Systemy Logistyczne Wojsk

Zeszvt 57 (2022) ISSN 1508-5430, s. 161-172

DOI: 10.37055/slw/163307

Military Logistics Systems

Volume 57 (2022)

ISSN 1508-5430, pp. 161-172

DOI: 10.37055/slw/163307

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# Administrative and legal regulations in the field of organization of public gatherings and the competences of the state in the field of security logistics

Administracyjno-prawne regulacje z zakresu organizacji zgromadzeń publicznych a kompetencje państwa w zakresie logistyki bezpieczeństwa

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Abstract. The article presents the administrative and legal regulations for the organization of public assemblies in relation to the state's competence in the field of security logistics. The aim of the article is to indicate the legal possibilities of the state in the field of organizing public assemblies. The research problem was formulated in the form of a question: How do public authorities performing tasks in the field of state security logistics fulfill the constitutional norm granting a person the freedom of assembly. The research hypothesis that has been verified is: The public authority has a wide range of possibilities both in terms of organizing public assemblies and ensuring their safety. The period between its notification and its holding is not without significance for the security logistics of a public assembly. Considerations on the topic will be based on the available literature on the subject, normative acts, personal observations, as well as other sources of information illustrating the course and control of public assemblies. The assessment of local government authorities evaluating the registered manifestations, as well as their applications for permission to hold an assembly or its prohibition, will also be of key importance for the consideration of the subject. Conclusions from the conducted research were formulated in the last part of the article. The most important conclusions include that Public authorities have a wide range of competences both in terms of organization and the ability to ensure public security. In addition, the amended Act on Public Assemblies introduced in 2015 significantly contributed to increasing the powers of local governments. **Keywords:** public assemblies, security logistics, state powers, civil liberties, security

Abstrakt. W artykule przedstawiono administracyjno-prawne regulacje organizacji zgromadzeń publicznych w odniesieniu do kompetencji państwa w zakresie logistyki bezpieczeństwa. Celem artykułu jest wskazanie prawnych możliwości państwa w zakresie organizacji zgromadzeń publicznych. Problem badawczy został sformułowany w postaci pytania: W jaki sposób organy władzy publicznej, realizujące zadania z zakresu logistyki bezpieczeństwa państwa, swoim działaniem wypełniają konstytucyjną normę przyznającą osobie wolność zgromadzeń? Hipoteza badawcza poddana weryfikacji to: Władza publiczna ma szerokje możliwości zarówno w zakresie organizacji zgromadzeń publicznych, jak i zapewnienia ich bezpieczeństwa. Nie bez znaczenia dla logistyki bezpieczeństwa zgromadzenia publicznego jest okres między jego zgłoszeniem a odbyciem. Rozważania tematu zostaną oparte na dostępnej literaturze przedmiotu, aktach normatywnych, osobistych obserwacjach, a także innych źródłach informacji obrazujących przebieg i kontrole zgromadzeń publicznych. Kluczowe znaczenie dla rozpatrzenia tematu bedzie miała również ocena władz samorzadowych dokonujących oceny zarejestrowanych manifestacji, a także ich wniosków o zezwolenie na odbycie zgromadzenia lub jego zakaz. Wnioski z przeprowadzonych badań zostały sformułowane w ostatniej cześci artykułu. Jako najistotniejsze wnioski wskazać należy, że, władza publiczna posjada szeroki zakres kompetencji zarówno w zakresie organizacji, jak i możliwości zapewnienia bezpieczeństwa publicznego. Ponadto, wprowadzona w 2015 roku znowelizowana ustawa o zgromadzeniach publicznych znaczaco przyczyniła się do zwiększenia uprawnień samorządów.

**Słowa kluczowe:** zgromadzenia publiczne, logistyka bezpieczeństwa, kompetencje państwa, wolność obywatelska, bezpieczeństwo

### Introduction

Freedom of public assembly was guaranteed in the Basic Law of 1997 (the Constitution, 1997). However, the legislator did not leave this issue free from other regulations, including the one responsible for the way it is organized and ensuring safety during it.

The authors of this paper will specify how to organize a public assembly in a way that complies with the law and how the law affects its course. It is impossible to separate the administrative and legal aspect of a public assembly from the scope of conduct of public authorities obliged not only to ensure security for the general public, but above all, for the participants of the assembly.

