MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

DEFENSE DIRECTIVE 2021

Introduction

The threats and challenges that characterize the current security context are complex and transnational in nature, consequently they are beyond the capabilities of individual countries, but must be addressed through a comprehensive approach and joint actions. The strong Euro-Atlantic perspective that our country has is also reflected in the Defense policy, which looks to NATO, the EU, and partner countries for the pillars of our alliance system, to ensure the security and defense of the country.

The situation caused by COVID-19, changed the lives of Albanian citizens, as well as the economic perspective of the country. It is currently difficult to predict how long the emergency situation will last, and its exact implications for economic and social stability are not yet understood, but it is clear that we will feel its effects for a long time.

In light of these developments, the Armed Forces face ongoing efforts to address this combination of challenges and have commenced a comprehensive transformation process while continuing to provide the same operational levels. A transformation process based on balancing and combining defense resources, to enable the continuous adaptation of the military instrument, it being interoperable and operational with NATO and EU allies. This without neglecting acquisition of skills in the direction of national efforts, in cases of extreme need and urgency.

The several-year approach to increase attention to personnel and a more dignified treatment has continued in areas that support the appreciation of military service and improvement of compensation.

The reforms carried out for the transformation of Military Higher Education, fully meet the defense needs for cadres and guarantee interoperability with the homologous military education systems of NATO countries. This system prepares today new officers, through the educational cycle "Bachelor", according to the format of the Bologna Charter and Process. The 3-year program of the first cycle is currently part of the curriculum of the Faculty of Defense and Security.

Implementation of projects, such as: Integrated Airspace Surveillance System, Integrated Maritime Surveillance System, Military Cyber Security Unit, cooperation with NATO for the transformation of Kuçova Air Base into a Tactical Air Base, as well as the process of turning the Pashaliman Base into a NATO Base will have a significant impact at a national level and within the Alliance.

The crisis caused by COVID-19, as well as the situation and damage caused by the earthquake of November 26, 2019, showed the added value that the Defense can demonstrate in this type of situation. The restructuring of the Civil Protection System has increased the effectiveness of responding to civil emergencies, safety, and quality of life of citizens.

The main priorities of the work for 2021 include: the conceptual framework in the field of security and defense, good management and development of defense resources, legal support, capacity development, consolidation of the Civil Protection System, as well as international cooperation. Also, the focus is on the objective of gradually increasing the defense budget to 2% of GDP, but also keeping investment and modernization expenditures at 20% of the defense budget.

The Defense Directive 2021 best addresses the challenges to the international security environment, supports the fulfillment of constitutional obligations, and fulfills international obligations.

As Minister of Defense, I have full confidence that the structures of the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces will best preserve what we have achieved and will successfully carry out the tasks set, making the Armed Forces a valuable asset for our country and society.

Olta Xhaçka

Minister of Defense of the Republic of Albania

MAIN AREAS OF ACTIVITY FOR 2021

1. Conceptual framework in the field of security and defense.

In 2021, the Long-Term Armed Forces Development Plan (LTAFDP) should be reviewed. Based on the general directions identified in the Strategic Defense Review 2019 and in line with the NATO Defense Planning Process, the LTAFDP should set out the required capacities and specific objectives for the development of defense capabilities, together with the relevant financial assessments needed.

2. Good management and development of defense resources.

2.1. Human resources, recruitment, promotion. Our military members, their families and the civilian workforce remain key elements of defense resources. Their management should be done through a transparent, reliable and efficient process during all phases of the personnel life cycle, as regards recruitment, education, training, assignment, career promotion, and retirement.

There should be worked continuously for the improvement of treatment, living conditions, work and service, health care for the military members and their families, as well as their integration into society after discharge. Special care should be taken of the families of servicemen sent on missions abroad.

There should continue the cooperation with central and local institutions and educational institutions at home, to further pursue the processes of professional and career guidance for young people, as well as to increase the attraction and motivation for recruitment in the Armed Forces.

There should be maintained the representation of women in uniform as to recruitment and promotion, and the gender perspective should be part of the policies and plans of the MoD and GS structures, not only in representation, but also in responsibility.

2.2. Education, training, and exercise.

Education: The Armed Forces Academy (AFA) should meet the needs of the Armed Forces with human resources having the necessary skills and competencies for all levels. Of priority is preparation for opening the second cycle and doctoral studies, the approval of the AFA statute and internal regulations, in accordance with the models of the Alliance countries, in support of the ambition to implement joint study programs, the signing of cooperation agreements, as well as conformity assessment and implementation of joint study programs with the counterpart academies of the Alliance countries.

