

NATO's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

NATO Allies stand in solidarity in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is an unprecedented global challenge, which affects us all.

NATO and Allied military personnel have been supporting civilian efforts - providing military airlift, setting up field hospitals, sharing medical expertise, and helping to develop innovative responses. This is helping to save lives.

While we continue to take all the necessary measures to protect our armed forces, NATO's operational readiness remains undiminished. The Alliance continues to deliver effective deterrence and defence. Our forces remain vigilant and prepared to respond to any threat.

Measures in place

The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) is NATO's main civil emergency response mechanism.

The Centre operates on a 24/7 basis, coordinating requests and offers of assistance. It is helping to coordinate assistance, including medical and financial support.

In June 2020, NATO Defence Ministers decided on a new Operations Plan to ensure that the Alliance is ready to help Allies and partners.

We have established a NATO Pandemic Response Trust Fund to enable us to quickly acquire medical supplies and services. The NATO International Staff is managing the NATO Pandemic Response Trust Fund.

The NATO Pandemic Response Trust Fund maintains an established stockpile of medical equipment and supplies to be able to provide immediate relief to Allies or partners in need. The NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) is managing the purchase and storage of relief items for the stockpile in the NSPA Southern Operational Centre in Taranto, Italy. Romania has also offered to host warehousing facilities.

Several Allies have made donations of medical equipment to the stockpile, including ventilators from the United States, Hungary and Slovakia, personal protective equipment from Germany and surface disinfectant from Latvia.

Throughout October and November 2020 NATO Allies Albania, Czech Republic, Montenegro and North Macedonia received 200 ventilators from the stockpile. The Czech Republic received additional assistance with the deployment of military medical personnel from the United Kingdom and Germany. And a total of around 1, 5 Million EUR in medical supplies is being provided to Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia. This follows requests for assistance from the four countries to NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre.

Since the beginning of 2021, the EADRCC has coordinated new donations to Allies and partners in need. Most recently, Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro received sets of ventilator supplies to sustain the operation



NATO delivers ventilators to the Czech Republic. Prague, 27 October 2020



NATO delivers ventilators to Montenegro. Podgorica, 4 November 2020



NATO delivers ventilators to North Macedonia. Skopje, 30 October 2020

of the ventilators received from NATO's stockpile earlier in 2020. Additionally, Slovakia donated and delivered four pulmonary ventilators to North Macedonia in response to an urgent request for assistance received in January 2021.

Sixteen Allies have already made financial contributions to the NATO Pandemic Response Trust Fund, including Albania, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Slovakia, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Some financial contributions are being used to deliver relief to our hardest-hit partners, including by providing packages of assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, the Republic of Moldova, Tunisia and Ukraine.

Cooperating with International Organisations

As part of a coordinated approach, NATO is working closely with other international organisations, including the European Union, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Health Organization and the United Nations World Food Programme.

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, we have strengthened our cooperation with the European Union. NATO and EU staffs have been exchanging information on steps taken by both organisations to support NATO Allies and partners during the crisis. This ensures that our efforts are coherent, complementary and transparent.

Following a global request by the United Nations for airlift support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in July 2020 flights coordinated by NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre transported a field hospital from Europe to Accra, Ghana. The flights were operated by the United Kingdom Royal Air Force.

With commercial flights disrupted and the cost of cargo flights having escalated, this support came at a crucial time.



The United Kingdom delivers a field hospital to West Africa following UN global call for support in July 2020

How NATO is helping to curb the pandemic

Since the start of the crisis, NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre has coordinated requests from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and 18 NATO and partner countries, garnering more than 130 responses in return.

Logistics support provided by the NATO Support and Procurement Agency has helped Allies and partners achieve economies of scale in purchasing COVID-19 relief material.

The NATO Support and Procurement Agency has also helped Allies and partners in acquiring and transporting urgent relief items to countries in need through the Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC), and the Strategic Airlift International Solution (SALIS) programmes, as well as through commercial chartered flights and sealift. In total, around 1,500 tonnes of medical supplies and equipment were transported to Allied countries, including Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and the Netherlands, as well as Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany and Poland.

In the first half of 2020, almost half a million troops from NATO militaries have supported civilian efforts, building field hospitals, helping with testing, transporting patients, distributing medical equipment, conducting repatriation, helping with decontamination, making available laboratories, quarantine facilities, establishing triage centres and supporting border security across the Alliance.

Military forces from NATO Allies:

- flew more than 350 flights to transport medical personnel;
- transported more than 1,000 tonnes of equipment;
- helped build almost 100 field hospitals and over 25,000 treatment beds.



