

PEDTR 2019**18th International Scientific Conference “Problems of Enterprise Development:
Theory and Practice”****PRISON RADICALIZATION AND DERADICALIZATION IN THE
COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL ASIA**

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Abstract

The ideas of extremism spread among convicts held in correctional institutions pose a threat to the national security of Central Asian countries. The relevance of the study is due to the presence of a number of problems in the framework of countering the manifestations of extremism in prison institutions and the radicalization of prisoners. The article focuses on the need for comprehensive measures to counter the radicalization of places of deprivation of liberty in the countries of Central Asia (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan). The authors emphasize that the penitentiary environment acts not only as one of the most vulnerable objects, but also as one of the main sources of dissemination of radical ideologies. The authors analyzed the factors of the spread of radical ideologies in the countries of Central Asia, characterized individual causes that contribute to the radicalization of prisons in the region. A description is given of measures to counteract the spread of radical ideas among the convicts of these countries. Such measures include: awareness-raising with prisoners; involvement of prison chaplains; introduction of a system of social elevators for prisoners; provision of psychological and material support; reorganization of law enforcement agencies; improvement of the legal framework for countering extremism; collective measures to counteract the radicalization of prisoners. Knowledge of the typical causes and conditions for the spread of radical ideology in penitentiary institutions is important first of all for the development of necessary preventive measures, and can help prevent the commission of criminal forms of extremism.

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1. Introduction

It is well known that persons representing extremist movements and convicted of terrorist crimes have been particularly active in places of detention in recent years. This negative phenomenon has not spared prison institutions in Central Asia. Consideration of this topic is actual, and conditioned with the activities of radical organizations, with their attempts to use the criminal environment in order to replenish the ranks of extremists and terrorists. The materials of the article represent practical value for public authorities, taking measures to counter extremism, law enforcement agencies, and practitioners in the field of penitentiary security. We believe that it is worth starting with the following questions: Is there a problem of the radicalization of a certain part of the population in the countries of Central Asia? What are the scope and reasons for the radicalization of prisoners in prisons in the region? What measures are being taken to counter the spread of radical ideologies and deradicalization of prisons in Central Asian countries? Let's try to answer these questions in order.

2. Problem Statement

The modern period of development is characterized by cardinal transformations taking place in all spheres of public life. It is well known that the era of reforms is characterized not only by positive achievements, but also by negative consequences. The latter include extremism and terrorism. Extremism and terrorism are considered one of the most dangerous phenomena of social life, destabilizing the political and economic systems of States, and creating a threat to the life and security of citizens. In our opinion, one of the directions of effective counteraction is to spread radical ideologies of militant extremism should be a comprehensive study of the causes and conditions of radicalization of prisoners in detention facilities around the world, as well as the measures taken to de-radicalize prisons in this regard. This will contribute to the development of comprehensive national and international programs to deindoctrinate radicalism and effectively counteract the activities of extremist and terrorist groups.

3. Research Questions

Today, the processes of radicalization to one degree or another have affected absolutely all regions of the world, and the countries of Central Asia cannot be an exception here. Nevertheless, many Western analysts have a different opinion - the processes of radicalization in individual regions or countries do not pose a serious danger either to themselves or to the world community as a whole. Evidence of this is the official position of the Western countries and their allies in relation to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. Against this background, the denial of the expansion of Islamic radicalism, and in some cases the “expert” attempts to justify the spread of radical Islam in Central Asia, are no longer surprising. Radicalism, including its extreme forms of manifestation (violent extremism and terrorism) seems to be only an expression of opposition in society, as a result of the lack of dialogue between the government and “moderate opposition”.

In 2014, J. Heathershaw (University of Exeter, England) and David W. Montgomery (University of Pittsburgh, USA) prepared a report entitled “The Myth of the Radicalization of Islam in the Central Asian Republics in the Post-Soviet Period,” which begins with the words: “Central Asia is generally

considered to have a widespread and increasing problem with ‘Muslim radicalization’ and yet there is little or no evidence of significant levels of Islamic extremism and political violence in the region” (p. 2). The authors of this document come to the ambiguous conclusion that the radicalization of Islam in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan) in the post-Soviet period is fiction, and the few existing radical groups and emerging violent actions, in their opinion, are recommended viewed outside the scope of the radicalization process. A significant increase in Islamic activity among the predominantly Muslim population of Central Asia is considered by researchers only as a positive factor in democratic transformations. At the same time, the authors point out the lack of evidence of the relationship between the level of Islamization and the radicalization of society, and any attempts by the “political elite of the Central Asian countries” to link terrorist activity with the threats of growing Islamic radicalization are directed only against political opponents, and are obsessively propagandized by the governments of the region. The combination of political and economic instability in the countries of Central Asia, the activities of "underground Muslim groups" enjoying support from abroad, to consider as factors in the emergence and spread of radical ideas, is unacceptable, the authors of the report believe.

