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**Morocco acquires Harpoon missiles  
for F-16 fighter jets**

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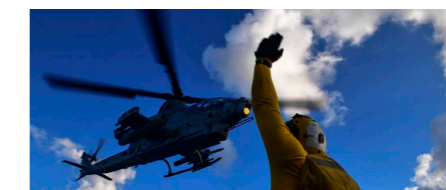
## Morocco acquires Harpoon missiles for F-16 fighter jets

The Royal Armed Forces are expected to receive 24 of these advanced jets by 2026.

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# Morocco acquires Harpoon MISSILES FOR F-16 FIGHTER JETS



The Harpoon Block II missiles, equipped with a 525 kg explosive warhead and a range of up to 280 km, represent the latest generation of anti-ship weaponry. Technical reports indicate that these missiles can precisely destroy floating targets and enemy naval assets, including aircraft carriers and landing ships.

## DAREK LIAM

Morocco has procured ten Harpoon Block II (AGM-84L) anti-ship missiles and SLAM-ER (AGM-84H/K) cruise missiles from Boeing.

These acquisitions aim to enhance the capabilities of the Royal Moroccan Air Force, particularly with the integration of Harpoon missiles into the F-16 Viper fighter jets. The Royal Armed Forces are expected to receive 24 of these advanced jets by 2026.

The A/U/RGM-84 Harpoon is an all-weather, over-the-horizon, anti-ship missile system that provides the Navy with a common missile for air and ship launches.

The Harpoon's active radar guidance, warhead design, low-level cruise trajectory, and terminal mode sea-skim or pop-up maneuvers assure high survivability and effectiveness. The missile is capable of being launched from surface ships, submarines, shore batteries, or aircraft (without the booster).

The Harpoon Block II missiles, equipped with a 525 kg explosive warhead and a range of up to 280 km, represent the latest generation of anti-ship weaponry. Technical reports indicate that these missiles can precisely destroy floating targets and enemy naval assets, including aircraft carriers and landing ships.

To increase the capabilities of its Lockheed Martin F-16 Fighting Falcon combat

aircraft in naval warfare, the Royal Moroccan Air Forces announced in April 2020 that it seek to acquire Boeing AGM-84L Harpoon Block 2 anti-shiping missiles from the United States in a deal worth \$62 million.

It was announced on Tuesday, 14 April 2020 by the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) that the State Department had approved the sale of 10 Harpoon missiles to Morocco. The proposed sale includes containers, spare and repair parts, support and test equipment, publications and technical documentation, personnel training and training equipment, US Government and contractor representatives' technical assistance, engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

The Boeing AGM-84L Harpoon Block II missiles which Morocco requested to procure from the United States for its F-16s fighter jets will have reduced coastal targeting capabilities says the US. The Harpoon missiles to be supplied to Morocco are the "non-coastal target suppression" version, which will not be able to attack land targets, this is according to an April 27, 2022 US Federal Register arms sale notification.

One of the new capabilities of the Block II AGM-84L Harpoon is its substantially

improved ability to find target ships sailing close to shore or in congested waters, as well as its ability to use its GPS-aided navigation to fly precisely to pre-launch programmed target coordinates.

"Block II is part of our spiral development plan for Harpoon," said Jim O'Neill, Boeing general manager of Navy Missile Systems. "Harpoon has proven it is a naval precision-strike weapon that has the ability to attack surface ships and land targets at standoff ranges."

Meanwhile, Morocco will receive BRU-57/A weapon release units to double the amount of smart bombs its F-16 fighter jets can carry. L3Harris Technologies announced in December 2022, a \$29 million contract to provide smart weapon release systems to air forces in the Middle East and North Africa. The Bomb Release Unit BRU-57/A will allow F-16 fighter aircraft to carry two smart weapons on each hardpoint instead of one, doubling munitions capacity. The unit is compatible with 500 and 1,000lb guided weapons.

In addition to the anti-ship missiles, Morocco has also acquired medium and long-range cruise missiles designed for high-precision strikes on land and sea-based targets. These advanced weapons further enhance Morocco's military capabilities.



As of today, the Royal Moroccan Air Force (RMAF) has 23 F-16C/D Block 50/52 aircraft which it received between 2011 and 2012, having lost one over Yemen during combat operations.

# AH-1Z Viper: The World's Most Advanced Attack Helicopter



Attack helicopters have evolved. Modern machines are faster, can engage from greater distances, and carry more ordnance than their predecessors. At the forefront of this evolution is the Bell AH-1Z Viper. Bell invented the attack helicopter and changed the face of U.S. Army aviation.

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From this legacy, Bell has created subsequent variations of the AH-1, culminating in the AH-1Z. Today, the Viper has evolved from the venerable AH-1 of the Vietnam War. In creating the AH-1Z Viper platform, Bell has been pivotal for advancing military aviation technology worldwide.

Today, the AH-1Z Viper is the newest attack helicopter on the market, designed to provide an overwhelming competitive advantage to its users across a broad range of missions. More than an evo-

lutionary upgrade, the Viper is a re-designed dedicated attack helicopter for modern threats.

Bell designed the Viper to counter both air-to-air and air-to-ground targets while simultaneously operating in the world's most austere environments. The AH-1Z has demonstrated its ability to counter unmanned aerial systems, a vital capability in today's operating environments.

The Viper is the only attack helicopter re-

quired to operate from naval vessels and small land-based forward-operating units regularly. Marinization of the Viper during the manufacturing process protects the aircraft from saltwater's corrosive effects and enables it to withstand the harsh environmental impact of deployments in all-weather environments.

