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**Egypt considers new
submarine acquisitions
amidst growing naval
capabilities**



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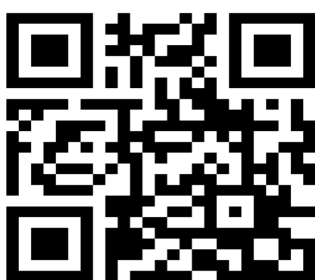
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FEATURED

Egypt considers new submarine acquisitions

The Egyptian Navy, amidst a significant period of capability growth, is seeking to replace its aging Romeo-class submarines, marking a pivotal moment in its naval procurement strategy.

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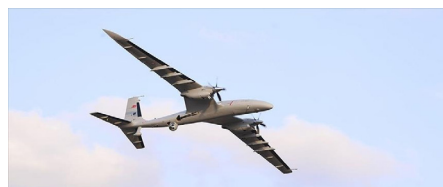
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Egypt's first Rafale F3 rolled-out in France



One of three French made Rafale fighter jets for Egypt air force is pictured at an air base in the southern France city of Istres on July 20, 2015.

STAFF WRITER



Early May 2021, Egypt signed a contract with the French Dassault Aviation company to purchase 30 Rafale fighter jets, worth 3.75 billion euro (\$4.5 billion).

The Egyptian Air Force is on the brink of enhancing its aerial capabilities with the imminent arrival of the first batch of six Dassault Rafale F3 fighters, expected by the end of this year. One of these supersonic jets, already bearing Egyptian markings and the inscription “EM09” on the tail, was recently spotted at the manufacturer’s facilities in France.

Egypt’s order for 30 new Rafale F3-R fighters in 2021 followed the cancellation of a deal for Sukhoi Su-35 jets from Russia. This new batch of Rafale fighters represents a significant upgrade from the 24 fighters previously acquired, the majority of which (18 jets) are the two-seat DM variant. The Rafale F-3R, introduced in 2018, boasts

enhanced weaponry and avionics systems, including integration with MBDA’s Meteor long-range air-to-air missile.

Expanding Egypt’s Fleet

Amid rising regional tensions, Egypt, like many other Middle Eastern countries, has been expanding its fighter fleet. In addition to the Rafale, Egypt has engaged in discussions to acquire F-15s and even Eurofighter Typhoons, although no deals have been finalized to date.

The Egyptian Air Force currently operates a diverse fleet, including: 24 Rafales, 19 Mirage 2000s, 43 MiG-29s, 80 Mirage 5s, and 218 F-16s (including A/B and C/D variants).

The F-16 remains the mainstay of Egypt’s fighter fleet, reflecting the country’s strategic emphasis on maintaining a robust and versatile

air force. Although, last March, the Egyptian Air Force (EAF) Rafale fleet became the first export customer to reach 10,000 flying hours on the type, having flown the Rafale since 2015.

In February 2021, Egypt reached an agreement with France for the purchase of 30 additional Rafale fighter jets worth 3.75 billion euros (\$4.5 billion). Eighteen single-seat models of the Rafale and 12 twin-seaters are to be delivered between 2024 and 2026, according to the French defence ministry.

Later that year, the deal with Dassault was confirmed and announced to have come into force

on 15 November. “In a demanding geopolitical context, Egypt has chosen the Rafale to ensure its role as a key player in the regional and international arena, in full sovereignty. This is an honour for Dassault Aviation and its partners, who are fully committed to meeting the expectations of the Egyptian authorities,” said Eric Trappier, Chairman and CEO of Dassault Aviation.

The Rafale F-3R has been succeeded by the Rafale F4.2, which features greater connectivity with other platforms and an advanced RBE2 AESA radar, among other improvements. It is believed that Egypt’s new Rafale aircraft could eventually be upgraded to incor-

In December 2023, at Egypt Defense Expo (EDEX) 2023, Safran Aircraft Engines and the Egyptian Air Force signed a Memorandum

of Understanding (MoU) for the company’s new EngineLife® services solution. According to the terms of the agreement, this MoU will cover through-life support (TLS) for the M88 engines powering Egypt’s current fleet of 24 Rafale on a by-the-hour basis with guaranteed levels of availability.

With more than 300 aircraft under contract, the C295 has an outstanding reliability record and proves itself to be a highly efficient aircraft every day.



Mozambique acquires C-295 transport aircraft from Airbus

Sarah Lesedi

The Mozambican Air Force (Força Aérea de Moçambique) recently received a CASA C295 transport aircraft from Airbus, which will help strengthen the country's air transport capabilities.

The new aircraft which will be delivered in the coming weeks is intended to support the Mozambican army's efforts in the Cabo Delgado province, where they have been deployed since 2017 to fight armed Islamist groups.

The twin turboprop plane, worth around €50m, was assembled at the manufacturer's site in Seville and can carry up to 70 passengers.

The CASA C-295 is versatile and can be used for a variety of missions, including: Airlifting troops, equipment, and supplies to remote or hostile areas, carrying heavy payloads, including vehicles, heli-

copters, and other oversized cargo, and providing critical care and transportation for wounded personnel.

The aircraft is considered the market leader in the medium tactical transport category with more than 80% of the market. There are currently 41 operators from 37 countries in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia. Of these 41 operators, 19 have made repeat orders.

The C-295, when compared to its predecessor, stands out with its more powerful Pratt & Whitney Canada PW100 engine delivering 2645 hp, a new propeller, and a redesigned wing. Despite these significant enhancements, efforts were made to retain as much commonality as possible between the two platforms.

Meanwhile, the Mozambique air force is slowly but steadily build-

ing up its aerial capabilities as it engages in combat against insurgents in its territory.

In 2022, Mozambique's armed forces took delivery of two refurbished transport aircraft acquired from Paramount Group of South Africa.

Paramount handed over a Let-410 Turbolet and a CN-235M transport plane to the Mozambican military. Air Force officials said the planes will be used for cargo and troop transport and special forces and paratrooper deployment. The arms manufacturer supplied the aircraft along with training and maintenance.

A year later, Mozambique acquired the Mwari aircraft designed by Paramount. The Mwari is a twin-turboprop aircraft that is used for a variety of missions, including surveillance, reconnaissance, and light attack.



