

ISCKMC 2022**International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****CURRENT TRENDS OF EXTREMISM IN RUSSIA**

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Abstract

The article presents research results on the current trends of extremism in Russia over the period from 2017 to 2021. It is noted that extremism is one of the most challenging issues confronting not only modern Russian society, but also almost the whole world, arising primarily from the diversity of its manifestations. Countering extremism is one of the priority tasks that the absolute majority of countries in the world have to solve, both at the national and interstate levels, in order to ensure state and public security. Despite the increasing joint efforts in countering extremism, the following main trends are relevant: since 2020, there has been an increase in extremist crimes, the structure of which is dominated by such offenses as public appeals to extremist activity, organizing activities of an extremist organization, incitement of hatred or hostility, as well as abasement of human dignity; an increase in the scale of destructive impact of extremist organizations on minors; widespread use of information and telecommunication networks, including the Internet, to legalize (launder) money, spread the ideology of violence, distort history, revive and justify the ideas of Nazism and fascism, dilute traditional spiritual and moral values, engage in the activities of extremist organizations; spread radicalism in the sports sector; cultivation of criminal subculture and other. New forms of extremism – cyber-extremism, environmental extremism, bio-extremism and others should also be taken into account. The identified trends of extremism suggest that its consequences are manifested in all spheres of society – political, economic and social.

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1. Introduction

In the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation (The Decree of the President of the Russian Federation "On the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation" dated July 2, 2021 No. 400), it is noted that current increase in extremism manifestations has destabilizing effects on the socio-political situation. Prevention and suppression of extremist activities by organizations and individuals, prevention of extremist criminal manifestations, especially among minors and young people, are among the tasks, the implementation of which will ensure state and public security.

According to paragraph 15 of the Strategy for Countering Extremism in the Russian Federation until 2025 (Approved by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated 28.11.2014, Pr-2753), terrorism is the most dangerous form of extremism in modern socio-political conditions. The threat of terrorism will continue to exist so long as there are sources and channels for the spread of extremist ideology.

The globalization of information processes has led to the emergence of new forms of terrorism and extremism – cyber-terrorism and cyber-extremism. The results of criminological research allow stating that modern terrorist and extremist organizations actively use the latest achievements of science and technology in the field of computer and information technologies, radio electronics, genetic engineering, immunology when conducting illegal actions; they use the most advanced methods of financing their activities. In this regard, criminological information on extremism trends is essential for the purposeful and timely organization and implementation of measures aimed at preventing, suppressing, detecting and investigating extremist and terrorist crimes, minimizing and (or) eliminating their consequences.

2. Problem Statement

In 2021, the number of reported extremist crimes continued to increase markedly by 26.9 % (total – 1,057) (table 01).

Table 1. Extremist crimes trends in the Russian Federation for 2017–2021

Indicators	Years				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Extremist crimes	1 521	1 265	585	833	1 057
Increase / decrease, %	4.9	–16,8	–53,8	42.4	26.9

Information and telecommunication networks, including the Internet, have become the main means of communication for extremist organizations, which they use to attract new members to their ranks, organize the commission of extremist crimes and spread extremist ideology. More than half (62.5 %; total – 661) of extremist crimes were committed using the Internet. This number is increasing annually – by 39.7 % in 2021.

The trend towards increased number of reported extremist crimes is influenced by:

- prevalence of radical views among certain population groups;
- aggravation of external extremist threats related to the support and stimulation by foreign non-governmental organizations of destructive activities aimed at destabilizing the socio-political

and socio-economic situation in Russia, violation of its unity and territorial integrity and destruction of traditional Russian spiritual and moral values;

- ongoing activities of international extremist and terrorist organizations to spread extremist ideology and radicalism in society;
- attempts by nationalist, radical public, religious, ethnic and other organizations and associations, individuals to engage in extremist and other illegal activities, as well as the formation of closed ethnic and religious enclaves of Russian citizens and foreigners residing in the country;
- permanent cross-national (interethnic) and territorial contradictions and conflicts in certain regions of the Russian Federation due to their historical and socio-economic features;
- frequent facts of deliberate distortion of history, the rehabilitation, and justification of the ideas of Nazism and fascism;
- dissemination of deliberately false information concerning the real state of affairs in countering coronavirus infection (Davies et al., 2021; Mishchenko et al., 2020).

