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First Gripen E produced in Brazil makes maiden flight

The first Gripen fighter built outside Sweden through the collaboration between Saab and Embraer, marks another milestone in the Gripen programme.

The first Gripen fighter built outside Sweden has taken to the skies, completing its historic maiden flight from Embraer's Gavião Peixoto aerodrome in São Paulo State on 6 October at 10:21 local time.

Flown by Saab chief test pilot Jakob Högberg, the sortie aimed to verify the aircraft's basic system functions and assess its initial performance. The flight was classified as the fighter's first production acceptance test and initiated the final phase of the manufacturing process at Embraer.

Embraer flight engineers were responsible for flight planning and execution, with support from Saab, marking another milestone in the technology transfer plan delivered by the Gripen programme to Brazil.

"This maiden flight shows that Gripen production in Brazil has reached a new level of maturity. I am proud of our close cooperation with Embraer in the Gripen programme, which establish a solid foundation for Gripen's future development in Brazil," says Marcus Wandt, head of Saab's business area Aeronautics.

"This first flight of a Gripen E produced in Brazil by Embraer is a historic milestone for the country's aerospace and defense industry. It confirms the success of a long-term strategy that combined the vision of the Brazilian Air Force, Saab's technological expertise and Embraer's engineering and industrial capabilities," said Bosco da Costa Junior, President & CEO of Embraer Defense & Security.

Following its production acceptance flight campaign, the aircraft will be certified and ready for delivery to the Brazilian Air Force (FAB). It will be transferred to Anápolis Air Force Base in Goiás State, to join the First Air Defence Group (1st GDA), currently operating 10 Gripen fighters.

This aircraft, officially presented on 25 March 2026 by Embraer, is the first of 15 to be produced in Brazil under the current programme. Embraer is home to South America's only supersonic fighter production line and an integral part of Saab's global manufacturing and supply chain network.

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