

## India Poised for Landmark Sukhoi Jet Export to Armenia



India is reportedly close to a major defense deal with Armenia that would see the former Soviet republic acquire Sukhoi Su-30 fighter jets. The potential agreement, which could also include the sale of the supersonic BrahMos cruise missile, marks a significant step in India's growing role as a global defense exporter. This development comes as Armenia seeks to modernize its air force and diversify its defense partnerships away from its traditional supplier, Russia. The deal would be a landmark moment for India's defense industry, as it would represent the country's first-ever export of a frontline fighter jet.

Armenia's interest in the Indian-made Su-30MKI, a heavily customized variant of the Russian Su-30, has been driven by a need to counter its regional rival, Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan recently acquired JF-17 fighter jets from Pakistan, a key strategic competitor for India. The Su-30MKI is a multi-role, twin-engine aircraft known for its versatility in air-to-air combat and ground strikes. India's extensive experience operating and maintaining a large fleet of Su-30s makes it an ideal partner for Armenia, offering a complete support system that includes pilot training, maintenance, and spare parts. This comprehensive approach would ensure the aircraft can be deployed rapidly and remain operational for the long term.

Beyond the fighter jets, the potential deal is also expected to include advanced weaponry. Armenia is reportedly keen on integrating the lethal BrahMos supersonic cruise missile and the Astra beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile into its Su-30 fleet. This would significantly enhance Armenia's combat capabilities, providing it with a formidable edge in the region. The sale of BrahMos missiles to Armenia would follow a similar deal with the Philippines, solidifying India's position as a reliable supplier of advanced defense technology.

This burgeoning defense relationship is built on a broader strategic framework. Since the 2020 conflict with Azerbaijan, Armenia has been increasingly looking to India and France for military hardware and support. According to reports from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India supplied almost half of Armenia's total arms imports between 2022 and 2024. Deals for Pinaka rocket systems and Akash air defense missile systems have already been finalized. The potential Sukhoi deal would further strengthen this partnership, showcasing India's indigenous defense manufacturing capabilities and expanding its geopolitical influence in the strategically important Caucasus region.