

**March 05<sup>th</sup>, 2012****Issue no. 2**

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# ROMANIAN MILITARY NEWSLETTER

**Annual Report of the Ministry of National Defence (MoND) for 2011**

## Special points of interests:

- Annual Report of the Ministry of National Defence (MoND) for 2011
- The Romanian Armed Forces, in support of the population affected by the snow falls and snow storms
- Military ceremony to mark the return of 495<sup>th</sup> Căpitan Ștefan Șoverth Infantry Battalion from Afghanistan



Minister of National Defence Gabriel Oprea addressing the audience

On Monday, February 20, the Ministry of National Defence presented the Annual Report of its activity for year 2011, at its Headquarters.

After the presentation of the Annual Report made by the Chief of General Staff, lieutenant general Ștefan Dănilă, and the invitees' speeches, the Minister of National Defence Gabriel Oprea and Prime Minister Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu gave their allocutions also.

"I was appointed ahead the Ministry of National Defense 26 months ago in the difficult context of the worldwide economic crisis. The budgets provided to our ministry during this period were insufficient. Year 2011 did not make an exception either. The Romanian Armed Forces (FAR) has gone through a difficult year as it has been for all the Romanians. We have firmly gone through this year and with the strong desire to accomplish the goals established with our citizens and allies. We succeeded in having an efficient and transparent administration of our resources with careful consideration, skills and permanent respect towards the Romanian people. These results are not the merit of a single person but of an entire team. This team is made up of competent and serious people that place the national interest above theirs", declared the Minister of National Defense Gabriel Oprea, outlining that the priority of his mandate have been and are the people.

"The Romanian Armed Forces gave in 2011 and has continuously given in this hard winter of 2012 an example of discipline and professionalism but also of solidarity. I wish this example were followed by our entire society, because, - as we notice throughout our history – we will succeed in getting over the hardest moments

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Minister of National Defence Gabriel Oprea

and trials if we (the Romanians) are united and work together ", added Minister Oprea.

He thanked all the MoND militaries and civilian personnel who, along the time, had turned the Romanian Armed Force into an echelon of professionalism and efficiency, a fundamental institution respected by all Romanians.

The increased contribution to ensuring the regional security and stability is a constant preoccupation for Romania, a frontier state not only for the European Union but also for NATO, the regions significantly connected to this goal being the Extended Area of the Black Sea and the Western Balkans, stated Minister Oprea. "A special attention was paid to the Strategic Partnerships with the USA, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France, Italy, Turkey, Poland, Hungary as well as to the cooperation with the Moldavian Republic and Chinese Popular Republic's Armed Forces. We continued by participating and supporting the multi-lateral formats and regional cooperation initiatives such as Tisa, Romanian-Hungarian Battalion, BLACKSEAFOR as well as Black Sea Harmony operation. For the first time after the II World War, the Romanian militaries have deployed outside the border a brigade and two maneuver battalions which proves the increase of our armed force's capability of acting at tactical and operational level ", explained Minister Gabriel Oprea.

At the same time, Minister Oprea emphasized that our participation in Afghanistan reached the maximum level not only with regard to the number of deployed militaries (1.829) and the complexity of the assigned missions, but also from the stand point of its support capability.

"According to the international commitments assumed by our country, the Romanian Armed Force participated in NATO 'UNIFIED PROTECTOR' operation, 'Regele Ferdinand' Frigate (...) successfully performing in the Mediterranean Sea weapons embargo missions on Libya", stated Minister Gabriel Oprea.

According to our minister of defence, year 2012 will consist in an increase of the military component of Romania's Strategic Partnership with the USA": « Romania's security warranty significantly increased being at its highest level ever due the placing of the US antimissile shield system on the Romanian territory. The antimissile shield is a valuable contribution to the increase of NATO capability in protecting the populations and territories of the member states against the missile attacks».

In the following period, the Romanian Armed Forces will be firmly engaged in the accomplishment of the international military obligations assumed by our country in order to adapt the legislative framework to further allow the promoting of Romania's military interests within the European and Euro-Atlantic community and to continue RAF's transformation process.