USAF attends Marrakech Air Show

STAFF WRITER

The United States Air Force (USAF) showcased its capabilities at this week's Marrakech Air Show (MAS), with notable displays from its logistic fleet. The event, held at the Royal Moroccan Air Force base in one of Morocco's four imperial cities, saw the arrival of a C-30J Super Hercules from Ramstein Air Base in Germany, alongside a Utah Air National Guard KC-135 Stratotanker that made its way across the Atlantic Ocean.

According to a statement from US Africa Command, the USAF's participation in this international exhibition aims to bolster US and international security assistance efforts, as well as enhance strategic partnerships with African countries. Brigadier General Ricky Mills, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs, expressed his enthusiasm: "We are glad to be back in Morocco. Interactions and exchanges with our partners at MAS 2024 allow us to learn from and leverage the strengths of oth-

er nations."

Joining him was USAF Brigadier General Shawn Holtz, Deputy Director of Strategy, Engagement, and Programmes for US Africa Command. He emphasized the long-standing partnership between the United States and the Royal Armed Forces of Morocco, noting that Morocco hosts Africom's largest exercise, African Lion, and has partnered with the Utah National Guard for more than two decades.

During the Marrakech Air Show, the generals engaged in bilateral discussions with senior leaders from the Morocco Royal Armed Forces and other African military leaders. These conversations underscored the strategic partnership between the US and Morocco, rooted in shared interests in regional peace, security, and prosperity, and a long-standing commitment to continued cooperation.

Organised jointly by the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the National Defence Administration and MEDZ, a subsidiary of the Caisse

de Dépôt et de Gestion, this international event is intended to be both a first-rate showcase for the latest innovations in the sector and a meeting platform for professionals seeking business opportunities.

The Utah National Guard's active partnership with Morocco, established in 2003 through the State Partnership Programme, focuses on security cooperation. This relationship, built on trust and mutual respect, has been strengthened through joint training and humanitarian missions. Both forces regularly exchange knowledge, refine tactics, and enhance their operational capabilities.

The Marrakech Air Show and the discussions held therein highlight the enduring and evolving strategic partnership between the US and Morocco. As these two nations continue to collaborate closely, their shared efforts in promoting regional stability and security are set to grow even stronger.

United States Delivers C-130 Hercules Transport Aircraft to Tunisian Air Force

Sarah Lesedi

On November 18, 2024, the United States government marked a significant milestone by delivering a C-130H2 Hercules aircraft to the Tunisian Air Force. The ceremony, held at Sidi Ahmed Air Base in Bizerte, was attended by high-ranking officials from both Tunisia and the United States, including Tunisian Minister of National Defense Khaled Sehili, U.S. Ambassador Joey Hood, Chief of Staff of the Tunisian Air Force General Mohammed Hajem, and Lieutenant General Jason Hinds, Deputy Commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Africa.

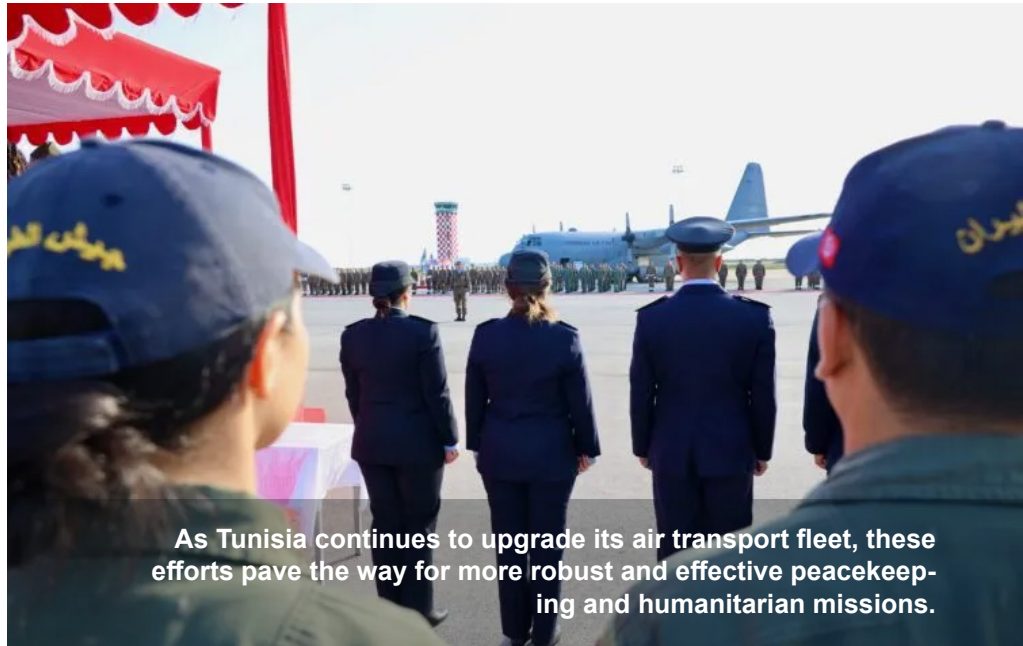
Enhancing Air Transport Capabilities

The delivery of this aircraft, valued at 36 million Tunisian dinars (\$12 million), underscores the U.S. commitment to expanding the Tunisian Air Force's air transport capabilities. This addition significantly bolsters Tunisia's C-130 fleet, enhancing its ability to conduct military and humanitarian operations.

Ambassador Hood emphasized the strategic importance of this delivery, stating, "This delivery is part of the U.S.-Tunisian joint strategy to increase the Tunisian Ministry of Defense and the Tunisian Air Force's ability to provide peace and security in the region and globally. Enhanced Tunisian air transportation capabilities advance our shared interest in peace operations. We look forward to more opportunities to collaborate jointly in the future."

Modernization Program

The Tunisian Air Force (TAF) is currently undergoing a major modernization program for its fleet of C-130J Super Hercules transport aircraft, which play a vital role in



As Tunisia continues to upgrade its air transport fleet, these efforts pave the way for more robust and effective peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.

its operations. This program involves upgrading the cockpit and mechanical components of the aircraft, as well as acquiring additional C-130H aircraft from the United States.

