



Delivering Gov's Manifesto

(29 May) Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Robert Kaliňák welcomed Prime Minister Robert Fico to the Ministry of Defence for an inspection day.

The aim was to brief the Prime Minister on the current status and delivery of the Defence commitments set out in the SVK Government's 2023-2027 Manifesto, including on the projects successfully completed, in the process of implementation, and those under preparation.

"The Ministry of Defence is a multifunctional ministry that has already fulfilled 75 percent of the tasks from the SVK Government's Manifesto – this is fantastic news – these are truly exceptional results in all areas from defence, missions and operations, Defence Medical Service (DMS) infrastructure, through protection and cultivation of our traditions to major dual use projects. What we can see here are real results and a clear vision for the future," the Prime Minister said.

"I would like to thank everyone who is fully dedicated to the cause of achieving our common goals," DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák said, adding: "We have accomplished a lot, there are things in process and still many challenges ahead."

Ex Slovak Shield tests readiness

(26 May) Ex Slovak Shield 2025 (SLSD25) – the largest international military exercise of the year testing the capabilities and readiness of the Slovak Armed Forces and NATO forces to defend Slovakia's territorial integrity – culminated at the Training Centre Lešť on 26 May 2025. In attendance were Slovakia's top constitutional and defence officials – President of the Slovak Republic and Commander-in-Chief of the Slovak Armed Forces Peter Pellegrini, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Robert Kaliňák, Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko, and other guests.

Mr Robert Kaliňák highlighted the great deal of meticulous planning, preparations and logistics that went into the exercise, saying: "What lies behind the success of this event are the long-term preparations and coordination activities of all partners involved. The exercise has shown just how important it is for individual Commands and Nations to communicate together to have the ability to conduct a joint operation. The Training Centre Lešť has proven to be among the major armed forces training areas in NATO."

SLSD25 combines a two-level Battle Staff Training Exercise and a Field Training Exercise (BSTX/FLX), aimed at operating together to improve the planning and conduct of defensive operations across SVK territory. Phase 1 focused on the protection and surveillance of national borders, Phase 2 simulated interdiction operations in the security area – using combat manoeuvre units to block the enemy's advance, putting defences in place, and assuring defence against surveillance and strike drones.

Speaking of the SVK Defence Industry innovations and new technologies including autonomous AI-guided surveillance and strike drones on SLSD25, CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko said: "We incorporated some new elements into the exercise for the first time in history."



SVK Defence Industry showcases its products at IDET 2025 Brno

(28 May) DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák attended the International Defence and Security Technologies Fair (IDET) 2025 Opening Ceremony in Brno. During the trade show, he held bilateral meetings with Czech Defence Minister Jana Černochová and Congolese Deputy Prime Minister and National Defence Minister Guy Kabombo Muadiamvita. Speaking of IDET, Robert Kaliňák said: "IDET Brno offers not only most advanced defence and security R&D and technologies, but we also have the opportunity to showcase our SVK Defence Industry products. Nowadays, we need to look differently at the value of peace and at how to protect peace through modernisation, innovation and cooperation between individual countries to assure peace and security in our region of the European continent." To support domestic defence manufacturing and to forge new partnerships, several state-owned and private SVK Defence Industry companies presented their products at IDET Brno.



■ DEPMINDEF Martin Vojtašovič met European Investment Bank (EIB) Vice-President Robert de Groot, President of the Security and Defence Industry Association Pavol Čahoj, CEO of Eximbanka Rastislav Podhorec, and Executive Director of the Slovak Banking Association Marcel Klimek, for talks on funding strategic Defence projects. They agreed on the need to deepen cooperation between the public and private sectors with SVK companies' involvement in building defence capacities, while taking account of the current security challenges in Europe.

■ At the invitation of Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko, Romanian Chief of Defence Gen General Gheorghiță Vlad paid an official visit to Slovakia. After paying their respects at the WW2 Romanian Soldiers Monument at the Training Centre Lešť, both CHODs attended Ex Slovak Shield 2025 (SLSD25).

■ The Milan Rastislav Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS) welcomed a delegation from the National Defence College Nigeria, led by Brig Gen Olu-mide Adeleke Ojo. The visit was part of a study tour of 15 Nigerian officers to Slovakia on the theme of 'Renewable Energy and National Development in Slovakia: Lessons from Nigeria'.

■ Given that Mons František Rábek reached the age of 75, Pope Leo XIV accepted his voluntary resignation from the SVK RC Bishopric of the Slovak Armed Forces and Armed Corps leadership on 27 May and has appointed Pavol Sajgalik, Head of the SVK RC Mission to Switzerland (2019 - 2025) and former Chaplain in the SVK RC Bishopric of the Forces and Armed Corps (2004 - 2019), as the new Bishop of the Forces and Armed Corps. In a ceremony at St Sebastian's Cathedral in Bratislava, the Apostolic Nuncio to Slovakia, Archbishop Nicola Girasoli announced that the handover/takeover of the leadership role would take place in Oct 2025. Until then, Bishop Rábek will continue to lead the Bishopric as an apostolic administrator, in accordance with the Pope's mandate.

■ The Armed Forces Academy (AOS)'s Logistics Dept hosted a five-day Project Management Course, focusing on the work of MOD and Armed Forces project managers and project teams. They worked through many practical challenges typical of the project team. On completion of the course, they received the Certificate of Completion and study materials for further education.

■ The Artillery Unit Commanders and Deputy Commanders Course concluded with a ceremony at 21 Sp Art Det Michalovce. The course focused on the professional development of NCOs, with the aim of deepening the professional knowledge and skills necessary for operating the Zuzana 2 SPH and managing entrusted teams in the military environment. All participants received the Certificate of Completion.

