
PRESS RELEASE

KSA'S MINISTRY OF DEFENCE TO INTRODUCE ADVANCED MARITIME PATROL AND MULTI-MISSION CAPABILITIES WITH CONTRACT FOR FOUR C-27J MPA AIRCRAFT

Rome, 16 February 2026 - The global presence of the Leonardo C-27J Spartan multi-mission tactical transport aircraft, with more than 290,000 flight hours worldwide, is set to grow with a new addition to the number of leading operators that have chosen and are using the aircraft to meet their demanding requirements. Leonardo will supply four C-27J Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Defence, providing the capabilities needed to cope with modern submarine and sea surface threats, to guarantee effective Search and Rescue (SAR) services and to perform transport and airdrop missions. Deliveries to the Royal Saudi Naval Forces, which becomes the 21st operator of the type globally, are expected to start in 2029.

This significant achievement confirms the strong bond between Leonardo and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, increasing the number of C-27Js ordered by KSA users, following the recent (Summer 2025) in-country acquisition of two units dedicated to firefighting, cargo transport and medical evacuation tasks. It also marks the first time the C-27J MPA is procured with maritime weapon system integration capability. A further evidence of the platform's versatility, able to uniquely combine transport, disaster response and multi-domain surveillance capabilities.

The C-27J program benefits from the continued investments in expanding the aircraft missions, improving its performance and embedding the most advanced technologies, so to provide task-oriented, customer-tailored solutions, able to meet the most challenging requirements from prime users.

Background information on the C-27J Spartan Next Generation and MPA variant

The C-27J MPA retains all the features and capabilities of the C-27J Spartan Next Generation platform, including its state-of-the-art avionics, navigation, communication, identification and self-protection systems, enabling seamless, safe and low workload operations in all weather and lighting conditions, both in military and civil controlled airspaces, also in high threat scenarios.

For the specific purpose of guaranteeing multi-domain surveillance capabilities, the C-27J MPA integrates a dedicated mission suite, including sensors optimized for detection, identification and tracking of surface and submarine targets, managed by an advanced mission management system (the Leonardo Airborne Tactical Observation and Surveillance system) with data fusion capabilities. A complete communication system allows real time data sharing with control centres and secures cooperation with other units, also in Beyond Line Of Sight (BLOS) conditions. Moreover, in addition to its maritime patrol and surveillance capabilities, the C-27J MPA can carry a significant weapons payload to counter multiple threats, including torpedoes, anti-ship missiles and depth charges in accordance with the specific mission needs.

By removing the mission management system consoles and other components of the mission suite, the C-27J MPA cabin can be easily reconfigured to perform the transport, airdrop and medical evacuation missions typical of the baseline C-27J Spartan Next Generation, providing the Customer with unparalleled flexibility. C-27Js for maritime roles are already in service with the US Coast Guard.

PHOTO AND INFOGRAPHICS: <https://leonardo.canto.global/b/IHIBS>

Leonardo is an international industrial group, among the main global companies in Aerospace, Defence, and Security (AD&S). With 60,000 employees worldwide, the company approaches global security through the Helicopters, Electronics, Aeronautics, Cyber & Security and Space sectors, and is a partner on the most important international programmes such as Eurofighter, JSF, NH-90, FREMM, GCAP, and Eurodrone. Leonardo has significant production capabilities in Italy, the UK, Poland, and the USA. Leonardo utilises its subsidiaries, joint ventures, and shareholdings, which include Leonardo DRS (71.4%), MBDA (25%), ATR (50%), Hensoldt (22.8%), Telespazio (67%), Thales Alenia Space (33%), and Avio (19.3%). Listed on the Milan Stock Exchange (LDO), in 2024 Leonardo recorded new orders for €20.9 billion, with an order book of €44.2 billion and consolidated revenues of €17.8 billion. Included in the MIB ESG index, the company has also been part of the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI) since 2010.

