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DEFENSE STRATEGY OF THE REPUBLIC
OF KOSOVO



2023

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GLOSSARY

RoK Republic of Kosovo

GRK Government of the Republic of Kosovo

MOD Ministry of Defense

KSF Kosovo Security Force

USA United States of America

LTDP Long-Term Development Plan

CTP Comprehensive Transformation Plan

KSS Kosovo Security Strategy

SM Defense Strategy

NATO North Atlantic Threat Organization.

EU European Union

NALT NATO Advisory Liaison Team

GDP Gross Domestic Product

MUAC Military Support of Civil Authorities

PPBE Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution

HR Human Resources

EOD Explosive Ordnance Disposal

ADIS Agency of Defense for Intelligence and Security

Introduction

The Defense Strategy is a public document that addresses the most important issues in the field of operation and development of the defense system in the Republic of Kosovo. The Defense Strategy derives from the legislation in force, based on the new mandate of the Ministry of Defense and the Kosovo Security Force. Likewise, it relies on the Kosovo Security Strategy and the perspective of the integration of the Republic of Kosovo in regional and international organizations in the field of defense and security.

The Defense Strategy provides a medium-term vision on how the Republic of Kosovo will implement the basic function of defense - preserving independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty. The Defense Strategy defines the structure, management and operation principles of the defense system in times of peace, in emergency situations, in crisis and in war.

Based on the challenges, threats and risks identified for security and defense, the Defense Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo shall define the purpose and strategic objectives of defense. It describes the defense system as a whole and the missions and tasks of the Kosovo Security Force. The Defense Strategy provides the development vision of defense capabilities and capacities, the principles of organizing defense system, and the necessary defense resources.

The Defense Strategy provides strategic guidance for the development, modernization and standardization of the defense system of the Republic of Kosovo.

The starting point of the Defense Strategy is the evaluation of the security and defense environment of the Republic of Kosovo. The strategy is a framework for the operation and development of the defense system. It is a document that applies to and gets updated depending on the security environment, the national interests, the economic opportunities, and the progress of the Republic of Kosovo in regional security and defense cooperation initiatives, as well as its integration into NATO and the European Union.

The Defense Strategy provides basis for the development of the defense system, including the development of defense plans and KSF development plans. Also, it provides the basis for the modernization and standardization plans of the KSF equipment, and the preparation of other documents in the field of operation and development of the defense system in general and of the Kosovo Security Force in particular. Moreover, the Defense Strategy is harmonized with National Response Plan and other strategic documents related to defense and security.

The budget of the Republic of Kosovo and support from partners shall determine the development of defense capabilities and capacities. Stand-up of the defense capabilities in the next period shall be accomplished through the gradual increase of the defense budget.

The Defense Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo shall be approved by the Government, with the proposal of the Minister of Defense. The Defense Strategy shall be implemented through the Action Plan.

1. Security Environment

1.1. Global

The global security environment continues to be volatile, unsafe, complex and unclear. The world faces challenges, threats and risks that change over time, geography, overall technological development, globalization, resource requirements and the confrontation of national interests of countries. In this decade, aspirations for territorial expansion from various countries, including countries on the European continent, have become a reality. Russian aggression against Ukraine revealed and increased the risk that other countries with the same aspirations as Russia will take territorial expansion actions against independent and sovereign countries. The increased complexity in the global security environment has a significant impact in Europe and in our region. The geopolitical and global security environment poses threats and opportunities that affect the determination of security policies and state interests of the Republic of Kosovo. The evolution of the worldwide security environment remains one of the decisive factors directly impacting the shaping of security and defense institutions.

In terms of threats, risks, and current security challenges, the emphasis is on: unresolved interstate issues, hybrid threats, renewed ideological competition, international terrorism, organized crime, corruption, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, ever-increasing demands for natural resources, religious and ethnic disputes, natural and man-made disasters, pandemics and endemics, socio-economic differences and cybercrime. Such threats/risks are constantly changing in shape and are characterized by duration, unpredictability, disproportionality and dynamism. This forces the security and defense structures to focus on creating capabilities and capacities to efficiently and effectively respond.

1.2. Regional

After the wars and conflicts that accompanied the process of disintegration of Yugoslavia, the level of security and stability in the region has improved. The presence of NATO and EU bodies in the region continues to be a factor in maintaining regional peace and stability. The Western Balkans security environment, however, is and will continue to be one of dynamic development in terms of security threats and risks. The war in Ukraine had a direct impact and secondary effect on the economic and security aspects of our entire region. In terms of security, Kosovo was affected by Russia's hybrid war, which, together with Serbia, aim to raise tensions in the north of the country that potentially could result in inter-ethnic conflict." Similar trends of destabilization have been observed in other countries of the region, including Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Despite these trends, the countries of the region have shown stability thanks to the Euro-Atlantic orientation and the close partnership with the USA.