The structure of extremist crimes includes such offenses as public appeals to extremist activity (art. 280 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) (486; 45.98 %), organization of the activities of an extremist organization (art. 282.2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) (278; 26.30 %), incitement of hatred or hostility, as well as abasement of human dignity (art. 282 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) (86; 8.14 %), organizing an extremist community (art. 282.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) (36; 3.41 %), financing of extremist activities (art. 282.3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) (23; 2.18 %), mass riots (art. 212 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) (17; 1.61 %) and others (131; 12.39 %) (figure 01).

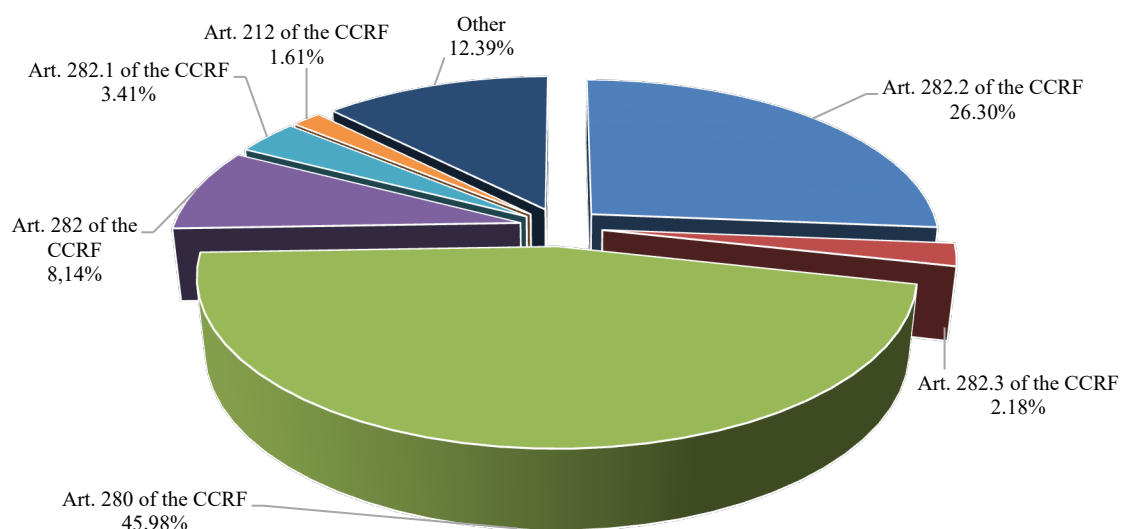


Figure 1. Structure of extremist crimes in the Russian Federation in 2021

The number of mass riots (from 2 to 17), incitement of hatred or hostility, as well as abasement of human dignity (+36.5 %), public appeals to extremist activity (+32.4 %) and organizing an extremist

community (from 21 to 36), considered as the most dangerous manifestations of extremism, has increased markedly.

Another dangerous manifestation of extremism is destructive activity carried out in relation to minors (Foret & Markoviti, 2020; Gielen, 2017). The scale of the problem highlights several dimensions of such activity: football fan extremist movements; "death groups" focused on suicidal ideation; school shooting (the use of firearms on the territory of educational institutions, often escalating into mass killings); cultivation of criminal subculture; totalitarian and occult religious associations and organizations (sects) as well as various international terrorist organizations (Polshikov & Latyshev, 2020); religious associations violating rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of families and children, widely using cross-border and transnational connections, the global potential of the Internet for involvement in criminal activities (Fernandez et al, 2018; Osipenko & Soloviev, 2019). The increase in extremist content on the Internet during the COVID-19 pandemic should also be noted (Davies et al., 2021).

According to the authors, the number of extremist crimes is expected to increase in the short term. Such development of the situation is indicated by:

- prevalence of the opinion on the acceptability of violent actions;
- spread of extremist ideology propaganda;
- the involvement of various population groups, including minors, to participate in uncoordinated public events, including protest actions, which are deliberately transformed into mass riots, as one of the main ways to destabilize the socio-political and socio-economic situation in the country;
- persistent hotbeds of extremist and terrorist manifestations (in the regions of the Middle East and North Africa), contributing to the intensification of migration flows, and in turn the arrival of members of international extremist and terrorist organizations spreading their ideology, including among migrant workers, on the territory of Russia;
- destructive activities of foreign organizations and Russian associations under their control, disguised as humanitarian, educational, cultural, national, and religious projects, aimed at inspiring protest activity of the population using socio-economic, environmental, and sanitary-epidemiological factors.

The most dangerous form of modern extremism is terrorism based on extremist ideology (Goertz & Streitparth, 2019; Posick & Rocque, 2019; Sarkisyan et al., 2021).

