



## On terrorism in Brussels

(12 February) NATO Defence Ministers discussed the Alliance's progress and further course of action on the fight against terrorism and intensifying the NATO-EU cooperation on hybrid threats.

Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "Within the Alliance, we remain committed to fighting terrorism. The operational deployments of our troops on international crisis management missions and operations under the umbrella of NATO are part of this commitment." He added that Slovakia supports NATO's involvement in the fight against terror through training and advisory activities in the world's unstable regions, including Iraq, where NATO will continue to coordinate its steps with the Iraqi government.

The fight against hybrid threats was named by NATO Defence Ministers and their partners from Finland and Sweden as one of the priorities of NATO-EU cooperation.

NATO HQ also hosted the Visegrad Four (V4) Defence Ministers Meeting with the United Kingdom. "The aim of the meeting was to coordinate the V4's future cooperation with the United Kingdom after the UK's exit from the European Union," said Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš. The meeting was concluded with the signing of the Joint Communiqué of the Ministers of Defence of the Visegrad Group and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

A regular meeting of the countries contributing to Canadian-led NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in the Baltics was held in the margins of the NATO ministerial. There, Allied leaders highlighted the contribution of joint training activities to enhancing interoperability, readiness and mutual support for units.



## On Ukraine and Afghanistan

(13 February) Slovakia approaches its NATO commitments in a responsible manner, which is evidenced by its real measures in a number of areas. This message was conveyed by Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš after the NATO Ministerial in Brussels. Ministers also discussed Ukraine's progress in its reforming and Euro-Atlantic integration efforts. Slovakia has supported Ukraine in its pro-Western direction in the long run and is ready to continue its assistance. Minister Gajdoš invited the UKR Defence Minister for an official visit to Slovakia. Ministers also paid attention to the RSM in Afghanistan. Minister Gajdoš confirmed the SVK military's commitment to remaining in the mission until such time that comprehensive peace arrangements have been reached in the country.

## Military Hospital Ružomberok ready to respond to coronavirus

(10 February) The Central Military Hospital (CMH) Ružomberok, including the SVK Armed Forces-operated ROLE 2 Field Hospital, is ready to respond in case of a coronavirus epidemic outbreak in Slovakia. After visiting the military hospital, this announcement was made by Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš, Hospital Deputy Director Col Roman Jantoš MMedSci, Deputy Chairman of the SVK MOD Crisis Staff Ján Holko, in the presence of Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini. "The capabilities of the field hospital are currently limited, because it is designed for a theatre of operations in the event of war and the state of war, with primary focus on surgical interventions. Yet we are ready to adapt this hospital so as to cope with such emergency and the Training Centre Lešť, Záhorie Training Area, and our Kuchyňa and Sliach Air Bases will be made available as well," said the Defence Minister. As CMH Deputy Director Col Roman Jantoš MMedSci pointed out, the hospital is ready to admit the patients suspected of contracting a variety of infections. "The hospital is ready to admit such patients. Currently, we have 25 beds at the infectious diseases department and the pulmonary diseases ward, which allow patients to be quarantined for a whole year round. Another six patients can be put in quarantine at the field hospital," he said. Prime Minister and Health Minister Peter Pellegrini said: "In case we need to deal with dozens or hundreds of [coronavirus-infected] patients who need to be placed in quarantine, we are ready to deploy a field hospital on Lešť and Záhorie Training Areas, whereas Lešť Training Area offers additional accommodation facilities." The armed forces are ready to set up a hermetically controlled site for up to 2,000 people, if required. The field hospital for 40 + 30 beds can be deployed within 3 days, if needed.

■ A meeting of commanders under the Chief of the Office of National Military Representative to SHAPE, Col Tibor Králik, was held at SHAPE in Mons on 12 Feb 2020. On behalf of the SVK Chief of Defence, Col Králik presented the SVK Chief of Defence Commemorative Cross 3rd Grade (Bronze) to General Sir James Everard, the outgoing Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR), for his significant contribution to developing and enhancing the cooperation between NATO's military structures and the SVK Armed Forces.

■ Members of the SVK Presidential Guard of Honour (GOH) joined the 25th "Valentine's Drop of Blood" campaign on 14 Feb 2020. The voluntary blood donors were visited by President Zuzana Čaputová during the blood donation session at the Presidential Palace.

