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Saab completes operational training of Brazilian pilots to fly Gripen

The last four pilots completed the Delta Conversion Training at the Swedish Air Force, which included theoretical and practical classes, as well as simulator flights.

The last class of operational pilots responsible for the deployment of the F-39 Gripen in the 1st Air Defense Group (1st GDA) of the Brazilian Air Force (FAB), concluded the Delta Conversion Training on June 13th at the Gripen Centre, located at the F 7 Wing in Sâtenäs, in the western region of Sweden.

The course, conducted by the Swedish Air Force's Phoenix Squadron, is divided into two stages. The Conversion Training, with a duration of 11 weeks and 50 flights per pilot, covers the basic operation of the fighter jet in both solo and formation missions during day and night periods. The Combat Readiness Training includes 25 flights over approximately nine weeks, exploring the air-to-air combat capabilities of the fighter, including the use of missiles, cannons, and the human-machine interface, one of the main features of Gripen.

"The Phoenix Squadron is dedicated to the training of Gripen pilots, and we are equipped appropriately for that, including flight simulators. The Brazilian pilots are highly trained and come here with extensive operational experience, both from the F-5M and AMX units. They quickly learned about the operation, configuration, and flying of Gripen," revealed Major Richard Carlqvist, commander of the Phoenix Squadron.

The Gripen Centre serves as a hub for training pilots who will fly Gripen, both from foreign nations and the Swedish Air Force itself. Throughout the course, students train on the Gripen C/D, with single and twin-seater configurations respectively. Despite being a different Gripen fighter than that acquired by Brazil, this experience is essential as it helps pilots understand the system, operational mode, and flight controls, considering the similarity in some aspects between these different Gripens.

"After being adapted to Gripen C/D in Sweden, our pilots will undergo their conversion to Gripen E entirely in Brazil, using the resources already available at the 1st GDA, mainly through the planning stations and flight simulators. The courses will be conducted within the scope of the 1st GDA and taught by selected Swedish pilots who will remain at the Anápolis air base as flight instructors. They

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work together with the Brazilian pilots on the conversion and operational deployment of the aircraft," explained Lieutenant Colonel Aviator Gustavo de Oliveira Pascotto, commander of the 1st GDA.

In this binational program with large scale technology transfer, the interaction between the two countries is continuous and results in benefits for both countries involved.

"The cooperation between the Swedish and Brazilian Air Forces is very good and takes place at various levels. We receive Brazilian fighter pilots here in S aten as, but we also have a support group from our base in An apolis, assisting the FAB in the introduction of Gripen E into service. Cooperation and discussions between the teams are excellent," said Colonel Adam Nelson, commander of the F 7 Wing.

Previously completed training

The Gripen Centre at F 7 Wing has already received 17 FAB pilots. The current commander of the 1st GDA, Lieutenant Colonel Aviator Gustavo, and Lieutenant Colonel Aviator Ramon Lincoln Santos F rneas were the first FAB pilots to undergo the Gripen C/D course, then as captains, in 2014. Next, three test pilots from the FAB's Flight Test and Research Institute (*Instituto de Pesquisas e Ensaio em Voo – IPEV*), with Lieutenant Colonel Cristiano de Oliveira, who was still a major at the time, became the first Brazilian to fly the Gripen E, and now the training is concluded with the three groups of four operational pilots each.

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