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CIVITAS SOTERIA

SUMMER SCHOOL 2026
Evidence for Policy in Disaster Risk Management

EXERCISE PALDISKI
GENERAL SCENARIO PACKAGE

Development of a preparedness plan in response to a credible drone or missile attack threat against the Paldiski radioactive waste storage facility (Estonia)

Please make sure to bring a printed or electronic copy of this document with you for consultation during the exercise. To reduce the environmental footprint of the event, no printed copies will be made available at the Summer School.

Tallinn

This exercise is based on a fictional scenario created for training and educational purposes only. All events, threat assessments, intelligence indicators, and developments described in this document and in the role-specific materials are entirely hypothetical. They do not represent real events or actual intelligence assessments.

1. Aims and purpose of the scenario-based exercise

What is this exercise about?

The overall goal of this scenario-based exercise is for participants to jointly develop, in a well-coordinated manner, the outline of a preparedness plan to address an emerging serious and significant threat, and – importantly - to go through the motions of preparing such plan, which should be operational, based on scientific evidence, informed by the contributions of key stakeholder groups and be tailored to the needs of the community.

The scenario is set in Estonia, where national intelligence services have identified credible indicators of a potential drone or missile attack against the Paldiski radioactive waste storage facility. The threat picture is uncertain and rapidly evolving and this exercise places participants at the centre of this crisis.

The exercise will be conducted in various consecutive phases, which 'mimic' - albeit in a highly condensed manner - the events that would trigger the need for a preparedness plan and the approach that would usually be followed to develop the core aspects of such plan. This includes closely examining the situation, determining what is needed and what different stakeholders can bring in, coordination and consultation between stakeholder groups and jointly preparing the outline of the plan.

Participants have been allocated to different groups, each representing a real institutional stakeholder. In your group, you will be tasked to work through the scenario in character, i.e. adopting the position that such stakeholder would typically hold and pursuing the course of action they would deem necessary in the given scenario. This means applying their stakeholder group's mandate, pursuing their specific objectives, operating within the constraints of the specific group, and engaging with other actors as such institutional stakeholder would do in a real situation. In addition to this general scenario, each stakeholder group will be provided with a specific set of information and instructions that will help them to establish their position and liaise with other stakeholder groups.

The exercise will be completed by a debriefing where experts and facilitators, who have been observing the various phases of the exercise, will provide feedback. They will look at both the process and the output of the exercise, and in particular how participants:

- Followed a well-structured process, as part of which they:
    - Collaborated across organisational roles, successfully managing the science-policy (and operational) interface
    - Made good use of scientific evidence and other (quantitative and qualitative) data

- Dealt with uncertainty, considered risks and managed unexpected events.
- Dealt with the rate at which scientific evidence is available.

- Proposed a logical preparedness plan that:
  - Is feasible, evidence-based and tailored to policy and operational needs
  - Addresses the social, economic, ethical, political, security and environmental dimensions of the scenario
  - Takes on board the views and contributions of different stakeholder groups
  - Is clearly formulated in an accessible and succinct manner.

Why have this exercise?

Organised after the Summer School's classes, the scenario-based exercise is designed to enable participants to apply, test, and consolidate the knowledge gained during the event through scenario-based learning, using a scenario that could happen in real life.

By placing decision-makers and scientists in a complex environment requiring a coordinated response, it directly links theoretical concepts to hands-on practice. More specifically, it is intended to strengthen participants' understanding of the science–policy interface: how technical assessments are generated and communicated to decision-makers, how uncertainty is acknowledged and managed, and how expert input is translated into proportionate, coherent preparedness decisions.

At the same time, it places participants at the centre of a collective policy process requiring different institutional actors to coordinate under pressure, reconcile diverging interests, and agree on a common course of action.

2. Exercise structure and timeline

The exercise unfolds in six sequential phases. Each phase serves a specific purpose and builds on the previous one. The table below summarises the full timeline.

