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**Proforce defence unveils  
PF Hulk 4x4  
armoured personnel carrier**

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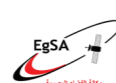
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FEATURED

## Proforce defence unveils PF Hulk 4x4 armoured personnel carrier

Nigeria's arms manufacturer Proforce defence has unveiled it's all-new armoured personnel carrier, the PF Hulk.

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# Proforce defence unveils PF Hulk 4x4 armoured personnel carrier



The Hulk is the latest in a growing range of Proforce armoured vehicles. In July 2022, the company unveiled the new lightweight PF Fury vehicle, which it said is designed to cater to the needs of the Nigerian military's infantry and Special Operations forces. [Image by Proforce Defence]

**Ekene Lionel**

**N**igeria's arms manufacturer Proforce defence has unveiled its all-new armoured personnel carrier, the PF Hulk.

According to a Proforce social media announcement on 25 June, the "PF Hulk" MRAP is a versatile vehicle designed to transport personnel or military supplies while providing necessary protection. It supports the installation of weapon systems and specialized equipment and can tow trailed systems.

With a gross vehicle weight (GVW) of 15 tons and a protection level of 3a / 3b according to

STANAG 4569 standards, it can carry up to 10 personnel.

Also, according to Proforce's brochure distributed at the 3rd Africa Air Force Forum held in Abuja last May, the armoured vehicle's Gross weight is 14,500kg, and fitted with a YaMZ-536 turbocharged diesel engine.

The PF Hulk MRAP is equipped with a 360-horsepower engine, a 6-speed automatic or 5-speed mechanical transmission gear box, and has a fuel endurance of 1,000 km.

The PF Hulk features a road clearance of 400 mm, length of 6,500 mm, width of 2,550 mm, and a height of 2,800 mm.

This new vehicle joins a growing number of tactical vehicles in Proforce's portfolio. Its first publicly unveiled armoured vehicle – the PF Ara (or Thunder in English) was unveiled in August 2017.

An improved variant, the PF Ara II MRAP was unveiled in 2019. Eight of which were delivered to the Nigerian Army in 2018 out of an order of 30. Proforce Nigeria disclosed that the Ara II offers significant enhancements, most notably a fully monocoque hull.

The PF Hulk appears to be a copy of the Russian VPK-Ural/Spartak, which was first revealed in 2019. It is based on a Ural truck chassis with a V-shaped hull to improve protection against

mines. Known as the Spartak from 2022, the vehicle is in Russian military service and has also been spotted in Libyan service – an export order for 60 VPK-Ural vehicles was announced in August 2020 and a batch was seen on a production line when Russian Deputy Defence Minister Alexey Krivoruchko visited a VPK factory in November 2021.

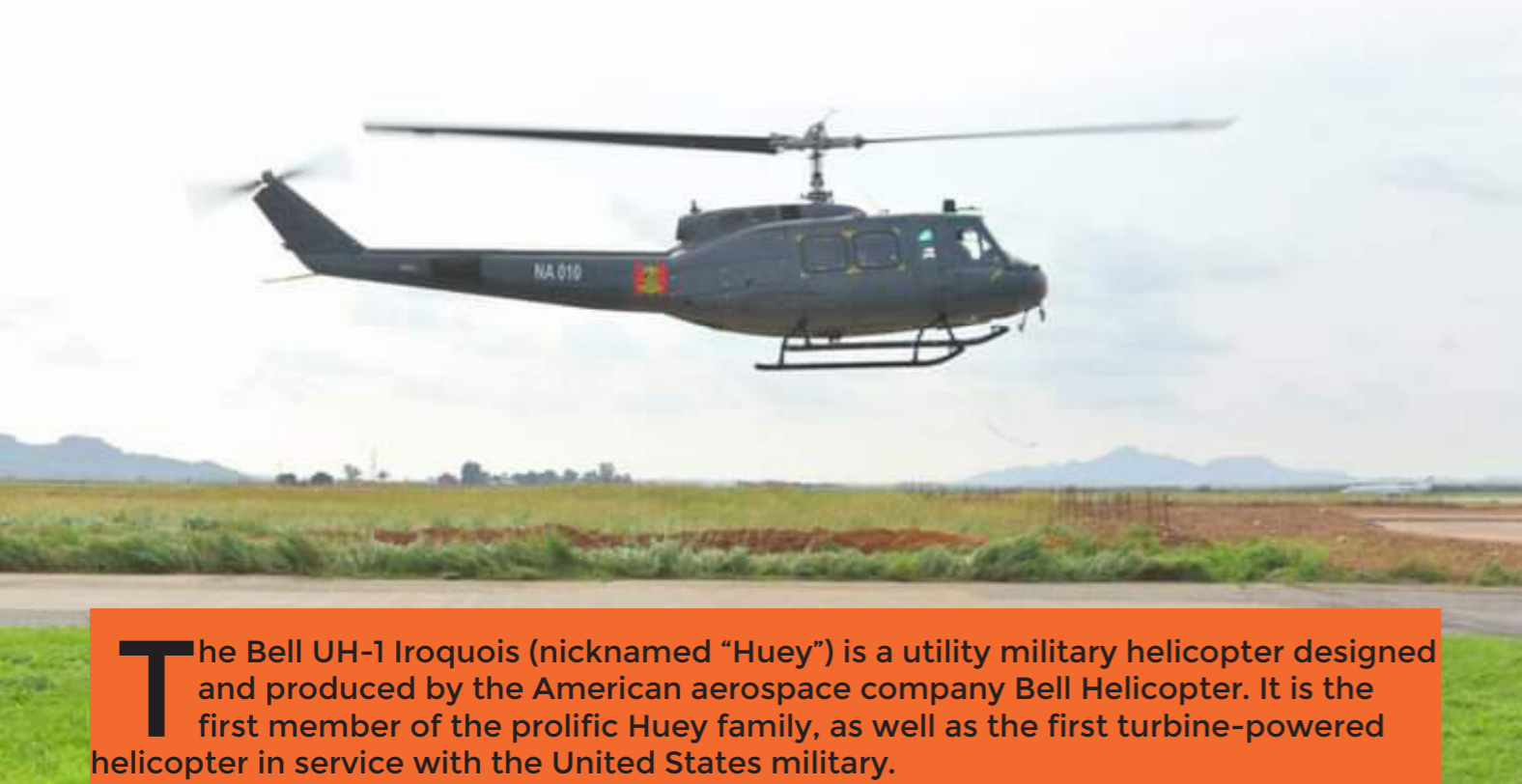
The Spartak is primarily intended for use by Russian special forces during operations, including the recent invasion of Ukraine. Additionally, it serves as a dedicated platform for the Russian National Guard and other internal troops. Drawing from Russian experiences in Syria, the Spartak places a strong emphasis on crew protection and vehicle modularity.

