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KANTAMA

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Maahanmuuttajien Varautumis- ja Maanpuolustusyhdistys (MVM) ry



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S GREETINGS

ATTITUDE – When Finland Feels Like Home

For me, Finland has never been just a country where I live. From the very beginning, I have had a strong sense that this is my country. A country I want to belong to, whose future I want to help shape, and which I am prepared to defend if necessary.

Over the years, however, I have come to understand that not everyone develops this kind of feeling in the same way. This realisation did not come in a single day or as a result of one particular event. It has grown over more than ten years of working with people.



Shaho Jaff
Executive Director
MVM ry

An Observation That Stayed with Me

Since 2015, I have worked in various roles with people from immigrant backgrounds. I have worked as a coordinator at a Christian educational institution, as the head instructor of a unit for minors, and later as an entrepreneur and lead coach in a vocational coaching programme delivered in participants' native languages, which I developed myself.

In these roles, I have met people from different backgrounds, listened to their experiences, and gained first-hand insight into their hopes, challenges, and opportunities.

Gradually, I began to notice one thing: many people may not necessarily know what their position in Finnish society is or how many different ways they could participate in it.

This is not always a matter of unwillingness or a lack of interest. Sometimes, people simply have not been given enough insight into the fact that Finland can be more than just a country of residence. It can be a society of their own, whose future they can influence and to which they can make a meaningful contribution.

This observation led me to reflect on how much a person's attitude affects their ability to find their place in society.

Opportunities Can Change the Way We Think

Over the years, I have become increasingly convinced that information alone is not enough. People must also understand what that information means for them personally.

We can provide information about rights, responsibilities, education, and working life. But do we do enough to communicate that everyone has the opportunity to be an active part of society and take responsibility for matters that affect us all?

If someone does not know that a door is open to them, how could they even try to walk through it?

An attitude cannot simply be handed to someone ready-made. However, we can inspire reflection, offer new perspectives, and create opportunities through which people can find their own place.

> *Attitude can change the way we see ourselves, one another, and our own place in society*

From Ideas to Practical Action

At MVM ry, we have wanted to turn these ideas into practical action. We want to create opportunities for people to participate, learn, and take responsibility for Finland's shared security.

We have seen how participation can strengthen people's confidence in their own abilities and their sense of belonging to society.

Attitude is a personal matter. I do not believe that everyone should experience Finland in the same way I do. Everyone has their own history, experiences, and path, but I firmly believe that everyone should have the opportunity to understand the significance of their own role in society.

At the same time, we must all examine our own attitudes. Are we ready to welcome new people and include them? Do we recognise the skills and potential in one another? Are we ourselves prepared to take responsibility?

When I look back on the journey that began in 2015 and the work we have done together, I am more convinced than ever of one thing. Attitude can change the way we see ourselves, one another, and our own place in society. When our way of thinking changes, new opportunities to participate can open up in entirely new ways.

For me, Finland is my country. I hope that more and more people will find their own way of feeling a sense of belonging to this country and, above all, understand that their actions, too, matter for Finland's future.

EDITORIAL

TRUST IS ALSO BUILT Within the Association

Ari Pakarinen, Executive Director, MPKL

The Association for Immigrant Preparedness and National Defence (MVM) has been steadily and purposefully establishing its place in the field of voluntary national defence, making rapid progress.

MVM has actively built networks with stakeholders and decision-makers at various levels of society and the national defence sector. This work continues, but it is time to shift the focus to the next phase of the association's activities.

The next phase, focused on services for members, is now underway. Active members of the association have acquired expertise and training through the Finnish National Defence Training Association (MPK) and in the field of civil protection.

The knowledge they have gained and the qualifications they have obtained to serve as instructors and course leaders provide a strong foundation for launching and further developing the association's training activities. Organising courses requires careful planning, which must also involve the members.

Members Must Become an Asset

The association has not been established merely as an administrative organisation in which a small group of people knows what is going on. It is an organisation that exists to serve its members.

Members expect to receive value in return for their membership fees.

The foundation of the association's activities lies in ensuring that every member can access the services outlined in its rules and action plans. These may include lectures, courses, and other activities that strengthen members' sense of belonging.

A sense of belonging and a strong team spirit build mutual trust among members.

Communication Is a Building Block of Trust

When people work together, effective communication is essential. Communication must be two-way, open, and, above all, easy to understand.

KANTAMA magazine serves as the association's communications channel, offering an excellent opportunity to share accurate information through its multilingual approach. Its role is to spark discussions, encourage reflection, and provide ordinary members with a platform for participation.