Contemporary security challenges and geopolitical developments have forced Kosovo to support its defense beyond its internal capabilities. Therefore, the Defense Strategy relies on integration of the Republic of Kosovo in regional and international organizations in the field

of defense and security. Main trends (threats, risks and opportunities) that characterize the Western Balkans during mid-term¹ are:

- Political goals for hegemony from Serbia continue to be present - “Serbian World Ideological Project”;
- Territorial claims and disputes between the states of the former Yugoslavia and beyond in the region;
- Arms race using every opportunity to enhance combat power;
- Violation of the constitutional order of any country or countries in the region;
- Influence of foreign state and non-state actors in the Western Balkans;
- Ethnocentrism;
- Insufficient consolidation of democracy;
- Demographic trends;
- Integration processes in alliances, coalitions and initiatives (EU and NATO integration of the Western Balkan countries);
- Regional cooperation.

1.3. Internal environment

The NATO and the EU integration process of the countries in the region, and policies of trust, cooperation, and partnership, have significantly reduced the possibility of direct military threat to the Republic of Kosovo, but this risk is not completely eliminated. Based on political, economic and social indicators and in the assessments by local and international institutions, the security environment in the Republic of Kosovo is relatively stable. In this context, the presence of NATO and the EU in Kosovo remains essential, as well as the development of Kosovo’s capacities in the field of security and defense.

However, challenges, threats and risks are not only related to the use of conventional military force, but also to asymmetric and hybrid threats and risks, which may affect the security of the Republic of Kosovo. The Republic of Kosovo, despite the positive developments, is threatened, endangered, and challenged by factors such as Serbia’s hostile stance, foreign interference, cyber-attacks, national and religious extremism, natural and other disasters.

1.3.1 Challenges, threats/risks

Serbia’s stance towards the Republic of Kosovo

The Republic of Serbia supported by Russia, continues to remain the main and the most serious threat to the national security of the Republic of Kosovo. In continuously infringing upon the interests and state security of Kosovo, Serbia has demonstrated its capability, capacity, and intention to advance its interests. The Republic of Serbia continues to use all its elements in a synchronized manner through hybrid methods² against the Republic of Kosovo. In the field of international diplomacy, it acts against the statehood and integration of the Republic of Kosovo

¹ Medium term, five (5) year time period

² A NATO definition is “Hybrid threats combine military and non-military as well as covert and overt means, including disinformation, cyber-attacks, economic pressure, deployment of irregular armed groups and use of regular forces. Hybrid methods are used to blur the lines between war and peace, and attempt to sow doubt in the minds of target populations. The speed, scale and intensity of hybrid threats have increased in recent years”.

in international institutions. In the territory of the Republic of Kosovo, it uses informative and economic elements to instrumentalize the Serbian minority and to strengthen the parallel structures, hindering their integration process. Meanwhile, Serbia continues to pose a direct threat to the security of the Republic of Kosovo, by developing, modernizing, and enhancing its military capabilities, as well as by positioning themselves along the borderline. Many of these challenges result from a lack of normalized relations between Kosovo and Serbia.

Destabilizing activities of foreign intelligence agencies

Various (malignant) activities, through their covert operations focused on obstructing democratic processes in Kosovo, pose a real risk to the state and institutions of Kosovo. Influential and disinformation activities of intelligence and security services of state and non-state actors pose an increasing threat. These actors use a variety of means and mechanisms (funding of criminal structures, non-governmental organization, information media), and intelligence operations to undermine the image and interests of the Republic of Kosovo.

Cyber attacks

Cyber-attacks pose a serious risk to Kosovo and global security. During 2022, several cyber-attacks against state institutions were reported in all countries of the Western Balkans. During the following years, increasing number and severity of cyber-attacks by state and non-state actors is expected. A global and coordinated response is necessary to address these threats, which are international in nature. NATO and the EU, in recent years, have coordinated activities in Southeast Europe. The National Cyber Security Strategy addresses the measures to be taken for cyber defense. The Republic of Kosovo shall focus on standing up the cyber defense capabilities and capacities.

National and religious extremism

Kosovo is part of the international coalition against terrorism and is committed to making a continuous contribution to addressing and combating this phenomenon. The Republic of Kosovo remains vulnerable to extremism, both religious and nationalist. In the country, extremism of a nationalist nature is more prevalent in regions with pronounced ethnic divisions. Deliberate Islamic or Serbian Orthodox ideological abuse serves as a basis for the spread of extremist attitudes, which can escalate and become a real threat to the disruption of internal stability in the country and the commission of terrorist acts.

