

The Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic are involved in mitigating the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic

October – November 2020

In the course of 2020, the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic, with their commitment and results of their work, confirmed that they are one of the main pillars in mitigating the consequences of a pandemic in the Slovak Republic. In the autumn of 2020, the pandemic situation in Slovakia began to deteriorate. Therefore, the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic was entrusted with the task of coordinating and managing the unprecedentedly demanding and large-scale operation “**Joint Responsibility**”, the main goal of which was to conduct nationwide testing of 5 and a half million of Slovak population, with the exception of citizens under age of 10 and over age of 65.

The operation was carried out by soldiers, medics, police, rescuers, firefighters, local government officials and volunteers.

The Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic was responsible for the organization and logistic support of nationwide testing for COVID-19 disease, including the organization of the work of the main Data Center at the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic. As part of operation “Joint Responsibility”, the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic carried out testing of the population of Slovakia in four phases:

- **1st Phase** 24th -25th October 2020, testing was focused on the most affected regions of Slovakia in Orava and Bardejov. **140,976 people were tested**, which verified and confirmed the operational readiness and capability of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic to carry out comprehensive testing of the population of the Slovak Republic.
- **2nd and 3rd Phase** -nationwide comprehensive testing phase held on 31st October – 1st November 2020 with **3,625,332 people tested**.

The data obtained by the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic contributed to the adoption of measures to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic. **In total, 6,000,000 tests were carried out under Operation Joint Responsibility.**

Within the operation the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic coordinated and managed in total of more than 40,000 soldiers, police officers, firefighters and rescuers, paramedics, members of the financial administration and local government officials and a number of volunteers.

The operation was supported by more than 5,000 motor vehicles from all involved units. The Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic covered a total of more than 1,200,000 kilometers and transported a total of approximately 7,000 tons of material.

Operation Joint Responsibility in the Slovak Republic was also supported by Hungary, Austria and Poland by sending military and civilian personnel to assist at sampling points during a weekend of area-wide testing.

Here, I would like to emphasize our gratitude to our neighboring countries and, in particular, to the Austrian medics, who gave first aid right on time to a young man who lost consciousness during the tests and hit his head dangerously when he fell. They ran to the man, gave him first aid, brought him to his senses, and called in rescue services. **We thank you. This is the real form of cross-border Armed Forces cooperation.**

The Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic assessed the performance of the Armed Forces as follows: The Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic once again supported Slovakia. In a really short time, they were able to prepare the largest logistics operation in the history of Slovakia.

- **4th and last Phase** of the Joint Responsibility operation took place in selected municipalities at the end of November 2020. In this phase, the Armed Forces carried out **111,000 tests at 460 sampling points.**

In November 2020, the Armed Forces, with their capacities, ensured the storing of contaminated material used in area-wide testing, and in 2021 will participate in its disposal.

In November 2020, the Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic conducts a regular public survey of the credibility of bodies, organizations and institutions in the Slovak Republic. The credibility of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic has been high and stable for a long time. **As part of the survey, the Slovak public also registered and appreciated the activities of professional soldiers in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.**

December 2020

December 10th 2020 **The Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic set up 18 mobile sampling points** in their buildings and premises, which are available to the public every working day. The capacity of each sampling point is at least 250 tested per day.

January 2021

Due to the deteriorating situation in the Nitra region, on January 6, 2021, 150 members of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic, including 30 paramedics, assisted in testing of the population for the presence of COVID-19 in the Nitra district.

Because of the constantly deteriorating situation, the Government of the Slovak Republic decided to allocate additional soldiers and Armed Forces capacities to **Operation Save Lives Together**, which is focused to re-testing

the entire population of the Slovak Republic that took place from 18 to 26 January 2021.

Of the 5,000 detached soldiers who are ready to intervene in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, about 500 members of the Slovak Armed Forces are daily participating in the given operation on a rotating basis.

