

Military crisis management

Military crisis management is part of foreign and security policy which, under the government's rule of procedure, is within the remit of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Military crisis management and peacekeeping operations, on the other hand, are within the competence of the Ministry of Defence. Military crisis management is also one of the three statutory duties of the Finnish Defence Forces. In 2000–2012, government expenditure on military crisis management totalled over EUR 1 billion. In the state budget for 2013, a sum of EUR 123 million was allocated to military crisis management, of which some EUR 63 million (51%) in the main title for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' administrative branch, and some EUR 61 million in the main title for the Ministry of Defence's administrative branch.

The main question the audit sought to answer was whether the military crisis management guidance procedures supported an effective implementation of military crisis management. The main question was subdivided into four parts focusing on goal-setting and reporting in military crisis management, consultation of the Parliament, financial planning and monitoring and contract award procedures, and the implementation of comprehensive crisis management. The audit did not set out to evaluate the success of crisis management operations.

As an answer to the main question, the National Audit Office considers that while the guidance procedures of military crisis management work relatively well, they could clearly be improved further to lend better support for the implementation of productive crisis management.

Based on the audit results, the goals presented for crisis management are not inclusive, adequate and logically connected to each other. Government level documents describe the aims of military crisis management as part of foreign and security policy, indicating the general lines along which military crisis management should be developed. Parliamentary documents discussing crisis management operations explain why such operations are carried out in general, but in other respects, the goals of these activities are not systematically discussed. Based on documents submitted to the Parliament, it is difficult to conclude why taking part in a specific operation is important and what its significance to Finland's crisis management activities is as a whole. The Defence Forces' objective of maintaining and developing its military capabilities by means of crisis

management is also not very prominent in the goal-settings described in parliamentary documents.

The Parliament receives yearly reports on military crisis management in the report on the final central government accounts and the Government Annual Report, as well as crisis management reports submitted to the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee. Other reporting channels for the Government include the annual reports of the various ministries and the Defence Forces, while the Defence Forces issues internal reports in its annual report and reports on individual operations. Regardless of all these reporting channels, the reports do not make it possible to form an idea of how productive military or comprehensive crisis management has been. Neither have there been public reports on the success of individual missions following such operations, despite the fact that the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee has specifically emphasised the importance of impact assessment.

Relying on parliamentary reporting procedures, the Government has consulted the Parliament on participation in operations pursuant to the Act on Military Crisis Management. The information content of reports submitted by the Government has not been homogeneous and good. The goals set for the operations have not been clearly described. Risk assessments of operations, which are vital from the point of view of selecting the consultation method and consideration by the parliament, have often been superficially presented, and the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and Defence Committee have frequently reprimanded the Government for this. However, no improvement has been taken place in the quality of risk assessments. There is also clear scope for improvement in the presentation of the financial data on the operations, as the information provided has not even allowed the Parliament to form an idea of the total costs of the operations, or the division of the costs over different years.

Judging by the operations selected for the audit, the Defence Forces has issued appropriate instructions to the financial administration of crisis management operations. The Defence Forces has also monitored the financial administration of the operations in compliance with the financial rules. However, reporting has not been as accurate as the operational plans. Deficient reporting of actual figures may hamper the resource planning of future operations. In connection with incidental operations, the contract award procedure for the vessel service contract in operation Atalanta was also audited. The audit indicated that the contract award procedure had not been completed in compliance with the Act on Public Contracts and ensuring that the objective of this Act, or efficiency in the use of public funds, would be implemented.

As required by the Parliament, the Government has drawn up a Comprehensive Crisis Management Strategy. The Comprehensive Crisis Management Strategy from 2009 sets promoting a comprehensive approach in Finland's crisis management operations as its goal. According to the strategy, military and civilian crisis management and humanitarian assistance should be coordinated to obtain the best possible synergies and sustainable results. The audit indicates that the Government has only partially implemented the measures to develop comprehensive crisis management. However, a framework for promoting a comprehensive approach does exist.