

# M203

■ **TYPE:** UNDER-BARREL GRENADE LAUNCHER



Model illustrated: M203, United States

## Technical Information

### Calibre

40 x 46 mm

### Length

380 mm

### Weight (unloaded)

Alone: 1.36 kg  
Deployed on M16A4: 5.48 kg  
Deployed on M4: 4.62 kg

### Barrel length

305 mm

### Sighting system

Quadrant

### Operating system

Single shot

### Muzzle velocity

74 m/s

The United States developed the M203 in the late 1960s as a tactical accessory to the M16 series of assault rifles. It is a single-shot, breach-loading grenade launcher. Its most distinctive feature is the ribbed breach/barrel grip, with which the user slides the barrel forward to load the weapon. There are slight variations among models of M203, which are the result of modification kits developed to allow the weapon to fit different variants of the M16 rifle. The standard M203 fits the M16A4, while model designations M203A1 and M203A2 have been adapted to fit the shorter M4 assault rifle (the M203A2 has a quick-release attachment). Each variant is clearly marked with a model designation on the left-hand side of the weapon, forward of the trigger mechanism.

## PROBABLE GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Region	State forces	Non-state/illicit
Western Europe	▶	○
Eastern Europe	○	○
Middle East & North Africa	●	▶
Sub-Saharan Africa	○	○
Central Asia	○	○
South Asia	○	○
East Asia	▶	▶
Pacific	▶	▶
North America	●	○
Central America	▶	▶
South America	▶	○

● Expect regular use ▶ Expect occasional use ○ Do not expect use

## Variants and their distinguishing features

### VARIANTS (Model/manufacture)

- M203, United States
- M203A1 & A2, United States
- Colt Launcher System, United States
- Diemaco M203A1, Canada
- Maadi 40 mm, Egypt
- 40 mm T85, Taiwan

With the exception of the Colt Launcher System, which is a stand-alone weapon (i.e. it does not have to be fitted to a rifle), non-US variants of the M203 are virtually identical to the original model. The left-hand side of the weapon should be consulted for markings that identify the manufacturer and model.

### Points to include when recording information about the weapon:

1. Serial number, including all prefix and suffix characters
2. Characters adjacent to fire selector
3. Any other engraved/stamped information on weapon

### DEPLOYED

Fitted to M16 rifle



▶ M203

### STAND-ALONE VARIANT

M203 fitted to M16-type rifle stock



▶ Colt Launcher System

### VARIANTS

Circular holes in hand guard



▶ M203

No hand guard (fits under rifle hand guard)



▶ M203A1 (shown)  
▶ M203A2

Compiled by the Small Arms Survey with the technical assistance of the National Firearms Centre, Royal Armouries, United Kingdom. For further information or if you have identification queries, contact [weaponsID@smallarmssurvey.org](mailto:weaponsID@smallarmssurvey.org) or call: +41 22 908 5777. This identification sheet may be downloaded in printable PDF format at [www.smallarmssurvey.org/weaponsID](http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/weaponsID)

### WARNING:

Make a full and informed appraisal of the local security situation before conducting any research related to small arms and light weapons.