



The Finnish Defence Forces

FINNISH
**MILITARY
INTELLIGENCE**
REVIEW 2026

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Foreword by the Chief of Intelligence

The changing security and geopolitical situation challenges military intelligence. We are about to enter the fifth year of the war in Ukraine. In addition to the war, Russia is continuing its hybrid influencing in Europe. The security situation in the Baltic Sea region has deteriorated. Russia is preparing to strengthen its military presence in the vicinity of the Finnish border, but significant changes will likely start when the situation in Ukraine allows it. Great power competition between the United States and China continues, while political and military cooperation between China and Russia tightens. Also, rivalry over the Arctic region remains and the situation in the Middle East continues to be challenging.

Finland's location as a neighbour of Russia, a state that unscrupulously uses power politics to advance its interests, underscores the need for continuous situational awareness, intelligence analysis and monitoring of the operating environment that serve the Finnish Defence Forces and the state leadership. Monitoring the Russian Armed Forces and the security environment of the Baltic Sea as well as comprehensive situational awareness of our operating environment remain critically important from a national security perspective. These tasks are carried out by Finnish military intelligence.

Finnish NATO membership has also had an impact on the field of military intelligence. We contribute to the alliance's situational awareness and thus support bolstering NATO's core tasks, particularly deterrence and defence. In 2025, we had the opportunity to chair NATO's Military Intelligence Committee, which helped us gain a unique insight into NATO's strategic level intelligence and significantly facilitated our integration into the alliance's intelligence functions and structures.

The Act on Military Intelligence was enacted in June 2019 and it significantly improved the prerequisites for intelligence collection by military intelligence. The legislation has improved our ability to monitor and foresee changes in the operating environment. It has allowed us to introduce new technologies and intelligence collection methods. These additions have been vital for our capability development. Network traffic intelligence and foreign computer network intelligence in particular are significant additions to our intelligence collection methods. The legislation

also created a parliamentary oversight mechanism for intelligence. However, needs for reviewing the Act on Military Intelligence have been identified and, for its part, the military intelligence community will support activities to improve the legislation.

Furthermore, rapid changes in our security environment and digitalisation have transformed our world in many ways. A digitalised environment makes events, crises and conflicts even more transparent. The speed of information processing, finding essential information and the speed of analysis have become vital in order to achieve an understanding of the situation faster. In the future, the flood of information cannot be managed without extensively utilising artificial intelligence in the field of military intelligence. New opportunities for intelligence and different technological solutions will require a review of current operating procedures and wider development of the entire intelligence community. Finding future solutions requires that we and other actors work even closer together and use experts to support our work, both nationally and internationally.

Finnish military intelligence looks to the future with confidence and will work diligently to ensure common safety and security also in 2026, while contributing to the comprehensive security of society.



*Defence Command Chief of Intelligence,
Major General Pekka Turunen*

Review of the Military Operating Environment

Military intelligence provides intelligence on the military operating environment to support planning and decision making. The operating environment is characterised by the return of power politics and sudden, rapid developments that military intelligence must be ready to anticipate. The Baltic Sea is increasingly important in international politics.

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A TU-160 Blackjack strategic bomber of the Russian Long-Range Air Force flying in international airspace in the Gulf of Finland. It is escorted by an armed Su-35S Flanker M fighter. Photo: Finnish Defence Forces

Russia has continued its aggressive anti-Western activities, the most prominent being its large-scale war of aggression in Ukraine. Antagonism towards the West has also become more pronounced in the Baltic Sea region, where tensions have clearly escalated since 2022. Russia is using different methods of hybrid influencing purposefully and is attempting to scale its actions so that they are deniable or difficult to link to Russia. It is continuing its ambitious armed forces reform which, when complete, will significantly increase Russian military power in Finland's neighbourhood. The global security situation is defined by the return of power politics and rising tensions worldwide.

Russia continues its efforts to reinstate its great power status

Russia's main goal of increasing its global influence has remained unchanged. Its regime considers Western liberal democracy as a threat and strives to weaken the West by using the war in Ukraine, other conflicts and hostile hybrid influencing as tools. Russia's focus has been on the area of the former So-

viet Union, and particularly on the war in Ukraine, which it is advancing at the cost of its other goals.

Russia remains a significant actor in the South Caucasus, although its influence has decreased. It has lost its position as the external regulator of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and both countries' relationship with Russia has weakened. On the other hand, Georgia has moved politically closer to Russia.

