MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

DEFENSE DIRECTIVE 2022

Introduction

The strategic environment today is characterized by the era of strategic competition where the aggressiveness of traditional threats intertwines with new hybrid, environmental, technological and information threats, causing serious challenges and concerns to the security.

The Western Balkans region, despite being on the path to Euro-Atlantic integration, remains fragile and under constant external pressure as a result of the growing influence of Russia and China. The Republic of Albania, despite the security granted by the status of being a NATO member country, is not immune to the security risks and threats.

These trends are expected to continue and will potentially be central as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to respond to the risks and threats, as well as the unpredictable dynamics of the security environment, timely and reliable information, interaction between security and intelligence structures, development of information defense technology, modern capabilities and active military diplomacy are required.

2021 was an important year for Albania, the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces. We ensured the protection of our citizens, cooperated with the allies and partners in conflict prevention, as well as addressed common challenges, directed the national response to civil emergencies, and supported the response to the pandemic. We are proud and grateful to all the military and civilian personnel in the Armed Forces, who have worked tirelessly in the service towards the nation.

2022 will continue to be challenging, and require continual adaptation of our defense policy, capabilities and force structure, which will enable us to deal with unpredictable situations. We will continue to transform the way we operate, in terms of ensuring the security and defense of the country, defending our Euro-Atlantic interests, engaging proactively in international operations, supporting our foreign policy goals, and providing capabilities and emergency support.

In this regard, the work outcomes for 2022, in which we will measure our success, include:

- The improvement of the financial treatment, conditions, and health care for the military personnel and their families, as well as their integration into society after their transition to the reserve status;
- The modernization through the equipment of the Armed Forces with the necessary capacities to face future challenges;
- The education, consolidation of the reform in the Armed Forces Academy, as well as the commencement of the projects for an Academy and a Defense College of high standards;
- The risk reduction stemming from disasters and emergency situations, as well as strengthening the specialized civil defense capabilities in the Armed Forces;
- The proactive contribution to the regional operations and engagements;
- The cyber security of our military systems;
- Increase of the defense capabilities, through technology and innovation.

As the Minister of Defense, I am confident that the structures of the Ministry of Defense and those of the Armed Forces will successfully achieve the planned objectives, offering maximum commitment in the implementation of these important projects for the country and the society.

Niko PELESHI
Minister of Defense of the Republic of Albania

MAIN AREAS OF ACTIVITY FOR 2022

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

The Long-Term Development Plan of the Armed Forces 2016-2025 has to be reviewed by drafting the Development Plan 2022-2031 based on the directions identified in the Strategic Defense Review 2019, and it should determine the future structure of the Armed Forces, the capacities and capabilities required to fulfill the mission and legal tasks, as well as the fulfillment of obligations within the Alliance.

Also, the process of reviewing the Defense Plan should start, in line with the national strategic and Alliance documents, including the Concept for the Deterrence and Defense of the Euro-Atlantic Area.

2. Good management and development of defense resources.

2.1 Human resources, recruitment and promotion. The social-economic policies should be reviewed, with the aim of improving the treatment as well as living, working and service conditions, enhancing care services ,and creating other facilities for the military personnel and their families, as well as creating opportunities for the integration of the military personnel in the society, after their transition to the reserve status. The flat-rate increase of the salary will be materialized to a 30% level for the military and 6% for the civilian personnel in the Armed Forces, as well as bonuses for the IT and cyber security, employees and particular specialties.

The recruitment system should be improved, enabling the AF to have more direct contacts and be more attractive to young people. Recruitment should be based on the promotion of the Armed Forces and the values they hold,and it should be carried out in cooperation with local government and educational institutions, based on current and future needs.

Gender perspective should be part of policies and plans, not only in representation, but also in responsibility. The representation of women in uniform in recruitment and promotion, throughout the AF should continue.

2.2. Education training and exercise

Education: The transformation of the Military Higher Education (ALU) system should continue. This should be an integral part of the national higher education and it should be based on the experience of the West Point Academy (USA). The main focus should be on twinning with the West Point Academy, institutional accreditation, and increasing effectiveness at all levels. Also, the project should be finalized and the construction of the new campus of the Armed Forces Academy (AFA) should start.

The establishment and functioning of the High Defense College in English, with regional focus and dimension should continue. This will serve as a professional institution of higher education for all career courses, up to the strategic level.

Training: The individual and collective training program should continue according to national and NATO standards, with a focus on increasing the individual and collective skills of the personnel, staffs and troops, by integrating the training program of the Armed Forces with the training program of NATO and US Command Individual Training Programs in Europe.

Exercise: This will continue to be a priority aiming at increasing the capabilities and operational capacities of the Armed Forces, in full compliance with the constitutional mission, accomplishing the Level of Ambition and engaging in missions and operations of the UN, NATO and EU, as well as in domestic operations in response to civil emergencies and search-and-rescue operations.
In order to enhance their interoperability, the AF training and exercises program should be organized and developed, based on real life scenarios, integrating it with the Deterrence and Defense programs

and concepts of the Euro-Atlantic Area and NATO joint exercises, as well as those of the U.S. European Command. During 2022, the main focus will be the preparation and development of the certification training of the Light Infantry Group-Battalion, according to the rating system "NATO CREVAL", the joint training with the U.S. Armed Forces in Biza shooting range, the development of support infrastructure in the garrisons ofZall-Herr, Vau Dejës andPoshnja, as well as the development of infrastructure with simulation in Zall-Herr garrison and in the Simulation Department at the AFA.

