



Freedom and Democracy Day

(17 Nov) On Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day in Bratislava, DEPMINDEF Martin Vojtašovič commemorated the 36th anniversary of Czechoslovakia's "Velvet" or "Gentle" Revolution at the Central Memorial to the Tortured and Executed Political Prisoners of Communism at Vrakuňa cemetery and at Devín's Gate of Freedom Memorial dedicated to the would-be escapees killed on the border while trying to flee communist Czechoslovakia across the Iron Curtain.

Also in attendance at this latter commemoration, organised by the SVK Political Prisoners Confederation, were PRES and CINC Peter Pellegrini, Parliamentary Chair Richard Raši, Government ministers, representatives of local governments, churches, embassies, and former political prisoners.

In his remarks, Martin Vojtašovič said: "Freedom belongs to those who did not give it up, even when under the threat of violence. It is our duty not only to remember them, but also to protect the values for which they paid with their lives." And that same day, soldiers of the SVK Defence Staff stood in formation for the 17 Nov ceremony, where the SVK President's orders were read out before DCHOD Lt Gen Miroslav Loric made his 'Freedom & Democracy' speech.

The Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš marked this official national day with a gathering of the entire Academic community. Accolades were presented to selected individuals as tokens of appreciation by SVK CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko and AOS COMDT Brig Gen Aurel Sabó, as were scholarships to selected OCs who stood out for their scientific research projects and representation of the Academy at international events. After the ceremony, the programme continued with a 'Sporting Challenge' and a 'Cadet Drop of Blood' donation activity, in which 40 OCs answered a call for blood donors – more than half of them were first-time donors.

Elsewhere at MTC Lešť, despite heavy rain showers, soldiers from all Allied nations in the MN BDE TF SVK stood in formation in a solemn ceremony to commemorate Freedom and Democracy Day and Students Day.



Rožňava and Kuchyňa host Oath of Allegiance ceremonies

(21 Nov) 230 trainee soldiers passed out of basic military training (BMT) and took the Oath of Allegiance in a public ceremony in Rožňava's Miners Square, in the presence of DEPMINDEF Martin Vojtašovič and Cdr 7 Trng Regt Martin Col Pavel Barančík. The ceremony included a formal inspection of troops with soldiers standing in formation and a presentation of awards to the best graduates and instructors. 269 trainee soldiers began this year's fourth BMT programme on 1 Oct. Over the course of eight weeks, they undertook training focused on developing basic soldiering skills, adapting to the conditions of military life, acquiring self-administration skills, and building physical and psychological resilience.

Elsewhere, another 148 National Defence Forces (NDF) trainee reservists passed out of BMT at three NDF training locations – Turkish Hill, Levice, and Sliac. In the presence of MOD SEC Gen Peter Krajčírovič, they took the Oath of Allegiance at 46 Wng Kuchyňa on 18 Nov. This is the highest number of Reserve personnel to graduate in a single intake since the NDF project's beginning. The total number of NDF reservists now exceeds 500.

- Soldiers from all Allied nations in the NATO MN BDE TF SVK completed 48 miles in the 4x4x48 Challenge – running 4 miles every 4 hours for 48 hours – a demanding test of endurance, dedication, and multinational cohesion, which took place across Slávia, Brožkov Prameň and Riečky Camps at MTC Lešť.

- Featuring the theme of "Future Conflict in the Cognitive Age: The Evolving Character of Warfare", Tatranské Zrubky hosted the Danubia Bridge Conference 2025, with a focus on new areas of information operations, human perception, and information influence activities in the complex information environment. The conference was attended by experts from Belgium, Czechia, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, and the United States.

- This year's last National Defence Forces (NDF) training programme has been concluded at 91 Engr Regt Sered. For three days, PRES and CINC Peter Pellegrini, DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák, and other NDF reservists took on training tasks for disaster relief and emergency operations.

- Director General of the MOD Personnel and Social Welfare Dept Martin Rímeš, and Director of the Institute of Military History Col Miloslav Čaplovič attended the memorial service commemorating the 81st anniversary of the burning down of the village of Tokajk and the massacre of its residents by Nazi troops on 19 Nov 1944.

- In memory of all victims of war, the annual National Day of Mourning (Volkstrauertag) was held at the German military cemetery in Bratislava's Vrakuňa on 16 Nov. The event was organised by the Carpathian German Association, the Society for the Care of German War Graves in Slovakia, the German-Slovak Chamber of Commerce, the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Slovak Armed Forces.

- Airmen of 46 Wng Kuchyňa completed basic combat skills development training, led by Senior Enlisted Airmen for the Air Operations Support Battalion Sgt 1C (OR-7) Tomáš Lipták, with the emphasis on movement and action on the battlefield, CBRN, and first aid.

- The Slovak National Uprising (SNP) Museum Banská Bystrica played host to a conference – "On the Ruins of War" – presenting the latest findings on the last months of, and subsequent to, WW2. On behalf of the Institute of Military History, the results of the latest WW2 research were presented by historians of the Military History Research Dept.

