



Summary

The Swedish National Audit Office has audited the Swedish Armed Forces with regard to the work of the regional staffs. The audit was conducted in autumn 2017 and spring 2018. As part of the audit the Swedish NAO collected information from the Ministry of Defence, the Swedish Armed Forces and 17 County Administrative Boards.

The Swedish NAO draws the conclusion that the overall objectives of the Riksdag and the Government are fulfilled, in other words the work of the regional staffs contributes to the capacity of the Swedish Armed Forces to carry out national tasks by exercising territorial command, leading Home Guard units and providing support to society. Furthermore, the Swedish NAO considers that the regional staffs, together with county administrative boards and others, are central players in the development of total defence at regional level.

At higher levels of conflict, however, the capabilities of the regional staffs to carry out their tasks are limited by shortcomings in both conditions and working methods, which are not fully effective. The Swedish Armed Forces' governance of the regional staffs is unclear with regard to both internal policy documents and harmonisation and development of best practice. The staffing needs of the staffs do not fully correspond

with the planned staffing. The staffs have not had practical training in their full leadership role and it is therefore difficult to assess the extent to which they can lead subordinate units and provide operative and tactical support. The regional staff in the Mitt military region encounter particular geographical and task-related challenges that mean they cannot effectively perform their duties in the same way as other regional staffs.

The Swedish NAO recommends that the Swedish Armed Forces:

- Clarify policy documents so that the tasks of the regional staffs are presented in a clear and coordinated way, to create clarity for the staffs and facilitate military unit evaluation and reporting to the Government.
- Harmonise the work of the regional staffs and ensure that effective working methods are shared and implemented by all regional staffs where appropriate.
- Ensure that the regional staffs receive practical training in their full role of leading subordinate units and giving support at operative and tactical level.
- Consider measures that can help the regional staff in the Mitt military region to perform their assigned duties more expediently.
- Take into account the regional staffs' staffing needs with regard to background and experience.

Apart from these recommendations, the Swedish NAO presents another three recommendations in a confidential memorandum that has been communicated to the Ministry of Defence and the Swedish Armed Forces.