

# The Air Force plans to acquire another fifth generation fighter in addition to the Eurofighter

09/09/2020 | Madrid

[https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate\\_c?client=tw-ob&depth=1&hl=en&ie=UTF8&pto=aue&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=auto&sp=nmt4&tl=en&u=https://www.infodefensa.com/es/2020/09/09/noticia-ejercito-estudia-reemplazar-eurofighter-modelo.html&usg=ALKJrhnh8khdN-BYdORYsbSI-K124jEag](https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?client=tw-ob&depth=1&hl=en&ie=UTF8&pto=aue&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=auto&sp=nmt4&tl=en&u=https://www.infodefensa.com/es/2020/09/09/noticia-ejercito-estudia-reemplazar-eurofighter-modelo.html&usg=ALKJrhnh8khdN-BYdORYsbSI-K124jEag)

The Spanish **Air Force** is studying the possibility of replacing its current fleet of *F-18* fighter jets, in service at the **Zaragoza** and **Torrejón de Ardoz** air bases (Madrid), with a new batch of combat aircraft made up of *Eurofighter LTE* (*Long Term Evolution*) and another fifth-generation fighter model.

The Chief of the Air Staff (JEMA), Air General **Javier Salto**, explains in a recent interview in RED magazine that "the Air Force considers that the best solution to date would be to replace part of the *F-18*s. with *Eurofighter's* acquisition of the most advanced version (*LTE*), while for the rest we do not rule out the option of acquiring either more *Eurofighter* or another 5th generation fighter model".

The *EF-18M* fleet - Spanish version of the *F-18* - is currently composed of 52 fighters. The **Ala 12** Torrejón operates about 36 aircraft and the remaining other 16 are in the **wing 15** of Zaragoza. These aircraft will be decommissioned around 2030, however, the general emphasizes that the final decision "should not take more than two years."

DEFENCE AND SPACE

## Flota Actual de Aeronaves de Combate del EA



- SEDEF
- MALOG
- IEST (Getafe)
- INTA (Torrejón)
- CLAEX (Torrejón)
- DT (Torrejón)
- MAESMA
- CNI

- AIRBUS D&S
- ITP (Ajávir)
- INDRA...

MAESE

MAESAL

**Ejército del Aire**  
**Escuadrones**

**F-18**  
Ala 12: Base Aérea de Torrejón  
Ala 15: Base Aérea de Zaragoza  
Ala 46: Base Aérea de Gando

**EUROFIGHTER**  
Ala 11: Base Aérea de Morón  
Ala 14: Base Aérea de Albacete

- 72 aeronaves entregadas
- 31 años en operación

12 a/c F-18B (biplaza)  
60 a/c F-18A (monoplaza)

20 a/c en BA Gando  
36 a/c en BA Torrejón  
16 a/c en BA Zaragoza



142 Aeronaves de Combate



T1 (17)

T2 (32)

T3 (17) + 4

5 Escuadrones

- 73 aeronaves entregadas, 70 aeronaves en operación
- 14 años en operación
- +50.000 horas de vuelo

AIRBUS

As published by [Infodefensa.com](https://www.infodefensa.com), **Airbus** has already offered a batch of between 20 and 30 *Eurofighter LTEs* to replace this entire fleet. If Spain finally committed two models in the race is expected to enter the *F-18 Super Hornet* from **Boeing** or the *F-35* of **Lockheed Martin**. The choice of this last model would also open the door to the acquisition of the naval version, the *F-35B*, the only possible option to replace the **Navy Harriers**.

## Falcon Program

What is clear is the replacement of the *F-18s* from the **Gando** air base (Gran Canaria), with more flight hours, acquired second-hand from the **US Navy** . JEMA points out that "at this time our priority is to guarantee the replacement of the oldest *F-18s* that we currently have deployed in the Canary Islands. The solution we are considering is the acquisition of new *Eurofighters* " .

And specifically: "With this, we would give continuity to the knowledge acquired with this system and we could take advantage of synergies in the logistics and sustainability fields. All of this, providing support to the national aerospace industry, which we must not forget is a driving force behind the activity. economic in Spain and which represents 80 percent of the defense industry " . The program, dubbed the *Falcon* , involves the purchase of some **20 new Eurofighters** for around 2 billion euros. The contract could be signed next year, with the aim that the first planes will be in service from 2025.

## Coach delay and MRTT

General Salto also addresses the status of the program to replace veterans *C-101* with *PC-21* from the Swiss firm **Pilatus** . In this regard, he details that "the program is in a very advanced phase, although its deadlines have been affected by the pandemic, which could mean that we cannot start with this new concept in the 2021/2022 academic year as we had planned. initially".

Regarding the *F-5* advanced training fighters , which will be decommissioned around 2028, the JEMA insists that the Air Force bets on the development of a national trainer. "Although there are still years for the entry into service of the new aircraft, the decision must be made in the coming months," he says. The development of a new advanced trainer by the national industry, has an impact, "in addition to providing us with the aircraft we need, it would benefit the Spanish economy with the development of an aeronautical technology program".

In the interview, Salto recalls that it is necessary to recover the strategic air transport and refueling capacity. "For its mission and that of all the Armed Forces, the Air Force urgently needs multipurpose air transport and resupply aircraft ( *Multi-Role Transport Tanker, MRTT* )". At this point, it must be remembered that the **Government** has committed to Airbus to **purchase three aircraft** of this model within a broader agreement to reactivate the aerospace sector after *Covid* .

## NH90 and Predator

JEMA is also **reviewing** the *NH90* helicopter and the *RPAS Predator B* , two new systems that will soon enter service in the Air Force. The arrival of the first *NH90* , scheduled for this month of September, represents -it stands out- "a qualitative leap in the field of rotary wing systems" and an effort in the modernization of the **Madrid Aviation Authority** to guarantee its sustainability.....