



REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO MINISTRY OF DEFENSE



NEWSLETTER

February 2022



KOSOVO SECURITY FORCE CELEBRATES 14TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE

On the occasion of the 14th anniversary of Independence Day, on "Mother Teresa" Boulevard and "Zahir Pajaziti" Square, the Soldiers of different units of the Kosovo Security Force, together with members of the Kosovo Police, paraded in front of our citizens, senior leaders, and other local and international representatives.

To mark the 14th anniversary of independence, the KSF began with the ceremonial raising of the state flag near the central institutions of the country, continuing with homage and honors at the Memorial Complex in Prekaz and the Cemetery Complex in Velani, Pristina, where the legendary Commander Adem Jashari and the Jashari Family was honored. the historic President. Ibrahim Rugova and the Symbol of National Resistance. Adem Demaci.



MINISTER MEHAJ MEETS GENERAL CORELL AND AMBASSADOR HOVENIER

The Minister of Defense, Armend Mehaj, in February received the Commander of the Iowa National Guard, Major General Ben Corell, accompanied by the US Ambassador to Kosovo, Jeffrey M. Hovenier.

On this occasion, Minister Mehaj thanked General Corell and Ambassador Hovenier and expressed his high gratitude for the partnership between the KSF and the Iowa National Guard, as well as the excellent bilateral cooperation, now in its 11th year. Among other things, Minister Mehaj recalled some of the joint successes, focusing on the first joint peacekeeping mission in Kuwait, Exercise "Defender-Europe '21", preparations for "Defender-Europe'23", as well as planning for other future peacekeeping missions in co-deployment with American troops.

ALBANIA AND KOSOVO WITH CLOSE COOPERATION

The close fraternal cooperation between Albania and Kosovo will overcome all challenges in the common Euro-Atlantic path. This was stated in the meeting held in February between Minister Mehaj and the Ambassador of the Republic of Albania in Kosovo, Qemal Minxhozi.



WELL DESERVED PRAISE FOR NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR, JENS ERIK GRONDAHL

In recognition of the extraordinary contribution to the advancement of capacities for the Ministry of Defense and the Kosovo Security Force, Minister Armend Mehaj decorated Ambassador Jens Erik Grondahl. He thanked Ambassador Grondahl for his support during the difficult days of the pandemic, and notably the Norwegian donation of 200,000 vaccines, respirators, support with counselors and other very important projects.

STATEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE ON RUSSIAN AGGRESSION IN UKRAINE

The Republic of Kosovo, and its citizens in general, through its representatives have openly and firmly expressed their support for the people of Ukraine, as well as for its' sovereignty and territorial integrity.

If requested by the US, as our vital partner and ally, we are ready to offer all the operational capabilities and capacities of the KSF to assist in the global response to this unprovoked aggression by Russia.

The Republic of Kosovo and its citizens, without distinction, have proven and continue to prove strongly, a firm commitment to a Euro-Atlantic orientation, therefore we again state our desire that the political and military decision-makers of NATO, do everything possible to advance the proces which will eventually result in Kosovo becoming a member of the NATO alliance.

For the same reason, we also consider that the new geopolitical reality brought on by the Russian invasion of Ukraine provides further reason for all of the members of NATO to take a fresh look at Kosovo's application for membership leading to a positive decision to move forward.



KOSOVO STANDS ALONGSIDE EURO-ATLANTIC ALLIES IN SUPPORT OF UKRAINE

The Republic of Kosovo, its institutions and people demand from the US, EU, UK, Canada and all countries lined up against Russian aggression against Ukraine, to condemn Serbia's deceptive and cynical stance. Russia through Serbia, as continually and in the future will continue, destructive activities to undermine the peace, security and stability of the countries of the region and beyond.

The consequences of attempts to lure Serbia to the West with concessions to the detriment of the Republic of Kosovo have not been successful, and could be dangerous, enabling Serbia to continue its close alliance with Russia in the future. We reiterate that time does not wait, and that Spain, Greece, Romania, Slovakia, as members of NATO and the EU, and Cyprus, as a member of the EU, should now move to recognize our country as we all stand together on the right side of history at this historic juncture in global affairs.

