The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Kalashnikov Maker Plans to Increase Exports

By The Moscow Times

December 23, 2013

The recently established Kalashnikov Concern, which makes and sells the eponymous assault rifle, is planning to develop a modernized main battle rifle for the Russian Army and hopes to increase the number of models available for export, its general director said in an interview.

"We are currently engaged with a large number of research and development projects for a number of government agencies ... we hope to begin a modernization of the AK-74 for the Defense Ministry," Konstantin Busygin said.

Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, who oversees the defense industry, said in September that the Russian military was planning on standardizing on a single modernized rifle, the AK-12, to replace three aging rifle models.

Later that month it was reported that the AK-12 — originally intended as an infantry rifle — was passed over by the Russian military. Senior commanders said they did not need the AK-12

when the army had millions of AK-74s stockpiled.

No announcement has yet been made by the Defense Ministry about modernizing the AK-74. Busygin noted that Kalashnikov would move forward with trials of the AK-12 assault rifle for law enforcement agencies.

The company also plans to sell the advanced Yarygin MP-443 pistol — currently used only by special units — in large numbers to the Defense Ministry, he said.

Busygin suggested further modifications to the AK-74 could be made for international customers, particularly for export to the U.S., Kalashnikov's largest market for civilian weapons.

The Kalashnikov Concern was formed earlier this year with the merger of Izhmash — the Izhevsk-based manufacturer of Kalashnikov rifles — with several other defense enterprises. The move was intended to consolidate the Russian small arms industry under a single vertically integrated holding company and return the Izhmash factory to profitability after it went into bankruptcy last year.

Busygin noted that this year the company more than doubled the production of aircraft guns compared to last year. In June the company won a $400 million contract to supply a new anti-tank missile for the Russian military.

As of September the new company employs some 4,600 workers earning an average wage of $720 a month, Busygin said.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/12/23/kalashnikov-maker-plans-to-increase-exports-a30735