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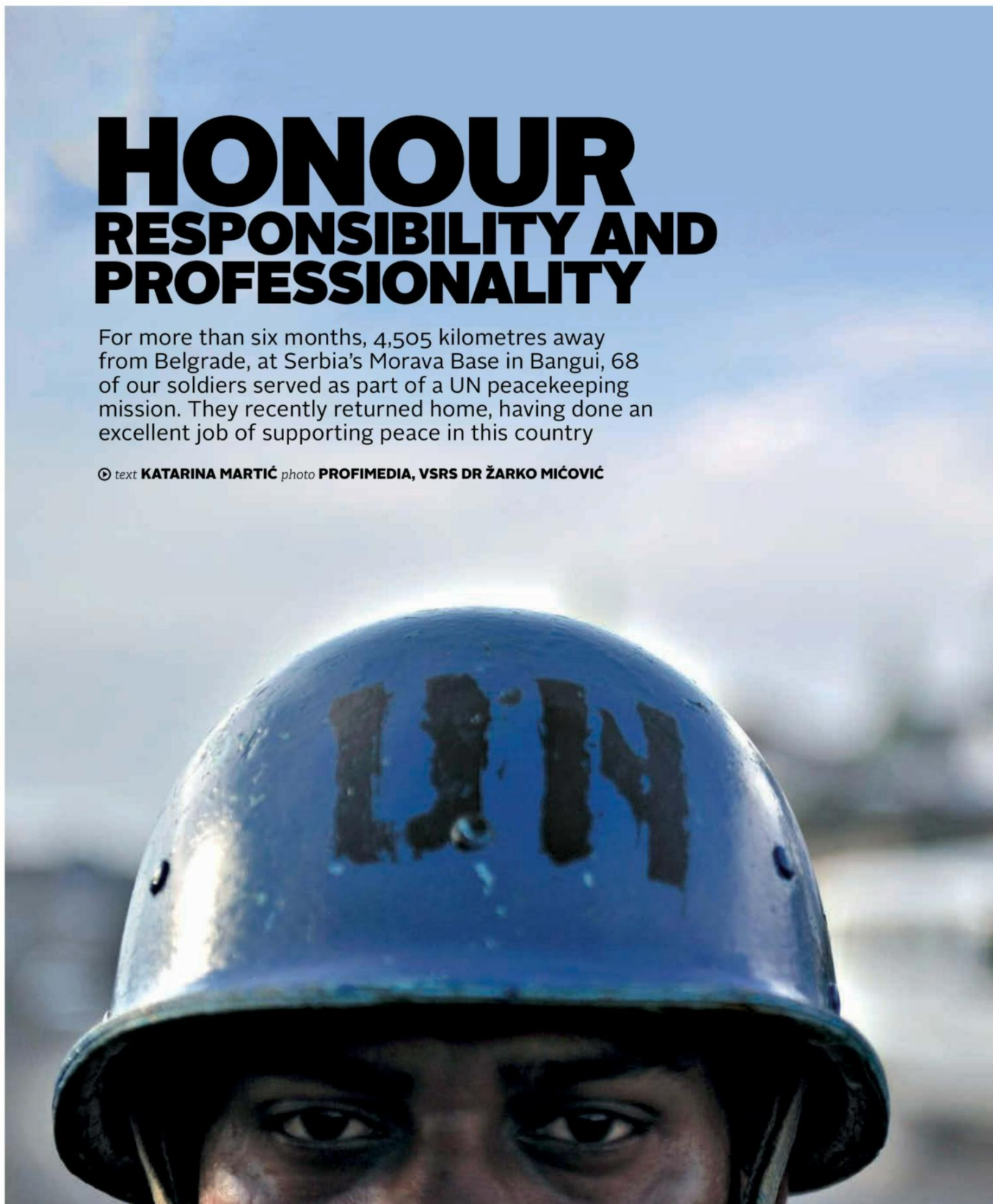
Strana: 42,43,44

