REPUBLIC OF KOSOVA
MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

# NEWSLETTER

November 2024

## Kosovo Marks "Force Day”

The Ministry of Defense and the Kosovo Security Forces celebrated November 27th as the "Day of the Force" with a special ceremony and a variety of activities. The "Open Day" was held at the KSF barracks in Prishtina, Mitrovica, Istog, Gjilan, Prizren, Ferizaj, and Pomozatin, where citizens and students had the opportunity to see military equipment and weapons up close, attend various demonstrations, and participate in activities showcasing the strength and readiness of the KSF. The central ceremony took place at the "Adem Jashari" barracks in Prishtina, with the participation of the highest state leaders, including Prime Minister Albin Kurti, Minister of Defense Ejup Maqedonci, Commander of the KSF Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari, Deputy Minister Shemsi Syla, and Adnan Redzeplar, as well as military and diplomatic representatives from partner countries.

On this special day, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense began their visit by inspecting the military capabilities of the KSF, which were on display for the public. In their statements to the media, they thanked the Commander of the KSF, General Jashari, and all the military personnel for their dedication and readiness in carrying out the sacred mission of defending the country. On this occasion, Minister Maqedonci emphasized that today is a special day for the KSF and that marking November 27th as "the Day of the Force" has now become a tradition. This tradition is linked to previous activities and the legacy of the liberation war, reflecting the KSF's development as an army over the years. He also noted that this day was marked by an important step in completing the defense and security infrastructure – the start of the military industry, a key component for state sustainability in defense and security. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Kurti emphasized in his speech that the KSF is continuously strengthening, and with this, the Republic of Kosovo is being empowered. He expressed deep gratitude and heartfelt thanks to the Ministry of Defense, the military, the leaders, and everyone who has been engaged and contributed to this process. This ceremony and the numerous activities held today demonstrate the joint commitment and dedication to strengthening and defending the Republic of Kosovo.

## Kosovo Leaders at The Halifax International Security Forum

The Minister of Defense, Ejup Maqedonci, together with the President of Kosovo, Vjosa Osmani, and the Commander of the KSF, Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari, participated in the Halifax International Security Forum in Canada, at the invitation of the Minister of National Defense of Canada, Bill Blair. This year's edition of the forum focused on the security challenges facing democratic countries, aiming to encourage strategic cooperation between them. In addition to participating in working sessions, they held bilateral meetings with other political and military representatives from partner countries. Minister Maqedonci and President Osmani met with the Chairman of NATO's Military Committee, Admiral Bob Bauer, to discuss the security situation and Kosovo's commitment to NATO membership, reaffirming the continued dedication to this goal to ensure peace and security in the region and beyond. Additionally, Minister Maqedonci met with NATO's Assistant Secretary General, Boris Ruge, to discuss strengthening the security sector, a key factor for the country's stability and development, and for Euro-Atlantic integration. The Minister emphasized Kosovo's ongoing commitment to fulfilling its state duties for this process.

As part of the official visit to Halifax, the Commander of the Kosovo Security Force (COMKSF), Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari, participated in the closing meeting of defense chiefs from many countries around the world. This meeting was organized by the Chief of Defense of the Canadian Armed Forces, General Jennie Cagninan, with the participation of counterparts from various countries. General Jashari expressed his gratitude to his Canadian counterpart, appreciating Canada's continuous contribution since NATO's intervention in Kosovo to the present day. He also informed her about the situation in Kosovo and the region, highlighting the developments and achievements of the KSF. The discussions also covered the KSF's contribution to the training of Ukrainian groups and the strategic objectives for Kosovo's integration into NATO in the future. Kosovo's participation in this international forum and the meetings held demonstrate its unwavering commitment to security and international cooperation, bringing the country one step closer to Euro-Atlantic integration.

## Minister Maqedonci and Canadian Ambassador Discuss Defense Cooperation

Minister of Defense, Ejup Maqedonci, hosted a meeting with the Ambassador of Canada to Zagreb, accredited to the Republic of Kosovo, Jessica Blitt. He briefed her on the developments at the Ministry of Defense and the Kosovo Security Force and thanked her for the cooperation in the field of defense between the two countries. Additionally, they discussed the participation of the Ministry of Defense and the Security Force delegation at the International Security Forum in Halifax. "The Republic of Kosovo remains steadfast on its path toward integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and Canada is among the countries on which the Republic of Kosovo relies for support in realizing this aspiration," emphasized Minister Maqedonci.

# KSF Successfully Validates the Second Infantry Regiment in Field Exercise "Iron Wolf"

The Kosovo Security Force, within the framework of the field exercise "Iron Wolf" at the Military Polygon in Babaj of Boka, organized the Distinguished Visitor Day on November 12. The objective of this exercise was to assess the military capabilities of the Second Infantry Regiment and the Combat Support Company of the Military Police, with the goal of validating their readiness to perform tasks in fulfilling the mission.

