

KANTAMIA

TOGETHER — FOR A SAFER FINLAND

Finland's security is a
responsibility we all
share



Security is not created only by authorities, the military or political leaders. It is built in everyday life through shared responsibility and the willingness to take part.



INTERVIEW

Everyone's experience can make a difference

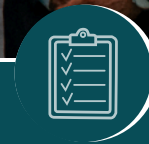
Antti Pekko Puhakka explains why he devotes his free time to civil protection and emergency preparedness.



MAIN ARTICLE

Security is our new area of focus

MVM's goal is to strengthen people's participation in society and their preparedness for different situations. By moving from observation to active action, we are building a safer Finland together.



PREPAREDNESS TIPS

Read important information before the summer

5 practical tips to help you prepare better for travel, trips to the cottage and emergency situations.



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TOGETHER WE ARE BUILDING A SAFER FINLAND

Thank you for being with us

Greetings from the Executive Director

Real trust is created by actions

Trust is a big word. It should not be repeated only in speeches. Real trust is not created by words, but by actions. It is precisely actions that must be continued day after day - for as long as it takes until people begin to feel that trust exists.

Trust is built slowly, but it can be broken quickly. That is why every action, every way of meeting another person and every promise kept matters. In everyday life, trust is visible in small things: greeting people, listening, honesty and treating one another with respect. When a person feels seen and valued, a sense of safety begins to emerge.

Trust between immigrants and native Finns is especially important. It is not built through ceremonial speeches, because most people who have moved to Finland do not even understand them. Nor is it built through individual projects alone, but through continuous cooperation and genuine encounters. Trust also includes motivating people to participate in society, taking different cultures into account respectfully, providing training, and building cooperation between authorities and communities. Through these actions, we can strengthen the security of society as a whole.

Real trust requires patience. Sometimes people may have fears, uncertainty or misunderstandings that only open dialogue, and direct actions can gradually break down.

Trust does not mean that everyone is the same. It means that despite our differences, people can respect one another and build a shared future.

In the end, the strength of society is not born from words alone, but from people who continue to do good deeds even when no one sees them. That is when trust becomes real - and that is when it also becomes lasting.



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Trust is built slowly, but
can be destroyed
quickly

Shaho Jaff

Executive Director

Maahanmuuttajien Varautumis- ja Maanpuolustusyhdistys (MVM)

Helsingin suojeluskuntatalo, Döbelninkatu 2, Helsinki

Editorial

Security is Our New Priority Area

Today, security is becoming a top priority for Finns, even ahead of climate goals. We must respond to this change together



The second issue of KANTAMA magazine is published at a time when Finns' understanding of security and the role of the EU has undergone a historic change.

A recent survey by the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra and the Finnish Business and Policy Forum EVA reveals a striking trend: Finns now place security even ahead of climate targets. The EU is no longer expected only to create economic growth, but also to have the ability to protect its member states and reduce technological dependence on great powers such as China and the United States.

This change in attitudes is strongly reflected in the work of the Immigrants' Preparedness and National Defence Association (MVM). When 74 percent of Finns want to protect critical infrastructure as a security-policy resource, it is clear that stability and trust are a strong foundation of our society. In comprehensive security, the participation and preparedness of immigrants play a decisive role. We are not merely recipients of information, but active experts and actors.

Security is a shared responsibility that we build together through cooperation



74%

of Finns consider the protection of critical infrastructure an important resource for national security



Source: Sitra ja EVA, spring 2025

MVM's goal is to ensure that language or cultural barriers do not stand in the way of a safe everyday life. Preparedness is a common language that everyone, regardless of background, must learn to speak. When immigrants participate in voluntary preparedness, Finland's overall crisis resilience and sense of community are strengthened. Security is a shared matter, built through cooperation. By moving from the role of bystanders to that of active participants, we build a more resilient and safer society for all of us.



Preparedness Tips

Check Important Information Before Summer

In summer, many people travel more, spend time at the cottage, outdoors, at events or away from home. That is why May is a good moment to pause and think about how you can prepare for situations where you may be in an unfamiliar place and something does not go as planned.



i Do you know where to get reliable information if a crisis or exceptional situation occurs at your travel destination?

globe What if your passport disappears abroad?

card How do you act if card payments do not work or the internet is down?

phone What do you do if your phone is lost or the battery runs out?



1 Make Sure Your Documents Are in Order



Check that your passport, identity card and residence permit are valid. When travelling abroad, some countries require your travel document to remain valid for several months after the trip.

If you are travelling in Europe, also check that you have a European Health Insurance Card. It is available from Kela free of charge.