Key features of the Spartak include reinforced front and roof armor capable of withstanding 12.7 mm fire, along with supplementary protection to resist 14.5 mm rounds. The vehicle is designed following the MRAP (Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected) principle, featuring a V-shaped hull to withstand blasts equivalent to 6 to 8 kg of TNT. The standard armament for the Spartak consists of a 12.7 mm Kord machine gun, mounted on a fully protected 360° turret. However, it can also be configured to accommodate other weaponry, such as PK/PKP machine guns or AGS-17/30/40 automatic grenade launchers. Notably, VPK (Military Industrial Company) indicates that the Spartak can be equipped with a remote-controlled turret similar to the Arbalet-DM.



This new vehicle joins a growing number of tactical vehicles in Proforce's portfolio. It's first publicly unveiled armoured vehicle – the PF Ara (or Thunder in English) was unveiled in August 2017.

# Nigerian Army Aviation receives Bell UH-1 Huey helicopters



The Bell UH-1 Iroquois (nicknamed “Huey”) is a utility military helicopter designed and produced by the American aerospace company Bell Helicopter. It is the first member of the prolific Huey family, as well as the first turbine-powered helicopter in service with the United States military.

## Ekene Lionel

Nigerian Army Aviation has taken delivery of two American-built Bell UH-1 Huey helicopters (NA010 and NA011) as the ramp-up of foundational assets continues.

NA 011 was until June registered as ZT-RAI in South Africa. It was manufactured in 1966 and served with the US Army until 1996, when it was delivered to Helinet Corp in California as N313CF. It was subsequently operated by Northwest Helicopters and Turbines LLC before being delivered to South Africa in 2015.

NA 010 was until June this year registered as ZT-RCS in South Africa – it was put up for sale earlier in the year. It was manufactured in 1968 and served with the US Army before entering the civilian market as N518CB. It was exported by Northwest Helicopters to South Africa in

2014. Northwest Helicopters has specialised in the refurbishment, repair, maintenance and overhaul of UH-1H helicopters for over 40 years.

The Nigerian Army (NA) is currently setting up its aviation branch, from modernized manned helicopters like the Cayuse Warrior Scout helicopter, Bell UH-1D utility helicopter, the fixed-wing aircraft like the MF-212 light aircraft, to fully autonomous platforms such as the Textron Aerosonde UAS, Ziyon UAS Blowfish thus, giving pilots greater standoff from enemy threats. Also, a newly formed UAV command will operate alongside the Nigerian Air Force Combat Reconnaissance Group (203 CRG) in Gombe state.

The Bell UH-1 Iroquois, commonly known as the “Huey,” is a multipurpose utility helicopter

famous for its widespread use during the Vietnam War. Bell developed the helicopter in the mid-1950s and produced more than 16,000 units between 1955 and 1976, over 7,000 of which served in Vietnam. The aircraft were used primarily for troop and cargo transport, medical evacuations, and aerial attack.

The Huey was developed as the Bell Model 204 and incorporated lessons learned during the Korean War about helicopter operations. A larger Model 205 was introduced in 1961, more familiarly known as the UH-1D. Hueys have served with all branches of the U.S. military, as well as multiple U.S. government agencies and at least 48 foreign countries. Many Hueys are still in use today.

The helicopter features an impressive power, effective weaponry, and precision sensors. All included to carry out a variety of complex missions in. Whatever the task, the Huey is the ultimate workhorse. It features a seating capacity of 8 passengers, a maximum speed of 170 knots, and a maximum range of 325 nautical miles under its own power.

The Nigerian Army Bell UH-1H Huey helicopters, were formally received by the Chief

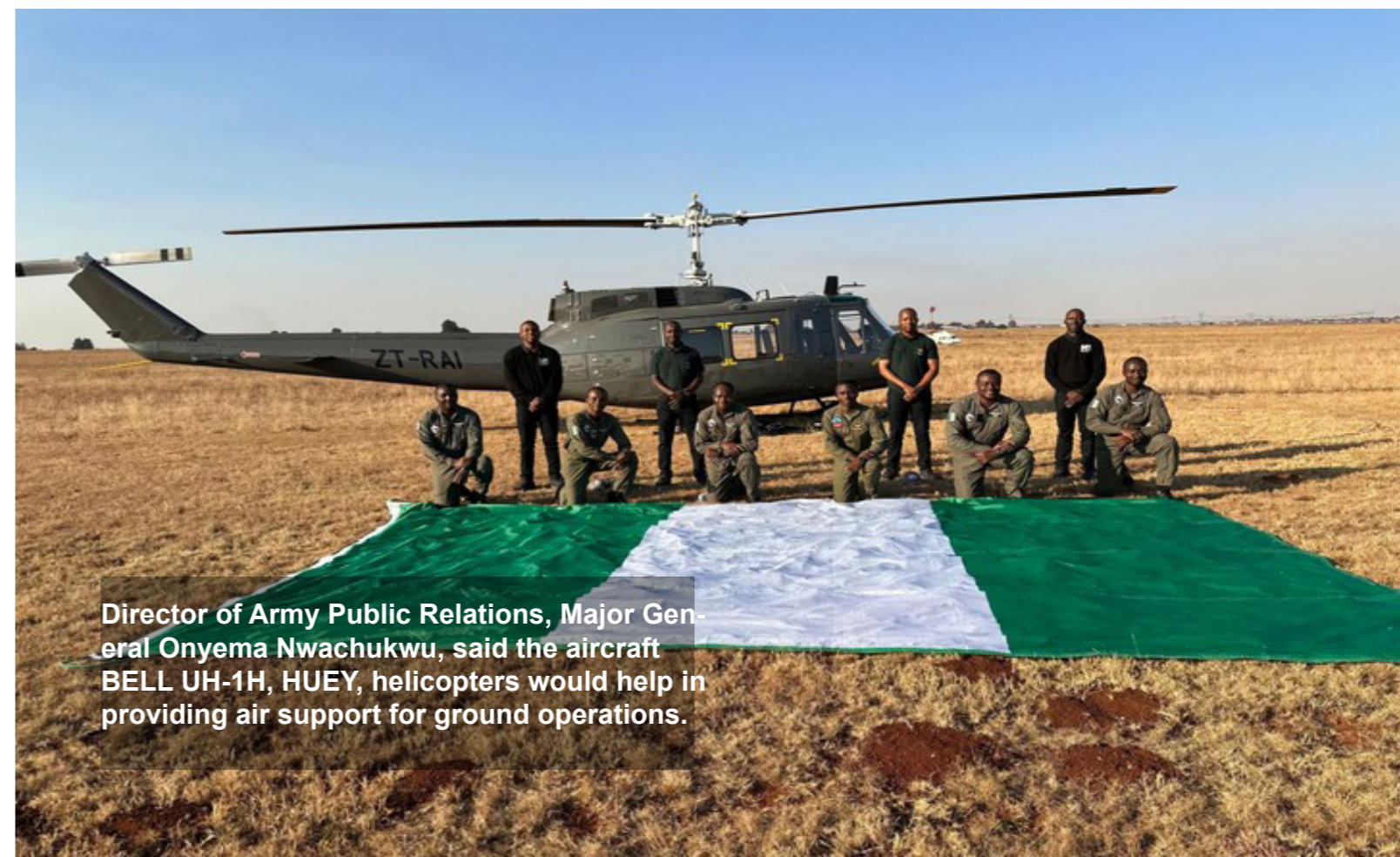
of Army Staff (COAS), Lieutenant General Taoreed Lagbaja in a brief ceremony held at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja on Thursday 20 June, 2024.

