



Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Single professional Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina are a professional, single military force organized and controlled by Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosnia and Herzegovina organizes, develops and maintains the military capacity and readiness of the Armed Forces to ensure sovereignty, territorial subjectivity of BiH, in order to promote foreign policy objectives of BiH and meet the international commitments of BiH, as well as to protect the citizens of BiH. The realization of these objectives determines the mission of the AFBiH (Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina), which, in compliance with the Law on Defense of BiH, is implemented through five defined basic tasks of the AFBiH.



Tasks of the AFBiH:



- Participation in collective security operations, peace and self-defense support operations, including counterterrorism;
- Provision of military defense to BiH and its citizens in case of attack;
- Assistance to civilian authorities in response to natural and other disasters and catastrophes;
- Countermine action in BiH;
- Meeting of international commitments of BiH.



Meeting the standards for credible candidacy for NATO

In July 2001, the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed clear commitment for accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina into European and Euro-Atlantic integrations and the NATO *Partnership for Peace Program*, as well as for implementation of the reforms required in terms of defense system and the restructuring of its Armed Forces. Having these objectives in mind, major efforts have been made over the past period in order to ensure the environment necessary for successful process of the defense system reform, for attaining international stability and creating the conditions for a credible NATO candidacy.

In February 2005, the Presidency of BiH passed the Decision, expressing BiH commitment to NATO membership, and by December 2006, BiH was admitted into the NATO *Partnership for Peace*



Activities of BiH under the mechanisms of cooperation and partnership with NATO

Cooperation of BiH and NATO is conducted on several levels and programs, by important partnership mechanisms, particularly in the context of furthering mutual cooperation and implementation of reforms necessary for creating prerequisites for accession to NATO. So far, the reviews of BiH defense system, given by NATO and EU officials, indicate that the defense institutions are leading in reforms and implementation of the planned activities.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to develop different mechanisms of interactive cooperation with NATO. This includes Planning and Review Process (PARP), which enables identification of forces and capabilities of partner countries available to NATO for exercises and NATO-led operations, as well as planning development of such capabilities and capacities. It is used as one of the main mechanisms for management and assessment of defense and military structures in the reform process.



By implementing the Operational Capabilities Concept program, a NATO tool which the AFBiH accessed to by declaring its units to the „Pool of Forces“, the intention is to promote capacities and reach satiable level of interoperability, which gives the AFBiH units a chance to take a bigger part in NATO-led operations.

Organization of different exercises for commands and units of AFBiH, and their implementation in cooperation with other institutions and agencies, demonstrates that the AFBiH have reached the satisfactory level of training.

Contemporary security challenges and risks impose the need for constant alert and building ability to answer different types of crises. Therefore, commitment to European and Euro-Atlantic integrations gives BiH numerous tasks related to fulfillment of necessary standards in order to make BiH acceptable partner for



Constant progress in reaching NATO standards



The AFBiH show best results in the frame of peace support actions, evident in the ISAF mission, thus the coalition partners accent their satisfaction with attained competences of AFBiH units. Significant improvement in meeting NATO standards has been made in the activities of demining as well as education and training on all levels of command.

Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina are in charge of Peace Support Operations Training Center (PSOTC), certified by NATO and UN, which guarantees that countries sending their representatives to these trainings will have personnel educated in compliance with NATO standards.

Priorities in the next period will be further affirmation and reinforcement of the AFBiH's contribution to social development, growth of NATO compatible and interoperable structures of the AFBiH and defense capacities responding to country's demands and security system, continuous education in order to reach the required level of capability and efficiency, active involvement in international collective security operations and peace support operations, as well as reinforcement of international defense cooperation.



Contribution to common efforts in peace building, peace keeping and the world stability

Bosnia and Herzegovina's aspiration to become a NATO member country is founded in legislation, commitments and tendency to NATO membership and Euro-Atlantic integrations. The argumentation for inclusion in ISAF mission in Afghanistan, under the NATO leadership, is reinforced by the fact that, participating in this mission, members of AFBiH will have the opportunity for learning and development with the skilled and best-equipped armed forces of the world, and gain experience which will be useful after they return home, as well as in future, during common activities in the frame of membership in NATO.



Bosnia and Herzegovina has displayed its commitment to engage members of the AFBiH in peace support missions. From Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Iraq to Afghanistan, the AFBiH have gained the trust and respect from their allies, and gave their contribution to global efforts in peace building and peace keeping and the stability in the world.