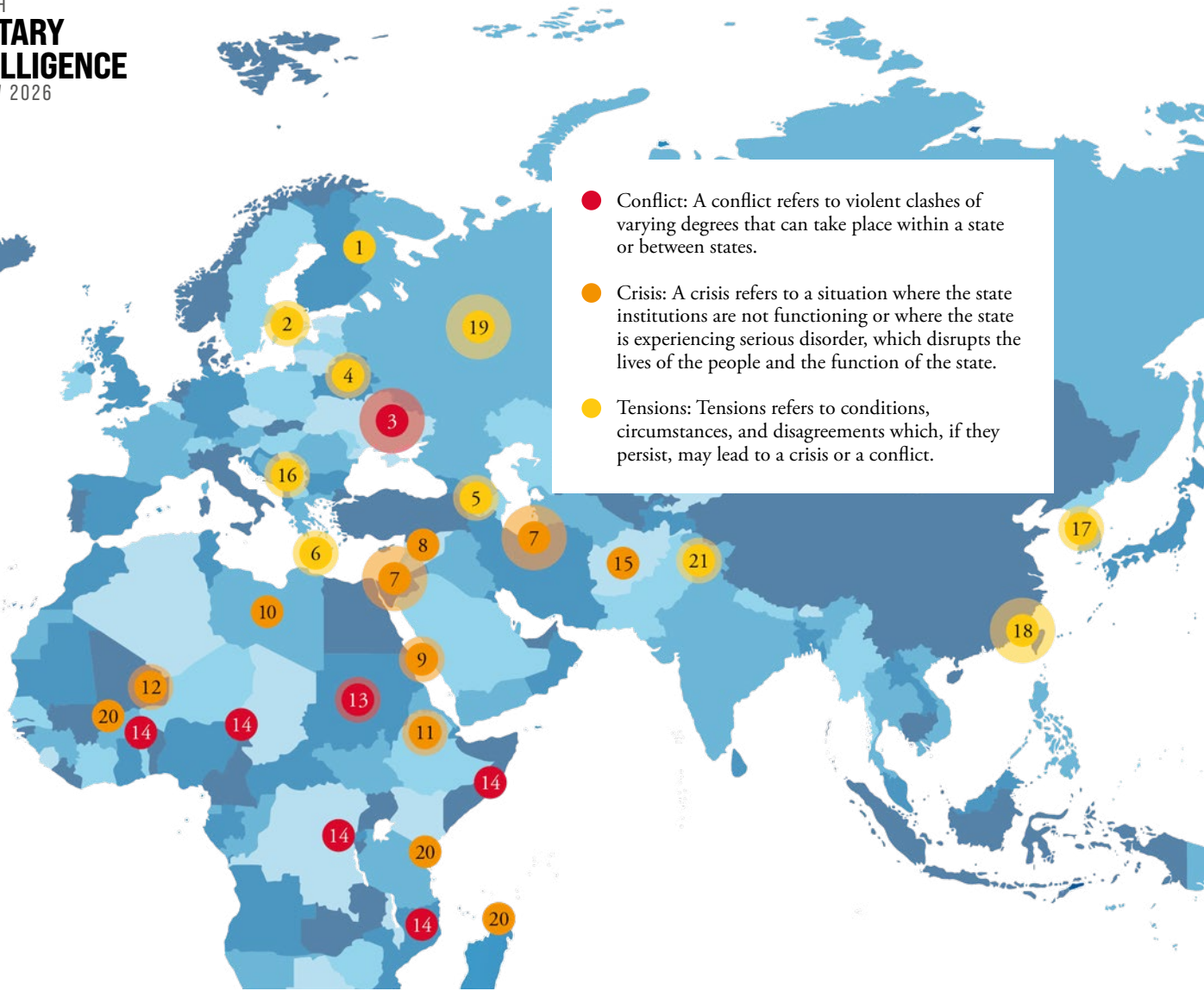
Belarus is still firmly controlled by Russia. Despite the pro-EU side winning the parliamentary elections in Moldova in the autumn of 2025, Russia is continuing its effort to grow its political influence in the country by using methods of hybrid influencing and by taking advantage of the frozen conflict in the separatist region of Transnistria.

In Africa, Russia is utilising its proxies and it has managed to limit Western influence in many African countries.

Russia is increasingly reliant on China. The military,



An increasingly concentrated power can enable surprise and rapid decision making. However, centralised power carries risks. Russia's President Putin speaking on 5 November 2025. Photo: Contributor/Getty Images