Also take a copy of your passport or identity card and keep it separate from the original document, for example in another bag and in electronic form. If your document is lost abroad, a copy can make it easier to deal with the police and the Finnish mission

2 Write Important Numbers on Paper

Write the most important phone numbers down on paper as well: family members, travel companions, accommodation, insurance company, bank blocking and customer service numbers, your health centre and, if necessary, the Finnish mission or the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' 24/7 service.

Keep one list at home and another, for example, in your wallet or bag. If your phone is lost, the battery runs out or connections do not work, the numbers are still available.



3 Prepare for Travel Abroad

Before travelling abroad, check the travel advice for your destination country and submit a travel notification to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The travel notification can be made through the matkustusilmoitus.fi online service or via the **112 Suomi** application.

Also check your travel insurance: whether it is valid at your destination, what it covers and where you can find the insurance company's emergency assistance number.

If something exceptional happens during your trip, follow the instructions of local authorities, the news and information provided by the Finnish mission.



4 Keep a Small Amount of Cash With You

Card payments or online banking do not always work during disruptions. That is why it is useful to have a small amount of cash with you or at home for essential purchases, such as food, medicines or transport.



5 Tell Your Loved Ones About Your Plans

If you travel or leave home for a longer period, tell someone close to you where you are and how you can be reached. Ask someone to visit your home to empty the mailbox and change the position of the curtains so that possible burglars think someone is at home. These are simple ways to improve safety if something unexpected happens.



Good preparedness does not mean fear

It means that you have thought in advance about how to act if things do not work normally for a while.



Women Involved

Security is a responsibility we all share

Many friends and acquaintances who have known me for a long time may be a little surprised that I have become involved in activities where we talk about preparedness, national defence and security. I understand that very well. To be honest, these themes have not been close to me. I have not been a person who would naturally seek out such topics.

However, I believe that those same friends and acquaintances would also describe me as a responsible person - and perhaps that is what this is ultimately about. Security is not only the responsibility of authorities, experts or someone else. It is also the responsibility of each of us - in our everyday lives, in our choices and in the way we relate to one another.

I am involved in this work because I care. I care about the country in which I live. I care about my home, my family and about knowing how to act correctly if something exceptional happens around us.

I also want to invite other women who feel that this country is our home. That we care about it and that, in our own way, we want to support the security of this country. Many women already do this every day by taking care of their families, helping others, taking responsibility in everyday life, learning the language, building trust and being part of this society.



I think of this a little in the same way as the pink ribbon for breast cancer awareness. When a person wears it, it is not only a small symbol. It says: this issue touches me, I care and I want to be involved. In the same way, our logo can carry the message: I am not a bystander. I am an active participant in this society. I care and I take responsibility.



I am happy to say that we have begun planning products carrying our association's own logo. Soon our association's members will be able to order them through our website. For me, they are not just items or small everyday objects, but a way to show belonging and care.

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I am not a passive observer.

I am an active participant in this society.

I care, and I take responsibility.

Tatjana Jaff



Events

A Common Language Creates Security: Immigrants' Preparedness Training Responds to the Challenges of Our Time

Improving the security awareness and preparedness of immigrant communities has become a central part of Finland's comprehensive security. An information event held in May brought together members of the Kurdish community and key Finnish security authorities to discuss how society's crisis resilience is built together across language and cultural boundaries.



The event, held in Helsinki, brought together a wide range of members of the Kurdish community as well as experts in Finland's national security, rescue services and civil defence. The event was chaired by MVM ry trainer Fariba Valizadeh.

Finland's changed security environment requires new kinds of measures and closer cooperation between different population groups. This need was addressed on Wednesday 13 May 2026, when the Immigrants' Preparedness and National Defence Association (MVM ry), in cooperation with the Finnish Kurdish Association, organised an information event titled "The Need for a Common Language for the Security of Society".

“MVM serves as a critical communication bridge between Finnish authorities responsible for preparedness and immigrant communities. We organise courses and training so that immigrants have concrete capabilities to act as part of Finnish society also in crisis situations,”

Jaff emphasised



A BRIDGE BETWEEN IMMIGRANTS AND AUTHORITIES

The event was opened by MVM ry Executive Director Shaho Jaff, who explained the background to the establishment of the organisation. According to Jaff, the organisation was created as a result of social, political and psychological factors.



THE STRENGTH OF COOPERATION

Hiwa Shwani, Chair of the Finnish Kurdish Association, supported this message. He emphasised the importance of cooperation between organisations. According to Shwani, the goal is to increase knowledge and awareness in the Kurdish community. This helps community members act calmly and correctly in unexpected situations.

COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY AND PRACTICAL PREPAREDNESS

Finnish experts and representatives of the authorities provided a strong package of information on everyday safety and preparedness for exceptional circumstances. Three key themes emerged:



SOCIETY'S CRISIS RESILIENCE

Kari Pietiläinen, Training Manager at the National Defence Training Association of Finland (MPK), presented MPK's national activities. MPK aims to improve citizens' everyday safety skills and their ability to face crises. Pietiläinen highlighted the cooperation model between MPK and MVM, through which these vital trainings are taken directly to immigrant communities



CIVIL DEFENCE IN THE CAPITAL

Walteri Jokela, Control Manager and Senior Planning Officer at Helsinki City Rescue Department, explained the dual role of rescue authorities. "In normal conditions, we plan and inspect civil defence shelters as part of civil defence, and in exceptional circumstances we lead the operations," Jokela explained. He also described the rescue department's close cooperation with MPK in developing services targeted for immigrants.



THE PILLARS OF SECURITY

Antti Pekko Puhakka, an internal security expert and property and premises strategist at the Ministry of the Interior, explained the structures of Finland's comprehensive security and civil defence in his presentation. He gave participants practical knowledge on how society protects itself and how citizens can support the authorities through their own actions during crises

A TIMELY FORUM RECEIVED A WARM WELCOME

The event was received exceptionally warmly by the participants. The discussions particularly highlighted that the forum addressed a topic that is highly relevant to the present moment.

The changed security policy situation in Europe and Finland - especially the consequences of Russia's attack against Ukraine and global tensions - is directly reflected in the everyday lives and sense of security of immigrants living in Finland. According to the participants, receiving information in their own language and direct interaction with authorities are the best ways to reduce uncertainty and build a shared, safe future.



The Voice of Young People



“For us, young people are not just one target group among others; they are at the centre of our work. This is not merely a principle, because the Chair of the MVM Association also belongs to this target group.”

The number of young people with immigrant backgrounds in military service is growing, but their participation in crisis preparedness, voluntary helping and societal security still needs active strengthening.

Military service and voluntary national defence activities can support the integration of young people with immigrant backgrounds, for example by strengthening working-life skills, language skills, networks and a sense of belonging. At the same time, it is important to recognise that young people may have prejudices, uncertainty or even fears related to these topics, arising from previous experiences, their close circles or a lack of information.

We interviewed the chair of our association about how her thoughts on military service, war and crisis situations have changed over time.



MARI PAUKKU
Chair of the Association, MVM ry

As I have followed and participated in the growth of MVM, I have had to reflect on issues that I might otherwise not have stopped to consider so deeply. War, crises, the army and national defence have not been simple topics for me. During my life, my relationship with the army has changed many times, and my opinions have moved from one extreme to another.

I have always had a strong wish that people could live in peace, understand one another and focus on building their own lives without fear of war or violence. That thought has not disappeared anywhere. On the contrary, it has perhaps only become stronger.

At the same time, I have had to accept that the world does not change overnight. Even though I would wish peace to be an obvious choice for everyone, reality constantly shows us that crises arise, security is undermined and people must also know how to act in difficult situations.

During the past year, I have begun to see national defence and crisis preparedness in a new way. It is not only about the army or weapons. It is also about whether we know how to help one another, remain calm, take responsibility and act when something unexpected happens.

Although national defence includes the perspective of duty, it should also be an opportunity for everyone who wants to participate in strengthening society's security. Even more importantly, I believe that as many of us as possible should learn how to act in crisis situations - regardless of background, gender or whether a person has completed military service.

I hope that people who participate in military service or voluntary national defence activities would see it first and foremost as a responsible task. Not as an opportunity to glorify weapons or power, but as a way to protect life, society and the people who need help.

I trust that in Finland the army exists for national defence, not for aggression. That is why it is important to me that national defence and crisis preparedness can also be discussed from the perspective of peace, responsibility and equality.

Many kinds of crises can happen in the world, not only wars. There may be natural disasters, power outages, cyberattacks, pandemics or situations where the normal everyday functioning of society is disrupted. In such moments, it is not enough for only one group of people to know how to act. Crisis preparedness should belong to everyone.

“It is not only about the army or weapons. It is also about whether we know how to help one another, remain calm, take responsibility and act when something unexpected happens.”

MVM wants to work



so that more and more young people can find their own way to participate in crisis preparedness, voluntary helping and societal security.

This work is carried out above all at the grassroots level: by meeting young people, listening to their questions and building trust

When a young person feels that they belong to this society, they can also see its security, helping others and defending it as their own

TOGETHER WE ARE BUILDING A SAFE FUTURE



PARTICIPATION

The voice of young people is heard. Young people take part in planning and developing activities.