Prime Minister Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu told the militaries that he is mainly aware of the issues they are confronting with: "I'm addressing you not only as the person that is ahead of the Romanian Government today

Prime Minister Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu  
addressing the audience



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but also an ordinary citizen. (...) I am mainly aware of the problems you are facing and I'm convinced that-after going through a difficult year-my debt is to give special attention to the personnel of this ministry and their needs. (...) I hope that in the near future we can identify solutions to the most stringent problems of this ministry, of the Romanian Armed Force, generally speaking".

« You continued participating in the operations conducted in Afghanistan together with our NATO partners in 2011 and in the international effort of placing the weapons embargo on Libya. And I mention only two of these most visible responsibilities of the Romanian Armed Forces. You contributed to the consolidation of Romania's image worldwide as an authentic, responsible and predictable security provider (...) You will keep being in the first line in the war against terrorism, we will enlarge Romania's contribution to the European Defence and Security Policy. And we need your personal involvement in order to accomplish these objectives in 2012. Until you become the best ambassadors of Romania, you are patriot citizens for me, and the example you set deserves to be followed by the others", added Prime Minister Ungureanu.

The Minister of Justice, Cătălin Marian Predoiu, the Minister of Administration and Internal Affairs, Gabriel Berca, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cristian Diaconescu, chairmen of Parliamentary Boards for Defense, Public Order and National Security, deputy Costică Canacheu and senator Teodor Meleşcanu, Chief of Department for National Security from the Presidential Administration, the presidential advisor Iulian Fota, the Director of the Romanian Intelligence Service, George Cristian Maior, other Members of Parliament and state representatives attended the activity organized at the Ministry of National Defence Headquarters. The chiefs of the MoND central structures, the chiefs of the Services, generals and officers, commanders of formations and units, as well as the military and civilian personnel of the General Staff's have also been present at this activity.

### **The Romanian Armed Forces, in support of the population affected by the snow falls and snow storms**



Food packages being unloaded from IAR- 330 PUMA helicopter,  
in Vrancea County

Between January, 25<sup>th</sup> and February, 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Ministry of National Defence carried out Land, Air and Naval operations in support of the people affected by massive snow falls and snow storms in many areas of the country.

For a month, over 8,000 militaries had conducted over 750 missions in order to save human lives, clear the communication lines of snow, unblock and evacuate vehicles, as well as ground, air, and naval transportations of people and goods by using 1,259 ground, air and naval equipment items. Many of these militaries had taken part in two, three or even more such rescue missions.

Throughout February 6<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup>, "GROZAVUL" Naval Rescue Tug Boat transported over 260 passengers and 130 tons of food and materiel at the

same time accomplishing its basic mission, by breaking the ice between Tulcea and Sulina harbors. The RF 328 Riverine Tug made 60 transports between Tulcea and Tudor Vladimirescu and transferred 1,200 passengers, medical teams and sick people during the circulation interdiction availability on the Danube for commercial ships.

On Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the last 75 tons of food and goods donated to the centers established in Bucharest, Câmpia Turzii and Focșani were delivered to the localities affected by the bad weather conditions from Buzău and Vrancea.

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Since the issue of the first weather forecast warning in January, Minister Gabriel Oprea urged the prefects, the chairmen of the county councils and the mayors to ask for the direct help of the garrison commanders and military units. Thus, the commanders of the military units throughout the territory did not need to have the approval of the further echelons in order to act, the clear order of minister being timely issued to all garrisons: "The Romanian Armed Forces will immediately take actions, as many times as necessary, in order to save the lives and goods of the locals".

By order of the the Minister of National Defence Gabriel Oprea, a coordination center was established at the 90<sup>th</sup> Airlift Flotilla in Otopeni with a view to creating an air bridge to supply food to the population in localities isolated by the massive snow falls and storms.

