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Philippines Scraps Russian Helicopter Deal Over Potential Sanctions – AP

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Philippines Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana. **U.S. Secretary of Defense**

The Philippines has scrapped a deal to buy 16 Russian military-transport helicopters over fears of U.S. sanctions, the Associated Press reported Wednesday.

The $227 million deal to acquire Mi-17s from Moscow was approved in November and canceled in June, before the end of then-President Rodrigo Duterte's term in office.

"We could face sanctions," Former Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana told AP on Tuesday night.

Lorenzana at the time said an initial payment had been made by the Philippines in January. He did not disclose what happened to the payment after the deal was scuttled.

Besides combat, the Mi-17s would have been used for search-and-rescue operations as well as medical evacuations.

The first batch of the multi-purpose helicopters would have been scheduled for delivery 2024.

Moscow can appeal Manila's decision to back out during the contract's "termination process," but the Philippine government has little room to reconsider, the AP cited an unnamed Philippine military official as saying.

The United States, the Philippines' treaty ally that has imposed heavy sanctions on Russia aimed at forcing it to withdraw from Ukraine, could offer Manila similar heavy-lift helicopters in exchange for the scrapped Russian deal, Lrenzana said.

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