

MINISTRY FOR THE KOSOVO SECURITY FORCE



Dear friends, welcome to the 33rd edition of the MKSF's newsletter.

U.S. - Adriatic Charter Defense Ministerial Conference, held last month in Budva, provided a very valuable opportunity to openly discuss the need to combine our regional efforts in order to increase collective stability and collective capability. It was also a great venue to talk about our plans to transform to a Ministry of Defense and Kosovo Armed Forces. As we transform, we want to be open and transparent to NATO and to our neighboring countries.

In October the Kosovo Security Force organized this year's biggest field training exercise "Eagle 3". I used the opportunity to visit exercise site and personally evaluate the operational readiness of KSF units. Our Force has made good progress, and we will continue to work hard to make further progression.

Women in the Kosovo Security Force do exceptional service, and I personally highly recognize their exemplary performance of duties. This time we want to tell you more about First Lieutenant Fitore Fazliu from the 3rd Battalion of the Rapid Reaction Brigade.

Have a pleasant reading.

Sincerely Yours,

AGIM ÇEKU

MINISTER ÇEKU ATTENDS U.S. - ADRIATIC CHARTER DEFENSE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

On October 15, Minister Agim Çeku attended the U.S. - Adriatic Charter Defense Ministerial Conference (A-5) in Budva, Montenegro. The meeting attendees included Ministers of Defense of the Adriatic Charter countries as well as other high level representatives from Western Balkan countries. The goal of the conference was to advance the regional defense cooperation, enhance joint capacities in coping with civil emergencies, as well as to agree on further steps for developing the Regional Emergency Management Assistance and the Balkan Regional Approach to Air Defense Project. The A-5 ministers signed a joint statement expressing support for NATO's open door policy, further participation in allied operations, and further work on Smart Defense projects. Minister A. Çeku in his speech stressed that Kosovo is fully committed to good neighborly relations and it will continue to be a strong facilitator of the regional peace and security ensuring processes and initiatives. At the margin of the conference, Minister A. Çeku had bilateral meetings with Albanian, Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin and Turkish Ministers of Defense, Eevelyn N. Farkas, Deputy Assistant of US Secretary of Defense, and Jonathan Parish, Deputy Assistant of NATO Secretary General for Defense Policy and Planning.



KSF HOLDS THE LARGEST ANNUAL FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE “EAGLE 3”

In October the KSF organized the largest annual field training exercise “Eagle 3”. The objectives of the exercise were to assess and enhance the capabilities of KSF units at the operational and tactical levels as well as to improve overall readiness for response during an actual emergency situation. According to a fictional exercise scenario a large explosion occurred in an underground ammunition bunker in Municipality of Peja with wide impact on the affected area, causing a leakage of chemical substances and many casualties. 110 KSF members from different units, including Demining, Urban Search and Rescue, HAZMAT, and Medical Units, and 19 vehicles were engaged in various exercise operations. KSF Commander, Lieutenant General Kadri Kastrati, who visited the final operations of the exercise, said: “Training of KSF members is our key objective and priority. “Eagle 3” is the successful finalization of the KSF individual and collective training cycles for this year, and an indicator of operational readiness of KSF units.”



MKSF ORGANIZES JOINT COOPERATION CONFERENCE

On October 30, the Ministry for the Kosovo Security Force (MKSF) organized a joint cooperation conference which was attended by MKSF and KSF's leadership, representatives of NATO Advisory Team and NATO Liaison and Advisory Team, and defense attaches accredited to Kosovo. The MKSF informed about the implementation process of the recommendations drawn from the Strategic Security Sector Review; operational planning and evolution of Kosovo Security Force's (KSF) units; bilateral training events; and MKSF's international cooperation. Minister A. Çeku in his opening speech pointed out that the KSF is ready to take on new duties and responsibilities which are defined in the Strategic Security Sector Review's recommendations. „We have worked hard this year to make further progress in developing the Ministry and the KSF, and we have achieved this. We have done this with the support of our bilateral partners and NATO, so this is a joint achievement and a joint investment, for which we are grateful,” said Minister Çeku.



ADDITIONAL 13 KSF MEMBERS ARE QUALIFIED TO PERFORM DUTIES OF AN EOD SPECIALIST

In October, 13 KSF members finished an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) course which was held at EOD Company in Prizren and lasted from the 8th of September through the 9th of October. The course was conducted by KSF EOD instructors and supported by KFOR EOD US Team. The training goal of the course was to instruct KSF members to the required knowledge and skills necessary to perform duties and responsibilities during EOD Operations of a qualified International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) Level 3 EOD Operator. During the course the following topics were taught: Explosive Theory; Land Service Ammunition; Air Dropped Weapons; Guided Weapons; Threat Assessment and Planning; EOD Task Management and Demolitions. “We are glad that now we have additional EOD specialists. As you know, mines and unexploded ordnances are still a great danger in Kosovo, and we need more qualified specialists who would be able to carry out humanitarian demining,” says Ahmet Sallova, Head of MKSF Mine Action Center.



