

Colonel Javier Sanz Maldonado, Director of the Centre of Excellence Counter Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED COE)



Colonel Javier Sanz Maldonado was born in Valencia (Spain) in 1970. In 1990 he joined the Spanish Army Officers School, being promoted to first Lieutenant in July 1995.

As First Lieutenant, he served in the Combat Engineer Unit of the 10th Mechanized Infantry Brigade as platoon leader and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group Chief.

He was promoted to Captain in 1999, serving as Company Commander in the Combat Engineer Unit of the 2nd Calvary Brigade.

In 2006, he was promoted to Major, being assigned to the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment as Operations Officer. He attended the IX Joint General Staff Course, in Madrid, for the period 2007-2008. After earning his Defense Studies degree, he joined the Spanish Army Engineers HQ in October 2008.

In July 2011 he was assigned to the Spanish Joint Staff, as an analyst at the Chief of the Joint Staff Office. After two years of service in this office, he was assigned as Spanish Defense Staff Liaison Officer to the US Joint Staff – J7 in Suffolk (Virginia) for a three-year tour, where he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel.

Back in Spain in 2016, he commanded an Instruction Battalion at the Army Officers Military School. After this command period, he was assigned abroad again as CIED Officer in the Engineering Division of the NATO Land Command (LANDCOM) HQ in Izmir (Turkiye). This was only for one year, as he was reassigned as Military Assistant / Executive Officer to the Deputy Chief of Staff Plans, in this same HQ.

At the end of this tour, in 2022, he was promoted to Colonel, being assigned as the Commander of the 12th Engineering Regiment, in Zaragoza. Finishing his command period in 2024, gained a post at the National Defense Superior Studies Center as a member of the High Studies Department.

Since August 1st, 2025, he serves as Director of the NATO-accredited Counter Improvised Explosive Devices Center of Excellence (CIED COE).

He has served in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Peru and Afghanistan as part of different Spanish contingents deployed in these areas.

Civilian and military courses

Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Officer, Advanced Engineering Course, NADEFCOL Short Course, General Staff Officer, some NATO Courses (CIED Staff Officer, Exercise Planning, Crisis Management, Peace Operations) and Flag Officer Qualification Course, among others. He owns a Master's degree in Security and Defense from the "Gutiérrez Mellado" Institute.

Biographical data

Colonel Sanz is married and has one son and one daughter.

Most relevant awards

Cross, Commendation and Badge of the Royal Military Order of St. Hermenegildo.

4 Cross of Military Merit (white distinction).

4 NATO mission medals.

US Defense Meritorious Service Medal