Time	Phase	What happens/What you and your group should do
Day 1 (26 May 2026)		
17:30-17:35	**TV news segment**	A short TV news segment introduces the threat of a possible drone or missile attack against the Paldiski radioactive waste storage facility.
Day 3 (28 May 2026)		
11:45–11:50	**Media opening**	The exercise opens with a short TV news video segment providing an update on the situation presented on Day 1 of the Summer School.

11:50–12:15	**Group preparation**	Each group has 25 minutes to review its materials and organise internally. Your group should: • Establish your initial understanding of the situation from your institutional perspective; • Identify the most pressing preparedness priorities within your mandate; • Note the key information gaps that could affect your contribution; and • Agree on a concise starting position: what you intend to propose, what you need from other actors, and any immediate coordination you recommend. *This position will guide your bilateral consultations and your opening contribution at the plenary.*
12:15–13:15	**Consultations and positioning**	Groups may request and hold bilateral meetings to exchange information, align positions, and prepare for the Stakeholder Consultation Meeting. Some bilateral meetings are pre-arranged in your role-specific package; others may be initiated freely by contacting the relevant group directly. You are encouraged to distribute tasks within your group and run parallel bilateral meetings to maximise the number of actors consulted. *Bilateral meetings may also be requested during the plenary session itself, in parallel, to resolve specific issues with individual counterparts.*
13:15–14:30	**Stakeholder Consultation Meeting and finalisation of the preparedness plan outline**	The following groups convene for the Stakeholder Consultation Meeting, chaired by the representatives of the Minister of Energy and Environment. • Municipality of Lääne-Harju (local government) • Estonian Rescue Services Agency • National CBRN scientists and technical experts • AS ALARA – Facility technical and stientific Staff • IAEA representatives • EU representatives (including ERCC staff) • University of Tartu • Estonian Security Forces • Meie Paldiski (local civil society association) • Public information staff working for the public administrations All groups work collectively to define the key elements of the plan — measures, triggers, responsibilities, and coordination interfaces — and must finalise the preparedness plan outline by 14:30.

14:30–15:15	**Debriefing and closing**	All participants involved in the two scenario-based exercises conducted as part of the Summer School reconvene for a joint final debriefing session. Thematic experts (including a senior manager in charge of the Paldiski site and a senior officer associated with the DSIM CBRN RescEU assets), together with class coordinators and exercise directors, will provide structured feedback on both the process and the outcomes of the exercises, based on a set of predefined criteria. *The Summer School closes at 15:15 after a short closing ceremony.*

EXPECTED OUTPUT

By 14:30 the **preparedness plan outline** has to be submitted to the Government of Estonia. The outline should identify, as a minimum:

- The key preparedness measures to be put in place, including protective actions, communication measures, etc.
- The coordination mechanism and arrangements for the plan overall, as well as responsible institutional stakeholders for each measure (not only identifying who would lead but also describing the interface with other stakeholder groups that would be involved in the measure)
- The activation triggers and conditions under which each measure would be implemented.

The plan should address the social, economic, ethical, political, security and environmental dimensions and take into consideration the needs of the vulnerable populations.

3. The information package

As part of the exercise, you will work with two complementary documents:

1) **The General Scenario Package** — which you are now reading — provides the baseline context: the regional security situation, a description of the Paldiski facility, the consequences of a potential strike, and an overview of the relevant emergency response actors and systems in the area.

2) **The materials specific to your assigned group,** which will be distributed at the start of the exercise, contain your group's institutional mandate, key responsibilities, operational constraints, and privileged information available only to your group.

Not all the information provided will be equally relevant to every group. Participants are expected to assess which elements are most pertinent to their role, determine priorities, and decide how best to use the available information during the exercise.

