



## Slovakia completes destruction of cluster munitions

(12 Sept) Slovakia can boast of fulfilling one of its most important obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) – the destruction of its cluster munitions stockpiles – to which it committed itself in the past. As a signatory to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), Slovakia belongs to a group of countries which have rejected the use of this type of weapons that pose a serious risk to civilian populations.

SVK MOD officials made this announcement during today's meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Geneva. Slovakia met the obligation ahead of the deadline – 31 December 2023. "Ever since Slovak authorities adopted the political decision to accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, we have made meeting our obligation towards this key international humanitarian law instrument a priority for Slovakia," Director General of the MOD Defence Policy Department Ján Mozola said, adding, "I can confirm that Slovakia achieved this goal as of 1 September 2023. Today, we have no cluster munitions in our stocks."

Slovakia's disposal of stockpiled cluster munitions included several types of artillery-fired and air-deployed cluster munitions, including 300,000 submunitions. These were destroyed by the Slovak Armed Forces in line with the Action Plan for Cluster Munitions Destruction. The process had been in progress since before Slovakia's accession to Convention – since 2013, with the help of EOD specialists.

Some of the cluster munitions were destroyed at the sites of the Slovak Armed Forces, while others were disposed of abroad. The disposal of the M26 cluster munition rockets was undertaken through NSPA at NAMMO NAD in Norway, thanks to U.S. funding provided for this purpose on the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Department of State and the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic regarding Conventional Weapons Destruction (CWD) Assistance.

The use of cluster munitions is banned by more than 120 countries, because they put civilian populations at risk during firing (these weapons release a large number of small explosive charges that disperse around a wide area of up to several hectares) and after it. As a result, large areas remain contaminated by unexploded submunitions in the ground long after conflicts end, causing civilians serious injuries and loss of life.

## Defence Minister pays tribute to the victims of the Holocaust and racial hatred

(11 Sept) To mark Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) 2023, Defence Minister Martin Sklenár attended a national HMD commemoration in remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust and racial hatred in Bratislava's Rybné Square. Also in attendance were President Zuzana Čaputová, other dignitaries, and Jewish community representatives. The Slovak Armed Forces GOH provided ceremonial support to the event.

"Never ever must we forget the atrocities that happened to our fellow citizens because people succumbed to a false and perverted ideology. We cannot allow any expressions of extremism to become part of our lives again," Sklenár said.

HMD, observed on 9 Sept in Slovakia, is linked directly to the day on which the Slovak Government adopted the Jewish Code, depriving Slovakia's Jewish population of their civil rights. Deportation transports from Slovakia to Nazi concentration and death camps began on 25 Mar 1942. In the next seven months, over 57,600 Jewish people were deported out of the country. From Sept 1944 onwards, Slovakia experienced yet another wave of deportation transports.



► A meeting between Deputy Director of the SVK Military Police Col Marián Kudláč and Deputy Chief of the CZE Military Police took place at the Military Police Department Trenčín, where they briefed each other on respective national MP structures and components and their tasks and activities, and discussed plans to develop MP forces over medium and longer term horizons. The outcome of the meeting is the SVK-CZE Military Police Programme of Activities for 2024, covering training activities for individuals up to teams.

► At the invitation of Czech Air Force Commander Maj Gen Petr Čepelka, Slovak Air Force Commander Maj Gen Róbert Tóth paid a visit to the Czech Air Force's 22 Helicopter Base Náměšť nad Oslavou, Aviation Training Centre Pardubice, 24 Air Transport Base Prague-Kbely, and the Czech Air Force HQ Prague. The SVK delegation also met representatives of LOM Prague and AERO Vodochody for talks to discuss the ambition of joint training for SVK and CZE pilots and support personnel, with the aim of improving the quality of training and reducing costs.

► In response to a request from the Chief of the SVK Fire and Rescue Service, a SVK AF UH-60M with an underslung Bambi bucket deployed on firefighting operations close to the village of Čierny Balog on 12 Sept. The helicopter crew flew a total of 4hrs and 30min and emptied 31 Bambi Buckets, with 68,250l of water dropped.

► A seven-week initial military training (IMT) programme for 215 trainee soldiers and PQOs has been underway at the Training and Mobilisation Force Generation Base Martin since 1 Aug. While one group fired the standard issue assault rifle and pistol and threw grenades on the firing ranges at Kamenná Poruba, the other group undertook the tactical and camouflage & concealment modules, practised hand signals, conducted offensive and defensive activities, and evacuated casualties from a battlefield on Martin Garrison's training ground at Sučany. The training will culminated with a 72-hour field survival skills training. The newest soldiers will pass out of training on 22 Sept.

