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Major order: Rheinmetall to modernize South Africa's air defence capabilities, enabling protection of civilian assets and events

Rheinmetall AG of Düsseldorf has just booked another important order in the field of military air defence. The Republic of South Africa has decided to embark on a thoroughgoing modernization of its existing air defence systems. The contract was signed several days ago. Including logistics and training services, the complete package is scheduled for completion by 2017.

Among other items, the contract encompasses the supply of Oerlikon Skyshield fire control units, which will substantially improve the performance and accuracy of South Africa's current twin-gun systems as well as significantly expanding the operational spectrum of its air defence capabilities. In this context, a number of guns will also be retrofitted with upgrade kits to accommodate Rheinmetall's state-of-the-art Ahead airburst ammunition.

The new Skyshield technology will enable the South African armed forces to protect sensitive installations such as the House of Parliament, power plants, stadiums and other critical military and civilian assets from a wide array of aerial threats, including asymmetric terrorist-type attacks. Because Skyshield air defence systems can be transported without much effort, they can basically be deployed anywhere depending on the evolving threat situation. Ever since the 1980s, South Africa has fielded air defence technology from the former Oerlikon Contraves, which Rheinmetall took over in 1999.

Rheinmetall is one of the world's leading makers of sophisticated short-range air defence systems. In the field of gun-supported air defence it is the market leader as in fire control technology, anti-aircraft guns, integrated guided missile launchers and Ahead airburst ammunition.

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