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## Grounded Mi-24 UPDF chopper in Somalia air base raises defense procurement concerns

January 8, 2024 News 0



This UPDF chopper is grounded at Baledogle Air Base in Somalia.

Mogadishu, Somalia | By Michael Wandati | A malfunction has been reported in a UPDF chopper valued at Shs 45 billion (\$12 million) in

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comment on the grounded Mi-24 UPDF chopper in Somalia, no response has been received.

Sources within the defense indicated that the UPDF chopper, part of the recently acquired Mi-24 fleet, was intended for combat and rescue operations in Somalia but has been deemed ineffective.

“The aircraft was bought to be used for combat and rescue operations in Somalia,” said a source who preferred anonymity to speak freely.

“But the chopper has not done any work because it’s garbage.”

Efforts to repair the aircraft, including bringing in experts from Georgia, have been unsuccessful. This incident not only hampers Uganda’s efforts against the Al Shabaab terror group in Somalia but also raises calls for an investigation into the procurement of aircraft by defense officials.

## Surge in plane crashes

The recent malfunction of the UPDF chopper is part of a concerning trend marked by an increased number of air crashes involving UPDF planes.



## Mi-28 attack helicopter crash

On January 2, 2024, a Russian-made UPDF Mi-28 attack helicopter crashed in western Uganda due to bad weather in the hilly areas of Ntoroko.



## Grounded Mi-24 UPDF chopper in Somalia air base raises defense procurement concerns



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The Mi-28 Havoc combat helicopter, valued at \$18 million (Shs 60bn), was developed by Mil Moscow Helicopter Plant.

## UPDF spy plane crash

Last Thursday, another UPDF plane, a Diamond aircraft costing approximately Shs 5 billion, used for reconnaissance missions in ongoing military operations against ADF militants in DR Congo, crashed in Kasese district, western Uganda.

## UPDF air fleet overview

The UPDF operates a diverse fleet of helicopters, including Mi-24/35 attack helicopters, Mi-8/Mi-17s, AB 206 Jet Rangers, Bell 205s, and Bell 212 helicopters.

In April 2023, President Museveni commissioned the first locally-overhauled Mi-24 by Russian company Proheli International Services at Nakasongola Air Base, intended for enhanced day and night operations, particularly in countering cattle rustling and combating regional terrorism.

## Concerns and lack of explanation

Despite efforts to bolster the air force and upgrade aircraft for specific operations, the surge in aircraft accidents raises significant concerns. The UPDF, however, has not provided a detailed explanation to taxpayers regarding the increased cases of aircraft crashes, leading to potential wastage of substantial funds.

## Chronicle of UPDF plane crashes: A decade of tragedies from 2012 to 2024

Over the years, the UPDF has experienced a series of unfortunate helicopter crashes, highlighting significant challenges in maintaining air operations.

In 2012, tragedy struck as three out of four UPDF choppers crashed in Kenya while en route to Mogadishu, resulting in the death of 7 Ugandan soldiers, all on a mission to combat Al Shabaab.

In 2020, Maj Naome Karungi, UPDF's most senior female pilot, and flight trainee Benon Wakola lost their lives when their jet ranger reportedly hit a hill in Butambala district.

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crash happened six days after another UPDF helicopter came down soon after take-off in Balidogle, Somalia.

## Also Read: UPDF helicopter bound for DR Congo crashes in Ntoroko

The year 2022 saw two Mi-24 helicopters crashing in Fort Portal and Mityana.

September 2022 witnessed a devastating incident in east Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where a UPDF helicopter delivering logistics to soldiers fighting ADF insurgents crashed, claiming the lives of at least 22 experienced combat operations officers. The Mi-17, primarily used for transportation, crashed shortly after take-off, hitting troops on the ground.

In July 2023, a routine UPDF helicopter operation in Karamoja sub-region ended in a crash landing.

✦ **HELICOPTER CRASH**    **JET RANGER HELICOPTER**  
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