In order for Bosnia and Herzegovina to become a NATO member country, it has to show the ability to share risks and difficulties of peace support operations, as well as other mechanisms of collective security. Members of the AFBiH, who have been in the missions so far, represented Bosnia and Herzegovina and Armed Forces of BiH in the best possible way and proved with their competences that they are capable of handling the biggest challenges in difficult conditions. This is a result of mutual efforts of all of those who were involved in the process of defense reforms, as well as aspiration of a country which once needed military intervention to be able to provide security for others.

Participation in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, and other missions as well, demonstrates readiness of BiH's soldiers to equally participate, with their allies and partners, in complex and responsible tasks in collective security missions. This is the best way to test and raise the level of interoperability and compatibility of the AFBiH with armed forces of NATO member countries and gain important insights and experience in preparation and execution of complex assignments abroad.



Competence, high motivation and discipline of AFBiH members

Armed forces' expert teams of countries helping the members of AFBiH in training for mission in Afghanistan have concluded that the members of AFBiH are fully qualified for the execution of all assignments and necessary procedures for accomplishment of the mission in Afghanistan. Besides the professional and psycho-physical capability of AFBiH members, their high motivation and discipline have made a special impression.

Motivation and competence for mission execution are related to a large number of AFBiH members, who volunteered for participation in this mission.



Participating in peace support missions, BiH has made the most specific step towards the NATO membership. Engaging in Afghanistan, AFBiH members have reached the necessary standards for mission implementation, and the training has been organized according to the standards of the armed forces of NATO member countries. The best have been chosen based on the very specific criteria, such as fighting experience, military skills and physical endurance.





Valuable experiences helpful for improving future operations and armed forces in general

AFBiH members represented Bosnia and Herzegovina and the AFBiH with honor and dignity, and thus proved their competence and capability in fulfilling all the given assignments. All the expectations that the AFBiH are going to be the best promoters and ambassadors of Bosnia and Herzegovina through their engagement are fully justified.



When soldiers and military organizations from different countries cooperate for a longer period of time, in demanding conditions, they gain valuable experience, which can be used to improve their future operations and armed forces in general.

Since 2009, when the first Decision on deploying the AFBiH members to ISAF mission in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has been passed, members of the AFBiH are sent to different areas and zones, with different missions and tasks.



Experiences of the AFBiH officers in the UN missions

The AFBiH's officers were first engaged in UN mission in Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) in 2002.

The AFBiH members perform their assignments as UN observers, through field and staff tasks, in compliance with implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions.

Task realization is done in cooperation with local population, organizing humanitarian aid, reporting on situation in controlled territory, with focus on crisis areas. This mission is a confirmation that a military observer has to be fully prepared, and besides physical competence, he has to be psychologically strong and adaptable.



Fourteen AFBiH members have participated in the UN mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE) since January 2006. This mission ended in July 2008. The AFBiH members, besides knowing they are helping in peace building and peace keeping, accented working in international environment as the biggest motivation for participating in the UNMEE mission, since there were officers from 55 countries.

Meeting local population, working and living with people of different culture, race, customs and behavior is a true fortune.



For participation in the mission AFBiH members got best evaluation, compliments and medals

First rotation of the First contingent of the AFBiH UXO Disposal Unit was deployed to Iraq in 2005. Rotation shifting was done every six months (eight rotations). The AFBiH unit for securing part of the Victoria base in Baghdad was deployed in 2008. With the return of the second, last group, on 15 December 2008, the mission of the AFBiH in operation „Iraqi freedom“ ended. The AFBiH members got the best evaluation, compliments and medals for participation in this mission.

Bosnia and Herzegovina can be proud of its soldiers who were in the mission in Iraq, for they have represented their country abroad in the best manner and made BiH a serious partner, showing potential in getting closer to integration processes, especially those related to future NATO membership.



Assistance to civil authorities in crisis situations

Out of all designated tasks of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, assistance to civil authorities in response to natural and other catastrophes and disasters, by providing direct active interaction with civilians, has been specially recognized.

In these situations, the AFBiH's resources are available to civilians, by providing different ways of aid and support to civil authorities, local bodies and population.

During heavy snowfall, the AFBiH engaged a large number of their personnel in snow removal on more locations throughout BiH. In addition, major engineering machines and motor vehicles of various capacities were employed, which served for transportation of personnel and transport of snow piles to dump depots.



Employing the AFBiH members, units and resources for assisting civil authorities meant engaging manning, as well as engineering machines, for snow removal from the blocked traffic communications and objects of common interest, and engaging the AFBiH personnel for medical aid and medical evacuation, and transportation of food and medicines to inaccessible areas.



