

AK-47

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The **AK-47** (also known as the **Kalashnikov**, **AK**, or in Russian slang, **Kalash**) is a selective-fire (semi-automatic and automatic), gas-operated 7.62×39mm assault rifle, developed in the Soviet Union by Mikhail Kalashnikov. It is officially known in the Soviet documentation as *Avtomat Kalashnikova* (Russian: Автомат Калашникова).

Design work on the AK-47 began in the last year of World War II (1945). In 1946, the AK-47 was presented for official military trials, and in 1948, the fixed-stock version was introduced into active service with selected units of the Soviet Army. An early development of the design was the *AKS* (S—*Skladnoy* or "folding"), which was equipped with an underfolding metal shoulder stock. In 1949, the AK-47 was officially accepted by the Soviet Armed Forces^[7] and used by the majority of the member states of the Warsaw Pact.

Even after almost seven decades, the model and its variants remain the most popular and widely used assault rifles in the world because of their substantial reliability under harsh conditions, low production costs compared to contemporary Western weapons, availability in virtually every geographic region and ease of use. The AK-47 has been manufactured in many countries and has seen service with armed forces as well as irregular forces worldwide, and was the basis for developing many other types of individual and crew-served firearms. As of 2004..."Of the estimated 500 million firearms worldwide, approximately 100 million belong to the Kalashnikov family, three-quarters of which are AK-47s".^[2]

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<div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;">AK-47^[N 1]</div>  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">AK-47 with 6H3 bayonet</p>	
Type	Assault rifle
Place of origin	Soviet Union
Service history	
In service	1949–1970s (USSR) 1949–present (worldwide)
Used by	See <i>Users</i>
Production history	
Designer	Mikhail Kalashnikov
Designed	1946–1948 ^[1]
Manufacturer	Kalashnikov Concern and various others including Norinco
Produced	1949–
Number built	≈ 75 million AK-47s, 100 million Kalashnikov-family weapons. ^{[2][3]}
Variants	See <i>Variants</i>
Specifications	
Weight	Without magazine: 3.47 kg (7.7 lb) Magazine, empty: 0.43 kg (0.95 lb) (early issue) ^[4] 0.33 kg (0.73 lb) (steel) ^[5] 0.25 kg (0.55 lb) (plastic) ^[6] 0.17 kg (0.37 lb) (light alloy) ^[5]
Length	Fixed wooden stock: 880 mm (35 in) ^[6] 875 mm (34.4 in) folding stock extended 645 mm (25.4 in) stock folded ^[4]
Barrel length	

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	Overall length:
	415 mm (16.3 in) ^[6]
	Rifled bore length:
	369 mm (14.5 in) ^[6]
Cartridge	7.62×39mm
Action	Gas-operated, rotating bolt
Rate of fire	Cyclic rate of fire:
	600 rds/min ^[6]
	Practical rate of fire:
	Semi-auto 40 rds/min ^[6]
	Full-auto 100 rds/min ^[6]
Muzzle velocity	715 m/s (2,350 ft/s) ^[6]
Effective firing range	350 m (380 yd) ^[6]
Feed system	30-round detachable box magazine ^[6]
	There are also 5- 10-, 20- and 40-round box and 75- and 100-round drum magazines available
Sights	100–800 m adjustable iron sights
	Sight radius:
	378 mm (14.9 in) ^[6]

History

Origins

Throughout World War II, Soviet soldiers found themselves consistently outgunned by heavily armed German troops, especially those armed with the Sturmgewehr StG 44 assault rifle, which the Germans fielded in large numbers.^{[8][3][9][10][11][12][13][14]} The select-fire StG 44 was chambered for a new intermediate cartridge, the 7.92×33mm Kurz, and combined the firepower of a submachine gun with the range and accuracy of a rifle.^[9]

On 15 July 1943, a Sturmgewehr was demonstrated before the People's Commissariat of Arms of the USSR.^[15] The Soviets were so impressed with the Sturmgewehr, that they immediately set about developing an intermediate caliber automatic rifle of their own, to replace the badly outdated Mosin–Nagant bolt-action rifles and PPSH-41 submachine guns that armed most of the Soviet Army.^{[11][14][15][16][17][18]}

The Soviets soon developed the 7.62×39mm M43 cartridge, the semi-automatic SKS carbine and the RPD light machine gun.^[19] Shortly after World War II, the Soviets developed the AK-47 assault rifle, which would quickly replace the SKS in Soviet service.^{[20][21]} In the 1960s, the Soviets introduced the RPK light machine gun, itself an AK-47 type weapon with a stronger receiver, a longer heavy barrel, and a bipod, that would eventually replace the RPD light machine gun.^[19]

Concept

Mikhail Kalashnikov began his career as a weapon designer in 1941, while recuperating from a shoulder wound, which he received during the Battle of Bryansk.^{[3][22]} Kalashnikov himself stated..."I was in the hospital, and a soldier in the bed beside me asked: ‘Why do our soldiers have only one rifle for two or three of our men, when the Germans have automatics?’ So I designed one. I was a soldier, and I created a machine



A Type 2 AK-47, the first machined receiver variation

gun for a soldier. It was called an Avtomat Kalashnikova, the automatic weapon of Kalashnikov—AK—and it carried the date of its first manufacture, 1947."^[23]

The AK-47 is best described as a hybrid of previous rifle technology innovations. "Kalashnikov decided to design an automatic rifle combining the best features of the American M1 and the German StG44."^[24] Kalashnikov's team had access to these weapons and had no need to "reinvent the wheel". Kalashnikov himself observed: "A lot of Russian Army soldiers ask me how one can become a constructor, and how new weaponry is designed. These are very difficult questions. Each designer seems to have his own paths, his own successes and failures. But one thing is clear: before attempting to create something new, it is vital to have a good appreciation of everything that already exists in this field. I myself have had many experiences confirming this to be so."^[22]

There are claims about Kalashnikov copying other designs, like Bulkin's TKB-415^[25] or Simonov's AVS-31.^[26]

Early designs

Kalashnikov started tinkering with a submachine gun design in 1942^[27] and with a light machine gun in 1943.^{[28][29]} "Early in 1944, Kalashnikov was given some M1943 7.62×39mm cartridges and informed that there were several designers working on weapons for this new Soviet small-arms cartridge. It was suggested to him that this new weapon might well lead to greater things, and he undertook work on the new rifle."^[30] In 1944, he entered a design competition with this new 7.62×39mm, semi-automatic, gas-operated, long stroke piston, carbine, strongly influenced by the American M1 Garand.^[31] "The rifle that Kalashnikov designed was in the same class as the familiar SKS-45 Simonov with fixed magazine and gas tube above the barrel."^[30] However, this new Kalashnikov design lost out to a Simonov design.^[32]

In 1946, a new design competition was initiated to develop a new assault rifle.^[33] Kalashnikov submitted an entry. It was gas-operated rifle with a short-stroke gas piston above the barrel, a breech-block mechanism similar to his 1944 carbine, and a curved 30-round magazine.^[34] Kalashnikov's rifles AK-1 (with a milled receiver) and AK-2 (with a stamped receiver) proved to be reliable weapons and were accepted to a second round of competition along with other designs.

These prototypes (also known as the AK-46) had a rotary bolt, a two-part receiver with separate trigger unit housing, dual controls (separate safety and fire selector switches) and a non-reciprocating charging handle located on the left side of the weapon.^{[34][35]} In late 1946, as the rifles were being tested, one of Kalashnikov's assistants, Aleksandr Zaitsev, suggested a major redesign to improve reliability. At first, Kalashnikov was reluctant, given that their rifle had already fared better than its competitors. Eventually, however, Zaitsev managed to persuade Kalashnikov.