Natural and man-made disasters, such as environmental and climate change and technological developments, which affect people, critical infrastructure and the state are expected to characterize the future security environment. Environmental pollution, limited resources, health risks, climate change, shortage of water pose a risk to the country's security. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, snowstorms, landslides, massive fires, and various epidemics, pandemics and endemics may also impact the security environment. Other threats can also result from industrial breakdowns from human negligence as well as by deliberate acts of sabotage, criminal and terrorist acts. The consequences of these phenomena may include and endanger the territories of neighboring countries and in the same form may spill over from neighboring countries to the Republic of Kosovo, endangering its territory and population. The inability of civilian authorities to meet these challenges may require the

commitment of the military component. The inability to timely identify and anticipate these challenges, threats/risks, forces the security and defense structures of the Republic of Kosovo to build capabilities and capacities to effectively and successfully respond to these challenges and threats/risks in the shortest possible time.

2. Defense Policy of the Republic of Kosovo

The Defense Strategy is based on the values of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo and on the basic principles of Defense and Security provided in the KSS.

The policy aims at identifying measures to defend the interests and objectives of state security: independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity; constitutional order; sustainable economic development; the life, well-being, property and safety of citizens; regional stability and membership of the Republic of Kosovo in international organizations.

NATO's presence in Kosovo has contributed to the preservation of peace and security not only in Kosovo, but also in the region. As a result of this presence, the Republic of Kosovo is able to further strengthen and develop its defense and security capabilities. As a result, it is imperative that this presence continues, and that Kosovo, together with its partners, build a security architecture.

The Ministry of Defense will further strengthen cooperation with NATO, through NATO Advisory Liaison Team (NALT), and intensify the cooperation with NATO in order to maximize all the opportunities that bring the Republic of Kosovo closer to full membership in NATO, while in the short term, the possibility of Kosovo to be membership of PfP is opened.

Bilaterally, efforts will be made to enhance the cooperation wider, especially with NATO and EU member states. Also, efforts will be made to enter into as many bilateral agreements as possible in the field of defense and security, as well as Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA).

It is important that, in accordance with the Comprehensive Transition Plan, with the support and assistance of international partners to continue the education and training of the KSF according to NATO standards, as it would increase interoperability with the military forces of partner countries. The Ministry of Defense in coordination and cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora (MFAD) will engage in expanding the network of defense attachés in all continents.

The Ministry of Defense aims to improve and build a security and defense system with the necessary capacities by combining elements of state power (Diplomacy, Information, Military, Economy, Finance, Intelligence and Rule of Law).

Security and defense institutions shall act within the defense strategic concept aimed at close cooperation between military and civilian authorities in times of peace, emergency, crisis or war, ensuring and directing all available capabilities for use in defending the country's interests.

Upon integration of the Republic of Kosovo into regional and international bodies, the Ministry of Defense will be part of the regional and global security architecture.

The Kosovo Security Force aims to participate in joint military exercises with NATO members and partner states; aims to participate in international operations, as well as in regional defense and security organizations and forums by ensuring continuous access to NATO education and training centers. In order to achieve membership in these organizations, Kosovo will follow

the application procedure as a partner, aspirant, candidate, or full member state, and will adhere to the basic principles that apply to NATO partners and members.

Partnership with the countries of the region on defense and security issues, in order to accelerate the NATO and EU integration process, remains a priority of the Republic of Kosovo and the Ministry of Defense. The Ministry of Defense will engage in the creating a “Smart Defense” approach with the states of the region, to build joint and interoperable capabilities in the field of weapons systems, maintenance, military training and civil emergencies.

Strategic Partnership with the United States guarantees the vital interests of the country. The role of the United States is crucial in facilitating NATO integration, regional initiatives, and the development of the defense sector, especially the KSF. The Ministry of Defense will further advance cooperation with the US Department of Defense in the field of security and defense through strategic documents, as well as advance cooperation with the Iowa National Guard.

The Kosovo Security Force will consolidate and further develop as a professional military force and will be the military capacity with which the Republic of Kosovo will guarantee the defense of sovereignty and territorial integrity participation in international operations, and military support to civil authorities. Maintaining and developing the capabilities of the KSF and other security institutions, in support of the civil authorities, is an important objective of the Republic of Kosovo in the field of defense and security.

Kosovo’s Defense Strategy sets the goal of modernizing the KSF to meet NATO and European Union standards. Based on the Comprehensive Transition Plan, the Republic of Kosovo will pay due attention to supporting the KSF with resources. Priority will be given to the modernization, training and education of personnel, as well as supporting participation in national and international operations.