Employment of the AFBiH members and a Mi-8 helicopter, which helped civil authorities in fire fighting, is especially emphasized. The AFBiH selflessly implemented their legislative duties and tasks for helping civil authorities in protecting and saving people and material-technical goods in times of natural and other disasters. In this way they helped putting fire under control and preventing further atrocities.



In areas caught by fire, apart from helicopter, the AFBiH members were employed to fight fire in fire sites in BiH, in cooperation with civil authorities for rescue and protection. This clearly displayed the AFBiH's competence and devotion to protect and serve to citizens of BiH when needed.



For the needs of various civil institutions and associations, the AFBiH premises were made available for temporary use. A significant number of material and technical assets was also made available. The AFBiH provided their support in numerous cultural, religious and other events, and provided significant support in organizing large events. In all of the mentioned fields, the AFBiH have demonstrated their readiness and competence and confirmed their social usefulness in a wide range of these and other non-military activities.



Together with engagement of the AFBiH resources (manning, engineering techniques, motor vehicles and other assets), the AFBiH members gave significant contribution by doing different engineering work in the municipalities which needed assistance. They were employed on reconstruction of local roads, as well as building plumbing system for settlements, reconstruction of bridges, building and reconstruction of schools, and other activities.



The AFBiH participated in numerous humanitarian activities, and among those, actions of volunteer blood transfusions have a special place. Likewise, fundraising for humanitarian needs and for those in need are organized, as well as for ill persons' medical expenses. These fundraising actions are organized during preparation of school children and preparation of presents for abandoned and sick children, as well as during other humanitarian activities.



Helicopter units of the AFBiH

The helicopter units greatly assisted civil authorities during natural and other catastrophes and disasters, primarily during snowfalls or fire fighting, as well as during medical evacuation, evacuation from inaccessible areas, search of missing persons and other forms of support.

The majority of the fire sites involved huge forest fires. Apart from using helicopter fire fighting buckets in fire fighting efforts, these units helped to local teams by monitoring fire sites from air and identifying critical areas.

What also needs to be noted is the role of helicopter units in the transportation of fire fighters by air to inaccessible terrains, as well as transportation of food and water to fire fighters in remote and inaccessible spots.



Employing helicopters Mi-8, UH-1 and Gazelle in the municipalities in need, the AFBiH transported people to and from the areas blocked by snow, provided personnel on radio-relay nodes and RTV transmitters, as well as evacuation of civil population and the AFBiH members from hardly accessible areas, medical evacuation, transportation of food, medicines, water and fuel.



One of the AFBiH's important tasks which include the use of helicopter is urgent medical evacuation (MEDAVAC), as well as significant assistance that was given to civil authorities in realization of search and rescue operations (SAR).



Transportation of military and civil delegations by air is also one of the significant tasks, as well as the AFBiH's participation in civil-military exercises with the use of helicopter. The following are worth mentioning too: support to security and rescue forces in training and operations, support in realization of sport events, as well as support in staging of anniversaries, business and cultural events.



Activities of the AFBiH helicopter units is shown in assistance and support to training of law enforcement forces (SIPA) and members of the Mountain Rescue Service, as well as recording from air for different needs.



AFBiH are contributing to safety and economic prosperity of citizens by humanitarian demining

According to the Law on Defense, one of the tasks and obligations of the Armed Forces of BiH is countermine action in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina are accredited and trained to destroy obsolete mines and ammunition, to conduct humanitarian demining using different methods (manual demining, mechanical preparation and use of mine detection dogs), to perform specific activities (technical survey, terrain and building clearance), to raise awareness about mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO), as well as to train demining personnel for countermine actions.



The AFBiH are conducting countermine action operations during the entire year, through demining campaigns in two phases: summer and winter demining campaign, due to prevailing weather conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



The AFBiH are responsible for about 20% of the overall annual demining in BiH.

Humanitarian demining is the most direct way to help the increase of security level and creating conditions for prosperity and economic growth of local communities.

Presentations related to raising mine awareness and mine dangers were organized during demining campaign, with goal to inform local population in areas endangered by mines about recognizing mines and reacting in case of finding one.



**Single professional
Armed Forces - organized,
equipped and trained
according to NATO
standards**

One of the key activities of the AFBiH is planned and organized education, training and specialization of the personnel, with the accent on training programs and plans, and improvement in NATO and Partnership for Peace (PfP) activities, as well as on obligations from international agreements. Officers, non-commissioned officers, soldiers and civilians are attending different courses in BiH and abroad, as well as seminars, conferences and other activities: congresses, competitions and other forms of training.