To facilitate these upgrades, the TAF has selected Honeywell and ST Engineering Defence Aviation Services (STEDAS) to perform the modernization work on other C-130 aircraft. This marks the first integration of a Honeywell Aerospace Technologies solution by STEDAS. The upgrade will feature Honeywell's Cockpit Display System Retrofit (CDSR) glass cockpit solution, offering various high-tech enhancements over legacy C-130 systems. The CDSR solution is available in three-display and five-display options, featuring large format LCD displays, flight controls, air data, and altitude sensors designed to meet sustainability and modernization needs.

Expanding the Fleet

In addition to upgrading its existing aircraft, it was announced the TAF will receive two more C-130H aircraft from the United States. This is one of the C-130 delivered. Approved for transfer in June 2020,

these aircraft will augment the TAF's transport capabilities and enhance interoperability with its allies. The total acquisition value, as stated by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, is \$60 million.

The Tunisian Air Force now has four C-130H and one C-130B Hercules in service (in May, C-130H TS-MTM was officially received from the United States at Al Aouina Air Base). These join two C-130J-30 Super Hercules, which were delivered in April 2013 and January 2015. Ten other Hercules are in storage or preservation.

Maintenance and Upgrades

The TAF has also contracted EDGE Group entity, AMMROC, a military maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) services provider, for Programmed Depot Maintenance (PDM) and upgrades on one of its C-130 aircraft. Delivered to AMMROC's MRO facility in Al Ain, UAE, in November 2021, this work is expected to last six months and involves a full structural inspection followed by customer-driven upgrade requirements. The announcement was made during the Dubai Airshow at Dubai World Central.

Burkina Faso acquires VN-22 armoured vehicles from China

Abdul Kazim

Burkina Faso military has acquired dozens of VN-22 armoured vehicles from China, to enhance its combat lethality.

At least 20 of the vehicles arrived Tema seaport on Saturday 26 October, from China heading to Ouagadougou. Burkina Faso versions are equipped with a 30 mm autocannon.

The VN-22 is a family of Chinese wheeled 6×6 armoured fighting vehicles intended for export. Designed and produced by Norinco, it was first unveiled at the 13th China International Aviation & Aerospace Exhibition in 2021.

Since the VN-22 was designed to be modular, the platform can be mounted with a variety of different turrets housing various weapon systems.

Typically, the family of the VN-22 wheeled armoured vehicles, primarily focuses on export, has featured variants aimed at armoured personnel transport (APC) and infantry combat (IFV) equipped with both manned and unmanned turrets. These come with a variety of armament options, ranging from

light and heavy machine guns to 30mm cannons.

The vehicle has appliqué armour plating covering the majority of the vehicle. When fully equipped, they give the vehicle the ability to protect against 14.5 mm armour-piercing rounds (NATO STANAG 4569 Level 4 equivalent) from all directions.

The VN22 also features a V-shaped hull for enhanced protection against landmines and IEDs.

In Africa, the VN-22 has been exported to Ivory Coast and Senegal. They would enhance the combat capabilities of the Burkina Faso's Army.

This is the latest in a series of acquisitions by the Burkinababe army. Burkina Faso is facing a worsening humanitarian and security crisis as jihadist armed groups have extended their control to around 40% of the national territory. The country's junta-led government has pursued an aggressive military campaign against the insurgents. The acquisition of new military equipment from China, which is a major economic partner of Burkina Faso, may signal the junta's intention to consolidate its power and resist external pressure for a return to constitutional order.

In January, the National Armed Forces of Burkina Faso took into

service a significant consignment of armoured vehicles from China, in a delivery event attended by Captain Ibrahim Traoré, the president of Burkina Faso.

The Chinese equipment includes six WMA301 fire-support vehicles, which are armed with 105 mm guns and made by Chinese company Norinco. Eight CS/SM1 self-propelled mortars, which use a Dongfeng light tactical vehicle as a platform and have a caliber of 81 mm. These are the first of their kind to be seen in Africa.

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

In June, 50 more CS/VP14 and 40 VP11 mine-resistance ambush-protected (MRAP) were delivered to Burkina Faso from China.

Similarly, Burkina Faso acquired a batch of mine-resistant ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles from Egypt in January. The vehicles are the Buffalo E10, an improved version of the Temsah-2, which is Egypt's flagship locally produced armoured vehicle.



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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Epail Nigeria debuts MRAP at NISEC Expo

Abdul Kazim

At the just concluded 7th edition of the Nigerian Defence and Security Exhibition and Conference (NISEC Expo), held at the Abuja Continental, Ladi Kwali Conference Centre on 28-29 October, in Abuja, Equipment and Protective Applications International Limited (EPAIL) has unveiled its all-new EPV24NG003 heavy mine resistance and ambush protected vehicle.

EPAIL (EPV24) 4X4 Anti-Mine Heavy Armoured Protective Vehicle is a specialized military vehicle designed to protect personnel and cargo from the effects of landmines, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and other explosive threats. These vehicles are typically used in combat zones and high-risk areas where the presence of mines or IEDs is a concern.

EPV24NG003 is part of a broader class of Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, offering high levels of protection through a combination of robust armor and innovative design features.

The vehicle features anti-mine

V-shaped hull which helps to deflect the force of an explosion away from the occupants, reducing the damage caused by mines and IEDs. The vehicle is equipped with thick, multi-layered armour made from steel plates that can withstand 7.62 mm and 12.7mm assault rifle from 100 meters. The Heavy MRAP's armor is rated at B6, B7, and the European standard CEN 1063.

Designed to withstand both underbody and side blasts from landmines and IEDs, ensuring the safety of the crew and passengers. The vehicle features run-flat tires, which enable them to continue driving even after being damaged, ensuring mobility in hostile environments. The windows are made from ballistic glass to protect occupants while maintaining visibility. A reinforced suspension system is critical in handling rough terrain, mine blasts, and heavy weights, while maintaining stability and maneuverability. These vehicles typically carry a driver, a commander, and ten soldiers or specialized personnel, depending on the mission. They may also have space for additional cargo or equipment.

The vehicle can be equipped with Automatic weapon systems, such as remote-controlled machine guns or grenade launchers, allow-

ing them to engage hostile forces if needed.

At the NISEC Expo, when referring to its other products, EPAIL's Director or Administration Air Vice Marshal A. A Olabisi (Rtd.) explained that manufacturing defence equipment locally in Nigeria is crucial for several reasons. It enhances national security by reducing dependency on foreign suppliers, ensuring that the armed forces have reliable access to the necessary tools and technologies.