All communication must be free of so-called noise and interference, as well as misinformation. Timing is crucial. When and how should we communicate about past events, and how should we communicate about upcoming ones?

Effective communication requires vigilance within MVM to ensure that messages are delivered clearly, accurately, and at the right time.

Expert Perspective



Titta Collin

Master of Psychology, Chair of the Tampere Region Women Reservists' Association (Tampereen Seudun Reserviläisnaiset ry) and MPK volunteer

Finland is becoming more diverse, and an increasing number of people living here have backgrounds, languages, and cultural roots that extend beyond the country's borders. In an increasingly diverse society, how we approach one another and build our shared everyday lives becomes particularly important. Attitudes influence how we interpret people, situations, and the world around us. However, they do not emerge out of nowhere. Our attitudes are shaped by our own experiences, upbringing, and environment, as well as by the stories we hear about other people and groups. This is why information alone is not always enough to change attitudes. Even when we receive new facts, we often interpret them through our existing beliefs. Being aware of our own starting points and assumptions is therefore essential to understanding our own thinking and, when necessary, changing it.

Many people recognise the experience of seeing their preconceptions about someone change only after meeting them personally. Research also suggests that close cooperation towards a shared goal reduces prejudice more effectively than simply increasing knowledge. Trust grows through experience: through seeing that another person acts consistently, takes responsibility, and demonstrates that they are worthy of trust.

Communities and associations provide a natural way to meet people and experience a sense of belonging. Different backgrounds can strengthen a community's expertise and its ability to respond to everyday challenges. This requires discussion, flexibility, and a willingness to develop shared ways of working. Many opportunities open up to those who dare to find out more and get involved. At the same time, we Finns must ask ourselves how easy it really is for newcomers to join in. Do we invite new people into the conversation, explain the unwritten rules, and give them a genuine opportunity to participate?

Trust is built through action: by listening to instructions, training together, and carrying out one's own duties as part of a group

In voluntary national defence, attitudes are reflected in concrete actions. Getting involved demonstrates a willingness to learn about Finnish society and its history, take responsibility, and contribute to our shared security. Trust is built through action: by listening to instructions, training together, and carrying out one's own duties as part of a group.

At the same time, participants from immigrant backgrounds can bring perspectives and expertise that benefit the entire community.

The importance of attitude becomes particularly evident when things do not go smoothly. A positive attitude does not mean accepting discrimination or inappropriate treatment. Rather, it means being willing to keep trying without allowing a single negative experience to define one's view of an entire society. However, the responsibility must not rest solely with the newcomer. The community must demonstrate that everyone who commits to shared rules and takes responsibility is welcome to help build Finland.

The Next Step in the Instructor Training Path – K2 Course Completed



In October, some members of the MVM ry team participated in MPK's K2-level course leader training. This training builds on the K1 course and forms part of MPK's multi-level instructor training pathway. Its aim is to deepen instructional skills and develop the ability to plan, deliver, and lead training courses.

This is an extremely important step for our association. Our goal is not only to encourage people from immigrant backgrounds to participate in training courses, but also to create a pathway through which they can become instructors themselves and pass on their knowledge to others.

Our team has a growing number of members who have successfully completed MPK instructor training courses and other training in security and preparedness. This strengthens our association's own expertise and expands our ability to organise training in different languages for various target groups in the future.

Upcoming Events

1. 11. 2026 – Information Session for Young People

Topics:
Military service, comprehensive security, voluntary national defence, and education and career opportunities.

Time:
14.00

Location:
Finpolar Nuoriso Yhdistys ry, Kornetintie 6 C, 00380 Helsinki

The event is organised in cooperation with Finpolar Nuoriso Yhdistys ry.

Interpretation into Turkish will be provided.

Coffee and refreshments will be served.

4.11.2026 – NASTAisku Webinar

Topics:
How can immigrants contribute to building a safer Finland and strengthen society's resilience to crises?

Time:
18.00–19.00

Location:
Online via Zoom

Representatives of MVM ry will introduce the association's activities at a webinar organised by the National Women's Preparedness Association of Finland (Naisten Valmiusliitto).

The participation link will be published on the websites and social media channels of the National Women's Preparedness Association of Finland and MVM ry. A recording of the webinar will be published on the websites at a later date.

12.11.2026 – Information Session in English

Topics:

Comprehensive security, preparedness, and voluntary national defence

Time:
17.00

Location:
Stadin ammattiopisto, Vilppulantie campus, auditorium,

Vilppulantie 14, 00700 Helsinki

The event is organised in cooperation with Think Africa ry.