"With the AH-1Z Viper, Bell has created an aircraft that not only meets but exceeds all the key requirements for modern military helicopters," said Mike Deslatte, Bell H-1 senior vice president and program director. "No other aircraft can match the performance, capability, connectivity, and survivability of the AH-1Z."

Almost as important as the AH-1Z's flight characteristics, the Viper maintains a minimal logistics footprint. Ease of maintenance for the troops operating it in the field while preserving effective operations away from main points of support and logistics create one of the most deployable attack helicopters in the world. Very few militaries around the globe have constant access to large operating bases with

dozens of support personnel and manufacturer contractors available to support their aircraft, so the design of the AH-1Z becomes even more important in day-to-day operations.

## UNRIVALED PERFORMANCE AT UNBEATABLE COST

The U.S. Department of Defense calculates the AH-1Z Viper with the lowest reimbursable cost among all U.S. based attack helicopters. Reimbursable rates provide the most accurate example of potential costs to operators vs individual services can calculate non-direct operating costs differently. The aircraft is known across the industry for its reliability, and is equipped with advanced fire control systems and supports multiple weapons configurations.

It provides rotary-wing Close Air Support, Anti-Armor, Anti-Air, Armed Escort, Armed/Visual Reconnaissance, and fire support coordination capabilities under day/night and adverse weather conditions, complementing its durability and reliability. The aircraft can operate multi-



Aviation Support Equipment Technician 3rd Class Angus Moss directs an AH-1Z Viper on the flight deck of USS San Diego | Photo by: PO3 Justin Schoenberger. [credit: Bell Flights]

ple missions, including:

**Attack:** The AH-1Z Viper provides air-to-ground fire support with a wide array of precision missiles and rockets capable of defeating armored formations, and provides the pilots multiple options to engage the enemy to achieve the desired effects on target. It is also the only attack helicopter in the world with fully integrated air-to-air AIM-9M sidewinder missile capability to counter both rotary and fixed-wing adversaries. The weapon systems are contained in the glass cockpit and selectable without the pilot removing their hands from the controls - allowing for a seamless shift in attack missions based on battlefield conditions.

**Aerial Reconnaissance:** With sensor-powered sight, the AH-1Z Viper features high-tech sensors that enable pilots to identify, track, and assign targets, allowing them to select their attack location and target for maximum effects. The multi-sensor Target Sight System (TSS) is unmatched in image processing and target identification. Precision weapons benefit from being more effective with a sensor with

advanced abilities to detect and identify long-range targets. On-board systems also provide data to allow for more precise firing of unguided weapons, increasing the overall precision kill capability of the AH-1Z.

**Escort:** The AH-1Z Viper is armed for aerial dominance of the battlespace and provides valuable air support for troops on the ground, reacting to threats ahead. The AH-1Z Viper maintains the fully-integrated and up-to-date survivability equipment that protects against modern weapons. The AH-1Z design supports the ground forces and engages the enemy as far from friendly forces as possible.

As more militaries modernize to become fifth-generation fully networked forces, they must do so while balancing cost to own and operate while maximizing capability. The AH-1Z systems, weapons, speed, and range will seamlessly enable forces to employ even more strategic resources from expeditionary environments.



A U.S. Marine Corps UH-1Y Venom helicopter prepares to land beside a U.S. Marine Corps AH-1Z Viper helicopter on the flight deck of the Royal Australian Navy's HMAS Canberra during Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2022 | Photo by: CDR Matthew Lyall



U.S. Marine Corps AH-1Z Viper pilots, Capt. Brendan O'Donnell and Capt. Gavin Wezinsky land at a forward arming and refueling point during Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) course at Stoval Airfield, Dateland, Arizona | Photo by: Sgt. Alexander Sturdivant



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## Nigerian Air Force achieve in-country maintenance on Dornier 228

**EKENE LIONEL**

**S**triding towards self-reliance and technical mastery, the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has accomplished a groundbreaking 4800-hour Periodic Depot Maintenance (PDM) on a Dornier 228 (DO-228) aircraft. This task, traditionally outsourced to foreign Maintenance Repair Organizations (MROs), marks a pivotal shift in the NAF's operational capabilities.

The successful in-country completion of the PDM not only represents a cost-effective approach but also a reduction in aircraft downtime, underscoring the NAF's commitment to efficiency and self-sufficiency. The Chief of Aircraft Engineering (CACE), Air Vice Marshal Pius Oahimire, highlighted this achievement as a testament to the NAF's burgeoning engineering expertise

This development is a continuation of the efforts by the Nigerian Air Force to reactivate and maintain its aircraft locally.

Last year, the NAF also reactivated a C-130H Hercules transport aircraft to further boost the Service's operational capabilities. The roll-out ceremony of C-130 Hercules aircraft (NAF918), was held on Wednesday 25 January 2023 at the 631 Aircraft Maintenance Depot, NAF, Ikeja, Lagos.

NAF 918 began PDM in the first quarter of 2021, and the reactivation was carried out with assistance from Pakistani Air Force (PAF) Technical Assistance Group.

and a reflection of the Chief of Air Staff's (CAS) philosophy that emphasizes a robust maintenance culture and logistics support.

The engineers' skill have garnered commendations from senior officials, including Air Vice Marshal Nnamdi Ananaba, who oversees the Air Training Command in Kaduna. This accomplishment heralds a new era of autonomy and technical proficiency within the NAF, with aspirations to further enhance the maintenance team's capabilities through specialized training.

