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PREMISES FOR PROTECTING THE POLISH POPULATION IN THE CONTEXT  
OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

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**Abstract.** The article's main objective was to characterize the assumptions of civil protection in Poland in the context of the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland as of 2020. As a result of the study, it was found that in the document of strategic importance, which is the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland in force since 2020, a lot of attention was paid to the issue of the security of the state and its citizens – the entire first pillar, which is also the main national interest of Poland. Within this pillar, particular importance was attached to the management of national security, state resilience and general defence, the Polish Armed Forces, cybersecurity and information space.

**Keywords:** civil protection; National Security Strategy; pillars of security; national interests

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## Introduction

Threats have always accompanied people and negatively affected their lives. In addition, threats have evolved as the environment has changed. Through his actions, a man had to prevent them and prepare for their occurrence in a situation where prevention was impossible.

The literature indicates that threats in the future may become more and more dangerous, and consequently, it will be more and more difficult for people to deal with them (Skrabacz, 2006, pp. 37-38). Many crises today begin in one country but quickly spread beyond its borders so that their effects are felt on a regional and even global scale (Galaz et al, 2011, pp. 361-380; Parker, 2015, pp. 97-108; Hegedűs, 2022; Wadjdi et al., 2023; Bamigboye et al., 2023; Radchenko et al., 2023; Szabó, 2023).

The response to threats should be a well-functioning civil protection system. Currently, in Poland, civil protection is carried out by many interrelated entities. Examples include the judiciary, special services, services, guards and inspections specialized in protecting security and public order; rescue and civil protection services, elements of crisis management; border guards and other institutions (Kalinowski, 2015a, p. 5). Therefore, the generally understood state should maintain a constant readiness to take and conduct protective actions (Groszek, 2016, pp. 273-274).

In this context, it should be stressed that the civil protection system also creates civilians. Often, the population's behaviour depends on whether a given threat will arise and intensify. Therefore, the population's education is essential (Stochaj, 2022).

Nowadays, civil protection in Poland in the field of civil defence is carried out based on the following Geneva Conventions:

- improving the lot of the wounded and sick in active armies,
- improving the lot of injured, ill and shipwrecked armed forces at sea,
- on the treatment of prisoners of war,
- on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Convention for the Protection of War Victims, 1949).
- Additional protocols have been established to the indicated conventions, which also regulate issues related to the implementation of civil protection:
- concerning the protection of victims of international armed conflicts,
- concerning the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts,
- concerning the adoption of an additional distinctive emblem (First Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, 1977; Third Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 concerning the Adoption of an Additional Distinctive Emblem, 2005).

Issues related to the population's security are addressed in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland. The document indicates that Poland's task is to safeguard the independence and inviolability of its territory, ensure the freedoms and rights of man and citizen, and take care of its citizens' safety. In addition, Poland protects the national heritage and provides environmental protection, guided by the principle of sustainable development (Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997, 1997).

In civil protection, the Act on Crisis Management is currently in force in Poland, which regulates the activities of public administration bodies in this area. This activity consists of preventing crisis situations, preparing to take control over them through planned actions, responding in the event of crisis situations, removing their effects, and restoring critical resources and infrastructure (Act of 26 April 2007 on crisis management, 2007). In addition, legal acts regulate the operation of individual entities performing tasks in the field of civil protection.

In the context of the above legal acts, it should be noted that currently, in Poland, no legal act would comprehensively regulate civil protection issues. Until April 2022, the provisions of the Act on the General Duty of Defence were in force, and attention was paid to civil defence. However, this act has lost its force. In its place, the Act on the Defence of the Fatherland was created, which, however, did not address issues related to civil defence and civil protection (see Act of 11 March 2022 on the Defence of the Fatherland, 2022). Work is underway on the draft Civil Protection and State of Disaster Act (see Draft Civil Protection and State of Disaster Act, 2023). However, comments relating to the document's content have been submitted, which consequently postpones the entry into force of the provisions.

This article aimed to characterize Poland's civil protection assumptions in the context of the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland 2020. The following research problem was formulated for the indicated objective of the research: What are the assumptions of civil protection of Poland in the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland? The research problem determined in this way was solved using theoretical research methods such as analysis, synthesis, abstraction, comparison and inference.