By investing in local manufacturing, he said Nigeria can strengthen its defence capabilities and contribute to a more secure and stable future.

In 2021, the Nigerian government and EPAIL, entered an agreement to locally produce bulletproof vests and other security equipment.

The new MRAP joins several other EPAIL defence products which includes the Light Tactical Armoured Vehicle which is a licenced production of China's Dongfeng Mengshi CKS-131.

At the NISEC Expo, Epail also showcased its range of combat and ISR drones, FPV loitering munition, tactical communications devices, and ballistic protection vest.

South African Centauri introduces range of turrets

Sarah Lesedi

Pretoria-based Centauri Technologies is making waves in the defense industry with the introduction of a new range of turrets capable of accommodating weapons from 12.7 to 40 mm.

First reported by defenceWeb, Centauri Technologies is known for its innovation in turret and weapons systems. Centauri Technologies specializes in advanced remote-controlled weapon systems and anti-drone technologies.

Centauri's portfolio includes solutions designed to enhance the operational capabilities and safety of

military personnel in various combat scenarios. The company offers robust 12.7 mm and 30 mm Remotely Operated Weapon Systems (ROWS) and versatile 40 mm grenade launchers. These products are engineered for precision, reliability, and firepower, with seamless integration into existing defense frameworks, providing a strategic advantage.

Key products in Centauri's lineup include the CRx-10 12.7 mm ROWS, CRx-30 30 mm ROWS, CRx-40 40 mm grenade launcher ROWS, and the Tri-AD hard kill anti-drone solution.

The CRx-10 ROWS features a dual-axis

stabilized turret with a quick-loading recoil mitigation cradle, primarily utilizing the NATO 12.7 mm (BMG – 12.7×99 mm) weapon. The optical payload and sensor pack can be customized to meet client requirements.

The CRx-40 series includes two multi-barrel 40 mm dual-axis ROWS configurations. The Mk 2 configuration, which includes a 40×46 mm Low Velocity launcher with a situational awareness camera and handheld human-machine interface (HMI), can also fire less-lethal ammunition. The Mk 3 configuration, capable of firing 40×51 mm Medium Velocity ammu-



munition, features an advanced optical system and ballistic calculator for improved accuracy, also controlled via a handheld HMI.

Centauri's flagship product, the CRx-30 ROWS, fires the powerful 30×113 mm DEFA series cannon. It is equipped with advanced optical and control sensor packs, making it highly effective in target suppression and hard-kill drone protection.

The CRx-10 is a dual axis, gyro stabilized remote controlled weapons station. The recoil mitigating cradle can be configured to fit a range of weapons. The cradle also features a mounting mechanism to enhance accuracy and to allow for quick change of weapons.



Nigeria Navy, South Korea partner on shipbuilding and Training

The Nigerian Navy and the Republic of South Korea have strengthened their bilateral relations, focusing on shipbuilding and training.

This follows a courtesy visit by the Ambassador of the Republic of South Korea, His Excellency Mr. Kim Pankyu, to the Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Emmanuel Ikechukwu Ogalla, at the Naval Headquarters in Abuja.

In a statement released in late August 2024, Ambassador Kim emphasized the importance of enhancing cooperation between both nations, citing their shared history and existing good diplomatic relations.

He identified shipbuilding and training as key areas for mutual benefit, highlighting potential joint development in security in the Gulf of Guinea.

In his remarks, Vice Admiral Ogalla acknowledged South Korea's participation in the Nigerian Navy's 68th-anniversary celebrations earlier this year.

He assured the Ambassador of exploring additional areas of collaboration. He said this diplomatic engagement will foster a stronger partnership between Nigeria and South Korea, promoting cooperation and development in the maritime industry.

The Ambassador was accompa-

nied by the South Korean Defence Attaché, Colonel Park Jong Soek, and his secretary.

Similarly, in February last year, the Director General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, Dr Bashir Jamoh, to have said this recently in Lagos when he hosted the Deputy Minister for Overseas Koreans and Consular Affairs, Republic of South Korea, Choi Yeong.

Yeong was led to the visit by the Korean Ambassador to Nigeria His Excellency Kim Young Chae. Jamoh said there was a need to deepen the over 40 years relationship between the two countries.

India provides additional patrol boats to Mozambique

As part of its capacity-building initiatives with friendly nations in the Indian Ocean Region, India has donated two fast interceptor vessels to the Mozambique Navy. The formal handover ceremony took place on November 8 in the port city of Nacala, following their delivery by the Magar class amphibious warfare vessel INS Gharial.

The event was attended by Robert Shetkintong, the High Commissioner of India in Mozambique; Colonel Puneet Attri, India's newly appointed Defence Adviser at Maputo; and Commander Rajan Chib, Commanding Officer of INS Gharial. The vessels were accepted on behalf of the Government of Mozambique by Augusto Casimiro Mueio, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of National Defence.

The Solas Marine water-jet-propelled boats, which were donated,



boast a top speed of 45 knots and a range of 200 nautical miles at 12 knots. They can accommodate a crew of five personnel and are outfitted with machine guns and bullet-resistant cabins. According to the Indian government, these vessels will significantly enhance Mozambique's efforts to combat maritime terrorism and the ongoing insurgency in the Cabo Delgado province.

This donation is part of India's broader efforts to bolster Mozambique's maritime security capabilities. In July 2019, India gifted two 30-meter-long Larsen & Toubro

interceptors (named Namiliti and Umbeluzi), followed by two fast interceptor crafts in January 2022 of the same class as the recently delivered vessels (16-meter Solas Marine vessels).

To ensure the effective operation and maintenance of these vessels, the resident Indian Coast Guard Afloat Support Team at Maputo provides on-the-job training. Since 2019, the interceptor vessels gifted by India have played a pivotal role in anti-insurgency operations, maritime patrol and interdiction, and logistics support missions.

Egypt considers new submarine acquisitions amidst growing naval capabilities

The Egyptian Navy, amidst a significant period of capability growth, is seeking to replace its aging Romeo-class submarines, marking a pivotal moment in its naval procurement strategy. Historically, France, Germany, and Italy have been the primary beneficiaries of Egypt's naval orders. However, the entry of South Korean bidders could disrupt the long-standing naval procurement partnership between Egypt and France.