The purpose of this article is to indicate the technical and legal activities carried out by the local government authorities and possible decisions in the proceedings. Next, the formal possibilities of the security authorities to control the course of a public assembly will be indicated. Considerations on the topic will be based on available sources, in particular statistical data in the field of safety assessment of individual events.

As a result of the conducted research, it was proved that statutory regulations in the field of the subject are highly formalized, and the exercise of constitutional freedoms requires numerous previously planned civic actions. The cooperation of the authorities and the bodies responsible for security guarantees efficient and trouble-free conduct of assemblies, which, in the light of the threats often arising from the subject of manifested views, is an essential element.

# Objective and subjective scope of the definition of security logistics

Security logistics is an institution in the field of defense sciences, the aim of which is to create a state that guarantees the certainty that public order will not be disturbed. A. Szymonik points out that: It is logistics that is closely related to entities and institutions involved in the economic security system, in the literature on the subject it is called: security logistics or logistics in security. The definition of this logistics is closely related to the structures of the ministry: national defense, internal affairs, health, finance, economy, agriculture and rural development, transport, construction and maritime economy (Szymonik, 2016). Therefore, we will call security logistics a set of measures aimed at preventing undesirable phenomena that may arise as a result of social movements. As the scope of activities of the authorities is wide, so will be the logistic activities optimizing possible threats. It should be pointed out that the goal of the state is to limit the risk in each of the possible spheres where they may occur.

In the aspect of security logistics, it should be pointed out that logistics will not only be actions that prevent the occurrence of undesirable phenomena, but also those that remove their effects.

The threats covered by the security logistics have been classified into four groups, each of which contains a different catalog of potential threats.

The first group includes natural disasters and events caused by civilization reasons, such as catastrophes, malfunctions and other events caused by human action or negligence. This group of threats includes, among others: fires, floods and inundations, strong winds and hurricanes, rapid temperature fluctuations, thick fogs, droughts, thefts, epidemics of human diseases, epidemics of plant and animal diseases, radioactive and chemical contamination, mining, construction and communication disasters, failures of power grids.

The second group includes events threatening the constitutional order of the state (states), terrorism, roadblocks, illegal demonstrations, mass migration.

In the third group there are featured mechanisms that aim to destroy or distort information sent, processed and stored for the needs of logistics systems. Any disruptions in the flow of information cause difficulties in the efficient and effective management of logistics along the entire supply chain.

The fourth group includes threats resulting from the effects of the economic, financial crises and globalization, which actually affect everyone, including logistics processes and systems. Unemployment, low GDP growth, destructive wage and pension policy, demographic decline, influx of cheap products are just some of the threats affecting the functioning of logistics systems (Jałowiec, 2014).

J. Sadowski indicates that the leading role in the area of security is played by the president and prime minister, the council of ministers, the ministers of national defense and internal affairs together with their subordinate organizations, police formations, special services and guards, as well as local government bodies, non-governmental organizations and private enterprises (Sadowski, 2014). These bodies establish their activity in accordance with the Law of 26 April 2007 on Crisis Management (Zarządzanie kryzysowe, 2007).

### **Public assemblies**

The source of law reviving the institution of public assemblies is the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (Konstytucja, 1997). According to art. 57 of the Constitution, "Everyone is guaranteed the freedom to organize peaceful assemblies and to participate in them. This freedom may be restricted by law." However, this act lacks any other references to public assemblies. Second paragraph of art. 57 refers directly to the Law of 24 July 2015 on Assemblies (Zgromadzenia, 2015). This act was introduced in order to implement the ruling of the Constitutional Tribunal of September 18, 2012, in which it was stated that the previously binding act violated the rights of persons without full legal capacity and persons with disabilities, including those resulting from the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Konwencja, 2006) and the ruling of May 3, 2007 of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Bączkowski v. Poland.

Assemblies organized by public authorities and those held as part of the activities of churches and other religious associations are excluded from the regulation of the currently binding act.

A public assembly is a grouping of people in an open space available to persons not specified by name in a specific place in order to hold joint deliberations or to jointly express a position on public matters. The legislator also defines a spontaneous assembly, which is a variation of a public assembly, and it is an assembly that takes place in connection with a sudden and unforeseeable event related to the public sphere, the holding of which at any other time would be pointless or of little importance from the point of view of the public debate.