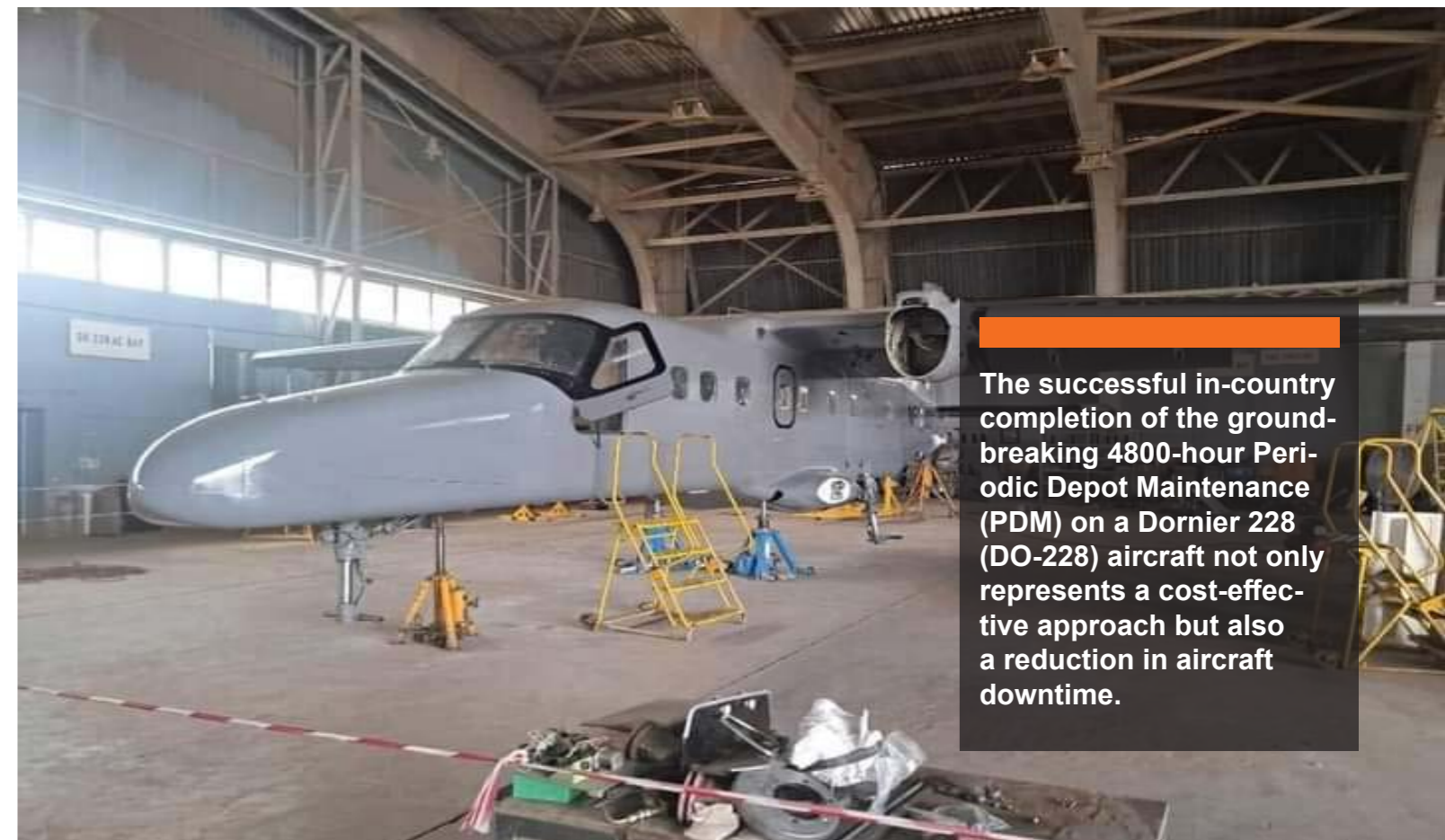
Air Vice Marshal Olanrewaju Oyename, the Unit Commander, was lauded for his exceptional leadership, which fostered an environment conducive to achieving this significant milestone. Air Vice Marshal

Oahimire reiterated the NAF's dedication to excellence, pledging continued support and a favorable working environment for personnel to fulfill the Service's mission objectives effectively.

The maintenance process, which began in May 2021, encountered delays due to challenges in procuring necessary spare parts. Nevertheless, the engineers and technicians' unwavering determination and expertise were crucial in realizing this historic undertaking. Wing Commander Micheal Aransiola, Commanding Officer of the 30 Engineering Wing, outlined the comprehensive five-phase PDM process, culminating in a Functional Check Flight that validated the aircraft's operational readiness.

The Nigerian Air Force and

Dornier Aviation of Nigeria, a subsidiary of Dornier already have an existing technical agreement. In December last year, the Chairman, Dornier Aviation Nigeria AIEP (DANA) Limited, Alhaji Suleiman Sani Bello reiterated the commitment of his organization to further strengthen the existing collaboration and cooperation with the Nigerian Air Force (NAF). The Chairman stated this when he recently paid a courtesy visit to Headquarters NAF. While thanking the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Air Marshal Hasan Abubakar, for the good working relationship both organisations have enjoyed over the last four decades, he also expressed the zeal and commitment of Dornier Aviation to collaborate and continue providing solutions, training, maintenance and logistics support to the NAF.



The successful in-country completion of the groundbreaking 4800-hour Periodic Depot Maintenance (PDM) on a Dornier 228 (DO-228) aircraft not only represents a cost-effective approach but also a reduction in aircraft downtime.



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Military Africa

# Uganda begins local production of Streit Tornado armoured vehicles

This initiative is part of Uganda's broader strategy to enhance its military capabilities while reducing reliance on imported vehicles.

PATRICK KENYATTE

Uganda has embarked on a joint venture with the United Arab Emirates' Streit Group to locally produce the Streit Tornado armoured vehicles. This collaboration is facilitated through the National Enterprise Corporation (NEC), the commercial arm of the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF), established by an Act of the Parliament of Uganda in 1989.

