



By: TA | AP Brief

France will build a new aircraft carrier as it increases defense spending



France will build a new aircraft carrier with a capacity for 30 fighter jets and 2,000 sailors, French President Emmanuel Macron announced Sunday in what he described as "the display of our nation's power in the service of freedom on the seas and amid the turbulence of our times."

"In an age of predators, we must be strong in order to be feared, and especially strong at sea. This is why, in line with the last two military programming laws, and after a thorough and careful review, I have decided to equip France with a new aircraft carrier.

The decision to launch the construction of this very large-scale program was taken this week," Macron told French troops stationed in Abu Dhabi.

The new vessel is planned to be ready in 2038, replacing the aging **Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier**, which came into service in 2001.

It will have a displacement of about 78,000 tons and a length of 310 meters (1,017 feet), compared to 42,000 tons and 261 meters (856 feet) for the Charles de Gaulle.

The new carrier would still be smaller than the USS Gerald Ford aircraft carrier, the largest warship in the world, which has a displacement of more than 100,000 tons and measures 1,100 feet (334 meters).

Like its predecessor, France's new aircraft carrier will be nuclear-powered and equipped with French Rafale M fighter jets.

Macron said the project will benefit hundreds of suppliers, most of them small- and medium-sized businesses.

"I will personally guarantee this commitment in support of our companies, and I will visit the shipyard next February to meet them," he said.

Extra military spending

The new carrier will be able to engage in heavily armed, long-range deployments at

short notice, repeatedly and for extended periods of time, the French defense ministry said on its website.

In 2023, the cost of a new aircraft carrier was estimated at about 10 billion euros (\$11.7 billion) by Sébastien Lecornu, defense minister at the time and now French prime minister.

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He said France will aim to spend 64 billion euros on defense in 2027, the last year of his second term, double the level of 32 billion euros when he became president in 2017.

France's military currently comprises around 200,000 active personnel and over 40,000 reservists, making it the second-largest in the European Union, just behind Poland. France wants to increase the number of reservists to 80,000 by 2030.