### **Civil protection system of Poland**

Many challenges are identified that modern organizations must address to deal effectively and in accordance with current regulations in times of disaster and crisis (Ansell et al, 2010, pp: 195-207; Boin et al. 2014, pp: 131-142). It is pointed out that the purpose of civil protection is to ensure the safety of civilians. Civil protection covers activities undertaken by public administration and individual entities to ensure the safety of life and health

of people, their property and the environment. The strategic goal of civilian protection remains to maintain survivable environmental conditions, social and psychological assistance to the victims, legal protection and their educational and fitness preparation to cope with disasters, natural disasters and armed conflicts, as well as immediately after them (Mikhailiuk, 2017, p. 56).

Civil protection consists of preventive, preparatory, intervention and recovery actions. The main objective of civil defence is to protect the life and health of persons and valuable property, cultural heritage and the environment to the extent necessary for survival and to provide humanitarian and legal assistance during and immediately after disasters, natural disasters, armed conflicts and occupations (Kitler, Skrabacz, 2010, pp. 67-68).

Civil protection should, therefore, be understood as organized actions undertaken by public and private entities to ensure the safety of the civilian population in the event of natural and artificial hazards. These actions can be implemented by counteracting and reducing the risk of threats, preparing to react, reacting when a threat occurs and taking corrective actions after the threat (Zieliński, 2017, p. 105).

Currently, civil protection is implemented in Poland by several entities, particularly from the central, voivodship, district and municipal levels.

The central level is otherwise referred to as the national level. It comprises the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers, the Government Crisis Management Team, the Government Centre for Security and the Internal Security Agency. The voivodship level consists of the voivode, the Voivodship Crisis Management Team and the Voivodship Crisis Management Centre. At the county level, crisis management is handled by the starosta, the security and order commission, the District Crisis Management Team and the District Crisis Management Centre. The municipal level consists of, respectively: the head of the commune, the mayor or the president of the city and the Municipal Crisis Management Team (Rysz, 2016). In addition, civil protection is implemented by several combined and independent administration entities, including: The State Fire Service, the Police, various Inspectorates, e.g., environmental protection, districts, military staffs, water management boards, border guard units and road transport inspection. The list of these entities formally forms a crisis management system, not a civil protection system.

The civil protection system should ensure the following four sets of tasks:

- prevention of risks and possible minimization of losses,
- preparation for the occurrence of threats,
- responding to a situation when a threat occurs,
- reconstruction carried out rationally and more resistant to future threats (Michailiuk, 2017, p. 76).

A well-functioning civil protection system is essential today. This is because the civilian population is most exposed to many dangers. In addition, very often, it needs to be adequately prepared to deal with these dangers.

In addition, a well-functioning civil protection system should:

- enable identification and location of the source of the threat,
- enable elimination or reduction of the causes of the threat,
- preventing the spread of the threat while isolating it,
- enable the alarm of the population and their evacuation from the danger zone,
- enable the provision of assistance to injured persons,
- ensure order during the rescue operation,
- make it possible to secure the living conditions of the affected population
- enable restoring the functioning of the breached infrastructure systems (Kalinowski, 2015b, pp. 48-49).

Civil protection is a crucial element of the civil protection system. It includes the fulfilment of humanitarian tasks aimed at protecting civilians from the dangers arising from hostilities or natural disasters, as well as overcoming their immediate consequences, in particular for the population, and ensuring the conditions

necessary for survival (Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, 1977, Article 61). Civil protection involves the preparation of society, authorities, services, inspections and guards, courts and prosecutors' offices, and all resources, infrastructure and territory to prevent, counteract, protect and defend national values and interests against existing and potential threats to national security. All tasks in this area are carried out continuously (Jakubczak, 2006, p. 337).

The civil protection system is part of the National Security System of the Republic of Poland. This system is based on implementing national interests, pillars of national security. "The system of national security aims at the appropriate preparation and use of the forces and means at the disposal of the state to counter threats to the survival of the nation and the state, territorial integrity, political independence and sovereignty, the efficient functioning of state institutions and socio-economic development. It is a system covering both external and internal security elements, aimed at ensuring national security in connection with the country's socio-economic development" (Strategy for Developing the National Security System of the Republic of Poland 2022, 2013, p. 13).

The National Security System is presented as a collection of related subsystems: command and executive. The implementation subsystems consist of operational and support subsystems. Operating subsystems, on the other hand, consist of defence subsystems and protective subsystems (White Book on National Security of the Republic of Poland, 2013, p. 36). Protection subsystems form rescue and civil protection systems.