2.1. State Values and Interests

Chapter 7 of the Constitution presents the main values that characterize the Republic of Kosovo. The constitutional order is based on the principles of freedom, democracy, equality, respect for human rights, the rule of law, the right to property, the protection of environment, pluralism, separation of state powers, and a market economy.

These state values, enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, demonstrate the Euro-Atlantic orientation of our country. Violation of these values is the basis for the activation of state power components.

The categorization of state interests is very important for assessing the security environment and for defining efficient state security platforms and policies in a timely and systematic manner, as well as defining long-term threats/risks to state interests and security.

As defined in the Kosovo Security Strategy, the main state interests of the Republic of Kosovo are:

- Defend sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- Preservation of constitutional order and public security;
- Human security and social development;
- Integration in Euro-Atlantic structures and other international mechanisms.

The Republic of Kosovo is oriented towards Euro-Atlantic integration and focused on defending its state interests and the achievement of the objectives of Defense and Security based on the principle of respecting international norms and laws. The Republic of Kosovo will use all available capacities and resources to defend its state interests.

2.2. Goals and Objectives of the Defense Strategy

The purpose of the Defense Strategy is to provide key guidance for the organization, development and functioning of the defense system to respond to threats/risks in the Republic of Kosovo. The Defense Strategy provides guidance and instructions for the development of capabilities and capacities to protect and protect the citizen, freedom, independence, sovereignty and territory of the Republic of Kosovo.

Defense Strategy objectives are set based on state interests. These objectives will be met in the mid- and long term. The level at which they will be achieved will be determined by the priority of national interests, the requirements related to human, material, and financial resources, as well as the medium-term development opportunities of the Republic of Kosovo.

Defense strategic objectives:

1. Defend sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country;
2. Modernization and upgrade of military capacities
3. Enhancing inter-institutional interoperability
4. Expand bilateral cooperation, membership in organizations and participation in international operations.
5. Advancing cooperation with NATO and its mechanisms in Kosovo

3. Defense system in the Republic of Kosovo

As stated in the Kosovo Security Strategy, the defense system in the Republic of Kosovo is based on the values and principles of the Constitution and the legislation in force. This approach is based on the security architecture, which has been developed and defined in the Security Sector Strategic Review and aims to develop capacities to act independently and are interoperable with strategic partners.

The Ministry of Defense aims to provide a response to security challenges, risks and threats, as well as to adapt to changes in the modern security environment. This means a comprehensive approach and a contribution of all elements of security and defense in the Republic of Kosovo.

The Defense System of the Republic of Kosovo is based on a security architecture, which means that there is a clear line of initiation of engagement, tasks, command and management, capabilities and capacities committed to operations according to scenarios stemming from the Strategic Security Sector Review.

The defense system relies on close cooperation between military and civilian authorities in times of peace, emergency, crisis and war, in order to ensure and guide all available capacities for the defense of the country.

This system is also based on the support of partners and allies, in times of peace, emergency, crisis or war.

3.1. Organization of the Defense System

The Republic of Kosovo organizes the defense system with the capabilities and capacities of the country's institutions available and those that are planned to be developed during the mid- and long-term period. The defense system is organized in accordance with the legislation in effect, requirements, goals, capacities and strategic concept of defense.

For the purpose of defending the country and implementing the strategic scenarios of the Republic of Kosovo, it is assumed that each institution responsible for security and defense will perform its tasks within the defense system accurately, effectively and efficiently, as per their competencies and legal responsibilities.

3.2. Priorities of the Defense System

The Republic of Kosovo aims to intensify bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation and interaction in the field of security and defense. Our country is committed to creating a safe environment within the country, and ready to support neighboring countries and other partners with security and defense capabilities. Kosovo will support international alliances or coalitions in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations lead by International organizations, NATO and strategic partners

While the main priority for the Ministry of Defense is the defense of sovereignty and territorial integrity, the Ministry and KSF will continue to develop capacities and capabilities to support participation in international operations and military support to civil authorities. The other security institutions of the Republic of Kosovo, in national emergency situations, as an inter-institutional response, shall provide the main capabilities and capacities supported by KSF.

3.3. Elements of the defense system and their role

The elements of the defense system of the Republic of Kosovo are unified, structured and operate in a synchronized manner, as per their competencies and legal responsibilities.

The main elements of the defense system of the Republic of Kosovo are: The Assembly, the President of the Republic of Kosovo, the Government, the Kosovo Security Council, the Ministry of Defense and the Kosovo Security Force, the Kosovo Police, the Kosovo Intelligence Agency and the Emergency Management Agency.

