



Chinese Weapons in Rwanda

OE Watch Commentary: While Rwanda has sourced much of its military equipment from a variety of countries, including Russia, France, South Africa, the United States, and Israel, as the accompanying excerpted article from the South African website *DefenceWeb* relates, the country's armed forces are increasingly turning to China for military hardware. The latest items, including Red Arrow 9A anti-tank missiles and at least one PCL-09 self-propelled howitzer, were first displayed on 11 December 2018 at Rwanda's annual combined arms exercise, labeled Hard Punch III, that took place at the Gabiro Combat Training Center.

The PCL-09, built by Poly Technologies, mounts a Soviet D-30 122 mm howitzer on a Shaanxi 6x6 truck. Only a single PCL-09 (export designation CS/SH1, not to be confused with the Norinco SH1 155 mm self-propelled artillery system) was seen at the exercise and while the article does not mention if Rwanda purchased others, it does say that alongside it was an SH3 122 mm tracked self-propelled howitzer. The SH3 122 mm is built by China and was first seen in Rwanda during the 2017 iteration of the exercise.

Also making an appearance at Hard Punch III was an Otokar Cobra armored vehicle. Fitted to the Cobra were Red Arrow 9A (HJ-9A) anti-tank missiles. According to the article, the Red Arrow 9A has a range of 5,500 meters and carries a high explosive anti-tank warhead able to penetrate 1200 mm of armor. Additionally, the article relates that Rwanda might be the first export user for this type of missile, which is already in service with the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

Several other pieces of Chinese military hardware in use by the Rwandan military were also mentioned in the article. While there is some uncertainty as to exactly what artillery platforms China has previously exported to Rwanda, there is no uncertainty that China continues to be a big supplier to this small country. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

“Rwanda’s military is now operating Chinese PCL-09 self-propelled howitzers and Red Arrow 9A anti-tank missiles.”

Source: “Rwanda unveils new Chinese weaponry,” *DefenceWeb*, 14 December 2018. <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/land/land-land/rwanda-unveils-new-chinese-weaponry/>

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The CS/SH1 can fire projectiles out to a range of around 27 km with a rate of fire of eight rounds per minute. A total of 40 rounds are carried. The vehicle can be fitted with a 12.7 mm machinegun on the crew cabin for self-protection – the cab has seating for five persons. The vehicle weights around 16 500 kg and can reach a top speed of 85 km/h with a range of 600 km.

The Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) also operate 2S1 self-propelled howitzers armed with 122 mm D-30-derived guns.



“Rwandan soldiers during a deployment in 2014. Increasingly the Rwandan military is purchasing Chinese weapons.”

Source: Rwanda Government/Flickr, <https://goo.gl/EVKYot>, CC BY-ND 2.0.