Historical Context and Current Fleet

The roots of the Egyptian Navy's modern submarine force can be traced back to the late 1960s, when the Soviet Union was its main defense equipment supplier. During that period, the Soviet Union delivered two Project 613 Whiskey-class and six Project 633 Romeo-class conventional submarines (SSKs) to Egypt. The severance of relations with the Soviet Union in the 1970s posed significant challenges, particularly in terms of sustaining the Romeo SSKs due to the lack of guaranteed spares and support services.

To address these challenges, Egypt turned to China in the early 1980s, acquiring four Type 033 ES5A submarines, the Chinese version of the Romeo SSK. However, these submarines were not without issues, prompting Egypt to undertake a refit and modernization program. By 1988, the US had become a major supplier of Egyptian defense needs, and a US\$116 million contract was signed with Tacoma Boat for the refit of the Romeo submarines. This upgrade included the capability to fire UGM-84 Harpoon anti-ship missiles and Mk 37 torpedoes, as well as new sonar and fire control systems.

Transition to Modern Submarines

Despite the anticipation of acquiring a new submarine class in the 1990s, it was not until 2011 that new submarine procurement materialized. Egypt signed a contract with ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS) for two Type 209/1400mod submarines. The scope of this contract was expanded in 2015 to include two additional submarines. The first unit, S41, was handed over to the Egyptian Navy in December 2016, followed by S42 in August 2017, S43 in April 2020, and the final unit, S44, in July 2021. The introduction of the Type 209/1400mod submarines significantly bolstered Egyptian naval capabilities. However, the Romeo boats continued to operate, highlighting the necessity for a replacement.

The Quest for a New Submarine Class

The Egyptian Navy faces the dual challenge of generating a realistic operational requirement and developing a strategy for technology transfer, which would enable local production and long-term support of future submarines. The potential contenders for this new submarine class include France, Germany, and South Korea.



France: A Long-Standing Partner

France has been a major supplier of defense equipment to Egypt, including two Mistral-class LHDs and a FREMM-class frigate, Tahya Misr. Egypt also signed a contract with Naval Group for four Gowind 2500 corvettes, with three being built at the Alexandria Shipyard in Egypt after a successful technology transfer program. The Barracuda-class submarine, which emerged victorious in Australia's Attack-class submarine requirement in 2016 before the program's cancellation in 2021, is a strong contender. Recently, the Barracuda was selected for the Royal Netherlands Navy Orka-class submarine program, with a contract signing in September 2024.

Naval Group envisions the Barracuda-class as a scalable family of solutions tailored to meet diverse customer requirements. Its characterization as an 'expeditionary submarine' suggests a larger displacement and extended operational range, potentially covering a much larger area than current Egyptian submarines.

Germany: The Incumbent Supplier

As the incumbent submarine supplier, TKMS remains a formidable competitor. Beyond the Type 209/1400mod submarines, TKMS signed a contract in 2018 to supply Egypt with four MEKO A-200EN frigates, with three built in Germany and one at the Alexandria Shipyard. The lead unit, Al-Aziz, was commissioned in November 2022, followed by Al-Qahhar in May 2023. The third unit, Al-Qadeer, was handed over in December 2023, and the final unit, Al-Jabbar, is scheduled for delivery in October 2025.

Both Naval Group and TKMS have demonstrated their capability to successfully deliver technology transfer programs to Egypt, a critical factor in meeting the submarine program requirements.

South Korean Bidders: New Entrants

The Egyptian requirement, estimated to be for four submarines, has attracted new bidders from South Korea, including Hanwha Ocean and Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI). These entrants bring additional competition to the tender, offering innovative solu-

tions and potentially favorable terms for technology transfer and financing.

Thirty-five attack submarines acquired from major suppliers have sailed with African navies, only a handful of countries in Africa own or have operated submarines. Our research shows that regarding export successes, the Soviet Union/ Russia exported 69% of the total submarines in Africa, Germany 22%, and France just 9%. Out of these, 15 are retired, decommissioned, or scrapped. Another four have exceeded their service life, and two are currently on order.

Although, about one-third of African countries are landlocked, maritime transport remains the main gateway to the global marketplace. Africa's international trade relies heavily on shipping and ports. The continent accounts for about 2.5% of exports and 3% of imports in 2020 of world merchandise trade by value.

Key Considerations for Egypt

In deciding on its future submarine acquisitions, Egypt will consider several key factors:

Technology Transfer: The extent to which suppliers can offer technology transfer will be crucial, enabling local production and sustainable long-term support.

Weapon Packages: The capabilities of the weapon packages provided with the submarines will be a significant determinant in the selection process.

Financing: The availability and terms of financing will play a pivotal role in Egypt's final decision.

Meanwhile, Russia is offering its Amur 950 class attack submarine for African navies. The Russian-made Amur 950 attack submarine is designed to destroy enemy submarines, surface ships, vessels, land targets and conduct reconnaissance missions. Armed with a total of 16 missiles, torpedoes, and mines which comprises of 4 x 533 mm torpedo tubes, and 10 vertical missile launchers.



TACTICAL ENGAGEMENT SIMULATION SYSTEMS

TRAINING OF THE FUTURE



Battle-tested, full-cycle manufacturer specializing in Force-On-Force simulators that allow the military to conduct training in conditions as close as possible to actual combat.

SKIFTECH equipment can be installed on standard weapons or armored vehicles. The software collects statistics on the exercises for each soldier and for platoons in general, enabling further analysis and objective assessment of their effectiveness. The dry-fire mode allows for endless repetition of training, making it cost-effective.

SKIFTECH

Turkish Hürjet targets North Africa and Europe market

PARTNER CONTENT

Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) has set its sights on expanding the market for its Hürjet trainer aircraft, targeting potential customers in North Africa and Europe. Initially designed to replace the Turkish Air Force's aging T-38 trainer fleet, the Hürjet is scheduled for deliveries starting in 2026. TAI confirmed that they are in closer talks with potential export customers as the aircraft continues to achieve significant milestones.

