

Press Release

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

Germany extends the contracts for the operation of the Heron 1 drones in Afghanistan and Mali

- Heron 1 German Air Force drones operation extended for more than a year
- Proven performance capability with a system availability reaching over 98%
- More than 46,000 operational flying hours successfully completed over both countries

Bremen, 12 December 2018 – Germany has extended the successful operation of the Heron 1 drones by Airbus DS Airborne Solutions GmbH, a company of Airbus, until mid of 2020.

These contracts have been signed with the Federal Office of Bundeswehr Equipment, Information Technology and In-Service Support on December 12th, 2018.

This renewed contract marks the continuation of one of the most successful cooperation's between the Bundeswehr and Airbus Defence and Space. The contract comprises the provision of all assets and manpower to support the Israeli Heron 1 systems operations in the two countries of deployment. Heron 1, manufactured by the Israeli manufacturer IAI (Israeli Aerospace Industries), is a medium altitude long endurance (MALE) unmanned aerial system (UAS) which can stay airborne above the respective operational area for very long periods and can be operated from unpaved runways under harsh environmental conditions.

The Heron 1 has a wingspan of about seventeen meters and a maximum mission duration of more than twenty-four hours. The detection of IEDs from the air, convoy and patrol unit escort, route exploration and supervision, creation of movement profiles and long-term supervision, support for status reports as well as object and camp protection rank among the military tasks. In addition the system is also used for security and humanitarian support operations.

The Air Force has been using the Heron 1 system in Afghanistan since 2010 and in Mali since 2016. The Heron 1 system makes an indispensable contribution to the protection of soldiers and civilians in the operational areas. With its operational range of up to 800 kilometers it significantly expands the possibilities of airborne reconnaissance of the German contingent. Until today, in total and over both countries, more than 46,000 operational flying hours have been successfully flown.

Airbus is responsible for provision, maintenance and repair of the systems and guarantees the agreed operational availability of Heron 1 in both Afghanistan and Mali on basis of a services model. For this purpose, Airbus has technicians and UAS specialists, on-site in Mazar-I-Sharif (Afghanistan) and Gao (Mali) who maintain the drone system and carry out test flights thus ensuring that the drones are available to the Bundeswehr at any time, as

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contractually agreed. This services model permits the Bundeswehr to concentrate completely on the fulfillment of its mission during operation, without being additionally burdened by the maintenance of the system.

“In Afghanistan and Mali, the services model has proven its performance capability by reaching a system availability of more than 98%. The proven capability of the Heron system to support worldwide deployment missions is reflected in these contract extensions as well as in the signed contract on the next generation RPAS MALE HERON TP.” said Ralf Hastedt, Head of Sales and Business Development of Airbus DS Airborne Solutions GmbH.

“We are very pleased to see the satisfaction of the German Air Force with the Heron UAS activities and the excellent cooperation with Airbus DS Airborne Solutions, forming the basis for such a renewed contract extending the capabilities for long-range airborne reconnaissance of the German Air Force in Afghanistan and Mali by at least another year.” said Moshe Levy, IAI Executive Vice President and General Manager of IAI Military Aircraft Group.

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About Airbus

Airbus is a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2017 it generated revenues of € 59 billion restated for IFRS 15 and employed a workforce of around 129,000. Airbus offers the most comprehensive range of passenger airliners from 100 to more than 600 seats. Airbus is also a European leader providing tanker, combat, transport and mission aircraft, as well as one of the world's leading space companies. In helicopters, Airbus provides the most efficient civil and military rotorcraft solutions worldwide.

About Israel Aerospace Industries

Israel Aerospace Industries: IAI Ltd. is Israel's largest aerospace and defense company and a globally recognized technology and innovation leader, specializing in developing and manufacturing advanced, state-of-the-art systems for air, space, sea, land, cyber and homeland security. Since 1953, the company has provided advanced technology solutions to government and commercial customers worldwide including: satellites, missiles, weapon systems and munitions, unmanned and robotic systems, radars, C4ISR and more. IAI also designs and manufactures business jets and aerostructures, performs overhaul and maintenance on commercial aircraft and converts passenger aircraft to refueling and cargo configurations.

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