Members of the Serbian Army return

HONOUR RESPONSIBILITY AND PROFESSIONALITY

For more than six months, 4,505 kilometres away from Belgrade, at Serbia's Morava Base in Bangui, 68 of our soldiers served as part of a UN peacekeeping mission. They recently returned home, having done an excellent job of supporting peace in this country

© text **KATARINA MARTIĆ** photo **PROFIMEDIA, VSRS DR ŽARKO MIČOVIĆ**





n from the Central African Republic



contingent of the Serbian Army of Serbia, from the second rotation, which had spent in recent months engaged as part of the UN mission in the Central African

Republic (MINUSCA), arrived in Serbia a few days ago. They were met at Belgrade's Nikola Tesla Airport by Deputy Chief of the Serbian Armed Forces General Staff, Lieutenant General Jovica Draganić, Deputy Commander of Joint Operations Command, Major General Slavoljub Janićijević, and Head of the Centre for Peace Operations, Colonel Milivoje Pajović. Some 68 of them spent more than six months located 4,505 kilometres away from Belgrade, at Serbia's Morava Base in Bangui. General Draganić welcomed them home and congratulated them on the successful completion of their mission of providing support for peace in the Central African Republic.

THIRD ROTATION DEPARTS

- You have performed your duty honourably, responsibly and professionally, to the pride of the Republic of Serbia and the Serbian Army, said the Deputy Chief of the General Staff.

Contingent Commander Colonel Goran Radosavljević noted that the mission in the Central African Republic was very complex.

- MINUSCA, after a year, is firmly "standing on its feet", as is the military component of the mission. I would mention the Senegalese general who has been at the head of the military component the last two months, because he importantly advanced the security situation and it will certainly impact on the entire mission and our members who have gone to Bangui under the auspices of the third rotation, announced Colonel Radosavljević.

Members of the Serbian Armed Forces were involved in the treatment and care of military and civilian patients and medical evacuations by air to Kenya, Uganda, Cameroon and the Central African Republic. They were resident in Bangui during the political and security crisis in the country. All members were awarded UN medals during the mission.

The third rotation has now also headed to the heart of the African continent – 68 members of the Serbian contingent composed of a logistics unit, Military Hospital level 2, which represents the main force of the contingent, and a three-member command unit.

The international community will seek even more ways to engage the Serbian

FACTS

- 336 soldiers from Serbia are involved in peacekeeping operations worldwide;
- Wages are not the same everywhere, with earnings partly provided by Serbia and partly by international organisations.
- UN and EU operational zones currently include 223 members of the Serbian Army's ground forces - in Cyprus, Lebanon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Somalia, Ivory Coast and the Central African Republic.
- 45 members of the Army of Serbia, 37 of whom hail from Kruševac's 246th NBC Battalion, are spending six months in Cyprus.
- Serbia has been participating in this peacekeeping mission since 2011, under the auspices of the Hungarian-Slovakian contingent, and this is the ninth rotation.
- The UN's multinational operation in Cyprus was established 51 years ago in order to prevent conflict between local Greek and Turkish communities.

📍 *In Somalia danger also comes from the water*

DOCTOR MIĆOVIĆ RESCUED A PILOT WHOSE LEG HAD BEEN BITTEN OFF BY A SHARK

➡ Lieutenant Colonel Doctor Žarko Mićović saved the life of a South African chopper pilot in Somalia who had lost his leg in a shark attack off the coast of Mogadishu.

- My task was to organise medical care for members of the mission," said Dr Mićović, a specialist general practitioner. We were not permitted to mix with the local population and we only took care of people from the EU in the case that they were attacked. Such an attack happened only once, when a bomb was planted under an armoured vehicle, but nobody was left seriously wounded – says Mićović. - However, it once occurred that an Italian came running in to tell me that a white man had lost his leg. I expected someone who had fallen on some rocks and ripped his leg. I went with a technician and we saw three local men carrying a man with no leg. He told us that he was a member of the UN. We immediately bound his leg, carried him to our hospital and operated on him, thereby saving his life. That white South African man, aged 35, had been a helicopter pilot for the UN mission – says Mićović.