- The SVK Military Academy's International Courses Dept delivered the 14th NATO-accredited Introduction to Planning of Joint Operations (IPJO) Course. Military personnel from Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine were introduced to NATO's doctrines and procedures, as well as the joint operations planning process (JOPP).

- The SVK Military Academy participated in the nationwide Science & Technology Week this year too. Under the slogan "Life with AI", the AOS Depts opened their doors wide to students and the entire academic community.

- Students from the Technical University of Košice (TUKE)'s Civil Engineering Faculty visited Military Forests and Estates (VLM) to learn more about the flood control solutions in the Levocá Hills, especially the flood detention reservoirs as the key element in protecting the landscape.

- An intensive 'Modern Approaches to Obstetrics' training course was held in the Auditorium of the Central Military Hospital Ružomberok – led by professional midwife and lecturer Anna Kohútová – who was invited by midwives from the Hospital's Gynaecology and Obstetrics Clinic. They will now apply the new knowledge and aids in delivery of care to women in all stages of labour.

- Based on a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) between Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín (LOTN) and Dubček University of Trenčín (TNUNJ)'s Special Equipment Faculty, LOTN participated in a Job Fair on campus to attract those interested in joining the company.

- A volunteer party of 1st-year Air Cadets restored the long-neglected grounds at the Pilot Training Dept of the Aviation Faculty, Technical University of Košice, transforming them into a new parade square to be used for morning rosters, roll calls, and drills. The opening ceremony for the parade square coincided with Students Day on 17 Nov.

- Judoka Alex Barto of the Dukla Military Sports Centre took seventh place in the U90kg category at the Grand Prix in Croatia's Zagreb.

70km Czechoslovak Paratroopers Memorial Endurance March

(20 Nov) 3rd-year Officer Cadets from the 'General Štefánik' Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš (AOS LM), led by Capt Martin Koziak of the Physical Training & Sports Dept, travelled to Czechia to take on the 70km Czechoslovak Paratroopers Memorial Endurance March, dubbed "Three Kings" – Lt Col Josef Balabán, Lt Col Josef Mašin and Capt Václav Morávek – a code name for Czechoslovakia's WW2 Resistance Group.

The two-member teams were tasked with a 70-km endurance march within the time limit of 18 hours. Each team had to plan their own route, take on various tasks along the way, and face enemies whose goal was to delay their advance as much as possible, so that they could not get their tasks done in the set time frame.

Of the 400 participating teams, 255 completed the race, with only 203 crossing the finish line within the set time. Despite taking the longer 78km route, both AOS teams carried out all their tasks, with the times of 17:46 and 17:48.

The AOS OCs successfully completed the challenge in honour of the Czechoslovak paratroopers, in adverse weather and difficult terrain conditions. "Although their route was longer than



UNFICYP FC in Bratislava



(19 Nov) Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko welcomed UNFICYP Force Commander Maj Gen Erdenebat Batsuuri of Mongolia to the SVK Defence Staff in Bratislava. They discussed current challenges for

UNFICYP peacekeepers and the possibilities for UNFICYP to continue developing into the future – from Slovakia's perspective as a troop-contributing nation. After that Gen Zmeko briefed Maj Gen Batsuuri on our pre-deployment training (PDT) concept and Armed Forces' contributions to peace support operations (PSOs) under the flags of international organisations.

SVK deployment to Kosovo



(17 Nov) 52 Airborne Battalion hosted a departure ceremony for 33 paras bound for a six-month tour of duty with the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR). This marks the 2nd rotation of SVK troops in

the Western Balkans. It is here that the mission of the Slovak Contingent (SLOVCON) is to protect a military base and support stability and security operations – for all people and communities living in Kosovo. The ceremony was attended by SVK military leaders, the families of the deploying soldiers, and guests. In his remarks, COM SVK SOF Maj Gen Jaroslav Krám said: "Our biggest thanks go out to the families – their support to our soldiers is irreplaceable," before concluding: "A true commander won't direct his soldiers to go where he himself would not go!"

2026 Defence Desk Calendar



(21 Nov) Next year will see the 25th edition of the Soldiers Through Children's Eyes MOD Art Competition – which is traditionally opened for entries by the Chief of Defence,

the Minister of Defence, and the Defence Magazine Editorial Staff – for primary school pupils. For this occasion, the MOD Communications Branch (SVK DPM and MINDEF's Office) has compiled a 2026 Defence Desk Calendar – Soldiers Through Children's Eyes – a selection of the most original and imaginative drawings, paintings, graphics and collages from the competition's history to keep you smiling throughout 2026 – which is currently being distributed to military and civilian staff across Defence.

the planned distance, they managed to complete it under their time limit," Capt Koziak said, praising our OCs' physical and mental endurance and resilience.

