



ROYAL NORWEGIAN  
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SECURITY

*Minister of Justice and Public Security*

Municipalities  
County authorities

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## **THE ROLE OF MUNICIPALITIES IN CRISIS AND WAR**

2026 is the Year of Total Defence. This year will be used to inform and raise awareness of what the security policy situation and total defence mean for residents, the business sector and for you in the municipalities. When authorities, businesses, voluntary organisations and the population pull in the same direction, civil society is better prepared for crisis and war, and resilience across Norwegian society as a whole is strengthened.

I encourage you to read the National Security Strategy presented by the Government in May last year. The background to the strategy is the serious security situation, and the fact that the gravity of the situation requires us to pool our efforts and build on our strong tradition of cooperation.

Municipalities play an important role in Norway's total defence and are already closely integrated into preparedness efforts. You have extensive preparedness responsibilities across the entire crisis spectrum. I experience that municipalities wish to be important contributors to total defence, and this is very positive. At the same time, there is a demand for information on what is expected of municipalities in crisis and war. The most important contribution municipalities can make is to continue delivering services and fulfilling their responsibilities as close to normal as possible. This strengthens the ability of civil society to maintain vital functions even in very demanding situations. This allows society to prioritise its shared preparedness resources where they are most needed, and ensures that civil society's ability to support

military efforts is as strong as possible. It is therefore important that all municipalities, on their own initiative, work to ensure they are as well prepared as possible to withstand crisis and war.

With this as a starting point, I have five recommendations for all Norwegian municipalities:

**1) Stay updated on the threat landscape**

The Norwegian Intelligence Service, the Police Security Service and the National Security Authority publish annual unclassified assessments of threats and risks. The Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning (DSB) has produced a range of scenario analyses of potential events that may challenge preparedness, and the Police publish an annual assessment of the Norwegian crime situation. Familiarise yourselves with and use these assessments to form an understanding of the challenges you may face, and assess vulnerabilities within the municipality.

**2) Integrate serious crises and war into preparedness efforts**

All municipalities must integrate preparations for serious crises and war into their preparedness work. This is already part of the statutory municipal preparedness obligation. In the current threat environment, it is particularly important that such events are emphasised in comprehensive risk and vulnerability analyses, overarching preparedness plans, exercises and crisis management. This year, DSB will publish an updated guide on municipalities' responsibilities in crisis and war. This will provide a stronger basis for preparedness work and for compliance with Chapter 5 of the Civil Protection Act and sections 4–7 of the Regulations on Municipal Emergency Preparedness.

I would also like to emphasise the importance of individual preparedness, both for residents and for organisations (businesses and authorities). Organisations must also plan for self-preparedness, and DSB has issued guidance on this. More information and detailed advice can be found at [dsb.no](http://dsb.no).

**3) Make active use of municipal preparedness councils**

All municipalities should have, or be affiliated with, a municipal preparedness council, and I note that 80 per cent of municipalities now have such a council. Preparedness councils should include representatives from public bodies in the municipality, the Armed Forces, the business sector and voluntary organisations. These councils can contribute to improved oversight of resources and actors within the municipality, and ensure that public, private and voluntary actors are well acquainted with one another. This can be invaluable when incidents occur and resources must quickly be mobilised to manage the situation effectively. They can also provide valuable support in preventive preparedness work, preparedness planning and risk and vulnerability analyses.

**4) Listen to the County Governor and seek advice and guidance when needed**

Preparing for crisis and war may raise new issues in municipal preparedness work. I encourage you to make active use of the County Governor if you require advice and guidance. By virtue of their role as a regional coordinating authority and as a link between municipalities and the central government, the County Governor also possesses important expertise that may be of assistance.

#### **5) Participate actively in the Year of Total Defence**

Throughout the Year of Total Defence, there will be several events and exercises where municipalities can learn and contribute. I encourage you to familiarise yourselves with the information available from DSB. I would particularly highlight the exercise 'Norge øver' ('Norway Exercises'). This is a discussion-based exercise where all municipalities in Norway are the primary target group. An important objective of the exercise is to encourage all municipalities to focus on, and reflect upon, the role, responsibilities and challenges municipalities would face if Norway were affected by war.

Yours sincerely

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*The document is approved electronically, as such no handwritten signatures are required.*