



Slovak National Uprising 80th Anniversary celebrations

(29 Aug) Under the auspices of the MOD, the central celebrations of SNP 80 commenced with a wreath-laying ceremony at the SNP Memorial in Banská Bystrica. The programme continued with speeches from guests and a host of musical and cultural performances on the main stage.

Addressing the SNP veterans, President and Commander-in-Chief Peter Pellegrini said: "I respect you for your inner strength, devotion to our country, and recognition for the value of freedom which you defended along with representatives of other nations in the fight against the ideology of evil and hatred." In his remarks, PM Robert Fico said that the Uprising ended an era of the Slovak Nation's smallness and passivity. To mark the occasion, the President and the Defence Minister presented the SNP 80th Anniversary Commemorative Medal to five SNP veterans.

In a statement, Defence Minister Kaliňák said: "We promised to assure more dignified celebrations for SNP 80. We wanted to keep the celebrations open to everyone, yet still putting special security measures in place due to the events of 15 May 2024. Despite this, the celebrations lacked neither contact nor interaction with the crowds, thanks to which everyone had the opportunity to fully celebrate this great holiday of the Slovak Republic."

SNP events across Slovakia

(28 Aug) Bratislava played host to an SNP 80 service of commemoration at the SNP Memorial, in the presence of Deputy Defence Ministers Igor Melicher and Martin Vojtašovič. Elsewhere, Mr Melicher paid tribute to all those who put their lives on the line for our freedom during the SNP in Brezno, and Mr Vojtašovič paid his respects at the SNP Memorial in Kunerad. The Armed Forces also bowed to the message of the SNP fighters at other commemoration sites across Slovakia, including at the French Partisans Memorial on Belfry Hill at Strečno.



Armed Forces Parade: Demonstrating determination & respect

(29 Aug) "Start the evacuation!", the resistance code signal for the launch of the Slovak National Uprising, and the sound of a gun salute marked the start of the Armed Forces Parade in honour of SNP 80 in Banská Bystrica. A total of 2, 973 soldiers, along with 266 vehicles and aircraft, paid their respects to the SNP veterans, President and Commander-in-Chief Peter Pellegrini, DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák, CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, domestic and international VIP guests, and thousands of citizens who gathered to pay tribute to the most significant event of contemporary SVK history. Among those marching alongside SVK military personnel were CZE, ESP, HUN, LVA, POL, U.S. and other Allied troops. And what was most difficult about the preparations for the parade? "Everyone was tested in the extreme heat during the rehearsals. At the end of the day, we all wanted the whole society to see our professionalism, determination, patriotism and respect for the roots of our pride – the Uprising. It worked!" Brig Gen Slavomír Verčimák, the Parade Commander, said with satisfaction in his voice.



- **PM Robert Fico**, accompanied by DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák and SVK Chief Diplomat Juraj Blanár, laid wreaths in Normandy to mark the 80th anniversary of the Allied landings. PM Fico was unable to attend the D-DAY 80 commemoration events in June after an assassination attempt on him. "All those who fought against Nazism and Fascism on the Western and Eastern Fronts as well as in the Slovak National Uprising deserve our gratitude and thanks," Mr Fico stated.

- **Latvia's Camp Ādaži** hosted a ceremony to mark the 80th anniversary of the 1944 Slovak National Uprising on 29 Aug. In attendance were Slovak Ambassador to Latvia Branislav Pavlovič, Defence Attaché Col Martin Joščák, and representatives of the Allied forces based at the camp.

- As many as 4,000 pieces of the latest August 'SNP 80' issue of the **Defence Magazine**, the official monthly publication from the SVK MOD, were distributed to secondary schools, colleges and universities across Slovakia.

- The **29th edition of the International Military Ascent of Mt Kriváň** will be organised by the SVK MOD, the SVK Soldiers Association and the Special Operations Forces Command (SOCOM) on Sat 7 Sept. Before the hiking event, there will be a service of commemoration at the SNP Memorial at Štrbské Pleso at 8:30hrs.

- The **Dukla Lookout Tower** will be closed to the public from August 2024 until further notice due to extensive refurbishment and upgrade works, including on the overall renovation of the building (e.g. the building's facade) and on the modernisation of the technologies presenting audio-visual and textual content.

- The Institute of Military History Bratislava and Piešťany City Council will co-organise the 16th edition of **'Armed Forces, Police, Fire and Rescue Services Day with Children'** at the Museum of Military History in Piešťany.

Oath of Allegiance: 531 Junior Soldiers pledge loyalty to Slovak Republic

(29 Aug) Addressing 531 Junior Soldiers, their families and visitors to a Pass Off Parade on the occasion of SNP 80, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Robert Kaliňák said: "Where else could there be a more suitable place for the citizens of our country to take the most powerful oath than here in Banská Bystrica, the centre of Slovakia's WW2 Resistance? And when else could be the best time to do it than today at SNP 80?" Speaking in the presence of President and Commander-in-Chief Peter Pellegrini, he continued: "After decades-long comforts of peace, many were unaware of the power of the words in your oath, namely, when and what you are willing to sacrifice to defend your country. Today when the war rages east of our border, you have found the courage to stand up in defence of our country. That is why your pledge carries much more weight than it would have before. My thanks go to you and your families for their support."



EU Defence Ministers in Brussels

(30 Aug) DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák took part in an informal meeting of EU Defence Ministers in Brussels, with the focus on Ukraine, among others. Mr Kaliňák stressed the need for peace negotiations, whilst much more diplomatic pressure must be put on both parties to the conflict. He also noted that a year ago when PM Fico said the war in Ukraine had no military solution, his words were labelled as pro-Russian. However, EU Chief Diplomat Josep Borrell has recently spoken in a similar spirit. According to him, the military solution is "problematic", which fills Mr Kaliňák with optimism that the EU will work towards a peaceful solution to the conflict.



SVK AF helicopters put out fire

(30 Aug) Two of 51 WNG Prešov's Slovak Air Force UH-60M helicopters, using underslung Bambi buckets, were called into action to put out a fire blazing in an inaccessible area of the mountain forest near the village of Pohorelá.