The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo adopts laws, resolutions and other documents, including the Kosovo Security Strategy and the Long-Term Development Plan of the KSF; ratifies international treaties; adopts the Budget of the Republic of Kosovo; supervises the work of the Government and other public institutions; oversees foreign and security policy; issues consent to the President's decree on the declaration of the state of emergency, crisis and war. The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, through the Parliamentary Committee for Security and Defense Affairs, exercises parliamentary control and supervision of the rule of law over the institutions of the security sector.

The President of the Republic of Kosovo - guarantees the constitutional functioning of the institutions defined by the Constitution; issues decrees in accordance with the Constitution of the RKS; announces the laws approved by the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo; has the right to return for reconsideration of the approved laws, if he considers that they are harmful to the legitimate interests of the Republic of Kosovo or of one or more of its communities; sign international agreements in accordance with this Constitution; leads the country's foreign policy; accepts credentials of heads of diplomatic missions accredited in the Republic of Kosovo; is the Supreme Commander of the Kosovo Security Forces; appoints the Commander of the Kosovo Security Forces and the generals of the KSF; together with the Prime Minister, appoints the Director, Deputy Director and Inspector General of the Kosovo Intelligence Agency; decides on the declaration of the State of Emergency, in consultation with the Prime Minister; may request meetings of the Security Council of Kosovo and preside over them during the State of Emergency; In cases of emergency, the President has the powers to order the mobilization of the Kosovo Security Force; Gives instructions to the KSF Commander for supervision and ensuring the execution of all legal orders; approves the operational plans for the state of emergency prepared by the Commander of the KSF.

The Government of the Republic of Kosovo exercises the executive power in compliance with the Constitution and the law. The Government implements the laws and other acts approved by the Assembly of Kosovo, defines and directs the defense policy; recommends the Kosovo Security Strategy and approves the Defense Strategy; initiates the Security Sector Strategic Review (SSSR) and the Strategic Defense Review (SDR); provides funds or other resources for the needs of defense.

The Kosovo Security Council in cooperation with the President of the Republic of Kosovo and the Government shall develop the Security Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo. The Security Council of the Republic of Kosovo shall also have an advisory role on all matters relating to security in the Republic of Kosovo. The Security Council of the Republic of Kosovo shall be chaired by the Prime Minister with the support of the Government, except during a state of emergency as provided by the Constitution. During a national of emergency, the President of the Republic of Kosovo chairs the Kosovo Security Council.

Ministry of Defense proposes, designs and implements general state defense policy at strategic level. It assesses threats, risks and challenges, and proposes to the Government the adoption of the Defense Strategy and the initiation of the Strategic Defense Review. The Ministry of Defense determines the strategic directions and, through policies, bylaws, development plans and sectorial strategies approved by the Minister of Defense, directs the operation, development, professionalization, modernization and standardization of the Kosovo Security Force. The Minister of Defense exercises civil democratic control over the KSF in accordance with the constitution and legislation in force.

The Kosovo Security Force shall defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity, citizens, property, and interests of the Republic of Kosovo. The Kosovo Security Force is a multi-ethnic, professional, and authorized military force to serve in the country and abroad, in accordance with given constitutional and legal competences.

The **Police of the Republic of Kosovo** is a professional organization and reflects the ethnic diversity of Kosovo and is responsible for the preservation of public order and safety throughout the territory of the Republic of Kosovo. The Police of the Republic of Kosovo shall have a unified chain of command throughout the Republic of Kosovo with police stations corresponding to municipal boundaries.

Kosovo Intelligence Agency shall identify, investigate and monitor threats to security in the Republic of Kosovo. The Kosovo Intelligence Agency shall be professional, politically impartial, multi-ethnic and shall be subject to oversight by the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo.

Emergency Management Agency is an agency within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and is responsible for coordinating the response to natural and other disasters. Some of the main tasks of the EMA include: responsible for organizing and operation of the monitoring and alert system; elaborate risk assessment and technical documentation for protection, rescue and assistance; monitor and report on threats and instructs on how to handle them; in cooperation with Government Ministries and Agencies, under the leadership of the Ministry of Internal

Affairs, drafts the National Response Plan. EMA also performs other tasks defined by the legislation in force.

4. Developing and modernizing defense capabilities and capacities

The Republic of Kosovo as a sovereign country develops its defense capabilities, respecting the mandate and presence of NATO in Kosovo. To enhance these capacities, the Republic of Kosovo will cooperate closely with strategic partners, NATO and KFOR. In terms of state interaction with NATO, the Republic of Kosovo will initiate, discuss and harmonize all actions related to NATO integration.