Receiving the aircrafts, General Lagbaja, noted that the renewed drive to establish an NA Aviation wing was conceived by the then-former COAS, Lieutenant General Kenneth Minimah (rtd), in 2014, with a three-phase ten-year implementation plan.

The COAS extolled former Chiefs of Army Staff, maintaining, that their tenacity and drive, along with the collective efforts of personnel and Nigerian Government’s political will, have been instrumental in realizing the fruition of NA Aviation.

Gen Lagbaja appreciated the various successive administrations for their support in training NA Pilots and Ground Crews as well as putting in place requisite structures.

The procurement of this Huey helicopter would help improve the operational capabilities of the Nigerian Army to curb the insecurity ravaging the country. The Nigerian Army blamed the lack of air power as the reason for the prolonged battle with the Boko Haram insurgents. The



Director of Army Public Relations, Major General Onyema Nwachukwu, said the aircraft BELL UH-1H, HUEY, helicopters would help in providing air support for ground operations.

service also opined that it needs its own aerial domain capability to quickly wrap up the long-drawn military campaign.

The BELL UH-1H Helicopters are equipped with advanced sensors and enablers to conduct a range of missions, including reconnaissance, surveillance, rescue, logistics, transportation, and medical evacuation.

The NA Aviation already has efforts underway to help realize its vision for heliborne and autonomous operations in the air domain.

A \$3.2 million investment for the construction of the first Army aviation hangar at the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Airport in Minna, Niger State was allocated.

The new hangar is expected to house an impressive fleet of aerial assets, including 12 MD530 Cayuse Warrior series attack helicopters, 10 Bayraktar TB2 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), 8 Magnus light attack aircraft, and the American-Built Bell UH-1 Huey Helicopters.

The hangar will also accommodate fully autonomous platforms like the Textron Aerosonde UAS

and Ziyon UAS Blowfish, enhancing the pilots' ability to operate at a safe distance from potential threats.

These platforms are crucial for the Army's surveillance, reconnaissance, and patrol operations, providing a significant boost to the nation's defense capabilities.

The Nigerian Army's vision for a robust aerial domain capability has been in the works since 2020 when it announced plans to procure combat platforms, particularly attack helicopters, to support its troops in the northeastern theater.

Current Nigerian Army aviation capabilities include light transport and utility and unmanned systems in form of two Bell 412EP, three Eurocopter EC135 and a number of Textron Aerosonde MK4.7, Ziyon Blowfish UAS, and other DJI-type commercial-grade drones sourced from the civilian market.

The Nigerian Army has partnered with the French Army light aviation French Army Light Aviation (French: Aviation légère de l'armée de Terre, ALAT).



The establishment of the Nigeria Army Aviation Wing could lead to bringing the insurgency across the country to a stop or at best reduce it to the barest minimum as the Nigerian Army (NA) has taken a significant step in enhancing its operational capabilities.



The BELL UH-1H Helicopters are equipped with advanced sensors and enablers to conduct a range of missions, including reconnaissance, surveillance, rescue, logistics, transportation, and medical evacuation.



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pilots.

In 2018, the Nigerian Air Force placed an order for six Leonardo AW109 helicopters, referred to as the AW109 Powers -the AW109M is the militarized version of the AW109E that can be armed with heavy machine gun pods and 70 mm rocket launchers. Two AW109 helicopter was procured in 2020, but several of the type has been lost to crashes; one in July 2017 in Borno state, one on November 2019 in Enugu, and another one in June 2019 in Kastina.

Moving on, the NAF will also place an order for 24 M-346 light fighter-trainer aircraft from Leonardo and two C-295 medium tactical transport aircraft manufactured by Airbus. Talks between officials of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Italian officials have reached an advanced stage for the procurement and delivery of 24 Alenia Aermacchi M-346 Master light combat aircraft, worth an estimated €1.2 billion.

Abubakar explained that the new planes will be used to bolster military offensives against jihadist groups and armed gangs that have been terrorizing Nigeria's northwest and central states.

Deliveries of the new aircraft are expected to begin next year.



**These additional helicopters are expected to be delivered to the NAF before the end of first quarter 2023. This, he said would further boost NAF's air power employment and projection capabilities as well as air combat training.**



## Nigeria orders 12 additional AW-109 helicopters

**EKENE LIONEL**

**T**he Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has announced plans to further boost its counter-terrorism capabilities by procuring 50 new military aircraft, which includes 12 new AW-109 multi-purpose helicopters from AgustaWestland now (Leonardo.)

The AgustaWestland AW109 is a lightweight, twin-engine, eight-seat multi-purpose helicopter built by the Italian manufacturer Leonardo S.p.A. (formerly AgustaWestland, merged into the new Finmeccanica since 2016).

Speaking at the opening of two new aircraft hangars in northwestern Nigeria, Chief of the Air Staff Hassan Bala Abubakar said the country will acquire 12 AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters and a dozen more AW109 multi-purpose helicopters to replace the existing acquisition of a single AW-139 helicopter.

Incidentally, Nigeria already fields various variants of the AW-109 helicopter, up to 15 units of the A109E/LUH (Light Utility Helicopter), and two Trekker variant from Leonardo used for combat operations against militants in northeast Nigeria, as well as for tactical training of future NAF helicopter

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# Egyptian Air Force eyes Chinese fighter jets to counter F-35

PATRICK KENYATTE

The Egyptian Air Force is considering the possibility of acquiring Chinese J-10C and J-31 fighter jets to modernize its fleet and replace American combat aircraft.

The Arab Republic of Egypt wants to modernize its air force in line with its talks with the People's Republic of China.

Official sources have announced that the Egyptian Air Force is holding talks for the J-10C and J-31 fighter jets. In addition to the J-10C, which stands out with its affordable cost, Egypt is also very interested in the J-31 fighter jets to counter the F-35 stealth combat aircraft actively used by Israel in the region.

