

## President of Latvia in Rēzekne: National military defence of the eastern border area underwrite the secure economic development of the region

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On 19 April, President Edgars Rinkēvičs convened a meeting of the President's Military Council (Council) in Rēzekne to discuss the National Armed Forces (NAF) support to local authorities and allied forces. The Council members, chaired by the President of Latvia, met with the heads of eleven municipalities of the border area to discuss ongoing reinforcement measures for the military protection of Latvia's eastern border. During the visit, President Rinkēvičs also met with the National Guard 3rd Latgale Brigade soldiers and national guards and visited the NAF bases in Rēzekne and Lūznava.

A meeting of the President's Military Council convened by E. Rinkēvičs was held at the premises of the Headquarters of the National Guard 3rd Latgale Brigade in Rēzekne. The Council discussed the infrastructure, support logistics and capability development for hosting Allied forces. Canada has committed to deploy up to 2 000 troops in Latvia by 2026 and to lead an Allied force brigade in Latvia. The first exercise and combat readiness assessment of this brigade is scheduled for the autumn of this year. Latvia has also committed to providing host nation support, including the establishment of a new military training ground "Sēlija".

At the Council meeting, the President of Latvia was briefed on the NAF cooperation with local authorities to provide civil protection measures and contingency plans in cases of military threats. Such plans were to be developed in all municipalities by January of this year, and an annual test exercise cycle must be launched to test these plans in cooperation with the NAF.

The President of Latvia extended an invitation to the heads of 11 municipalities in the eastern border region of Latvia – Augšdaugava Municipality, Alūksne Municipality, Balvi Municipality, Daugavpils, Gulbene Municipality, Krāslava Municipality, Līvāni Municipality, Ludza Municipality, Preiļi Municipality, Rēzekne, Rēzekne Municipality – to a meeting with the members of the Council. The meeting provided an opportunity for local governments to hear the NAF action plans for ensuring the defence of the

Latvian territory and population from the very "first centimetre" and to discuss effective cooperation in the reinforcement of the military infrastructure in the border area.

"We must build up our capabilities, raise our readiness to host allied forces and establish defence positions so that our strength deters any desires to test it. The superiority of Latvia's defensive positions must instil confidence that we neither face military threat today, nor in the future. This requires active development of capabilities and infrastructure, but it is equally important to work closely with local authorities, both in constructing defensive lines and in providing civil protection to build a comprehensive national defence posture. National military defence in the eastern border area should not only provide security for the residents, but also underwrite the secure economic development of the region," emphasised E. Rinkēvičs.

During the visit, the President of Latvia met with the soldiers and national guards of the Headquarters of the National Guard 3rd Latgale Brigade, 32nd Infantry Battalion and 36th Combat Support Battalion. E. Rinkēvičs got acquainted with the tasks of the units, service conditions and their development plans at the NAF military bases in Rēzekne and Lūznava. The President commended the combat capabilities of the units and expressed gratitude for their commitment to the defence and security of the country.



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