The event will be conducted in English.

Women Involved

Being Prepared Is Not About Fear, but a Path to Inner Strength and Security



Olena Niemceva

Our sense of security can change quickly when something happens in the world that hits close to home. But can worry and uncertainty be turned into action — and can preparedness even strengthen our sense of security?

Olena Niemceva, who is involved in the activities of MVM ry, explains how events in Ukraine changed her attitude towards security and why the importance of knowledge, training and working together means something quite different to her today than it did before

How did the events in Ukraine change your own sense of security?

The events in Ukraine stirred deep pain and concern in my heart. When you see how a familiar life can fall apart, it is impossible to escape fear of the future — and, above all, the thought that something similar must never happen here in Finland, which has become my home.

At first, feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability stayed with me every day. It felt as though an individual could do very little in the face of global crises.

What helped you turn fear into action?

Everything began to change when I decided not to give in to panic, but to take action instead. After joining MVM ry and starting to work with a like-minded team, I saw how much is done in Finland every day to keep people safe.

This includes training the population, preparing clear instructions for dealing with emergencies, and systematic preparedness across different sectors of society.

This experience changed my understanding of security. Anxiety was replaced by the knowledge that there are established procedures, expertise and people I can work with. I found myself surrounded by people who share the same desire to protect our shared environment, contribute and help others.

What does preparedness mean to you today?

When you know what to do in different situations, fear diminishes. In its place comes a calm sense of confidence, a willingness to take responsibility and the ability to help others, too.

Today, I am convinced that genuine security is built on knowledge, mutual assistance and everyone's individual initiative. Learning, preparing and participating in MVM ry's activities are ways for me to help build shared security and a shared future.

Has being involved changed your sense of belonging in Finland and Finnish society?

Yes, absolutely. I now understand that I, too, am a full-fledged member of Finnish society and can contribute through my own knowledge and skills. I have also realised that a shared goal can bring together people of different nationalities and backgrounds.

Prepare Your Mindset, Too

Preparedness is about more than emergency supplies, a flashlight or first-aid skills. One of the most important tools for preparedness is your own mindset. It influences how we approach potential risks, whether we prepare for them in advance, and how we act when something actually happens.

Don't think, "Nothing will ever happen to us."

If we think nothing will ever happen to us, we won't see the need to prepare either. Preparedness begins with accepting that unexpected situations can also occur in our everyday lives. The aim is not to expect the worst, but to be ready to act if something happens.

Don't live in a constant state of worry

The purpose of preparedness is not to live in fear or constantly think about what bad things might happen. On the contrary, knowledge and preparation can reduce uncertainty and strengthen our sense of security. When you know you are prepared, you don't have to fear everything in advance.

Build connections with other people

Preparedness is not just an individual responsibility. In disruptions and crises, we often need other people — family, friends, neighbours and the wider community. Good relationships and trust are also part of preparedness: one person can be an important source of security for another.

Be willing to learn

Preparedness does not mean you have to know everything in advance. What matters is the willingness to learn, practise and develop your skills before they are actually needed. It is easier to act in a crisis when you are not encountering everything for the first time.

Be ready to adapt

Things do not always go according to plan, and it is impossible to prepare in advance for every situation. A good preparedness mindset includes the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. If Plan A doesn't work, look for Plan B.

Mindset Is Part of Preparedness

We cannot know in advance what will happen, nor can we control everything around us. However, we can prepare, learn, build trust in others and practise acting even in uncertain situations. A good preparedness mindset is not about fearing what might happen — it is about trusting that I will know how to act if something does happen.



FINDING YOUR PLACE IN FINNISH SOCIETY COMES THROUGH LEARNING, WORKING AND PARTICIPATING

Himdad Shwani, 29, moved to Finland as a child in 2005. Today, he works as a doctor and contributes through his work to maintaining the wellbeing and security of Finnish society. His story shows how education, employment and a willingness to participate can open up many opportunities and strengthen the feeling of belonging to society.

From Childhood in Finland to a Career in Medicine

Himdad Shwani was born abroad in 1996 and moved to Finland in 2005. He started school in Finland in the fourth grade and later continued to lower secondary school and upper secondary school. He completed his university studies in medicine abroad. Moving to a new country and learning a new language were not easy at first, but his curiosity and interest in learning helped him move forward.

"I have always enjoyed school and been interested in learning new things. The Finnish education system has provided me with a good foundation for further studies," Himdad says.
Although his roots lie elsewhere, Finland is home to him. He has grown up here, attended school and built his career here.