The Republic of Kosovo in each of its dimensions for 14 years of independence has proven and strongly confirms that it is a European state built and functioning on the highest Euro-Atlantic principles and values.

Kosovo, along with other democratic countries, came out strongly in defense of the values of Freedom, Peace and Democracy and full solidarity with Ukraine and its freedom-loving and peace-loving people.





DEFENSE MINISTER ARMEND MEHAJ REQUESTS NATO MEMBERSHIP AND ESTABLISHMENT OF AMERICAN BASE IN KOSOVO

Kosovo's membership in NATO and the establishment of a permanent base of American Forces, is an immediate need to guarantee peace, security and stability in the Western Balkans and beyond.

Based on the reality created after the Russian military aggression in Ukraine and its reflection in the overall security environment of the Western Balkans, Europe and the World, we request from the US and all allies and partners of the country, to advance the process of membership of the Republic of Kosovo in NATO.

The Republic of Kosovo and its citizens, we have proven and confirmed the strong position and determination that we are worthy fighters in defense of the Euro-Atlantic values of freedom, peace and democracy, the values on which NATO stands and its mission.

It is also time to reiterate my request to our irreplaceable ally, the United States, to establish a permanent military base of the United States forces on the territory of Kosovo as a full guarantee of peace, security, and stability in the region and beyond.



**KSF COMMANDER, Lieutenant General
BASHKIM JASHARI RECEIVES NEW US
AMBASSADOR, JEFFREY M. HOVENIER**

On this occasion, General Jashari thanked Ambassador Hovenier for the irreplaceable US support given to the KSF since its establishment until now.

Among other things, General Jashari stressed that the KSF is and will be a professional force, multi-ethnic, with the highest values and standards, under democratic civilian control and prepared to fulfill all of its' constitutional and legal obligations.



**KSF COMMANDER, LIEUTENANT GENERAL
BASHKIM JASHARI MEETS IOWA
NATIONAL GUARD COMMANDER,
GENERAL MAJOR BEN CORELL**

On this occasion, General Jashari expressed his gratitude for the irreplaceable and vital support of the US Army in general and the Iowa National Guard in particular, for building, developing and strengthening the KSF Operational Capabilities and Operational Capacities.

General Jashari briefed General Corell on KSF achievements so far, the activities in process and his operational objectives for the future.



**MINISTER ARMEND MEHA MEETS WITH
KFOR COMMANDER FRANC KAJARI**

Minister Mehaj, in a meeting held in February with KFOR Commander Franc Kajari, agreed to increase coordination between the country's security institutions and KFOR, as well as to increase capacity and vigilance throughout the country.



**MINISTER MEHAJ THANKS US
CONGRESSMAN, RITCHIE TORRES FOR
HIS ENDURING STRONG SUPPORT FOR
THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO**

Minister Mehaj stressed that "Our application for NATO membership is clean, clear, necessary and urgent.

He added his view that Kosovo's pathway to membership depends on the support of all partners and friends, noting further that "We are convinced that we deserve it and we will gain this support, and we will eventually become a member of NATO".



**THE MEETING OF THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND NALT
WAS HELD DURING FEBRUARY**

The Minister of Defense, Armend Mehaj, in this meeting emphasized the close and successful coordination of all activities conducted with NALT will help achieve the key objectives of the Ministry of Defense.