On this occasion, the President of the Republic of Kosovo, Vjosa Osmani, Prime Minister Albin Kurti, Minister of Defense Ejup Maqedonci, Commander of the KSF Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari, Deputy Minister of Defense Shemsi Syla, Adnan Rexheplar, General Secretary of the Ministry of Defense Gafurr Dugolli, Deputy Commander of the KSF Major General Enver Cikaqi, Director of the Directorate for Intelligence in the Ministry of Defense Major General Gezim Hazrolli, Chief of Staff of the KSF Brigadier General Ilir Qeriqi, Director of the NATO Advisory and Liaison Team (NALT) Brigadier General Christian Nawrat, as well as other local and international officers and officials, participated.

In her speech addressed to the military participants in the "Iron Wolf" field exercise, President Vjosa Osmani expressed her gratitude and highest appreciation for the exercise, emphasizing that today the resilience, courage, and spirit of our army were demonstrated.

Prime Minister Albin Kurti stated that the special feature of this exercise is the validation of the Second Infantry Regiment of the KSF, confirming the ongoing development and strengthening of the army towards the highest international standards. The participation of high-ranking state and military figures in the "Iron Wolf" exercise highlighted the importance and commitment of Kosovo's institutions to strengthen military capacities and ensure the security and stability of the country. The

demonstration of the resilience, courage, and spirit of our army is proof of the dedication and professionalism of the Kosovo Security Force. The Kosovo Security Force, based on the Comprehensive Transition Plan (CTP), is building the operational capacities of its units according to their mission. Therefore, as part of this exercise, the Second Infantry Regiment and the Military Police Combat Support Platoon were validated.

## Minister Maqedonci Commemorates British Soldiers Who Lost Their Lives During Service in Kosovo

Minister of Defense, Ejup Maqedonci, honored the memory of the 14 British soldiers who lost their lives during their service in Kosovo by laying flowers at the memorial plaque dedicated to their lives and sacrifice, located in "Edit Durham" square. Minister Maqedonci, together with the Commander of the KSF, Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari, the

Commander of KFOR, Enrico Barduani, the British Ambassador, Jonathan Hargreaves, and other diplomats, paid tribute to the British soldiers for their sacrifice for Kosovo. Great Britain, as a friendly state, has played an important role in the freedom, independence, and state-building of Kosovo. The special bond between the Republic of Kosovo and Great Britain is nurtured by our shared sacrifices and common values. We express our praise and gratitude to the British soldiers who lost their lives in Kosovo, as they are part of our country's history.

## Honoring Kosovo's Ally: Meeting with General Wesley Clark

The Minister of Defense, Ejup Maqedonci, hosted a meeting with American General Wesley Clark, expressing the gratitude of the people of Kosovo for his leadership in NATO's air campaign against the military forces of the Serbian occupying regime. Minister Maqedonci informed General Clark in detail about the significant progress of the Kosovo Security Force in achieving the objectives agreed upon within the Comprehensive Transition Plan. He emphasized that the high level of professionalism demonstrated by the Kosovo Security Force today is, above all, the result of close relations and cooperation in the field of defense and security between our countries, for which General Clark's contribution has been and remains extremely important. "Meetings like this give us emotion and remind us of the difficult times of our joint commitment to freedom. When we were fighting alongside our comrades against the evil threatening our country, the air support through NATO was decisive in ending the war. Wesley Clark was commanding NATO forces in the humanitarian intervention that would forever change the future of our country," stated Minister Maqedonci.

## Minister Maqedonci and President Osmani Visited Bondsteel Camp on Thanksgiving Day

On Thanksgiving Day, the Minister of Defense, Ejup Maqedonci, together with the President of Kosovo, Vjosa Osmani-Sadriu, and the U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo, Jeffery M. Hovenier, visited the Bondsteel camp.

During this special day, the Minister expressed gratitude and special thanks to the American soldiers and those from other nations serving at Bondsteel for their contribution to the defense and security of Kosovo.

## Minister of Defense Ejup Maqedonci and Prime Minister Albin Kurti Visit Static Points and Military Patrols

Minister Maqedonci, together with Prime Minister Albin Kurti, visited static points and military patrols located along the water channel in the regions of Obiliq and Vushtrri to talk to the members of the Force engaged there. The KSF is engaged in patrolling and securing key points of Kosovo's critical infrastructure to protect against any threats and hostile forces targeting Kosovo and its citizens. These tasks arise from decisions made at the latest meeting of the Security Council regarding the engagement of the Force in support of civil authorities. The Commander of the KSF, Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari, and the General Staff have planned the engagement of units at key points of critical physical infrastructure in Kosovo. The security institutions of the Republic of Kosovo are in full and continuous inter-institutional coordination to respond to the needs of state and citizen protection, as well as the challenges of the security environment. Following the terrorist attack on the Iber-Lepenc canal in the village of Varage, Zubin Potok, the Kosovo Security Force has increased its engagement to fulfill its mission to protect Kosovo's sovereignty and territorial integrity and to support civil authorities.

