

Colombia Leases Civilian Helicopters Amid Operational Fleet Crisis

This crisis is emblematic of the broader challenges faced by countries reliant on Russian-made military equipment. As geopolitical tensions continue to disrupt supply chains, the Colombian Army's temporary reliance on civilian aircraft highlights the urgent need for diversification in procurement strategies and long-term planning to ensure operational readiness in critical regions.

The war between Russia and Ukraine has severely hindered access to **spare parts**, leaving **80% of Colombia's Mi-17 helicopter fleet inoperative** and forcing reliance on **civilian aircraft** of the same model.

Diplomatic tensions arising from the conflict have disrupted the supply chain for **Russian-made helicopters**, impacting the **Colombian Army's logistical and operational capabilities**. The inability to obtain critical parts and technical assistance has significantly complicated military missions in remote regions such as **Catatumbo**.

In response, the **National Army** turned to leasing **civilian helicopters** as a temporary solution to maintain operations. Companies like **SIS Aviation** and **Helistar** have provided aircraft, including the **Mi-8MTV-1** and **Mi-17 IV**, which are now essential for **troop transportation**, **resupply missions**, and **medical evacuations** in hard-to-reach areas.

Among the leased helicopters are aircraft registered as **HK-3779** and **HK-5080**. These helicopters are being utilized to mobilize **military personnel**, conduct **humanitarian missions**, and perform critical tasks such as **troop transport**, **evacuation of the wounded**, and **resupply of ground units**. Their ability to operate in adverse weather and rugged terrain makes them indispensable in areas like **Catatumbo**, where **land routes** are scarce or nonexistent.