The J-10C fighter jet is known for its advanced capabilities and relatively low cost, while the J-31 is considered comparable to the Israeli Air Force's F-35 jets. Egypt is seeking to diversify its military equipment, taking into account sanctions imposed on Russia and the close ties between the US and Israel.

While the J-10 is a very maneuverable fourth-generation fighter jet, the J-31 is a



The Shenyang J-31 is one of China's first attempts at a fifth-generation fighter jet. If exported to Egypt, this would be the first international sale for the J-31 unless Pakistan beats Egypt to ordering the J-31.

low-observable fighter jet. With Russia currently embroiled in a long war on Ukraine with resulting sanctions and the United States very close to Egypt's neighbor Israel, then China seems a logical secondary supplier.

The J-10C can carry a targeting pod, laser-guided bombs, and air-to-air missiles. The J-10C also comes with infrared search and track equipment and an active electronically scanned array (AESA). For power, the J-10C relies on the Shenyang WS-10 engine built by the PRC.

Egypt's move comes amid rising tensions between Russia, the US and China. The Egyptian army has increased its military investments with China in recent years in response to the close military ties between Israel and the US. The US threatened to sanction Egypt

if Cairo goes ahead with its planned purchase if the Russian built Sukhoi Su-35 super flanker fighter jet. Egypt had already operate a number of Chinese warplanes including the Xi'an H-6 bombers and simple F-7B and J-6 fighter jets in previous decades and has been considering modern fighter jets from the PRC since late 2022. This interest intensified in late May 2023 when the J-10C was displayed by the August 1 Aerobatics Team at the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition in Malaysia.

Apparently, during the trade show, the Egyptians were eyeing at least 12 of the J-10Cs. The J-10C comes with an advanced electronic warfare system and active electronically scanned array (AESA) radar to support its multirole capabilities.

# Tunisian air force receives first two special mission Textron EX aircraft



C-208 aircraft are increasingly used in counter-insurgency operations around the world, notably in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**Derek Liam**

**T**unisian air force (Al Quwwat al-Jawwiya At Tunisia) receives first two special mission Textron C-208B Grand Caravan EX aircraft.

The two aircraft (N684EX and N692EX) arrived Tunisia on 24th of July via Vatry in France.

As first announced in 2021, the United States will supply a total of four Cessna Grand Caravan 208 aircraft which will likely to be converted into the Textron C-208EX by ATI Engineering Services.

The four Textron C-208EX aircraft will be equipped to carry out ISR duties for the Tunisian Air Force. The delivery of the

aircraft is part of an initiative to build Tunisian military capacity to better support the US Africom mission.

“The Caravans will not be armed but will be configured for ISR purposes “to aid in Tunisia’s border security efforts.” – the US Department of Defence said.

In March 2022, Textron Aviation secured a contract from ATI Engineering Services for the delivery of four Cessna 208B Grand Caravan EX utility aircraft to the Tunisian Air Force. ATI Engineering Services will equip the aircraft with an electro-optical/infrared sensor, tactical radio, operator console, video data link and night-vision compatible light-

ing to meet requirements for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities.

“The fleet will aid the Tunisian air force in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations in the country,” says Bob Gibbs, vice-president, Special Mission Sales for Textron Aviation.

The deal was conducted via a US government initiative to equip multiple African nations with a combined 16 Grand Caravan EX aircraft via the Foreign Military Sales process. Past recipients are Cameroon, Chad, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, and Uganda,

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South African sailors embarked on the guided-missile destroyer USS Arleigh Burke wave to their native ship SAS Amatola during joint maneuvering drills. The South African sailors are embarked on Arleigh Burke as part of a crew swap between the two ships to familiarize Sailors with a foreign navy's operation and lifestyle. Arleigh Burke departed Durban, South Africa with Amatola to kick off a series of cooperative at sea exercises geared to enhance interoperability and strengthen the ongoing partnership between the two navies. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class David Holmes.)

## Lack of maintenance sinks South Africa's 'Historic' Naval voyage to Russia

SARAH LESEDI

The South African Navy (SAN) had ambitious plans for a historic voyage to Russia, but those dreams have been dashed due to a critical issue: lack of maintenance. The cancellation of this voyage not only deals a blow to the country's prestige but also serves as a stark reminder of the dire state of the SAN's fleet.

### The Ambitious Voyage

The SAN selected the frigate SAS Amatola (F145) as the flag bearer for an extended voyage that would include participating in the Russian Navy anniversary parade in St. Petersburg. This Baltic Sea city, home to the Russian Navy Baltic fleet, was to witness a momentous occasion—the first visit of a South African Navy ship to Russia.

The plan was for SAS Amatola to circumnavigate the African continent, covering approximately 19,000 nautical miles. The frigate would sail along the east coast of Africa, through the Suez Canal, and stop at Alexandria in Egypt. From there, it would proceed through the Mediterranean Sea, the Straits of Gibraltar, the English Channel, and the North Sea before entering the Baltic Sea.

The highlight of the voyage was to be SAS Amatola's participation in the Russian Navy Anniversary Parade in St. Petersburg at the end of July. As one of the strategic BRICS partner countries, Russia held significant importance for South Africa.

SAN Public Relations said the decision to cancel Amatola's Russian visit was in line with "current defects to the vessel".

### The Harsh Reality

Unfortunately, none of these historic trips will take place. The SAN faces a critical challenge: maintaining its fleet. Traditionally, South Africa boasted the most powerful navy in sub-Saharan Africa, but today, it is a mere shadow of its former self. Government budget cuts have severely impacted the SAN's ability to keep its vessels seaworthy.

First, The SAS Drakensberg, a pivotal component of the Navy's fleet, is nearing the end of its operational life, prompting the need for a modern replacement.

An 18 August, 2021 progress report from the South African Department of Defence (DoD) revealed the grim situation. The SAN lacks sufficient funds to refit most of its frigates and submarines, leaving them far from top fighting shape. Only R786 million was allocated for naval vessel refit in the 2021/22 financial year, falling significantly short of the required R1.479 billion.

The underfunding of refit, maintenance, and repair of vessels negatively affects the preparation of naval platforms for force readiness and employment. Without proper maintenance, the SAN cannot achieve its planned sea hours.

The SAN reports ever-diminishing sea hours to Parliament each year. Driven by a declining budget, the Navy has failed to meet its annual sea hour target of 10,000 hours.

The effects of budgets cuts are far-reaching and are now being felt as only one of the four frigates, SAS Amatola, was partially refitted in 2014/15 and only one of the three submarines, SAS Manthatisi, was refitted in 2013/14.

While the three remaining frigates; SAS Isandl-

wana, SAS Spioenkop, and SAS Mendi; and the submarine and the SAS Queen Modjadji 1; could not be refitted since they became due for it due to funding shortage.

