



REPUBLIC OF KOSOVA
MINISTRY OF DEFENSE



NEWSLETTER

April 2023

KOSOVA HOST COUNTRY OF "DEFENDER EUROPE '23"



The Kosovo Security Force is making final preparations for the successful implementation of the largest international military exercise in the Western Balkans region, that of "Defender Europe '23". Kosovo has been selected as host country for "Defender Europe '23" which will involve 22 000 soldiers from 25 countries, under the direction of the U.S. Army. In this exercise, which will be conducted in Babaj Boka and at Gjakova Airport, from May 22 to June 2, the Kosovo Security Force will participate with two regiments, over 1300 troops from several units, showing high professionalism, discipline and readiness to offer its contribution as a member of NATO. Minister of Defense, Armend Mehaj has expressed gratitude to the General Staff of the KSF, the entire chain of command as well as other military personnel engaged for the

continuous work in the successful realization of this exercise.

While General Jashari has congratulated the officers and non-commissioned officers for their work and dedication, he has also thanked the partners for the support they have given to this exercise at all stages emphasizing the importance of this large scale exercise creating the opportunity for us to be interoperable with our partners in joint operations



KOSOVO'S PARTNERSHIP WITH IOWA GROWS STRONGER

The new commander of the Iowa National Guard, Brigadier General Stephen Osborn, visited the Ministry of Defense and the KSF in April, where Minister Mehaj and General Jashari welcomed him.

In this visit, Minister Mehaj informed General Osborn about the security situation in the country, the developments within the Ministry of Defense and the work that is being done to achieve the fulfillment of strategic objectives, which are in full function of development and strengthening of our army, with special emphasis on the Comprehensive Transition Plan of the KSF, the progress of preparations for the multinational exercise "Defender Europe '23", amendments and supplements to the legislation of the MoD, etc.



Meanwhile, General Jashari thanked General Osborn, for the excellent cooperation and continuous support that the Iowa National Guard has given in upgrading the capacities of the KSF in the field of non-commissioned officers' choir, military medicine, the field of cyber security and finally with increased focus in the field of combat maneuver.

During this visit, General Osborne has emphasized that the partnership with Iowa will be increasingly strong and that support will also continue for the KSF's 10-year plan to become a multi-ethnic, professional and NATO-interoperable territorial defense force.

THE KSF CHOOSES THE BEST SOLDIER FOR 2023



The Kosovo Security Force has conducted the international competition of the best soldier for 2023, with the participation of KSF members, international partners and the states of the region. The best soldier winner for the KSF for 2023 is first class soldier Armend Neziri, while the winner for international soldier is specialist soldier from Croatia, Marijan Jelic.

Competitors for the best soldier competition braved the rain, challenging themselves and giving their best to come out on top at the end of the competition.

The closing ceremony of this competition was attended by the Commander of the Doctrine and Training Command, Brigadier General Jeton Dreshaj, the Commander of the Iowa National Guard, Brigadier General Stephan Osborn, the Deputy

Commander of the KSF National Guard, Colonel Skender Hoxha, officers and non-commissioned officers of KSF and international partners and the region. The traditional "Best Soldier 2023" competition was held at the premises of the Doctrine and Training Command in Ferizaj, where a total of over 50 competitors from Kosovo, the United States of America, Canada, Croatia, Slovenia, North Macedonia, Jordan participated. and Albania.

FIELD EXERCISE "IRON WOLF" SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED

In the framework of the final stage of the KSF's preparations for the international exercise "Defender '23", the First Regiment of the Land Forces, the field exercise "IRON WOLF" has been successfully completed in the military training area in Babaj i Boka. In order to closely observe the implementation of the exercise, the members of the regiment were visited by the Commander of the Kosovo Security Force, Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari, the Commander of the Iowa National Guard, Brigadier General Stephan Osborn. The purpose of this exercise was to test the ability of this Regiment to deploy, conduct conventional day and night combat operations and re-deploy with its own logistical sustainability.



EXERCISE "IRON MIKE" IS COMPLETED

In order to evaluate and test the capacities of the Mechanized Company to execute offensive and defensive operations at the platoon and company level, the 1st Land Forces Regiment has conducted the "Iron Mike" field exercise that culminated in the final exercise "Target Attack" which was carried out with live fire – LFX.

This exercise has been evaluated by Observers-Controllers of the Command of Doctrine and Training together with those from the US Army (SATMO).

