

## The Use of Territorial Defence Force in Crisis Situations on a Voivodeship Level

### Využití vojsk územní obrany v krizových situacích na úrovni vojvodství

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**Abstract:** The present article is devoted to the new kind of the Polish Armed Forces, namely the Territorial Defence Force (Polish: Wojska Obrony Terytorialnej, WOT), the essence of which is, i.a., territoriality. Among the many tasks facing this kind of military unit, there are the ones involving non-military threats.

By connecting the two basic elements mentioned above, the authors present in the following article the possibilities of using the Territorial Defence Force and the alternate process of administering the armed force component on a voivodeship level.

**Abstrakt:** Tento článek je věnován novému druhu polských ozbrojených sil, konkrétně Silám územní obrany (polsky: Wojska Obrony Terytorialnej, WOT), jejíž podstatou je mj. teritorialita. Mezi mnoho úkolů, jimž tato vojenská jednotka čelí, patří i ty, které zahrnují nevojenské hrozby.

Na základě spojení dvou základních prvků uvedených výše předkládají autoři v následujícím článku možnosti využití Sil územní obrany a alternativní proces správy této složky ozbrojených sil na úrovni vojvodství.

**Keywords:** Government Administration; Military Administration; Crisis Situations; Territorial Defence Force; Provincial Military Staff; Military Recruiting Commandant.

**Klíčová slova:** Státní správa; vojenská správa; krizová situace; síly územní obrany; oblastní vojenský štáb; velitel odvodového řízení.

## INTRODUCTION

The elementary function of the state comes down to ensuring the safety of its citizens. Thus, it becomes necessary to undertake legal and organizational action, focused on preventing and diminishing the results of any possible threats. Threats caused by natural forces and human activity under specific circumstances can become the source of crisis situations. Actions undertaken in the face of said threats often diverge from the routine actions undertaken by the executive entities of national security systems.

An important part in this system is played by the military, which is the ultimate and extraordinarily successful means. This is due to the fact that the state's military force is among the most proficiently organized entities, remaining in constant preparedness in the time of peace, crisis or war. This proficiency is expressed primarily through a high level of readiness to take action, especially support-oriented action towards the civil authorities and the society in the face of crisis situations. The army is also in possession of specialized equipment and logistical facilities, which could prove particularly useful in crisis situations.<sup>1</sup>

In order to make full use of the potential, which is at the disposal of the military organization, it has become necessary to introduce relevant legal regulations. The use of troops and military sub-units of the Military Forces of the Republic of Poland in the face of non-military threats is applicable only when it is impossible to use other forces or resources or when they could prove insufficient to resolve the emergency.<sup>2</sup>

## TASKS OF THE TERRITORIAL DEFENCE FORCE AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ARMED FORCE COMPONENT IN VOIVODESHIPS

The Territorial Defence Force (Polish: *Wojska Obrony Terytorialnej*, WOT) as a new branch of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland (Polish: *SZ RP*) is a response to the current challenges of a changing environment and an exquisite follow-up to the state's defence policy on all levels of state and local administration. At the first stage of creating the WOT, an extraordinary kindness and far-fetched help of public administration could be noticed for the emerging divisions and sub-divisions of the WOT. The society and authorities show their natural bond with WOT units in a unique way. It is, of course, linked with the readiness of the Polish Military Force to react quickly to the ever more rapidly emerging threats and the need to protect the citizens of particular communes, districts and voivodeships by the WOT soldiers. Their presence in a given region significantly influences the increase in the level of local safety, as well as the defence capabilities of the whole country.

1 R. Jakubczak & J. Flis, *The national safety of Poland in the 21st century*, Warsaw 2006, pp. 257-261.

2 B. Balcerowicz, *The Armed Forces in the country and international relations*, Warsaw 2006, pp. 24-29.

In order to exploit fully the potential of the WOT and its aforementioned territoriality aspect, it is necessary to create and introduce legal and organizational solutions to determine their cooperation with the local authorities and public administration organs in the area. It is, thus, essential to establish the competences and tasks of the new formation and its representatives in relation to particular entities of government administration, local government and their organs in order to eliminate possible competence disputes, which could occur as a result of introducing the WOT units into the emergency reaction system.