To keep naval vessels available for operations and to extend their service life depend mainly on periodically scheduled refits (major overhauls) of all systems, equipment, and machinery to ensure effective, efficient, and economical combat readiness of the total platform.

"Plans to refit the remaining three frigates and submarine will be finalized based on the availability of progressive funding to enable the phased commencement of their refits. In this regard, it is to be noted that the average cost estimate for a frigate refit amounts to R687 million and that of a submarine refit amounts to R660 million," the DoD stated.

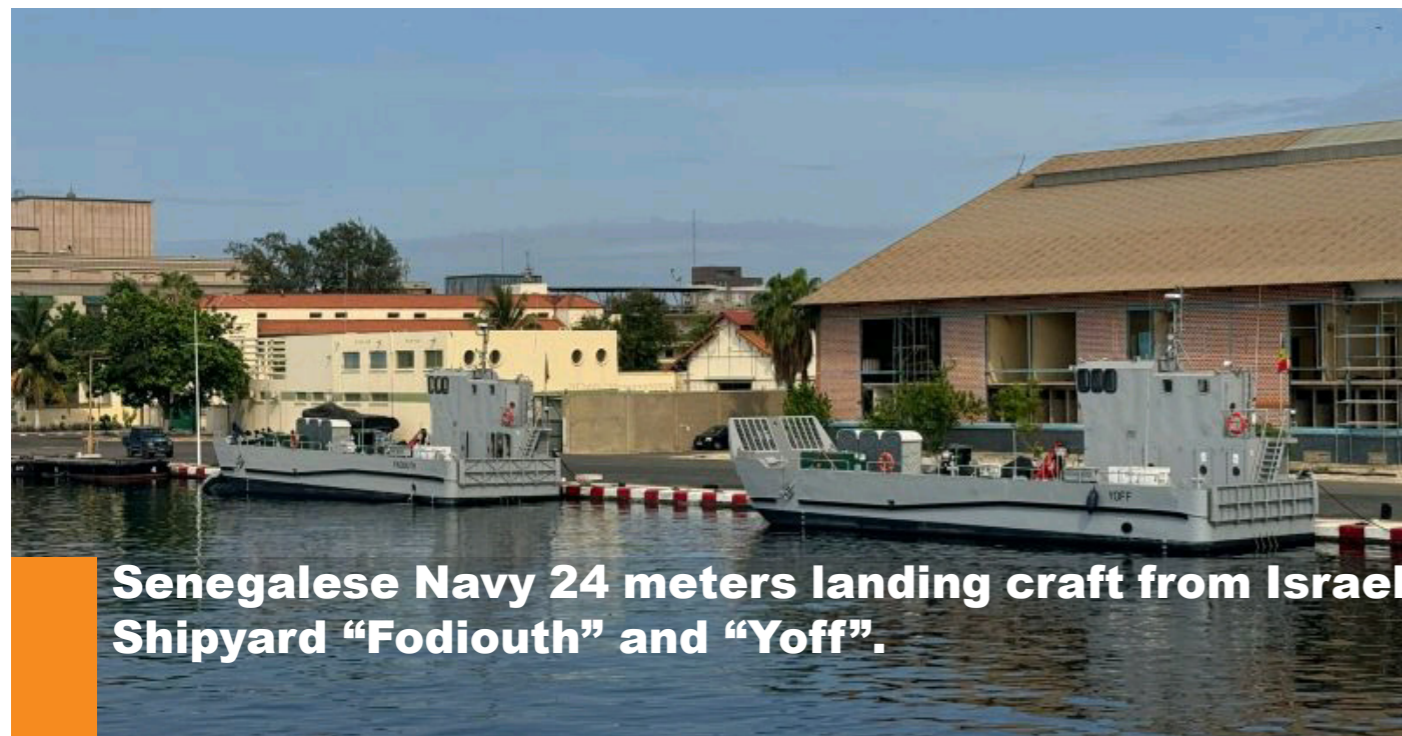
Although, Armscor Dockyard is currently refitting the submarine SAS Charlotte Maxeke and R189 million has been earmarked to ensure the completion of the current refit during the 2023/24 financial year.

South Africa's once-mighty navy now struggles to patrol its waters, let alone project influence abroad. As the SAN grapples with financial constraints, the dream of a historic voyage to Russia remains unfulfilled. The lesson is clear: neglecting maintenance can sink even the grandest of ambitions.

This funding challenge is not localized to the South African Navy alone, so far, financial woes continue to impede South African military's readiness. For years, the SANDF has been grappling with severe budget cuts which have been negatively impacting its operational efficiency. The air force has been unable to keep entire Hawk and Gripen fleets flying, and opted to place half of the Gripen fleet in 'rotational storage' in Waterkloof Air Force base.

Two of the South African Air Force helicopter types—the Oryx transport and Rooivalk attack helicopter are largely grounded, with only a handful serviceable at present. For the landward force, there is a maintenance backlog for the G5 and G6 artillery and Samil trucks.

## Senegal Navy received two 24m landing craft from Israel



Senegalese Navy 24 meters landing craft from Israel Shipyard “Fodiouth” and “Yoff”.

### EKENE LIONEL

The Senegalese navy has taken delivery of two 24 meters landing craft from the Israel Shipyards. The two vessels “Yoff” and “Fadioth” named after cities in Senegal will improve the country’s amphibious and logistical capabilities.

Israel Shipyard delivered both vessels this month to Senegal.

In 2022, Israel Shipyards announced on 15 March that it has signed an agreement with an undisclosed African customer to supply two landing ships, with an option for a third vessel. Valued at 10.7 million euros, the contract agreement will see Israel deliver the two vessels in the next 22 months. The customer has six months to decide whether or not to acquire a third vessel, for around 5.35 million euros.

The 24m Landing Craft, designed for a wide range of missions, is particularly suited for operations in rivers and lakes, addressing the operational needs of various nations. The new ships will replace an ageing fleet of Gorée and Karabane infantry and tank landing craft received from France in 2011.

According to information published by Israel Shipyards on March 17, 2024, the Israeli firm has announced the commencement of sea trials for its newly unveiled 24m Landing Craft.

“We are excited to announce that the two 24m Landing Craft (LCM) vessels have successfully arrived at their destination! This marks another significant achievement for Israel Shipyards Ltd, showcasing our dedication to delivering advanced maritime solutions.” Israel Shipyards said.

The next phase involves the Training part of the Transfer of Technology (TOT) program, where Israel Shipyards’ team will work closely with Senegalese team to ensure seamless operation and ongoing support.

“A significant advantage of Israel Shipyards is our commitment to providing tailored-made solutions and advanced technologies that meet the unique needs of our clients worldwide.” – Israel Shipyards concluded.

