



Op Shared Responsibility

(18 October) Dubbed Operation Shared Responsibility, the SVK Government approved the launch of one of the biggest logistical operations in the history of Slovakia. The Ministry of Defence has been entrusted with rolling out the cross-the-board, nation-wide testing of Slovak population for COVID-19.

This comes part of the efforts to reverse the unfavourable and dangerous COVID-19 developments in Slovakia. Thousands of service personnel will be involved in the operation in close cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Health and local self-government authorities.

Praising the work of SVK service men and women, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "What awaits us is the biggest operation in contemporary Slovak history – Op Shared Responsibility. I want to assure you that in the Ministry of Defence and the Slovak Armed Forces we are fully prepared for this task." He continued: "I am asking you, the men and women of the Armed Forces, to do the best you can. Throughout the first wave of coronavirus, you demonstrated that we could rely on you, for which you earned the admiration and gratitude of the entire nation. I am confident that you will do well again and I thank you in advance for your commitment and all your work you will put in. The whole world will be looking at your work and I am already now immensely proud of you!"

Isolator relies on field hospital

(16 October) The Ministry of Defence has been putting several operational plans into action to deal with the deteriorating COVID-19 situation, with one of them being the "Isolator" plan, which relies on a field hospital where up to 1,500 patients can be in isolation at the Training Centre Lešť, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď has announced today.

Currently, a total of 567 soldiers have been assigned various tasks to support 28 hospitals, 31 regional offices of the Public Health Authority, and 19 mobile testing units across the whole of Slovakia. After converting wards into ICUs for COVID-19 patients, the Defence Ministry's Central Military Hospital has 106 beds available, with almost 50 vacancies.

The SVK Armed Forces have approx. 450 medical professionals, capacities at the Training Centre Lešť, and a field hospital, which is primarily designed for treating combat-related and multiple trauma patients, as well as providing a range of surgical interventions. The field hospital has 30 beds and its bed capacity can be temporarily extended to 40 beds.

Parts of the field hospital have been deployed in support of the Central Military Hospital Ružomberok. However, if the Isolator plan is fully implemented, the field hospital will be set up as a whole at the Training Centre Lešť. "Of course, the most severe cases will remain in hospitals. This alternative solution will be primarily for patients with moderately severe symptoms," Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said.

Based on the requests for assistance from the Crisis Staff of the Ministry of Health, our soldiers are tasked to instruct patients before entering hospitals or mobile testing units, help with the screening paperwork, and assist the regional Public Health Authorities in tracing COVID-19 contacts. Additionally, if required, our military are ready to join Police Corps and City Police personnel in enforcing the epidemiological measures across the country.

Neglected infrastructure poses threat to Military Archives in Trnava

(15 October) Today's schedule of engagements took Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď to Trnava for a visit to the Military Archives – Central Registry. As with many other units and organisations under the remit of the MOD, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď and Defence State Secretary Marian Majer stated that local infrastructure requires renewed investment and needs to be reconstructed. The Military Archives stores historical records which, if placed in a line, would be over 33.29km in length. Pledging support to the Military Archives, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď stated: "The Military Archives in Trnava is housed in the historic complex of the former University of Trnava dating back to 1615. This is a national heritage site with very precious contents, that's why we are determined to find all possible means available to help with its current state." The Trnava-based Military Archives stores the personal files of Czechoslovak citizens, to be exact, the service records of generals, officers and warrant officers born from 1906 and Other Ranks and NCOs born from 1921 until the split of the common State. Apart from this, the Military Archives also keeps the personal files relating to personalities of the Anti-Nazi resistance movement as well as a precious copy of the personal file of Gen Milan Rastislav Štefánik. Also as part of his programme today, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď visited the Granit Hotel in Piešťany for a meeting with the hotel's management and a technical unit of the Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade in Viničné, where they agreed on the need to invest into infrastructure.



- MPs on the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee and the Defence and Security Committee approved the deployment of five SVK Armed Forces members on Op **EUNAVFOR MED Irini**. They will help monitor compliance with the arms embargo on Libya, illegal crude oil exports and illegal migration in the Mediterranean.

- **Col Pavol Tököly**, Chief of Staff at SVK Air Force Headquarters, has been appointed Chief of Staff for Support of Operations in the SVK Defence Staff.

- At the Ministry of Defence, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security Juraj Krúpa and Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on European Affairs Tomáš Valášek met Defence State Secretary Marian Majer to discuss the **Action Plan for Fight Against Hybrid Threats and cyber security**.

- Under the organisational changes to 2nd Mechanised Brigade, **3rd Tank Troop was established** and Combat Support Company was reorganised to admit more regular soldiers and employees.

- Col Peter Križ took over as **Commander of the Prešov-based Helicopter Wing** in succession to Col Róbert Tóth.