■ The Ružomberok-based Council of the Regional Nurses and Midwives Chamber presented the White Heart Awards in three categories – Nurse in Practice, Nurse Manager, and Nurse Trainer – in a ceremony at the Pipe Organ Hall of the Health Sciences Faculty of the Catholic University in Ružomberok. Among the awardees were eight nurses from the Central Military Hospital - Teaching Hospital Ružomberok. In addition, Vice-Mayor Róbert Kolár presented the Mayor of Ružomberok Awards to nurses Soňa Žiaková and Katarína Obtulovičová and Róbert Pastorek MD from the Central Military Hospital.

■ In keeping with tradition, the 31st 'Jozef Gabčík Memorial Run took place on the last Saturday of May. Soldiers, police officers, members of other units, and enthusiasts met on the start line of the 11km route from Gabčík's birthplace in Polušie to 5 SOF Regt Barracks in Žilina. 500 individuals, 155 runners in 7 groups, and 140 children in three running categories took part.

■ Long-time member of the Dukla Military Sports Centre Mária Katerínka Czaková – four-time Olympian in the 20km race walk, SVK record holder in the 10km, 35km, 50km and 10,000m 'on the oval' races, and 24-time SVK race walk champion – has ended her professional sporting career.

FULL FIELD KIT

Radio Regina's Full Field Kit programme presents the USA as a new member of the NATO EOD COE Trenčín at 21.05 on Fri.

Ex Steadfast Deterrence 2025 – first of its kind

(28 May) Ex Steadfast Deterrence 2025 took place from 19 to 28 May. Planned and coordinated by SHAPE and directed by NATO's Joint Warfare Centre (JWC), the computer-assisted command post exercise (CAX/CPX) was the first of its kind to train and certify SHAPE as a NATO Strategic Warfighting Headquarters (SWHQ).

With the focus on multi-domain readiness and interoperability, STDC25 was designed to deepen operational ties between SHAPE and USEUCOM. The exercise scenario received the North Atlantic Council (NAC)'s approval and was based on a 360-degree multi-domain setting simulating a theatre-wide crisis in the Euro-Atlantic area. It rehearsed and tested the activation of the Alliance's defence plans, even with the use of AI.



Representing the Slovak Armed Forces on the exercise were the Office of National Military Representative to SHAPE (NMR SHAPE SVK), led by Maj Gen Martin Štoklása, and the SVK

Defence Staff (DS) National Response Cell (NRC), led by Brig Gen Ferdinand Muriň.

Brig Gen Muriň gave his assessment of STDC25 with the following words: "Our main task was to support the NMR SHAPE SVK in achieving its training goals and to rehearse the SVK DS's role in handling communications with the strategic level of NATO command. The exercise provided staffers of the SVK DS, JOCOM Banská Bystrica, and 82 JNT SPT BDE Trenčín with an invaluable opportunity to grow their professional and technical knowledge and skillset."

ESP helicopters at Kuchyňa AB



(28 May) The NATO Multinational Brigade Slovakia has been reinforced by five Spanish Armed Forces helicopters. On Wed, two HA-28 Tiger attack helicopters, two HT-17 Chinook heavy transport helicopters, and a HT-29 NH-90 Caiman multirole helicopter landed at Kuchyňa AB. They will be tasked with missions in support of the MN BDE SVK, stationed since 2022 at TC Lešť, with the aim of strengthening the NATO's eastern flank. This reinforcement was welcomed by DCHOD Maj Gen Miroslav Lorinc (SVK F), who said that Ex Strong Lineage 25 is the first of its kind where Spain – the Lead Nation of the NATO MN BDE SVK – will be upscaling the battle group into a brigade. "The exercise will run approx. until 11 June. The two heavy transport helicopters will then fly back to Spain, and the remaining three will stay here."

SVK AF opens its bases to children



(31 May) To mark International Children's Day, the Slovak Air Force opened its bases to children of all ages. The first to welcome them was 11 SVK AF BDE Nitra on Wed 28 May, followed by 2 AF BDE Zvolen on Thur 29 May and 51 WG Prešov on Sat 31 May. In addition to static displays, our airmen and women prepared live action demonstrations, contests and games, and MP officers introduced the work of forensic technicians. At the Army Recruitment Stand, children could try throwing at targets and pull-ups. Nitra's highlights included the landing of a Mil Mi-17, the SVK Presidential GOH Show, and the Božena 4 Demining System Presentation. Zvolen drew children to a presentation of the air navigator's role, an engaging quiz game and a blind map. Prešov wowed kids with a helicopter flying display and a helicopter troop insertion. The entertainment for kids concluded with a water fountain in Nitra and a foam show in Zvolen and Prešov.

Soldiers Through Children's Eyes



(26 May) DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák, CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, and the Defence Magazine Editorial Staff opened the 24th "Soldiers Through Children's Eyes" MOD Art Competition for entries earlier this Feb. A total of 2,005 entries from 260 primary schools and from 19 individuals were submitted for the competition. From among the 1,310 entries in the Junior Pupils category, the winner was "The Soldier as a Friend" by Ela Kijacová (9) from Omšenie, and from among the 696 entries in the Senior Pupils category, the winner was "The Serviceman" by Monika Chybová from Trenčianske Teplice. The first-, second- and third-place finishers of both categories will receive diplomas, gifts and cash prizes. Their artworks will appear in the MOD Defence Magazine and will be on display on-site at the MOD.