■ The 2nd Maj Peter Pavlovský Memorial Swimming Competition took place on 11 Feb 2020. 31 swimmers participated in the 300m freestyle individual and 3x100m team relay categories, with 3 male age groups and 1 female age group. Out of the servicewomen, the best swimmer was Lt Katarína Csejteyová (MU 8116 Trenčín). PFC Tomáš Púchly (MU 4444 Hlohovec) was the winner in the men's U30 category, Sgt 1st Class Gabriel Rückschloss (MU 4977 Sliach) in the men's 31-40 age group, and Capt Miloš Karel (VÚ 9149 Trenčín) in the men's O40 age group. Pte Gabalec, PFC Púchly and Lt Csejteyová triumphed in the team relay category.

■ On the night of 10/11 Feb 2020, partial rehearsal for alerting troops to the state of high readiness and conducting mobilisation and force protection tasks by day and at night was undertaken by members of HQ 1st Mech Bde, subordinate units, and 1st Mech Bde elements alongside personnel of the Logistics Battalion Topoľčany. The aim of the rehearsal was to divide personnel into groups and perform manning tasks as specified in the Wartime and State of War Table of Equipment and Organisation.

■ The final winter charity concert, entitled "Through the Eyes of the Heart", will be presented by piano player Natália Sklareňo at the VSMU Dvorany Concert Hall at 1 Zoch Street, Bratislava at 18:00 on 26 Feb 2020. All the proceeds from the concert will be used to fund the stay of children from Bosnia and Herzegovina at a children's summer camp, to be organised by the Ecumenical Pastoral Service Office this July in Slovakia.

■ Drivers are advised by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be 13 Allied road movements, mostly involving POL and SLO troops, across Slovakia from 17 to 23 Feb 2020. SVK Army convoys will also transport oversized cargo and conduct road moves on the following routes: Rožňava – TC Lešť, Prešov – Ruská Nová Ves, Sereď – Nemecká, Hlohovec – Dobrá Niva, Hlohovec – Koliňanský vrch. There will also be rail movements between Michalovce and Moldava nad Bodvou and Sása – Pliešovce and Trebišov.

## Minister Gajdoš visits Special Operations Forces members in Žilina

(14 February) Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš attended the Annual Meeting of SVK Special Operations Forces (SOF) Commanders in Žilina. On this occasion, he thanked members of the 5th Special Forces Regiment for performing at the highest standard last year and highlighted their participation in international exercises as well as in education and training activities with foreign partners. Minister Gajdoš said: "Members of the Special Operations Forces, built around the 5th Special Forces Regiment, confirm they are amongst the elite of our Armed Forces. They deserve our gratitude and recognition for their work and accomplishment of tasks, be that as part of domestic or international crisis



management." He also underscored that their participation in international missions and operations is highly valued by representatives of the NATO Alliance. He reminded that the current MOD leadership has exerted maximum efforts to provide them with the best Service conditions thus far in terms of social, financial and material welfare. In particular, he highlighted the deliveries of SOF equipment. This mainly concerns Polaris vehicles, winter training gear, parachutes, training equipment, mountaineering equipment, communications systems, and weaponry, including a variety of firearms, with the intent of ensuring high standards of quality and greater effectiveness in every aspect of their work.

## Cadets in the snow

(12 February) 3rd-year cadets of the M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš began their week-long winter training by marching on snowshoes across snowy mountainous terrain. All the 64 3rd-year cadets will be treated to downhill, alpine and cross-country skiing. The aim of the assignment is to develop practical basic military movement skills in snow conditions. There will be a follow-up to this activity under the comprehensive military training programme. This year the 3rd-year cadets will undergo concentrated summer training, which will incorporate rock climbing, white water rafting, and a mountain march. From Mon to Fri, winter training for 2nd-year Armed Forces Academy cadets was underway on Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area at Humenné. 77 SVK cadets were joined by 10 CZE cadets from the Defence University Brno.



## Trebišov-based tankies at Lešť

(16 February) Members of the 1st Tank Battalion Trebišov will deploy on exercise to Lešť. This will be the biggest practical test of the unit's capabilities since its reestablishment last year. At the Training Centre Lešť, tankies undertook firing and tactical tasks. With new soldiers joining the Battalion as drivers, gunners and tank commanders, individual elements of the 1st Tank Company are working on their coordination. Training tasks included testing the ability of platoon and tank commanders to make decisions during an operation to halt the enemy advance, the conduct of combat operations, and the coordination of fire control; readily respond to battlefield developments and enemy target identification and neutralisation; prepare and conduct manoeuvres; and coordinate units. What is this week awaiting members of the 1st Tank Company is a 72-hour field training, which will test their physical and mental readiness.