Training: It should meet the needs according to specialties and requirements of the structures, to support the Capability Objectives, as well as preparation of personnel and forces that will take part in operations abroad. There should be conducted training according to specialties in all structures of the Armed Forces, in particular for the Air Force personnel, where priority remains the preparation of new pilots, the initial training, and their certification from the Air Force resources and cooperation with NATO countries.

Exercise: Exercise in the Armed Forces should be planned and conducted in the interest of enhancing capabilities to contribute to Alliance missions, operations and activities, as well as missions and tasks at home, including support to civilian authorities in civil emergencies. The development in our country of the training package "Defender Europe 21" and the active participation of the Armed Forces in this training should be a top priority and to be used to increase the operational and interactive capacities of the Armed Forces.

2.3. Material resources: The available defense resources should be prioritized in investment and modernization, taking into account the obligations arising from the Capability Objectives Package, maintaining the operational commitments of the Armed Forces and the objective for their gradual reconceptualization to suit to "diversity of areas, capacities and quality".

There should be provided the necessary logistic support and required capabilities to support the Armed Forces' troops in operational commitments at home and abroad. Attention should be

paid to the logistic support for carrying out repair and maintenance of equipment according to the forces, as well as development of repair and maintenance capacities of helicopters and ships. The primary task of the MoD and GS structures remains the full support for the NATO Support and Procurement Agency, to implement the projects for modernization of the Kuçova Air Base, for its transformation into a NATO Tactical Air Base.

There should be worked continuously to improve the infrastructure, provide the best possible conditions for work, living, education, training, support operations, and systematization of command and control. The MoD and GS structures should continue the work to provide "online" services for citizens, through the governmental portal e-Albania.

The health service capacity building should aim at providing basic and mandatory health support for the personnel, with priority given to the implementation of preventive measures and possible health training against COVID-19. Of priority remains health support in operations, general medical support, as well as capacity building for civil emergencies.

2.4. Financial resources: The defense budget should be planned in a balanced way between the main categories of budget expenditures, aiming at capacity building, based on priorities. The budget should be implemented in accordance with the objectives for increasing transparency and the fight against corruption, as well as aiming to increase as much as possible the effectiveness of spending the available funds. Of priority is to continue the support for investment projects in the framework of modernization of the Armed Forces and international commitments.

3. Legal support for MoD / FA structures.

Improving the defense regulation system, the activity of the Armed Forces, but also the transformation process that is currently underway, should be part of the efforts and will of the Ministry of Defense for continuous legal changes. There should continue completion of the sublegal package necessary for the consolidation of the National Civil Protection Agency (NCPA), drafting of laws and bylaws for the implementation of the NATO project at the Kuçova Air Base, as well as the legal alignment with that of the *acquis*, further aligning legislation in the field of defense.

4. Capacity building of the Armed Forces.

The capacities of the structures should be built in accordance with the needs, to enable the fulfillment of the constitutional mission, the obligations of collective defense, to operate independently and/or cooperatively in military operations, as well as to cope with civil emergencies. There should continue work on building new intelligence capacities, staffing and consolidation of intelligence structures, guaranteeing the intelligence support for the Armed Forces.

In the framework of collective defense, there should be taken the necessary preparatory measures for the new Capability Objectives package of 2021, aiming at the development of defense capabilities and infrastructure, which serve to increase the operational capabilities of deployable structures.

Of main priority is modernization of the structures of the Light Infantry Battalion Group; establishment of the Military Cyber Security Unit; integration of the Airspace Surveillance System in the NATO Integrated Missile and Air Defense System; provision of a Air Control Tactical Group in the interest of ground deployed formations at battalion and/or battalion group level; secure communication through the Navy's Military Message Management System.

4.1. Modernization: The priority of modernization should be the structures that fulfill the obligations in the framework of national commitments and those in the composition of the Alliance. Work should be directed at the implementation of modernization projects with a focus on:

- *General Staff of the Armed Forces:* Increase of data storage, transmission and information security capacities, as well as cyber defense;

- *Land Force:* Provision of communications equipment, armaments, ammunition in accordance with NATO standards, structures, part of national and Alliance commitments;
- *Air Force:* Integration of assets in the Integrated Air and Missile Defense System and in the NATO Air Control and Surveillance System; consolidation of airspace surveillance, reconnaissance and monitoring capabilities; provision of search and rescue systems and equipment aircraft and helicopter support systems; implementation of the project for Tactical Air Base in Kuçova, to be made available for NATO and national use;
- *Navy:* Renovation of the Integrated Maritime Space Surveillance System; provision of computer systems for Iliria-class ships; the military message management system and equipment of the Boarding Group;
- *Support Command:* Modernization with systems and equipment for search-and-rescue structures and unexploded ordnance disposal company.