FIRST LIEUTENANT FITORE FAZLIU: THIS IS A DIGNIFIED AND A NOBLE PROFESSION

In 2010, after graduating from the Center for University Studies and simultaneously the American University in Kosovo, First Lieutenant Fitore Fazliu was sent to the US Army Intelligence School at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, to attend the Military Intelligence Basic Officer Leadership Course. While in Fort Huachuca she also finished the Intelligence in Combating Terrorism Course. After completing the studies in US, First Lieutenant Fazliu was assigned to the Intelligence Department of Land Force Command where she served as a Security Officer. In 2012, First Lieutenant Fazliu was assigned to the 3rd Battalion of the Rapid Reaction Brigade as a Platoon Commander. In the same year she won the prestigious Fulbright scholarship and attended Kansas State University to pursue her graduate degree in Security Studies. After returning from her studies in US, F. Fazliu returned to her duty as a Platoon Commander. “I take my job very seriously and I have given an oath to serve and stand up for those who cannot, even if it costs me with my own life. I want to be the change I want to see in Kosovo, and being in uniform gives me the opportunity to be a part of the development of my country,” stresses First Lieutenant Fazliu. In her spare time she studies terrorism related issues and the factors that lead individuals and groups to it: “The whole warfare has switched from conventional to urban and we ought to be always one step ahead of these groups.” F. Fazliu also does outside sports and is a regular swimmer.



COMKFOR GENDER ADVISOR RAISES GENDER AWARENESS AMONG KSF MEMBERS

Major Lotta Ekvall, the Swedish Gender Advisor to COMKFOR, was deployed to Kosovo in January 2014. “My main responsibility is to monitor and synchronize gender mainstreaming in KFOR, therefore I am indispensable part of KFOR’s planning and decision making process. I also give lectures on gender perspective in peacekeeping missions to KFOR personnel. In addition, since summer I am supporting the NATO Liaison and Advisory Team with trainings to the KSF,” says Major Ekvall. She has provided gender and human rights seminars for the KSF that are focused on gender in peacekeeping operations, understanding of influencing factors and gender impact on the environment of operations, UN normative basis, and other gender related issues. During the seminars Major Ekvall also talks about conflict related sexual violence. “Sexual violence has devastating consequences and we must speak about it loudly. I am glad to see that Kosovo is making significant progress in addressing this very sensitive issue,” points out Major Ekvall. In March the Assembly approved “Law on the Status and Rights of Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, Persons Raped during the War, Civilian War Victims and their Families.” The adopted Law recognizes persons who suffered sexual violence during the 1998-1999 war in Kosovo. “I am amazed by the hard work Kosovo’s women are doing in order to help each other and make difference. These women have my fullest respect,” says L. Ekvall.



KSF PARTICIPATES IN DANCON MARCH

On October 18, the Danish Contingent operating within KFOR at Camp Novo Selo, organized the traditional DANCON march. Together with KFOR soldiers, there were also 33 KSF members from its different units who took part in the march. Participants had six hours to complete the 25 km course in uneven terrain carrying a minimum load of 10 kg. Upon finalizing the marching three KSF members were ranked among the top ten marchers. Private Fatmir Hetemi from the KSF Engineering Battalion was among top 15 participants. “This was the second time I took part in the March. I love hiking and marching, and on weekends I regularly hike in the mountains. By participating in DANCON March I also wanted to represent my country and my unit. In addition, it is a great opportunity to make friends who come from other countries,” he says. DANCON march is a tradition dating back to 1972 when the Royal Danish Army was deployed to Cyprus, and has been carried out in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Africa and other locations. It is normally conducted by every Danish unit on deployments with participation of foreign troops working along with the Danish contingent.



FIRST LIEUTENANT GETOAR REXHEPI BECOMES A KARATE CHAMPION IN ALBANIA

On October 25, First Lieutenant Getoar Rexhepi from the 3rd Battalion of the Rapid Reaction Brigade participated in the 21st National Championship in Karate, which was organized by the Albanian Karate Federation. In a tough competition First Lieutenant Rexhepi achieved outstanding results and was declared the Champion of the Republic of Albanian in Karate for the senior category. G. Rexhepi has won the title of the Kosovo Championship in Karate ten times consecutively in the category of different ages. In the recent Kosovo Championship in Karate he got the second place in the senior category.



KSF FOOTBALL TEAM PLAYS IN TIRANA

On October 13, the KSF football team travelled to Tirana for the return game against the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) in the Qemal Stafa National Football Stadium. As you would expect, the game from the beginning to the end was extremely competitive, with both teams giving 100% effort throughout. The KSF team during the first half was well on top and should have gone in at half time, at least one goal up if not better, but had to settle for 0-0 score line. Second half saw a more determined AAF team who took the game to the KSF; however, on the struck of the hour the KSF took the lead with a beautiful free kick that ended up in the top corner of the AAF. In the remaining part of the game the KSF was looking very comfortable and could have went further ahead, but with only 12 minutes to go the KSF centre half was given a straight red card, and this caused the game to swing into AAF favor. Great defending allowed the KSF to stay in front, however, more problems mounted for the KSF when another defender was sent off. With minutes to go, the AAF scored a very soft goal that forced the game to finish all equal, and so went to a penalty shootout that the KSF eventually lost. “We may have lost the game in controversial circumstances but it was a great day out and we most thank the AAF for really looking after the KSF players,” said Lieutenant Colonel David Jones, KSF Team Manager.

