

# UNIDEF's Global Sales and Marketing Capabilities are Augmented with UNIROBOTICS' Engineering Capabilities

UNIDEF is celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> year of its founding in 2023, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye. UNIDEF is renowned for the weapon integration solutions it offers for various platforms and users in the defence and aerospace industry, and the company's Managing Partner and Co-Founder, Cem Kurter, has shared insights on the company's current activities, its engineering marvel subsidiary UNIROBOTICS, and its IDEF 2023 plans.

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Cem KURTER, Managing Partner and Co-Founder of UNIDEF

**MSI TDR:** UNIDEF is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Over the past 10 years, UNIDEF has worked tirelessly regarding the procurement of weapon systems needed by Turkish users and weapon integration onto aircraft, along with achieving critical milestones along the way, culminating in the establishment of UNIROBOTICS in 2020. Could you summarise the past 10 years of UNIDEF?

**Cem KURTER:** We established UNIDEF in 2013 and the company has accomplished remarkable work in the past 10 years by designing and producing unique weapon integration solutions for S-70i/UH-60 BLACK HAWK, AS532 Cougar, and we even have an ongoing weapon integration project for CH-47 Chinook helicopter windows. We know that most of the integrations carrying our signature have proven themselves in the field. The efforts we spent on weapon integration naturally led us to develop an indigenous weapon pod as well. As weapon integration has begun to

transition from aviation to land and naval platforms, we started receiving requests from end users to enhance system integrations. These requests then led to new opportunities. With the introduction of smart systems, we also started considering stabilisation projects. This field requires expertise and we decided to invest in it, establishing UNIROBOTICS in partnership with UNIDEF and Ömür Baç to take weapon integration to the next level. Our partner Samsun Yurt Savunma (SYS) is producing its own take on a 12.7 mm M2 heavy machine gun, and the fact that UK-based AEI Systems became a subsidiary of SYS, demonstrated how accurate our investment decision was. We had already set our vision to develop and produce medium-calibre weapon systems and indigenous original remote-controlled weapon turrets utilising said systems within our ecosystem.

Even though UNIROBOTICS started as a spin-off company, it now possesses the engineering capabilities to design and produce a high-performance remote-controlled weapon station in a very short time. UNIROBOTICS has reached a level where it can easily take on the responsibility of designing a new weapon turret.

With the establishment of UNIROBOTICS, we shifted our entire engineering team and engineering activities under the UNIROBOTICS umbrella to make the structure more efficient, while UNIDEF focused on its strengths, namely sales, marketing, and business development and focused on project management, in line with its founding purpose. Yes, we are still taking on weapon integration projects and related system integration projects, but we receive engineering support from UNIROBOTICS for these endeavours.

**MSI TDR:** Does UNIDEF have plans to establish new companies?

**Cem KURTER:** When we founded UNIDEF 10 years ago, building remote-controlled weapon turrets was not in our imagination. However, circumstances, demands, and opportunities led us in that direction. It is necessary to evaluate current conditions well and make future predictions. UNIDEF's focus on weapon integration has brought forth these opportunities. We believe that future opportunities will pave the way for us to establish new companies or partnerships in different fields.



TRAKON TARGAN

## We Must Develop Our Marketing and Sales Efforts

**MSI TDR:** Turkish defence and aerospace industry made great strides in engineering. Are engineering capabilities alone sufficient to become a global actor?

**Cem KURTER:** Yes, engineering capabilities are crucial, and our country has made significant progress in this regard. However, we should not overlook the following: The Turkish defence and aerospace industry is progressing with a focus on engineering; we design, conduct R&D and production, but it is not enough. Sales, marketing, and business development efforts also must advance in parallel. Our failure to achieve the desired export figures supports this idea. Individually, our companies are breaking their own records, but collectively, we are not at the desired level.

At UNIDEF, we have focused on the sales of our stakeholders' solutions, especially in international markets, for this reason. We have a strong global business network, and we open this network to industry stakeholders as well. This was also the founding vision of UNIDEF 10 years ago, and we have successfully realised this vision so far. We combine CANiK's firearms with UNIROBOTICS' weapon systems and integrate them into manned or unmanned land, sea, and air platforms. By integrating our stakeholders' products into our developed systems as beneficial subsystems or products that benefit the user, we confidently offer them in the international market without hesitation.

In short, UNIDEF offers comprehensive solutions for land, sea, and air defence systems. When making proposals for weapon integration on an air platform or remote-controlled weapon turrets on land and sea platforms, we often observe that these platforms have other needs as well. If there is a Turkish defence and aerospace industry product meeting this need, we utilise our business network to include the products from Turkish defence and aerospace sector stakeholders with or alongside our own products. We believe that to increase our exports, it is important to be open to such collaborations and not act selfishly. We believe that by integrating our products or complementing each other rather than imitating or competing with each other, we can increase our revenues and create integrated systems that will act as force multipliers in the global market in the development journey of the Turkish defence and aerospace sector.



## Our Newest and Best Product: UNIROBOTICS

**MSI TDR:** Upcoming IDEF is one of the most important events for the defence and aerospace sector in Türkiye. How did UNIDEF and UNIROBOTICS prepare for the fair? Will you showcase any new products?