Many high-profile crises and disasters have led the European Union to strengthen cooperation between Member States in civil protection and to take action to increase its capacity to conduct operations in this area. However, in light of recent crises in the EU, manifested in the refugee crisis, terrorist attacks and natural disasters, it is not clear how effective such EU cooperation arrangements can be. This is mainly due to differences in how civil protection is done at the national level between Member States (Parker, Persson, Widmalm, 2019). Therefore, it is important to create a civil protection system in Poland.

UN missions have also been assessed as an effective mechanism for protecting civilians. Research confirms that as the UN devotes more military and police resources to peacekeeping missions, fewer civilians fall victim to violence (Hultman, Kathman, Shannon, 2013, pp: 875-891).

### **Assumptions of the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland**

National Security Strategy contains a collection of ideas, insights, judgments and beliefs related to:

- the international environment of Polish,
- opportunities and threats to the security of Polish resulting from its geopolitical location,
- the main areas of Polish development,
- Polish national identity (Gil, 2021, pp. 17-18).

The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland is a document in which the vision of the national security of Poland has been defined. This vision is defined through the prism of subjective and objective aspects. In addition, the strategy defines national interests and strategic objectives related to national security. The main national interests constituting at the same time the pillars of national security include:

- safeguarding independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty and ensuring the security of the state and citizens,
- shaping the international order based on solidarity and respect for international law, guaranteeing the safe development of Poland,
- strengthening national identity and safeguarding national heritage,
- ensuring conditions for sustainable and sustainable social and economic development and protection of the natural environment (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2020).

**Table 1.** Characteristics of activities under the security pillars in the SBN RP

Pillar	Area	Action characteristics
I Security of the state and citizens	National Security Management	It involves integrating national security management and building adaptive capacity.
	State resilience and general defence	Increasing the state's resistance to threats and building public understanding in this area.
	Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland	Increase the Armed Forces' capabilities in the field of deterrence and defense against threats.
	Cybersecurity	Increasing resistance to cyber threats, increasing the level of information protection and raising public awareness in this area.
	Information space	Ensuring the security of the information space.
II Poland in the national security system	NATO and the European Union	Strengthening the capabilities of NATO and the EU to guarantee the security of Poland and the Alliance.
	Bilateral, regional and global cooperation	Strengthening of the implemented bilateral, regional and global cooperation.
III Identity and national heritage	National identity of the Republic of Poland	Increasing national identity, especially in the scope related to universal and Christian values.
	Creating a positive image of Poland	Taking measures to create a positive image of Poland, in particular in terms of increasing the cultural and economic activity of the country.
IV Social and economic development. Environmental protection	Health and protection of the family	Improving the conditions enabled an increase in the level of family protection, as well as increasing the level of health security of Poles.
	Migration policy	Coordinate actions implemented within the framework of migration policy with actions implemented within the economic, social and security framework.
	Economic security	Increasing the level of economic security, in particular financial security.
	Energy security	Guaranteeing the security of an energy country based mainly on traditional energy sources while developing alternatives.
	Environmental protection	Guaranteeing the ecological safety of Poland.
	Scientific and technological potential	Proper management of human capital with simultaneous use of scientific and technological potential for the economic development of Poland.

*Source:* prepared on the basis of National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2020.

Implementing tasks from the first pillar (see Table 1) is closely related to civil protection in the context of guaranteeing its security. Within the area of national security management, the implementation of tasks is carried out through:

- combining processes, procedures and operating practices by merging existing systems, mainly such as: sub-systems of national security management, crisis management and cybersecurity, as well as obtaining the ability to adapt to changing conditions in the environment quickly,
- the creation of a committee of the Council of Ministers as a supra-ministerial mechanism for coordinating national security management. The committee's activities are to be implemented at the strategic level. They aim to ensure the coherence and implementation of tasks related to the area of national security management, as well as to ensure that the tasks carried out are linked with the activities undertaken by the Government Crisis Management Team and the Government Centre for Security,
- involvement of the Marshals of the Sejm and the Senate in the work on national security,
- adjusting mechanisms and instruments to support the President in connection with the implemented changes in the field of security and defence,
- adapting the crisis management system to the NATO crisis response system, mainly in the area of integration into the crisis management system of political and military conflict, as well as through the creation of effective tools to counteract and combat threats,
- establishing the hierarchy and dependencies between strategic and planning documents,
- preparation and implementation of the communication system,
- ensuring the coherence of civil and defence planning for all levels of government and government administration, as well as enabling individual actions depending on the identified needs (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2020).