1. Tensions: Consequences of instrumentalised migration at the Russo-Finnish border
2. Tensions: Incidents involving undersea infrastructure in the Baltic Sea, jamming of air and maritime traffic navigation
3. Conflict: Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine ongoing since February 2022
4. Tensions: Hybrid influencing against the West by Belarus
5. Tensions: The crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh has de-escalated as the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan moves forward, but small incidents are still possible
6. Tensions: In the eastern Mediterranean, disputes over territories and natural resources, as well as the movement of migrants maintain the tensions and regional instability
7. Crisis: Israel's operation against Hamas and the tense situation between Israel and Iran increases the tensions all over the region
8. Crisis: Due to conflicting interests between Syria and its neighbours, the security of the region is still vulnerable to rapid changes
9. Crisis: The security situation in the Red Sea continues to be weak as a result of the conflicts in the region
10. Crisis: The domestic political deadlock in Libya continues, the power struggle is susceptible to rapid escalation of the crisis and clashes
11. Crisis: The situation inside Ethiopia is unstable, susceptibility to new clashes has increased
12. Crisis: In the Sahel region, the military juntas are attempting to consolidate their positions, expanding Russian influence is even more centralised than before, as a result of changes in private military companies operating in the region
13. Conflict: The civil war in Sudan continues, the wide-spread fighting also contributes to and increases the humanitarian crisis
14. Conflict: The emphasis of radical Islamist movements has shifted from the Middle East to Africa, counter-terrorism efforts continue in various regions without any end in sight
15. Crisis: Afghanistan in Central Asia is still in a serious humanitarian crisis
16. Tensions: In Kosovo as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, tensions between ethnic groups are bubbling under the surface; Russian hybrid influencing continues in the Western Balkans
17. Tensions: The actions of North Korea are causing tensions in the Korean Peninsula and in the region
18. Tensions: Tensions between China and Taiwan remain high
19. Tensions: Russia is using hybrid influencing against Western countries
20. Crisis: The decline of democracy-building is manifested as military coups and the increasingly more autocratic behaviour of different leaders
21. Tensions: The previous clashes between India and Pakistan are maintaining the tensions and susceptibility for crisis despite the cease fire



Russian-built Indian frigate INS Tamal escorted by Finnish Border Guard Coastal Patrol Vessel RV-20 (left) and Swedish Navy Gävle class corvette in July 2025. Photo: Finnish Defence Forces

military technological and economic cooperation between the countries has increased considerably with the war in Ukraine. In the autumn of 2025, China purchased nearly half of Russian oil exports, with India purchasing approximately 40 percent. After the start of the Russian war of aggression, India has increased its energy purchases from Russia and is therefore a major enabler of the war. However, India seeks to maintain working relations with both the West and Russia. Russia is also continuing its efforts to shape the BRICS block into an anti-Western alliance, but most of the member states do not share Russia's firm anti-Western views.

Despite the challenges, Russia's defence industry has adapted to maintaining mass production, but Western sanctions have had an impact on the quality of the materiel. Cooperation with China especially, but also with Iran and North Korea, has eased the

production pressure on Russia's defence industry and enabled an increase in production despite the war.

As the war continues, the Russian defence industry primarily produces materiel for the front in Ukraine. A possible cessation of hostilities would allow for storage of the produced materiel and thus support the rebuilding of the armed forces. Easing sanctions or circumventing them would likely immediately improve the state of defence materiel production.

As the fighting continues, it is highly likely that the problems facing Russia's economy will deepen. However, the Russian economy is not about to collapse: Russia can still finance the war in Ukraine in the foreseeable future.

The Russian government has continued to pass laws and regulations tightening the surveillance of civil-

ian society at an increasing pace. The effects of the prolonged war are becoming increasingly evident in the everyday lives of Russians – the cost of living has been rising, which the government fears will result in discontent and protests. Even after the war in Ukraine, defence expenditure will likely remain as the main expenditure item of the state. This will weaken the living conditions of citizens and increase the risk of anti-government unrest. However, the government is likely well prepared for any anti-government protests. The impact of the Duma elections in 2026 will be negligible because the political parties and the election process are under tight state control.

The military-political antagonism in Europe will continue to strengthen during the next few years and the struggle for influence will move increasingly to third countries. Russia's relationship with Europe will remain hostile. Russia will strive to expand its influence and power, and the only way to stop it or have it back away is a credible military counterforce.

War in Ukraine continues

Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine has been ongoing for nearly four years. Despite its slow progress, Russia has not achieved its publicly stated military objectives, particularly the objective of occupying



View of autumnal Kyiv at Independence Square (Maidan). A memorial for soldiers and volunteers who have fallen while defending Ukraine against Russia's invasion. Russia's war of aggression takes its toll. Photo: Finnish Defence Forces

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| 1 71st Guards Motor Rifle Division (14th Army Corps) | 13 Olenya air base |
| 2 61st Naval Infantry Brigade | 14 Monchegorsk air base |
| 3 80th Separate Arctic Motor Rifle Brigade (14th AC) | 15 Besovets air base |
| 4 44th Army Corps (LEMD) | 16 Khotilovo air base |
| 5 69th Guards Motor Rifle Division (6th Army) | 17 Chkalovsk air base |
| 6 68th Guards Motor Rifle Division (6th Army) | 18 14th Army Corps (LEMD) |
| 7 76th Guards Air Assault Division | 19 6th Army (LEMD) |
| 8 18th Guards Motor Rifle Division (11th AC) | 20 11th Army Corps |
| 9 336th Guards Naval Infantry Brigade | 21 Leningrad Military District (LEMD) Headquarters |
| 10 Northern Fleet | |
| 11 Baltic Fleet main naval base | |
| 12 Baltic Fleet Leningrad naval base | |

Russian conventional forces
in Finland's neighbourhood.



the Donbas region. From its perspective, it has successfully used negotiations to postpone Western countermeasures, and it is highly likely that it will continue the war.