The Streit Group, a global leader in armoured vehicle manufacturing, has 12 production facilities and 25 offices worldwide. It specializes in producing armoured personnel carriers (APCs), cash-in-transit, luxury, and security vehicles, with more than 15,000 vehicles delivered globally. The company's decision to close its Algerian subsidiary, Streit Group Algérie, on 21 March and shift focus to other markets has paved the way for this new venture in Uganda.

NEC-Streit Uganda Ltd aims to provide a range of security solutions through technology transfer, sup-



porting not only defence but also healthcare, industrial sectors, and the railway industry. The facility was officially inaugurated by President Yoweri Museveni in July 2022 and is set to produce and maintain a wide array of armoured vehicles for both the Ugandan army and international markets.

General Wilson Mbadi, chief of the Uganda People's Defence Force, highlighted that the armoured vehicle plant would cater to the needs of Uganda's

military, police, VIPs, and regional demands. The Streit Tornado 4x4 Armoured Personnel Carrier / MRAP stands out as one of NEC-Streit Uganda's products. Designed for various infantry troop movements, including long-range patrols and convoy support, the Tornado can also serve as a command-and-control unit or medical evacuation platform. It boasts advanced protection against blast and ballistic threats up to STANAG 4569 Level 3 and can accommodate a crew including a driver,

commander, eight dismounts, and a gunner.

The successful production of the Tornado armoured vehicles has been showcased on social media by NEC-Streit Uganda, marking a milestone in Uganda's defence manufacturing capabilities.

In related developments, October 2021 saw the UPDF commissioning the Chui (Leopard) infantry fighting vehicle (IFV), based on Twiga's Nyati armored vehicle. The Chui armored vehicle integrates features unique to the UPDF's Land Forces

and is largely based on the South African Twiga Nyati unveiled in 2020.

This initiative is part of Uganda's broader strategy to enhance its military capabilities while reducing reliance on imported vehicles. President Museveni noted that Uganda spends over \$550 million annually on vehicle imports from Japan and Europe. The local production of armoured vehicles like the Streit Tornado and Chui IFV represents a significant step towards self-reliance and economic efficiency in Uganda's defence sector.



General Wilson Mbandi, chief of the Uganda People's Defence Force, highlighted that the armoured vehicle plant

NEC-Streit Uganda Ltd aims to provide a range of security solutions through technology transfer, supporting not only defence but also healthcare, industrial sectors, and the railway industry.



## Mauritania bolsters military capabilities with Chinese weaponry acquisition



The Yitian-L, mounted on a Dongfeng Mengshi tactical vehicle, is equipped with four TY-90 missiles.

SARAH LESEDI

In order to enhance its military prowess, the Mauritanian National Armed Forces have acquired an array of advanced Chinese weaponry, as confirmed by President Mohamed Ould Sheikh al-Ghazouani during his visit to a military base on June 10th. This strategic acquisition includes long-range unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and other sophisticated equipment, marking a substantial upgrade to the nation's defence resources.

The president's office re-

leased a statement highlighting the inclusion of "highly effective reconnaissance and attack drones capable of covering the entire national territory, including territorial waters, around the clock." Mauritanian television provided the public with a glimpse of these UAVs, showcasing their impressive operational radius of 2,000 km, an endurance of 36 hours, and the capacity to carry six guided missiles with a 14 km range.

The UAVs displayed a twin-tail pusher-propeller configuration, indicative

of their advanced design and capabilities. Although the media did not specify the models, the inspected equipment comprised 20 WMA301 fire-support vehicles armed with 105 mm guns and eight Yitian-L short-range air-defense systems, both promoted by Norinco, a prominent Chinese defense company. Additionally, eight Harbin BZK-005E Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAV) were part of the acquisition.

The BZK-005, designed





The WMA301 fire support vehicle, a Chinese export built on the 6x6 chassis of the widely utilized WZ551 Armored Personnel Carrier

Other military equipment seen during the 9 June inspection included a dozen Toyota Land Cruisers fitted with roof-mounted machineguns, and 15 Calidus MCAV-20 armoured vehicles manufactured in the United Arab Emirates.



by Harbin Aircraft Industry Group, is a medium-altitude, long-range UAV primarily used for reconnaissance by the PLA Navy and Air Force. It incorporates stealth features, including a satellite data link antenna housed in its large upper body dome and an optic-electric sensor system, presumed to be its primary sensor. The BZK-005 is expected to have a cruising speed of around 170 km/h, a service ceiling of 8,000 m, a maximum takeoff weight of approximately 1,200 kg, and a payload capacity exceeding 150 kg.

The Yitian-L, mounted on a Dongfeng Mengshi tactical vehicle, is equipped with four TY-90 missiles. This configuration renders it lighter than its prede-

cessors, the original Yitian and the Yitian II, which are mounted on armored personnel carriers with eight missiles. Its primary mission is to provide low-altitude defense against various airborne threats, including fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, UAVs, and even cruise missiles.

The WMA301 fire support vehicle, a Chinese export built on the 6x6 chassis of the widely utilized WZ551 Armored Personnel Carrier (APC), is now part of Mauritania's military fleet. Serving multiple nations, the WMA301 is designed to engage armored vehicles, buildings, field fortifications, and other targets. While sometimes referred to as an assault gun or tank destroyer, its primary role

is to offer fire support, as its armor is not suited for direct tank engagements. It is equipped with a 105 mm rifled gun compatible with standard NATO ammunition and can launch anti-tank guided missiles alongside conventional munitions.

