

## FOUR BLACK HAWK HELICOPTERS FOR POLAND BY THE END OF 2019

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**A contract has been concluded today, at the PZL Mielec facility, concerning delivery of four S-70i Black Hawk helicopters for the Polish special operations component. This includes retrofitting of the airframes, logistical and training packages. The total value of the agreement is defined as PLN 683 million. The head of the MoD, Mariusz Błaszczak, stated that the helicopters are to be delivered by the end of 2019.**

The agreement has been signed in presence of PM Morawiecki, other politicians and generals. This is a very important day for us, since not only do we reinforce the Polish security, but we also reinforce the Polish industry through procurement and actions as such. This is a fusion of strategy for development with strategy for security – said the Polish PM.

Meanwhile, Mariusz Błaszczak, the head of the MoD signing the agreement on behalf of the government, placed an emphasis on the fact that the military has acquired a battle-proven helicopter design. *It is a fine product made in Poland by a fine company* – the official said convincingly.

*The helicopters will be delivered by December this year.*

*Head of the Polish Ministry of Defence, Mariusz Błaszczak*

The Minister also said that the agreement signed is only the beginning of collaboration between the Polish military and the PZL Mielec facility.

According to the information released by the MoD, the agreement is worth PLN 683 million. The price includes the helicopters (PLN 75 million per a single aircraft with the equipment) along with extra equipment and a training/logistics package.

Mariusz Błaszczak stressed it a couple of times: the helicopters have been acquired *“at a good price”*. The Head of the MoD also referred to the agreements signed back in 2018, concerning three Black Hawks procured by the Polish Police. *The price of the (military) helicopter is the price that has been paid by the Polish police for the equipment plus, obviously, everything related to the requirements of the Polish military, and of the Special Operations component in particular, in essence the armament, the extra equipment and all the hardware that is definitive for the capabilities of this helicopter* – Błaszczak explained. He added that the agreement also covers a logistics and training package.

The Police signed a 140 million zlotys worth contract in 2018, acquiring two Black Hawk helicopters

with a training package included. The third helicopter (with option that could be exercised to acquire another two examples) came with a pricetag of PLN 65 million.

The commander of the Special Operations component, Brig. general Sławomir Drumowicz said that procurement is embedded within the plans aimed at enhancing the special forces' combat capabilities. - *The acquisition will enhance the effectiveness of our forces. We are now facing a tough period related to crew training and to tailoring the helicopters to our needs, we will also need to modify the infrastructure* - the General said.

Janusz Zakręcki, PZL Mielec CEO, stressed the fact that the agreement is going to result in delivery of modern helicopters, made at a Polish facility, to the military.

On the basis of the contract, the MoD acquired four S-70i helicopters, the export variant of the Black Hawk platform. The helicopters in question are to be used to conduct special operations. The agreement covers procurement of a logistics package (spares, expendables, equipment for the ground crews) and a training package, including complex training for the pilots and for the ground crews. All four aircraft are to be delivered by the end of this year.

According to the MoD, the procurement was taking place as a confidential single source procurement procedure. Basic meaning for national security constituted the legal basis for carrying out the work in this manner. The urgent operational requirement concerning the helicopters was announced to the MoD by the Operational Command of the Polish Armed Forces.

The MoD has not disclosed the justification for procedures as such. For reasons said to be "operational" the Ministry also has not disclosed any information on equipment and armament of the helicopters ordered.

Last year's acquisition of three Mielec-made Black Hawks for the Polish Police has also been carried out as a single-source procurement procedure.

Black Hawk that has made its maiden flight in 1974 is a medium-size twin-engine multi-role helicopter. The S-70i export version is being assembled at the PZL Mielec facility in Poland, along with some of its components. PZL Mielec is owned by Sikorsky, while Sikorsky is a part of Lockheed Martin. The first of the Mielec-made Black Hawks made its maiden flight in 2010. Depending on the variant and configuration and equipment carried by the soldiers, the helicopter may carry 11-17 troops. Its top speed is 295 kph, and it offers a range exceeding 500 kilometres. 4 thousand examples of the Black Hawk have been made so far, with 30 countries operating the type.