► The AOS International Courses Section hosted the 10th Introduction to the Planning of Joint Operations (IPJO) Course. The NATO-accredited course is regularly attended by officers from partner countries. This year five SVK military personnel were joined by two officers from Morocco and three officers from Georgia, Azerbaijan and Columbia. The IPJO course focused on NATO operations planning doctrines and SOPs.

► Powerboat racer Marián Jung, member of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, placed 3rd in the fourth round of the Powerboat World Championships in Germany's Bad Saarow.

► Two-time Olympian kayaker Elena Kaliská, member of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, donated some of her precious sporting memorabilia from her career to the Olympics Museum in Lausanne.

## FULL FIELD KIT

Radio Regina's Full Field Kit presents SVK soldiers engaging with pupils of Jelence Primary School live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat.

## Cadet Leadership Development Training in Cyprus

(12 Sept) Under the Erasmus+ programme, the Military Leadership B Course was hosted by the Cypriot Armed Forces and was delivered by instructors of the Austrian Armed Forces Academy under the leadership of Lt Col Marcus Hornof and instructors of other participating Military Academies. Slovakia's Armed Forces Academy was represented by Capt Richard Liška, instructor of the Military Tactics and Operational Art Department, and Pte Filip Slatkovský and Pte Patrik Bandžák, both fifth-year OCs. Trainees were from eleven nationalities. English was the official language. The aim of the course was to improve the leadership skills of military personnel with a focus on adaptability to a changed situation and on decision-making, communication and organisational skills. E-learning activities on basic military principles in planning offensive operations with an entry test had



to be completed before the course. During the course, trainees worked in teams of five along with instructors who issued orders (scenarios) to them.

The training took place at a fast pace with frequent changes of place and situation. The intention was to motivate the participants to make decisions under time pressure and with a lack of information, thereby improving their decision-making and leadership skills. Equipment and weapons were used during the final two days of the training.

"The course achieved its goal. The cadets saw for themselves what military leadership is all about. They confirmed that international cooperation in conflict resolution is essential and requires language competence, application of different leadership and management styles, and acceptance of national customs and traditions," Capt Liška said.

## Minister meets Czech Ambassador

(11 Sept) Defence Minister Martin Sklenár met CZE Ambassador Rudolf Jindrák along with CZE Defence Attaché Maj Gen Libor Jilek at the MOD. The focus of their conversation was on SVK-CZE Defence & Security cooperation, including between the nations' defence industries. Minister Sklenár said: "We have historically and naturally enjoyed a very good relationship with the Czech Republic, not excluding Defence & Security. I am delighted to see that our collaboration is deepening in the field of armaments and defence industry. This is confirmed by our joint action to procure CV90 tracked IFVs and the established cooperation on equipment repairs and production between Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín and AERO Vodochody and LOM Prague." He also thanked Ambassador Jindrák for the Czechia's significant assistance as a framework nation in building NATO MN BG SVK.

## Six Leopards

(11 Sept) The Slovak Army's 14 Tank Battalion Trebišov took delivery of its fifth and sixth 2A4 MBTs out of 15 of these tanks gifted from Germany to Slovakia for the transfer of its 30 BVP-1 IFVs to Ukraine. Whilst the tank ammunition package was delivered in August, Slovakia is set to receive the spares package still this September. Industry-level maintenance and repairs are conducted on all of the Leopard 2A4s by Rheinmetall Landsysteme GmbH prior to their handover.

## BIA's debut at DSEI London

(13 Sept) Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer met UK Minister for the Armed Forces James Heappey for bilateral talks at DSEI London 2023. The SVK-UK defence relationship with high levels of long-term commitment and engagement, a range of Defence & Security issues, and joint NATO activities were among the talking points. Stated-owned KONŠTRUKTA - Defence's 155mm BIA 6x6 SPH made its international debut at

DSEI. The BIA project combines the strengths of KONŠTRUKTA - Defence's 155mm ZUZANA 2 and EVA howitzers into one compact artillery system and integrates the learnings from the ZUZANA 2's deployment to Ukraine and those from international military exercises as part of NATO's eFP in Latvia. Compared to the 155mm ZUZANA 2 SPH, the BIA comes lighter and more mobile with raised suspension for greater ground clearance, whilst maintaining the same firepower and other parameters. In contrast to the 155mm EVA SPH, the BIA carries a larger supply of ammunition and offers enhanced crew protection and upgraded automated reloading and fire control systems. The 155mm BIA 6x6 SPH prototype will be showcased at IDEB on 3-5 Oct 2023 in Bratislava.