Recently, the Hürjet successfully broke the sound barrier, marking an important achievement for Turkey's first indigenous supersonic jet aircraft. "This is really encouraging for us – it's not the goal but it's the first step," said Dr. Mehmet Demiroglu, TAI's general manager, at the Saha Expo in Istanbul. This follows the Hürjet's maiden flight in May 2023.

The Turkish Air Force has already placed an order for 17 Hürjet trainers, with deliveries expected by 2026. The programme is valued at US\$205.3 million, and most of the airframes have already been produced. TAI highlights that the Hürjet features an advanced mission computer, a modern cockpit, and a human-machine interface designed to minimize conversion time to current and future Turkish fighter aircraft.

TAI also positions the Hürjet as an attractive option for air forces looking to modernize their fleets with cost-effective and high-performance Advanced Jet Trainers (AJTs). The manufacturer is actively pursuing export opportunities, with Spain and Egypt identi-



A prototype of the Hurjet is displayed during the Teknofest festival at an Istanbul airport Sept. 20, 2018. (Ozan Kose/AFP via Getty Images)

fied as notable prospects.

Hurkus-C, the armed variant of the base version of Hurkus, features locally developed ammunition including CIRIT, TEBER, HGK and LGK. It can also use inertial navigation system/GPS-guided bombs, conventional bombs, non-guided rockets, and machine guns.

The armed Hurkus also features armored body parts, a self-protection system, a data link, laser tacking, an electro-optical and infrared pod, an external fuel tank, and advanced avionics.

With a 1,500-kilogram payload that can be used through seven external hardpoints, the Hurkus-C can perform light-attack and armed reconnaissance missions.

Spain has shown strong interest in the Hürjet, particularly as it seeks replacements for its aging fleet of 19 F-5M lead-in trainer aircraft. Following an evaluation by the Spanish Air Force in mid-2024, Spain has signaled a positive outlook on the Hürjet's capabilities.

In North Africa, Egypt has emerged as a likely candidate after an Egyptian F-16 pilot tested the Hürjet at the Egypt Air Show in September 2024. The aircraft received positive feedback and made a strong impression by performing a notable flight over the iconic pyramids, showcasing its operational versatility and appeal. Egypt is actively seeking a trainer platform to support its diverse fighter fleet, which includes F-16s, MiG-29s, and Rafales.

Additionally, there is talk of a strategic trade involving 24 Hürjets in exchange for six Spanish A400Ms. This echoes past exchanges, such as Turkey's trade of 46 F-16s for 630 Cherokee Jeeps with Egypt. With Turkey-Egypt relations normalizing after mutual presidential visits since early 2024, further defence cooperation between the two countries could gain fresh momentum.

TAI's Hürjet is poised to make a significant impact in both North African and European markets, bolstering Turkey's presence in the global defence industry.

CSIR and Sysdel unveil advanced ACEPOD Electronic Warfare pod

Sarah Lesedi

In a significant leap for South Africa's airborne defense capabilities, an advanced electronic warfare (EW) pod developed by Sysdel, Armscor, the South African Air Force (SAAF), and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) was unveiled at the Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) exhibition in September. This development marks a milestone in the country's quest to enhance its electronic warfare capabilities.

The Acepod, first reported by defenceWeb was designed by Sysdel of Centurion and supported by Armscor and the SAAF, is short for Airborne Countermeasure and ELINT (Electronic Intelligence) Pod. This technology demonstrator, funded by the SAAF and acquisition agency Armscor, aims to develop and demonstrate advanced electronic warfare technology. Additionally, it provides crucial training to EW and radar personnel, enabling the SAAF to develop strategies and expertise in operating with jamming equipment.

Collaborative Efforts

Sysdel, specializing in the development, manufacture, and support of Electronic Warfare systems in the radar domain, led the original design of the Acepod Mk 1. The CSIR was brought in to support integration, specifically focusing on adapting the pod to the fast jet environment. This collaboration leveraged Sysdel's electronic warfare expertise and the CSIR's proficiency in aircraft integration, addressing challenges related to aerodynamics, physical constraints, and flight requirements.

One of the major hurdles during development was the pod's size.



Denel ACEPOD EW pod

Weighing 326 kilograms and stretching over three and a half meters in length, it is the heaviest payload ever integrated onto a South African Hawk. The limited ground clearance of the Hawk's relatively low undercarriage posed additional challenges. To tackle this, the CSIR developed a custom trolley to safely load and mount the pod under the aircraft's center pylon.

Cost-Effective Innovation

The integration process was completed at a fraction of the cost that would have been charged by the original equipment manufacturer (OEM). The CSIR's work on the Acepod Mk 2 led to the development of a new methodology for integrating large payloads onto fast jets, which has since been patented.

Testing and Future Plans

The first flight test of the Acepod Mk 2 took place in March this year. Primary envelope expansion tests confirmed the pod's compatibility with the Hawk, validating its structural and operational integrity in flight. The next phase, involving the testing of the pod's actual jamming payload, is scheduled for early next year. This timeline depends on the availability of testing facilities in South Africa, including critical vibration tests that will further validate the pod's perfor-

mance.

The pod requires considerable support from the aircraft to function, drawing power from the Hawk to run its onboard systems. The collaborative effort between Sysdel, the CSIR, and the SAAF's Test Flight and Development Centre (TFDC) was essential in overcoming these technical hurdles. The CSIR orchestrated the process in close coordination with the Air Force's Directorate System Integrity.

A Leap Forward

The Acepod Mk 2 represents a major advancement in South Africa's electronic warfare capabilities. The SAAF has never had access to such a powerful jamming pod. Once fully operational, the Acepod will significantly enhance the SAAF's ability to conduct EW missions and safeguard its airspace against evolving threats. This development underscores South Africa's commitment to advancing its defense technology and maintaining a robust defense posture.

As the project moves forward, the collaborative efforts of Sysdel, the CSIR, Armscor, and the SAAF continue to pave the way for cutting-edge innovations in electronic warfare, ensuring that South Africa remains at the forefront of military technology advancements.

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FLYING HIGH

Nigeria's domestic defense industry is relatively new and growing rapidly, and over time, the Defence companies in Nigeria will contribute to research, development, employment, and export revenue.



Details emerge on Nigerian-made stealthy EPX-10 cruise missile system

Ekene Lionel

Epail Nigeria, one of the most innovative defence company in Africa, has provided more information regarding its stealthy cruise missile/drone system.