Russia's tactical success has been possible due to the following factors:

- manpower and the ability replace losses,
- increasing volume of drone production,
- effective use of aerial bombs,
- larger supply of artillery and ammunition, and
- materiel and military technological support from China, North Korea, and Iran.

Russia has changed its tactics in the war in Ukraine and, in practice, most of the attacks along the frontline are conducted by infantry. The attacks are heavily supported by drones and electronic warfare. This change in tactics is likely a result of the equipment and materiel losses caused by its previous tactics. Ukraine is monitoring areas between the thinly manned defensive line with drones. Detecting Russian infantry infiltrating into these areas is harder than detecting armoured fighting vehicles.

Russia still assesses it can defeat Ukraine with attrition warfare and estimates that Ukrainian losses and Western war fatigue will allow Russia to win. The highly conflicting objectives of the parties make any peace negotiations difficult.

As a result of, for example, drone attacks, the consequences of the war in Ukraine can be concretely felt also in the Baltic Sea region. Ukraine has been able to extend its strikes to reach deep into Russia, including areas close to Finland. Attacks directed at Russian energy infrastructure in particular have had a major impact on Russian energy exports. As they continue, the strikes will also hamper the fuel supply of Russian forces in Ukraine and have an effect on the functions of society at large. Russia will continue to put effort into protecting its strategically important regions in the Baltic Sea region, namely Saint Petersburg and the Kaliningrad exclave. The risk of drones or air defence weapons straying into Finland increases as the strikes continue and diversify.

Tensions continue in the Baltic Sea region and unpredictability increases

In the Baltic Sea, the war in Ukraine can be seen in increased Russian escort operations. Russia has demonstrated its readiness to aggressively protect its shadow fleet. Its actions, combined with the variable

condition of the ships, the expertise of the crews and the jamming of navigation systems, increase the risk of the intentional or unintentional escalation and accidents.

Russia's ability to utilise vessels sailing in the Baltic Sea region for hybrid influencing remains significant. It will likely persist in its ambitions to damage the undersea infrastructure of the Baltic Sea. Also, intentional harassment of NATO's military activities and presence or civilian traffic in the area as well as causing dangerous situations, intentionally or unintentionally, is possible. NATO has enhanced its vigilance as a result of Russia's actions, and in 2025 launched Baltic Sentry, a new activity with the aim of protecting critical infrastructure in the Baltic Sea. At the same time, Ukraine remains Russia's main focus, with the Baltic Sea as a secondary area of interest.

The changes launched with the armed forces reform have not so far significantly increased Russia's military capabilities in Finland's neighbouring areas. The majority of Russian land forces are committed to the war in Ukraine. Therefore, the role of the Russian Aerospace Forces and the Russian Navy is highlighted in Finland's neighbourhood. As the war in Ukraine continues, the garrisons mainly focus on providing basic training to units being sent to Ukraine. Following the end of the war, however, it is clear that one of the main directions in which Russia's Armed Forces will be developed is Finland.

In the Baltic Sea region, Russian grey zone activities have also been echoed in the Gulf of Bothnia. For example, a Russian-built Indian Talwar II class frigate sailed as far north as Oulu in the Gulf of Bothnia. It is extremely rare for foreign warships to sail into the Gulf of Bothnia. Even though the vessel was Indian, the activities serve Russian interests in testing Finnish and Swedish reactions.

Russian hybrid influencing in Europe has increased over the last few years. The intelligence, espionage, and sabotage threats directed at Finland are affected not only by the tightened security situation in Europe but also by Finland's support for Ukraine and the Western sanctions and export restrictions directed at Russia. However, it is likely that Russia does not see Finland as a primary target for sabotage. Since the expulsion of diplomats in 2018 and after Finland tightened its policies, Russian human intelligence capabilities in Finland remain limited.

The number of suspicious security related incidents



The Eagle S tanker without its port-side anchor photographed off the coast of Porvoo after being taken into custody by Finnish authorities on 31 December 2024. The vessel had been linked to the breaking of the Estlink 2 power cable in the Baltic Sea on 25 December 2024. Photo: Finnish Border Guard and Police

connected to personnel and exercises of the Finnish Defence Forces and our Allies have increased. The phenomenon is most likely related to increased vigilance and a lower threshold of reporting, but there is also genuine intelligence gathering relating to military national defence in these numbers. The Russian intelligence services have started to utilise young people and petty criminals for their purposes more frequently in Europe in 2025. For a nominal fee, these groups will, for example, vandalise property without knowing who that vandalism actually serves. It is possible that when the situation becomes strained, the same methods will also be used in Finland.

Russia emphasises the Arctic region as its sphere of interest

Russia will try to advance its use of natural resources in the Arctic region and the position of the North-

ern Sea Route as an international trade route. Russia will also seek to protect its sovereignty in the Arctic region and develop its Arctic capabilities.

