



DEFENCE MINISTRY AGREES MOU WITH AGUSTAWESTLAND FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE AIRCRAFT

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The **Defence Ministry** on Tuesday said it had signed a memorandum of understanding with **AgustaWestland**, a unit of Italy's Finmeccanica, to buy six AW609 tilt-rotor aircraft for search and rescue operations.

Major General Abdullah al-Hashimi, the ministry's executive director of strategic analysis, told reporters at the Dubai Airshow that the aircraft would improve the capabilities of the entire UAE Armed Forces.

The AgustaWestland AW609, formerly the Bell/Agusta BA609, is a twin-engined tilt-rotor aircraft that can take off and land like a helicopter, but flies like a plane.

AgustaWestland said in a statement that three of the aircraft would be delivered starting in 2019, with UAE's Joint Aviation Command also taking options for three more aircraft.

Also on Tuesday, AgustaWestland Aviation Services, a joint venture with Abu Dhabi Aviation, said it is expanding its support solutions including maintenance, repair and overhaul for a range of

components, for the 200 AgustaWestland helicopters in service in the region.

“The Company is set to support the whole AgustaWestland Family of new generation models with dedicated services in the area,” it said in a statement. “The set-up of a local hub for maintenance services has helped the customers to access spare parts locally within few hours.”

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