The conclusion of the field exercise was closely monitored by the deputy commander of the KSF, Major General Enver Cikaqi, the commander of the Land Forces, Brigadier General Hysen Dreshaj and the American Attaché Lt. Col. KIM, officers and non-commissioned officers of the KSF.



KSF ACHIEVES SUCCESS IN THE "BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION" IN IOWA, USA

KSF Non-commissioned officers, Sergeant Astrit Gashi and Specialist Soldier Sokol Hoxha showed high results in the "Best Warrior Competition", held in Iowa, USA. The competition was quite challenging and contained 16 military disciplines of theoretical and practical aspects that the participants were challenged in: physical testing, combat tactics, moving in formations, placing mines in the combat zone, launching from the repel tower, etc.

The demonstrated success of the members of the KSF, the discipline, professionalism and dedication shown in all the organizations, schooling competitions both inside and outside the country, is a high motivation and an indicator that the KSF is moving with sure steps together with the partners towards the realization of the goal in the Euro-Atlantic integrations.

MINISTER MEHAJ PARTICIPATED IN THE DELPHI INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC FORUM, ORGANIZED UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GREECE



Under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Greece, the International Economic Forum of Delphi was held in April, where prominent Greek and international dignitaries participated.

For the first time, in this forum that deals with the economic impact, as a result of the geopolitical situation and the coordination between the states for the management of this crisis, the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Kosovo, Armend Mehaj, was invited, accompanied by the person in charge in the special mission in Greece, Fitim Gllareva, the military adviser, Colonel Ejup Makedonci, as well as the adviser for International Cooperation, Leureta Lumi.

During the opening of the forum, Minister Mehaj had the opportunity to meet many prominent personalities. Within the Delphi International Economic Forum in Greece, Minister Mehaj participated in the Western Balkans Quad panel.



On this occasion, Minister Mehaj answered the questions of journalist Nektaria Stamouli, on issues such as the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, the impact of the war in Ukraine and Russian aggression on the overall stability of the Balkans, regional cooperation, the role of Greece in the last 20 years in European politics, as well as Kosovo's aspirations for membership in the European Union. Minister Mehaj emphasized that he feels privileged to be part of this panel and to talk about such important topics for the geopolitical situation and the democratic values that we as a state protect.

After the meeting with the heads of states participating in the Delphi International Economic Forum in Greece, Minister Mehaj visited the Office of Kosovo Interests in Athens, where he was welcomed by the person in charge, Fitim Gllareva.

In the meeting, Minister Mehaj was informed by Mr. Gllareva about the activities of the Office, which is of particular importance for coordination with the institutions of Greece, whom he thanked for his commitment and that of the Office's team.

Then, Minister Mehaj together with Mr. Gllareva continued to the Embassy of the Republic of Albania in Greece, where they were received by Ambassador Lueta Hajdaraga, with whom they discussed some of the important topics regarding the joint commitment of Kosovo-Albania in relation to foreign policy.

Minister Mehaj expressed that he was pleased to see the close cooperation between the Office of Kosovo Interests in Athens and the Embassy of Albania.



TÜRKİYE REMAINS KOSOVO'S PARTNER IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF OUR ARMY

Within the framework of participation in the military technology fair TKNOFEST in Istanbul in the Republic of Türkiye, the Minister of Defense Armend Mehaj met the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Turkey, Hulusi Akar.

During the meeting, they discussed the excellent cooperation that exists between our countries, this cooperation that will be deepened even further as they are working on the signing of the SOFA agreement, the agreement on the exchange of personnel and the agreement in the military field of training, technology and science. Minister Akar has expressed thanks and gratitude for the help that the Republic of Kosovo has offered to the Republic of Türkiye in the event of the earthquake. The reaction was in a very short time and the KSF troops gave their best to save the survivors.



COMMANDER OF THE KSF, GENERAL JASHARI HOSTED IN THE MEETING THE DIRECTOR OF NALT, BRIGADIER GENERAL RALF PETER HAMMERSTEIN

The Commander of the KSF, Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari, welcomed the new Director of NALT, Brigadier General Ralf Peter Hammerstein, in a meeting, where they discussed the cooperation between the KSF and NALT.

General Jashari thanked General Hammerstein for the contribution and continuous support of NALT in the development of the KSF. Furthermore, COMKSF

reiterated that KSF will continue its close cooperation with NALT during the leadership of General Hammerstein and that it expects further strengthening and growth of cooperation. On the other hand, General Hammerstein thanked COMKSF for welcoming and readiness for cooperation and confirmed his and NALT's willingness to continue and increase cooperation with the Kosovo Security Force.