Currently, the role of the national defence department in that regard is primarily seen through the scope of tasks imposed on the Armed Forces in the Act on Crisis Management, which condition to a significant extent the use of troops and other sub-units in the face of non-military threats on the territory of the Republic of Poland. The use of Armed Forces troops in non-military threat situations is presently only applicable, when the use of other forces and instruments is not possible or might seem insufficient to solve the crisis situation. Conducted analyses indicate that such an approach makes it impossible for the Armed Forces to ensure the efficient realization of tasks in that regard. For many years, experts and publicists have been pointing to the legitimacy of introducing a homogenous, transparent and consistent procedure of using the army on the country's territory in the situation of public administration support.<sup>3</sup> The procedures in force account for a path too long, and thus the time is prolonged to delegate military units to support government administration in crisis situations. In many cases, the rapid decision making might be of key importance.

Forming of the Territorial Defence Force gives an excellent opportunity to carry out fundamental changes in this field. The command of the army sub-units in crisis situations has been under the jurisdiction of the Operational Command of the Branches of the Armed Forces so far. Currently, the tasks related to crisis operations are being taken over by the Territorial Defence Force. In each voivodeship, the WOT brigades will operate alongside battalions, subordinate to the brigades, which will be properly equipped and trained. These units, based on appropriate orders, can be used at any moment to support a civilian component in crisis operations.

Taking into account the above, the Territorial Defence Force, as part of the crisis management system, ought to perform the following key functions:

- analysing the actual situation for the risk of threats;
- obtaining information about the possibility of an outbreak or occurrence of a risk to the health and life of people related to a crisis situation in a specific area;
- identifying type, location, scale and consequences of the existing threats and marking the hazardous zones;
- warning about and alerting to the approaching threat and informing about recommended rules of conduct (behaviour) in a particular situation;

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<sup>3</sup> It needs to be noted that during non-military threats, especially in emergency situations encompassing natural disasters and catastrophes, soldiers from the National Reserve Force can be designated to perform tasks in the field of emergency reaction as part of the emergency allotment given by the military administration. Act of 21 November 1967 on the General Defence Obligation of the Republic of Poland, O.J. of 1967, no. 44, item 220, as amended.

- assigning certain forces and resources to carry out tasks in the areas where the emergency situation occurs.

The main tasks assigned to the crisis management component of the WOT should cover the following:

- supporting public administration authorities in mitigating the effects of natural disasters - under the Act of 26 April 2007 on crisis management;<sup>4</sup>
- providing assistance to the Police<sup>5</sup> according to rules and in situations defined in the Act of 6 April 1990 referring to the Police Force and in accordance with the decisions of the Act of 21 November 1967 on the General Defence Obligation of the Republic of Poland;<sup>6</sup>
- support of the Police and the Border Guards mainly to assist anti-terrorist operations.

The above actions allow the appropriate implementation of the tasks at every stage of crisis management, allowing the best possible use of the WOT for existing crisis threats, including: preventing a crisis situation, preparing for crisis management, responding in the event of a crisis situation and taking part in reconstruction by mitigating the effects and rebuilding the resources and critical infrastructure.

At the stage of prevention, the WOT would carry out a number of actions to:<sup>7</sup>

- maintain the elements of the crisis management system in constant readiness for the action and prepare the public administration for the crisis management;
- formulate and update plans for the use the Armed Forces in the event of a crisis situation;
- monitor and assess the possibility of a crisis situation;
- improve operating procedures, information exchange, cooperation and coordination in carrying out the tasks;
- maintain constant cooperation at all levels of command within the Armed Forces and other entities of the non-military system assigned for the implementation of the crisis management process;
- maintain the system of the operational and on call service to ensure the continuity of command and swift transmission of signals, orders, decisions and directives at respective levels of command;
- maintain forces and resources to conduct the search of the area;
- maintain readiness of alert systems to mobilize specific forces;
- implement training in crisis management tasks.

