

| Country Overview   |   |
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| <b>Poland</b>  |   |
| Legislative framework for armed forces' use for civil protection | <p><b>Act on General Defence Obligation (1967)</b><br/> <b>Act on the State of Calamity (2002)</b><br/> <b>Act on Crisis Management (2007)</b></p> <p>Historically, the integration of civil-military efforts has been a critical tenant of Poland's defence and national security strategy. Since 1967, the Polish legal framework has supported a civil defense system as per the Act on General Defense Obligation. In the Post-Cold War era, civil defense protocols have become reprioritized to tackle non-military threats. The 2002 Act on the State of Calamity and the 2007 Act on Crisis Management explicitly mandate the use of armed forces to support civil authorities in emergencies.</p>  |
| Key civilian authority/ies                                       | <p><b>State Fire Service and the National Rescue and Fire-Fighting System (KSRG)</b><br/> <b>State Medical Rescue</b></p> <p>The civil protection system in Poland covers both crisis management and rescue through the coordination of the State Fire Service and the National Fire-Fighting System (KSPRG), the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, and the State Medical Rescue.</p>   |
| Armed forces branch(es) primarily involved                       | <p><b>The Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, including the Territorial Defence Force</b></p> <p>Since its foundation in 2017, non-military operations are assigned to the Territorial Defence Force (<i>Obrona Terytorium Kraju</i>, OTK), the fifth branch of the Polish Armed Forces, which works with the civilian sector within the national boundaries of Poland. Additionally, Poland's National Security Strategy supports paramilitary organisations, which are most often comprised of young Polish citizens. In times of crisis through they are used in emergency response operations or local administration to ensure the security of citizens and state structures.</p>  |
| Cases of use / Good practices                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Covid-19 mitigation and distribution of essential supplies</b></li> </ul> <p>The Territorial Defence Force played a leading role in mitigating the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, by becoming integrally involved in supporting citizens, authorities, and local institutions. The Territorial Defence Force was deployed to undertake two operations, using the codenames 'Immune Spring' and 'Lasting Immunity' to support local communities, regional governments and NGOs by transporting and distributing food and medical supplies. Remarkably, the Covid-19 pandemic became one of the largest national crisis response operations for the first time since the country's 1989 transition to democracy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tornados</b></li> </ul> <p>In June 2019 in the midst of damaging hailstorms, a local outbreak of tornados occurred in the Lubuskie province in Central Poland. In response, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lubuskie Territorial Defence Force deployed 200 soldiers to help restore electricity to households and remove trees that were damaged by the storms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Flood Prevention and Mitigation</b></li> </ul> <p>In the summer of 2019, the south of Poland was devastated by severe storms and flooding. Over 1,200 soldiers from the Territorial Defence Force were deployed to assist in disaster relief efforts. A year later, in May and June 2020, the Territorial Defence Force, alongside local crisis management teams, local authorities and firefighters, were praised by the government for helping to build a dry reservoir in Racibórz to reduce the risk of flooding, a project which was co-financed by the EU, World Bank, Council of Europe Development Bank, and the Polish government.</p> |
| Follow-up questions / concerns                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What role can Polish paramilitary organisations assume between the military and civilian authorities?</li> <li>• Who pays for the civil protection activities of the military and of paramilitary organisations?</li> <li>• What is the hierarchy between civilian and military authorities in dealing with civil emergencies?</li> <li>• Is there any concern about bringing the military into civilian activities?</li> <li>• Is there joint training involving civilian authorities, paramilitary organizations and the military?</li> </ul>  |

- What about cross border cooperation with other countries' military and civilian authorities for civil protection operations?
- What about engagement in coordination via NATO, the UN or other mechanism, e.g. the EU?

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