced warships, Sumedha, in Madagascar, as part of its ongoing outreach programme in Africa. The navy has also strengthened its military ties with Mozambique, Namibia, and Mauritius, among other nations, in recent months.

The hijacking of MV Lila Norfolk was the latest in a series of attacks on vessels off Somalia's coast, which have raised concerns that piracy could be making a comeback in the area. The attacks are believed to be linked to the relocation of navy ships from the US and other countries from the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea, to safeguard shipping from Houthi rebels based in Yemen.

The Indian Navy has vowed to continue its vigilance and assistance in ensuring the safety and security of the maritime domain in the region.





Military Africa's mobile-friendly websites give professionals the ability to quickly and easily access the latest news on any device, through unrivalled timely and accurate news curated by our international analysts.

Military Africa brings your product in front of thousands of interested audiences. Now you can be assured of great business growth



Advertising and Editorial Enquiries

Email: Business@military.africa

Tel: +234 810 368 9898