According to art. 18 sec. 1 of the Act, the assembly is managed by the chairman who is the organizer of the assembly, being a natural person, unless another natural person agrees in writing to accept the duties of the chairman of the assembly, or a person acting on behalf of the organizer of the assembly who gives written consent to accept the duties of the chairman of the assembly, if the organizer of the assembly is a legal person or other organization.

The organizer of the assembly and the chairman of the assembly are obliged to ensure the course of the assembly in accordance with the law and to conduct the assembly in such a way as to prevent damage caused by the participants of the assembly. To this end, the organizer of the assembly and the chairman of the assembly

shall take the measures provided for in the Act. During the assembly, the organizer is obliged to keep in a visible place elements distinguishing his positions at all times.

Performing the functions of the organizer entitles, in accordance with art. 19 sec. 5 of the Act, to the possibility of expelling from the assembly a person or persons whose conduct threatens the assembly or prevents it. In the event of failure to comply with the request, the chairman may turn to the police or the municipal guard for help. Moreover, he may dissolve the assembly and order it to leave the place of its organization immediately. At this point, however, it should be noted that granting this competence is not entirely accurate, because if the assembly takes place in a public place, it is not possible to force the obligated entity to leave it. This provision should rather be read exponentially and not literally, and should be understood as ordering the participants of the assembly to lose the character of the assembly if they remain in a public place.

# Obligations of the assembly organizer and the powers of the public authority to refuse its organization as a competence in the field of security logistics

A public assembly is a manifestation of the exercise of civil freedom, but the provisions of law codify it to a large extent in order to ensure their safe conduct. The most important from the point of view of the above is the obligation of the organizer to report the assembly to the municipality in whose district it is to be held, not earlier than 30 days and not later than 6 days before the planned date of the assembly. Important in the context of the deadline for reporting the assembly is the fact that the message must reach the authority within the indicated time range, so the Code of Administrative Procedure (KPA, 1960) does not apply here. If these were valid, the organizer could send the parcel to the municipal office on the sixth day before the assembly, while keeping the deadline. However, the legislator indicated that the information about the organization of the assembly must reach the office no later than six days before its start. Such a procedure allows the authorities to prepare appropriately and consider eventualities that may occur during its course. If the assembly is to be organized in more than one municipality, separate proceedings are conducted in each of them.

According to art. 9 of the Act, the organizer of the assembly shall notify the municipal body of the intention to organize the assembly in writing, by fax, verbally for the minutes or by means of electronic communication. The submission of a notification of the intention to organize a meeting is registered taking into account the date, hour and minute of submitting the notification, which determine the order in which the notification is submitted. If a notice of the intention to organize a meeting is submitted orally to the minutes, the order in which the notice is submitted is

determined by the date, time and minute of the start of drawing up the minutes, which are included in the minutes. In the case of submitting a notification of the intention to organize an assembly by means of electronic communication, the date, time and minute of entering the notification into the municipality's ICT system are decisive for the order in which this notification is submitted. Then, the municipal authority provides information, concerning the e-mail address and fax number to which notifications of the intention to organize an assembly are sent, on the website in the Public Information Bulletin.

A. Gronkiewicz points out that after submitting the notification, the municipality head (mayor, president of the city) is obliged to examine it both in formal and substantive terms. They examine the content of the notification, i.e. they check whether it contains the required elements and whether the organizer has the required legal capacity. In addition, they check compliance with the statutory deadlines for submitting notifications and examine whether there is a situation of simultaneous assemblies, which requires determining the priority of notifications. At the same time, the municipality authority immediately informs certain entities of its intention to organize the assembly. However, the information obligation imposed on them is of a varied nature, and also depends on the place of organization of the assembly (Gronkiewicz, 2016). If the authority finds that the application has formal defects, it calls on the organizer to immediately supplement them. As a rule, the requested party has 7 days from the date of receipt of the notification to supplement the deficiencies, however, in these proceedings, in particular due to the short time periods, it is replaced by means of distance communication.

The municipality authority is obliged to issue decisions on permitting or prohibiting an assembly no later than 96 hours before the planned date of the assembly. A refusal decision is issued by the authority when the purpose of the assembly violates the freedom of peaceful assembly, the principles of organizing assemblies or criminal provisions, or may threaten the life and health of people or property to a significant extent. Refusal of consent to the organization of an assembly also takes place when a cyclical assembly is to be held at that time. The municipality authority, after issuing the decision to ban the assembly, immediately makes this decision public on the website in the Public Information Bulletin and forwards it to the organizer of the assembly by means of electronic communication together with information about its publishing. At the same time, the municipality authority forwards the decision to ban the assembly together with the case files to the competent district court.