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# Mwari. Legendary African Warrior



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## One year later, no sign of India's 'affordable' weapons in Africa



**EKENE LIONEL**

It is exactly one year and a few months since India's defence companies proposed selling 'affordable' weapons to African militaries to help fight terrorists. In April last year, various defence companies from India showcased domestically-made helicopters, drones, and artillery at a gathering of army chiefs and officials from 31 African nations, as New Delhi, one of the world's largest arms importers seeks to become a major exporter too.

### India's defence industry

India has been working diligently to increase its presence in the arms trade and compete with powerhouse nations like Russia and China. This ambition has seen India focus its efforts on selling its domestically produced weapons to African militaries, which are often unable to afford Western-made equipment. India has already had some success in this sector and is now looking to build upon this as it hopes to become a major player in African arms deals.

India has developed and manufactured a vast array of weapons and defence systems, rang-

ing from small arms to sophisticated aircraft. These are made available to African militaries at a fraction of the cost of their Western counterparts, making them an attractive option for poorer nations. India has also made great strides in providing maintenance and support for its weapons systems, making them a reliable and cost-effective option for African militaries.

India is hoping to capitalize on its growing presence in Africa to not only sell more of its domestically produced hardware but also to gain access to new markets and further strengthen its global presence. India has already made strong inroads into the African arms market and is confident that, with the right strategies in place, it can become a major player in the sector and compete with Russia and China for arms deals.

### \$1 billion lifeline for DICON

Despite the media frenzies at the time, however, there has been little to no progress regarding the venture. Well, to be fair, there has been 'some' progress in that regard.

A few months after the promise of 'affordable' weapons, Nigeria signed a \$1 billion deal with India to boost its defence industry. The deal, which was signed with the Managing Arm of the Military-Industrial Complex of the Indian government, will see the Defense Industries Corporation of Nigeria (DICON) become 40% self-sufficient in local manufacturing and production of defence equipment by 2027.

The new deal will provide DICON with the funding and expertise it needs to modernize its facilities and produce a wider range of products. This includes everything from firearms and ammunition to armoured vehicles and advanced communication systems. It will also help to create jobs and boost the Nigerian economy. For Nigeria, the deal is a good move because it bore fruit immediately, as state-owned DICON resumed the production of arms and ammunition after years of suspension.

### One year on, no weapon sale

Besides that, there have been no actual weapons sales from India to any African recipient. Although, Botswana started talks with India's state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to acquire at least a squadron of its Tejas fighter planes, to enhance its defence capabilities. However, the deal failed to materialize.

Likewise, Egypt, one of India's strategic partners in the Middle East, expressed interest in acquiring the Akash air defence missile system, a medium-range mobile surface-to-air missile (SAM) system developed by India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and produced by Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL). The Akash missile system can target aircraft up to 45 km (28 mi) away and can neutralise aerial targets like fighter jets, cruise missiles, air-to-surface missiles, and ballistic missiles. It is in operational service with the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force.

This deal too appears to have fallen through even though Egypt had hoped to replace the IRIS-T SLM air defence system it paid to Germany, but was given to Ukraine in August. Egypt and India already have an existing robust defence cooperation, particularly in the area of military sales, training, and technical transfer of knowledge. The two countries have also been conducting joint exercises and port visits by

their naval and air forces.

It is not yet certain why the Egyptian Akash deal and Botswana Tejas fell through, however, experts believe it may be connected to Indians' complex bureaucratic process in developing, fielding, and supplying weapons.

The Tejas debacle

India even tried to sell its Tejas fighter jets to Nigeria after signing the \$1 billion defence industry bill, similarly, Nigeria rejected the aircraft. Nigeria is one of the largest and most populous countries in Africa, with a GDP of \$477 billion and a population of 214 million. It is also one of the most troubled countries in the continent, facing security threats from various sources, such as the Islamist militant group Boko Haram, separatist movements, communal violence, and piracy.

Nigeria's air force, which has a strength of about 15,000 personnel and 150 aircraft, is in dire need of modernization and expansion. According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Nigeria's air force inventory consists of mostly obsolete or ageing platforms, such as the Alpha Jet, the F-7, and several helicopters. Nigeria also operates only three JF-17 Thunders, a fighter jet jointly developed by Pakistan and China, which it acquired in 2018.

Nigeria's interest in the Tejas stems from its long-standing military and diplomatic relations with India, which date back to the 1960s. India helped Nigeria establish its defence academy and naval college, and the two countries have cooperated in joint military training, exchange programmes, and UN peacekeeping operations.

Despite the close ties between India and Nigeria, the sale of the Tejas fighter jet to Nigeria is highly unlikely, for several reasons. First, the Tejas are still unproven in combat and have not been fully operationalized by the Indian Air Force. The Tejas has faced several delays and technical issues in its development and has not yet achieved the final operational clearance (FOC) that certifies its readiness for combat. The Tejas is also yet to be equipped with some of the advanced weapons and systems that it is supposed to carry, such as the beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile (BVRAAM) and the active electronically scanned array (AESA) radar.



## Rheinmetall Denel Munition to benefit from €8.5 billion German military contract

This landmark contract solidifies Rheinmetall's leading role in the global ammunition market.

**SARAH LESEDI**

**R**heinmetall Denel Munition (RDM) is poised to significantly benefit from a historic framework agreement for 155 mm artillery ammunition from the German military.

The contract, valued at up to €8.5 billion, marks the largest in Rheinmetall's history and was signed on June 20 by Annette Lehnigk-Emden, President of the Federal Office of Bundeswehr Equipment, Information Technology and In-Service Support (BAAINBw), along with Rheinmetall representatives in Koblenz, Germany.

The primary objective of this substantial order is to replenish the Bundeswehr's stocks and support Ukraine in its defense efforts. Deliveries are set to commence in early 2025, with the Federal Republic of

Germany being the main purchaser. Additionally, partner countries including the Netherlands, Estonia, and Denmark are participating in the order.

An initial call-off from the framework contract has been made to ensure the capacity utilization of a new factory in Unterlues, Lower Saxony, Germany. This initial order, valued at approximately €880 million, includes the delivery of various 155 mm calibre projectiles, with deliveries also beginning in 2025. Rheinmetall plans to produce up to 700,000 artillery shells and 10,000 tonnes of powder annually at its facilities in Germany, Spain, South Africa, Australia, and Hungary.

**RDM's Role and Global Expansion**  
RDM, a key player in Rheinmetall's global operations, is heavily involved in various

## SH15 SUPERIOR HOWITZER OF CHINA

SH15 155 mm self-propelled gun howitzer adopts plenty of innovative designs which endows the howitzer with advantages of high accuracy, rapid maneuverability, strong firepower, quick response, and high reliability, representing the development trend of 155 mm artillery.