TECHNICAL AGREEMENT SIGNED IN THE MILITARY MEDICAL FIELD BETWEEN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OF REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO AND MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OF REPUBLIC OF ITALY IS SIGNED



Upon authorization of Minister Mehaj, Deputy commander of the KSF, Major General Enver Cikaqi, has signed the Technical Agreement in the Field of Military Medicine in Rome, Italy.

General Cikaqi as the leader of the delegation, Colonel Dr. Xhevdet Tahiraj, Commander of the Medical Regiment in the KSF, as well as Edona Abazi Zylfijaj, official for bilateral cooperation and desk officer for Italy, were received by Lieutenant General Vito Ferrara, head of the General Inspectorate of Military Medicine, Admiral C.A Egidio Fracasso, head of the department for Medical Policy, Colonel Luigi Principe head of the branch for International Relations in the field of Medicine, Lieutenant Colonel Giuseppe Barone branch of medicine for international relations.

The purpose of signing this agreement is to expand bilateral cooperation between the two armies in the field of military medical services and that it will be the key to opening doors in different military medical dimensions.

KSF'S COOPERATION WITH THE GERMAN ARMY CONTINUES IN BUILDING LOGISTICS CAPACITIES AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION FOR KSF'S DRIVING SCHOOL

TRADOC instructors under the training and mentoring of German officers developed maintenance, driving and licensing training for KSF instructor category C. The cooperation of the KSF with the German army is continuing in building logistical capacities and professional education for the KSF driving school, in support of equipment and expertise. The German advisor, Sergeant Major Stefan Stieber within the KSF, is most meritorious for coordination and professional support and building military skills in driving vehicles in all categories, including armored vehicle categories.



KSF AND SLOVENIAN ARMY CONTINUE TO DEEPEN GOOD COOPERATION



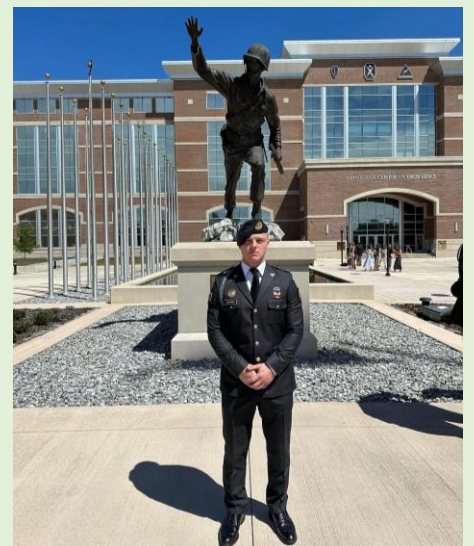
The sergeant major of the Kosovo Security Force, Bedri Zuka, received the sergeant major of the Slovenian army, Daniel Kovac, in an official meeting.

The two sergeant majors discussed the possibility of deepening cooperation at the level of non-commissioned officers, such as; participation in Adriatic Charter conferences, career and professional development trainings as well as participation in military competitions, which focus on the development of non-commissioned officers at a professional and tactical level.

During the meeting, the exchange of non-commissioned officers at the level of the Military Academies was also discussed, an opportunity which would have a key role in the advancement of KSF non-commissioned officers. Sergeant Major Zuka thanked Sergeant Major Kovac for the contribution and continuous support that the Slovenian Army has had over the years in the development of the Kosovo Security Force.

THE KSF LIEUTENANT RECEIVES THE HONOR GRADUATE AWARD IN THE USA

Lieutenant Ylli Dalladaku has completed with high results, the Infantry Officer Basic Course (IBOLC), in Georgia, United States of America, being awarded the International Honor Graduate award and also with the achieved results he became part of the Commandant's List. During the 19 weeks that this course lasted, Lieutenant Dalladaku showed high performance, presenting the Kosovo Security Force with dignity, among the 170 participants who were in the course, American officers and officers from different countries of the world. Lieutenant Dalladaku completed his military studies at the West Point Academy in the USA and from 2020 he returned to Kosovo to serve as an officer of the Kosovo Security Force.



THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE SIGNED A COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT



During April, the Ministry of Defense signed two cooperation agreements, with the Ministry of Health and the the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development. On the first this occasion, the Minister of Defense, Armend Mehaj and the Minister of Health, Arben Vitia, have signed a cooperation protocol, which aims to increase and create cooperation between the MoD

and the Kosovo University Clinical Hospital Service.

While in the agreement signed between Minister Mehaj and the Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, Faton Peci, the goal is cooperation between the parties through the provision and implementation of training in the field of food safety.



OFFICERS OF THE 'ADVANCED SECURITY AND DEFENSE COURSE' FROM ALBANIA VISIT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

The Minister of Defense, Armend Mehaj, accompanied by Major General Gëzim Hazrolli and Major General Irfete Spahiu, welcomed the officers who are attending the "Senior Course for Security and Defense" (SCSD), from the College of Defense and Security from the Republic of Albania.

As a member state of NATO, the Defense Academy of the Republic of Albania is an educational institution that offers the education of new cadres in programs licensed by NATO. Among these programs is the Advanced Course for Security and Defense (CLSM), the trainees of which program, high-

level leaders of Albanian security institutions and military and civilian personnel of NATO member countries, such as Greece, Italy, North Macedonia, Bulgaria and Georgia (which has a partnership for peace with NATO), visited the Ministry of Defense.

In front of those present, Minister of Defense Armend Mehaj gave a lecture, where topics from the field of security, defense and political developments in the region and beyond were discussed.

OFFICERS OF "SENIOR COURSE OF OFFICERS" FROM ALBANIA VISITED THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE



Minister hosted the officers of the "Senior Course of Officers" from the College of Defense and Security of the Republic of Albania.

Pointing out the importance of security in general and that of cooperative security in particular, Minister Mehaj emphasized that the strengthening of cooperation between the two armies is a function of common interests and for the benefit of the security of Kosovo and Albania.

Minister Mehaj emphasized that the close fraternal ties will be further strengthened in increasing cooperation in the field of

defense and security, with a special emphasis on the exchange of military experiences in military education, training and exercises at the operational, tactical and strategic level.

MINISTER MEHAJ HOSTED THE AMBASSADOR OF THE NETHERLANDS, CARIN LOBBEZOO



The Minister of Defense, Armend Mehaj, has hosted the Dutch ambassador to Kosovo, Carin Lobbezoo, accompanied by the Head of Bilateral Affairs at the Ministry of Defense of the Netherlands, Colonel J. Dekker, as well as the Dutch Defense Attaché, Lt. Col. Verbeek.

In this meeting it was discussed about the security situation in the country and the region, the steps that the Minister of Defense and the KSF have taken to increase the military capacities to serve security in Kosovo and the missions of NATO, of which the

alliance is intended to be a member of it. On this occasion, Minister Mehaj thanked Ambassador Lobbezoo for the support that the Netherlands is offering to the Ministry of Defense and the KSF, while, for her part, the Dutch ambassador expressed her high appreciation for the work of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo as well as the speed with which the Kosovo Security Force is developing.

APRIL 14th -INTERNATIONAL MINE AWARENESS DAY

On the occasion of the International Day of Mine Awareness and Action, April 4th, Minister Mehaj participated in the joint activity organized by the Coordinating Center for Demining, the Norwegian organization NPA (Norwegian People's Aid), HALO Trust, Kosovo Police and KFOR. In this activity, the director of the Demining Coordination Center, Ahmet Sallova, presented the progress achieved since 1999, emphasizing that so far over 62 million square meters have been cleared and 95,000 mines and unexploded explosive devices have been found. On this occasion, the Minister of Defense, Mr. Armend Mehaj, in front of those present, assessed that "these results make us proud of the excellent work carried out by the KSF and other demining organizations, thanks to their work many lives have been saved and at the same time a number of large amount of land for use by communities, however, we are still not considered a mine-free area, therefore commitment is required".



THE KSF UNITS HELD A MEETING FOR THE COORDINATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE "SAFETY EDUCATION" CONCEPT IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

The meeting of KSF units was held at the Ministry of Defense for the coordination of the implementation of the "Education for Safety" concept, which will be part of the school curriculum as a pilot project in seven regions.

The goal is to prepare and educate the youth of the Republic of Kosovo for basic defense skills and abilities as well as the benefit of knowledge about the field of security and response in case of civil emergencies.

The implementation of this pilot project will enable the young generations, inseparable from their educational formation, to cultivate feelings of patriotism, service to the country and causes that really matter.