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the municipality authority of lodging an appeal against the decision banning the assembly by providing information on the appeal on the court's website in the Public Information Bulletin and informs the assembly organizer and the municipality authority of the date of the hearing via electronic means of communication. The date of the appeal hearing is set no later than within 24 hours of the appeal being filed.

The decision of the regional court may be appealed against to the appeal court within 24 hours of its issuance, which examines the decision within 24 hours. The decision of the appeal court is not subject to a cassation appeal and is immediately enforceable.

The obligation to notify public assemblies was established primarily in order to enable state authorities to verify what threats may arise as a result of them. First, administrative control - decision of the head of the municipality/mayor/president of the city, and then two-instance proceedings before a common court guarantee that all pros and cons of a given event will be considered in these proceedings.

By keeping a period of at least 6 days before the start of the assembly, it is possible to plan its course and ensure the participation of public service officials, who are to guarantee security. It is important that not only preventive but also rescue services participate in a given assembly. Article 8 of the Act indicates which authorities are to be notified by the municipality in order to secure the course of the assembly.

The table below presents the subjective jurisdiction of the authorities in relation to the circumstances indicated in the Act.

Body Circumstance Police Public assemblies in the territory of Poland. Municipal Police Commander Public assemblies in the territory of the capital city of Warsaw. If the assembly is to be organized in the vicinity of diplomatic missions, consular offices, special missions and international Foreign Affairs Minister organizations enjoying diplomatic immunities and privileges. State Protection Service Com-If the assembly is to be organized in the vicinity of facilities mander guarded by the State Protection Service. If the assembly is to be organized in the vicinity of facilities Marshal's Guard Commander guarded by the Marshal's Guard. If the assembly is to be organized in the vicinity of military Military Gendarmerie Commander competent for the place of the unit within the meaning of art. 2 p. 12 of Law of 11 March assembly 2022 on Homeland Defense.

Table 1. Bodies responsible for securing the public assembly

Source: Own elaboration

## Police prevention as an element of security logistics

Definitely the most visible unit during public assemblies is the Police. It is this formation, as the only one among those mentioned above, that has a nationwide scope. Its versatility lies primarily in the fact that it can perform an auxiliary function in relation to other formations. However, the Law on Assemblies does not indicate a specific catalogue of the Police's powers in relation to the participants of the assembly.

The Constitutional Tribunal in its resolution of March 16, 1994 in the case no. act 8/93 indicated that the act establishing the powers of the Police during public assemblies is the disposition of art. 14 sec. 3 - In the course of performing their duties, police officers are obliged to respect human dignity and to observe and protect rights. Therefore, the police have an order to enforce the law, and as an example of powers in their enforcement, the protection of assemblies is provided for in the Act of May 20, 1971. Code of offenses. According to Art. 52 § 1 KW is punishable by arrest for up to 14 days, restriction of liberty or a fine, who: 1) disturbs or attempts to hinder the organization or conduct of a non-prohibited assembly, 2) organizes a meeting without the required notification or chairs such a meeting or a prohibited meeting, 3) presides over a meeting after its dissolution, unlawfully, unlawfully occupies or refuses to leave a place where another person or organization legally disposes as the organizer or chairman of the assembly, - is subject to the penalty of restriction of liberty or a fine (Witkowski, 2018).

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Polish Ombudsman, in the context of the Police's powers under the Police Act, pointed out that they should not be applied unconditionally to members of assemblies. It was indicated that officers of the police and other services should not take actions (check documents, apply sanctions, initiate proceedings) that hinder or even prevent peaceful demonstrators/counter-demonstrators from exercising freedom

of assembly. Direct coercion measures applied by the police against assembly participants should be proportionate and adequate. Methods of securing the assembly - such as, for example, separating the assembly with concrete fences, tactics of detaining demonstrators in the so-called "kettles" - should be exceptions to isolate people who are aggressive or break the law.