## Protection of Critical Water Infrastructure: Inter-Institutional Cooperation and Emergency Plan

In the framework of inter-institutional cooperation for military support to civil authorities, with a focus on the management and protection of critical water supply infrastructure, the Deputy Minister of Defense, Shemsi Syla, held a meeting with the Chief Executive of Regional Water Company Prishtina, Arsim Fetahu. During the meeting, they discussed the identification of risks and the development of emergency plans to protect water supply systems from various threats. Additionally, Deputy Minister Syla expressed his willingness to offer training and assistance to the R.W.C Prishtina personnel, especially in the field of emergency response. On this occasion, Mr. Fetahu informed Deputy Minister Syla about the activities and commitments of his team to ensure uninterrupted water supply and the improvement of the water management network, emphasizing the importance of security and stability in daily operations. At the end of the meeting, Deputy Minister Syla visited the main facilities of the enterprise to observe the work being carried out and explore opportunities for further support. As part of the commitments for military support to civil authorities and to ensure the security of critical infrastructure, in November, Deputy Minister Syla, together with the Chief Executive of the Hydro-Economic Enterprise "Iber Lepenc", Faruk Mujka, visited Ujmani Lake. During the visit, discussions were held on risk assessment and the preparation of an emergency response plan for the protection of the dam from natural and other risks. Additionally, training was provided for the enterprise personnel in the field of emergency response to strengthen their skills in critical situations. During this visit, the achievements and ongoing projects being implemented at the "Iber Lepenc" Enterprise were closely presented, highlighting the dedication and commitment of the team to improving services and increasing the security of the facilities under its management.

## Cooperation for Security of Energy Infrastructure in Kosovo

As part of the mutual cooperation for military support to civil authorities, with a special focus on the protection of critical energy infrastructure, Deputy Minister of Defense Shemsi Syla held a meeting with the Chief Executive of KTSMO (Kosovo Transmission System and Market Operator), Evetar Zeqiri. During the meeting, they discussed the identification of risks and the drafting of emergency plans for protecting energy systems from various threats. Additionally, they expressed a willingness to provide training and assistance to KTSMO personnel in the field of emergency response.

On this occasion, Deputy Minister Syla was informed by Mr. Zeqiri about the activities and commitment of his team in managing and improving Kosovo's energy network, emphasizing the importance of security and efficiency in daily operations.

## German Army and KSF Discuss Future Cooperation

A delegation from the Department of International Cooperation of the German Army conducted a working visit to the Ministry of Defense and the KSF, during which bilateral discussions were held. As a result, the bilateral M2M (military-to-military) plan was compiled, outlining joint military activities between the Kosovo Security Force and the Bundeswehr for 2025. This traditional event between the Republic of Kosovo and the Federal Republic of Germany strengthens cooperation in the field of defense and helps to enhance the military capabilities and capacities of the KSF.

## MoD and KSF Take Over Management of Dumosh Airport Properties

Starting from November this year, the Ministry of Defense and the Kosovo Security Force took over the management of the Dumosh Airport properties as strategic points for enhancing the country's defense and security.

The deployment of KSF soldiers at Dumosh Airport in Podujevë is a significant development for security and stability in the region. This date also coincides with the birthday of the Hero of Kosovo, the strategist and inspirer of our liberation war, Commander Zahir Pajaziti.

"This step strengthens the presence of the KSF in the Llapi and Gollak regions, providing additional security for the residents of this area, better and faster support for responses, as well as for operations in the event of civil emergencies," emphasized Minister of Defense Ejup Maqedonci. He added that this decision demonstrates the commitment of Kosovo's institutions to strengthening military capabilities and contributing to a safer environment.

## KSF Leaders Honor Italian Advisors and Plan Future Collaborations

The Minister of Defense, Ejup Maqedonci, and the Commander of the KSF, Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari, held informative and farewell meetings with the Italian military advisors, Colonel Giovanni Ventura and Colonel Osvaldo Ceroni. In these meetings, they thanked Colonel Ventura for his contribution to advancing the capacities of the KSF and welcomed Colonel Ceroni in his new role. The discussions included the development of the Force and bilateral plans for training, exercises, and joint activities, aiming to strengthen military relations between the two countries.