To carry out tasks related to the management of national security, the Act on the Management of National Security was to be created. An inter-ministerial team was appointed to develop a draft of this law. However, draft legislation still needs to be made available.

The area of state resilience and general defence is implemented through:

- building a system of universal defence based on the potential of the state, private entities and the population,
- building the state's resilience to threats,
- making civil defence and civil protection widespread and preparing and maintaining the state's ability to rapidly restore critical resources;
- increasing the capacity of the health care system and public administration to overcome epidemic threats,
- enriching the knowledge and capabilities of the population in the field of national security, in particular in response to the changing environment, while promoting patriotic attitudes, civic duties, as well as pro-social activities,
- building social capital,
- redefining the system of civil protection and civil protection – as part of this task, it is also foreseen that a legal act of the rank of an act will be created, comprehensively regulating these issues. The main assumption of this task is to create a system corresponding to the changes that take place in the environment, taking into account emerging challenges and threats,
- increasing the country's resilience to threats,
- implementation of the model of critical infrastructure functioning, mainly by ensuring the continuity of its operation and the services provided within it,
- implementation of a uniform management system,
- improving the state's capacity to prevent and respond to terrorist and organized crime threats;
- strengthening the implementation of the rule of law tasks,
- strengthening counterintelligence activities,
- intensifying the activities of special services in the field of threat detection,
- further undertaking activities related to the appropriate planning and development of the state with particular emphasis on security needs,
- improvement of the system of non-military defence preparations, mainly in relation to legal and organizational requirements,
- intensifying inter-ministerial activities in the field of development of the national industrial and technological base in the area of defence,
- making changes in the strategic reserve system based on changes in the security environment,
- strengthening capabilities related to cryptology,
- creating the capacity to develop technologies and produce strategic resources (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2020).

The Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland area refers to the strengthening of the operational capabilities of the Polish Armed Forces in the field of deterrence and defence in the event of threats to state security. Strengthening operational capabilities according to the assumptions of the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland should take place through:

- accelerating the development of operational capabilities of the Polish Armed Forces by increasing defence spending,
- adjusting the command structure of the Armed Forces to changes resulting from the environment,
- supplementing the personnel and equipment of the armed forces and changing training programs,
- increasing the mobility of troops and improving the effectiveness of their support and logistic security,
- improving the management of people in the army,
- building a situational awareness system based on various means of reconnaissance, communication and command,

- increasing the state's air defence capabilities, in particular missile defence,
- giving the armed forces the ability to destroy targets at long distances and the ability to defend against air and anti-tank defence,
- developing the capabilities of the armed forces to counter hybrid threats and counter-terrorist actions,
- strengthening the capabilities of troops to conduct activities in cyberspace and space,
- improvement of the mobilization system, in particular the training of personal reserves,
- taking actions to improve the processes of protection and defence of maritime interests, in particular by improving the Navy's operational capacity,
- further expansion of the Territorial Defence Forces,
- creating favourable conditions for the defence industry to secure the long-term needs of the Polish Armed Forces (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2020).

The armed forces are rated the state organization's most significant and best-organized part. They are also a fundamental element of the defensive subsystem and, at the same time, are the most excellent support for ensuring the effectiveness of the protective subsystem. The Polish Armed Forces require continuous expenditures in implementing the professionalization and modernization process. Actions are also being taken to obtain operational capabilities to deter and defend against security threats (Sobolewski, 2020).

The area related to cybersecurity focuses mainly on increasing resistance to cyber threats and increasing information protection. These activities are implemented through:

- increasing the resilience of information systems and achieving the capacity to effectively prevent, combat and respond to online threats,
- ensuring continuous development of the cybersecurity system,
- obtaining the ability to conduct military operations in cyberspace,
- improving the country's capabilities related to testing, researching, evaluating and certifying cybersecurity services and solutions,
- increasing the level of awareness of public administration and society in the field of cyberspace threats,
- strengthening and expanding the state's potential in cyberspace (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2020).

Another critical strategic document in cybersecurity is the National Cybersecurity Strategy of the Republic of Poland for 2019-2024 (see National Cybersecurity Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2019). This strategy has two overarching objectives. The first goal concerns the construction of the National Cybersecurity System. The second objective is to increase the resilience of networks and ICT systems of public administrations and the private sector. The strategy also aims to achieve the ability to effectively combat the effects of cyber incidents (Dziwisz, 2021).