4. The scenario

The following sections provide the situational context within which the exercise unfolds. They present the evolving security environment, the nature of the threat, and the characteristics of the Paldiski facility and its surrounding area. This information reflects the current state of knowledge available to the stakeholders at the outset of the scenario and forms the common baseline upon which all actors will build their assessments and preparedness planning.

4.1 Regional Security Context

The Baltic Sea region continues to experience elevated geopolitical tension and persistent hybrid activity that has intensified markedly since late 2023. The region has been targeted through a series of acts of sabotage against critical infrastructure. Over the course of late 2025 and into the early months of 2026, a coordinated series of drone incidents has occurred across the Nordic and Baltic region, with manifestations at critical civilian and military infrastructure facilities. These incidents include multiple unauthorised drone approaches to airports in Denmark and Sweden and reconnaissance flights over energy infrastructure in Latvia and Lithuania. Subsequent analysis by regional security authorities indicates a unified strategic campaign conducted by a hostile state actor operating from territories east of NATO's borders. The sophistication of the coordination, the scale of resources required, and the strategic timing relative to broader geopolitical developments all point to a single state actor with substantial capability.

Estonia, as a NATO member state, has been subject to sustained probing operations across multiple vectors. Over the preceding months, Estonian authorities have registered repeated low-level cyber intrusion attempts directed at public institutions and infrastructure operators, sporadic Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) disturbances in border-adjacent areas, and irregular aerial contacts detected through routine airspace monitoring. These incidents have not individually triggered escalation measures, but collectively they reflect a pattern of deliberate and methodical activity consistent with reconnaissance and vulnerability testing ahead of potential direct action. The Estonian Defence Forces have extended drone surveillance capabilities along the eastern frontier, the Police and Border Guard Board has deployed additional mobile radar units and raised interceptor readiness, and national defence planning has undergone significant acceleration. Public and political attention to critical infrastructure vulnerability has intensified, with energy facilities, telecommunications nodes, and radiological sites all identified as potential targets. The Paldiski facility — on Estonia's northwestern coast — sits at the intersection of these concerns: radiologically significant,

geographically exposed via maritime and aerial approaches, and located in proximity to strategic communication routes across the Baltic Sea.

4.2 Threat of Drone or Missile Attack Against the Paldiski Facility

In the days immediately preceding 26 May 2026, several converging intelligence and security indicators have generated a specific and credible concern about a potential drone or missile attack against the Paldiski radioactive waste storage facility. While the overall threat picture is credible, the precise timing, modality, and operational objectives of any such action remain uncertain. At present, intelligence services cannot determine the exact type of drone that might be employed. Current assessments consider two primary attack vectors: the use of small to medium-sized drones capable of carrying limited explosive payloads and conducting low-altitude precision strikes against infrastructure targets, and the possible use of a precision-guided cruise missile launched from territories east of NATO's eastern border. Intelligence indicators do not allow analysts to rule out either modality at this stage. Both vectors would be consistent with the technical capabilities of a hostile state actor and with the strategic objective of achieving maximum impact on a radiologically significant site.

The primary concern associated with a successful drone or missile attack is not limited to the physical damage to the facility. A strike against the radioactive waste storage buildings could breach containment structures and trigger the dispersal of radioactive material into the surrounding environment. Depending on the nature and intensity of the impact volatile radioactive dust could be released into the atmosphere, creating a contamination risk for the local population and potentially for a wider area, with consequences that would persist well beyond the immediate emergency phase.

