

Directory: world air forces

COMBAT HELICOPTER

Mi-6	1		
Mi-8	9		
Mi-17			12/
Ka-32T	6		

LATVIA

Latvia's air force was formed in August 1994 after the last Russian forces withdrew. The country joined NATO in March 2004.

Operational activity

Belgian F-16 fighters based in Lithuania assumed responsibility for policing Latvia's airspace, a commitment subsequently taken over by Danish F-16s and British Tornado F3s.

Procurement

In 2001, Latvia acquired a second Mi-8 for SAR duties and to replace some of its Mi-2s. Lithuania's Helisota equipped both Mi-8s with US avionics before delivery. Two Mi-8MTV-1s have been ordered from Ulan-Ude.

New transports could be acquired in partnership with Estonia and Lithuania. The national guard air wing plans to acquire six transport helicopters.

Fleet review

Roles include transport, SAR, parachute drops and special forces support. The national guard air wing is subordinate to the air force and operates An-2s, Wilgas and gliders for coastal patrol transport and air experience.

LATVIAS REPUBLIKAS GAISA SPEKI (AIR FORCE)

Type	Active	Stored	Order/Req
TRANSPORT			
An-2	6	4	
Let L-410UVP	1		
COMBAT HELICOPTER			
Mi-8	2		/6
Mi-2	4		

NATIONAL GUARD

Type	Active	Stored	Order/Req
TRANSPORT			
An-2		12	
PZL-104	5		

LEBANON

FORCE AERIENNE LIBANAISE/AL QUWWAT AL JAWWIYA AL LUBNANIYA (AIR FORCE)

Lebanon's years of strife are reflected in its combat fleet, delivered before the civil war erupted in the mid-1970s. Other equipment, predominately French helicopters, was received during the civil war but this is now thought to be non-operational.

Operational activity

The much reduced Lebanese air force is limited to SAR missions, as well as VIP transport. Israeli and Syrian forces continue to operate in the country and UN peacekeeping troops continue to monitor Lebanon's southern border.

Procurement

No new procurement is planned.

Fleet review

The UH-1Hs were received from the US Army, although some have been cannibalised for spares. At least one company has asked to buy the Bulldogs. Pakistan acquired stored Mirage IIIs. It is reported that the money will be used to return other assets – probably the Pumas or Gazelles – to airworthiness.

Type	Active	Stored	Order/Req
COMBAT AIRCRAFT			
Hunter F70/T66C		5/1	
TRANSPORT			
Falcon 20	1		
COMBAT HELICOPTER			
UH-1H	24		
SA330L Puma		13	
SE3130 Alouette II		2	
SA316B Alouette III		6	
SA342L Gazelle		4	
AB212		11	
TRAINING AIRCRAFT			
CM170 Magister	5		
Bulldog 126	5		

LESOTHO

LESOTHO DEFENCE FORCE – AIR SQUADRON

The air wing was formed in December 1978.

Operational activity

No major air operations took place during the past year.

Procurement

An LA-8 Airvan and a BO105 were purchased, with the helicopter replacing a crashed example. A Cessna 182Q and Bell 47G were sold. Plans exist to acquire Bell 206Ls.

Fleet review

The defence force air transport unit operates two C-212s, two Bell 412SPs and two BO105LSA-3s.

LIBERIA

LIBERIAN ARMY AIR RECONNAISSANCE UNIT

Liberia has been wracked by strife since the assassination of its president in 1990. US and UN peacekeepers landed in the country in August 2004 to broker a ceasefire deal after the government fled. UN troops remain in the country to disarm warring factions and a new government has yet to be formed.

Operational activity

Liberia has no functioning armed forces.

Procurement

No procurement is planned.

Fleet review

The army air unit was a small transport force but most of the pre-1990 fleet has been destroyed in recent fighting.

Type	Active	Stored	Order/Req
TRANSPORT			
DHC-4 Caribou		2	
IAI-101B Arava		2	
Cessna Caravan I		1	
Cessna U207		1	
Cessna 172		2	
PA-23-250		1	
COMBAT HELICOPTER			
Mi-17		2	

LIBYA

AL QUWWAT AL JAWWIYA AL JAMAHIRIYAN AL LIBYA (LIBYAN ARAB REPUBLIC AIR FORCE)

Moves began to lift international sanctions against Libya early in 2004 after it agreed to dismantle its weapons of mass destruction programmes.