In November 1947, the new prototypes (AK-47s) were completed. It utilized a long-stroke gas piston above the barrel. The upper and lower receivers were combined into a single receiver. The selector and safety were combined into a single control-lever/dust-cover on the right side of the rifle. And, the bolt-handle was simply attached to the bolt-carrier. This simplified the design and production of the rifle. The first army trial series began in early 1948.^[36] The new rifle proved to be reliable under a wide range of conditions with convenient handling characteristics. In 1949, it was adopted by the Soviet Army as "7.62 mm Kalashnikov assault rifle (AK)".^[7]

Further development

There were many difficulties during the initial phase of production. The first production models had stamped sheet metal receivers with a milled trunnion and butt stock insert, and a stamped body. Difficulties were encountered in welding the guide and ejector rails, causing high rejection rates.^[37] Instead of halting production, a heavy^[N 2] machined receiver was substituted for the sheet metal receiver. This was a more costly process, but the use of machined receivers accelerated production as tooling and labor for the earlier Mosin–Nagant rifle's machined receiver were easily adapted.^[38] Partly because of these problems, the Soviets were not able to distribute large numbers of the new rifle to soldiers until 1956. During this time, production of the interim SKS rifle continued.^[37]

Once the manufacturing difficulties of non milled receivers had been overcome, a redesigned version designated the AKM (M for "modernized" or "upgraded"; in Russian: *Автомат Калашникова Модернизированный* [*Avtomat Kalashnikova Modernizirovanniy*]) was introduced in 1959.^[39] This new model used a stamped sheet metal receiver and featured a slanted muzzle brake on the end of the barrel to compensate for muzzle rise under recoil. In addition, a hammer retarder was added to prevent the weapon from firing out of battery (without the bolt being fully closed), during rapid or automatic fire.^[37] This is also sometimes referred to as a "cyclic rate reducer", or simply "rate reducer", as it also has the effect of reducing the number of rounds fired per minute during automatic fire. It was also roughly one-third lighter than the previous model.^[39]



AKMS with a stamped Type 4B receiver (top), and an AK-47 with a milled Type 2A receiver



1955 AK-47 with a milled Type 3A receiver showing the milled lightening cut on the side above the magazine that for Type 3 receivers is slanted to the barrel axis

Receiver type	Description ^[38]
Type 1A/B	Original stamped receiver for AK-47. -1B modified for underfolding stock. A large hole is present on each side to accommodate the hardware for the underfolding stock. (this naming convention continues with all types)
Type 2A/B	The first milled receiver made from steel forging. It went into production in 1949. The Type 2A has a distinctive socketed metal "boot" connecting the butt stock to the receiver and the milled lightening cut on the sides runs parallel to the barrel.
Type 3A/B	"Final" version of the AK-47 milled receiver made from steel bar stock. It went into production between 1953 and 1954. The most ubiquitous example of the milled-receiver AK-47. The milled lightening cut on the sides is slanted to the barrel axis.
Type 4A/B	AKM receiver stamped from a smooth 1.0 mm (0.04 in) sheet of steel supported extensively by pins and rivets. It went into production in 1959. Overall, the most-used design in the construction of the AK-series rifles.

Both licensed and unlicensed production of the Kalashnikov weapons abroad were almost exclusively of the AKM variant, partially due to the much easier production of the stamped receiver. This model is the most commonly encountered, having been produced in much greater quantities. All rifles based on the Kalashnikov design are frequently referred to as AK-47s in the West, although this is only correct when applied to rifles based on the original three receiver types.^[40] In most former Eastern Bloc countries, the weapon is known simply as the "Kalashnikov" or "AK". The differences between the milled and stamped receivers including the use of rivets rather than welds on the stamped receiver, as well as the placement of a small dimple above the magazine well for stabilization of the magazine.

Replacement

In 1974, the Soviets began replacing their AK-47 and AKM rifles with a newer design, the AK-74, which uses 5.45×39mm ammunition. This new rifle and cartridge had only started to be manufactured in Eastern European nations when the Soviet Union collapsed, drastically slowing production of the AK-74 and other weapons of the former Soviet bloc.

Design

The AK-47 was designed to be a simple, reliable automatic rifle that could be manufactured quickly and cheaply, using mass production methods that were state of the art in the Soviet Union during the late 1940s.^[41] The AK-47 uses a long stroke gas system that is generally associated with great reliability in adverse conditions.^{[31][42][43]} The large gas piston, generous clearances between moving parts, and tapered cartridge case design allow the gun to endure large amounts of foreign matter and fouling without failing to cycle.

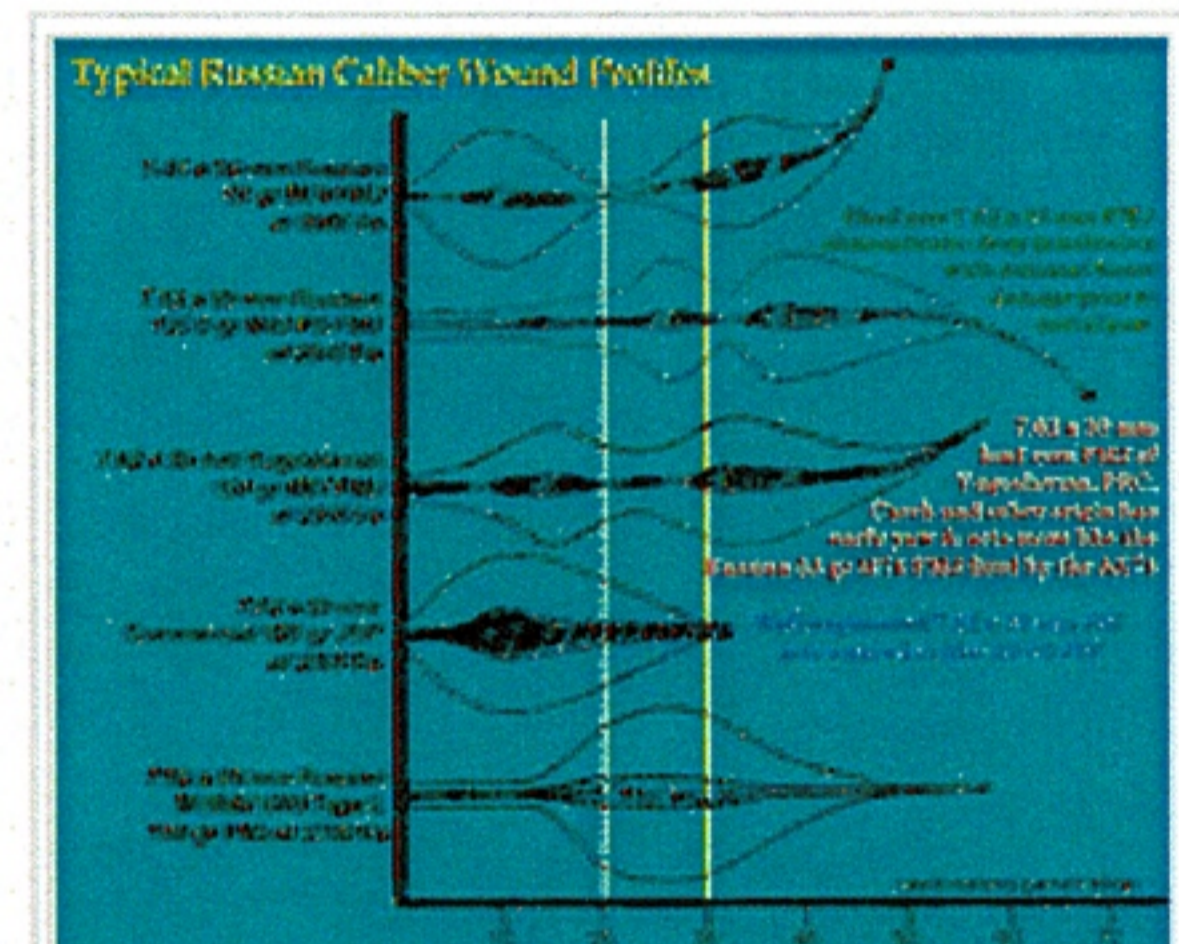
Cartridge

The AK fires the 7.62×39mm cartridge with a muzzle velocity of 715 m/s (2,350 ft/s).^[6] The cartridge weight is 16.3 g (0.6 oz), the projectile weight is 7.9 g (122 gr).^[44] The original Soviet M43 bullets are 123 grain boat-tail bullets with a copper-plated steel jacket, a large steel core, and some lead between the core and the jacket. The AK has excellent penetration when shooting through heavy foliage, walls or a common vehicle's metal body and into an opponent attempting to use these things as cover. The 7.62×39mm M43 projectile does not generally fragment when striking an opponent and has an unusual tendency to remain intact even after making contact with bone. The 7.62×39mm round produces significant wounding in cases where the bullet tumbles (yaws) in tissue,^[45] but produces relatively minor wounds in cases where the bullet exits before beginning to yaw.^{[46][47]}^[48] In the absence of yaw, the M43 round can pencil through tissue with relatively little injury.^{[46][49]}

Most, if not all, of the 7.62×39mm ammunition found today is of the upgraded M67 variety. This variety deleted the steel insert, shifting the center of gravity rearward, and allowing the projectile to destabilize (or yaw) at about 3.3 in (8.4 cm), nearly 6.7 in (17 cm) earlier in tissue than the M43 round.^[50] This change also reduces penetration in ballistic gelatin to ~25 in (64 cm) for the newer M67 round versus ~29 in (74 cm) for the older M43 round.^{[50][51]} However, the wounding potential of M67 is mostly limited to the small permanent wound channel the bullet itself makes, especially when the bullet yaws.^[50]