Obviously, this approach contradicts both objective studies of the processes of extremization of society and an extensive array of empirical data on the causes and real manifestations of the threats of Islamic radicalization in various countries, including in the region. The most revealing in this regard are studies on prisons in the UK (Liebling, Arnold, & Straub, 2011), the Italian Republic (Marone & Olimpio, 2019; Zaccariello, 2018), and the work of other foreign experts: Dr. Schmid (2013) and the leading world expert on prison radicalization, professor of criminology Hamm (2008), Neumann (2003), is essential in this field of science. The radicalization of prisoners is the work of Silke and Veldhuis (2017). Violent extremism in US prisons is explored, for example, by LaFree, Jiang and Porter (2019). The nature of the radicalization of prisoners in French prisons over the past decade has been revealed by Khosrokhavar (2013).

It should be noted that various aspects of Islamic extremism and terrorism in prisons in Central Asia have not been adequately reflected in scientific works. Along with the revival and marked activation of traditional Islam in the countries of Central Asia, the adoption of radical religious ideologies that generate intra-confessional conflicts is taking place. The collapse of the USSR and the awakening of national identity, contributed to the growth of radical sentiments in society. Degenerative processes predetermined the radicalization of the Islamic movement and the emergence of numerous religious extremist organizations in the post-Soviet space.

The countries of Central Asia today are most seriously concerned about the involvement of citizens in the ranks of extremists. In particular, at the international forum “Interaction of Central Asian Countries to Combat Violent Extremism” held in the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Astana, September 28, 2015), issues were discussed of improving the comprehensive system of joint measures implemented by law enforcement agencies of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the fight against violent extremism.

The fact that the ideas of extremism spread among convicts held in correctional institutions in Central Asia pose a threat to the national security of the states of the entire region was also discussed

during expert meetings of representatives of special services and law enforcement agencies, which were initiated by the CIS Anti-Terrorism Center (Bishkek, January 21, 2016). Let us characterize the scale and reasons for the radicalization of correctional institutions in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Favorable conditions for the spread of religious extremist ideology are created by the proximity of the borders of the countries of the region to the centers of armed conflict. So, from Afghanistan material and ideological support is provided to the Islamic groups of Central Asia. Local extremist terrorist organizations are active in the region.

The vast majority of the population of Central Asian countries are Muslims, who mainly practice Sunni Islam, Shiite Muslims make up a small part. According to figures H. Kettani, 98.00% of the population professes Islam in Tajikistan, 89.00% are Muslims in Turkmenistan, over 93% are in Uzbekistan, almost 90.00% in Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, where the religious level of the population is the lowest in the region, most (about 70%) of believers are also Muslims (Kettani, 2010). Partly for this reason, in Central Asian countries there is an increased interest of a part of the population in radical Islam. The replenishment of members of terrorist organizations, for example, ISIS, is mainly due to Islamic youth, adjacent to various radical and extremist groups. Thus, according to the General Prosecutor's Office of Tajikistan, the number of citizens of the country "fighting in the ranks of foreign extremist groups in Syria and Iraq", more than 420 cases were opened.

In Kazakhstan, the reasons for the radicalization of prisoners should also include: the disadvantage of counter-propaganda activities of public services in the field of countering the extremism of the prison population; the insufficient level of job security for prisoners; problems with ensuring the rights of prisoners, etc. the Ranks of extremists and terrorists are replenished by support from radical groups.

Let us consider individual factors under the influence of which radical views and beliefs are formed in the penitentiary environment of Uzbekistan. Almost from the first days after independence, Uzbekistan became the object of close attention of various international terrorist organizations and armed gangs. Over the past 20 years, the level of extremism in the country has grown 10 times, and today the country occupies a leading position in the number of extremist groups in Central Asia. It is noted that the process of radicalization in republican correctional institutions accelerated sharply under the influence of religious extremist propaganda among prisoners. Today, in jails in Uzbekistan are adherents of the radical organizations "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan" and "Union of the Islamic Movement of East Turkestan". There have been cases of the creation in prisons of a well-developed and well-organized network of cells of the terrorist organization Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami, which was engaged in the dissemination of extremist ideas among prisoners.

