

The Ecuadorian Army reaffirms its commitment to Eurocopter with the delivery of two new AS350 B2 helicopters

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Eurocopter has delivered the first two Ecureuil AS350 B2 of nine helicopters contracted by the Ecuadorian Armed Forces in July 2010 under its extensive modernization program.

The two Ecureuil AS350 B2s were delivered to the Army Aviation Brigade at La Balvina, Sangolquí in the presence of the Ecuadorian Defense Minister Javier Ponce, the Head of Armed Forces Joint Command Ernesto González, Army Commander Patricio Cárdenas and various other Ecuadorian military officials and Eurocopter representatives.

“The renewal of our helicopter fleet is a key feature of the Army’s modernization process,” declared Javier Ponce. “This purchase will equip the Armed Forces with a new generation of helicopters with lower maintenance costs.”

Meanwhile, Eurocopter’s Vicepresident for Latin America, took the opportunity to thank the Ecuadorian Army “for trusting in Eurocopter’s range of products over the last 40 years. We are delighted to assist the Armed Forces with their renewal program and wish them every success in their operations with our helicopters.”

The Ecuadorian Armed Forces were one of the first armies in Latin America to integrate Eurocopter aircraft into their fleet and they now have nearly 30 Eurocopter helicopters, including 2 Ecureuil AS350Bs, 2 A315B Lamas, 2 SA316 Alouettes, 19 SA342 Gazelles and 4 AS332 Super Pumas. The long operational life of this fleet, which includes helicopters with forty years of service, bears testimony to the reliability and durability of the Eurocopter range.

The new Ecureuils will replace the Lamas and will be used for army pilot training activities in Guayaquil as well as reconnaissance, SAR and firefighting, among other operations. The AS350 B2 is a light single-engine helicopter with an endurance of 3 hours at 140 knots and a capacity of 4 passengers and 2 crew members. Powered by a Turbomeca Arriel 1D1 engine, the Ecuadorian Army’s new Ecureuils are also equipped for night flight and include rescue hoists.

In addition to the recent arrival of the two AS350 B2s, the contract also includes seven Fennec AS550 C3s, which will in turn progressively replace the Gazelles, to be delivered by 2015. Modern, versatile and highly maneuverable, the Fennec AS550 C3 is perfectly adapted to the operational requirements in Ecuador, a country that combines high altitudes and extreme temperatures.

Since its first flight in 1974, the Ecureuil family has achieved sales of more than 5,000 aircraft all over the world and 22 million flight hours



About Eurocopter

Established in 1992, the Franco-German-Spanish Eurocopter Group is a division of EADS, a world leader in aerospace, defense and related services. The Eurocopter Group employs approximately 17,500 people. In 2010, Eurocopter confirmed its position as the world's number one helicopter manufacturer in the civil and parapublic market with a turnover of 4.8 billion Euros, orders for 346 new helicopters and a 49 percent market share in the civil and parapublic sectors. Overall, the Group's helicopters account for 33 percent of the total worldwide civil and parapublic fleet. Eurocopter's strong worldwide presence is ensured by its 30 subsidiaries and participations on five continents, along with a dense network of distributors, certified agents and maintenance centers. There are currently 11,200 Eurocopter helicopters in service and some 2,900 customers in 147 countries. Eurocopter offers the largest civil and military helicopter range in the world.

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