



Remembering August 1968 victims

(19 August) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď paid tribute to the victims of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in a ceremony held in Bratislava's Šafárik Square. In the presence of Slovakia's three highest constitutional representatives, the commemoration marked the 54th anniversary of this tragic historical event.

Speaking on the occasion, Jaroslav Naď said: "The occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact armies trampled on whatever efforts there were to liberalise and democratise the socialist regime. Yet, let's not forget that our Ukrainian friends who are fighting the Russian aggression are experiencing a far worse reality. Even there today, as with Czechoslovakia half a century ago, the occupiers are destroying ordinary people's dreams and hopes for a better future."

Due to the occupation, at least 400 Czechs and Slovaks lost their lives, including the three young people who were shot dead by Soviet soldiers at the Comenius University building in Šafárik Square, Naď noted.

"Therefore, let's offer our respects to their memory, which is to remind us of how important it is to stand up against unfreedom, injustice and suppression, while holding onto democratic values," Naď concluded.

The Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, code-named Operation Danube, began on the night of 20-21 August 1968. The first days of the invasion claimed dozens of victims and hundreds were injured as they protested against the occupation forces in different ways. The occupation of Czechoslovakia lasted well up to 1991. The drawdown of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia took 16 months to complete.



Reflection & warning

(20 August) In a ceremony at the walls of Leopoldov Prison, Secretary General of the Service Office Peter Kozák paid tribute to the memory of the political prisoners who were imprisoned unjustly and unlawfully by the Communist regime. At the Memorial Plaque dedicated to political prisoners, Peter Kozák expressed his sympathies to all those whose lives were affected by the regime's cruel crackdown on freedom and democracy, saying: "Let's be careful to protect our values and disallow the return of the regime that has the blood of innocent victims on its hands."

Over 70,000 people were wrongly convicted of committing political crimes in Slovakia. Between 1948 and 1989, up to 450,000 political prisoners served their prison sentences in Czechoslovakia. The August ceremony at the walls of Slovakia's oldest prison has been organised by the SVK Political Prisoners Confederation since 2009.



Come and join us in bidding farewell to SVK AF MiG-29s at SIAF!

(15 August) Aviation fans will be bidding farewell to the SVK AF MiG-29 fighter jets at SIAF at Kuchyňa AB as early as this weekend (27 and 28 Aug). Executive Director of SIAF Ivan Húlek, former MiG-29 pilot and SVK AF Display Team member, said: "It is a beautiful, powerful and agile machine which would attract the attention of each and every aviation expert and fan. This is an aircraft which was an equaliser in the balance of performance between the Western and Eastern machines at the time." After over 30 years of service, Slovakia's MiG-29s will be grounded. In a post on a social media channel, Defence Minister Naď wrote: "The fighter jets are still operational at Sliac. They will protect our airspace until the end of Aug.



On 27 and 28 Aug, you will see them at SIAF, where they will be given the official farewell. Talks with our allies on the future of the MiG-29s are still underway. No decision has been taken yet." Aside international and domestic military and civil aviation assets, team and solo displays, and a rich programme of side events, the 11th edition of SIAF will also feature static displays and live action demonstrations of SVK Armed Forces equipment. A farewell to the MiG-29s will be one of the programme's highlights. Don't miss out on this chance!

- The Training Centre Lešť hosted a multinational company-level tactical training exercise to verify the manoeuvre capabilities of CZECON, DEUCON, SVNCON's mechanised companies in NATO MN BG SVK. The exercising troops practised combat and offensive missions, combat actions to delay the enemy, counter-attacks, and were tested on the appropriateness of their reactions to unexpected incidents.

- To promote military sports competitions, NATO MN BG SVK hosted its first **Running League** event. The Running League consists of five running races at TC Lešť. To keep them engaging and varied, the running trails are designed by respective national contingents. CZECON, which oversees the competition, organised the first 10km relay run for BG personnel.

- Sgt 1C Martin Karas, member of 14 Log Bn, claimed the SVK Champion title at the **Slovak 3D Archery Championships** with international participation in Spišské Vlachy.

- Vladimír Macura, weightlifter of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, took the gold medal for 148kg in snatch and the silver medal for 176kg in clean & jerk at the **U17 European Weightlifting Championships** in Raszyn, Poland. Thanks to this, he claimed the European Junior Champion title in the Olympic lifts.