- **Petra Vlhová**, member of the Slovak National Team alpine ski racer, was an excellent 3rd in the Women's Giant Slalom at the Audi FIS Ski World Cup Soelden (AUT) on 17 Oct. She has finished 7 times on the podium in this World Cup discipline in her career.

- Sgt 1st Class Dušan Fatsrik (46), one of the first members of the Žilina-based 5th Special Forces Regiment, passed away after serious illness. In cooperation with the Military Support Foundation, his colleagues are raising funds to help his surviving family. Donations can be made into the following bank account: **SK86 7500 0000 0040 2303 3049**.

- The SNP Central Military Hospital Ružomberok calls for more blood donors due to **urgent shortages of blood**. Donors are invited to give blood from 07.00 to 10.00 on Tue, Wen and Thu after prior phone appointment on 044/4382401.

- The MOD has issued a **traffic warning** to motorists as six Allied road movements involving US, Polish and Romanian troops are scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 19 to 25 Oct 2020. Over the same period, the SVK Armed Forces will conduct round trip convoy operations from/to: Hlohovec – Koliňanský Vrch, Topoľčany – Zemianske Kostolány, Zemianske Kostolány – Nitra, Zemianske Kostolány – Kuchyňa, Zemianske Kostolány – Liptovský Mikuláš, Sliač – Zemianske Kostolány, Zemianske Kostolány – Sereď, and Zemianske Kostolány – Ružomberok. Also scheduled are SVK Armed Forces rail movements from/to: Prešov – Zemianske Kostolány, Prievidza – Sklené, Prievidza – Trenčín, Prievidza – Nováky, Zemianske Kostolány – Kuchyňa and Zemianske Kostolány – Vlkavová.

2019 Military Intelligence Report



(13 October) Military Intelligence released its 2019 annual report, giving a summary of its activity and the state of and threats to the external and internal security environment that could have an influence on the security and protected interests of the Slovak Republic. The "Report on Activity of Military Intelligence" is available to the public online at <https://vs.mosr.sk/sprava-o-cinnosti-vs-2019/>.

According to the Report, no major change to the internal security environment was reported by Military Intelligence last year. However, particularly of note is that the uneven economic, social and demographic development of Slovakia's individual regions had negative ramifications. This led, for example, to the polarisation of society, extremism and terrorism, which was associated with increased misuse of cyberspace for propaganda of such phenomena.

The Report further points to a worsening of stability in Slovakia's external security environment. Factors contributing to this were the dynamics of competitive relations among the key geopolitical security actors and the growth of their combat potential and capabilities. Additionally, there was growing interest of the key geopolitical security actors in competing for supremacy in cyberspace and space. According to the Report, there was a change in the way how intelligence was gathered – besides human resources, it was, in particular, the exploitation of cyberspace that increased too.

From the perspective of territorial focus, 42% of MI outputs were directed towards the former Soviet Union republics and 20% towards the Near and Middle East. Based on the Report, 2019 saw continued interest of the Russian intelligence services in obtaining sensitive and classified information.

Taking cooperation to higher level



(15 October) Also thanks to regular meetings with our partners, we are taking politico-military cooperation to a higher level, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said during his meeting with Croatian Ambassador Aleksandar Heina, accompanied by Defence Attaché Col Mijo Čubić.

During their first official meeting, they paid attention to the international commitments of both countries towards the EU and NATO, the use of troops in national response to the pandemic, military procurement and cooperation on joint military exercises and training.

Flood polders, tested by torrential rains, protect local residents

(15 October) The flood water retention basins built across the watercourses in the Levočské Hills by SVK Military Forests and Estates (VLM) once again protected local residents from floods. Heavy torrential rains swept across the area, which received 55mm of rainfall.

The flood polder on the Ľubická River was filled up to 85% of its capacity, in other words, it detained 87,000 cubic metres of water. Mr Naď said: "I want to thank all those who have done their bit in building these flood polders. Over the past days, their importance has been fully confirmed by the developments in many places across Slovakia." In 2015, VLM constructed a total of 11 flood polders and introduced a network of 230 technical and biotechnical measures on the rivers and streams across the former Javorina Military District, including the Ľubica Stream, Ruskinovský Stream,



Jakubianka River, Kolačkovský Stream, Lomnický River, Lomnický Stream, Holumnický Stream, Ihla Stream, Pofný Stream and Škapová River.

Director General of SVK Military Forests and Estates SOE Ján Jurica stresses that we have not seen the 2010 flood events repeat themselves. "Their operation and maintenance is immensely demanding, but the benefits they bring when retaining flood waves from torrential rains and high amounts of precipitation are incalculable for local residents," he said.

SVK Military Forests and Estates SOE has plans to construct additional six flood polders on the Ľubica River and ten flood polders in the Levočské Hills. The projects will be co-funded from EU funds and from the budget of the MOD-owned organisation.