



Being well acquainted with Operational Law and Rules of Engagement is a crucial matter for each soldier taking part in any operation. With the upcoming mission in Afghanistan in view, Operational Law and Rules of Engagement Seminar took place in Baltic Barracks from 14 to 15 October 2009.□

"Under legal care"

The Seminar was organised by Legal Advisers from Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast (HQ MNC NE) in order to keep high level of knowledge of legal aspects among servicemen. This time, this cyclical legal event was devoted to the Operational Law and Rules of Engagement specific to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan. *"All soldiers need to know when, how and to what extent the use of military force to complete the mission is allowed"*, explained Mr Jochen Katze, Senior Government Official in the German Military Legal Service and HQ MNC NE Legal Adviser, adding that Rules of Engagement differ from one mission to another.

Mission-specific topics

During two-day seminar, Headquarters' military personnel took part in a series of briefings and analyzed several case studies. Among other things, the participants learnt about legal framework for the ISAF mission and the specific rules for the use of force. Theoretical background to Rules of Engagement was presented by a guest speaker Senior Government

Experienced in Operational Law

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Official Thomas Schneevoigt from the German General Staff College. Moreover, Major David Nauta from the Joint Force Command Brunssum delivered a lecture on the legal aspects of targeting, which drew lots of attention due to expressive presentation and interesting video footage. All topics raised during this seminar referred to the actual situation in Afghanistan, making it an important step in the mission preparation process.

Mr Katze stated that the seminar was not intended to make lawyers out of soldier but soldiers have to be sensitive to legal issues of military operations in order to know when to involve a legal adviser. After all, the presence of advisers providing expertise in legal matters is important in the whole operational planning process. They help to ensure that the operation remains within the legal framework and, in doing so, provide "legal force protection" for each serviceman.

Theory put into practice

After receiving a theoretical background during the Operational Law and Rules of Engagement Seminar, all servicemen preparing for the mission will have a chance to use the knowledge in practice during the FAT Eagle Exercise as well as the final Mission Rehearsal Exercise preparing them for the deployment to the mission area in Afghanistan in 2010.