Developing defense capabilities and capacities is an ongoing, gradual process, synchronized by many factors and in line with development plans and projects. Availability of funds will determine the pace and duration of development and modernization of Security and Defense Institutions in the Republic of Kosovo.

4.1. Defense capabilities

The Ministry of Defense pledges to engage in advancing capabilities and capacities to fulfill the mission to respond to the entire spectrum of threats and dangers to the country.

Main capabilities and capacities needed by the defense system of the Republic of Kosovo are:

- Capabilities and capacities for territorial defense from possible conventional aggression;
- Capabilities and capacities to respond to hybrid threats;
- Capabilities and capacities for response and management of humanitarian operations caused by natural and man-made disasters;
- Communication and cooperation capabilities between institutions responsible for security and defense.
- Capabilities and capacities to participate in international operations.
- Development and advance the Active and Reserve Component of the KSF
- Skills and capacities for air operations and air defense, in cooperation with the relevant institutions and agencies in order to prepare the Government of Kosovo (institutions) for eventual assumption of responsibility for control of the airspace of the Republic of Kosovo.

In this regard, an Action Plan will be developed, which provides specific guidance on tasks to be completed and when. Also, this Action Plan will include the delineation of responsibilities and define institution or organization in lead and those providing support, including the type of support they will provide.

The Republic of Kosovo will contribute specialist capability (Humanitarian Demining - EOD, Search and Rescue - SAR, Hazardous Materials - HAZMAT, Medicine and Civil Engineering) to international operations. Our country pledges to support partners and allies for maintaining peace and security. This list is not exhaustive, and for every possible scenario and situation of threat or direct, the necessary response capabilities and capacities shall be defined by the country's institutions.

The Ministry of Defense in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, other responsible institutions and in line with the Kosovo Security Strategy, will develop and advance the State Educational Program for Security and Defense.

The Ministry of Defense and the KSF will develop and advance the Cyber Security National Training Center. This center will provide professional education/training in the field of cyber security to all institutions of the Republic of Kosovo. In addition, the Ministry of Defense and the KSF will continue to maintain and advance the International Training Center for Search and Rescue as a training capacity in order to increase professional training in the field of search and rescue.

The Republic of Kosovo encourages possible economic development through the defense industry, which is very important for the country. Therefore, the Ministry of Defense and other relevant ministries will develop the necessary legal framework in exploring opportunities for investment and development of the defense industry.

The Ministry of Defense and the Kosovo Security Force will focus on advancing defense intelligence capabilities through the establishment of the Agency of Defense for Intelligence and Security (ADIS). This will advance physical security, information security, personnel as well as information sharing with local and international partners. The Ministry of Defense and the KSF through the ADIS will establish a privileged exchange of information with the Security Institutions in Republic of Kosovo in order to make prevention and fighting of threats and risks that may violate the security of our country.

The Ministry of Defense and the KSF will contribute to develop and execute deradicalization programs of foreign fighters, based on the State Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo against Terrorism and Violent Extremism.

4.1.1. Ministry of Defense

The Ministry of Defense is a state administration body composed of civilian and military personnel. The Minister of Defense is the top political authority of the Ministry and exercises civil and democratic oversight, control and general administration over the KSF. The Minister of Defense inspects the KSF through the General Inspector. In addition, the functionality of the position of parliamentary commissioner (ombudsperson) will strengthen civil and democratic observation.

The Ministry of Defense (MoD) shall draft and implement the general state defense policies at the strategic level, as well as exercise its functions and competencies, in accordance with the Constitution and the legislation in force. The Ministry of Defense is responsible for providing strategic guidance and supervising the implementation, in the following areas:

- Defense Policy and Planning;
- Defense budget;
- Strategic intelligence of Defense;
- Strategic communication;
- Military and civilian training and education;
- Human Resource Management;
- Logistics
- Acquisition/procurement
- Assess achievements and provide results;
- International operations;
- International defense cooperation and defense diplomacy.

4.1.2. Kosovo Security Force

The Kosovo Security Force shall defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity, citizens, property, and interests of the Republic of Kosovo. The Kosovo Security Force is a multi-ethnic, professional, and authorized military force to serve in the country and abroad, in accordance with given constitutional and legal competences.

The overall tasks of the Kosovo Security Force shall be:

- Defend sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Kosovo;
- Military Support to Civil Authorities;
- Participate in International Operations;

The KSF shall operate throughout the territory of the Republic of Kosovo through a unified military command chain and consists of the Headquarters, Commands, and Subordinate Units of the KSF Headquarters.

The Kosovo Security Force plays a key role in each of the five objectives of the Defense Strategy:

The first objective of the Defense Strategy - Defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. The KSF will continuously develop and consolidate as a professional and interoperable force with partner forces. The Kosovo Security Force will develop as per the Comprehensive Transition Plan and Long-Term Development Plan.