By the afternoon of 26 May 2026, confidential details of the threat assessment had been leaked to the press and widely reported across national media. The source of the leak remains unidentified. ERR television and radio have aired brief news segments referencing a credible security concern at the Paldiski facility; the reports, while factually limited, have generated significant public alarm. The leak has also inflicted immediate damage on public trust in official institutions. For a segment of the population, the fact that sensitive information about a threat to their community reached them through the media rather than through official channels is itself a source of concern: it suggests that authorities either lost control of the situation or withheld information that directly affected residents' safety. The emergency number is being flooded with calls asking about possible threats, which burdens emergency services and delays first responders' assistance in situations where help is needed. Social media channels are circulating unverified information, including exaggerated accounts of the threat, speculation about an imminent attack, calls for immediate self-evacuation, and multiple inconsistent narratives emerging in parallel about the nature of the threat, its severity, and the areas potentially affected. At the same time, a substantial segment of the population is responding with scepticism or outright dismissal: local business owners, port and industrial workers, and commuters whose livelihoods depend on uninterrupted access to the peninsula are actively minimising the

threat, resisting any suggestion of disruption to normal activity, and in some cases publicly questioning the credibility of official assessments. Public perception of the threat is fragmented and fluid: levels of concern differ across population groups, locations, and information sources, and may shift rapidly as new information emerges.

4.3 The Paldiski Facility

The Paldiski facility is a former Soviet naval nuclear training centre transferred to Estonian authority following the removal of all nuclear fuel. It is currently operated by AS ALARA, Estonia's state-owned radioactive waste management enterprise, and constitutes a radiologically significant site within the national safety and security framework. Located on the Pakri Peninsula in Lääne-Harju municipality, the facility comprises two main radiological holdings within the same secured compound: the reactor compartment sarcophagi and the interim radioactive waste storage facility. Both contain radioactive materials under controlled conditions and are managed under continuous security and environmental monitoring arrangements.

4.4 Geographic, Economic and Demographic Context

Paldiski is a small coastal town situated at the tip of the Pakri Peninsula, with an immediate resident population of roughly 3,700 people concentrated in the town itself and in a limited number of nearby settlements. The immediate area is characterised by limited autonomous resources, no hospital-level emergency capacity, and a high degree of functional dependence on external systems and services, including electricity supply, higher-level healthcare, and wider operational support from outside the peninsula. At the same time, the town has strategic economic relevance as an industrial, logistics, port, and energy hub, while surrounding villages,

commuter flows along the Tallinn corridor, and seasonal visitors increase the number and diversity of persons potentially affected in a crisis.

4.5 Infrastructure

The Paldiski area is functionally dependent on Tallinn for transport connectivity, energy supply, and access to higher-level services, with the T8 road corridor and the Tallinn–Paldiski railway constituting the principal links to the capital. The area also depends on external power transmission and on coastal groundwater aquifers for essential services, meaning that disruption could have immediate consequences for local functionality and on-site monitoring systems. In addition, the presence of major nearby infrastructures, including the Port of Paldiski and the Balticconnector gas pipeline, increases both the operational complexity and the wider strategic significance of any incident affecting the facility.