Operating mechanism

To fire, the operator inserts a loaded magazine, pulls back and releases the charging handle, and then pulls the trigger. In semi-automatic, the firearm fires only once, requiring the trigger to be released and depressed again for the next shot. In full-automatic, the rifle continues to fire automatically cycling fresh rounds into the chamber, until the magazine is exhausted or pressure is released from the trigger. After ignition of the cartridge primer and propellant, rapidly expanding propellant gases are diverted into the gas cylinder above the barrel through a vent near the muzzle. The build-up of gases inside the gas cylinder drives the long-stroke piston and bolt carrier rearward and a cam guide machined into the underside of the bolt carrier along with an ejector spur



Wound Profiles of Russian small-arms ammunition compiled by Dr. Martin Fackler on behalf of the U.S. military



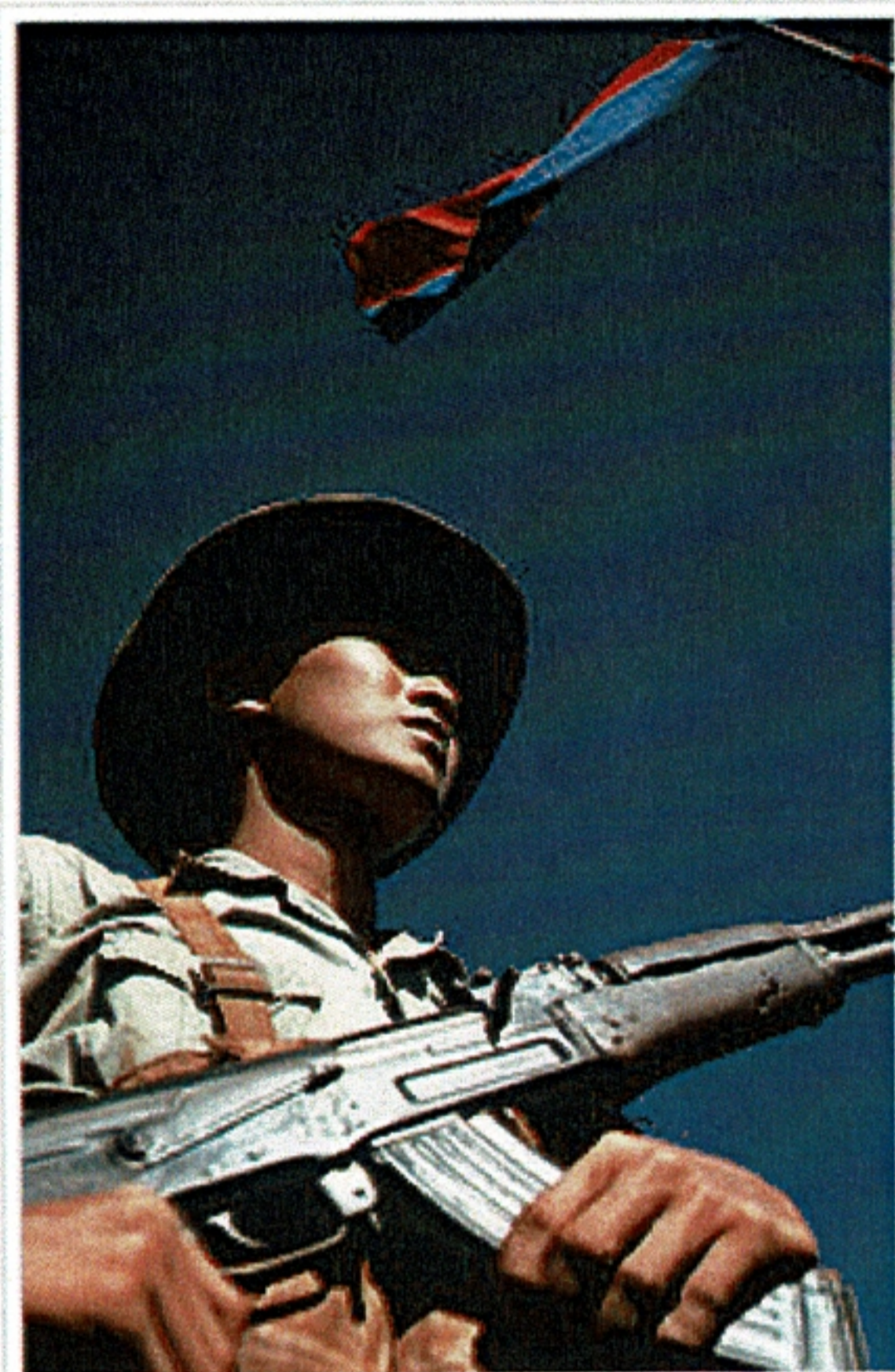
The gas-operated mechanism of a Chinese AK-47

on the bolt carrier rail guide, rotates the bolt approximately 35° and unlocks it from the barrel extension via a camming pin on the bolt. The moving assembly has about 5.5 mm (0.2 in) of free travel which creates a delay between the initial recoil impulse of the piston and the bolt unlocking sequence, allowing gas pressures to drop to a safe level before the seal between the chamber and the bolt is broken. The AK-47 does not have a gas valve; excess gases are ventilated through a series of radial ports in the gas cylinder. The Kalashnikov operating system offers no primary extraction upon bolt rotation, but uses an extractor claw to eject the spent cartridge case.^[52]

Barrel

The rifle received a barrel with a chrome-lined bore and four right-hand grooves at a 240 mm (1 in 9.45 in) rifling twist rate. The gas block contains a gas channel that is installed at a slanted angle in relation to the bore axis. The muzzle is threaded for the installation of various muzzle devices such as a muzzle brake or a blank-firing adaptor. The standard AK-47 barrel does not counteract muzzle rise and climb as well lateral shift to the right much like the AKM's offset muzzle brake.

Fire selector



Vietcong guerrilla stands beneath a Vietcong flag carrying his AK-47

The fire selector is a large lever located on the right side of the rifle, it acts as a dust-cover and prevents the charging handle from being pulled fully to the rear when it is on safe.^[53] It is operated by the shooter's right fore-fingers and has 3 settings: safe (up), full-auto (center), and semi-auto (down).^[53] The reason for this is that under stress a soldier will push the selector lever down with considerable force bypassing the full-auto stage and setting the rifle to semi-auto.^[53] To set the AK-47 to full-auto requires the deliberate action of centering the selector lever.^[53] To operate the fire selector lever, right handed shooters have to briefly remove their right hand from the pistol grip, which is ergonomically sub-optimal. Some AK-type rifles also have a more traditional selector lever on the left side of the receiver just above the pistol grip.^[53] This lever is operated by the shooter's right thumb and has three settings: safe (forward), full-auto (center), and semi-auto (backward).^[53]

Sights

The AK-47 uses a notched rear tangent iron sight calibrated in 100 m (109 yd) increments from 100 to 800 m (109 to

875 yd).^[54] The front sight is a post adjustable for elevation in the field. Horizontal adjustment requires a special drift tool and is done by the armory before issue or if the need arises by an armorer after issue. The "point-blank range" battle zero setting "IT" on the 7.62×39mm AK-47 rear tangent sight element corresponds to a 300 m (328 yd) zero.^{[54][55]} These settings mirror the Mosin–Nagant and SKS rifles which the AK-47 replaced. For the AK-47 combined with service cartridges the 300 m battle zero setting limits the apparent "bullet rise" within approximately −5 to +31 cm (−2.0 to 12.2 in) relative to the line of sight. Soldiers are instructed to fire at any target within this range by simply placing the sights on the center of mass (the belt buckle) of the enemy target. Any



Rear sight of a Chinese Type 56, featuring 100 to 800 m (109 to 875 yd) settings and omission of a battle zero setting

errors in range estimation are tactically irrelevant, as a well-aimed shot will hit the torso of the enemy soldier. Some AK-type rifles have a front sight with a flip-up luminous dot that is calibrated at 50 m (55 yd), for improved night fighting.^[54]

Stock

The AK-47 was originally equipped with a buttstock, handguard and an upper heat guard made from solid wood. With the introduction of the Type 3 receiver the buttstock, lower handguard and upper heatguard were manufactured from birch plywood laminates.^[38] Such engineered woods are stronger and resist warping better than the conventional one-piece patterns, do not require lengthy maturing, and are cheaper. The wooden furniture was finished with the Russian amber shellac finishing process.