The **main** combat and support **structures** will be at the regiment level, while the **basic** combat and support **structure** will be at the company level or equivalent. KSF units may be organized in the form of task forces, the level of which will depend on the tasks and the nature of the missions in which they will be engaged. The Kosovo Security Force will further build and develop the capabilities and capacities to work together with NATO military forces based on national and NATO standards, as applicable.

The second objective of the Defense Strategy - Modernization and upgrade of military capacities - The KSF will support this objective through development based on the combination and compatibility of systems, techniques and equipment in use.

In addition to increasing investment spending, a clear policy will be implemented to balance the costs of modernizing systems, equipment, and infrastructure based on available resources.

The defense system in the Republic of Kosovo aims to ensure the capabilities and capacities, as follows:

- Plan, direct and conduct deterrence and defense operations throughout the territory of the country;
- Maintain and develop current support to civil authorities during emergency situations, and Provide military capabilities and capacities at the platoon level to support international operations, during times of no crisis or war.

The third objective of the Defense Strategy - Enhancing inter-institutional interoperability for the defense of the country. The KSF will maintain and continuously develop the capabilities and capacities for military support to civil authorities. The inter-institutional fusion center will be responsible for coordination, communication and cooperation of inter-institutional activities in emergency, crisis and war situations.

Inter-institutional cooperation is also important in combating propaganda activities of foreign services. The creation of the inter-institutional platform for the identification and exposure of external hostile interference will help in early warning, addressing such threats and raising awareness among citizens.

The fourth objective of the Defense Strategy - Expand bilateral cooperation, membership in organizations and participation in international operations. The Ministry of Defense aims to expand bilateral cooperation. Memorandums of cooperation in the field of defense and security, as well as SOFA agreements that have been signed and those that are in progress, affirm the partnership and increase mutual trust with other countries. As a result of these

agreements, the MoD is demonstrating that the security mechanisms in Kosovo are prepared and ready, both in terms of organization and functionality, to interact with partners towards the ultimate objective - Kosovo's membership in NATO. Through relevant mechanisms, the Ministry of Defense will engage to increase the number of Memorandums of Understanding, SOFA, and technical agreements, with a view to enhancing interoperability in exercises, training, exercises, and experiences exchange between the KSF and other nations' militaries. With the expansion of bilateral cooperation, the MoD and KSF reach higher heights and gain an advantage in gaining new experience in global security.

Among the goals of the Ministry of Defense is the readiness and capability of the KSF to participate in international operations alongside military forces from allied and partner countries. Joint deployments prove the capability of the KSF to operate within the standards and procedures of NATO and other security mechanisms, and bring our country closer to the NATO alliance. The KSF has operational and tactical capabilities that have been proven during joint deployments abroad.

It is the goal of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo to become a member of international organizations, and in the area of defense and security, it translates into participation of the Ministry of Defense in various initiatives and forums related to defense and security. In this regard, one of the goals is the membership of the Republic of Kosovo in the Adriatic Charter (A5), which would be a milestone towards PfP (Partnership for Peace). Coordinating with partners that would assist the Republic of Kosovo in achieving full membership in other forums is also important, including participation in **SEDM** (South - Eastern Europe Defense Ministerial), **RCC** (Regional Cooperation Council), **RACVIAC** (Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre), Graci Forum, etc.

The fifth objective of the Defense Strategy - Advancing cooperation with NATO and its mechanisms in Kosovo - The Ministry of Defense has good cooperation with NATO, through the **NALT** (NATO Advisory and Liaison Team), which continuously monitor and advise in the relevant fields within the MoD. Additionally, the Republic of Kosovo, through the liaison representative, informs the ambassadors and representatives of NATO member countries, with the achievements, commitments and goals of the RKS towards the path to NATO. We must work with all NATO member states to provide RKS with practical opportunities to open the door to NATO through a Partnership for Peace process. The MoD has excellent cooperation with the KFOR mission in Kosovo. Through liaison offices, the MoD and KFOR inform and coordinate planned activities, and various joint exercises between the KSF and KFOR. This cooperation should continue as it enhances interoperability and provides security for Kosovo.

4.2. Developing and Modernizing the Defense System

The Republic of Kosovo is developing the capabilities and capacities for defending territorial integrity. Therefore, mid-term main priority of the Kosovo Security Force is developing its capabilities.

A review of the priorities for developing and modernizing defense and security institutions will be conducted based on the strategic assessment of threats, risks, and opportunities facing the Republic of Kosovo. All institutions of the country shall direct their development and modernization based on the needs to contribute to the defense system of the Republic of Kosovo.