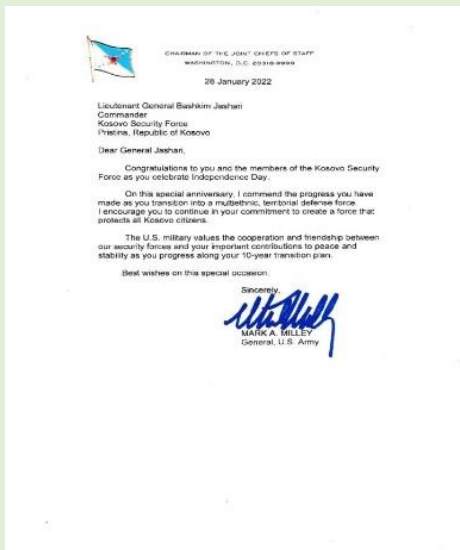
He appreciated the strong support of NALT as of great importance in all the achievements of the Ministry of Defense and the KSF thus far, and for this he thanked and expressed his high gratitude to the Director of NALT, Brigadier General Jörg Rüter and his team.





CONGRATULATIONS FOR KOSOVO INDEPENDENCE DAY

On the Independence Day of the Republic of Kosovo, Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari received letters of congratulations from many friends, among them from the most senior US military officer, General Mark Milley, the Commander of Iowa National Guard, and the Chief of General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces, Four Star General, Yasar Guler.



APPROVED THE DRAFT LAW ON THE RATIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE STATUS OF FORCES (SOFA) BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF KUWAIT AND APPROVED IN THE PRINCIPAL THE DRAFT LAW ON MILITARY POLICE



The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo in February approved the Draft Law on Ratification of the Agreement on the Status of Forces (SOFA) between the Republic of Kosovo and the State of Kuwait. This agreement allows and regulates the temporary stay and transit of the Kosovo Security Force in the territory of the State of Kuwait for participation and support in the missions of the US forces in the Republic of Iraq. Also, during this month the approval was given in principle for the Draft Law on Military Police in the Kosovo Security Force. This is a very important step to strengthen our military component for law enforcement, protection of forces, military activities, as well as resources and assets of the Ministry of Defense and the KSF.

MEDALS FOR DISTINGUISHED MILITARY AND OFFICERS OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND THE KSF

The Minister of Defense, Armend Mehaj, accompanied by Deputy Minister Sylja, on the eve of Independence Day, honored the military and distinguished civilian officials of the Ministry of Defense and the KSF. The medal for “Outstanding Service,” recognizing outstanding service and high performance and responsibility in executing their duties, was presented to Colonel Mentor Zejnullahu, Colonel Ejup Maqedonci, Lieutenant Colonel Binak Zeka, Lieutenant Behar Fazliu and senior official, Kujtim Shala, and with gratitude, Captain Shpend Haidini, Captain Shpëtim Uikani and official Arben Hamza.



OUR MILITARY WOMEN AND GIRLS - OUR PRIDE!



KSF officer, Lieutenant Arbenita Haxholli-Grezda, graduated from the US Army Logistic University in Fort Lee, Virginia, USA, as a distinguished international student. Our military women and girls continue to make us proud through their hard work and dedication!



General Jashari and other KSF officers of the KSF, were received by the President of the Republic of Kosovo, Mrs. Vjosa Osmani in February. President Osmani, who is also the Supreme Commander of the KSF, stressed that the achievements of our officers reflects professionalism and equal opportunities in the KSF. General Jashari expressed his deep conviction that these achievements will encourage even more young women and girls to unite in the service of the homeland.

CHILDREN OF SOS VILLAGE HAPPY FOR KOSOVO INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION



Minister Mehaj, together with the KSF military, have kindly donated gifts to the children of the SOS Village. The Minister has promised his full support to the leadership and staff of the SOS Village. Likewise, he also made the same promise to all citizens of the Republic of Kosovo, without discrimination.



MINISTER MEHAJ MEETS WITH THE AMBASSADOR OF BULGARIA IN KOSOVO, HRISTO GUDJEV

Minister Mehaj received the Ambassador of Bulgaria in Kosovo, Hristo Gudjev, with whom he discussed the level of cooperation between the two countries in the field of security and defense, a shared objective in support of regional and global peace and security.

The interlocutors fully agreed on the intensification of commitments by both parties to carry out reciprocal visits between the two ministries of defense aimed at concluding agreements on bilateral defense cooperation.

