



Left and above: Among Ukraine's 'Hind' inventory are a small number of Mi-24Rs, this aircraft serving with the 3rd Brigade (badge below). The Mi-24R was developed specifically for the NBC (nuclear, biological, chemical) reconnaissance role and has a number of unique features. The most obvious are the outrigger excavators, which extend to recover soil samples and are seen in operation above. Below the port forward fuselage is a 'sniffer' air sampling unit, while the cabin has NBC protection. Additional equipment can be carried in pods under the stub wings. Two equipment operators sit inside the cabin, processing data before dispatching reports by datalink. On the starboard side is an elongated blister window to give them some measure of downward view. Although the nose gun is retained, the Raduga-F sighting system is removed as the Mi-24R cannot carry guided missiles.



Below: The Mi-24P is the most numerous 'Hind' version still in use, as the airframes are relatively young. The Mi-24Ds have been retired, but a few Mi-24Vs remain in service. Ukraine is studying upgrade proposals for some of its Mi-24 fleet, such as that offered by IAI Tamam, but any such programme carries serious budgetary implications. Any major upgrade work would undoubtedly involve Aviakon, the local 'Hind' refurbishment centre, and the largest of its kind in the world.