This acquisition underscores Mauritania's commitment to modernizing its defense capabilities and ensuring the protection of its sovereignty. The inclusion of these advanced systems from China will undoubtedly enhance the operational effectiveness of the Mauritanian Armed Forces and contribute to the stability and security of the region.

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## ETHIOPIA SEEKS FRENCH EXPERTISE FOR NAVAL AMBITIONS AMIDST REGIONAL TENSIONS



Field Marshal Berhanu Jula, the Commander-in-Chief of Defense of Ethiopia, visited these out dated ex-navy war ships and combat boats.

### PATRICK KENYATTE

In order to bolster its maritime capabilities, Ethiopia, a landlocked nation, has turned to France for assistance in developing a naval force. This initiative comes in response to the dynamic geopolitical landscape of the Red Sea region, where Ethiopia aims to deploy a naval presence to ensure safety and security.

The aspiration for a naval force was articulated by Dima Nego, the Chairman of the Standing Committee of Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs at the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives. The discussion took place during a meeting on January 17, which saw the participation of French military representatives and members of the Ethiopian Parliament's Foreign Affairs and Peace Standing Committee.

Tawfik Abdullahi, leading the Foreign Relations Subcommittee, engaged in dialogue with the French delegation led by Thomas Gassilloud. The conversation highlighted Ethiopia's commitment to peacekeeping and the critical importance of the Red Sea region to the country's security interests.

Ethiopia's quest for maritime access has been a peaceful endeavor, yet it has faced challenges. Efforts to secure a sea outlet have been misinterpreted by other nations, including the European Union, as a potential prelude to conflict. Consequently, Ethiopia negotiated with Somaliland, a territory claimed by Somalia, signing a memorandum of understanding that would recognize Somaliland's independence in exchange for a naval port.

This agreement, however, sparked a diplomatic crisis with Somalia. Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud cautioned Ethiopia against implementing the plan, citing the risk of war. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sought to defuse tensions, emphasizing the fraternal relationship between Ethiopia and Somalia and the mutual interest in continued trade.

In January 2020, landlocked Ethiopia re-established its navy for the first time since 1991, when the war with Eritrea deprived it of its access to the Red Sea. Earlier in December 2019, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed met his Norwegian counterpart Prime Minister Erna Solberg in Oslo, where they discussed rebuilding the lost Ethiopian navy.

Amidst this impasse, Ethiopia looks to France, a longstanding EU partner with historical ties dating back to the establishment of a French protectorate in Djibouti in 1833. France's connection with Ethiopia was further solidified when Emperor Menelik II granted France its largest embassy in 1907.

Today, Ethiopia is a significant market for France, being its fifth-largest in sub-Saharan Africa and yielding the second-largest trade surplus. The two nations engage in substantial trade, with France exporting transport equipment and pharmaceuticals, while importing Ethiopian agricultural products like coffee.

Moreover, a letter of intent has been signed to establish an Ethiopian naval component with French support. France has already contributed to the rebuilding of the Ethiopian navy, providing training and expertise. The cooperation extends to



Ethiopian Defense Chief of Staff, General Berhanu Jula, was recently awarded the rank of Field Marshal

other military branches, with initiatives to enhance language skills and infrastructure at the Ethiopian International Peacekeeping Training Centre (EIPKTC). In parallel, Ethiopia's military has been in discussions with France to upgrade its aerospace capabilities, particularly in the transport sector. This includes potential procurement of helicopters, missiles, UAVs, and aircraft, as revealed in a letter from Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali to French President Emmanuel Macron. The letter outlines Ethiopia's intention to strengthen its Air Force with advanced equipment and training for pilots and technicians.

The proposed acquisitions include transport helicopters, multi-role helicopters, transport aircraft, attack helicopters, fighter jets, UAVs, ballistic missiles, and electronic warfare systems. These procurements underscore Ethiopia's commitment to enhancing its military capabilities in the face of regional challenges and its reliance on France's support to achieve these goals.

# PROFORCE AND GIDS SIGN LANDMARK PARTNERSHIP ON DEFENCE COLLABORATION



**EKENE LIONEL**

In a significant development for international defence cooperation, Global Industrial & Defence Solutions (GIDS) of Pakistan and Proforce Intelligence Systems Limited (PISL) of Nigeria have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) during the Africa Airforce forum held in Abuja. The MOU aims to strengthen bilateral relations, enhance technological exchange, and promote peace and security in the region.

GIDS, Pakistan's largest defence conglomerate, specializes in the export of military, security, and technological products and services. Their expertise spans various domains, including Air, Land, Sea, NBC Defence, Satellite Imaging, AI, Security, and Riot Protection. With a robust portfolio and a reputation for innovation, GIDS has become a key player in the global defence industry.

Proforce Intelligence Systems Limited (PISL) stands as Nigeria's first indigenous defence manufacturing company. As a leading defence provider in West Africa, PISL has demonstrated its commitment to advancing Nigeria's defence capabilities. The collaboration with GIDS represents a significant step forward for PISL and the Nigerian defence sector.

### Localizing Defence Technologies

The central focus of the MOU is to facilitate the localization of defence technologies in Nigeria. GIDS will support PISL in producing licensed defence equipment within the country. By leveraging GIDS's expertise, PISL aims to enhance its manufacturing capabilities and contribute to Nigeria's self-reliance in defence production.

## Building Capacity and Responding to Security Challenges

The agreement goes beyond technology transfer. It seeks to build capacity by exchanging knowledge and expertise between the two nations. As emerging security challenges continue to evolve, this collaboration will enable both countries to respond effectively and proactively.