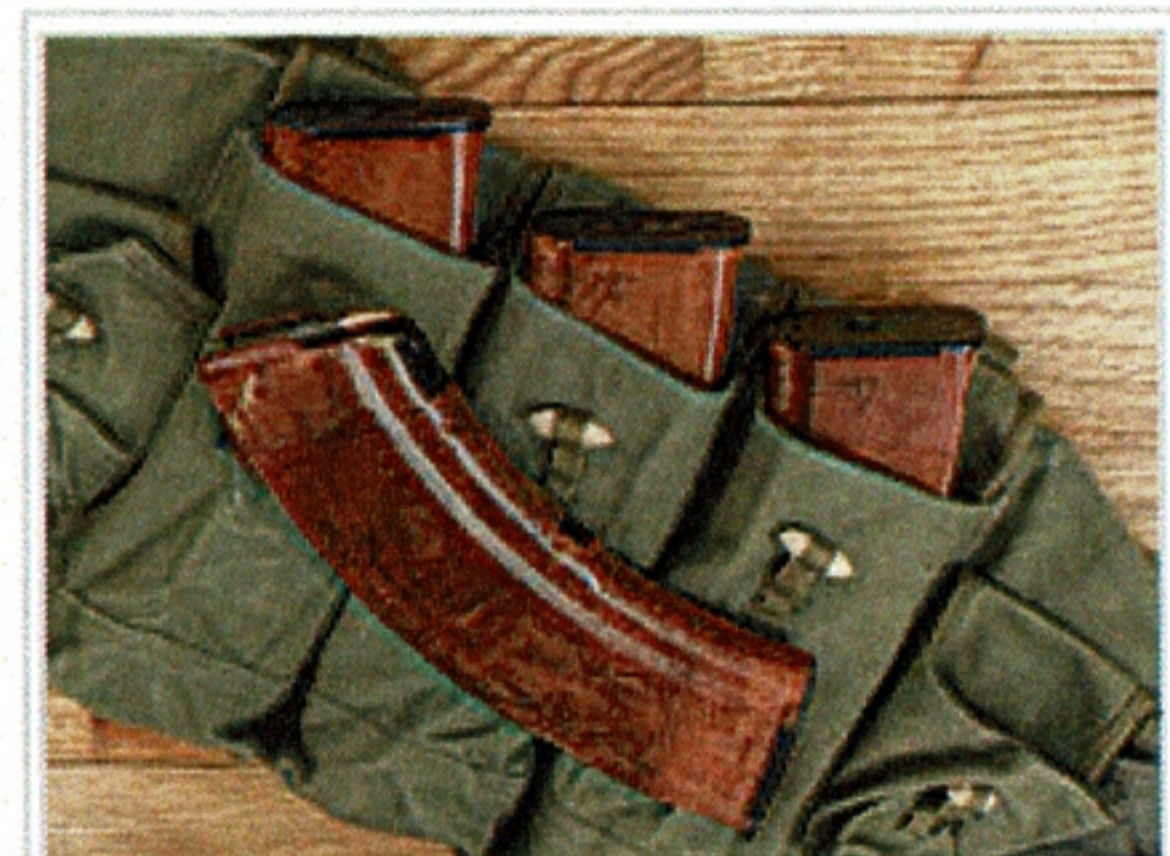
Magazines

The standard magazine capacity is 30 rounds. There are also 10, 20, and 40-round box magazines, as well as 75-round drum magazines.

The AK-47's standard 30-round magazines have a pronounced curve that allows them to smoothly feed ammunition into the chamber. Their heavy steel construction combined with "feed-lips" (the surfaces at the top of the magazine that control the angle at which the cartridge enters the chamber) machined from a single steel billet makes them highly resistant to damage. These magazines are so strong that "Soldiers have been known to use their mags as hammers, and even bottle openers."^[56]^[57] This contributes to the AK-47 magazine being more reliable, but makes it heavier than U.S. and NATO magazines.

The early slab-sided steel AK-47 30-round detachable box magazines weigh .43 kg (0.95 lb) empty.^[43] The later steel AKM 30-round magazines had lighter sheet-metal bodies with prominent reinforcing ribs weighing .33 kilograms (0.73 lb) empty.^{[43][58]} To further reduce weight a light weight magazine with an aluminum body weighing .19 kg (0.42 lb) empty was introduced for the AKM that proved to be insubstantial and was quickly withdrawn from service. As a replacement steel-reinforced 30-round plastic 7.62×39mm box magazines were introduced. These rust-colored magazines weigh .24 kg (0.53 lb) empty and are often mistakenly identified as being made of Bakelite (a phenolic resin), but were actually fabricated from two-parts of AG-S4 molding compound (a glass-reinforced phenol-formaldehyde binder impregnated composite), assembled using an epoxy resin adhesive.^{[59][60][61]} Noted for their durability, these magazines did however compromise the rifle's camouflage and lacked the small horizontal reinforcing ribs running down both sides of the magazine body near the front that were added on all later plastic magazine generations.^[61] A second generation steel-reinforced dark-brown (color shades vary from maroon to plum to near black) 30-round 7.62×39mm magazine was introduced in the early 1980s, fabricated from ABS plastic. The third generation steel-reinforced 30-round 7.62×39mm magazine is similar to the second generation, but is darker colored and has a matte nonreflective surface finish. The current issue steel-reinforced matte true black nonreflective surface finished 7.62×39mm 30-round magazines, fabricated from ABS plastic weigh .25 kg (0.55 lb) empty.^[6] Early steel AK-47 magazines are 9.75 in (248 mm) long, and the later ribbed steel AKM and newer plastic 7.62×39mm magazines are about 1 in (25 mm) shorter.^{[62][63]}

The transition from steel to mainly plastic magazines yields a significant weight reduction and allows a soldier to carry more ammunition for the same weight.



"Bakelite" rust-colored steel-reinforced 30-round plastic box 7.62×39mm AK magazines. Three magazines have an "arrow in triangle" Izhmash arsenal mark on the bottom right. The other magazine has a "star" Tula arsenal mark on the bottom right

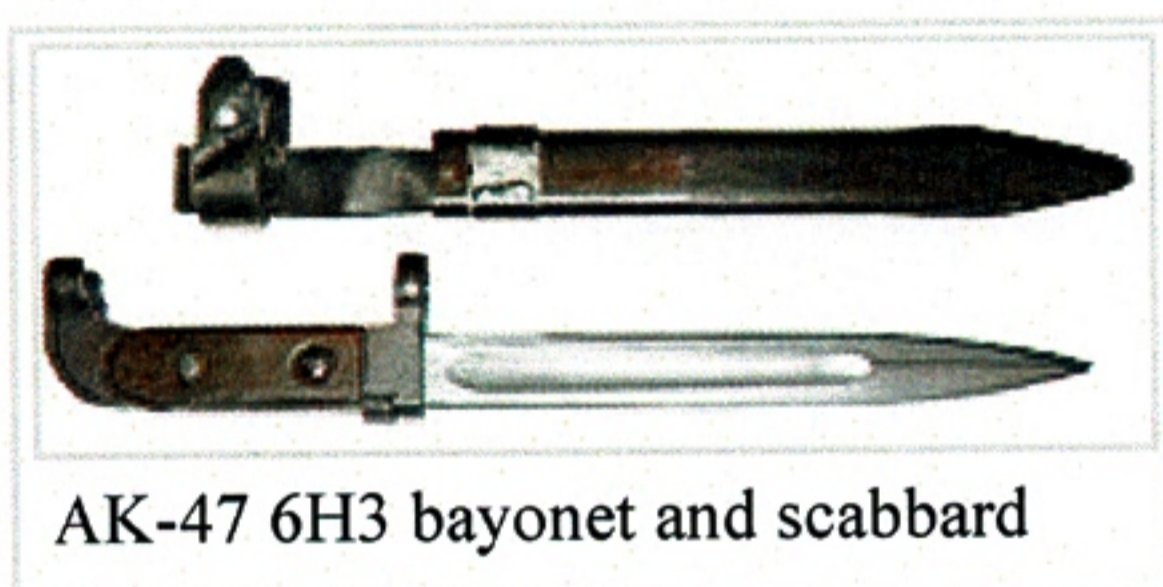
Rifle	Cartridge	Cartridge weight	Weight of empty magazine	Weight of loaded magazine	Max. 10.12 kg (22.3 lb) ammunition load*
AK-47 (1949)	7.62×39mm	16.3 g (252 gr)	slab-sided steel 430 g (0.95 lb)	30-rounds 916 g (2.019 lb) ^[43]	11 magazines for 330 rounds 10.12 kg (22.3 lb)
AKM (1957)	7.62×39mm	16.3 g (252 gr)	ribbed stamped-steel 330 g (0.73 lb)	30-rounds 819 g (1.806 lb) ^[43] ^[58]	12 magazines for 360 rounds 9.84 kg (21.7 lb)
AK-103 (1994)	7.62×39mm	16.3 g (252 gr)	steel-reinforced plastic 250 g (0.55 lb)	30-rounds 739 g (1.629 lb) ^[43] ^[58]	13 magazines for 390 rounds 9.62 kg (21.2 lb)

All 7.62×39mm AK magazines are backwards compatible with older AK variants.