In response to the Ombusman's recommendations, General Jarosław Szymczak, the Police Commander-in-Chief, pointed out that the purpose of police activities when securing public assemblies is not only to facilitate the peaceful gathering of the society, but above all to prevent the escalation of aggressive behavior or behavior that violates the law. In his opinion, references in the report of the Ombudsman to the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, pointing to the obligation to ensure the peaceful course of all legal demonstrations, suggest that not all participants of legal assemblies are duly protected in Poland, in particular when demonstrators may annoy and offend people of other views. In the commander's opinion, the Ombudsman's report interprets these principles as equal to groups of demonstrators referred to as "counter-demonstrators". This suggestion does not reflect reality, because, as a rule, the actions of officers are aimed at protecting any legally manifesting group, expressing even the most controversial views (Starzewski, 2019; Starzewski 2021).

Despite the comments on the Police from the Ombudsman, the latter willingly shares its participation in public assemblies, and so on December 12, 2022, the Pomeranian Police published an article in which it indicated that: "Today the policemen secured a public assembly organized by opponents of the restrictions related to COVID-19 disease. The assemblies were held in Gdańsk, Gdynia, Chojnice and Wejherowo. Officers secured the marches and ensured the safety of the residents. Policemen solidly reacted to persons violating the law. Documents were verified, fines were imposed, motions for punishment will be sent to the court. In Gdańsk, the bodily integrity of public officials was violated. Police officers analyze the secured evidence, and people who broke the law must take into account the consequences" (Policja Pomorska, 2022).

# Decisions regarding the organization of public assemblies

There can be only two decisions regarding public assemblies - consent to conduct them or refusal. Decisions in the above scope are published in Public Information Bulletins, but it should be noted that they are mostly positive for the applicant. However, if the authority prohibits the organization of a public assembly, the decision shall indicate a broad justification stating the reason for issuing the said contract.

The Code of Administrative Procedure regulates the obligatory elements of an administrative decision - designation of the authority and the applicant, date and place of the decision, settlement, justification, signature and instruction. As far as the administrative decision itself is concerned, the most important element is the settlement and justification, i.e. the elements on which a possible appeal can be based.

In the refusal decisions from the period 2020-2022, the indicated element was art. 14 point 2 of the Law on Assemblies, and therefore a threat to life or health that may arise as a result of the creation of a large group of people. The immediate consequence of refusals to organize public assemblies was the COVID-19 pandemic (Decyzja WV/5310/ZG/13, 2020). The justification in the subject proceedings was based on the following statement: "On August 13 this year the office of the capital city Warsaw received the opinion of the Mazovian State Sanitary Inspector No. 141/HKN/2020, in which they unequivocally stated that the assembly with the participation of 1,000 people should not take place, as it violates the current legal status. This is undoubtedly related to the number of SARS-CoV 2 virus infections that has been increasing in the country for some time. The dynamic development of the epidemic situation from the date of notification by the organizer about the assembly and the large increase in daily illnesses make it necessary to issue the most restrictive, but legally permissible and deeply justified decision on the prohibition of assemblies".

Subsequently, in the decisions art. 14 sec. 3 of the Act is pointed as the argument against organizing - the assemblies are to be held in the place and time at which assemblies organized cyclically are held (Decyzja WV/5310/ZG/4, 2022). The justification for the refusal includes an indication of a previously notified assembly with the same territorial scope. This indication refers to the Roman paremi *prior tempore potior iure*.

The lowest percentage of refusals is based on art. 14 sec. 1 of the Act. In the justification of the refusal decision, it was indicated that: "The method of convening assemblies, e.g. by the applicant and the environment of people opposed to abortion and "pedophilia" in Poland, consisting for years in shocking in the public space with drastic images of bloody fetuses, using homophonic slogans and playing through high-powered sound and slogans. Extremely aggressive behaviors towards other organizers also makes it necessary to protect the employees of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship Office and the City Hall, as well as bystanders exposed to noise and persistently imposed messages that are unacceptable by many people" (Decyzja WV/5310/ZG/10, 2020).

### **Conclusions**

Despite defining public assemblies as a constitutional freedom, it is highly formalized. However, it should be recognized that the indicated scope of legislation has a positive impact on the preservation of other rights and freedoms indicated in the Constitution.

High formalization, and in particular the determination of statutory deadlines for submitting an application for approval of the assembly, allows for planning and examining whether the requested event will not cause undesirable phenomena. The key from the point of security logistics is the participation of the Police, in particular prevention, on the one hand, counteracting and, on the other hand, enforcing order.

Authorities issuing decisions on the authorization or refusal to organize a public assembly operate within the limits of the law, thus limiting the grounds for appealing against them. Overall, the above has a positive effect on securing social interests.

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