### A Historic Agreement

Asad Kamal, Chief Executive Officer of GIDS, expressed his pride in signing this historic agreement. Speaking at the Africa Airforce forum, he emphasized the commitment of both Pakistan and Nigeria to regional stability and security. The MOU reflects their joint dedication to promoting peace and safeguarding their nations.

During the forum, Proforce displayed its PF Viper tactical armoured vehicle, showcasing Nigeria's indigenous defence capabilities. Additionally, GIDS demonstrated its cutting-edge products, including the Sharpar II Block 2 drone, precision-guided munitions, and missiles. The event provided a platform for both companies to highlight their technological prowess and foster collaboration.

In summary, the MOU signed between GIDS and PISL represents a milestone in Pakistan-Nigeria relations. It underscores the importance of international cooperation in addressing security challenges and advancing defence capabilities. As the two nations move forward, this partnership promises to strengthen ties and contribute to a safer and more secure world.



Asad Kamal, Chief Executive Officer of GIDS and Proforce CEO, Ade Ogundeyin, alongside their delegates during the 2024 Africa Airforce Forum in Abuja.

# MILKOR AND AERODATA PARTNER ON MARITIME SURVEILLANCE

The AeroForce 380 is expected to inherit the Milkor 380's safety and operational efficiency features.



SARAH LESEDI

At the forefront of technological innovation in aerial surveillance, South African defense company Milkor and German aerospace firm Aerodata AG have unveiled their latest collaborative venture, the AeroForce 380, at the ILA Berlin Air Show 2024. This new Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) unmanned aerial system (UAS) is built upon the robust Milkor 380 platform and is poised to rank among the top ten MALE UAVs globally for maritime operations.

The partnership, which was first announced at the Paris Air Show in 2023, has culminated in the AeroForce 380—a

UAS that synergizes the Milkor 380's performance with maritime surveillance sensors from Optimare Systems, an Aerodata subsidiary. This integration significantly augments the Milkor 380's capabilities, tailoring it for civilian use, especially in maritime monitoring and data collection.

Classified as a MALE system, the AeroForce 380 also operates within the Low Altitude Long Endurance (LALE) segment, offering versatility for various naval and coast guard missions. These include EEZ surveillance, pollution monitoring, fishery patrols, search and rescue, counter-narcotics, anti-piracy, and border patrols.

LAND | SEA | AIR

# Mwari. Legendary African Warrior

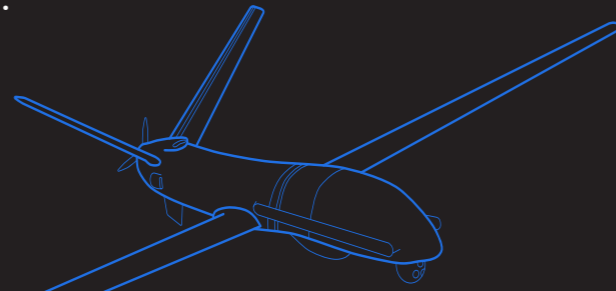


The Mwari is a legendary all-seeing and all-knowing deity as described in the Shona language. Today the legend lives on in the multi-mission African-designed and manufactured aircraft. Equipped with the latest technology there is little that the Mwari cannot see or hear well above the clouds. Combining the best features of a reconnaissance aircraft with those of an attack helicopter, Mwari can stand watch for hours on-station and successfully interdict any threat with its precision weapons systems as guided by its onboard real-time, real-life actionable intelligence. It's the ultimate warfighter and game-changer for African Air Forces.



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AeroForce® 380 is characterised by the fact that, in addition to being a MALE UAS, it can also be used efficiently as a LALE UAS (LALE stands for “Low Altitude Long Endurance”), i.e. below 10,000 feet (approx. 3,000 meters).



Milkor's comprehensive surveillance package for maritime forces comprises the AeroForce 380, a sensor suite, a ground control station (GCS), and a ground data terminal, along with commissioning services and training for operational personnel. The minimum sensor configuration includes side-looking airborne radar (SLAR), electro-optical/infrared (EO/IR) sensors, and automatic identification systems (AIS). The AeroForce 380's flight control system supports autonomous operations, minimizing the need for human intervention.

The AeroForce 380 distinguishes itself as a naval variant of the Milkor 380, boasting a maximum range of 4,000 kilometers and a continuous operational capacity of up to 35 hours. Optimized for naval tasks, it typically operates between 1,000 and 10,000 feet but can ascend to 23,000 feet if required. Its mission flexibility allows it to cover extensive distances, making it ideal for prolonged surveillance and reconnaissance missions.

With a maximum takeoff weight (MTOW) of 1,300 kg and a payload capacity of 250 kg, the AeroForce 380 can cruise at 18,000 feet and reach a maximum altitude of 23,000 feet, with a service ceiling of 30,000 feet. It operates at a maximum speed of 118 knots indicated airspeed (KIAS), equivalent to 218 kilometers per hour.

Aerodata's contribution to this project includes cutting-edge mission system technology and maritime surveillance sensors from Optimare Systems GmbH. This integrated approach ensures that the AeroForce 380 remains a leader in maritime surveillance technology.

The AeroForce 380 is expected to inherit the Milkor 380's safety and operational efficiency features, such as anti-icing capabilities, a turbocharged engine, and compatibility with 110LL Avgas fuel. It also supports both line-of-sight (LOS) and beyond line-of-sight (BLOS) data link connectivity for reliable long-distance communication.

Harry Cassidy, Milkor's head of Business Development in Europe, emphasized the significance of this collaboration, stating that it sets a new standard in global maritime surveillance by merging advanced unmanned technologies with proven sensors. Ghaazim Rylands, CEO of Milkor Integrated Systems, expressed optimism about the Milkor 380's deployment readiness and the positive feedback received from potential clients.