## Successful Completion of Month-Long Blood Donation by Ministry of Defense and KSF

In cooperation with the Kosovo National Blood Transfusion Center, the Ministry of Defense and the Kosovo Security Force completed a month-long voluntary blood donation session this year. A large number of officials from the Ministry of Defense and KSF soldiers have responded to this humanitarian action, which saves lives. This activity is of particular importance for securing the necessary blood reserves for patients in need of transfusion. Besides the organized action, members of the KSF have always been ready to respond to the requests of the Kosovo Blood Transfusion Center (KBTC) for sporadic needs in specific cases.

## Bilateral Meeting Between the Commander of the KSF and the Croatian Military Intelligence Delegation

Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari, the Commander of the KSF, hosted a delegation from the Croatian Armed Forces Intelligence Department, led by Brigadier General Mijo Validzic, as part of the framework of bilateral cooperation between the Kosovo Security Force and the Croatian Armed Forces. During the meeting, General Jashari expressed high gratitude for the continued support that the Croatian Armed Forces are providing to increase the capacities of the KSF, and they agreed that this cooperation should continue further. After the meeting with COMKSF, the delegation continued their visit to the General Staff of the KSF, where they exchanged assessments on the security situation in the region and the impacts of the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East. The parties discussed and agreed on areas of cooperation for the future.

## KSF and AFRA Conduct Joint Exercise "Rescue 2024" in Pomozatin

At the “Young Europeans” Barracks in Pomozatin, the joint exercise “Rescue 2024” was held between units of the Kosovo Security Forces (KSF) National Guard and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania (AFRA). The purpose of this exercise was to enhance interoperability between units and provide military support to civil authorities in cases of natural disasters (civil emergencies). During the exercise, the teams demonstrated their capabilities in the elimination of hazardous materials, disposal of unexploded ordnance, search and rescue of individuals trapped under rubble, K9 search capabilities, providing support with engineering machinery, and offering first aid to the injured. At the end of the exercise, Colonel Skender Hoxha, the Acting Commander of the KSF National Guard, greeted and thanked the participants on behalf of the KSF Commander. He expressed gratitude for their efforts and the successful cooperation between the two forces.

## Technical Training of Kobra Armored Vehicles by the Turkish Army for the KSF

Instructors from the Turkish Army have trained members of the Kosovo Security Force as part of the military cooperation between the two forces. This training, which included the use and operation of Kobra tactical vehicles, was conducted according to the cooperation plan and encompassed both theoretical and practical aspects, with the aim of increasing the military capabilities of the KSF.

## KSF Completes First “Basic Infantry Officer Course” with U.S. Support

The “Basic Infantry Officer Course” was completed at the Training and Doctrine Command in Ferizaj, conducted for the first time by instructors from the Kosovo Security Force with support from the American SATMO and ODC teams.
At the certification ceremony, the Chief of Staff of the General Staff, Brigadier General Ilir Qeriqi, and the Commander of Doctrine and Training, Brigadier General Jeton Dreshaj, attended and congratulated the members of the Force for successfully completing the course. General Qeriqi, on behalf of the KSF Commander, Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari, congratulated the graduates for their utmost dedication and high level of professional preparation. This course, based on a detailed program that combined theory and practice, prepared the graduates with advanced infantry tactical skills and leadership on the battlefield, as well as assessed them for their leadership potential, leading by example, and teamwork. The course also included recent graduates from prestigious academies such as West Point, Sandhurst, Albania, and USC (University Study Centre). The goal of the course was to advance and professionally increase military leadership to face current and future challenges.

## KSF Officer Graduates in the USA

KSF Officer, Durim Behluli, has successfully completed the Career Captain’s Course in Artillery at the Field Artillery School in Oklahoma, USA. The course included around 50 officers from 10 different countries and aimed to prepare officers for duties as staff officers at the battalion-brigade level and as artillery battery commanders.

## Joint Medical Exercise ROL1 between KSF and Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania

As part of the continuous cooperation between the Kosovo Security Force and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania, the KSF Medical Regiment participated in a joint exercise with the AFRA Medical Service for the ROL1 training. The purpose of this activity was to advance the medical interoperability between our forces, aiming for integration into NATO structures. This was an important step in the alignment and standardization of combat support procedures. Additionally, the activity helped prepare both units for NATO's MEDEVAL process.

The Kosovo Security Force (KSF) expresses its gratitude to the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania (AFRA) for their continued cooperation and for providing the capabilities necessary for the development of bilateral activities. KSF and AFRA continue to engage in bilateral activities to achieve their objectives, contributing to regional and broader peace and security.

## Always Ready

As part of the cooperation with the Turkish Armed Forces, the "SARP Weapon System Training" focused on gaining theoretical and practical knowledge of the advanced SARP weapon system. Instructors from the TAF are making a valuable contribution to increasing the professional capabilities of the KSF.