Russia has announced that its goal is to develop the organisation and combat readiness of its armed forces as well as its base and transportation infrastructure in the Arctic region. So far, the war in Ukraine has significantly weakened the development of the Russian Armed Forces and its military presence in the Arctic region, and the majority of Russian land forces are committed to the war in Ukraine. Despite the war, Russia has continued the reorganisation of its forces according to the armed forces reform – for example, by expanding its Arctic brigades into divisions.

Russia sees as a threat a situation where other actors would seek to change the international regulatory

systems regarding the natural resources of the Arctic, economic activities or borders of maritime areas in a way that is disadvantageous to Russia. Russia will strive to improve its military capability and send a message that it is ready to defend its interests also by military force, if necessary. However, as long as the war in Ukraine continues, Russia's ability to strengthen its military capabilities in the Arctic remains limited.

Strategic power balance in the Middle East in flux

The shift in the power balance in the Middle East has become even more pronounced. Iran's military and political influence declined further after the strikes conducted by Israel and the United States in June 2025. Iran's regional influence has also declined as a result of the weakening of Iran's proxies and the transfer of power in Syria. Israel has strengthened its position in its neighbouring areas. Israel's actions on the West Bank and most of all on the Gaza strip have been internationally condemned and have also caused divisions in Israel's domestic politics. It continues to man its forward bases in Lebanon and Syria and continues to strike at actors it perceives as a threat.

In Syria, the central government has at least temporarily been able to strengthen its position and begin reforms to create a democratic system, as demanded by the West. If the political, economic, and societal reforms do not proceed, the threat of instability and clashes will increase. However, the potential weakening of the situation in Syria is unlikely to have a significant impact on the overall situation of the Middle East.

Russia's influence in the Middle East has weakened following the fall of the Assad regime and with Russia focusing on the war in Ukraine. The strikes against the Iranian nuclear programme by the United States and Israel were also a blow to Russian prestige. Russia and Iran are strategic partners and Iran's air defence, which was built with Russian support, turned out to be unable to defend against or even significantly limit the attack.

Iran will try to reconstitute the military capabilities it has lost and continue the negotiations related to its nuclear programme in order to avoid further sanctions. Israel will almost certainly try to keep the regional situation under its control with pre-emptive strikes. A new military conflict on a larger scale be-

tween Israel and Iran is likely unless an agreement is reached on limiting the Iranian nuclear programme. The Iran-supported Yemeni Houthi rebels' strikes against Israel and its interests have at least temporarily subsided.

The unstable situation in Lebanon continues. In August 2025, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the UNIFIL operation until the end of 2026, after which the operation will be shut down by the end of 2027. The goal is that the Lebanese Armed Forces will assume responsibility for the security situation in Southern Lebanon. In August 2025, the Lebanese government decided that non-governmental organisations in the country, such as Hezbollah, will be disarmed by the end of 2025. In the worst case, the situation may lead to a crisis in domestic politics and to an armed conflict, if Hezbollah feels that its position is threatened as its military capabilities weaken.

It is highly likely that Israel will continue its presence in Southern Lebanon in the near future and will try to stop Hezbollah's attempts to reconstitute its military capability, by striking at Hezbollah arms shipments if necessary. Israel's military footprint in Southern Lebanon allows it to expand the military buffer zone or to conduct other military activities if necessary. Although, the large-scale conflict in Gaza is winding down, there are still groups within the Palestinians that do not recognise the peace with Israel. Therefore, occasional anti-Israel attacks are likely. Likewise, Israel will continue its targeted attacks, if it feels threatened.

Tensions will remain within Finland's operating environment

Russia will continue its war of aggression in Ukraine. As a result of the long-standing tensions between Russia and the West, which have been aggravated by Russia's war in Ukraine, relationships between the countries will remain extremely poor. Russia will continue to strive to increase the strength of its armed forces. Even though Russian forces are currently committed to the war in Ukraine, the Russian Armed Forces are being developed towards the goal mentioned in relation to armed forces reform. As these changes occur, Russia's ability to wage war in areas close to Finland improves significantly. However, it is unlikely that an immediate military threat will be directed at Finland during 2026.

Crises and conflicts will continue to play a role in

international relations also in 2026. Both tensions between the great powers and local armed clashes will continue in different parts of the world. The crises and conflicts may have significant effects on Finland's security, either directly or indirectly. These may include migrant flows or the need for Finland

to participate in crisis management operations in new areas. The dynamics of several crises and conflict zones as well as the possibility for rapid changes are a constant challenge for the international community as it searches for solutions.



Finnish peacekeepers of the UNIFIL-operation in Lebanon inspecting a village located near the Blue Line in spring 2025. Photo: Finnish Defence Forces

Current Issues in Military Intelligence

Finnish military intelligence is a key contributor to national security and defence capability, especially in the current geopolitical situation, where Russia's aggressive behaviour and international tensions elevate threats to an entirely new level. Ensuring security and stability is critically important and military intelligence offers vital information about potential threats, such as war preparations. Finland's national intelligence capabilities are developed with a purpose and as part of strengthening our defence capability.