In the preparation phase, the WOT would undertake actions in matters of:

- forecasting the effects (losses and damages) of potential threats;
- gathering the maximum number of forces and means necessary during the crisis;
- development of the emergency response management plans;

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<sup>4</sup> Journal of Laws from 2007, no. 89, item 590 as amended

<sup>5</sup> Journal of Laws from 1990, no. 30, item 179 as amended

<sup>6</sup> Journal of Laws from 1967, no. 44, item 220, as amended

<sup>7</sup> Act of 26 April 2007 on crisis management (O.J. Of 2007, no. 89, item 590, as amended.)

- organisation of the management systems of communication, monitoring, warning and alert;
- establishing warehouse bases;
- setting up databases;
- forming emergency services and their reserves;
- social education and training;
- establishing non-standard procedures;
- assistance to the victims and reduction of consequential damage and losses.

The most important phase of crisis management in which the WOT would perform the key role is the response phase, which comprises an integrated set of practical actions undertaken by the assigned forces and resources of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, including the WOT. Its aim is to undertake rescue and rescue-evacuation actions, alert and warn the public, maintain public order in the area affected by the crisis situation and undertake actions to limit losses and damages. The actions carried out by the Territorial Defence Forces in this phase will be:

- monitoring and evaluation of the crisis situation;
- maintaining the cooperation with the national authorities (institutions) involved in the implementation of the crisis response tasks;
- activation of the Army units and sub-units delegated for the public administration assistance;
- rotation of the forces and resources participating in crisis response depending on their needs;
- ensuring that the forces and their resources have appropriate logistic, medical, fire, etc. protection.

The final phase of the involvement of the Territorial Defence Forces in the crisis management process would be the reconstruction phase. In the implementation of this phase, the WOT would undertake the actions allowing, i.a.:

- redeployment of the forces and means from the area of action to the permanent dislocation sites (MSD);
- carrying out technical equipment maintenance, inspections, repairs, renovations;
- carrying out the tasks related to the repair and the reconstruction of the technical infrastructure;
- ensuring the smooth traffic flow of communication routes;
- providing medical help and performing sanitary and hygiene tasks.

The conditions regarding the functioning of the WOT in the crisis situations should determine the division of delegated forces into two categories depending on the situation: planned and random (emergency). Sub-units assigned to the planned category are equipped and prepared to be used in the event of the occurrence of threats that can be easily predicted, e.g., due to the specific terrain features, spatial planning, etc. The sub-units classed as part of the emergency category will be deployed in situations that are difficult to predict and their equipment and possibilities of counteraction will be adapted to the specificity of the threat. The early identification of threats guarantees a selective introduction of properly prepared sub-units into the action.

It is, therefore, proposed to include the Chief of the Voivodeship/Provincial Military Staff (chief of the WSzW) and the WOT Brigade Commander in the participation in

the activities of the Voivodeship/Provincial (Wojewódzki) Crisis Management Team, the participation of the Military Recruiting and the WOT Battalion Commander (representative) in the tasks of the County (Powiatowy) Crisis Management Team, and the participation of the WOT Sub-unit Commander in the duties of the Commune (Gminny) Crisis Management Team.

The fundamental tasks of the WOT are: protecting the population from the effects of natural disasters and their consequences, property protection, search actions and rescue or protection of human health and life as well as the implementation of crisis management tasks.

In accordance with the interviews carried out with people who participated in the actions counteracting crisis threats, and based on their own experience, it has been mentioned that the prerequisite for the success of the action or the reduction of the consequences of a crisis situation, especially non-military, is the relation of time pressure to action taking.

