

Parliament Okays \$60.7m Presidential Jet

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Parliament House

PARLIAMENT ON Thursday approved a major retooling package for the Ghana Air Force, endorsing two agreements totalling €125.9 million and US\$60.68 million for the purchase of four helicopters and a Falcon 6X aircraft to replace the Force's ageing fleet and strengthen national security operations.

The approval covers a €125,965,974 contract between the Government of Ghana and Airbus Helicopters SAS for one H160 and three H175 helicopters, and a US\$60,680,000 sale and purchase agreement with Dassault Aviation for a Falcon 6X.

Both agreements were presented to the House by the Deputy Defence Minister, Ernest Brogya Genfi, and subsequently referred to the Defence and Interior Committee for scrutiny.

Presenting its report, the Committee emphasised that the acquisition was necessary to restore the operational readiness of the Air Force. It noted that several aircraft, including the Mi-17, Z-9EH, Falcon 900EX and two of the three Casa C295Ms, were either unserviceable or severely limited, exposing the country to significant security vulnerabilities.

The report noted the increasing complexity of national threats, including terrorism, illegal mining, drug trafficking, human smuggling and maritime crimes, and stressed that modern air assets were

essential to protect the country's territorial integrity and support executive mobility.

Ntim Fordjour: "Enough of the politics"

Contributing to the debate, the Ranking Member for Defence and Interior, Rev. John Ntim Fordjour, supported the approval of the two purchase agreements, calling it a "patriotic responsibility" and signalling a shift in the long-standing political disputes that have dogged military acquisitions.

He recounted multiple past attempts to secure bipartisan support for upgrading the Air Force, saying those efforts "became a taboo" under previous National Democratic Congress (NDC) resistance.

"For countless occasions, we attempted to bring our colleagues in the NDC along for us to take a proper look at investing in our Ghana Armed Forces. It became a taboo. Propaganda was waged against even suggesting retooling platforms for our forces," he said, urging Parliament to break with past partisanship. "Enough of the politics... This is a new dawn," he added.

He referenced the Kufuor administration's aircraft procurement plan in 2008, which envisioned both a long-haul and a short-haul aircraft, but said the succeeding NDC government halted part of that programme.

According to him, that decision contributed to the present aircraft deficit.

Addressing past controversies about the current Falcon 900EX, he noted that the

same aircraft once hailed by some NDC MPs as "pristine" and requiring no replacement had, after recent safety audits, been found to have severe defects including corrosion and fuel leakage.

He said support for the new Falcon 6X was ultimately a matter of presidential and national security.

"We will put the safety of the President and the safety of our men in uniform in priority so they can safely conduct business on behalf of the state," he added.

Rev. Ntim Fordjour also welcomed the inclusion of expert recommendations from the August 6 helicopter crash investigation, particularly the adoption of modern avionics and performance guarantees.

He emphasised the need for strict oversight in implementing the agreements and ensuring pilot training, maintenance structures and long-term sustainability of the fleet.

He further urged the government to fulfil its own commitment, as captured in

the 2026 Budget, to later acquire a long-haul aircraft to complement the Falcon 6X, insisting Parliament would "hold the Minister to account."

Beyond the military's operational needs, he encouraged leveraging the Air Force's capabilities to service the oil and mining sectors, arguing that revenue from such contracts could eventually finance additional aircraft.

He cited similar arrangements that helped the Navy acquire two vessels that are

"paying for themselves."

Rev. Ntim Fordjour commended the military high command for technological innovations, including locally developed drones, calling them an important addition to Ghana's air capabilities. He cautioned, however, that Parliament must never again politicise the safety of soldiers or the presidency.

"This agreement must be a turnaround... Never again must we politicise the safety of our soldiers. Never again must we politicise the safety of our President," he said.