According to different programs of military support (IMET, IPP, Mil to Mil, BMATT, Marshal Center, PSOTC, OSCE and RACVIAC), a large number of the AFBiH members have been sent to education and training in and out of the country, to learn and improve foreign languages (English, French, German, Greek, Turkish and Italian).

Moreover, when abroad, they are gaining new and usefull knowledge, among which the general staff and command staff improving, military academy, academy for sergeants, academy for non-commissioned officers, school for active non-commissioned officers have special place.



The goal of training and military education in the AFBiH is to produce highly professional and trained officers, non-commissioned officers, soldiers and units, that will be capable to react in a wide range of operations to fulfill demands set by institutions of BiH, which conduct civil command and control over the AFBiH. Its aim is also to develop highly-trained command personnel, that will be capable to adapt to variable circumstances and ensure forehand and appropriate engagement of units in order to successfully implement given missions.



In the system of the AFBiH, members of the AFBiH are given the opportunity for training and military education through basic, collective and institutional training, meaning that the most important activities regarding the training are carried out in the centers of the AFBiH.



Training in the centers of the AFBiH are carried out through giving basic military training for candidates, future PMP in the Center for basic training; individual training for non-commissioned officers and officers in the Section for Military Courses and Section for Foreign languages in the Professional Development Center; simulations of practical combat situations for command levels of battalions and brigades (BBS and JANUS) in the Combat Simulation Center and practical exercises for units including battalion level (CPX, STX, KGB, SIMEX, JANUS, BBS, FTX and LFX) in the Combat Training Center in Manjača, by which the circle is basically closed and learned lessons could be implemented.

Important part of the standardization of the NATO forces is lingual interoperability, which is defined by STANAG 6001 standard. The AFBiH have decided to form their own team for assessment of English language proficiency (STANAG team) in 2008, which will later prove to be a very important step in fulfilling other obligations in the process of Euro-Atlantic integrations. By forming the STANAG team, besides fulfilling one of the Partnership Goals for accession of BiH to NATO Alliance (lingual interoperability), the AFBiH have set the conditions to offer their services to other countries in the region.



In the Combat Training Center the following activities are realized and conducted: rotational exercises with infantry brigades, evaluation of units declared for peace support operations, qualification live ammunition firing at the shooting range with members of infantry brigades and machineguns firing from armored carriers and M-84 tanks. Conducting trainings of the AFBiH units declared for participation in peace support operations is of a great priority for the AFBiH.



While performing complex exercises, the AFBiH members are achieving top results. For this success, the AFBiH give credits to the training which is fundamental for the tasks execution. One of the main goals implemented during the training is to keep motivated, disciplined and physically strong force, ready for realization of all given tasks, and to build and keep individual and collective skills needed for prompt and successful mission execution.





In the AFBiH centers on the training site Manjača, near Banjaluka, infantry brigades of the AFBiH with adjoint units, have conducted Dynamic Response exercises. The goal of these exercises was evaluation and assessment of operative capability and readiness of units and battalion groups to plan and execute operations in real time, in order to achieve necessary level of training.



Closing activity and a culmination of the exercise is firing with artillery and infantry weapons. These exercises are an extension in building interoperability of the AFBiH with the NATO concept of performing exercises. These exercises represent a training crown for infantry



The Peace Support Operations Training Center (PSOTC) was established in 2003, as an international project of eighteen partner nations under the leadership of the United Kingdom. By the end of 2012, it completed its operation in this form, and was incorporated into the AFBiH structure.

Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue to lead the Center with international staff, which will ensure its multinational spirit as one of the basic elements in Center's instruction process. PSOTC was confirmed as a NATO partner center for training and education, which confirms that the training in the Center is compatible with NATO standards and procedures.



Current training barycenter of the AFBiH is focused on four main areas of training: institutional training in centers for training of the AFBiH (according to approved plans and programs in the frame of professional development of the officers and non-commissioned officers in the AFBiH), conducting field exercises with external evaluation, evaluation according to OCC E&F program and joined training for units of the AFBiH and EUFOR.



The AFBiH find significance in realization of three exercises with external evaluation on the Manjača training ground (with participation of 2100 AFBiH members), two OPREH exercises of EUFOR and the AFBiH, and SEL-2 evaluation according to OCC E&F program. During the exercises of external evaluation the AFBiH units were graded with „Combat ready“, which has opened opportunities for final level of evaluation „NEL-2“ and ensured participation of more declared units in this process.