Epail revealed details on the EPX-10 cruise missile/drone system at the NISEC Expo 2024 in Abuja, Nigeria.

The EPX-10 cruise missile/ drone system is still undergoing testing, and development. And if completed, would be Nigeria's first wholly indigenous cruise missile. It would enhance the capacity of the operator, and could provide lethal long-range strike capabilities.

According to the company, the EPX-10 Cruise Missile/ Drone is a state-of-the-art single-use aerial vehicle meticulously engineered for high-stakes missions. It is designed to neutralize high-value fixed assets with unparalleled precision and efficiency. Ideal targets include enemy encampments, parked vehicles, and training centers, making it an indispensable tool for modern warfare and tactical operations.

Key Features and Capabilities:

- Single-Use Design: Optimized for targeting

- high-value fixed assets.
- High-Precision Targeting: Ensures accurate strikes on enemy encampments, parked vehicles, or training centers.
- GPS Navigation: Provides precise guidance for targeting
- High-Payload Capacity: Capable of carrying an 18kg TNT payload.
- Extended Range: Operates over distances exceeding 100km.
- High-Speed Operation: Reaches speeds of up to 180m/s.
- Robust Airframe Design: Built to withstand high-speed impact.
- Autonomous Flight Modes: Capable of executing predefined missions with minimal operator input.
- Low Acoustic Signature: Designed to minimize detection during flight.
- Stealth Design: Reduces visibility to enemy defenses.
- Real-Time Video Feed: Provides operators with visual confirmation of target and surroundings.

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Mali acquires Akinci drone



Ekene Lionel

Mali has acquired new military equipment, including Akinci drones from Turkey, to enhance its fight against armed groups.

Mali's transitional president, General Assimi Goita, presented the Akinci drones to the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA) in Bamako on Tuesday, through the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs, according to the state TV.

At least two AKINCI-A UCAVs were photographed, with munitions including ROKETSAN's MAM-T smart munition and TEBER-81/82 laser/GPS guidance kits.

These drones will strengthen the fight against terrorism and enhance national security.

Mali's Minister of Defence, General Sadio Camara, welcomed the development. "With these new aircraft acquired from the national budget, we are taking a new course. They will help strengthen the territorial grid and neutralise threats wherever they are," he said.

"Thanks to the continued listening of the Malian people, the highest authorities have put the return of security to the top of priorities," General Camara added.

The defence minister encouraged the security forces to use the equipment optimally to meet the expectations of the Malian people as the country grapples with frequent deadly attacks by Tuareg-led separatists and various terrorist groups.

Türkiye's growing ties with the Sahel region, particularly with Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso, have led to increased economic and military cooperation.

This comes as countries in the region sever ties with Western powers, including former colonial rul-

er, France. They often describe Türkiye as a reliable partner.

After Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Libya, Mali is Africa's fourth confirmed AKINCI user. The contribution of Bayraktar TB2 armed UAVs to counter-insurgency operations in Africa and AKINCI's capacity-sufficient munitions that are carried by manned combat aircraft can be given as some of the leading factors in AKINCI's entry into Africa as a cost-effective solution for both ISR and bombing operations.

AKINCI's export customers are Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Saudi Arabia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Mali.

AKINCI was developed as a follow-up to the Bayraktar TB2 armed UAV with greater speed and payload capacity. Two turboprop engines power the UCAV and have an MTOW of 6+ tonnes.



Morocco acquiring Akinci drone from Turkey

Sarah Lesedi

Morocco is reportedly in talks to acquire Turkish Bayraktar Akinci drones.

Delivery of the advanced unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) will start in February next year, local media reported.

Local sources first confirmed the deal in August 2023.

The initiative comes after the Moroccan Royal Armed Forces signed a 626 million dirhams (\$70 million) contract in 2021 to acquire 13 Bayraktar TB2 combat drones, including remote control ground stations and configurable simulation systems.

The Bayraktar Akinci, developed by the Turkish firm Baykar, is designed as a more advanced aircraft compared to the Bayraktar TB2.

It features a wingspan of 20 meters (65.6 feet), a length of 12.3 meters (40.4 feet), and a height of 4.1 meters (13.5 feet).

The UAV has a maximum take-off weight of 6,000 kilograms (13,228 pounds) and can carry a payload of up to 1,500 kilograms (3,306 pounds).

Powered by dual turboprop engines, it can reach cruising speeds of 277 kilometers (172 miles) per hour and a maximum speed of 361 kilometers (224 miles) per hour.

Equipped with a dual satellite communication system, it can perform air-to-ground and air-to-air attack missions while remaining airborne for over 24 hours.

The Akinci will work closely with other drones in the Moroccan military inventory.

In October 2022, the Moroccan military procured an unspecified number of Wing Loong II medium-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) as part of its continuing effort to bolster its capabilities.

The Akinci will also join four basic Wing Loongs initially acquired in 2020 (likely gifted by the UAE), and other Israeli and Turkish unmanned systems.

Morocco's foray into heavy-duty medium altitude long endurance drone department started in 2020 when the United States provided the country with four MQ-1 Predator XP drone made by General Atomics.

Also in 2021, Israeli IAI supplied there Harfang (also considered Heron drones) to Morocco, as part of a \$48 million arms deal.



Combat drone Akinci is seen loaded with domestic ammunitions in this screen grab from a video shared on Aug. 22, 2022. The combat drone, which is able to conduct flights with several ammunitions, bears domestically-developed ammunitions Teber-82 and mini munition MAM-T, together with mini munitions MAM-L and MAM-C on a multiple launcher station and the HGK-82 on the medium weapon station.

Denel unveils Rotary-wing drone



Sarah Lesedi

Denel Aerospace has introduced a new Rotary Wing Unmanned Aerial System (RW-UAS) as part of its product diversification strategy. This innovative drone is designed primarily for surveillance purposes, providing situational information and detailed object or terrain data.

According to defenceWeb, years ago, Denel collaborated with local universities and Armscor to develop next-generation aircraft, including an unmanned helicopter (Prowler) and a manned airplane (Small African Regional Aircraft – SARA). The RW-UAS, a result of this research, operates day and night, equipped with optical sensors and an optional radar sensor. Standard sensors include a thermal imaging camera, high-definition color TV camera, auto tracker, laser rangefinder, and designator. Optional radar capabilities include synthetic aperture radar (SAR) and inverse synthetic aperture radar (ISAR) imagery, as well as ground moving object indicator imagery.