Milkor anticipates delivering several Milkor 380 units within the next year, with six units slated for completion by the end of 2024. This rapid production aligns with Milkor's commitment to addressing market demands with innovative UAV technology, reinforcing the Milkor 380's reputation as a versatile platform for ISTAR operations.

## MILKOR PITCHES 380 DRONE TO DR CONGO



SARAH LESEDI

South Africa's defence company Milkor is hoping to sell 12 of its new Milkor 380 drone to the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is looking to procure drones since fighting resumed with the M23 rebels.

Tshisekedi administration has already bought Chinese CH-4 drones in large numbers, and may be looking at acquiring more.

Specifically engineered for extended Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) missions, the Milkor 380 is designed to accommodate an external payload of 210 kilograms, which includes an assortment of weapons and sensors.

The Milkor 380 drone was one of the main attractions at the last Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) exhibition, held in Pretoria, South Africa.

Milkor displayed the UAV alongside Al Tariq X-series precision guided munitions, Halcon Desert Sting DS-16 guided bombs, FZ602 laser-guided rocket launchers, and

Airborne Technologies' Self Contained Aerial Reconnaissance (SCAR) Pod.

Milkor has achieved a significant milestone with the inaugural flight of its Milkor 380 unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), representing a substantial step forward in the development of its flagship aircraft, which stands as the largest armed UAV originating from Africa.

The Milkor 380 boasts a formidable wingspan of 18.6 meters and an impressive maximum takeoff weight of 1,300 kilograms.

Milkor has designated the first five units of this UAV for South African use, with the first aircraft already undergoing comprehensive testing and evaluation at its expansive 10,000 square meter manufacturing facility located in Cape Town. This commitment was solidified through a memorandum of understanding signed between Milkor, Armscor, and the South African Air Force at the Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) expo held in September 2022.



## CHAD INTERCEPTS ARMS TRAFFICKING FROM SUDAN

EKENE LIONEL

In an operation against arms trafficking in Central Africa, the Chad-Sudan joint force has intercepted a substantial cache of weapons en route to Lake Chad. The haul, comprising 296 firearms of various calibers, including two RPGs and 17 pistols, was showcased to the media by the joint force.

The seizure took place during a law enforcement operation in the village of Teleguey, located in the Djourfal Ahmar Department. The display of the seized arms was conducted in the presence of notable figures such as the Governor of Ouaddaï Province, General Bachar Ali Souleymane, and the Coordinator of the Eastern Operational Zones, General Ousmane Bahar Mahamat Itno.

This event underscores the ongoing

challenges faced by the Sahel region, where criminal organizations and terrorist groups exploit vulnerabilities to traffic illicit goods, including weapons, ammunition, and counterfeit medicine. The porous borders of countries like Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, The Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal have historically facilitated legitimate trade but now serve as conduits for illegal activities.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) emphasizes the need for a collaborative regional approach to combat organized crime effectively. The illicit economy not only finances but also equips extremist groups, contributing to a significant rise in violence across Africa. In 2022, extremist violence claimed over



19,100 lives, marking a 48% increase from the previous year, with the majority of incidents occurring in the Sahel and Somalia.

The most popular weapon, the Kalashnikov AK-47 has been in all conflict in Africa since the 1950s. A rifle of choice for rebels, terrorists, drug lords and gangsters alike. This singular firearm has seen the rise and fall of African empires, dictators and nations from the North down to the South. Virtually everyone in Africa has heard about it and it symbolizes either a tool for self-defense, oppression or liberation depending on the wielder. Arms trafficking particularly benefits violent extremist groups such as al-Shabaab, Ansaroul Islam, Islamic State Sahel Prov-

ince, Islamic State in Somalia, and Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen. The use of explosives, often sourced from illegal mining operations, further exacerbates the situation.

The issue of arms supplies to rebel forces remains contentious, with evidence suggesting that the Sudanese Government has provided support to Chadian armed groups. Despite official denials, investigations indicate that weapons, including those of Chinese origin, have been funneled to rebels in Chad. The dynamics of the arms trade in the region are complex, with flows occurring in both directions between Sudan and Chad, raising concerns at the international level.



The first United States C-17 Globemaster III aircraft departed from Air Base 101 in Niamey on 7 June 2024.

## US. FORCES LEAVES NIGER

EKENE LIONEL

The presence of US forces has been a deterrent to militant activities, and their absence could embolden insurgent groups.

The United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) recently confirmed the start of US forces' withdrawal from Niger, marking a significant shift in American military presence in the region. The first C-17 Globemaster III aircraft departed from Air Base 101 in Niamey on 7 June 2024, signifying a pivotal moment in the broader context of US strategy in the Sahel and West Africa.

In May, the Pentagon issued a formal directive for the withdrawal of all 1,000 U.S. combat troops from Niger, marking a significant shift in the United States' counterterrorism operations and its strategic stance in West Africa.

This March, the junta in Niger officially ended the military agreement that allowed the deployment of US personnel within its borders.

For over a decade, Niger has been a critical hub for US military operations aimed at counterterrorism and regional stability. The withdrawal represents a significant change in US policy, reflecting both evolving strategic priorities and the complex dynamics of regional security. The decision to withdraw comes amidst ongoing instability in the Sahel region, where militant groups such as Boko Haram and Islamic State affiliates continue to pose significant threats.

The withdrawal also highlights the shift-

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ing allegiance of the putschists in Niger, who, since sacking democratic President Mohamed Bazoum last year, have aligned militarily with Russia. This April, Military instructors and personnel from Russia's defence ministry arrived in Niger, signaling that the West African country is building closer relations with Moscow like its junta-led neighbours. The military instructors are bringing an air defense system and will train the Nigerien troops.