THE TRADITIONAL ACTION OF VOLUNTARY BLOOD DONATION HELD IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND THE KSF

With the coordination of the KSF medical service, in the framework of cooperation between the Ministry of Defense and the Kosovo National Center for Blood Transfusion (KCCHTG), the Ministry of Defense held a voluntary blood donation event in February.

The personnel of the Ministry of Defense once again responded without hesitation to the call, to include the Minister of Defense, Armend Mehaj, as a regular voluntary blood donor, as well as Deputy General Secretary, Salvador Elmazi.

Also among the donors was the American Advisor to the Minister of Defense, Mr. Tom Niblock, whose action reinforced our close partnership with our American friends.

Despite the ongoing pressures of the pandemic, and a still busy vaccination schedule, the staff of MOD, KSF, and the KCCHTG conducted a highly successful event with strong participation and good results.





GENERAL JASHARI WAS RECEIVED WITH THE HIGHEST MILITARY HONORS IN TIRANA BY HIS COUNTERPART GENERAL BEGAJ

The Commander of the KSF, Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari, was received on an official visit to the Republic of Albania, by his counterpart, Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania, Major General Dr. Bajram Begaj.

After receiving the highest military honors at the Ministry of Defense, General Jashari was received by Deputy Minister of Defense, Dallëndyshe Bici.

The main focus of the meeting was to discuss common issues in the field of defense and security, the deepening of bilateral cooperation in individual training, and collective training and other activities.

General Jashari's visit to Albania was his first official visit abroad since taking over the post of KSF Commander and symbolizes the close cooperation between the Forces of the two countries.

GENERAL BASHKIM JASHARI MEETRS WITH AMERICAN EXPERTS FROM THE INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY GOVERNANCE



The Commander of the KSF, Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari received during February the American experts of the Institute for Security Governance (ISG) headed by Mr. Keith Dunn.

On this occasion, General Jashari expressed his gratitude and high appreciation for the contribution of the ISG for the support of the institutional development and reform process of the KSF.



GOOD COOPERATION BETWEEN THE KSF AND VERMONT AND COLORADO NATIONAL GUARD

Members of the KSF Third Ground Forces Regiment, along with US troops from the Vermont and Colorado National Guard, conducted the joint “First Vermont Reconnaissance Platoon Academy” exercise.

The interoperability of our forces with the American ones was strongly reaffirmed during this exercise in reconnaissance and maneuvering in the theater of war for obtaining information about enemy forces, terrain and other activities.

KSF CONTINGENT SUCCESSFULLY REALIZED ACTIVITIES IN THE INTERNATIONAL EXERCISE "KFOR 30"

Our military demonstrated high professional competence in the activities within the international exercise "KFOR 30", which was held at the US Military Base in Hohenfels, Germany. Our participating units were highly evaluated by our US Allied forces and other co-participant partners forces.



MINISTRY OF DEFENSE MARKED ASHKALI DAY

In honor of Ashkali Day, February 15, the Minister of Defense, Armend Mehaj, organized an official reception for the KSF military from the Ashkali community.

On this occasion, Minister Mehaj stressed that ethnic diversity in the KSF is a special value that proves the strong commitment of the KSF to guarantee the sacred constitutional rights of all citizens, without discrimination.



DEPUTY MINISTER SYLA AND DEPUTY MINISTER REDZEPLAR COMMEMORATED THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RESTELICA TRAGEDY



In commemoration of the tragedy that happened 10 years ago, in the village of Restelica in the municipality of Dragash, Deputy Minister of Defence, Shemsi Sylja together with Deputy Minister of defence, Adnan Redzeplari, visited the relatives of the victims and other residents of the village.

Ten years ago an avalanche caused the death of ten inhabitants in this village. However, in all this tragedy, a miracle also took place, when the soldiers of the Liaison Unit for Crisis Response, led by the former commander of the Unit, current Deputy Minister Sylja, together with colleagues from other KSF units, arrived in time to save the life of a 6-year-old girl, Amsera Reka.