The participation in the military exercises of "Defender Europe 22" abroad together with some of the operational capacities and planning for the conduct in our country of "Defender Europe 23" should be a priority.

2.3. Material resources: They are to be used effectively and efficiently to ensure the readiness and operability of the capacities of the Armed Forces and particularly of the prioritized formations. Bilateral, multilateral and regional projects should be developed with the aim to equip the Armed Forces with the necessary capacities, as well as for the repair and maintenance of vehicles, by taking advantage of the opportunities for lower costs and cooperation for joint products.

Necessary measures are to be taken to properly sustain Armed Forces operations within the country, the support of the troops engaged in missions/operations abroad. Security and safety measures should be further improved by means of infrastructure investments.

The repair and maintenance process of land, navy and air equipment and capabilities is to be oriented towards the establishment of full function of the repair and maintenance centers. All possibilities for the development of bilateral, multilateral and regional projects, for the equipment of the Armed Forces with the necessary capacities, as well as for the repair and maintenance of vehicles should be explored.

2.4. Health support: Aim for the development and further increase of preventive and treatment health capacities, in order to provide basic and mandatory health support to staff. Provide health support for troops at the tactical, operational and strategic level, such as preventive, clinical, laboratory and pharmaceutical medical services. The priority should be the engagement of the medical staff of the Armed Forces, in support of the national response within the preventive and compensatory measures for the situation caused by COVID-19, as well as the support for the personnel of the Armed Forces that participates in operations and civil emergencies.

2.5. Financial resources: The Defense Budget should be planned in a balanced way between the main categories of budget expenditures, aiming at capacity building, 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. The focus will be in the treatment of personnel and also to continue the support for investment projects, meeting the main priorities for the year 2022, in the framework of modernization of the Armed Forces civil protection and international commitments.

3. Legal support.

The review of domestic legislation in the field of defense and legal adaptation with European legislation should continue. The main priority should be the process of drafting laws/bylaws, related to the finalization of national strategic documents, review of military status, improving the evaluation and career advancement of the military personnel in the Armed Forces, recruitment of officer candidates in the Armed Forces, implementation of the NATO project at Kuçova Air Base, as well as the material reserves of the state.

4.Development of Armed Forces capabilities.

Capability development of the Armed Forces should be guided in full compliance with the constitutional mission and legal obligations, as well as fulfillment of the Alliance LoAand the requirements of collective

defense, focusing on the development of capabilities and the fulfillment of the requirements of the Capability Objectives package.

4.1. Modernization: The modernization of the Armed Forces will be focused on the development of the required capabilities for the progress of the Light Infantry Battalion Group (LIBG), the establishment of deployable and immobile communication capabilities, as well as the development of cyber defense capabilities.
The modernization should continue according to the plans for Land Force, Air Force, Navy and Support Command.
-*Land Force:* In cooperation with strategic partners the completion with armored vehicles, the project of purchasing light infantry armament, transport and special vehicles, equipment for combat engineering support, individual and collective equipment for measures against WMD, as well as tactical communication equipment will continue.
-*Air Force*: The most important project in terms of infrastructure is the construction of the Kuçova Tactical Air Base, as a NATO tactical base . The project will continue with the equipment of "Black Hawk" helicopters, the completion of two "Cougar" helicopters (AS 532) with electronic self-defense and communication systems, the consolidation of airspace surveillance, reconnaissance and monitoring capabilities and the development of Ground-Based Air Defense Capability.
-*Navy*: The modernization of the integrated Maritime Space surveillance system, the project for the Military Message Management System for "Iliria"-class ships and the operational centers, as well as the purchase of ammunition for the Automatic Fire Systems 20mm for "Iliria"-class ships will continue.
-*Support Command*: Completion of EOD Company with special/collective equipment and special tactical combat/operation equipment, equipment for repair and maintenance, as well as equipment for environmental monitoring and analysis of CBRN agents. The project of the Armed Forces Museum in Berzhita, in order to promote the history of the Albanian Army and culture over the years.
4.2. Readiness and Operability: The readiness of the Armed Forces, in fulfilling the constitutional mission and obligations on behalf of the Alliance, ensuring independence, territorial integrity and constitutional order, as well as increasing community engagement are to be guaranteed.
Also, the fulfillment of the commitments of the Armed Forces to participate in international operations, as well as the fulfillment of obligations within the Alliance should be guaranteed. Units and departments should be equipped and supported according to priorities, with a focus on NATO-declared units.
4.3. Interoperability: Increasing interoperability both at the national level and with the Alliance countries will be the focus of training activities and capacity development, based on NATO concepts.
The standardization process should support the modernization priorities and plans, by selecting for ratification and implementation documents compliant to NATO standards that support the AF priorities, the Capacity Objectives package and those considered critical by the Alliance, in the framework of interoperability. Priority should be given to the ratification and implementation of the main doctrines of the Alliance by the AF structures, especially by the departments of LIBG, to precede its certification.
4.4. Technology and Innovation: Defense will contribute to the development of our society through the wider support of technology innovation in the Armed Forces and the economy, investing in research and development and new technologies, in order to develop military capabilities of civil defense and cyber security. In this regard, an evaluation process based on the current internal institutional situation as well as in the national aspect should be carried out, , with the aim of promoting and supporting innovation and scientific research, for the benefit of defense development, but also the socio-economic one. The processes for the development and adoption of technological solutions, to address our military needs and Albania's engagement in the Defense Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) should be followed.