US authorities, however, said the withdrawal of US forces is being done in cooperation with Nigerien authorities.

AFRICOM's press release highlights the "productive cooperation between the US and Nigerien forces" through the Joint Disengagement Commission. This collaboration is essential for ensuring an orderly and secure withdrawal, which is slated for completion by 15 September 2024.

The withdrawal of US forces raises questions about the future of US engagement in the region and its implications for both Niger and broader West African security.

The departure of the first C-17 signifies not just logistical prowess but also the complex coordination required for such an operation, officials said.

The US Africa Command Director of Strategy, Engagement, and Programs, Kenneth Ekman, a US Air Force Major General, lauded the professionalism of US service members, noting, "The US service members I have met here continue to impress me with their professionalism and commitment to their mission despite the unique set of challenges they have faced over the last few months."

The transition from planning to execution underscores the extensive preparations undertaken by the US Department of Defense, officials said. A small contingent of US personnel has been deployed to Niger to provide logistical support, ensuring a smooth withdrawal of remaining forces and assets from Air Bases 101 and 201. This planning is crucial to avoid any potential security vacuum that militant groups could exploit.

The Nigerien Ministry of National Defense has emphasised its commitment to protecting and securing American forces throughout the withdrawal process. This assurance is vital given the precarious security environment in the Sahel. The collaboration between US and Nigerien officials aims to mitigate any negative impacts of the withdrawal on local and regional stability.

However, the broader im-

plications of the US withdrawal are multifaceted. While the withdrawal may be seen as a response to changing priorities and resource allocations, it also raises concerns about the ability of local forces to manage security challenges independently. The presence of US forces has been a deterrent to militant activities, and their absence could embolden insurgent groups.

The withdrawal also highlights the shifting allegiance of the putschists in Niger, who, since sacking democratic President Mohamed Bazoum last year, have aligned militarily with Russia. Before the withdrawal of US forces, French forces were also made to withdraw from Niger by the putschists.

"We are encouraged by this transition from planning to execution," Mr Ekman said, suggesting that the US remains committed to its objectives in Africa, albeit through different methods.

Meanwhile, in the wake of a recent coup in Niger, the United States and France 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.



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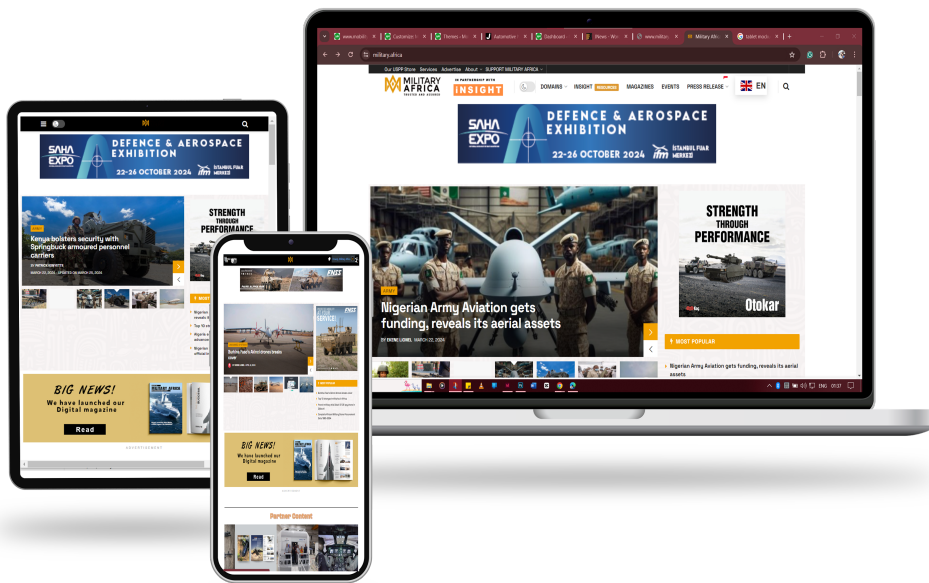
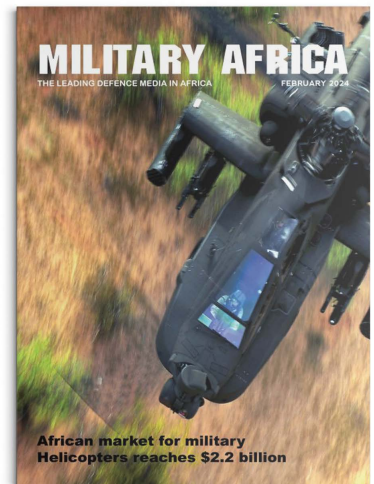
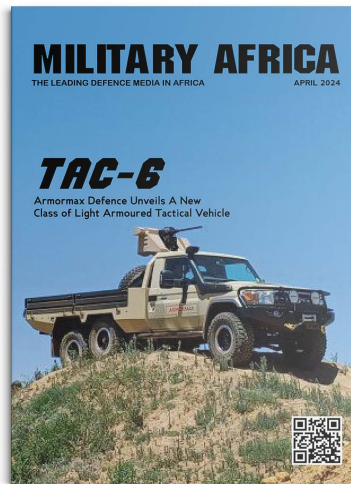
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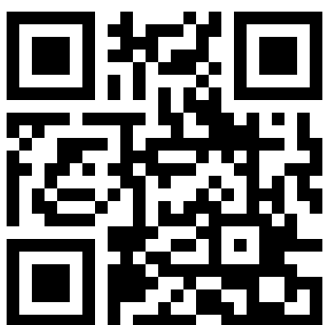
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