10.12 kg (22.3 lb) is the maximum amount of ammo that the average soldier can comfortably carry. It also allows for best comparison of the three most common 7.62×39mm AK platform magazines.

Most Yugoslavian and some East German AK magazines were made with cartridge followers that hold the bolt open when empty; however, most AK magazine followers allow the bolt to close when the magazine is empty.

Accessories



AK-47 6H3 bayonet and scabbard

Accessories supplied with the rifle include a 387 mm (15.2 in) long 6H3 bayonet featuring a 200 mm (7.9 in) long spear point blade. The AK-47 bayonet is installed by slipping the 17.7 mm (0.70 in) diameter muzzle ring around the muzzle and latching the handle down on the bayonet lug under the front sight base.^[64]

All current model AKM rifles can mount under-barrel 40 mm grenade launchers such as the GP-25 and its variants, which can fire up to 20 rounds per minute and have an effective range of up to 400 metres.^[65] The main grenade is the VOG-25 (VOG-25M) fragmentation grenade which has a 6 m (9 m) (20 ft (30 ft)) lethality radius. The VOG-25P/VOG-25PM ("jumping") variant explodes 0.5–1 metre (1.6–3.3 ft) above the ground.^[66]



AK-103 with GP-34 Grenade Launcher

The AK-47 can also mount a (rarely used) cup-type grenade launcher, the Kalashnikov grenade launcher that fires standard RGD-5 Soviet hand-grenades. The maximum effective range is approximately 150 meters.^[67] This launcher can also be used to launch tear-gas and riot control grenades.

All current AKs (100 series) and some older models, have side rails for mounting a variety of scopes and sighting devices, such as the PSO-1 Optical Sniper Sight.^[68] The side rails allow for removal and remounting of optical accessories without interfering with the zeroing of the optic. However, the 100 series side folding stocks cannot be folded with the optics mounted.

Characteristics

Accuracy

The AK-47's accuracy has always been considered to be "good enough" to hit an adult male torso out to about 300 m (328 yd),^{[69][70]} though even experts firing from prone or bench rest positions at this range were observed to have difficulty placing ten consecutive rounds on target.^[71] Nor could the weapon's accuracy be significantly improved with later designs, where its accuracy remained relatively mediocre.^[71] An AK can fire a 10-shot group of 5.9 in (15 cm) at 100 m (109 yd),^[72] and 17.5 in (44 cm) at 300 m (328 yd)^[71] The newer stamped-steel receiver AKM models, while more rugged and less prone to metal fatigue, are actually less accurate than the forged/milled receivers of their predecessors: the milled AK-47s are capable of shooting 3 to 5 in (8 to 13 cm) groups at 100 yd (91 m), whereas the stamped AKMs are capable of shooting 4 to 6 in (10 to 15 cm) groups at 100 yd (91 m).^[70]

The best shooters are able to hit a man-sized target at 800 m (875 yd) within five shots (firing from prone or bench rest position) or ten shots (standing).^[73]

The single-shot hit-probability on the NATO E-type Silhouette Target (a human upper body half and head silhouette) of the AK-47 and the later developed AK-74, M16A1 and M16A2 assault rifles were measured by the US military under ideal proving ground conditions in the 1980s as follows:

Rifle	Chambering	Hit-probability (With no range estimation or aiming errors)								
		50 meters	100 meters	200 meters	300 meters	400 meters	500 meters	600 meters	700 meters	800 meters
AK-47 (1949)	7.62×39mm	100%	100%	99%	94%	82%	67%	54%	42%	31%
AK-74 (1974)	5.45×39mm	100%	100%	100%	99%	93%	81%	66%	51%	34%
M16A1 (1967)	5.56×45mm NATO M193	100%	100%	100%	100%	96%	87%	73%	56%	39%
M16A2 (1982)	5.56×45mm NATO SS109/M855	100%	100%	100%	100%	98%	90%	79%	63%	43%



Under worst field exercise circumstances, due to range estimation and aiming errors, the hit probabilities for the tested assault rifles were drastically reduced with differences without operational significance.

Service life

The AK-47 and its variants are made in dozens of countries, with "quality ranging from finely engineered weapons to pieces of questionable workmanship."^[75] As a result, the AK-47 has a service/system life of approximately 6,000,^[76] to 10,000,^[77] to 15,000^[78] rounds.^[11] The AK-47 was designed to be a cheap, simple, easy to manufacture assault rifle,^[79] perfectly matching Soviet military doctrine that treats equipment and weapons as disposable items.^[80] As units are often deployed without adequate logistical support and dependent on "battlefield cannibalization" for resupply, it is actually more cost-effective to replace rather than repair weapons.^[80]

The AK-47 has small parts and springs that need to be replaced every few thousand rounds. However, "Every time it is disassembled beyond the field stripping stage, it will take some time for some parts to regain their fit, some parts may tend to shake loose and fall out when firing the weapon. Some parts of the AK-47 line are riveted together. Repairing these can be quite a hassle, since the end of the rivet has to be ground off and a new one set after the part is replaced."^[54]

Variants

Early variants (7.62×39mm)

- Issue of 1948/49: Type 1: The very earliest models, stamped sheet metal receiver, are now very rare.
- Issue of 1951: Type 2: Has a milled receiver. Barrel and chamber are chrome plated to resist corrosion.
- Issue of 1954/55: Type 3: Lightened, milled receiver variant. Rifle weight is 3.47 kg (7.7 lb).^[4]
- AKS (AKS-47): Type 1, 2, or 3 receiver: Featured a downward-folding metal stock similar to that of the German MP40, for use in the restricted space in the BMP infantry combat vehicle, as well as by paratroops.
- AKN (AKSN): Night scope rail.^[81]



7.62×39mm cartridges from Russia, China and Pakistan

Modernized (7.62×39mm)

- AKM: A simplified, lighter version of the AK-47; Type 4 receiver is made from stamped and riveted sheet metal. A slanted muzzle device was added to counter climb in automatic fire. Rifle weight is 3.1 kg (6.8 lb)^[6] due to the lighter receiver. This is the most ubiquitous variant of the AK-47.
 - AKMS: Under-folding stock version of the AKM intended for airborne troops.
 - AKMN (AKMSN): Night scope rail.
 - AKML (AKMSL): Slotted flash suppressor and night scope rail.^[82]
- RPK: Hand-held machine gun version with longer barrel and bipod. The variants—RPKS, RPKN (RPKSN), RPKL (RPKSL)—mirror AKM variants. The "S" variants have a side-folding wooden stock.

Low-impulse variants (5.45×39mm)

- AK-74: Assault rifle.
 - AKS-74: Side-folding stock.
 - AK-74N (AKS-74N): Night scope rail.
- AKS-74U: Compact carbine.
 - AKS-74UN: Night scope rail.
- RPK-74: Light machine gun.
 - RPKS-74: Side-folding stock.
 - RPK-74N (RPKS-74N): Night scope rail.



AK-74 and RPK-74

The 100 Series

5.45×39mm / 5.56×45mm / 7.62×39mm

- AK-74M/AK-101/AK-103: Modernized AK-74. Scope rail and side-folding stock.
- AK-107/AK-108: Balanced recoil models.
- AK-105/AK-102/AK-104: Carbine.
- RPK-74M / RPK-201 / RPKM and RPK-203: Squad automatic weapon.

Other weapons

- Saiga-12: 12-gauge shotgun. Built on AK receiver.
 - Saiga-12S: Pistol grip and side-folding stock.
 - Saiga-12K: Shorter barrel.
 - Saiga-20 (S/K): 20-gauge.
 - Saiga-410 (S/K): .410 bore.
- Saiga semi-automatic rifle
- KSK shotgun: 12-gauge combat shotgun (based on Saiga-12).
- Vepr-12 Molot: 12-gauge combat shotgun. Built on RPK receiver.

- Bizon: Submachine gun with helical magazine. Borrows 60% of details from AKS-74U. 9×18mm PM, 9×19mm Luger, .380 ACP; 7.62×25mm TT (box magazine).
- Vityaz-SN: 9×19mm Parabellum Submachine gun. Successor to the Bizon and the standard SMG for all branches of Russian military and police forces^[83]
- OTs-14 Groza: Bullpup assault rifle. 9×39mm, 7.62×39mm.