In recent years, a significant increase in extremism has been observed in the Republic of Tajikistan. Tajikistan also faces the threat of intensification of extremist ideologies among prisoners. One reason is the shortage of prison chaplains. In prisons in Kyrgyzstan, the extremism of the prison population is also linked to the lack of clerics in prisons.

Turkmenistan. Overcrowding in correctional facilities and unsatisfactory conditions of detention of convicts are also characteristic of the penitentiary system of the republic. For example, a 2011 report on the situation of female prisoners in the Dashoguz Women's Colony (Turkmenistan), which was prepared and issued by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, states that the conditions of women do not meet

international standards and sometimes come down to ill-treatment and torture, the number of prisoners exceeds normal twice. In addition, today Turkmenistan practically does not take any part in the activities of the interstate anti-terrorist structures of the CIS countries: the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and other regional international organizations. It should be noted that the propaganda activities of religious extremists in Turkmenistan intensified against the backdrop of the activation of the Russian Federation air forces in Syria and the successful offensive of the Syrian army on the militants of the ISIS terrorist organization. The country's secrecy and isolationist policies of official authorities only partially restrained the spread of radical ideas in Turkmenistan, as they contributed to the departure of radical Islamic organizations into deep underground.

The analysis of the results of the activities of penitentiary institutions made it possible to generalize and identify typical reasons and circumstances that contribute to the radicalization of prisoners. In particular, this should include: the lack of an individual approach to carrying out psychocorrection measures to form an anti-extremist consciousness, involving convicts in socially oriented activities; unsystematic control over the acquisition and storage of literature and other information materials by prisoners; failure to take measures to stop the channels of receipt and timely removal of materials of an extremist nature.

Scientists with deep knowledge of various fields of social and political activity are trying to solve the problems of combating the radicalization of prisons. However, this problem is not so much theoretical as practical. Considering the problem of countering the spread of radical ideologies in the prison environment, it is necessary to recognize that one of the main obstacles in their way should be the constructive interaction of state and public institutions, their cooperation in order to achieve common goals. Joint coordinated activities should be it is aimed at implementing a set of measures to identify, suppress, prevent and prevent the recruitment of new supporters of extremist and terrorist organizations.

4. Purpose of the Study

Often, in places of incarceration and isolation from society, the introduction of radical views is influenced by "cellmates" as a result of psychological manipulation and "ideological brainwashing". As practice shows, recruiters of extremist and terrorist organizations provide "converts" with broad support (provide protection, financial assistance, etc.). By the way, these processes are also taking place in penitentiary institutions around the world. In modern conditions, the most important condition for ensuring penitentiary security in the context of countering the extremism of the prison population is to minimize the factors of the spread of radical trends. In addition, the purpose of this work is to improve and update the competencies necessary for the professional activity of a law enforcement officer in the field of countering extremism.

5. Research Methods

The research was based on a systematic approach to the problem under study. The methodological basis of the study is materialistic dialectics as a universal method of cognition. The study is based on a metaphysical approach, dialectical and epistemological representations. In addition to the basic method,

private scientific ones are also involved, namely: historical-structural, formal-logical, comparative law, modeling, expert assessments, sociological. In addition, sociological research methods were applied, based on theoretical and empirical methods, supplemented by the specification of the subject. The information base was provided by literary sources, statistical data, expert opinions, legislative acts, legal documents regulating issues of countering the extremism of places of detention.

6. Findings

Countermeasures against the radicalization of prisoners in Central Asian prisons. In accordance with the State Program on Combating Religious Extremism in the Republic of Kazakhstan, human resources are being strengthened, and professional staff and government officials who are involved in countering religious extremism and terrorism are being upgraded. The following activities are carried out in the country's prisons: personal work with extremist prisoners; awareness-raising activities aimed at de-incriminating prisoners; a system of social elevators for such prisoners; and others. In Uzbekistan, among other things, there is a system of support for former prisoners. Those who have embarked on the path of correction are provided with financial support, assistance in employment, etc.