The food was transported with the help of IAR-330 PUMA Helicopters, a C-27J SPARTAN aircraft and C 130 Hercules aircrafts belonging to the Romanian Air Force, the humanitarian aid being given to the endangered population through the care of the citizens and certain associations and companies of the food producers.

The personnel of the Ministry of National Defense has collected and transported the material goods donated both by companies and citizens to coordination and transit centers for further ground transportation and airlift organized at national level; these centers have managed the 55 collection centers established in over 40 counties throughout the territory.

Over 900 tons of food, clothing items and other goods of foremost importance have been collected and distributed so far. Thus, the airlifts have been executed by using aircrafts of 90<sup>th</sup> Airlift Flotilla, 86<sup>th</sup> Air Flotilla Fetești and 95<sup>th</sup> Air Flotilla Bacău; the ground tranportations have been made by formations and units subordinated to the Land Forces Staff, Air Force Staff, Joint Logistic Command and Communication and Information Technology Command.

"The military act in solidarity, to be 24/24 side by side their colleagues from the Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs. This is an exceptional act of solidarity. We are NATO military that conduct successful operations not only in the theaters of operations but here, at home, as well, wherever we are needed" Minister Gabriel Oprea declared, on February 11<sup>th</sup>, during the working visit he made with the Prime Minister Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu and the Minister of Administration and Internal Affairs Gabriel Berca in several localities in Vrancea and Buzău counties.



Intervention for clearing roads of snow in the area of Slava  
Cercheză, Tulcea County

### **Military ceremony to mark the return of 495<sup>th</sup> Căpitan Ștefan Șoverth Infantry Battalion from Afghanistan**

On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Land Forces Staff organized a military ceremony to mark return of 495<sup>th</sup> Căpitan Ștefan Șoverth Infantry Battalion from Afghanistan, with the participation of the Minister of National Defence Gabriel Oprea. The Chief of General Staff, lieutenant general Ștefan Dănilă, generals and officers of the ministry's central structures and Services as well as members of the militaries' families were also present at the activity.

After the solemn call and the celebration of the mess, Minister Gabriel Oprea welcomed the militaries, emphasizing the fact that Romanians once again proved they fully deserve the respect and appreciation of the entire world, due to the way they acted in the theater. "Your presence in the Afghan theater of operations together with the other structures of the Romanian Armed Forces stand for a part of the firm response Romania gives to the North-Atlantic Alliance's request in order to continue ensuring the security and stability effort in Afghanistan", stated the



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Minister of National Defence Gabriel Oprea, reviewing the troops

minister of defence, who added that: “We thus honored our commitment and we raised to the standards of an active security provider. Your commanders’ skill and competence in conducting the operations together with your fighting abilities were the main factors that led to your success”.

Gabriel Oprea reminded the audience that the safety of the militaries acting in the theaters of operations - where they undergo the highest dangers and risks - was his prime concern since the beginning of his mandate. The Minister of National Defence sent Corporal Ion Lucian Leuştean, who was seriously injured during his mission in Afghanistan (currently hospitalized at the Military Emergency Hospital), and his family a support and encouragement message.

Gabriel Oprea emphasized the fact that the medical team who takes care of the corporal makes all its effort to improve and recover his health.

When referring to the activity of the militaries deployed in the theater of operation, Minister Oprea said: You accomplished your mission assigned in the theater of operations in a fully responsible and professional manner, by proving your correctness in the relation with our partners and allies. Romania is proud of you and I am congratulating today - in the name of all our comrades and Romanian - those who serve the country and the national colours with faith and honor.

The 610 militaries of 495<sup>th</sup> Căpitan Ștefan Șoverth Infantry Battalion were part of 1st Argedava Mechanized Brigade, which acted under ISAF command for six months. The Romanian militaries executed over 3,600 high risk reconnaissance and surveillance missions, IED and insurgent attack counteracting missions among which 2,400 were on foot patrol ones. The humanitarian aid missions and the 52 projects developed in support of the local population in order to repair the schools, rehabilitate the humanitarian centers and infrastructure and provide potable water were also of outmost importance.