AK-12 series

- AK-12: The AK-12 uses the same gas-operated long-stroke piston system of previous Kalashnikov rifles, with many modern features that are radically different from other guns in its family. However, in late September 2013, the AK-12 was passed over by the Russian military.^[84]



Production

Outside of the Soviet Union/Russian Federation

Kalashnikov Concern (formerly Izhmash) has repeatedly claimed that the majority of foreign manufacturers are producing AK type rifles without proper licensing.^{[85][86]}













































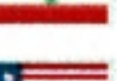





Country	Military variant(s)
Albania	Automatiku Shqiptar model 56 (ASH-78 Tip-1) Albanian Automatic Assault Rifle Model 56 Type-1 [Made in Poliçan Arsenal] (Straight forward copy of Type 56, which in turn is a clone of the Soviet AKM rifle)
	Automatiku Shqiptar Tipi 1982 (ASH-82) Albanian Automatic Assault Rifle Type 1982 [Made in Poliçan Arsenal] (Straight forward copy of AKMS)
	Automatiku Shqiptar model 56 (ASH-78 Tip-2) Albanian Light Machine Gun [Made in Poliçan Arsenal] (Straight forward copy of RPK)
	Automatiku Shqiptar model 56 (ASH-78 Tip-3) Albanian Automatic Hybrid Rifle Model 56 Type-3 [Made in Poliçan Arsenal] (Hybrid rifle for multi-purpose roles mainly Marksman rifle with secondary assault rifle and grenade launcher capability)
	Several other unnamed & unidentified versions of the AKMS have been produced mainly with short barrels similar to the Soviet AKS-74U mainly for special forces, Tank & Armoured crew also for Helicopter pilots and police. There have also been modifications and fresh production of heavily modified ASh-82 (AKMS) with SOPMOD accessories, mainly for Albania's special forces RENE & exports.
Armenia	K-3 (bullpup, 5.45×39mm)
Azerbaijan	Khazri (AK-74M) ^[87]
Bangladesh	Chinese Type 56
Bulgaria	AKK/AKKS (Type 3 AK-47/w. side-folding buttstock)
	AKKMS (AKMS), AKKN-47 (fittings for NPSU night sights)
	AK-47M1 (Type 3 with black polymer furniture)
	AK-47MA1/AR-M1 (same as -M1, but in 5.56mm NATO)
	AKS-47M1 (AKMS in 5.56×45mm NATO)
	AKS-47S (AK-47M1, short version, with East German folding stock, laser aiming device)
	AKS-47UF (short version of -M1, Russian folding stock), AR-SF (same as -47UF, but 5.56mm NATO)
	AKS-93SM6 (similar to -47M1, cannot use grenade launcher)
Cambodia	Chinese Type 56, Soviet AK-47, and AKM

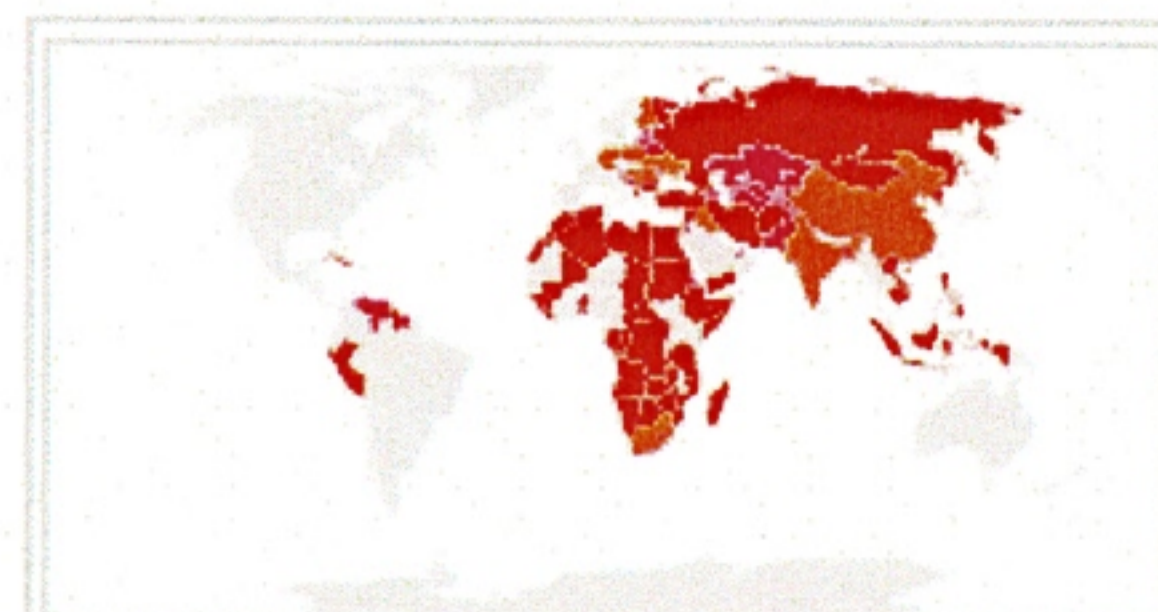
People's Republic of China	Type 56
Colombia	Galil ACE
Croatia	APS-95
Cuba	AKM ^[88]
East Germany ^[89]	MPi-K/MPi-KS (AK-47/AKS)
	MPi-KM (AKM; wooden and plastic stock), MPi-KMS-72 (side-folding stock), MPi-KMS-K (carbine)
	MPi-AK-74N (AK-74), MPi-AKS-74N (side-folding stock), MPi-AKS-74NK (carbine)
	KK-MPi Mod.69 (.22 LR select-fire trainer)
Egypt	AK-47, Misr assault rifle (AKMS), Maadi ARM (AKM)
Ethiopia	AK-47, AK-103 (manufactured locally at the State-run <i>Gafat Armament Engineering Complex</i> as the Et-97/1) ^[90]
Finland	Rk 62, Valmet M76 (other names Rk 62 76, M62/76), Valmet M78 (light machine gun), Rk 95 Tp
Hungary ^[91]	AK-55 (domestic manufacture of the 2nd Model AK-47)
	AKM-63 (also known as AMD-63 in the US; modernized AK-55), AMD-65M (modernized AKM-63, shorter barrel and side-folding stock), AMP-69 (rifle grenade launcher)
	AK-63F/D (other name AMM/AMMSz), AK-63MF (modernized)
	NGM-81 (5.56×45mm NATO; fixed and under-folding stock)
India	INSAS (fixed and side-folding stock), KALANTAK (carbine), INSAS light machine gun (fixed and side-folding stock), a local unlicensed version with carbon fibre furniture designated as AK-7 ^[92]
	Trichy Assault Rifle 7.62 mm, manufactured by Ordnance Factory Tiruchirappalli of Ordnance Factories Board ^[93]
Iran	KLS/KLF (AK-47/AKS), KLT (AKMS)
Iraq	Tabuk Sniper Rifle, Tabuk Assault Rifle (with fixed or underfolding stock, outright clones of Yugoslavian M70 rifles series), Tabuk Short Assault Rifle (carbine)
Israel	IMI Galil: AR (assault/battle rifle), ARM (assault rifle/light machine gun), SAR (carbine), MAR (compact carbine), Sniper (sniper rifle), SR-99 (sniper rifle)
	Galil ACE
Italy	Bernardelli VB-STD/VB-SR (Galil AR/SAR) ^[94]

Nigeria	Produced by the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria as OBJ-006 ^{[95][96]}	
North Korea	Type 58A/B (Type 3 AK-47/w. stamped steel folding stock), Type 68A/B (AKM/AKMS), Type 88 (AKS-74) ^{[97][98]}	
Pakistan	Reverse engineered by hand and machine in Pakistan's highland areas (see Khyber Pass Copy) near the border of Afghanistan; more recently the Pakistan Ordnance Factories started the manufacture of an AK-47/AKM clone called PK-10 ^[99]	
Poland ^[100]	pmK (kbk AK) / pmKS (kbk AKS) (name has changed from pmK – "pistolet maszynowy Kałasznikowa", Kalashnikov SMG to the kbk AK – "karabinek AK", Kalashnikov Carbine in the mid-1960s) (AK-47/AKS)	
	kbkg wz. 1960 (rifle grenade launcher), kbkg wz. 1960/72 (modernized)	
	kbk AKM / kbk AKMS (AKM/AKMS)	
	kbk wz. 1988 Tantal (5.45×39mm), skbk wz. 1989 Onyks (compact carbine)	
Romania	kbs wz. 1996 Beryl (5.56×45mm), kbk wz. 1996 Mini-Beryl (compact carbine)	
	PM md. 63/65 (AKM/AKMS), PM md. 80, PM md. 90, collectively exported under the umbrella name AIM or AIMS	
	PA md. 86 (AK-74), exported as the AIMS-74	
	PM md. 90 short barrel, PA md. 86 short barrel, exported as the AIMR	
South Africa	PSL (designated marksman rifle; other names PSL-54C, Romak III, FPK and SSG-97)	
	R4 assault rifle, Truvelo Raptor, Vektor CR-21 (bullpup)	
	Sudan	MAZ ^[101] (based on the Type 56)
	Ukraine	Vepr (bullpup, 5.45×39mm), Malyuk (bullpup) ^[102]
United States	Century Arms Model 39 (7.62×39mm), InterOrdnance AKM247, M214, Palmetto State Armory PSAK-47	
Vietnam	AKM-1 (AKM), TUL-1 (RPK), Galil Ace 31/32	
Venezuela	License granted, factory under construction ^[103]	
Yugoslavia/Serbia	M64, M70, M72, M76, M77, M80, M82, M85, M90, M91, M92, M99, M21	

