

# Exercise: Kosovo Resolve

20th – 24th March 2023, Kosovo International Search and Rescue Training Centre (SARITC).

Search and Rescue Assistance in Disasters (SARAID) is proud to have taken part in a European Association of Civil Protection Volunteer Teams (EVOLSAR) exercise held at the Kosovo International Search and Rescue Training Centre, a short trip from Pristina.

9 Teams including SARAID (6 EVOLSAR member teams and 2 associated member teams) were on site for 5 days of training and exercises as well as team building and cultural experiences.

Taking advantage of the excellent facilities at SARITC the team spent the first day on the climbing rig as well as practicing mechanical advantage systems and horizontal transport systems. The evening was spent on familiarisation with the centre's tools and equipment, this turned into a teaching session with three other teams.



Day 2 started with an offsite search and rescue exercise at the country's powerplant. SARAID formed one section with the addition of the K9 NISAR (N Ireland) and 4 from ANDA from Turkey. We were given an area of industrial scrap and some buildings to search, 2 casualties were found and recovered safely.

Afterwards all the teams were taken to Prekaz, the site of a massacre that is credited with starting the fight for Kosovo's independence. The day ended with a demonstration of K9 search by Wolf and Claudio from the Portuguese team on the SARITC's rubble pile.





Day 3 was once again an offsite day, this time at a disused factory site. Once again Saraïd formed a section with additional help from K9 NISAR, ANDA, Portuguese Team K9 and a ServeOn medic. SARAID were given lead on the section with TL Sarah Pickup managing the K9 Team and what turned into 3 worksites. 2 Casualties were extricated from the second floor through a small hole in a floor, whilst the third was a significant challenge. The walls of the building were at least 30cm thick and whilst various options were considered including building platforms and taking the casualty higher to then lower on rope systems, it was decided to dig under the wall. It proved to a good decision. That evening we returned to SARITC and once again SARAID with K9 NISAR led a demonstration on car cutting for several teams.



Day 4 started with a presentation of the teams to the President of Kosovo, the Minister of Defence, senior military officials as well as Ambassadors and other political leaders. Followed by a small demonstration by the teams at various stations.

Day 5 we devised a training scenario that involved breaching a concrete slab, removing a van and a car from a tunnel and working a breach inside a 90cm diameter tunnel.



All in all it was a fantastic experience and the staff at SARITC were very helpful. As well as the learning from the USAR exercises, such as working with K9, the team made many new friends. We also discovered some of the challenges of working with teams who have different procedures and standards, as well as working with people for whom English is often not their first or second language.

The SARAID team was led excellently by Sarah Pickup, and the mixture of experienced technicians, engineers as well as some who are still in their training stage, all performed well. Everyone enjoyed our time in Kosovo and hope to return in the future.

Team: Dave Jones, Luke Dhiman, Sarah Pickup (TL), Alex Werren, Tom McNicholas, Seb Parris, David Pickup, Ed Watson.

Not in picture: Mark Scorer and Gary Francis.



## Ends

Links:

EVOLSAR: <https://www.evolsar.eu/>

Emergency Fire & Rescue Unit' (E.F.R.U.) (Malta) <https://www.efru.org/>

Edelweiss (Italy) <http://gruppoedelweiss.it/>

Escola Portuguesa de Salvament SAR Team (Portugal) <http://epssarteam.vr-sar.org/>

ServeOn (UK): <https://www.serveon.org.uk/>

Kosep-Budai Onkentes (Hungary) <https://opve.hu/>

Angeli Della Sila (Italy) <http://www.angelidellasila.it/>

Associated member teams

K9 NISAR (Northern Ireland): <https://www.k9searchandrescueni.org/>

ANDA: [https://andaake-org.translate.google/?\\_x\\_tr\\_sl=tr&\\_x\\_tr\\_tl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_hl=tr&\\_x\\_tr\\_pto=wapp](https://andaake-org.translate.google/?_x_tr_sl=tr&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=tr&_x_tr_pto=wapp)

Kosovo International Search and Rescue Training Centre

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100081753849151>

President visit report: <https://fb.watch/jwiyeCNALb/>