

# Milex 2017: Belarus's military exhibition – Belarus Photo Digest

On 20-22 May, Minsk hosted Milex 2017, its eighth exhibition of arms and military equipment. This year, the exhibition hosted more than 140 official guests from Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, China, and Kazakhstan.

Military officials from more than 27 countries were in attendance. However, the exhibition's results remain somewhat mysterious. Manufacturers have repeatedly stated that they do not want to disclose their partners or the amount of weapons they sell. Therefore, most contracts happen behind closed doors and do not appear in the press.

Belarus ranks 18th on the list of the world's largest weapons exporters. Both the authorities and independent experts agree that the country has a strong military industry. This is due not only to the country's Soviet legacy, but also to a mature market with many private companies. According to State Military Industrial Committee chairman [Siarhiej Hurulioŭ](#), Belarus is capable of making any weapon in the world right now.

'This is a risky business, organised by former employees of the defence industry and retired military officials', says military expert [Aliaksandr Aliesin](#). 'They are quick to take up the novelties which state-owned enterprises do not want to risk dealing with.'

The exhibition effectively demonstrates how the Belarusian defence industry is developing as well as the partnerships it is forging. According to Siarhiej Hurulioŭ, weapons and equipment based on new technologies, IT, robotics, and drones are in the highest demand.

The main buyers of Belarusian products are the countries of the Persian Gulf, Indonesia, and China. Remarkably, the role of China in joint military projects is growing year by year. One of the results of this cooperation is the Belarusian multiple-launch rocket system Polonaise.





*About the photographer: Siarhei Leskiec is a freelance photographer whose work focuses on everyday life, folk traditions, and rituals in the Belarusian countryside. Originally from Maladzieczna Region, he received a history degree from the Belarusian State Pedagogical University.*