TRUST

Open communication and respectful interaction help build trust between young people and representatives of the authorities.



SECURITY

Knowledge, skills and preparedness help young people act more confidently during crises, together with others.



RESPONSIBILITY

Everyone can make a difference. Even small everyday actions help build a stronger and more resilient community.



FUTURE

Together — towards a common goal: a safe, fair and united Finland.

A sense of belonging is the key to integration

Expert Perspective

Finland's Security Belongs to All of Us

Finnish security is built above all on trust, shared responsibility and the idea that we do not leave anyone outside. That is precisely why the work of the Immigrants' Preparedness and National Defence Association, MVM ry, is extremely important for Finland's comprehensive security as a whole.



Security is not created only through authorities, the Defence Forces or political decisions. It is created in everyday life: in the fact that people know how to act in exceptional situations, understand how society functions and feel that they are part of Finland and its security. The most important resource of comprehensive security is people



Finland has long traditions of willingness to defend the country and society's crisis resilience. Internationally, the Finnish model of comprehensive security is seen as a strength. At its core is the idea that security is created together: through cooperation between authorities, companies, organisations and citizens.



MVM ry also makes an important contribution to this work.



It is significant that immigrants living in Finland can take part in security work, preparedness and voluntary national defence. At the same time, the unity and trust of society are strengthened. A sense of security arises when people feel that they belong to the same society and are part of a shared future.

Security must never be divided into "us" and "them". Finland's security is a shared matter for all of us.



The current security environment is changing rapidly. Hybrid influencing, cyber threats, information influence operations and technological development affect the whole of society. At the same time, in crisis situations people's own ability to act, preparedness and ability to work together become especially important. That is why security information and preparedness must reach every person living in Finland.



Practicality is also important in MVM ry's work. Security is not only about strategies or ceremonial speeches. It is concrete skills, training, cooperation and the building of trust. Every trained person also strengthens Finland's crisis resilience.



Finnish society is strong when people feel that they are involved in building it. The spirit of national defence is not created by force. It is created through the experience that this country is shared and worth defending.



I have personally worked for a long time in the fields of security, comprehensive security and national defence. That is why I know very well that security is never finished. It is built every day together. At the same time, I also know that Finland's strength has always been its ability to unite in difficult times.

For this reason, I consider the work of MVM ry to be extremely valuable and important.

Security belongs to everyone. And when security is built together, Finland is stronger.

Jarno Limmell

Shared Security Needs Everyone

Finland's comprehensive security is built through cooperation between authorities, organisations and individuals. Everyone's skills can matter when society faces crises or disruptions.

In this interview, Antti Pekko Puhakka, who works in the field of internal security, explains why he uses his free time for voluntary work in support of civil defence and preparedness - and why the skills of people with immigrant backgrounds are also needed in strengthening shared security.



THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES FOR COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY



My Background:

I am a long-serving public official and have worked at all levels of administration: local government, regional administration and, in recent years, central government. By education, I am a security-oriented humanist engineer. I completed most of my studies in Scotland and lived there for five years. Before settling back in Finland, I also spent time in the Netherlands and Hungary, among other places. I am extremely interested in different people, specifically as individuals. I currently work on matters related to Finland's internal security authorities at the Ministry of the Interior



Voluntary Work

I use a large part of my free time in various projects related to the comprehensive security of our society. When Russia expanded its brutal war of aggression against Ukraine into a full-scale campaign of destruction in 2022, interest in the protection of the civilian population in Finland grew enormously. Helsinki has long traditions in civil defence training, but the demand that began in spring 2022 required a major scaling up of the activities. Russia's war crimes against Ukrainian civilians were the most significant motivation for me to become involved in this work.

Over the years, my role has become more central in this voluntary activity, which is intentionally loosely organised. The National Defence Training Association of Finland (MPK), which provides the framework for the activities, offers a vast range of training that supports both the military sector and civil society and its authorities. In the training courses, I meet many different individuals who want to develop their knowledge and skills so that our shared readiness to face disruptions would improve.

The Finnish model of comprehensive security is based on individuals taking responsibility for their own readiness and preparedness. Each person can, for their part, strengthen our shared readiness by developing knowledge and skills related to their own area of expertise that could be useful to all of us in exceptional situations.



My Advice to Readers with Immigrant Backgrounds

Be brave in meeting your fellow human beings as individuals - the same advice applies to everyone. Thinking in terms of "us and them" is natural for people, but for society to function it is essential to be able to find unifying factors and shared important issues. Together, WE can be stronger. Be brave. Develop your knowledge and skills. Our society needs all individuals, regardless of background. We all have skills that can also help others in times of need. Finnish society is worth defending. You surely know many useful things that I do not know.

