



REPUBLIC OF KOSOVA
MINISTRY OF DEFENSE



NEWSLETTER

January 2023

IOWA'S OUTGOING NATIONAL GUARD COMMANDER, MAJOR GENERAL, BENJAMIN J. CORELL WAS HOSTED WITH HIGH MILITARY HONORS



With high military honors, the Minister of Defense, Armend Mehaj and the Commander of the KSF, Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari and officials and senior officers of the Ministry of Defense and the KSF, in January hosted the Commander of Iowa National Guard Major General Benjamin J. Corell.

On this occasion, Minister Mehaj decorated General Corell with the Distinguished Service Medal which was given in recognition of his exemplary service and contribution to strengthening the cooperation between the Ministry of Defense and the Iowa National Guard.





Whereas, for extraordinary and selfless commitment, for the time he served as Commander of the Iowa National Guard, in supporting the KSF in raising professional and operational skills and capacities, especially in the interaction between the US Army and KSF, also for operations in peacekeeping missions, General Jashari awarded General Corell the Medal for Selfless Service.

In this meeting, Minister Mehaj and General Jashari thanked General Corell for his contribution to the development of the Ministry of Defense and the KSF, emphasizing that the progress and achievements so far are also the result of his efforts and work with high commitment.

For his part, General Corell thanked for the honors, respect and warm friendly reception, stressing that the excellent relations and cooperation between the two countries and our forces will continue in the future with his successor.

Among other things, General Corell expressed his high impressions of the level of development and advancement of the Ministry of Defense and the KSF, as a professional force and dignified partner of the Iowa National Guard.



MINISTRY OF DEFENSE CLOSED THE YEAR OF 2022 WITH GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS



In a joint workshop with ministers and government cabinets organized by the Prime Minister's Office, the Minister of Defense, Armend Mehaj, accompanied by Deputy Minister Shemsi Sylja, presented the main achievements of the Ministry of Defense during 2022, but also the plans for 2023. Among the strategic objectives for the year 2023, Minister Mehaj, among other things, assessed the drafting of the Defense Strategy, the concept of the reserve component of the KSF, as well as the expansion of cooperation with partner states as very important.

Also, he presented the intention to realize numerous capital projects, which will contribute to the overall advancement of the Kosovo Security Force at the highest professional and operational levels.

“The year 2023 will be the year of strengthening the Army, investing not only in equipment but also in raising the professional training of our soldiers, who will contribute to maintaining peace and stability not only in the country and region but also beyond, as a force of a NATO member country, in the near future”,
Minister Mehaj.



DELEGATION OF MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND KSF PARTICIPATED IN THE UKRAINE CONTACT GROUP MEETING

The delegation of the Ministry of Defense and KSF participated in the meeting of the Contact Group for the Defense of Ukraine, the eighth in a row, under the chairmanship of the US Secretary of Defense, Lloyd J. Austin III and the Chief of US Forces, General Mark A. Milley - composed of Brigadier General Jeton Dreshaj, Mr. Hasan Hoxha and Colonel Sylejman Cakaj.

The meeting was held at Germany's Ramstein Air Base, bringing together representatives from more than 50 countries and organizations to determine how best to provide the military capabilities Ukraine needs to repel Russian forces from its sovereign territory.

Among other things, at this meeting the Contact Group was addressed for the first time by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who informed about the situation on the ground and the needs they need to continue operations. He thanked the assembled delegates for their efforts, adding that their military capabilities provided are already making a difference on the front lines in Ukraine.

The participation of the Republic of Kosovo within the Contact Group proves the strong trust of our strategic partner, the USA, in the Ministry of Defense and the KSF and is an expression of high appreciation for the concrete readiness offered to support and protect Ukraine.

ARM BY ARM WITH THE AMERICAN FORCES AND OTHER ALLIES AT THE FINALIZATION OF THE PLANNING PHASE OF THE JOINT EXERCISE “DEFENDER-EUROPE'23”



The KSF planning team together with the US forces and other allied forces are conducting the final four-day planning conference of Exercise “DEFENDER-Europe'23” in Budapest, Hungary.

Exercise “DEFENDER-Europe' 23” is a wide-scale exercise organized by the US Army for Europe and Africa with the forces of allied countries of 25 NATO countries and its partners.

Our country will be among the host countries of this exercise and KSF participates with over 1300 members.

