



**AAD**  
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## GRIPEN ENTERS SERVICE

Day One at AAD2008 marked the commissioning into service of the South African Air Force's (SAAF) Gripen fourth-generation fighter jet.

Minister of Defence, Mr Mosioua Lekota and the Chief of the SAAF, Lt Gen Carlo Gagiono, officiated at the ceremony entailing a formation fly-past by four Gripens, a low-level air display and media event.

"The modernisation of our defence force in no way diminishes the commitment to peace and stability, and the defensive posture that are cornerstones of our post-1994 defence policy," the Minister said.

He added that air power – the ability of a nation to use the air in peace and war and to deny the free use of the air to its enemies – is a key component on modern defence capability. "The Gripen will be the icon of South Africa's air capability for several decades to come.

The Gripen is a platform designed to survive the complex battle arena of the future, characterized by beyond visual range (BVR) missiles and high agility self defence missiles cued by a helmet sight. This capability allows the pilot to engage threats in the own vulnerable rear sector whilst delivering a range of ballistic and guided smart weapons with pinpoint accuracy.

The Gripen system was acquired to afford the SAAF a credible all-round capability in the air.



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