Users

-  Afghanistan^[105]
-  Albania^[106]
-  Algeria^[106]
-  Angola^[106]
-  Armenia^[106]
-  Azerbaijan^{[106][107]}
-  Bangladesh^[106]
-  Belarus^[106]

-  Benin^[106]
-  Bosnia and Herzegovina^[106]
-  Botswana^[106]
-  Bulgaria^[106]
-  Burkina Faso^{[108][109][110]}
-  Burundi^{[111][112]}
-  Cambodia^[106]
-  Cameroon^{[113][114]}
-  Cape Verde^[106]
-  Central African Republic^[106]
-  Chad^[106]
-  Chile^[115]
-  People's Republic of China: Type 56 variant was used.^[116]
-  Comoros^[106]
-  Republic of the Congo^[106]
-  Democratic Republic of the Congo^[106]
-  Cuba^[106]
-  Djibouti^{[117][118]}
-  Egypt^[106]
-  Eritrea^[106]
-  Ethiopia^[106]
-  El Salvador^[119]
-  Finland: Rk 62, Rk 95 Tp.
-  Gabon^[106]
-  Gambia^{[120][121][122][123]}
-  Ghana^{[124][125]}
-  Greece: EKAM counter-terrorist unit of the Hellenic Police.^{[126][127]}
-  Guinea^[106]
-  Equatorial Guinea^[106]
-  Guinea-Bissau^[106]
-  Guyana^[106]
-  Hungary^[106]
-  India:^[106] Used by Force One.^[128]
-  Indonesia: Still used by TNI-AD, TNI-AL, TNI-AU, and Police
-  Iran^[106]
-  Iraq^{[105][106]}
-  Ivory Coast^{[129][130][131]}
-  Kazakhstan^[106]
-  Kenya^[132]
-  North Korea: Type 56 and Type 58 variants were used.^[106]
-  Kurdistan – Peshmerga
-  Laos^[106]
-  Kuwait^[133]
-  Lebanon^[106]
-  Liberia^[106]
-  Libya^[106]
-  Macedonia^{[106][134]}
-  Madagascar^[106]
-  Mali^[106]
-  Malta: Type 56 variant.^[106]



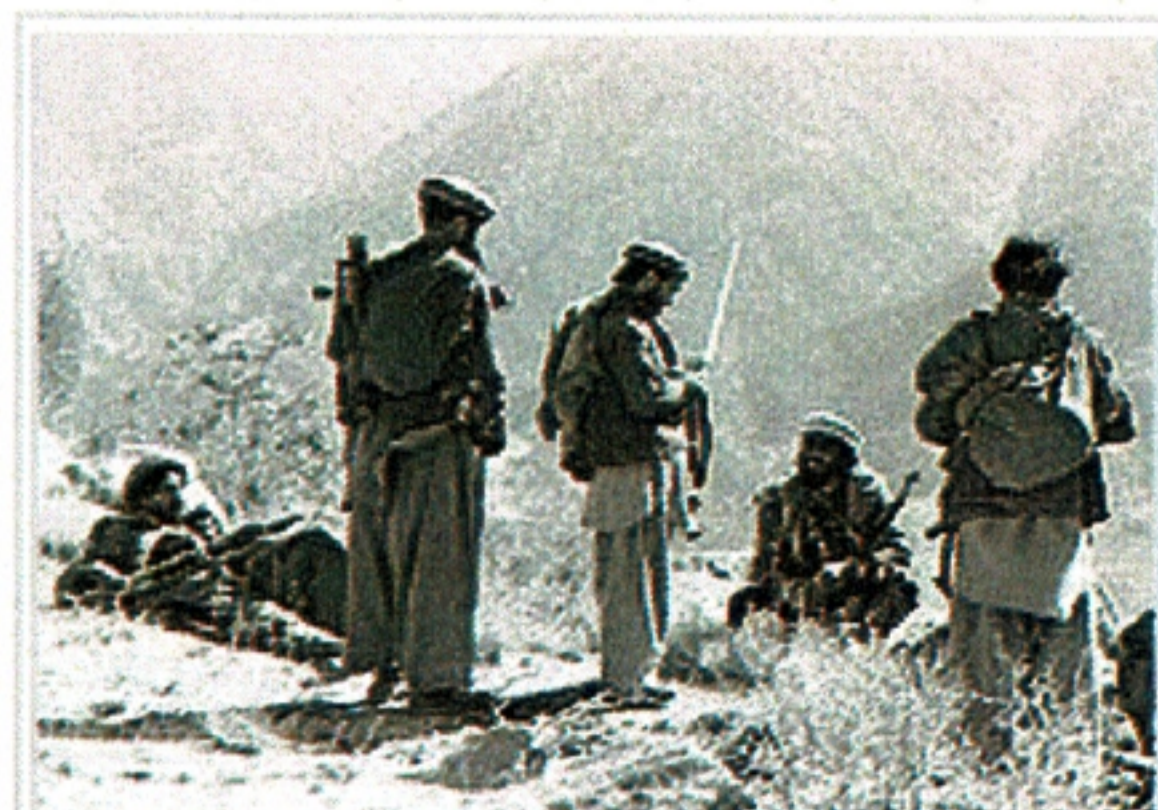
A map of current and former AK users



A U.S. Army M.P inspects a Chinese AK-47 recovered in Vietnam, 1968



A Soviet Spetsnaz (special operations) group prepares for a mission in Afghanistan, 1988



During the Soviet war in Afghanistan in the 1980s, several sources simultaneously armed both sides of the Afghan conflict, filling the country with AK-47s and their derivatives.^[104]

-  Mauritania^{[135][136][137]}
-  Moldova^[106]
-  Mongolia^[106]
-  Morocco^[106]
-  Mozambique^[106]
-  Myanmar: Used by the Myanmar Police Force (include the Chinese Type 56).
-  Namibia^[106]
-  Niger^{[138][139][140]}
-  Nigeria^{[95][96]}
-  Pakistan: Type 56^[141] and AK-103^[142] used.
-  Palestinian Authority^[143]
-  Peru^[106]
-  Philippines: Used by the Santiago City PNP.^[144]
-  Poland:^[25] Replaced by AKM, Tantal and Beryl.
-  Qatar^[106]
-  Rhodesia^[145]
-  Romania^[106]
-  Russia:^[25] Replaced by the AK-74 since 1974.
-  Rwanda^[146]
-  Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic^[147]
-  Sao Tome and Principe^[106]
-  Senegal^[148]
-  Serbia^[106]
-  Seychelles^[106]
-  Sierra Leone^[106]
-  Slovenia^[106]
-  Somalia^[106]
-  South Africa: Used by the Special Forces Brigade.^[149]
-  Sri Lanka: Type 56 variant.^[106]
-  Sudan^[106]
-  South Sudan
-  Suriname^[106]
-  Syria^[106]
-  Tajikistan^[106]
-  Tanzania^[106]
-  Togo^[106]
-  Turkey^[106]
-  Turkmenistan^[106]
-  Uganda^[106]
-  Ukraine^[106]
-  Dominican Republic^[106]
-  UAE^[106]
-  Uzbekistan^[106]
-  Vietnam: Type 56 variant was used extensively by the Viet Cong.^[116]
-  Yemen^[106]
-  Yugoslavia^[25]
-  Zambia^[106]
- Zimbabwe^[106]

Illicit trade

Throughout the world, the AK and its variants are commonly used by governments, revolutionaries, terrorists, criminals, and civilians alike. In some countries, such as Somalia, Rwanda, Mozambique, Congo and Tanzania, the prices for Black Market AKs are between \$30 and \$125 per weapon and prices have fallen in the last few decades due to mass counterfeiting.^[150] In Kenya "an AK-47 fetches 5 head of cattle (about 10,000 Kenya shillings or 100 U.S. dollars) when offered for barter but costs almost half that price when cash is paid."^[151] There are places around the world where AK type weapons can be purchased on the Black Market "for as little as \$6, or traded for a chicken or a sack of grain."^{[152][153][154]}