SH15 combat units generally operate as battalions or batteries. The weapon system possesses function modules including reconnaissance, command control, strike, assessment, and support, leading to a closed-loop combat unit to carry out long-range fire suppression, precise striking and fire support. It can be deployed in heavy mechanized troops, artillery, coastal defense troops.

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contracts secured by its German parent company. This includes a €848 million multi-year contract for ammunition supply to the Hungarian armed forces and a €192 million contract for an explosives factory in Hungary. To meet the growing global demand for artillery ammunition, RDM is running 24-hour shifts at its South African plants and investing significantly in their expansion, increasing capacity from 100,000 to 150,000 shells annually.

**Strategic Importance and Future Outlook**  
Armin Papperger, Chairman of the Executive Board of Rheinmetall AG, expressed his enthusiasm for the contract, highlighting its significance in reinforcing Rheinmetall's position as a leading ammunition supplier. He emphasized the trust placed in Rheinmetall by the Federal Republic of Germany and its allies, noting that the framework contract ensures the necessary capacity utilization of the new Unterlues factory.

Papperger also underscored the Federal Government's commitment to supporting the armed forces with reliable ammunition supplies, as evidenced by the framework contract and the new factory's development. Rheinmetall aims to produce the entire value chain for artillery ammunition at the Unterlues site, offering a comprehensive solution from a single source.

**Comprehensive Production Cap**  
Rheinmetall will produce the entire value chain for artillery ammunition at Unterlues, Lower Saxony, to offer "shot by a single source." This includes the projectile, fuse, explosive charge, and propellant charge that propels the projectile out of the barrel when fired. The site is expected to achieve an annual capacity of 100,000 projectiles from the second year of production with plans to increase this to 200,000 per year.

Addressing Global Demand

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Rheinmetall has highlighted the immense demand for artillery ammunition, as evidenced by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The current production capacity in the western world is not designed to meet these quantities, prompting Germany and other countries to plan for large-scale procurement over an extended period.

#### Diverse Ammunition Portfolio

Rheinmetall's artillery ammunition offerings include the DM121 explosive projectile, DM125 smoke projectile, and DM702 SMART search fuse ammunition (produced in collaboration with Diehl Defence). Additionally, the portfolio features the RH68 training projectile and the RH1901 and RH1902 range-optimized smoke projectiles.

The versatile 155 mm Assegai artillery ammunition family from Rheinmetall Denel Munition includes insensitive ammunition (IM), conventional explosive projectiles (High Explosive/HE), as well as smoke, illumination, infrared illumination, and other projectiles. The entire Assegai ammunition spectrum can be used at ranges of around 40 kilometers.

This landmark contract solidifies Rheinmetall's leading role in the global ammunition market.



The Rheinmetall wheeled howitzer provides rapid coming into/out of action and to leave the firing position swiftly, high rate of fire, increased firing range as well as enhanced precision through the use of the of the combat proven Rheinmetall 155mm L52 elevating mass and the use of JBMoU-compliant modular charges and projectiles.

## AKINCI DRONE SPOTTED IN LIBYA



SARAH LESEDI

A single Turkish-made Akinci unmanned combat aerial vehicle has been seen in Libya, confirming that Libya may have taken the drone into service.

The Akinci drone was spotted in Libya during Turkey's Chief of General Staff Gen. Metin Gürak visit to Libya.

Türkiye's Chief of General Staff Gen. Metin Gürak and Libya's Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibeh on Sunday met to discuss cooperation programs between their two countries' general staffs and the issue of joint military exercises.

During his visit to Libya, Gürak conveyed President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's message to Prime Minister Dbeibeh emphasizing the historical relations between the two countries, according to a statement from the Libyan government.

Although, it is not certain when the Akinci UAV was delivered, however, it was seen spotting a Libyan flag on its rudder.

First report of Tripoli acquiring the Akinci was in 2022, when Libyan politician and businessman Abdulhamid Dbeibah who is the prime minis-

ter of Libya under the Government of National Unity (GNU) in Tripoli on Tuesday 25, October 2022 visited Turkey where he signed a military cooperation with the Turkish Defence Minister Akar Hulusi.

Local media reported at the time that a deal for the acquisition of the Turkish-built Akinci drone was later signed between both countries. This move consolidated Dbeibah's grip on power by protecting his administration from a fresh offensive by Haftar's force, although, Turkish military presence is already preventing such attempts.

Dbeibah previously released a statement hinting that the AKINCI have been used in clearing Khalifa Haftar's forces and other illegals in the North African country.

The AKINCI in the picture appears to be the A variant with AI-450T turboshaft engines, each providing a maximum of 450 hp power.

Bayraktar Akinci is a high-altitude long-endurance unmanned combat aerial vehicle being manufactured by the Turkish defence company Baykar. The aircraft has a 5.5+ ton maximum takeoff weight, of which over 1,350 kg is payload.

## Turkish STM secures first export order for Boyga drone from Africa



Turkish Savunma Teknolojileri Mühendislik ve Ticaret (STM) has secured the first export order for its Boyga rotary-wing armed drone. STM announced this today, stating that the Boyga “has achieved another major export success in the field of tactical mini UAVs, further cementing its pioneering position in Türkiye.”

Designed to operate at altitudes up to 3,000 meters, BOYGA can deploy 81 mm mortar ammunition with extreme precision thanks to a sophisticated ballistic estimation algorithm. This capability makes it particularly effective in counter-terrorism and asymmetric warfare contexts. The system is compact and can be transported and operated by a single individual, enhancing its flexibility in the field.

Boyga UAV boasts an endurance of 30 minutes when carrying one piece of ammunition. It can operate up to a maximum altitude of 3000 meters above mean sea level (MSL) and can reach a cruise speed of 54 km/h. The UAV is also

designed to withstand winds up to 10 m/s.

Özgür Güteryüz, General Manager of STM, stated that the Tactical Mini UAV family, developed by STM with advanced engineering capabilities to cater for the needs of the Turkish Army, is also playing pioneering roles in the international arena:

“we have entered into a contract for the first international sale of BOYGA to an African country, thus achieving significant success in exporting all members of our tactical mini UAV family, which we have developed and which have proven themselves successfully in the field. We are also in talks for further exports of our UAVs, which are proving to be surprisingly effective in the field, and have increased our production capacity in the field of mini UAVs to meet the demands of our army and friendly and allied nations.”

Although, STM did not disclose the African customer, however, according to our Drone Pro-

curement Data, Nigeria, Uganda, and Libya are operators of STM’s drones. With Libya fielding four Kargu suicide drones acquired in 2020, Nigeria and Uganda operating five each of the Togan UAVs acquired last year respectively.