The main objectives of the KSF in this exercise are to increase interoperability, validate infantry capabilities, validate support capabilities and evaluate medical support.

DEP/MINISTER SHEMSI SYLA VISITED THE MINSITRY OF DEFENSE OF REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

The Deputy Minister of Defense, Shemsi Sylja, accompanied by the country's Ambassador to the Republic of North Macedonia, Florian Qehaja, and senior officers and officials of the Ministry of Defense and the KSF, in January was hosted by the Deputy Minister of Defense of Republic of North Macedonia, Bashkim Hasani, deputy Chief of Staff, Major General Azim Nuredin, as well as senior officials and officers.

In this meeting, Deputy Minister Sylja thanked his counterpart for the invitation and emphasized that this shows the commitment of the two countries to a stable and promising region.

Deputy Minister Sylja requested from the counterpart the continuation of support in the membership of the Republic of Kosovo in the regional security initiatives and in its final goal, the membership in NATO.

On his part, deputy The Minister of Defense of the Republic of North Macedonia, Mr. Hasani emphasized that the Republic of North Macedonia has demonstrated unreserved support of the Republic of Kosovo in all spheres, especially in the field of security, adding that Kosovo's membership in NATO would constitute a very powerful element of security in the region.



MINISTER MEHAJ HOSTED FOR A FAREWELL MEETING THE AMBASSADOR OF TÜRKIYE IN KOSOVO, CAGRI SAKAR

The Minister of Defense, Armend Mehaj, hosted the ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye in Kosovo, Cagri Sakar, in a farewell meeting, on the eve of the end of his diplomatic mission in Kosovo.

During this meeting, Minister Mehaj thanked Ambassador Sakar for the extraordinary contribution, in the capacity of ambassador of Türkiye, to the increase of cooperation between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kosovo and the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Türkiye and the advancement in general of relations between Kosovo and Türkiye.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Sakar thanked Minister Mehaj for the good cooperation and emphasized that this level of cooperation will continue with his successor, increasing the support of the Republic of Türkiye for the Republic of Kosovo, in all important fields.



MINISTER MEHAJ HOSTED THE AMBASSADOR OF FINLAND IN KOSOVO, MATTI NISSINEN



In this meeting, various topics of interest to both parties were discussed, with special emphasis on the expansion of bilateral cooperation in the fields of security and defense.

On this occasion, Minister Mehaj expressed interest in the possibility of exchanging experiences between the two ministries of defense, such as in the development of courses and military training in winter conditions for members of the KSF in Finland.

GENERAL JASHARI HOSTED THE SWEDISH AMBASSADOR IN KOSOVO, JONAS WESTERLUND



The commander of the KSF, Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari, in January hosted the Swedish ambassador to Kosovo, Jonas Ústerlund. On this occasion, General Jashari informed Ambassador Westerlund about the achievements of the KSF, on the way to capacity development. Furthermore, General Jashari thanked the ambassador for the cooperation so far and invited him to increase the cooperation, considering that alliances and partnerships are key to guaranteeing security in the region and beyond.

On the other hand, Ambassador Westerlund also expressed his willingness to increase and concretize bilateral cooperation.

FAREWELL MEETING WITH ADVISOR OF NATO LIASION OFFICE, LTC. DR.ANIKA BENESCH

For the service of the advisor of the NATO Liaison Office, Lt. Col. Dr. Anika Benesch and the contribution made in the field of health, the advancement of the capacities of the KSF in this direction, Minister Mehaj has decorated her with the Medal for Outstanding Service.

The role of the NATO advisory body in the implementation of the Comprehensive Transition Plan is extremely important, and constitutes an irreplaceable element for the consolidation of the KSF in safe steps in accordance with the standards of the NATO member states, Minister Mehaj emphasized in this case.



THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND KSF ARE AT THE FULL SERVICE OF OUR CITIZENS

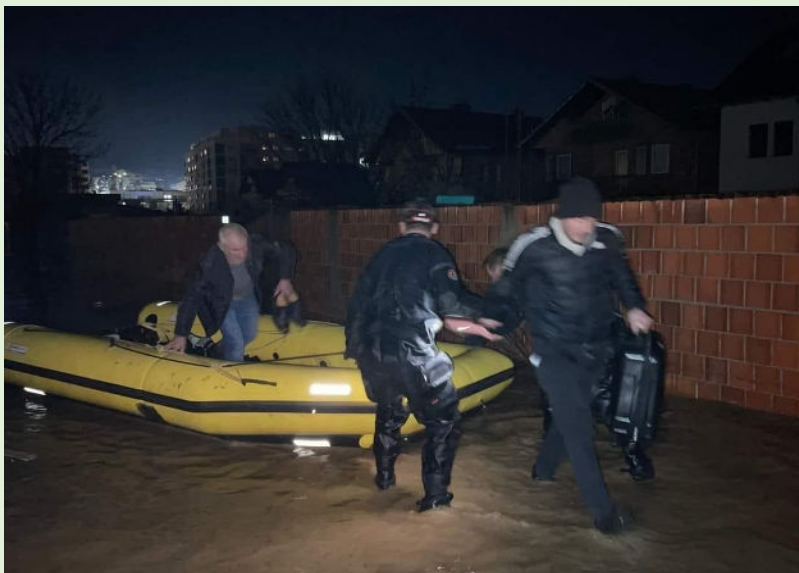
The Kosovo Security Force with its search and rescue teams, after the severe flood situation in our country during the month of January, had raised the operational readiness, participating in the operations to save the lives of citizens in the affected areas of Skenderaj, Istog , Klina and Mitrovica.



The Kosovo Security Force is always prepared and ready to support civil authorities in dealing with situations created by natural disasters.

The KSF specialist search and rescue units have been on the ground all the time to offer their support. The commitment of the KSF was at the highest level and in cooperation with the local authorities the situation was well managed.

The Government of the Republic of Kosovo and all state institutions have stood by the residents of the municipalities where there were floods, by helping and supporting them.



YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN OF THE COUNTRY SHOW GREAT INTEREST TO APPLY TO KSF

A large number of young men and women have applied to the competition for the selection of 1,000 young soldiers of the KSF, which was open from December 15 to January 23.

As part of the information campaign, Minister Mehaj, accompanied by officials and senior officers of the Ministry of Defense, held numerous meetings with young men and women in many cities of the country where the main topics were the measures taken to improve well-being of the military,



plans for the future, as well as suggestions that would contribute to easier application.

While in the meeting with the citizens of Prizren, Minister Mehaj together with Deputy Prime Minister Emilija Redzeqi, Deputy Minister Redzeplari as well as deputies of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo from among the communities, citizens of Prizren, where among them there were parts of the Turkish, Bosnian and Roma communities emphasized that the Kosovo Security Force is a multi-ethnic professional force, with a common element is the will to serve the homeland.

Also, the members of the KSF as well as the Unit for Community Affairs and the Unit for Human Rights and Gender Equality, have conducted the information campaign through meetings and dialogue directly with the young men and women of our country in every locality and institution with invitation to apply and join the KSF. KSF has welcomed all applications, guaranteeing a fair and transparent process in full compliance with legal and procedural acts.



ASV ARMORED VEHICLE MAINTAINERS ARE CERTIFIED

As part of the cooperation between the Training and Doctrine Command and the US Army from Camp Bondsteel, the Armored Vehicle Maintenance Course - ASV was held at the Skënderbeu Barracks in Ferizaj in January. The course was carried out for the first time and was mainly focused on the first level of maintenance which included the theoretical and practical part.



KSF HOLDS LECTURES ON THE DANGER FROM MINES AND EXPLOSIVE AMMUNITION



The instructors of the Demining Company of the Kosovo Security Force, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, have conducted awareness lectures about the risk of mines and unexploded explosive munitions with students of Junior High Schools in the Republic of Kosovo.

"Don't touch them, don't move them, don't throw them" is the motto that this year the members of the KSF are distributing to the young people of the Republic of Kosovo, with the aim of making the population aware of the danger from



mines and unexploded explosive munitions. The members of the Demining Company of the Kosovo Security Force, in addition to their commitment to clearing dangerous areas, for years have taken care to organize such activities that contribute to the awareness of the citizens of the country, about the danger that comes from unexploded ordnance.

KSF OFFICERS GRADUATE FROM THE COLLEGE OF DEFENSE AND SECURITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

At the College of Defense and Security of the Republic of Albania, last month five officers of the Kosovo Security Force graduated from the Staff Officer Basic Course.

This course prepares officers to lead and command in army headquarters, to achieve efficiency and to assume responsibility in military duties and obligations.