The Finnish model of comprehensive security is based on each person's responsibility for their own preparedness. Each of us can strengthen shared security by developing our knowledge and skills. In an emergency, even experience in one's own field can become important and useful to others



Current Affairs

MVM Receives Praise: Immigrants as Active Builders of Security

A wide-ranging article in Suomen Sotilas magazine (4/2026) prominently highlights the valuable work carried out by the Immigrants' Preparedness and National Defence Association (MVM ry). The association's activities have been received exceptionally positively in Finnish media and society, and they are seen as strengthening the comprehensive security of the whole country.

The article emphasises that MVM ry fills an important gap in Finnish preparedness. Under the leadership of Executive Director Shaho Jaff, the association ensures that information on how to act in times of crisis also reaches people with immigrant backgrounds.

“We are building a Finland where every resident is part of the solution, not only someone who receives help”

Jaff summarises the association's core message

The work has gathered strong support from high-level decision-makers. Members of Parliament and Defence Committee members Paula Werning and Jarno Limnell praise MVM ry in the magazine as a builder of society's resilience. According to them, the association acts as an important bridge and helps Finnish society recognize and make better use of the language skills and cultural knowledge that people with immigrant backgrounds bring with them.

The positive reception is also visible in the association's rapid integration into the official security field. MVM ry works in close training cooperation with the National Defence Training Association of Finland (MPK) and has already been accepted as a member of the National Defence Guilds' Association. In addition, our association shares information through the KANTAMA digital magazine that it has established. The Suomen Sotilas article clearly shows that there has been a pressing need in our society for the work of MVM ry.




Read the full article: Suomen Sotilas 4/2026
www.suomensotilas.fi

Current Affairs

SPEK Council Statement: Developing public warning communications and strengthening shared security

We publish here the statement by the Council of the Finnish National Rescue Association SPEK, which addresses the development of public warning communications and the strengthening of comprehensive security. The statement was published as a SPEK press release, and it raises important perspectives on how public warning communications should reach all people living in and moving around Finland - including different language groups and target groups.

 For KANTAMA magazine, the topic is especially important because the accessibility, clarity and multilingual nature of security communications are key prerequisites for everyone to be able to act correctly in a dangerous situation.



Statement by the Council of the Finnish National Rescue Association SPEK

The public warning issued in Uusimaa on Friday concerning a drone approaching Finland highlighted the critical need to implement a functioning public warning system so that warnings can be communicated comprehensively to citizens. Public warning communications must immediately reach everyone affected by the danger, regardless of the technical settings or challenges of an application.

Minister of the Interior Mari Rantanen has said that she has urged the development of the warning system. The view of SPEK's Council is that a functioning system must be put into use as soon as possible. A great deal can happen before next year. Public warning communications must now be put in order during this interim period while the system is awaited. The de-escalation of the situation must also be handled appropriately.

“Public warnings must reach everyone who lives in Finland or moves around the country, including different language groups and target audiences.”



The System Alone Is Not Enough

However, no system will help if there are other shortcomings in the implementation of communications. Ultimately, the issue is not only technology, but a shared situational picture, coordination and leadership of the situation, cooperation, decisions, sufficient instructions for action and maintaining the sense of security.

Public warning communications must also take different target groups into account, such as immigrants, tourists, older people, people with reduced functional capacity and children. Many parents have been confused about how the matter should be discussed with children. Instructions must be clear and understandable to everyone. In SPEK's earlier study on public warning communications, many people also considered how children would have coped with the situation if they had had to act alone.

Public warnings must also be able to reach people who move between areas. If a public warning is sent only once to those already in the area, it may not reach people travelling there.



Finland's Comprehensive Security Needs Strong Cooperation

New security threats also challenge the rescue sector, while at the same time highlighting the importance of close cooperation between authorities, companies, the third sector and citizens. While public warning communications are improved, the coordination of preparedness exercises and information exchange must also be strengthened.

A wide range of actors, from authorities, organisations and businesses, must be invited to participate in exercises at local, regional and national levels. Through exercises, challenges can be anticipated and solved together before threats materialise.

Strong cooperation has an impact on Finland's comprehensive security.

In addition to cooperation, sufficient resources for rescue services must be ensured. It is finally time to understand that rescue services are a key factor in internal security, and their importance is emphasised in many dangerous situations and threat scenarios.

“The Chair of the Council of the Finnish National Rescue Association is

Paula Risikko



Read the full statement on the SPEK website:

www.spek.fi