The AK-47 has also spawned a cottage industry of sorts and has been copied and manufactured (one gun at a time) in small shops around the world (see Khyber Pass Copy).^{[155][156]} The estimated numbers of AK-type weapons vary greatly. The Small Arms Survey suggest that "between 70 and 100 million of these weapons have been produced since 1947."^[157] The World Bank estimates that out of the 500 million total firearms available worldwide, 100 million are of the Kalashnikov family, and 75 million are AK-47s.^[2] Because AK-type weapons have been made in many countries, often illicitly, it is impossible to know how many really exist.^[158]



AK-47 copies confiscated from Somali pirates by Finnish mine-layer *Pohjanmaa* during Operation Atalanta, photographed in Manege Military Museum. The stocks are missing on the top three AKs

Cultural influence and impact



Flag of Mozambique

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, as well as United States and other NATO nations supplied arms and technical knowledge to numerous countries and rebel forces around the world. During this time the Western countries used relatively expensive automatic rifles, such as the FN

FAL, the HK G3, the M14, and the M16. In contrast, the Russians and Chinese used the AK-47; its low production cost and ease of manufacture allow them to make AKs in vast numbers.



Coat of arms of East Timor

In the pro-communist states, the AK-47 became a symbol of third-world revolution. During the 1980s, the Soviet Union became the principal arms dealer to countries embargoed by Western nations, including Middle Eastern nations such as Iran, Libya, and Syria, which welcomed Soviet Union backing against Israel. After the fall of the Soviet Union, AK-47s were sold both openly and on the black market to any group with cash, including drug cartels and dictatorial states, and more recently they have been seen in the hands of Islamic groups such as Al-Qaeda, ISIL, and the Taliban in Afghanistan and Iraq, and FARC, Ejército de Liberación Nacional guerrillas in Colombia.^[159]

In Russia, The Kalashnikov is a tremendous source of national pride.^[160] "The family of the inventor of the world's most famous assault rifle, Mikhail Kalashnikov, has authorized German engineering company MMI to use the well-known Kalashnikov name on a variety of not-so-deadly goods."^[161] In recent years, Kalashnikov Vodka has been marketed with souvenir bottles in the shape of the AK-47 Kalashnikov.^{[162][163]} There are also Kalashnikov watches,^[164] umbrellas,^[165] and knives.^{[166][167]}

In Izhevsk, Udmurt Republic, the Kalashnikov Museum (also called the AK-47 museum) opened on 4 November 2004. This city is in the Ural Region of Russia. The museum chronicles the biography of General Kalashnikov and documents the invention of the AK-47. The museum complex of Kalashnikov's small arms, a series of halls, and multimedia exhibitions are devoted to the evolution of the AK-47 assault rifle and attracts 10,000 monthly visitors.^[168] Nadezhda Vechtomova, the museum director, stated in an interview that the purpose of the museum is to honor the ingenuity of the inventor and the hard work of the employees and to "separate the weapon as a weapon of murder from the people who are producing it and to tell its history in our country."

The proliferation of this weapon is reflected by more than just numbers. The AK-47 is included in the flag of Mozambique and its emblem, an acknowledgment that the country's leaders gained power in large part through the effective use of their AK-47s.^[169] It is also found in the coats of arms of East Timor and the revolution era Burkina Faso, and in the flag of Hezbollah.

Some Western countries associate the AK-47 with their enemies; both Cold War era and present-day. For example, Western movies often portray criminals, gang members and terrorists using AK-47s. For these reasons, in the U.S. and Western Europe the AK-47 is stereotypically regarded as the weapon of choice of insurgents, gangsters and terrorists. Conversely, throughout the developing world, the AK-47 can be positively attributed with revolutionaries against foreign occupation, imperialism, or colonialism.^[159]

The AK-47 made an appearance in U.S. popular culture as a recurring focus in the Nicolas Cage film *Lord of War* (2005). Numerous monologues in the movie focus on the weapon, and its effects on global conflict and the gun running market.^[170]

In 2006, Colombian musician and peace activist César López devised the *escopetarra*, an AK converted into a guitar. One sold for US\$17,000 in a fundraiser held to benefit the victims of anti-personnel mines, while another was exhibited at the United Nations' Conference on Disarmament.^[171]

In Mexico, the AK-47 is known as "Cuerno de Chivo" (literally "Goat's Horn") because of its curved magazine design and is one of the weapons of choice of Mexican drug cartels. It is sometimes mentioned in Mexican folk music lyrics.^[172]

See also

- Comparison of the AK-47 and M16
- List of Russian inventions
- List of Russian weaponry
- List of assault rifles
- Table of handgun and rifle cartridges
- Overview of gun laws by nation

Notes

1. Table data covers the AK-47 with Type 3 receiver
2. 2.6 lb milled from 6 lb stock. This was about 2.2 lb heavier than the stamped receiver.

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Kalashnikov Vodka

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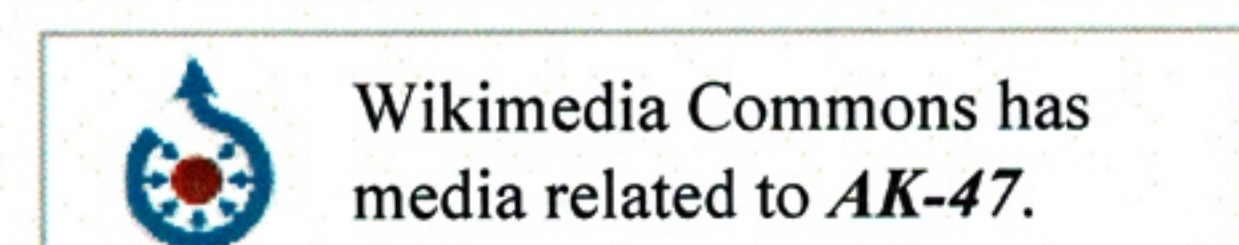
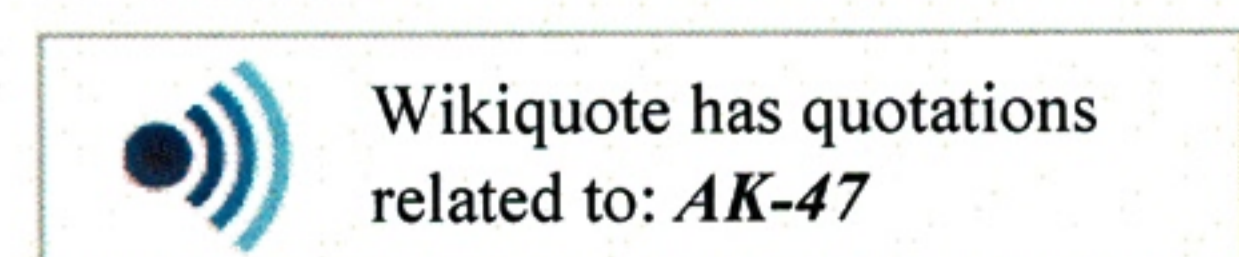
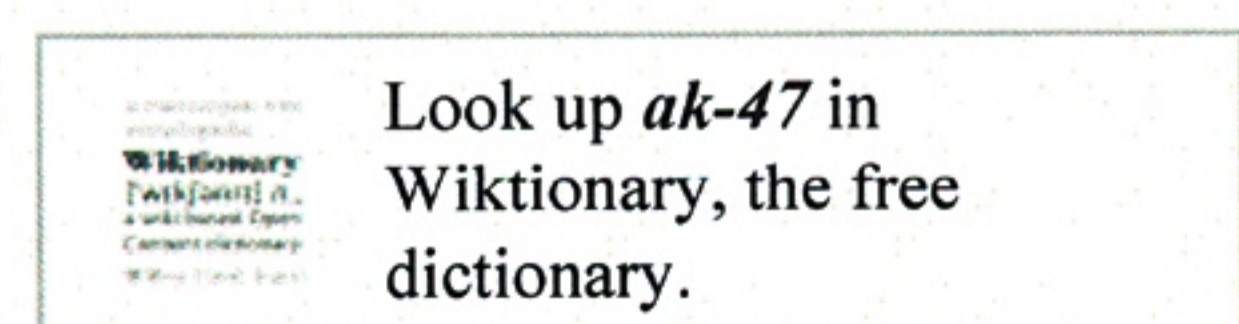
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External links

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