For institutions to be able to interoperate and operate during joint response situations, development and modernization of capabilities and capacities must take place in sync with the principles defined.

5. Defense Resources and Budget

The proper use of defense resources has a significant impact on the effective functioning of the defense system in the Republic of Kosovo. The main elements of defense resources are: **Human, material and financial resources**. Defense resources enable the discharge of the mission and basic tasks of defense and security institutions.

Human resources are the main asset for the development of a successful defense system in the Republic of Kosovo. Therefore, in order to adapt the best practices, more advanced policies will be developed for the recruitment of active and reserve military personnel, civilians, in order to create conditions for the development of a professional modern force. New security risks/threats require new capabilities and modern training. Specifically, the emphasis is on preparing active duty, reserve, and civilian military personnel who are highly qualified, skilled, and motivated. In continuation, in cooperation with strategic partners, analyzes and feasibility assessments will be developed to generate options for military service models, based on conditions, circumstances and resources.

In order to recruit military and civilian staff, competitive salaries, benefits, and other remuneration will be offered according to military and civilian service requirements. The current demographic trends call for an increased commitment to ensuring that our policies for recruitment, retention, and attraction meet the standards expected of our armed forces, with a particular focus on individuals with higher educations, unique skills, and specializations. The Kosovo Security Force is a multiethnic force of men and women, with equal career development opportunities as a priority. Gender representation will be prioritized in accordance with Resolution 1325 of the United Nations Security Council.

It is of particular importance to maintain the integrity of defense institutions and their personnel through integrity plans. Through the implementation of these plans, enhanced efficiency, transparency, and the fight against corruption will be achieved. Management of human resources, recruitment, selection, education, training, motivation, remuneration, promotion, and termination of service play an integral role in the development and maintenance of operational forces and capabilities, as well as in the civil service.

Material and financial resources include the natural, economic, financial, energy, information and other capacities of the Republic of Kosovo committed to defense needs. Material resources for security and defense needs are planned and used transparently in accordance with the legislation in force of the Republic of Kosovo. The Defense Strategy encourages defense system institutions to prioritize the development and modernization of security and defense capabilities and capacities.

The budget of the Republic of Kosovo and support from partners are key to defining the development of defense capabilities and capacities. In order to provide support with funds and other resources, the Government and the Parliament of the Republic of Kosovo will review the priorities and defense elements. In the event of various natural disasters, infectious diseases, and economic events, capacity development may be slowed down or existing capacities may be lost as a result of reprioritizing.

The KSF transition and the dynamics of equipment plans have been implemented through the gradual increase in the defense budget, and will continue to be implemented in the future. In relation to the MoD budget, the Republic of Kosovo aims to achieve spending targets of at least 2% of GDP. To achieve various objectives, a budget increase must be balanced between the main spending categories, including the professionalization of the KSF, better equipment maintenance, advancement in education and training, standardization and modernization, as well as the continuous development of capabilities for mission execution.

Defense and security institutions shall carry out their main missions, tasks and functions using all available financial resources. The Government of the Republic of Kosovo will develop a fiscal, representative and well-defined strategy.

5. Conclusion

Our priority is to defend Kosovo and keep all its citizens safe and to prevent and/or fight a conflict. But if all else fails, we must be prepared to fight. As a sovereign country, membership in NATO and the wider Euro-Atlantic community remains at the core of our security and defense aspirations, in keeping with the Kosovo Security Strategy. Kosovo will be safe and secure only when our region is safe and secure.

The Defense Strategy supports the ambition and direction of the Kosovo Security Strategy. It describes our current defense position; the threats and opportunities we face and the structures to address them. The Defense System requires that all relevant institutions work together in an organized manner, under a powerful governing structure, in the defense of Kosovo, its interests and values.

The Defense Strategy provides guidance for the future development and ongoing transformation of defense, with the aim of creating a ready force, interoperable with NATO forces. It explains that Kosovo will be a regional contributor to security and a participant in international humanitarian and peace support operations, and expresses Kosovo's intention to commit the appropriate funds to defense, in line with our NATO membership aspirations.

The Defense Strategy defines that the KSF is and will be a security provider for all citizens of Kosovo. Also, the strategy determines the planned size and shape of the MoD and the KSF.

Furthermore, the Defense Strategy will be supported by the Defense Strategy Action Plan, which obliges the Ministry of Defense, through the Department for Policy and Strategy, to monitor and evaluate the implementation of progress every six month and annual reports.

As needed, the Defense Strategy will be revised in order to ensure that it remains aligned with the objectives of the Kosovo Security Strategy, as well as relevant and affordable to the broader security situation.