Commenting on the features of BOYGA, Güteryüz said: “The Ukraine-Russia war has once again shown how these drones and ammunition-dropping UAVs are a game-changer in the field. BOYGA provides users with significant advantages in the field, making use of its indigenous software, its specially developed ammunition and its prediction algorithm. BOYGA can hit targets with full precision from high altitudes, making it difficult to be detected by the enemy.”

BOYGA, the newest member of STM’s tactical mini UAV product family, is able to deploy its customised 81 mm mortar ammunition with full accuracy thanks to its advanced ballistic estimation algorithm.

SHAHPAR-III (GROUP 4+ UAV)

SHAHPAR-II BLOCK II (UAV SYSTEM)

FATAH-I (ROCKET)

HARBAH NG WEAPON SYSTEM (SUBSONIC CRUISE MISSILE SYSTEM)

TAIMOOR (CRUISE MISSILE WEAPON SYSTEM)

TIPU WEAPON SYSTEM (155MM CANNON LAUNCHED GUIDED PROJECTILE)

FATAH-I (MLRS)

FATAH-II (ROCKET)

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On July 15, SAMIM officially completed its mission.



## SUN SETS FOR SAMIM

Patrick Kenyette

On July 15, SAMIM officially completed its mission. Now, the focus shifts to cleaning up, packing, and returning equipment and materiel to their respective countries.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Ministerial Committee on Defence and Security recently concluded its 26th meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, where it commended the leadership and personnel involved in the just-ended SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM). This mission, which aimed to restore security and stability in Cabo Delgado, has been a critical endeavor since its deployment in July 2021.

### Commendation for Efforts

The commendation from the SADC Ministerial Committee of the Organ (MCO) underscores the significant strides made by SADC member states in bringing peace and security back to Mozambique. Despite the withdrawal of SAMIM, the region remains committed to collaborating with the Republic of Mozambique in the ongoing fight against terrorism. The MCO Chairperson, Mulambo Haimbe of Zambia, expressed confidence that the exit of SAMIM would not create a security vacuum, jeopardizing the gains achieved during its deployment.

### SAMIM's Completion and Next Steps

On July 15, SAMIM officially completed its mission. Now, the focus shifts to cleaning up, packing, and returning equipment and materiel to their respective countries. Troop-contributing countries (TCCs), including Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, are actively involved in this process.

KC-390 MILLENNIUM

# MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

AFTER AN EXTENSIVE TEST CAMPAIGN THE KC-390 MILLENNIUM IS CERTIFIED FOR FULL OPERATIONS.

From the outset, the KC-390 Millennium was designed to set a new benchmark in the medium-size military transporter segment. Developed with support from the Brazilian Air Force (FAB) and Brazilian Government, the largest and most complex aircraft ever built in the southern hemisphere has gone through a rigorous and challenging testing program, including 3,500 prototype flight test hours and close to 85,000 hours of lab tests. In March 2023, it received the coveted Full Operational Capability certification from the Brazilian Military Certification Authority (IFI - Institute of Industrial Development and Coordination), with the platform meeting or exceeding all requirements. This seal of approval, which is extremely difficult to attain, confirms the KC-390 Millennium is ready for full operational duties in all missions and showcases to the world its class-leading reliability, flexibility and performance.

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South African military personnel, who remained in Mozambique after the departure of the 6 SA Infantry (SAI) Battalion in June, have been allocated a budget of R984,368,057.

This funding covers the costs of dismantling, loading, and transporting equipment and materiel, as well as employment expenses (CoE) until year-end.

**Remaining Presence and Tasking**

While the specific units still represented in Mozambique are not publicly disclosed, they likely come from the SA Army Support Formation and the Department of Defence (DoD) Logistics Division. These elements previously provided support to the frontline forces, including infantry and limited SA Air Force (SAAF) involvement through helicopters and transport aircraft.

According to Colonel Selinah Rawlins, Acting Director of the SANDF Directorate Corporate Communication, the current task is to “backload all SANDF assets that need to be returned to South Africa.” However, the remaining infantry element will not participate in active patrols or support the Mozambique Armed Forces (FADM), aligning with the overall mission transition.

**After Action Review**

Last week’s SADC MCO meeting in Lusaka directed an after-action review. Representatives from the regional bloc secretariat, SAMIM leadership, TCCs, and the SADC Regional Peace Training Centre (RPTC) will participate in this process.

The review aims to draw lessons and make recommendations to enhance the operational effectiveness of future SADC-mandated missions.

At a parade in Pemba, Mozambique, marking the official closure of SAMIM, Mozambique’s National Defence Minister, Cristovao Chume, expressed gratitude to the regional bloc. The mission played a crucial role in restoring safety and security to Cabo Delgado province, where Ansar al-Sunna Wa Jamma (ASWJ)/Islamic State had held virtual sway over the populace since 2019.

He told an end of mission parade in the Cabo Delgado provincial capital, where SAMIM was headquartered, the multi-nation mission destroyed terrorist bases, reduced the number of terrorist attacks as well as aiding materially in returning life to normal by way of free movement of goods and people and the resumption of economic activity. “While it has not fully achieved its objectives, the mission, along with the Rwandan troops, has contributed significantly for stabilising the region through neutralising terrorists, recapturing villages, dislodging terrorists from their bases, and seizing weapons and equipment.

These efforts have facilitated the creation of conditions for the return of internally displaced persons to their homes and the safer passage of humanitarian aid. Reported deaths also decreased from 1 100 in 2021 to 644 in October 2022...By August 2023, over 570 000 internally displaced persons had

successfully returned to their homes,” Tefesehet Hailu wrote for Amani Africa of SAMIM. “Despite these successes, the situation remained precarious,” Hailu wrote, especially after insurgents increased attacks since September 2023. Since January 2024, Islamic State Mozambique (ISM) expanded its renewed campaign under the ‘kill them where you find them’ mantra, resulting in an increase in terrorist activities and internal displacement.

“Compared to the 51 attacks claimed by ISM in 2023, the group has already claimed 57 attacks within the first few months of this year. Additionally, a recent report by ACLED indicates the reestablishment of insurgents on the mainland of Palma district, where the international liquefied natural gas projects are based, for the first time since February 2023.” From December 2023 to mid-March, 110 000 people had been internally displaced. In light of further attacks, Rwanda has decided to deploy another 2 500 troops to Mozambique in addition to the 1 000 troops that were deployed in 2021 under a bilateral arrangement. On 1 July Tanzania confirmed it will maintain its 300-strong force in the northern district of Nangade even after SAMIM’s departure.

Mozambique is now reliant on military assistance from the EU and Rwanda

With SAMIM’s mandate now ended, the onus on security in Cabo Delgado province rests on the shoulders of the FADM with assistance from the Rwandan military deployment.



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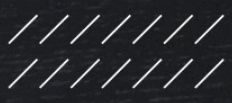
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