Every Job Is Part of Your Personal Growth

Before qualifying as a doctor, Himdad had already worked in many different roles. He has worked as a security screener at an airport, a café worker, a taxi driver, a market vendor and a school assistant.

These experiences show that you do not have to build your future along just one path. Different jobs offer opportunities to learn, meet people and understand how society works.

Today, Himdad works as a general practitioner, mainly at a health centre. He also sees patients in the private sector and works on call at a hospital.

"I enjoy my work because every day is different and I get to interact with people a lot. The work can be challenging at times, but it is also rewarding."

Working Is Also a Contribution to Our Shared Security

Comprehensive security is not just about national defence or the work of the authorities. It is also built into the everyday life of society: in healthcare, education, workplaces and cooperation between people.

Himdad's work as a doctor is a concrete example of this. By treating patients, maintaining people's health and contributing to healthcare services, he helps strengthen society's ability to function.

The same principle applies to many other professions. Teachers, drivers, shop workers, entrepreneurs and countless other professionals all do work that matters to the functioning of society.

Society's security is not built only during emergencies. It is built every day through studying, working and taking responsibility for one's own role.

A Sense of Belonging Grows Through Participation

Himdad considers the activities of MVM ry important because they encourage people with immigrant backgrounds to participate in society, including in matters related to security and preparedness.

"Everyone living in Finland has their own role in society and the opportunity to contribute to its wellbeing and security. Preparedness and societal security are shared concerns that affect us all, regardless of our backgrounds."

In his view, participation in associations can also promote integration, strengthen a sense of belonging and help people better understand how Finnish society works.

Participation offers opportunities to meet new people, learn skills and realise that everyone has something to contribute to society.

A Message to Young People: Believe in Your Potential and Build Your Own Future

Himdad's main advice to other young people with immigrant backgrounds is simple: believe in your own potential and do your best to achieve your goals.

"Finland offers good opportunities to pursue an education, work, start a family and build a good future for yourself and your family. It is worth making the most of these opportunities."

He also emphasises the importance of meeting other people and participating in society. In his view, maintaining one's own culture, religion and identity is not an obstacle to succeeding in Finnish society.

"I hope young people will have the opportunity to develop themselves, make use of their strengths and contribute to the wellbeing of others, too."

Himdad's story is a reminder that belonging to society is more than just a feeling. It is also reflected in actions: studying, working, helping others and sharing responsibility. Every young person can contribute to building Finland's future in their own way — and, at the same time, strengthening its comprehensive security.

Emergency Alerts Will Soon Be Sent Directly to Mobile Phones



Finland's public warning system will be updated in November 2026. The new FI-Alert system will allow authorities to send emergency alerts directly to mobile phones in the affected area. Receiving alerts will not require the installation of a separate app.

The President of the Republic has approved an amendment to the Act on Emergency Warnings, which will enter into force on 1 November 2026. The amendment will introduce a new public warning channel in Finland, FI-Alert, which will complement existing methods of alerting the population.

The aim of the reform is to improve the reach of public warnings and speed up the delivery of alerts, particularly under emergency conditions. The changing security situation has highlighted the importance of fast and reliable communication from the authorities.

How does the new system work?

FI-Alert is based on Cell Broadcast technology. It allows authorities to send emergency alerts almost instantly to mobile phones in a specific geographical area.

A key advantage of the system is that recipients do not need to install a separate app or register for a service. Warnings can be delivered directly through the mobile network to compatible phones in the affected area.

Geographical targeting makes it possible to send warnings specifically to people affected by an emergency. Such situations may include major accidents, hazardous substance releases or other incidents requiring immediate protective action.

How can you recognise an emergency alert on your phone?

An emergency alert received through the FI-Alert system differs from a regular text message. It appears on the phone screen as a separate notification, which may be accompanied by a distinctive alert sound and vibration.

The alert sound and vibration may also be activated when the phone is set to silent mode. This helps ensure that the alert catches the recipient's attention as quickly as possible.

When you receive an alert, read the instructions it contains and follow them.

Existing public warning channels will remain in use

FI-Alert will not replace existing public warning channels, but will complement them.

Emergency alerts will continue to be broadcast on radio and television. They can also be received on smartphones through the 112 Suomi and Yle apps. In addition, alerts will be published on the websites 112.fi and yle.fi, as well as on page 112 of Teletext.

The general public warning signal, sounded by outdoor warning sirens, can also continue to be used to alert the population.

The introduction of the new FI-Alert system will strengthen Finland's multi-channel public warning system. The aim is to ensure that information about an emergency reaches as many people as possible in the affected area, quickly and reliably.