Armed Forces, noted Lt. Gen. Frederick Ben Hodges, commander of U.S. Army Europe, recently. Speaking about the level of training of Serbian troops, General Hodges pointed out that, from what has been shown to him, he "sees that the Serbian Army places a lot of stock in training and allocates significant resources for that purpose".

MULTINATIONAL EXERCISES

- The Army of Serbia not only trains its own forces, but also helps in the training of the forces of other countries for missions in areas such as peacekeeping operations, while at the same time it participates each year in multinational exercises. Serbian



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troops are eager for international missions, whether they join them as medical workers in Africa or peacekeepers in Lebanon. And the level of their training also bears witness to that. The fact that they provide their own people with such opportunities shows very clearly how well prepared the Serbian armed forces are currently. The U.S. Army is proud to work with the Army of Serbia in this way to improve its capabilities, as well as working on their bilateral cooperation – says General Hodges.

The U.S. commander says that the Serbian Army has committed itself to many joint military events with the U.S. and NATO in the coming year.

- Events are planned for 2017 and the following years. Serbia also continues to provide forces for major multinational exercises at the Joint Multinational Centre in Germany – said Hodges.

WHICH ARMY IS THE REAL ONE?

Captain Jovica Tepavac was in the Ivory Coast from April 2013 to April 2014, serving as logistics planning officer in the command of the UN mission in the Ivory Coast, UNOCI.

- The aim of the mission is to oversee the establishment of peace following the latest armed conflict, which broke out in 2011, and the mission then numbered 8,000 troops and around 4,000 civilians, a total of 12,000 people from 46 countries.

- It was reported as though that was a war between Christians and Muslims, but in my opinion that was a war between rich and poor. There are enormous differences between the rich and the poor. Paramilitaries fought there; it often isn't known which army is the real one, and sometimes it isn't even known who is president," says Tepavac.

He spent most of his time in Abidjan, the largest city in the Ivory Coast, which has a population of 3.5 million.

- Abidjan does not represent the true face of Africa, as it is a modern city with its own infrastructure, shopping malls and all conditions for a normal life, unlike other parts of the Ivory Coast. I was also tasked with touring all the camps of the Ivory Coast mission once every three months, so I toured the whole country," says Tepavac.



Results recognised

SERBIAN PEACEKEEPERS IN LEBANON DECORATED WITH UN MEDALS

At the Miguel de Cervantes Base in Lebanon, in the East Sector of the multinational UNIFIL operation, medals were awarded to blue helmets from Serbia, Spain, El Salvador and Brazil. Some 177 Serbian peacekeepers are currently engaged in the UNIFIL mission in Lebanon, making it the biggest single contingent of the Army of Serbia. In recognition of results achieved in the execution of missions within this peacekeeping operation, UNIFIL commander Major General Luciano Portolano decorated the Commander of the Serbian contingent, Major Vladan Parezanović. Medals for staff officers, members of the Element of national support platoon for support, were presented by Brazilian Rear Admiral Flavio Macedo, while medals were awarded to members of the infantry platoon by Indonesian Colonel Yotanabey AM and Lebanese Colonel Talib Hanadeh. The UNIFIL Commander thanked the members of the awarded contingents on their exceptional results in the execution of missions, and thanked their governments for their willingness and ability to maintain and strengthen the capacities of multinational operations.

He says that the Ivory Coast's biggest problem is malarial mosquitoes, but he fortunately avoided malaria, while one officer from Uruguay contracted malaria as many as 15 times in a year.

- In traffic there are no existing rules, there are no driving schools and everyone drives however they like, and when the power goes out at night and the traffic lights don't work, complete chaos descends in traffic,"

says this Serbian Army captain.

Tepavac recalls an episode in a hotel in Daloa, a city in central Ivory Coast, where he ordered chicken and was served meat that tasted disgusting. He asked the waiter what he had given him and was told he had been served the meat of the agouti, an animal resembling a giant rat, which natives often sell beside roads, holding it by the tail as blood drips to the ground. ■