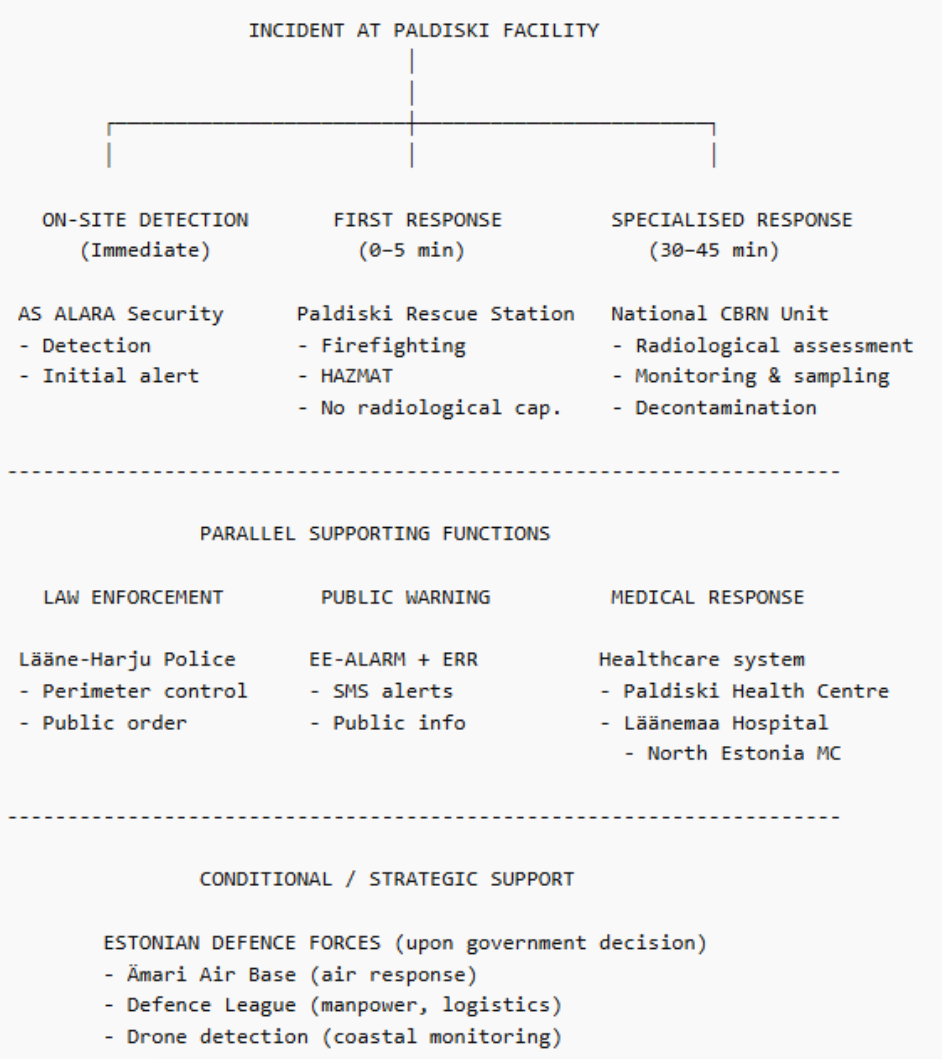
4.6 Emergency Response Actors, Monitoring Capabilities and Public Warning Systems

4.6.1 Emergency Response Actors and Capacities

The nearest response assets include the Paldiski Rescue Station, the limited local police presence, the on-site security personnel maintained by AS ALARA, and the primary healthcare services available in Paldiski. Together, these actors provide the initial capability for detection, notification, perimeter management, first response, and basic medical stabilisation, but they do not offer hospital-level emergency care, full radiological response capability, or advanced treatment capacity. Specialised radiological response is held by the Estonian Rescue Services Agency's national CBRN unit in Tallinn, while hospital treatment and higher-level emergency care would depend primarily on

facilities in Tallinn and, secondarily, on regional capacity in Haapsalu. Additional support relevant to perimeter security, logistics, airspace awareness, and population movement could be provided mainly by the Estonian Defence Forces, subject to the necessary government decision.

The schematic overview below summarises the main response architecture for a potential incident at the Paldiski facility. It shows the sequence from on-site detection to first response and specialised response, together with the parallel support functions and conditional strategic support that may also need to be activated.



4.6.2 Radiation Monitoring and Environmental Surveillance

Radiation monitoring in the vicinity of the Paldiski facility is supported by a combination of fixed external monitoring stations, independent on-site systems operated by AS ALARA, and modelling tools linked to real-time meteorological data. Together, these arrangements provide baseline situational awareness, threshold alerting, and the capacity to assess likely plume movement and environmental contamination in the early stages of an incident. This technical capability would be central to informing protective action decisions and supporting coordination among response authorities.

4.6.3 Public Warning Systems

Public warning is centered on the national EE-ALARM system, which combines outdoor sirens with mobile alerts to persons located in the affected area. This is complemented by official broadcasting through national public media, which would serve as the principal channel for detailed public instructions during a radiological emergency. Operational coordination among emergency services is further supported by resilient communications systems intended to preserve continuity of command and information flow throughout the response phase.