4.2. Readiness and Operationality: The specific requirements should be met and readiness for international engagements and operations is to be maintained. Also to be ensured at all times are the operational levels planned and approved for 2020-2024, as well as the capacities declared in the Civil Emergency Plans and the National Search and Rescue Plan.

NATO measures in the national system should be implemented, in order to respond to crisis and Operational Planning to Engage the Armed Forces against asymmetric, hybrid, but also conventional threats, completing the strategic and operational planning within 2021, according to the scenarios of the Strategic Defense Review 2019.

In the framework of collective defense, there should continue the contribution to the NATO Command and Force structures, the Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) and the Response Force (NRF), as well as to the current NATO, EU, the UN crisis management operations.

4.3. Interoperability: There should be increased the level of interoperability, with the aim of successfully accomplishing engagements at the national level, as well as with NATO and EU allies, with a special focus on the declared departments and subdivisions and those participating in Alliance-led missions and operations. There should be improved the implementation of ratified STANAG/Aps of the Capability Objectives Package, through their integration into the educational, training and exercise programs of the structures.

The standardization process should support the Capability Objectives and modernization plans, mainly selecting for ratification and implementation the STANAG/APs of the Capability Objectives Package and those considered critical in the context of interoperability.

There should be updated the doctrines of the forces and services, aiming at achieving the objectives in fulfillment of national interests, as well as achieving interoperability with the Allied Forces.

5. Consolidation of the Civil Protection System.

Consolidation of the Civil Protection System should aim at disaster risk reduction, securing people's lives, property, cultural heritage and environmental protection. In addition to the adoption of bylaws, of priority is the functioning of NCPA, as well as the continuation of procedures for our country's membership in the European Civil Protection Mechanism. There should be coordinated and supported local self-government units for the implementation of preventive and rehabilitation investments in infrastructure. There should be strengthened the role of the National Search and Rescue Center, as the main management structure of search and rescue operations, through increased cooperation and interaction with institutions inside and outside the country, in accordance with the requirements of the National Search and Rescue Plan.

The engagement of the Armed Forces in support of the community should focus on the modernization of operational capacities for coping with civil emergencies, the contribution to the improvement of infrastructure in rural areas, as well as the cleaning of hotspots.

There should be further improved the Military Meteorological Service both in terms of technology and infrastructure, enabling the establishment and operation of the "METEO" network of real-time data transmission.

Planning and creation of material reserves should aim at increasing transport capacities to cope with emergency situations, replenishing the stock of reserves, as defined by applicable laws, increasing and improving storage capacity.

6.International engagement and cooperation.

6.1.International co-operation: There should continue the political support and the necessary resources to be provided for full and sustained Alliance engagement, in the spirit of Fair Sharing of Responsibilities (BurdenSharing).

The Ministry of Defense should remain committed to politically support the Alliance's continued adaptation to current and future security risks and challenges. The Armed Forces should enhance efforts to strengthen national and collective security, based on the newly updated NATO defense and reinforcement plans, with primary attention paid to the implementation of the Euro-Atlantic Area Defense and Deterrence Concept.

The security and defense policies should be based on the strengthening of bilateral agreements and cooperation with close allies, both in times of peace or crisis. The defense should be based on a wide network of multilateral and bilateral relations, consolidating solidarity and the spirit of trust. Defense diplomacy should play an important role in this regard.

There should continue the cooperation with state actors, seizing the opportunities for engagement in EU initiatives and participation in multilateral export control and non-proliferation regimes.

The Western Balkans region, the common approach to various risks and challenges, as well as its promotion in the international arena, should remain a priority in bilateral and multilateral engagements. Comprehensive und unlimited support should be offered for the transformation of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kosovo and the consolidation of its Security Force.

6.2 Regional cooperation: There should continue the active participation and proactive approach to OSCE forums and mechanisms in the field of defense and arms control, and there should be pursued the support for priorities built during the 2020 presidency.

The Ministry of Defense should continue promoting cooperation, for the consolidation of security, stability and peace in Southeast Europe. Of priority is the successful completion of the chairmanship of the Southeast Europe Defense Ministers Secretariat. As part of the US-Adriatic Charter initiative, close cooperation should be maintained with a view to joint operational engagements of the Alliance. There should continue the interaction in the framework of the meetings of the Chiefs of Defense of the Western Balkans and the Defense Cooperation Initiative.

6.3 Contribution to international operations and initiatives: The primary objective of Defence should be the contribution as part of engagements undertaken by Albania for safeguarding international peace and security. We are of the opinion that the defense of Albania starts outside our territorial borders and that the most effective approach is prevention. In this perspective, an integral part of the overall defense efforts should be the participation of the Armed Forces in NATO, EU, and UN operations or activities.