In prisons in Tajikistan, in order to reduce the influence of extremists, prisoners were given the opportunity to read religious literature in Arabic. At the initiative of the Islamic Center of Tajikistan, about 100 copies of the Koran and religious attributes for prayers were transferred to correctional colonies. The Main Department for the Execution of Sentences of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan focuses on the rehabilitation of convicts.

Kyrgyzstan is increasing its efforts to combat religious extremism and terrorism, including working with those convicted of extremism and terrorism. The Kyrgyz prison system also uses a wide range of preventive measures to target extremist prisoners. The state service of execution of punishments (SSEP), together with chaplains and psychologists and organizes trainings. In April 2016, the criminal code of the Kyrgyz Republic was amended, according to which those accused of crimes related to terrorism and extremism must be kept in isolation and in strict regime.

Official information on law enforcement practice is not available, and the real number of supporters of radical Islamist movements in republican correctional institutions is unknown. On the one hand, any religious propaganda in Turkmenistan's prisons is being harshly suppressed, and on the other hand, there is information about the merger of the criminal element with extremists, and the high level of corruption in the penitentiary system, the incompetence of staff, combined with the lack of proper support from the state only strengthen the position of Islamists in prisons and colonies.

Joint measures of Central Asian countries to counteract radicalization. On April 21, 2000, a treaty between the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Tajikistan on joint actions to combat terrorism and extremism, transnational organized crime and other threats to the security of the Parties was signed in Tashkent. Thus, the beginning of the joint efforts of the Central Asian republics to counter the activities of radical groups was laid. In the same year, the CIS Anti-Terrorism Center (ATC CIS) was established, an interstate body that coordinates the interaction of CIS member states in the fight against international terrorism and other manifestations of extremism. All the countries of Central Asia in 2003 adopted a set of measures aimed at countering the manifestations of

terrorism and extremism, both domestic, carried out by each country independently on its territory, and collective, implemented in the framework of bilateral and multilateral international cooperation. The first group includes measures to improve the conceptual framework and legal framework of the national strategy to counter terrorism and extremism. An important area of the antiterrorist and anti-extremist activities of the states of the region is to improve the system of law enforcement agencies and special services. Collective measures to counter radicalization in Central Asia include international meetings and expert meetings of heads of special services, security agencies and law enforcement agencies of the world, which are attended by delegations from the UN, SCO, CIS and the European Union and other organizations. The agenda of such events raises issues of strengthening the global and regional systems for countering extremism. So, on January 21, 2016 in Bishkek, the State Committee for National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Anti-Terrorism Center of the CIS Member States (CIS ATC) held consultations with law enforcement officials, including criminal-executive. It was decided to develop methodological recommendations aimed at reducing the spread of religious extremist ideology and counteracting recruitment activities in correctional institutions in the CIS countries.

7. Conclusion

It should be noted that recently the problems of countering various manifestations of extremism have become very relevant, which is confirmed by the significant popularity of a number of scientific studies on this subject, both by domestic authors and foreign scientists. The manifestations of extremism in the penitentiary environment, as well as the spread of radical ideologies among prisoners, require the adoption of adequate and, most importantly, effective comprehensive organizational and legal, ideological and counter-propaganda, psychological and pedagogical measures to prevent them. Indoctrination of new subjects of extremist activity in prison institutions in Central Asia (albeit with some delay) is carried out in a number of areas: outreach to prisoners; the Institute of prison chaplaincy is involved; introduced a system of social mobility; provides psychological and material support to the prisoners, embarked on the road to reform; improving law enforcement agencies' and special services, the legal framework of national strategies for countering terrorism and extremism; etc. a Special role is given to collective measures to counter the radicalization of prisoners in the countries of Central Asia: expert meetings and international conferences; exchange of experience de-radicalization of prisoners; the strengthening of regional systems of counteraction to extremism; development of methodological recommendations aimed at reducing the spread of religious and extremist ideology and countering recruitment activities in correctional institutions in the CIS countries.

Knowledge of the typical causes and conditions for the spread of radical ideology in penitentiary institutions is important first of all for the development of necessary preventive measures, and can help prevent the Commission of criminal forms of extremism. The theoretical significance of the results of the study is: 1) to determine the conditions and factors of radicalization of prisoners in prisons in Central Asia; 2) to form effective measures for deradicalization of prisons. The main provisions and results of the study were discussed at all-Russian and international scientific and practical conferences on countering extremism and terrorism. A number of recommendations and suggestions have been implemented in the activities of Russian penitentiary institutions.

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