Operational activity

The EU is considering establishing surveillance centres in Libya to monitor Mediterranean waters for illegal immigrants. Little activity has been undertaken by the Libyan air force over the past year.

Procurement

Libya has talked to Russia about upgrades for its MiG-21s and MiG-25s while also expressing an interest in MiG-29s, MiG-31s and long-range SAMs. Reports suggest some MiG-29s have been delivered.

Libya has also been linked to a South African/Russian programme to re-engine the Mirage F1 with the MiG-29's RD-33 engine. Libya could also be a target for South Africa's Mi-24 MkIII upgrade, although its Mi-24 fleet has been depleted through gifts to Namibia and Zimbabwe. Two An-124s were delivered in 2002 and two An-32s were due for delivery in July 2004.

Fleet review

The Il-76s are operated by Libyan Arab Air Cargo in civilian markings and some other aircraft fly as part of the flag carrier, Libyan Arab Airlines. UN-imposed sanctions from April 1992 make it likely that serviceability is low within the Libya air force and the aviation elements of the army and navy. Many of the transport and combat aircraft are in storage. Most of the inventory is up for sale, with Pakistan agreeing to buy some 50 Mirage 5DD/DE/DRs during 2004.

Type	Active	Stored	Order/Req
COMBAT AIRCRAFT			
MiG-21MF	50		
MiG-23MS/BN/U	75/40/15		
MiG-25PD/R/U	40/5/4		
Mirage F1AD/BD/ED	16/6/16		
Mirage5D/DE/DD/DR	53/32/15/10		
Su-20/22/22M-3	80		
Su-24MK	24		
Tu-22A/Tu-22U	6/2		
Jastreb J1E	24		

TANKER

KC-130		10	
TRANSPORT			
An-26	8		
An-32		4	2/
An-72	1		
707-320	1		
C-130H/L-100-20/30	6/2/3		
G222		16	
Il-76M/TD	20		
Gulfstream II	2		
An-124	2		
Falcon 50/200	1/1		
Rallye235GT		4	

COMBAT HELICOPTER

Mi-24	17		
CH-47		4	
AB212	4		
AB205	5		
Mi-8		3	
SA321 Super Frelon		4	
TRAINING AIRCRAFT/HELICOPTERS			
G2AE Galeb	70		
Let L-410UVP	15		
L-39ZO	136		
Mi-2	20		
SF260WL Warrior	190		

NAVY

SA321 Super Frelon	7
Mi-14PL	12

ARMY

O-1E Bird Dog	10
CH-47C Chinook	10
AB206A JetRanger	5
SA342L Gazelle	40
AB205	5

LITHUANIA

LIETUVOS KARINES ORO PAJEGOS (AIR FORCE)

In January 1992, the service formed as Aviation Service (Aviacijos Tarnyba), but was renamed in March 1993. Lithuania joined NATO in March 2004.

Operational activity

Belgian F-16 fighters based at Zokiani air base assumed responsibility for policing Lithuania's airspace, a commitment subsequently taken over by Danish F-16s and British Tornado F3s.

Procurement

In 2000, Lithuania expressed interest in acquiring six L-159s and it has a tentative need for 12 fighters, probably secondhand aircraft but this has now been superseded by requirements for transport aircraft to support Lithuanian peacekeeping contingents.

Fleet review

The Lithuanian national guard is a separate organisation with a range of general aviation types and gliders as well as those listed. It is to be merged into the air force by 2006.

Type	Active	Stored	Order/Req
TRANSPORT			
L-410 Turbolet		2	
An-2	13	11	
An-26	3		
C-130			???
PZL-104	8		
COMBAT HELICOPTER			
Mi-8	11		
Mi-2	3	2	
TRAINING AIRCRAFT			
L-39ZA/C	2	4	

NATIONAL GUARD

Type	Active	Stored	Order/Req
TRANSPORT			
Wilga	3		
An-2	4		
PA-38	1		
Yak-18T	1		
Yak-50	1		
Yak-52	20		
Yak-55	1		