**Cem KURTER:** We are very excited for IDEF, both for UNIDEF and UNIROBOTICS. We can say that our newest and best product is UNIROBOTICS. We will be showcasing the weapon mounts we designed for the windows and doors of CH-47 helicopters for the first time at IDEF 2023. These mounts are our original design, and we are eager to adapt them to Türkiye's current and future indigenous helicopters. Our mounts designed for S-60 SEAHAWK windows for weapon integration are also turning a lot of heads, figuratively. We won't be able to physically showcase it at this exhibition, but we will discuss the details with our stakeholders.



TRAKON CREW



**MSI TDR:** How do you plan to proceed after CH-47 weapon mount? Are there any platforms for which you plan to design a new weapon mount?

**Cem KURTER:** We conduct our weapon mount design studies in Türkiye in collaboration with end users. If there is demand, we can design an external weapon station for T-70 BLACK HAWK and GÖKBEY helicopters. If there is a demand for the integration of CANiK's 12.7 mm M3 heavy machine gun into helicopters, we can design a mount for that as well. We have also started receiving similar requests from foreign users that utilise the same platforms in Turkish inventory. We participate in international exhibitions, particularly in South America and the Far East, and maintain close contact with those countries. We are ready for collaboration, whether it involves utilising our existing mounts or designing new ones to meet demand.

In summary, we continue to present the mounts we have developed and transformed into off-the-shelf products as UNIDEF's offerings. Additionally, we have completed a project in the Czech Republic where we developed a special turret system for integrating two M134 Miniguns onto SUVs, marking our first export. Our Modular Weaponised Trailer (MWT), which is in the maturity stage, is still undergoing field tests with a foreign customer.

**UNIDEF, Will Continue It's Path with Dillon Aero**

**MSI TDR:** Could you provide some insight on the current developments regarding UNIDEF's international collaborations?

**Cem KURTER:** Our international collaborations are also continuing to grow and expand, just like our domestic





ones. We have reached an agreement to continue our activities related to the M134 Minigun in Türkiye in partnership with Dillon Aero, for which we are now the Turkish representative. We will respond to both domestic and international demands for the mounts we have developed specifically for this weapon, together with Dillon Aero. Dillon Aero is a company with a strong infrastructure, owning two airports and over 20 aircraft in the United States. They will also provide us access to this infrastructure. We believe that we can address the long-standing issue of the need for a flying platform for conducting tests for the systems we develop with the help of Dillon Aero. We will also share new developments regarding this collaboration at IDEF.

**MSI TDR:** What can we expect from UNIROBOTICS at IDEF? Will your products be showcased at other companies' booths?

**Cem KURTER:** At the exhibition, UNIROBOTICS will showcase the TRAKON turret carrying AEI Systems' VENOM LR 30x113mm cannon, the TRAKON TARGAN stabilised turret featuring the 12.7 mm CANiK M2 QCB heavy machine gun, as well as the TRAKON CREW and TRAKON LITE turrets developed for land and sea platforms. We will also see our TRAKON turret on HAVELSAN's KAPGAN unmanned ground vehicle (UGV) and the BARKAN UGV. Additionally, our TRAKON turret will be mounted on Katmerciler's HIZIR 2 vehicle.

Our TRAKON turret, which was previously exhibited on Nurol Makina's EJDER YALÇIN 4 x 4 vehicle at the Defence Vehicles Dynamics (DVD) event in Millbrook, UK in 2022, will also be featured on another vehicle at Nurol Makina's booth in its final configuration, alongside the VENOM LR. We are also planning to start live firing tests with this turret in collaboration with Nurol Makina in the near future.

**MSI TDR:** Can you provide information on the current status of UNIROBOTICS' existing turret projects?

**Cem KURTER:** In 2021, we were selected as the subcontractor responsible for the development

of close-in weapon systems for the Hisar-class Offshore Patrol Vessel project of the Turkish Naval Forces Command. We are working on this project together with HAVELSAN. It may be surprising for a newly established company to be involved in such an ambitious project in a short time, but we had prepared all our infrastructure in line with goals like these when we founded our company. We will complete the delivery of the first two TRAKON TARGAN remote-controlled weapon turrets to their first vessel within 2023. After the qualification, factory acceptance, and port acceptance tests, there will be vessel acceptance procedures. We have completed all the tests specified in our contract. The factory acceptance tests will start in August, followed by port and vessel acceptance procedures. While the deliveries to the first vessel are ongoing, the factory acceptance tests for the second vessel will begin. These processes are expected to take approximately 1 year.

We have a solution in progress at UNIROBOTICS to integrate SYS's CANIK M3 heavy machine gun onto helicopters, following the integration of the M134 Minigun. We are working on a version of TRAKON CREW for this solution, which will support the operator with a stabilised weapon mount, that can be attached to the rear door of the helicopter with depression limits of 25 to -30 degrees, with an elevation limit of +1 degree.

We have focused on mechanical integrations on helicopter windows until now, but we have not done any weapon integration on the rear doors and ramps of helicopters. With the TRAKON CREW mount we have developed for rear doors and ramps, we aim to present a solution that is different and more capable than the systems currently in use worldwide. We aim to complete our work on TRAKON CREW by 2024-2025.

*We would like to thank Cem Kurter, Managing Partner and Co-Founder of UNIDEF for taking the time to answer our questions, and for providing us with such valuable information. ♦*