Newly admitted privates in professional military service in the AFBiH

Admission of young soldiers in the AFBiH has been realized since 2008. After the application procedure and training, the most successful candidates sign contracts on admission to professional military service, and are allocated in the AFBiH units, on specific duties.



After the admission, like other professional soldiers, young privates are going through really demanding basic and military-specializing training. The work is filled with discipline, dynamics and continuous training, which makes this call appealing to young people.



Every new generation of soldiers has new challenges, but also a chance for acquiring new knowledge, professional improvement and building strong psycho-physical personalities. By improving themselves as individuals, in professional and every other aspect, these young people give full contribution to building and enforcement of the AFBiH and BiH as a country.



An unit is an organization that seeks team work, because only in that way it can give good results. What makes it special is a collective spirit and friendship born in the military unit, solidarity among the soldiers and helping each others.

Continuation in rejuvenating the personnel is being done through the dynamic admittance of young privates to professional service in the AFBiH, coherent with the dynamics of personnel discharge from the AFBiH. The Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina have made significant steps in the preparation of the process of military personnel transition and asked the members of NATO, EU and other potential donors for active involvement in the NATO Perspektiva Program for discharged members (whose professional military service has ended due to their age).



Process of admittance of the new professional soldiers in the AFBiH and rejuvenating its structure is going to be conducted in the next period as well.





It is noticable that more women have applied for professional army. Currently, there are 5% of women in the AFBiH, and this number is in constant growth, with a goal to reach 10% of women in the AFBiH.



Women in AFBiH have showed that they can be as successful in the army as men.

The AFBiH are contributing to better regional and cooperation between BiH soldiers and soldiers of the EU and NATO member countries

The Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina are actively and equally participating in the work of regional forums and initiatives, which was recognized by countries in the region, as well as partner countries outside of it, which is considered to be very important to global security.

The Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been successful organizers and hosts in conducting international civil-military logistic, telecommunication and other exercises. Participants in those exercises have shown high level of interoperability in the plan of implementing Partnership Goals in multinational environment and reaching standards needed for efficient tasks execution as a part of the peace support operations and NATO-led operations.



Successful preparation and organization is a proof that the AFBiH, with constant efforts and hard work, are ready to conduct demanding integrational and international exercises. Exercises have been performed on locations of the AFBiH, with a large number of participants from BiH, regional countries, NATO and Partnership for Peace member countries and leading international organizations in domain of security and defense.

As an organizer in conducting international military exercises, the AFBiH have given significant contribution to regional cooperation, as well as to cooperation of BiH soldiers and soldiers of the EU and NATO member countries, which is the unique opportunity for gaining new knowledge and experiences, but also it contributes to testing the AFBiH in practical mission implementation, defined by law.



The AFBiH members have participated in important international military exercises in other countries. Participation in these activities created more benefits, such as reaching higher level of interoperability of the AFBiH and NATO (common standards regarding the structure of planning, training, equipment, communicational procedures and others). The AFBiH have made a large step forward in drafting and implementing the planning procedures, realization and analysis of exercises in compliance with NATO standards and their implementation in training system of the AFBiH, so that today, they are planning military exercises in the same way as NATO partner countries are.

The Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina are cooperating with many international organizations and institutions, but the emphasis is on the support given by NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo and EUFOR, while a very close cooperation is being established with other international subjects, through bilateral and unilateral agreements.





Regardless of complex challenges, the AFBiH have accomplished valuable and visible results, which are displayed in fulfilling international commitments, assisting civil structures and authorities, especially during natural and other catastrophes and disasters, and humanitarian demining of the territory of BiH. Significant improvement has been made in the process of reaching NATO norms and standards in working and promoting interoperability and compatibility with NATO partners.



The AFBiH have proved the importance of defense and security structure in BiH, through successful professional mission implementation and task execution. The evaluation given by NATO and EU experts shows that the AFBiH are one of the institutions in BiH, which with hard work have displayed its dedication to Euro-Atlantic integration.



Publisher: Public Relations Office of the Ministry of Defense

For publisher: Uma Sinanović

Photography: Archive of the Ministry of Defense and units of the Armed Forces BiH

Journalist – Associate: Major Amela Mostarlić

Translator: Ardanela Ridžalović

DTP: In cooperation with EUFOR (Jasmin Zeherović)

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