

**Address by the Minister of Defence Vlado Misajlovski on the occasion
of the 18th of August – Army Day**

18.08.2026 - Central Ceremony, Water Training Camp – Ohrid

Distinguished President and Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova,

Distinguished President of the Assembly, Mr. Afrim Gashi,

Distinguished Prime Minister, Hristijan Mickoski,

Distinguished Chief of the General Staff of the Army, Major General Sashko Lafchiski,

Distinguished colleagues, Ministers, MPs, mayors,

Distinguished generals and representatives of the Ministry of Defence,

Distinguished representatives of the military-diplomatic corps,

Distinguished representatives from the Vermont National Guard,

Distinguished media,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Congratulations on the Day of the Macedonian Army, the 18th of August - a day when we proudly look back on its tradition, but at the same time responsibly look to the future - with all its challenges.

From this place, first and foremost, I would like to pay tribute to all generations of members of the Macedonian Army and defence employees who have built this institution and the defence system in all these past years. Each one of them, with their professionalism and dedication, contributes to the mosaic that allows us to say loud and clear – Macedonia is a safe and stable country. In a time filled with global uncertainty, the Army and defence are the pillar that keeps us upright as a country – stable and safe. Therefore, today belongs primarily to the Macedonian soldiers, and then to all the citizens, who show that they appreciate and respect the Army in its entirety.

We often say: "The army is the guardian of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state." But in essence, it is much more than that. The Macedonian Army is a pillar of stability, a trusted partner of the institutions, and a force that is always ready to serve the citizens and the country!

Considering the place and role of the Army in the Macedonian society, as Minister of Defence I have one goal – and that is for the defence and the Army to be stronger, more motivated, better equipped with every passing day. That is why we will soon have a new and better Collective Agreement, a new Legal solution that will be in favour of professional soldiers over 45 years of age, and from this podium I can announce an increase in salaries and better working conditions starting next year.

The Macedonian Army and its members must have modern and sophisticated weapons and personal equipment that will guarantee its readiness and response to challenges.

I am pleased to say – that the process of modernization of the Army is being implemented according to all our plans. Numerous equipment has arrived – the JLTVs and Stryker armoured vehicles, Boran artillery systems, the greater part of the Mistral 3 air defence systems, and this year we are expecting the first two new helicopters. With European support, the Army received modern radars, thermal cameras, engineering mechanization, transport vehicles, medical simulators and many other types of equipment that have strengthened our combat readiness.

We signed new contracts with the United States for the procurement of light infantry weapons, unmanned systems, and (Javelin) anti-tank systems, cyber protection equipment for the units of the Light Infantry Battalion Group and the Ministry of Defence, close air support equipment, radio devices, as well as upgrading the Simulation Center in Veles.

We are purchasing significant equipment, but we are not forgetting about personal equipment for army members. The challenges of purchasing new uniforms, boots, etc. for Macedonian soldiers are a thing of the past. We now procure them on a regular basis.

It is more than clear that conventional warfare has changed and in order to be ready to respond, it is necessary to make adaptations for deterrence and defence. Currently, together with the General Staff as the highest expert body and with our allies we are working on new strategic documents that will give us guidelines for further development of our defence capabilities.

We are modernizing the Army, but at the same time we are also improving the conditions in which our soldiers work. In the past period, the public was closely acquainted with the infrastructure projects in several barracks, including the barracks in Kjojlja, Veles, Prilep, and Shtip. Over 12 million euros are planned to be invested in the infrastructure in the coming period, and so far the investments amount to over 3.1 million euros.

Additionally, what I would like to emphasize at this moment is that we are working on putting the Pilot Training Center, which has been totally non-functional for 10 years, into operation. This Center is of particular importance for the aviation component of the Army, but also for other state institutions. The steps taken by the Military Academy towards the establishment of a department for Military Aviation and Air Defence (MA and AD) are also in support of the aforesaid.

I want to emphasize that in the coming period, we will continue to develop the Army at an even faster pace - with even more procurement of all types of equipment, with strong investments in the Army's infrastructure, with more exercises and training.

All of the above was made possible because this Government has recognized the need for strong investments in the defence for which I want to personally thank Prime Minister Mickoski. Our budget is continuously growing, and the investments that are included in defence-related projects and activities, including the development of infrastructure and the improvement of military mobility, are increasing. In this way, we are strengthening our security, the security of the region and the eastern flank of NATO, but at the same time we are demonstrating that we are a credible and reliable ally within the Alliance.

This conclusion does not only stem from the growth of the defence budget, which together with investments in defence-related activities this year reached over 4 percent of GDP, but also from our personal contribution to the security of the Euro-Atlantic area. Macedonian soldiers, even today, while we are celebrating the day of the Army, are performing their tasks with the utmost professionalism – in the NATO multinational forces in Latvia, Bulgaria and Romania, in the NATO-led mission KFOR, in Kosovo, KFOR, in the ALTHEA mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in the UN-led mission in Lebanon. I thank them and congratulate them for the professionalism they have shown in front of their colleagues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, I would like to thank the President for the immense support she has provided all these years, the professionals in the Ministry, the General Staff, the Military Academy, but also the members of parliament, the experts, and all those who contribute to jointly strengthening the Macedonian defence system.

I will continue to work together with them, because their success is our success. The success of the country and of its citizens.

I would also like to thank the Chief of General Staff, all generals, all members of the Army and especially my colleagues in the Ministry of Defence. We are working on many projects, together, in synergy, and we will prove what we are – the best and most organized institution in the country.

Congratulations on the Army Day – 18th of August.

Long live the Macedonian Army!

Long live Macedonia!

Thank you.