

Minsk Wheeled Tractor Plant (MZKT)



Minsk Wheeled Tractor Plant (MZKT) is the only company all over the world specialized in manufacturing of unique multi-axle heavy-duty trucks, truck trailer combination and wheeled chassis with high cross-country characteristics. During its 40-years history more than 150 types of motor and trailer vehicles were designed and produced in full scale, which became the basis for about 40 armament systems. MZKT motor vehicles are used in more than 30 countries in Africa, Europe, Asia and America.

Minsk Wheeled Tractor Plant (MZKT) was established in 1991 from a special-purpose wheeled tractor division of the Minsk Automobile Plant [MAZ] which was involved in the production of transport platforms for mobile missile systems of the former USSR and all-wheel drive chassis.

MZKT also has converted its products into civil heavy duty all terrain tractors. The first generation of off-road automobiles emerged in 1950s, which demonstrated the potential of implemented technological solutions. Many years of experience in the development and production of special-purpose heavy-duty and super heavy-duty chassis for the USSR Ministry of Defense resulted in a whole pallet of wheeled chassis for various equipment able to move on any road and any terrain.

Nowadays MZKT produces cargo trucks and semi-trailers to them, trucktrailer combinations for carrying indivisible loads of 50-70 t, dump trucks, pipe carriers, chassis for concrete mix-tures, water and fuel tankers. Accumulated practical experience in building 3-, 4-, 6-, 7-, 8- and 12-axle motor vehicles enables MZKT to produce the vehicles as per a concrete order of the most exacting business partner.

When one of MZKT tractors was photographed in 1997 by US satellite in China a scandal broke out, though it was reported that the Chinese had actually reverse engineered the MZKT tractor. Subsequently it is claimed that the Chinese presented MZKT with a choice, either earn money and assist in construction of the plant in China, or the Chinese would manufacture MZKT clone anyway. Evidently MZKT decided to assist China in construction of the plant. This plant would manufacture the trucks similar to those of MZKT.

On 8 January 2002, Mikhail Leonov, the 48-year-old head of the Minsk Tractor Factory, was arrested on charges of abuse of office, large-scale embezzlement, and unlawful entrepreneurial activities. This was the third case to be brought against an industrial chieftain in recent weeks. If found guilty, Leonov faces up to eight years in prison and confiscation of property.

A working group with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Ilya Klebanov visited Minsk on 10 February 2000, and the negotiations resulted in the signing of an intergovernmental agreement setting up a Russian-Belarusian international financial industrial group called Defense Systems. The group, which would design, manufacture and sell joint air-defense technology, would include Belarusian companies like the Gomel radio factory and the Minsk truck factory. Using Belarusian-made chassis and electronic equipment, the group could manufacture mobile anti-missile systems such as the S-300 and S-400.

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/belarus/mzkt.htm>