

This document is a translation of the original assessment in Swedish by SHK of the response to the recommendation. In case of discrepancies between this translation and the Swedish original text, the Swedish text shall prevail in the interpretation of the assessment.

Swedish Armed Forces

Headquarters

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Assessment of the Swedish Armed Forces' response to the recommendations in the report RM 2015:01

On 27 April 2015, the Swedish Accident Investigation Authority (SHK) published its final report RM 2015:01 into a serious incident during aerial combat training south-east of Gällivare on 20 March 2014 involving two JAS 39 Gripen operated by the Swedish Armed Forces. Seven recommendations were made to the Armed Forces in this report (RM 2015:01 R1–R7). The Armed Forces has responded to these recommendations and has provided an account of the action that has been taken or is planned.

With regard to recommendations R1 and R3–R7, SHK deems the responses to be satisfactory and the recommendations to have been taken on board.

With regard to recommendation R2, SHK makes the following assessment.

Recommendation R2 was for the Armed Forces (Military Aviation Safety Inspectorate) to investigate whether the method established in LML for ensuring the balance between tasks and resources is effective and applied in the right way in order to achieve the purpose.

The background to this recommendation is described in Section 2.2.4 of the final report, which includes the following.

The system described by the Armed Forces for ensuring that there is a balance between tasks and resources has, in accordance with what the investigation has shown, not worked in practice as there has clearly been insufficient resources, i.e. primarily calendar time, flying hours, number of individual aeroplanes and number of available instructors, to enable combat pilots to be trained in the intended manner. Given this background, it can be called into question whether the current arrangement for creating a balance between tasks and these resources fulfils its function.

SHK also notes that a relatively large amount of responsibility is placed on the units reporting imbalances that require further action. If such a system is to work, it is necessary that Armed Forces Headquarters also take action when imbalances are reported. If there is no tangible action, i.e. the allocation of additional resources, an explicit reduction in the level of ambition or the withdrawal of certain tasks in order to achieve a balance, there is a clear risk that filing a

report seems meaningless and that units will choose to deal with the situation as best they can within the unit because this is still the signal that is being put out by Armed Forces Headquarters. It was indicated during the interviews conducted by SHK at the units during the investigation that there is a risk of such a tendency developing. This may have an adverse effect on the safety culture and result in safety risks in these organisations.

It is SHK's understanding that it is possible to calculate the need of resources for the training of combat pilots in terms of number of flying hours, calendar time, instructors and individual aeroplanes on the basis of a given level of ambition and training instructions. The need for these resources should be so well known out in the air combat squadrons with many years' experience and it should be possible to present these resources to Armed Forces Headquarters without difficulty.

If it is true that there are different perceptions between units and Armed Forces Headquarters about the resources needed to implement combat pilot training, the model inscribed in the document Management of Military Aviation (Ledning av Militär Luftfart, LML) cannot be used to achieve a balance between tasks and the resources necessary as it presumes there to be a consensus in place.

In the light of the difficulties that appear to exist in terms of ensuring a balance between tasks and resources, the Armed Forces should investigate in more detail whether the model that is currently used is effective and being applied in the correct manner in order to achieve the intended aim. Furthermore, it is important that the model ensures that any imbalances are identified and taken charge of at the headquarters levels during the planning of expanded tasks or other supplementary tasks, i.e. prior to the task or tasks being allocated to units.

In its response to the recommendation, the Armed Forces describes the method in LML. As far as can be determined from the response, no investigation of whether the method is actually effective and being applied in the correct manner has been conducted and nor is there any plan to do so. In the light of the observations made and reported in SHK's final report, this is not satisfactory and the recommendation cannot be considered to have been taken on board.

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