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Fulfilling the tasks of military intelligence requires continuous capability development and the anticipation and management of emerging technologies. Photo: Finnish Defence Forces

Finnish military intelligence is constantly evolving as a national security provider. Development is a continuous activity that relies on the expertise of personnel and sufficient resources. Military intelligence is also cooperation. Finland has continued active integration into the NATO intelligence community.

An exceedingly complex and rapidly changing world continues to challenge military intelligence as a national security provider. The geopolitics of Russia and the great powers, technological upheavals, and international crises place new demands to quickly adapt and develop intelligence activities. In Finland, military intelligence has always been a key part of national defence capability, but in the next few years its importance will be even greater as threats become more complex and difficult to foresee.

An eventful 2025 and military intelligence

For military intelligence, 2025 was influenced by the war in Ukraine, with its effects also felt in Finland's neighbouring areas. International agreements related to the shared understanding of threats, increase of defence expenditure, and capability goals were central also for the intelligence system and its development.

At NATO's Hague Summit, the Allies reaffirmed their commitment to collective defence as enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. In the summit, the members agreed on significant increases in defence investment in support of deterrence and defence. This decision will create possibilities for the development of intelligence and its capabilities.

In 2025, Finland chaired the NATO Military Intelligence Committee, which supports the North Atlantic Council and the Military Committee and gives guidance to NATO's intelligence functions. During the year, Finnish Defence Intelligence was responsible for planning and steering the Committee's work in close cooperation with NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Intelligence and Security. The chairmanship offered a unique insight into NATO's strategic-level intelligence and significantly supported our integration into the Alliance's intelligence functions and structures.

The intelligence dimension of the Alliance is also visible on the ground and in the skies. During the summer of 2025, a remotely piloted RQ-4D Phoenix surveillance aircraft from the NATO Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Force (NISRF) deployed to Finland for the first time, operating from



An RQ-4D Phoenix UAV from the NATO Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Force in Satakunta Air Wing's base in Pirkkala in June 2025. Photo: Finnish Defence Forces

Satakunta Air Wing in Pirkkala. The NISRF deployment and use of joint ISR capabilities enhanced allied situational awareness and strengthened the defence of both Finland and the alliance.

Military counter-intelligence repels threats by means of counter-intelligence and security intelligence

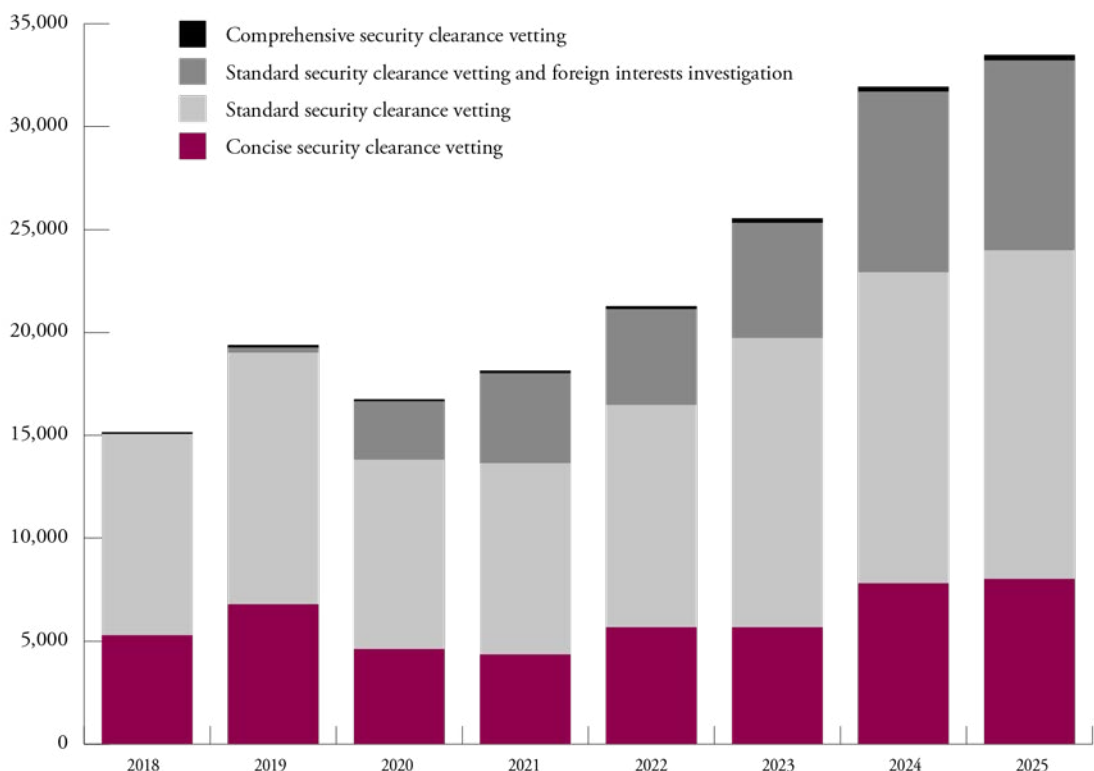
Military counter-intelligence assesses intelligence and other threats against the defence system. This means protecting against intelligence collection by foreign intelligence services, individuals, and organisations that target the Finnish Defence Forces or its projects, or stakeholder companies involved in research and development activities. After Finland joined NATO, exercises with our allies have increased and set new requirements for counter-intelligence as well.