The Kosovo Security Force, in the framework of cooperation with the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania, is training and preparing military personnel interoperable with NATO countries and its partners.



The Chief of the General Staff of AFRA expressed a special thanks to the officers of the Kosovo Security Force for the dedication and seriousness shown while attending this course. He evaluates the performance of the trainees from the ranks of the KSF, and he assured that the cooperation between AFRA and the KSF will be ever increasing, with the aim of exchanging experiences and knowledge.

The Chief of Staff of the AFRA, Brigadier General Arben Kingji, the Commander of the Armed Forces Academy, Brigadier General Bilbil Bitri, the Deputy Commander of the Defense and Security College, Colonel Emrro Hajdarasi, the Defense Attaché of the Republic of Kosovo in Tirana, lieutenant colonel Enver Hoti, lecturers and officers of FARSH.



THE NUMBER OF KSF STAFF OFFICERS GRADUATING FROM ACADEMIC CENTERS OF PARTNER COUNTRIES WAS INCREASED



In the framework of bilateral cooperation in the field of education with the Ministry of Defense of Türkiye, at the University of National Defense in the Staff Officer Course in Istanbul, our officers graduated with high success: Captain Afrim Zabeli, Captain Egzon Sylja and Captain Ruzhdi Ali.

With this success, the number of KSF staff officers with academic and professional skills in the field of operations management at the operational and tactical level, the decision-making process and military analysis, the principles and procedures of operational training planning, management and leadership, is increased. Our officers decently represented our country and our military among 43 officers from seven countries and other forces.

OUR COMMANDOS TRAIN IN SNOW AND DIFFICULT WINTER CONDITIONS WITH PARTNER FORCES



In the framework of international cooperation and partnership with the Turkish forces, a contingent of the KSF, together with the colleagues of the Turkish forces and other forces of 8 partner countries, is participating in the “Winter Exercise'23” field exercise, which was held in Kars of Türkiye.

The KSF is participating with a contingent of mechanized infantry, mortar, search and rescue, and staff officers.

The objectives of the exercise have included ensuring cooperation and coordination in the combined operation, testing the fighting skills of the troops, increasing the synchronization of fire and maneuver, training the troops in key topics such as: deployment, food service, clothing, supply and activities of maintenance, survivability, and operation of the command and control system in snow and tough winter conditions.



ENROLLMENT OF WOMEN IN THE ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO IS OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE

Representatives of NGOs dealing with the promotion of women's rights and gender equality visited the Ministry of Defense in January, where they were hosted by Minister Mehaj, KSF Inspector General, Major general Irfete Spahiu as well as his members of cabinet.

In the meeting, it was emphasized that the inclusion of girls and women in the Army of the Republic of Kosovo is very important, because equality is the foundation of every state, and that the composition of the Army must reflect the composition of the population, and above all the fact that patriotism does not recognize gender.

Within the spirit of cooperation, in this meeting was also discussed the recruitment campaign, the importance of informing young women about the opportunities offered by the KSF in career development under the emblem of the Kosovo Security Force, which symbolizes the dream of the martyrs fallen for the freedom of the country but also the courage of the new generations and the pride of the people.

In the end, all together, they invited all interested young women to dedicate themselves to this noble profession and apply to become a member of the country's Army.



THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND THE BUSINESS ALLIANCE OF KOSOVO SIGNED A COOPERATION MEMORANDUM



Minister Mehaj and the chairman of the Business Alliance of Kosovo, Agim Shahini, in January signed a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Defense and the Business Alliance of Kosovo (BAK).

The purpose of this Memorandum is to cooperate with member and non-member businesses in KBA, for offering discounts on products and items for KSF military personnel.

On this occasion, BAK pledges to support the Ministry of Defense and the KSF by offering

discounts on products, items and services of relevant businesses, for KSF members.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Defense and the KSF, through the military staff, will support the KBA, in the traditional campaign "Kosovo Business Weeks", with the aim of promoting and raising awareness among citizens about the consumption of local products. After the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Cooperation, Minister Mehaj thanked those present for the cooperation and readiness shown in support of the KSF. While the chairman of KBA, Mr. Shahini said that this initiative is an expression of the will of entrepreneurs to support the security of the country in an economic form. On this occasion, he pledged that the number of local businesses that will support the KSF will continue to increase.