



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND

Finnish peacekeepers are serving in ten military crisis management or military observer missions. Your role in military crisis management is an important part of shouldering our share of international responsibility. Crisis management supports conflict resolution, post-conflict stabilisation and creates the conditions to build secure societies.

Finland participates in international crisis management on foreign and security policy grounds as part of building common security. Participation serves Finland's international relations and demonstrates Finland's desire to participate in solving international problems. At the same time, it develops Finland's own defence capabilities and strengthens our military interoperability.

As the international environment and the nature of conflicts have changed, crisis management operations have become increasingly wide-ranging and complex. Operations require a high level of professionalism and special expertise. Highly trained Finnish soldiers meet these requirements excellently and are often praised by our partners.

The Finnish Defence Forces' crisis management operation in Afghanistan ended in June. The protection of personnel evacuations in August was carried out effectively and safely. A total of around 2,500 Finnish soldiers, most of them reservists, served in Afghanistan. The soldiers served in diverse and demanding training, advisory and relief duties as well as in mission planning, command and support roles. Finns have gained the respect and appreciation of local and international partners for our expertise and commitment to crisis management tasks.

This year, the Parliamentary Committee on Crisis Management prepared a comprehensive policy outline, extending over government terms, for Finland's crisis management. In accordance with the Committee's policy outline and the Government's Defence Report, Finland will strengthen its participation in military crisis management. Participation will be assessed from the perspective of mission effectiveness and national objectives. The work you are currently doing in missions and operations will continue, and through this you will also build the foundation for your successors.

I thank you for your service in crisis management operations and your valuable work for the good of international peace and Finland. I wish you and your close friends and relations a peaceful Christmas and every success in 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sauli Niinistö". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail.

Sauli Niinistö
President of the Republic of Finland