Military counter-intelligence is a Designated Security Authority (DSA), which issues personal and company security clearances and approves information sys-

tems and encryption methods. After 1 January 2025, the National Security Authority (NSA), operating within the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, has begun to charge a fee for the international Personnel Security Clearances (PSC) that it issues. A valid national security clearance is a requirement for a PSC.

According to the recommendation of a 2024 Ministry of Defence working group tasked with reviewing fee policies of security clearances, beginning on 1 January 2026, Defence Command Finland will also charge a fee when issuing security clearances to those outside the Finnish Defence Forces. This will be done in accordance with the Security Clearance Act and Act on Criteria for Charges Payable to the State. A fee is charged for personnel security clearances relating to projects and commissions administered by Defence Properties Finland, and for Facility Security Clearances vetted by Defence Command Finland. After the change, approximately a third of all security clearances vetted in Defence Command Finland and all Facility Security Clearances will be subject to a fee. Finland's NATO membership and capability

Number of security clearance applications in process 2018-2025



projects have increased the need for comprehensive security clearances in particular. The number of comprehensive security clearance applications has nearly tripled between 2018 and 2025.

New legislation strengthens combating crime by means of military counter-intelligence

The new Act on Military Discipline and Combating Crime in the Defence Forces (89/2025) entered into

force on 1 December 2025. The previous act dated from 2014. Numerous small amendments had been made to it over the years, mainly making changes relating to other legislative projects. The need to amend the act was identified and work started in the spring of 2019 to improve the legislation.

According to the act, the Finnish Defence Forces is responsible for the prevention, detection, and investigation of crimes in all states of readiness. The best



The targets of counter-intelligence strive to exploit boundaries of legislation. Photo: Finnish Defence Forces

way to ensure effectiveness is to create and maintain a well-working organisation already during normal conditions. In the field of national defence, military counter-intelligence has traditionally been responsible for preventing and detecting criminal offences involving intelligence activities targeted at Finland and those compromising the purpose of national defence. The military counter-intelligence tasks of preventing and detecting crimes focus on crimes that target defence policy, the defence industry, or the defence system. Typical crimes include the offences of treason, such as treason and espionage, or offences of high treason, such as high treason or illegal military activities. The objective is to also prevent and detect actions that endanger national defence, such as organised crime gaining access to classified information or materiel of the Finnish Defence Forces.

The new act includes a new regulation on general powers concerning all crime prevention duties in Defence Command Finland. The law defines powers that are necessary in order to carry out the statutory tasks of Defence Command. Such powers include the establishment of identity, cordoning off a place or an area, security search, and the right to use force. The powers are narrower than those of the police.

Military counter-intelligence's crime prevention section has received some new powers that will be used independently in the future. The powers of the previously authorised secret information collection methods remained unchanged. With the new act, Defence Command Finland can independently request authorisations for telecommunication interception and data traffic monitoring from a district court and carry them out. Completely new powers include undercover activities, undercover activities in an information network, and the use of covert human intelligence sources.

The regulation improves crime prevention cooperation with other authorities. Like the police, Finnish Customs and the Border Guard may provide assistance if Defence Command Finland does not have the necessary powers to conduct a crime prevention task. The act also includes a new regulation on operating in the duties of another crime prevention authority.

The regulation concerning oversight will become more effective, as the Intelligence Ombudsman will in the future also oversee the use of powers by the crime prevention section of military counter-intelligence.



The opening ceremony on NATO's Northern region land command element (Multi-Corps Land Component Command, MCLCC) was held in Mikkeli on 3 October 2025. The NATO flag and the flags of the nations that formed the MCLCC Core group were raised on flagpoles. Photo: Finnish Defence Forces

Application and development needs of the Act on Military Intelligence

The Act on Military Intelligence has been in force for almost six years and the military intelligence authorities have gained insight into how the act should be developed. The act requires clarification in places. On the other hand, a review should be conducted to see how the provisions of the legislation could best improve the capabilities of military intelligence in order to carry out its statutory task. This refers to a review of whether the powers of the military intelligence authority should be expanded.

One point of consideration is to review the prohibition of directing intelligence collection at a space that is permanently used as a domicile. If, for example, foreign intelligence officers are meeting in someone's home, military intelligence cannot use intelligence methods to listen to the conversation the people are having inside. Therefore, the current legal situation could be described as a significant barrier against comprehensive intelligence collection on targets of military intelligence. The sanctity of the home is a basic right guaranteed in the Constitution of Finland, which is why directing intelligence collection at homes is not, nor should it be, a matter of course. That is why the Ministry of Justice has established a working group to address this constitutional

question. Its task is to assess what changes need to be made to the Constitution of Finland so that the military intelligence authorities may have powers to obtain intelligence from a space that is permanently used for living.