The RW-UAS features automatic vertical take-off and landing and can operate autonomously with a 10-hour endurance carrying the standard payload. With an additional 80 kg payload, it can fly for four hours. The maximum take-off weight is 560 kg. Its fully articulated five-blade main and tail rotor system ensures a low noise profile, allowing operation from various landing zones, including vehicles and vessels.

With an airframe length of 5.9 meters, a rotor diameter of six meters, and a height of 1.7 meters, the RW-UAS is powered by a 4-cylinder, 4-stroke turbocharged petrol or diesel engine, reaching speeds of up to 200 km/h. Its applications include law enforcement, public safety, border patrol, wildlife monitoring, area

surveillance, powerline inspection, disaster management, search and rescue, communications relay, and geological surveying.

The RW-UAS offers multiple flight modes, including Autonomous mode with autopilot control for pre-planned flights, Trajectory mode with autopilot executing commands from the Ground Control Station (GCS), and a sense and avoid capability. In the event of a communication failure, the system autonomously flies to a predetermined landing point. It also has provisions for engine rotor failure, allowing for autorotation and autonomous landing.

Denel's RW-UAS marks a significant advancement in unmanned aerial technology, expanding the company's portfolio and addressing a wide range of operational needs.

Denel Aerospace has been making significant strides in the drone industry, showcasing its latest innovations at various defence exhibitions.

One of their notable achievements is the development of the Seeker 400 UAS, a versatile and advanced reconnaissance system designed for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) missions.

The Seeker 400 UAS features a modular design, allowing for multiple sensor payloads and a large payload carrying capability.

Denel's commitment to innovation is evident in their continuous efforts to enhance situational awareness and operational capabilities. The Seeker 400 UAS, along with other drones in their portfolio, plays a crucial role in border patrol, maritime surveillance, and disaster management.

Denel's advancements in drone technology underscore South Africa's position as a key player in the global defence industry. Their ongoing research and development efforts ensure that they remain at the forefront of technological innovation, providing effective solu-

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AL BATTAAR

LASER GUIDED BOMB
RANGE 8 KM

BURQ

AIR TO GROUND MISSILE (AGM)
RANGE 8 KM

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Russian troops with military vehicles are seen on patrol outside the town of Darbasiyah in Syria's northeastern Hasakeh province, on the border with Turkey, November 1, 2019. Photo: AFP

Russia deploys troops to Equatorial Guinea

Ekene Lionel



Russia has reportedly deployed up to 200 troops to Equatorial Guinea to protect the presidency, as part of its ongoing efforts to expand its influence in Africa. Media reports indicate that these Russian troops are training elite guards in Malabo, the capital, and Bata, the country's second-largest city. Initial reports of Russian troop deployment surfaced in August, with an estimated 100 to 200 Russians arriving over the past two months.

This deployment includes personnel likely affiliated with Africa Corps, a paramilitary force previously known as Wagner before being integrated into the Russian military structure. Sightings of these mercenaries in both Malabo and Bata suggest their primary mission is to safeguard the president and his family.

The Wagner Group has been active in the Central African Republic, Sudan, Libya, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Mozambique, among other African countries. In 2024, the Wagner Group in Africa was merged into a new Africa Corps under the direct control of Russia's Ministry of Defense.

Equatorial Guinea has also established a new Rapid Intervention Brigade (BIR) with Russian assistance,

acquiring Russian and Chinese-made armored vehicles for the unit. These vehicles include armoured personnel carriers, infantry fighting vehicles, self-propelled guns, mortar carriers, and command and recovery variants of the WZ551 6x6 armored vehicle.

President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, the world's longest-serving president, has led Equatorial Guinea since 1979. In September, he expressed gratitude to Russian President Vladimir Putin for sending instructors to bolster Equatorial Guinea's defense capabilities, as reported by state news agency TASS.

This move aligns with a broader trend in West Africa, where several countries have shifted away from traditional Western allies like France, seeking closer ties with Russia. These countries, which have experienced coups in recent years, have criticized Western nations for not adequately addressing jihadist insurgencies and have turned to Russia for support.

Russia's increased presence in Equatorial Guinea shows its strategic ambitions in the region, aiming to strengthen alliances and exert greater influence across Africa.

US calls on Rwandan troops to leave DR Congo



Ekene Lionel

The United States has voiced deep concern over reports of ceasefire violations in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), calling for immediate de-escalation from both involved nations. Specifically, the U.S. has urged Rwanda to withdraw all Rwanda Defense Force personnel and equipment, including surface-to-air missile systems, from the DRC.

In a statement from the U.S. Bureau of African Affairs, the need for Rwanda to “cease GPS disruptions” in the region was emphasized, highlighting the adverse impact these disruptions have on both military and civilian operations within the DRC.

Additionally, the United States called on the DRC to stop supporting the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a rebel group that has historically fueled tensions between the two

countries.

The eastern DRC has been plagued by ongoing conflict due to competing interests, historical grievances, and the presence of multiple armed groups. This recent appeal from the United States underscores the escalating diplomatic concern over regional stability, which is increasingly at risk with each ceasefire violation.

Rwanda’s military presence in the DRC has intensified in recent years, justified by Kigali as necessary to secure its borders from threats posed by armed groups operating within the DRC, particularly the FDLR, a militia group with ties to the Rwandan genocide. However, the DRC and several regional and international observers view Rwanda’s deployment as a breach of Congolese sovereignty and a destabilizing factor in an already volatile region.

The M23 rebel group, which has been accused of receiving Rwan-

dan support, resumed its offensive in October, seizing multiple localities and clashing with Congolese armed forces and allied militia groups. Angola recently condemned the M23’s occupation of a town in early October, describing it as a “flagrant violation” of the ceasefire.

Reports of advanced Rwandan military equipment, including surface-to-air missiles and GPS system disruptions, have heightened concerns, with the DRC accusing Rwanda of infringing on its territorial integrity.

Congolese officials also argue that Rwanda’s military presence has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in the region, as local communities often find themselves caught in the crossfire between various armed groups and foreign military forces.



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