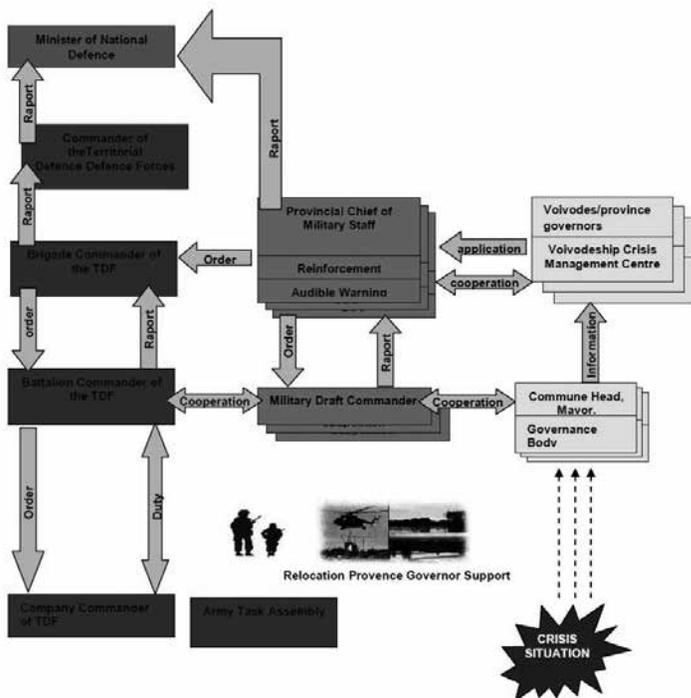
In order to simplify procedures related to the use of units and sub-units of the SZRP (Military Staff of the Republic of Poland) as the example of procedures implemented in the USA (state administration), the decision level should be lowered, by authorising the Chief of WSzW (Voivodeship/Provincial Military Staff) to make decisions about their use. Such decisions will authorise the Chief of WSzW to give an order to the military units based in the Voivodeship/Province to use the forces and resources, and, in particular, it will improve the use of the WOT soldiers in the first hours of the crisis situation.

The proposed suggestion of using the WOT as a component of the Armed Forces in the area administered by the Chief of WSzW is fully adequate to the ongoing and planned changes within the process of transformation of the Armed Forces.

After having worked out the decision with the voivode governor, the Chief of WSzW should give orders about the use of sub-units within the Voivodeship, which, as part of the Military Task Force, directly address the effects of the crisis. The military forces of the WOT Brigade will be used in accordance to the principle of territoriality, in a situation when the potential of the non-military forces is insufficient. It seems that the best solution would be that the Chief of the WSzW has the coordinating role in the use of the Army in a crisis situation until the WOT is in full readiness, and after the formation of the WOT units throughout the whole country, these tasks would be taken over by the WOT Brigade Commander.

In the planning process it is necessary to foresee the need of using sub-units from the operational units if the WOT sub-units have insufficient specialized equipment. It is the Chief of the WSzW who should be responsible for the legitimacy of the use of the army forces as well as coordination of the operation of the specialized sub-units delegated from the operational forces. The equipment and hardware that the Armed Forces have at the voivodeship level should be placed in the bases of forces and its resources and it should be included in the Crisis Management Plans, prepared by voivodes/province governors (wojewoda), county/poviat governors/starosts (starosta), presidents, mayors (burmistrz) and commune governors (wójt). Decentralization of the entitlements and competences will reduce response time to the emerging threats and will ensure effective and efficient use of the WOT sub-units and an appropriate cooperation between the public administration and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland.

Moreover, more reliable approach is expected from the voivodeship and self-government administration authorities to formulate the “Plan of the participation of the sub-units of the Armed Forces of RP for the period 2014 to 2020”, in which the needs of a given voivodeship/county/municipality (województwo/powiat/gmina) for the support of the administration by the Armed Forces would be reliably demonstrated. At present, for example, the Silesian Voivodeship has not reported any needs for updating the existing plans.



**Diagram 1:** Concept of the Armed Force component management in crisis situations at the voivodeship level.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Component is a constituent of something, an ingredient, an element. In W. Sikorski’s broader understanding, national defence consists of two components: the military component and the civil component. The armed forces belong to the basics of the military component, they are the tools of contemporary national defence, which is constituted by operational forces, as well as support and protection of the armed forces. The components of the armed forces are divisions, brigades, regiments, bases and squadrons. Components of support and protection of the armed forces are logistics brigades, Voivodeship Military Headquarters (Polish: WSzW), Military Draft Posts (Polish: WKU) as field organs of military administration, executive organs of the Minister of National Defence in operative and defensive matters and military administration in the area of their respective voivodeships, designated, i.a., to support civil authorities fulfilling tasks in crisis management in the case of non-military threats. Słownik Języka Polskiego PWN, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2002. (Polish Language Dictionary, State Scientific Publishers, Warsaw 2002).