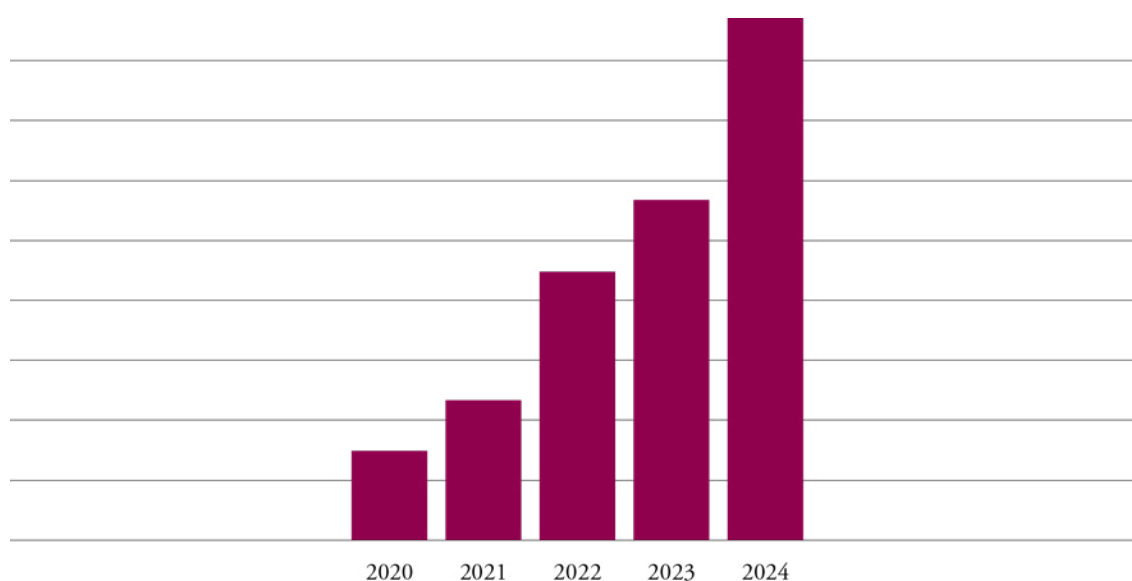
Outlook for the near future

Finland's position as Russia's neighbour highlights the importance of military intelligence in surveying and analysing regional and global threats. Intelligence is not solely about foreseeing military threats. Cyber threats, the development of hybrid influence methods, and the misuse of information are threats that can escalate quickly and have a wide impact on national security.

Finland does not work alone, but as a part of a larger Western military alliance. This emphasises the importance of intelligence in preventing regional conflicts and in reacting to crises quickly. Information provided by military intelligence is key when forecasting and trying to prevent regional conflicts before they escalate into a larger war.

Topics of interest in military intelligence for the future include organising intelligence support for the NATO presence in Finland, such as for NATO's new Multi-Corps Land Component Command

Decisions on the use of intelligence collection methods 2020-2024



(MCLCC) in Mikkeli and the Forward Land Forces (FLF) in Northern Finland.

In addition to meeting the information requirements of the high command of the Finnish Defence Forces and the state leadership, military intelligence must also be able to meet the intelligence information requirements of the combat units of various command levels. Also, the use of increasingly longer-range weapons of the Finnish Defence Forces requires up-to-date and precise intelligence information. We must also have the readiness to create an enemy situation picture and estimate the enemy's intentions on the battlefield because the intelligence system provides the eyes of the fighting units. At the same time, military intelligence must be able to constantly develop new methods and technology that enable us to separate essential information from the mass of information available, and act efficiently and at the right time.

Different data streams, such as social media, satellite images, content created with artificial intelligence, and cyberattacks, will make intelligence gathering

and analysis increasingly challenging. However, AI can be used to analyse large masses of data and find trends or deviations that might be missed with traditional methods. It makes it possible to react even faster and act pre-emptively, which is particularly important in a challenging operating environment.

In a democratic and open society, military intelligence is also developed through open research and public debate. In Finland, Scientific Intelligence Studies is becoming a notable field of research, which produces results that feed into developing intelligence to serve the needs of national security. At the same time, academic research will create the conditions for calm and neutral discussions about intelligence as a phenomenon on a wider scale in society.

Military intelligence will work continuously and tirelessly for the security of Finland and the Finnish people. Constant development will guarantee that military intelligence is ready to respond to the diverse challenges and threats of today and of the future.



M270 MLRS heavy rocket launcher system at the Rovajärvi training area during the Lightning Strike 23 exercise. The same type of system was also used during the exercise conducted by the U.S. and British forces. Military intelligence has a key role in enabling long-range fires. Photo: Finnish Defence Forces





The Finnish Defence Forces
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