

L-39 Skyfox successfully completes mission in Africa and the Middle East

Vodochody, January 22, 2026 **The L-39 Skyfox aircraft completed an exceptionally demanding business trip across Africa and the Middle East lasting more than six weeks. During this trip, it visited several African countries, opening up future business opportunities for AERO. The aircraft also flew to the southern hemisphere for the first time, demonstrating its exceptional reliability and ease of operation – most of the trip was completed by a two-member pilot crew without accompanying technical personnel.**

After a successful premiere presentation at the Dubai Airshow 2025, where Skyfox flew on November 7, a several-week mission across Africa followed. The crew consisted of factory pilots David Jahoda and Vladimír Továrek, who flew over 30 countries in more than six weeks, made 20 stopovers, and covered a total of 12,429 nautical miles (approximately 23,000 km). The Skyfox landed at its home airport in Vodochody on December 23, 2025.

"During the presentation of the aircraft in Dubai, we received many positive and complimentary responses from our customers – not only for the completely new camouflage, but especially for the aircraft's versatility, as we presented the Skyfox in an armed version for the first time," says Viktor Sotona, President and Chairman of the Board of Aero Vodochody. "During the subsequent trip to Africa, we were able to present the Skyfox in more detail, for example in Uganda, where air force representatives appreciated the aircraft's unique flight characteristics and reliability. We believe that this trip will help us to complete some ongoing business deals, but at the same time it will open up new avenues for further cooperation in other countries," adds Viktor Sotona.

The longest trip in 20 years

The mission itself would not have been possible without the factory pilots, who took care of the aircraft not only in terms of piloting, but also from a technical point of view. They were not accompanied by technical staff on the African trip, as is usually the case. Everything was handled by a crew of only two, who had to prepare flight plans, fly the aircraft, and at the same time perform a number of other tasks – from checking the aircraft upon arrival, refueling, securing and safeguarding the aircraft, to complete pre-flight preparation. Under normal circumstances, these tasks are the domain of technicians.

Viktor Sotona also emphasized the extraordinary nature of the entire mission: *"I am extremely proud of David and Vladimír for not shying away from this challenge, but instead accepting it with full commitment. They had to push the limits of their personal courage several times, whether flying over risky areas or during several hours of flight over the dense African jungle,"* he said, praising both pilots.

"The trip to Dubai and then to Africa was the longest we've done at Aero in the last 20 years," adds one of the pilots, **David Jahoda**. *"Africa is a very important region for Aero, and several local airlines wanted to take the opportunity to see the aircraft up close and get to know it better. This mission was significantly different from normal test flights – during long flights, it was necessary to constantly communicate with air traffic control in individual areas and maintain maximum concentration, because communication was not always completely clear and understandable,"* Jahoda added.

Skyfox as a brand of reliability

During more than six weeks on the road, Skyfox flew over 56 flight hours without any serious technical malfunctions. The aircraft thus demonstrated not only exceptional flight characteristics and easy handling, but above all the high reliability of all systems and components.

"After each landing, we followed internal regulations for aircraft maintenance at foreign airports. In practice, this meant performing simple mechanical checks, which can be compared to preparing a car before a long journey," says the **second pilot, Vladimír Továrek**. **"In total, we flew more than 50 flight hours in very different climatic conditions without encountering any major technical problems,"** he emphasizes the reliability of the aircraft.

Continuing the legend

The simplicity and operational reliability of the Skyfox is also demonstrated by the fact that no special technical modifications were necessary for this extremely demanding mission. The technical preparation was identical to that for normal operation. *"The only difference was that the pilots had to undergo special training focused on preparing the aircraft before, between, and after flights. This gave*

them the necessary knowledge and authorization to take care of the aircraft not only in the air, but especially on the ground," explains **Petr Jinda, Vice President of Development at Aero Vodochody**.

"In developing the L-39 Skyfox, we built on Aero's many years of experience with the legendary L-39 Albatros, which was known for its simplicity, reliability, and low operating costs. We have further enhanced these features with modern technologies," adds Jinda. "The Skyfox is equipped with modern monitoring systems, a maintenance panel with clear signaling, an independent oxygen system without the need to refill bottles, a highly reliable and efficient engine, greater fuel capacity thanks to a wet wing, and a number of other improvements. This greatly simplifies the operation of the aircraft and makes it possible to carry out even such demanding missions," adds Petr Jinda.

Consequences of the geopolitical situation

The biggest complications were not technical, but rather related to the geopolitical situation and administrative restrictions. The main difficulties that the pilots had to deal with during the trip were not technical, but stemmed from the fact that Skyfox is registered in the military aircraft registry. "At almost every other destination, we had to explain how it was possible that Skyfox was a military aircraft operated by a civilian company and piloted by civilian pilots," adds David Jahoda, recounting one of the stories. The flights were further complicated by the current geopolitical situation, which made it impossible to obtain permission to fly over certain countries.

The African journey in a nutshell

- Number of countries flown over: 30 (+ 3 other countries with airspace overflight)
- Number of stopovers: 20
- Number of flight hours: 56h20min
- Total distance: 12,429 nm (approx. 23,000 km)
- Total fuel consumption: 35,000 lb (approx. 15,900 kg)
- Longest leg: 1,075 nm (approx. 1,990 km)
- Countries where Skyfox made stopovers: Bulgaria – Turkey – Egypt – Saudi Arabia – UAE – Oman – Djibouti – Ethiopia – Uganda – Central African Republic – Nigeria – Ghana – Burkina Faso – Senegal – Mauritania – Algeria – Croatia.

The L-39 Skyfox is a modern multi-purpose aircraft capable of performing a variety of functions, from pilot training to tactical and reconnaissance missions. The Skyfox is the most efficient aircraft in its class, available in both Western and Eastern configurations and certified according to EU and NATO regulations. This versatile technology platform combines modern simulation technologies and ground training systems. The Czech L-39 Skyfox training aircraft offers an innovative combination of modern avionics, a powerful jet engine, and excellent flight characteristics, making it a suitable choice for all phases of training pilots of 4th and 5th generation aircraft, reconnaissance, and tactical missions focused, for example, on cooperation with various ground forces of the army.

AERO Vodochody AEROSPACE a.s. focuses on the development, production, maintenance, and modernization of civil and military aircraft. It is the largest aircraft manufacturer in the Czech Republic and one of the oldest aircraft manufacturers in the world. In the field of its own aircraft, Aero is a permanent partner of a number of military air forces and has a strong position in the market for military training and light combat aircraft. Thanks to the 11,000 aircraft it has manufactured over the course of its 100-year existence, hundreds of L-39 Albatros aircraft still in use by dozens of military operators and a number of demo teams, and especially thanks to its new L-39 Skyfox aircraft, Aero is establishing itself as a leader in the global market for jet training aircraft. In the field of civil aviation, Aero cooperates with the largest aircraft manufacturers on a wide range of projects and is a partner in several risk-sharing programs, where it is responsible not only for the production and assembly of aircraft components, but also for their development.

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