5. Cyber Defense:

The main focus in this domain, is ensuring the cyber security of military systems, through securing the information infrastructures, strengthening the technological tools and building a secure cyber environment with the required professional capacities in the field of information security.

The necessary mechanisms for information security in cyberspace should be developed, taking advantage of the benefits of information technology, as well as promoting national and international cooperation in the field of cyber security.

The Military Cyber Security Unit, in cooperation with the strategic partners, shall achieve its full operational capabilities.

6. Consolidation of Civil Defense System

The Civil Defense System aims at reducing the risk of disasters, ensuring the lives of people, properties, cultural heritage and protecting the environment. Adapting bylaws remains a priority, as well as drafting and implementing the strategic documents for civil protection. Meeting the objectives should be a priority to fulfill the conditions in the framework of the membership of European Civil Protection Mechanism, as well as to establish the National Training Center for Civil Protection. The local government units should be supported and coordinated with, to improve their infrastructure investments, , in the framework of preventive and mitigation measures, for the damage which might be caused by disasters.

7. International engagement and cooperation

7.1 International Cooperation: Interoperability in the international framework shall start with our role in the NATO context, cooperation with close allies, as well as strategic goals and primary objectives of Albanian foreign policy. NATO and the EU have launched a process of strategic adaptation, in the framework of which the national contribution is closely and fundamentally linked to the strong Atlantic approach that our country has.

NATO is and remains our main point of reference, regarding the common values, prevention, deterrence, and defense. The Ministry of Defense shall be committed to supporting the Alliance's adaptation to current and future security risks and challenges, maintaining a comprehensive approach taking into account all types of threats, in all areas and in all strategic directions, with the focus in the southern flank, as areas of national strategic interest.

This year will be intensive for NATO because the Madrid Summit will approve the "New Strategic Concept", the implementation of which will have an impact on how we will defend ourselves, develop, prevent crises, and adapt to the new innovative technology developments, as well as in the international cooperation.
Priority should be given to supporting and fulfilling all the obligations in order to develop the national capacities, engagements in the international activities, missions, and operations, increasing the interoperability and cooperation with the member and partner countries of NATO, EU, and the region.

Special attention should be given to the obligations and commitments coming from the status of the Republic of Albania, as a member of the United Nations Security Council.
The Balkan region should remain a priority in bilateral and multilateral engagements, and particularly continuing to provide comprehensive and unrestricted support to the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kosovo and the consolidation of its Security Force.

7.2 Regional Cooperation: Active contribution should proceed to be active in the regional initiatives and its aim should be to promote cooperation, while consolidating security, stability, and peace in Southeastern Europe.

Pursuant to this cooperation, the purpose of these regional initiatives, such as maintaining peace and stability, Euro-Atlantic integration and promoting regional cooperation, which are also the priorities of the foreign policy of the Republic of Albania should be taken into consideration.
Regional military cooperation should aim at promoting not only the establishment and use of joint military capabilities, civil emergency response capacities, but also the establishment and use of joint capabilities in international operations.

7.3 International contribution: The main goal is to maintain an active role beyond the national context and also in operations to restore international stability, because the defense of Albania begins outside our territorial borders, so prevention is the most effective approach.
Albania's representation in Alliance structures, and in international missions and operations, should be re-evaluated in order to increase its contributions. In this regard, we aim to increase our contribution based on the interoperability and characteristics of the Albanian Armed Forces, taking into account the added value of different missions by paying special attention to regional environment.
As far as Security Cooperation is concerned, we should support the Alliance initiatives in order to strengthen partnerships, and contribute to arms control and disarmament.

8. Strategic communication.

The internal and external communication efforts should be harmonized, as an important factor for the development of a common identity and a desired image for the Defense. Communication of all possible audiences of the mission and activity of the Defense should be achieved, in full compliance with the implementation and protection of strategic interests. Efforts for misinformation and narratives, which are contrary to the strategic interests of our country, should be reduced, underlining the importance and positive effects of fulfilling these interests.

CONCLUSIONS

Pursuant to this directive, I request all the structures of the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces to draft plans, programs and projects oriented by priorities and work directions, as well as to take all necessary measures to accomplish them on time and with quality, applying lessons learned to eliminate shortcomings in order to adapt and become successful in the implementation of the Defense Directive 2022.