- Bishop of the Forces Mons František Rábek and members of the Cathedral parish gathered for the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary at the Cathedral Church of St Sebastian. At the Holy Mass, Bishop Rábek instituted Peter Solej, member of the Bishopric of the Forces Curia, to the **ministry of Acolyte**.

- The Institute of Military History Bratislava and Piešťany City Council invite the public to attend the 14th edition of the **Armed and Rescue Services with Children Day** event, to be held under the auspices of Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď and Mayor of Piešťany Peter Jančovič at the Museum of Military History Piešťany on Sat 10 Sept from 9:30 to 17:00.

- The **Central Military Hospital** - Teaching Hospital Ružomberok has warned patients of a temporary closure of its rear gate from Gen M. Veselý Street until further notice as the adjacent road is being reconstructed. Vehicles are allowed to enter and leave the hospital through the front gate only.

- The Head Office of Ecumenical Pastoral Service in the Slovak Armed Forces and Armed Corps will host the **Fathers & Sons Weekend Camp** at the MEMC Ichthys Centre in Veľký Slavkov from 30 Sept to 2 Oct. The price for two (father & son), including accommodation and catering, is 110 euros.

FULL FIELD KIT

Radio Regina's Full Field Kit programme reports on disposal of cluster munitions at Záhorie live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat.

Military summer camps with the Bible

(5 August) This year's Bishopric of the Forces Summer Camp 3 for kids of military and civilian personnel in Defence under the direction of chaplains of the Forces has come to a close.

For a number of kids and a chaplain it was their first such camp in Smrekovica. Chaplain Lt Ján Lehocký took on the new role very selflessly in tandem with his colleague Senior Chaplain Maj Slavko Ganaj. During the camp the kids were treated to a lot of fun activities, games, swimming, outings and hiking trips in the mountains. Each day culminated with the celebration of the Eucharist at St Gorazd's Chapel. At the end of the camp, all kids were given



gifts to remind them of their time at the 10-day summer camp. Similarly, the Head Office of Ecumenical Pastoral Service in the Slovak Armed Forces and Armed Corps, too, traditionally

hosts summer camps for kids of military and civilian families in Defence. This year one such summer camp for kids aged 7-12 was held at the BEREA Christian Centre near Modra. The programme featured military theme-activities, from 07:20 reveille to 21:00 lights out. The kids were promoted on their merits from junior enlisted ranks to officer ranks. That they were satisfied with the camp is best evidenced by the fact that most of them want to return to the camp next year.

Homage to SNP heroes



(20 August) Commemorations were held in the villages of Zlatno and Skýcov to pay homage to the memory of the victims of the Slovak National Uprising (SNP), with Director of HR Dept Martin Jakál representing the SVK MOD. As part of the SNP 78th Anniversary

Commemorations programme, the 34th Zlatno - Skýcov Educational Partisan Trail Walk was organised to put the history of Slovakia's WW2 Resistance in the region below the Tribeč Mountain Range in the spotlight.

Defence against floods

(18 August) Military Forests and Estates takes good care of its flood defences system. How important the existing 11 polders (flood detention basins) in the Levoča Hills are in defending against floods has been demonstrated many times. Along with 230 biotechnical measures in place, the polders have helped deal with torrential rains. This year the MOD forestry company wants to build six dry polders on the Lubica River and 10 small anti-flood structures in the Levoča Hills.

Festival Overture in Washington



(15 August) The Festival Overture on Washington DC's National Mall took place to mark 100 years of the United States Army Band "Pershing's Own", with NATO military orchestras in attendance. SSgt Ján Múdry, musician of the SVK Armed Forces Band, joined

DEU and UK military musicians in singing "One Voice" and "This is My Wish". The U.S. Army Band summer concert was conducted in the spirit of allied orchestras sharing responsibility and fostering cooperation.

Tankies under the water

(16 August) Tank crews of 14 Tank Battalion Trebišov simulated the passage of tanks across a water obstacle in Martin ahead of conducting fording operations this Sept. Supported by military divers from Sereď, the training also comprised diving up to a depth of 5m in a swimming pool and the basics on diving equipment.