

**Address by the Minister of Defence, Vlado Misajlovski, on the occasion of Operations
Command Day
16 October 2026 | Boro Menkov Barracks, Kumanovo**

Madam President and Supreme Commander of the Macedonian Army,
Distinguished Chief of the General Staff,
Distinguished Deputy,
Distinguished Commander of the Operations Command,
Distinguished generals, officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers,
Distinguished guests and representatives of the media,
Distinguished Members of Parliament, distinguished mayors,
Distinguished retired generals and people who built this Army,
Distinguished soldiers and dear friends,

Today, we are here to pay tribute to one of the most significant structures of the Macedonian Army, the Operations Command, which represents a pillar of our defence capabilities and a guarantor of the security of our homeland.

Here, in this Command, the knowledge, experience and capabilities of the different branches and services are united, but above all, here are the people who prove their readiness to serve Macedonia every day. Their strength is measured not only by the equipment and weapons at their disposal, but by the sense of duty they carry within themselves, by discipline and unity.

Distinguished members of the Command,

Your contribution to the security of our country is visible both at home and abroad. Your dedication is particularly significant when our citizens face natural disasters, fires and other crisis situations. At such moments, your uniform represents a symbol of security, trust and hope for Macedonian citizens.

Through your participation in NATO multinational forces and operations, you also directly contribute to strengthening collective security and defence. Through your work, you demonstrate that Macedonia is a responsible member of the Alliance, a country that is not merely a beneficiary of collective security, but also actively contributes to its strengthening. This is a responsibility that cannot be measured solely by the number of tasks, exercises or missions carried out.

And precisely for this reason, I want to clearly state today that your dedication to the homeland is accompanied by an equal dedication of the institutions to you. Together with the General Staff, we remain firmly committed to investing in improving working conditions, developing the capabilities of each of its members and modernising the Army.

Our goal is clear: to continue building an even stronger, more modern and better-equipped Army, capable of responding to all tasks arising from national needs and our NATO membership.

These processes require time, serious preparation and serious coordination. But I want you to know that behind every activity of ours stands one common goal: for the Macedonian soldier to have the conditions, equipment and support they deserve.

Distinguished members of the Operations Command,

I want to conclude with a message directly to you. Continue working with the same energy, discipline and dedication. Continue developing your knowledge and capabilities, preserving unity and nurturing the trust that Macedonian citizens have in their Army. Be proud of the uniform you wear, the tradition you continue and the responsibility entrusted to you.

But here, allow me to personally thank the President as well.

Madam President,

I want to personally thank you for your efforts, for your, dedication, courage, and the fact that you are always interested about the situation in the Army and always give us encouragement for what we are doing.

I would like our last conversation to also be some good news for all of you. We also discussed the reforms that we need to introduce.

I also want to personally thank the Chief of the General Staff, the people on his team, the people in the Directorates, the people in the sections, because they work hard.

I want to inform you that since I became Minister, we have had lawsuits dating from 2019, 2020 up until now, for which more than 26 million euros have been paid out. This was done because those are your funds and you deserve them, but at the same time we are paying everything under the Collective Agreement.

This is something that is very important to me, but also to all the people in the Ministry.

But we continued to procure new equipment. We can see that all the JLTV vehicles have arrived, all the Strykers, and all of that has been paid for. Likewise, everything stipulated by contract is being paid for. The howitzers have been paid for, they have arrived in Macedonia. Everything that is planned in accordance with our agenda is being paid for.

Yes, but it was not like that. When I came in as Minister there was not enough money left for the Collective Agreement, there were no reforms, and that needs to be said. I want to say this publicly here.

But good times are also ahead. Although we had difficulties with many contracts, I will particularly highlight the contract with Leonardo, I want you to know that step by step, carefully and consistently, we will implement it, and from next month the acceptance of the helicopters, should be carried out. Two new helicopters will arrive, and from next year we have announcements of accelerated production and of the remaining helicopters under the contract arriving even ahead of schedule.

These are substantial funds that we need to allocate, and I am saying all this because everything will be paid for. And, yes, it represents an enormous task and challenge for us.

Enormous gratitude to every single trade union that genuinely wants to help improve conditions, I want to personally thank them for their dedication and for the proposals they put forward. Very soon, we will also adopt a new Collective Agreement. The current one is being respected, but everything that the trade unions propose will be accepted, and we will draw up a new Collective Agreement, and I want you to know from here that not a single right that you have had until now will be jeopardized. Nothing.

I also announced that from 1 January salaries in the Army and in the Ministry will increase, and I stand here before you and announce this.

But I will finish with something good.

The 17th is one of the most beautiful days of my life because of my son's birthday, but also because of the [Day of the] largest Command in our Army.

I want you to be informed that for a long time we worked with the Chief [of the General staff], with the trade unions and with the other Directorates, but also with many people and commanding officers in the Army, to find a solution for professional soldiers who reach the age of 45.

We worked on it, and I am very grateful for this solution because it comes from the Army, it comes from the people who wear the uniform. I want you all to be aware that this solution has already passed through a Government collegium meeting and will be placed on the agenda of a Government session as early as next week.

But after that, we will brief you together with the Chief [of the General staff], of course, to make it clear to you that not a single one of you who reaches the age of 45 will be forgotten, but will have [your] place in the Army and will remain there until retirement. But you will hear about that very soon, once the Government decision is adopted.

[Also] I will do everything I can to ensure that there is more equipment, more funds and better incomes.

But for this, and for this solution, Madam President, I thank you, because it is also connected to increasing the force structure, and the wind at our backs that you give us means a great deal.

I say this from the heart, and I want to convey to everyone that the Chief [of the General staff], has my maximum support and trust, and in the coming years we will continue with many processes. All the generals, but also all of you who give your best and work honestly and help improve the situation, know that you have your greatest friend in me.

Long live the Army!

Long live Macedonia!