

Swedish leader says security leak in 2015 was disaster

July 24 2017, by Matti Huuhtanen



Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Lofven speaks during a press conference in Stockholm, Monday, July 24, 2017. Sweden's prime minister says a security leak in the transport agency two years ago was "a disaster," but it's unclear what damage it may have caused. Lofven says the data leak was revealed after security police investigated the outsourcing of services by the Swedish Transport Agency and found IT workers in other countries, including the Czech Republic, were not given normal security checks. (Stina Stjernkvist/TT News Agency via AP)

A security leak in Sweden in 2015 is causing reverberations in the

Scandinavian country two years later with Prime Minister Stefan Lofven saying it was "a disaster," exposing the nation to harm.

The breach, first reported on last week, provided confidential information abroad allowing IT workers, including in the Czech Republic, to access Swedish government and police databases when the Transport Agency decided to outsource some of its services. Although officials gave little detail about the leak, it made the country vulnerable to possible further cyberattacks.

"What happened was an accident ... it was a complete failure and is very serious," Lofven told reporters Monday. "It was in breach of the law and exposed Sweden and Swedish citizens to harm."

Lofven said the data leak was revealed after security police investigated the outsourcing plans. After he heard about it in January this year, he said the head of the agency was fired.

"Naturally, I would have liked to get the information earlier," Lofven told reporters at a news conference. "What happened was an accident. It is very serious and a breach of law," he told a news conference.

He said he could not say exactly what information was involved in the leak or what damage it may have caused, but said that it had exposed "Sweden and Swedish citizens to harm."



From left, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Micael Byden, Director-general of the Swedish security police Anders Thornberg, Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Lofven and Director-general of the Swedish Transport Agency Jonas Bjelfvenstam attend a press conference in Stockholm, Monday, July 24, 2017. Sweden's prime minister says a security leak in the transport agency two years ago was "a disaster," but it's unclear what damage it may have caused. Lofven says the data leak was revealed after security police investigated the outsourcing of services by the Swedish Transport Agency and found IT workers in other countries, including the Czech Republic, were not given normal security checks. (Stina Stjernkvist/TT News Agency via AP)

Security and military officials will now assess the situation, he said.

"We can't reveal everything when it comes to security matters, but the public is entitled to a good and comprehensive account of what happened, what measures have been taken to ensure that information dealing with security is safe and secure in Sweden," Lofven said.

The Transport Agency's general director Jonas Bjelfvenstam, who was appointed in January, described the incident as "unacceptable," but said there were no signs that confidential information had been compromised. He said he could not provide more information about the incident.

Also, the head of the military denied Swedish media reports that the leak included a register of Swedish military vehicles.

However, the scandal is not likely to die down soon.

Opposition politicians have accused the government of ineptitude and Lofven's Social Democrat-led Cabinet was expected to face tough questions when the parliamentary justice committee discusses the issue this week.

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