

French government tank maker to cut one-third of labor force

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Giat, the French government's tank and munitions maker, will cut 10,500 jobs, a third of the work force. Unions are claiming that up to five of Giat's fourteen plants face closure. Alain Richards, the minister for defense, has admitted that 3-4,000 jobs will go, with details to be announced next month. Since 1996 Giat's work force has been cut by 2,500.

Giat's main contract is the Leclerc battle tank, for use by the French army and the United Arab Emirates. The Emirates contract was won in 1993 at a fixed dollar price, and the tank is now being produced at a loss. Since 1996 the government has subsidized the company by 1.1 billion francs.

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