Albanian military officials collect 60 ventilators from the NATO stockpile at the NSPA Southern Operational Centre in Taranto, Italy on 16 October

Since the start of the pandemic, the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre coordinated critical support for several Allies and partners in need. Deliveries of vital medical supplies from NATO Allies and partners in the first half of the year have eased the burden on the national healthcare systems and helped to save lives. Allies also helped each other through bilateral forms of assistance. Spain for example received support including from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland and Turkey. Italy received support including from Albania, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Poland, Turkey and the United States.



Spain delivers critical medical aid to Iraq in August 2020

Critical assistance has also been delivered to NATO's newest members Montenegro and North Macedonia. Montenegro received support including from Estonia, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the United States; and North Macedonia received assistance including from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Turkey and the United States. Most recently, Germany has provided support to Portugal with medical staff and equipment.

In addition to preventive measures taken at NATO installations around the globe, NATO and Allies are helping local authorities in locations where we are deployed, including Afghanistan, Kosovo and Iraq:

- The NATO-led Resolute Support Mission has helped to provide critical supplies to Afghan security forces in 14 provinces, including masks, gloves, sanitizers and personal protective equipment. The United States has provided 15.6 million USD of assistance to Afghanistan in support to surveillance, laboratories improvements, case-management, infection prevention and control, community engagement, and technical assistance, as well as 5 million USD of assistance for displaced communities.

In June 2020 Turkey delivered protective masks and other medical equipment, including ventilators and test kits to the Afghan health authorities.

- In coordination with the NATO Mission Iraq, Spain delivered essential medical equipment to Iraq in July and August 2020. The deliveries consisted of oxygen masks, personal protective equipment as well as medicines and other items. Turkey and Poland also delivered assistance to Iraq in June and July including ventilators, testing kits, medicines and other items.
- In April KFOR donated personal protective equipment to hospitals in Pristina and Gracanica and delivered more than 50 donations of food and clothing to 14 Kosovo municipalities, in coordination with local charities and the Red Cross of Kosovo, while the United States led KFOR Regional Command East delivered gloves, face masks and other medical supplies to the Mayors of Mitrovica North and South in Kosovo. In May 2020 the Polish military contingent operating with KFOR distributed sanitary and personal protection equipment to the Health Institutions in Kosovo, as part of NATO Allies' response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In November 2020, Hungary donated 50,000 face masks and 5,000 protective suits to the Health institutions in Kosovo. Family health centres located in Kacanik and Elez Han received from KFOR's Italian military contingent medical equipment, including oxygen machines.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, testing has been an essential tool in tackling transmission. In order to help protecting our troops and civilian personnel deployed in NATO-led operations, the NATO Support and Procurement Agency delivered two COVID-19 testing laboratories to the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission as well as to the Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission, in May and in September 2020 respectively. Over 15 000 tests have been conducted by these two laboratories in 2020.

Support to NATO partner countries

NATO and individual Allies and partners have also coordinated deliveries of aid to partners such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine and others.

For example, in the last few months, Bosnia and Herzegovina received assistance including from personnel from NATO Headquarters Sarajevo, from Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and from NATO's partner Austria.

The Republic of Moldova received assistance including from Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, the United States and from NATO's partner Austria.



The Republic of Moldova receives support from Romania and other Allies in May 2020

Georgia received assistance from Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Slovak Republic, the United Kingdom and the United States and the United States, and from partner Israel.

Ukraine received assistance including from Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, the Slovak Republic, the United Kingdom and the United States (bilaterally).

Serbia received bilateral assistance including from Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Turkey and the United States, and from partners Austria and Israel.

Research and Innovation

NATO is supporting innovation through research and scientific collaboration on COVID-19. For example, the NATO Science & Technology Organization has tapped into its network of 6,000 defence scientists through the NATO Chief Scientist's Challenge. Launched in April, the Challenge tasked Alliance researchers with identifying solutions to some of the most pressing challenges posed by COVID-19. More than 40 projects are now being taken forward, addressing topics such as understanding and countering pandemic disinformation, as well as improving military training for pandemic relief operations.

Furthermore, the NATO Science & Technology Organization's Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation directly supported the US state of Connecticut in developing a modelling capability to help forecast the spread of COVID-19.

Through the NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme, Italian and Swiss scientists are collaborating on a NATO supported project to develop rapid COVID-19 diagnostics.

More information: <https://www.nato.int/covid19>

Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC):

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_117757.htm

NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA):

<https://www.nspa.nato.int/en/index.htm>

NATO Science and Technology Organisation (STO)

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_88745.htm

NATO Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation (CMRE)

<https://www.cmre.nato.int/rockstories-blog-display/528-cmre-covid19-model>

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