Source: *Ministry of the Interior, 15 October 2026 – An additional channel to be introduced under the Act on Emergency Warnings: alerts will be sent directly to phones in future.*

questions and ANSWERS

FI-ALERT

How does the service work?

01 The service is based on Cell Broadcast technology.
Emergency alerts are transmitted through mobile network base stations to a specific geographical area. The alert is delivered simultaneously to all 4G and 5G mobile phones in the area, regardless of which operator provides the user's mobile subscription.
This makes the system particularly effective for delivering warnings quickly in emergencies.

What should you do when you receive an emergency alert?

02 When you receive an emergency alert, stay calm and follow the instructions provided in the message.
The alert will always explain what you need to do immediately. It will also identify the authority that issued it.
You can find further information on official websites and through other official channels.

Which phones can receive emergency alerts?

03 The service works on all 4G and 5G phones that support Cell Broadcast technology, which includes most mobile phones.

Older devices that only use 2G or 3G networks cannot receive emergency alerts delivered directly to phones through the mobile network. Efforts will be made to reach these users through other channels, such as radio, the 112 Suomi app and television.

Does the service work without a SIM card, like emergency calls?

04 Yes. The system also works without a SIM card.

Can the service be switched off if you do not want to receive alerts?

05 The public warning system cannot be switched off. Emergency alerts are issued only in situations where people need to be warned quickly. It is therefore important that everyone in the affected area receives the alert on their phone.

Why is the new service being introduced now?

06 Due to the changing security situation, it is important that information reaches people quickly. People must be warned more quickly than before, particularly under emergency conditions.
The new channel complements the existing public warning system and is already in use in many other EU countries.

In which languages will emergency alerts be issued?

07 As required by law, emergency alerts will always be issued in Finnish and Swedish.

Where necessary, alerts will also be issued in the Sámi languages. The use of other languages is being explored.

Who can issue an emergency alert?

08 The decision to issue an emergency alert is always made by an authority. Alerts may be issued by, for example, rescue authorities, the police, the Finnish Border Guard, the Emergency Response Centre Agency, the Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (STUK), the Finnish Meteorological Institute, the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency, the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency (Traficom), the Finnish Food Authority, the Finnish Medicines Agency (Fimea) and government ministries.

When will the system be tested?

09 The system is expected to be completed around the turn of October and November 2026. Once it is ready, tests will be conducted that will be visible to the public.

Information about the tests will be provided in advance, for example on the Rescue Services website, pelastustoimi.fi, and on the Ministry of the Interior's social media channels.

How does an FI-Alert emergency warning differ from one received through the 112 Suomi app?

10 FI-Alert warnings are delivered directly to phones in the affected area without the need for a separate app.
Emergency alerts delivered through the 112 Suomi app, on the other hand, require users to have downloaded the app and granted it permission to access their location data. The different channels complement one another, and an emergency alert may reach a phone through both channels.

Source: *Rescue Services / Rescue Department of the Ministry of the Interior, FI-Alert emergency warnings – Frequently asked questions*

SECURITY VOCABULARY

TURVALLISUUDEN TUNNE SENSE OF SECURITY	The feeling of being safe and not facing an immediate threat.
EPÄVARMUUDEN SIETOKYKY TOLERANCE OF UNCERTAINTY	The ability to function and continue with everyday life even when not everything is known or predictable
VALPPAUS VIGILANCE	The ability to notice changes in one's surroundings and identify potential dangers.
HARKINTAKYKY SOUND JUDGEMENT	The ability to assess a situation calmly before making a decision or taking action.
SOPEUTUMISKYKY ADAPTABILITY	The ability to adjust one's actions when circumstances or situations change.
YHTEISÖLLISYYS SENSE OF COMMUNITY	Working together, caring for others and sharing responsibility.
YHTEENKUULUVUUS BELONGING	The feeling of belonging to and being part of a group or community.
ENNAKKOLUULOTTOMUUS OPEN-MINDEDNESS	A willingness to engage with new people, ideas and situations without preconceived negative assumptions.
RISKITIETOISUUS RISK AWARENESS	The ability to identify potential risks and take them into account in one's actions
HENKINEN VALMIUS PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPAREDNESS	The ability to face difficult or unexpected situations while striving to maintain one's ability to function

Maanpuolustuskoulutusyhdistys MVM Maanpuolustuksen Varautumis- ja Valmiuttajien

Security belongs to everyone – Join Us!

As a member, you are not merely following our activities – you can learn, participate and help build a safer Finland together with others.

Apply for membership by scanning the QR code

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