Efforts are also being made in the European Union to ensure security in cyberspace. The European Community entered the era of the information society later than the United States and Japan. Despite this, the EU is developing its capabilities to act in cyberspace dynamically, and cybersecurity is one of the main elements of this action. Since the rapid development of information and communication technologies, ensuring the security of the virtual environment has become crucial. Activities carried out by the European Union are very often pioneering on a global scale, apply systemic solutions and are characterized by the logic of a sequence of actions taken to ensure a high level of cybersecurity on its territory. They seem to be effective, as evidenced by the high position of the European continent in global cybersecurity rankings (Grabowska, 2022).

The area related to the information space is based on ensuring the security of the functioning of the state and citizens in the information space. This is done by taking the following actions:

- building the state's capacity to protect the information space, in particular in the area of counteracting the phenomenon of disinformation,
- building a unified system of strategic communication of the state,

- counteracting disinformation activities,
- educating the public about the risks resulting from information manipulation (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2020).

Information in the context of security plays a significant role in shaping the spectrum of the functioning of the state. Today's information chaos has been used to use information as a tool for manipulation and disinformation (Dukiewicz, 2021, pp: 66-75). Disinformation is designed to mislead an opponent by giving him false information. However, the phenomenon of disinformation itself is a threat to modern societies (Bączek, 2020, pp: 3-18). Countering disinformation should also consider all the challenges and opportunities that AI advances present in the context of information operations. It is crucial to choose solutions from those available that could help combat the spread of AI-based disinformation and help improve the online environment (Kertysova, 2018, pp: 55-81).

Civil protection of Poland, according to the assumptions of the National Security Strategy, is also implemented through international cooperation and alliances. Poland is a member of the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union. NATO membership gives allies a guarantee of collective defence.

The North Atlantic Alliance has undoubtedly been revived by the armed conflict in Ukraine, but it has also been touched and to a significant extent, still has to deal with many challenges. The Alliance's external threats from Russia, China and terrorism, as well as internal threats related to inconsistent policies of member states and divergent perceptions of threats, mean that NATO has to deal with many problems (Tardy, 2023).

Polish membership in NATO has become particularly important in the context of Russia's Military aggression in Ukraine. This war has become a significant challenge for Europe's security. This is a situation of concern for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic states, which may become a possible target for Russian invasion (Gładysz, 2016). It should be emphasized that the Russian-Ukrainian war is changing world institutions, including NATO. It also showed the incompetence of the world's major security institutions and identified the challenges of their rapid transformation. NATO has actively engaged in this process, mainly by moving from the concept of a "peace programme" to the concept of peace engineering (Lepskiy, Lepska, 2023).

## Conclusions

Modern threats evolve and require constant adaptation in terms of prevention and preparation for their occurrence to minimize possible losses. Therefore, at the strategic level, documents are created to ensure the state's and its citizens' security. The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland of 2020 is the most important document in the field of state security of a strategic nature. The strategy distinguishes four main pillars based on which Polish security is shaped. From the point of view of civil protection, the first pillar is devoted to the security of the state and citizens. This pillar operates based on five main areas. They concern national security management, state resilience and general defense, the Polish Armed Forces, cybersecurity and information space. Tasks related to national security management were to be specified in the Act on the Management of National Security. Since the creation of these assumptions, there has yet to be a draft law that would be devoted to this issue. From the point of view of citizens' security, tasks from the second area related to building state resilience and general defence are of great importance. In this area, it was indicated that defining and characterizing the civil and civil protection systems is crucial. It is also provided that these issues will be regulated by a legal act with the rank of an act. Currently, its project is being processed. However, the work carried out in this area is protracted in time. It should be emphasized that a legal basis of the rank of law should appear as soon as possible, which would comprehensively regulate issues related to civil protection and its particular area of civil protection.

In the area related to the functioning of the armed forces, the need to strengthen operational capabilities, particularly in the field of deterrence and defence, was stressed. The Polish Armed Forces are treated as the



main element of the defence subsystem but also as an essential support for the protective subsystem, in which rescue and civil protection actions are identified. Cybersecurity mainly refers to increasing resistance to cyber threats and concerned activities to improve information security. These issues are complemented by activities undertaken within another area related to the functioning of the information space, which refers to ensuring the information security of the state and citizens.

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