



Summary and recommendations

The Swedish NAO has audited whether the Police Authority and the Swedish Security Service share intelligence effectively to prevent and combat violent extremism and terrorism. The rationale for conducting this audit is the importance of these activities for maintaining public confidence in the judicial system.

Audit background and purpose

There are two agencies with clear roles and responsibilities for preventing and combating terrorism and violent extremism: The Swedish Police Authority and the Swedish Security Service. The Swedish Security Service has the main responsibility in Sweden for fighting terrorism and other crimes that threaten national security. At the same time, the Police Authority is responsible for crime that may be associated with, but fall outside, the area of responsibility of the Swedish Security Service. To enable both agencies to perform their respective tasks effectively and obtain the best possible status report in their respective areas of operation there is a considerable need for cooperation between them. A central component of this cooperation is the exchange of intelligence information.

Audit findings

The Swedish National Audit Office's conclusions

The Swedish NAO's overall conclusion is that the Police Authority and the Swedish Security Service by and large share intelligence effectively, but that some conditions for exchange of information at regional and local levels need to be improved.

Information sharing has developed well

The Swedish NAO notes that cooperation has developed in a positive direction since 2015. Officers at regional level state that they have built up confidence in each other through meetings and working together. The intelligence that needs to be shared between agencies is largely subject to confidentiality provisions. Both the Police Authority and the Swedish Security Service state that they make a secrecy assessment before sharing intelligence, and that they often find that the information can be shared.

Agreements only take regional and local levels into consideration indirectly

At the beginning of 2015 the Police Authority and the Swedish Security Service made agreements for the purpose of shaping a framework for how the agencies are to interact. The Swedish NAO notes, however, that the agreements only indirectly include how exchange of intelligence should take place at regional and local level. As the agencies have left it up to the regional level to define the forms of cooperation, this has meant that the forms of cooperation vary between regions. The Swedish NAO agrees that there is a value in adapting to regional conditions, but that the current governance is not sufficient to ensure that the exchange of intelligence information regionally and locally ensures the best outcome.

Some shortcomings in the technical conditions

The Police Authority's regional intelligence units regularly share intelligence with the Swedish Security Service through a special digital link established between the agencies. However, for the Swedish Security Service to be able to achieve digital access to all intelligence the Police Authority is willing to share they need access to the Police Authority's common national database, which only a few people at the Swedish Security Service have. The Swedish Security Service's regional sections share most intelligence verbally, which means that the Police Authority needs to deal manually with the information received. The Swedish NAO sees, however, a risk that verbal information

sharing may lead to the information being misunderstood by the Police Authority, or even lost. Officers from the Police Authority in six out of seven regions would also like better digital channels for sharing protected information. Overall, the Swedish NAO therefore concludes that the technical conditions for sharing information need to be improved at regional level to enable more secure, effective and traceable sharing.

Different organisational patterns at regional level complicate cooperation

The Swedish Security Service's regional sections work from central instructions, and all analysis and assessment of intelligence information is carried out centrally. However, the Police Authority's regional intelligence units work both with analysis and assessment. The consequence of the agencies' different forms of organisation at regional level is that in the day-to-day interaction the Police Authority's regional intelligence units do not always have time to get a timely response, since the Swedish Security Service's regional section needs to wait for centrally issued instructions. Urgent cases are also to be handled centrally by the Swedish Security Service, which it is stated leads to lack of synchronisation regionally.

Overall, the view of the Swedish NAO is that this imbalance in regional discretion risks leading to delays in regional interaction.

The Swedish Security Service cannot enter information in the Police Authority's data collection

The Police Authority has a data collection about violent extremism. The Swedish Security Service has access to it, but cannot add its own information to it. Instead, the Police Authority itself enters information from the Swedish Security Service's regional intelligence picture in various internal systems. The Swedish NAO considers that a more effective process would have been if the Swedish Security Service could have entered information itself in this data collection. Given that the Swedish Security Service has not found legal conditions for being able to work in this way, the Swedish NAO nevertheless regards it as positive that the agencies have developed a way of sharing the Swedish Security Service's intelligence with the Police Authority.

Feedback from the Swedish Security Service is important for directing the Police Authority towards what is relevant

The audit also shows that the intelligence units in the Police Authority would like to see more feedback on the intelligence information given to the Swedish Security Service, to improve the Police Authority's ability to concentrate on what is relevant. The Swedish NAO's view is that more feedback from the Swedish Security Service, albeit on an aggregated level, could help to strengthen Police Authority's knowledge, and also contribute to ensuring that the Swedish Security Service receives a relevant inflow of information. This is particularly important as the inflow of information to the Swedish Security Service is ever increasing.

The Swedish NAO's recommendations

The Swedish NAO makes the following recommendations to the Police Authority and the Swedish Security Service.

- The audit shows that the agencies have left it up to the regional level to define the forms of cooperation and that there is no prescribed lowest level of regional cooperation. This has meant that the forms of cooperation vary between regions. To obtain a more systematic and secure exchange of information at regional level the agencies should therefore jointly establish a sufficient lowest level of cooperation on exchange of intelligence information, both in regard to scope and in content.
- The audit shows that the technical conditions for exchanging intelligence information need to be improved at regional level. Both agencies need to ensure that the information is not misunderstood or lost. The agencies should therefore develop the technical conditions together to be able to share intelligence information in an effective, secure and traceable way.