This probably results from the necessity of covering the costs of the participation of the Armed Forces by self-governments. Undoubtedly, a complete exemption from the costs could lead to the excessive and probably unnecessary involvement of the Army, and therefore, the self-governments, fearing the costs, do not report their needs to the "Plan of participation of the sub-units of the Armed Forces of RP for the period 2014 to 2020". In the event of crisis situations, it makes the Armed Forces act in emergency mode, thus, requiring approval at the highest level, which prolongs the time needed to make a decision.

At this point, the role of the Chief of WSzW in proposing the plan, assessing or rejecting the unjustified motions is significant. Considering the conclusions from the analysis of the crisis situations, observations made in the course of their duration and the experience of the participation in the prevention, combat, and first of all, administration of the human resources, the authors suggest in this article the idea of using the components of the Armed Forces in the crisis situations, including those of the Territorial Defence Force.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the tasks and competences of particular bodies of communes, districts and voivodeships allows to reach a plane of cooperation with the Territorial Defence Force. The concept of creating a new branch of armed forces, its missions and planned forms of action can have a genuine influence on local safety, particularly when emergency situations occur, and it will create a new quality of cooperation between the army and local public administration.

It should be assumed that there is a need for a broader approach to the participation of a component of the Armed Forces in the context of undertaken management actions. Currently, the role of the Ministry of National Defence in this area is seen mainly through the prism of the tasks imposed on the Polish Armed Forces in the Act on Crisis Management, which, to a large extent, determines the use of the units and sub-units of the Army in the particular non-military threats on the territory of the Republic of Poland. However, the analysis carried out has indicated that such an approach means that the Armed Forces do not provide the effective implementation of the non-military tasks in the country.<sup>9</sup>

A significant problem for the majority of the Polish political class is the lack of a strategic, long-term thinking about safety. In many cases, its actual occurrence hastens the work on laws concerning that matter. For many years, experts and publicists have pointed to the adequacy of introducing a unified, transparent and consistent definition of permitted force applied by the army in the country. Furthermore, no regulations in

<sup>9</sup> <http://obronanarodowa.pl/artykuly/display/wplyw-kryzysu-na-ukrainie-na-bezpieczenstwo-rp/>, access date: 25.08.2015

that regard contain the legal basis for “rules of using force”.<sup>10</sup> A large number of regulations regarding the use of the military forces of the Republic of Poland in the case of emergency causes issues of interpretative nature. The current procedures envisage a long decision path, which, in turn, elongates the time necessary to delegate military units to support local or government administration in emergency situations. In many cases, the length of the decision-making process might be of vital importance.<sup>11</sup>

It is worth noting that the experience of many countries indicates that the territorial troops are necessary in order to control, for example, the consequences of terrorism effectively and counteract it successfully in their own territory. It is their responsibility, in the first moments after a terrorist attack, to take the burden of securing the area around the site of the attack and make the main effort to face the challenges to help the victims.

Currently, the units of the Territorial Defence Forces, which should perform this role are being created in Poland. However, the units of the Territorial Defence Forces are the units with the “W” time, so using them to carry out the tasks in the crisis response will be possible after achieving readiness for the actions (following their mobilization development), which is unacceptable.

The National Reserve Forces (NSR) as a component of the reserves, mainly for the operational forces, are not able to complete these tasks, mainly due to the quantitative and equipment status compared to the basic needs in this area.

The National Reserve Forces operating within the compact sub-units (mainly at WszW) are generally a base for the replenishment of the personnel reserves for the military units. In spite of the tasks assigned within a crisis management, they are not able to implement them due to the lack of a necessary equipment. The tasks in this field were established by the Chief of WszW in the “Plan of the use of the Armed Forces” formulated at their level.

The units of the Territorial Defence Force (WOT) are being formed and at the moment it is difficult to define their value in terms of military value and resources they have at their disposal. In order to perform fully the tasks in the field of crisis management, it is necessary to provide them with a proper specialized equipment and training.

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<sup>10</sup> B. Janusz-Pawletta, *The Acceptability of using the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland in the face of terrorist threat*, 2011, p. 91.

<sup>11</sup> M. Walaszczyk, *Chaos w armii*, <http://www.naszdziennik.pl/wp/74016,chaos-w-armii.html>, access date: 25.08.2015

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