In 2021, the number of reported terrorist crime decreased by 8.8 % (total – 2,136) (table 02).

Table 2. Terrorist crimes trends in the Russian Federation for 2017-2021

Indicators	Years				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Terrorist crimes	1 871	1 679	1 806	2 342	2 136
Increase / decrease, %	-16,0	-10,3	7.6	29.7	-8,8

The decrease in the number of terrorist crimes was due to the measures under the Strategy for countering extremism in the Russian Federation until 2025 implemented by the internal affairs bodies.

The structure of terrorist crimes includes the organization of an illegal armed formation or participation in it (art. 208 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) (437; 20.6 %); arranging the activities of a terrorist organization and participation in these activities (art. 2055 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) (486; 22.75 %); assistance to terrorist activities (Article 2051 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) (437 20.46 %); public calls to the performance of terrorist acts or public justification of terrorism (Article 2052 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) (393; 18.40 %); failure to report a crime (Article 2056 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) (124; 5.81 %); training in order to carry out terrorist activities (Article 2053 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) (112; 5.24 %); terrorist act (Article 205 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) (41; 1.92 %); organization of a terrorist community and participation in it (Article 2054 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) (36; 1.69 %) and others (70; 3.28 %) (figure 02).

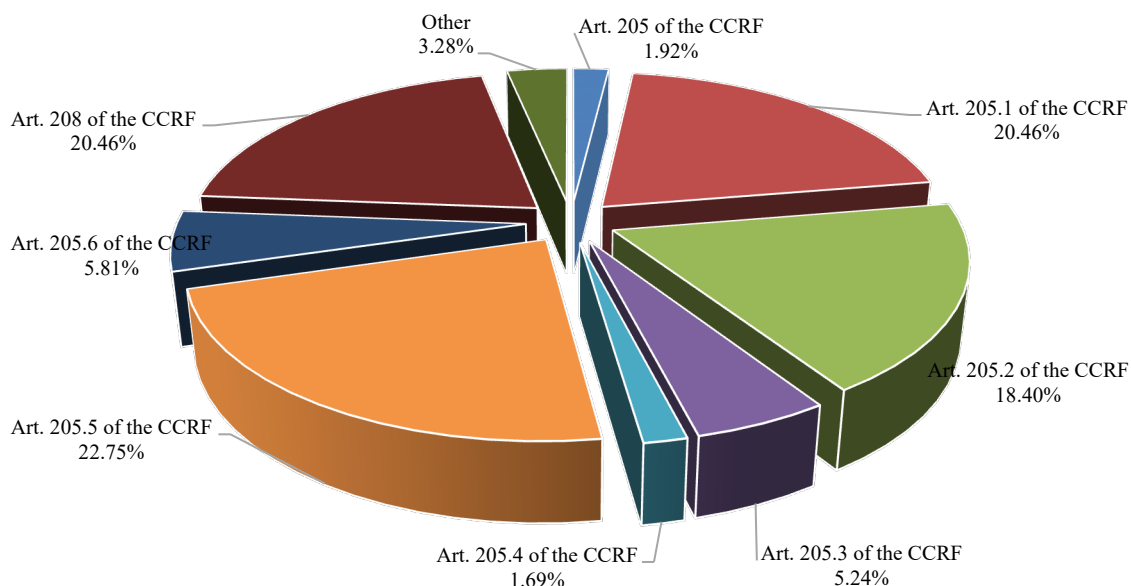


Figure 2. Structure of terrorist crimes in the Russian Federation in 2021

The number of terrorist acts (–18.0 %), arranging the activities of a terrorist organization and participation in these activities (–28.9 %) and the organization of an illegal armed formation or participation in it (–33.4 %) has significantly decreased.

A decrease in the number of terrorist crimes is predicted in the short term. However, the threat of terrorism will continue to exist as manifestations of aggressive nationalism, xenophobia, and extremism are growing in the current socio-political conditions.

3. Research Questions

The subject of the article is the current trends of extremism as a negative social, systemic phenomenon and its most dangerous manifestation – terrorism, including quantitative and qualitative indicators of extremist and terrorist crimes for the period from 2017 to 2021.

The identification and study of current trends of extremism highlights the priority areas in countering extremist activities and forecasts extremist and terrorist crimes in the short term.

The study of quantitative indicators of extremist and terrorist crimes involves measuring their volume (state), determining the dynamics; qualitative indicators – understanding their socially dangerous nature and structure, which contributes to the expansion of criminological knowledge field.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to assess the state of extremist and terrorist crimes and identify current trends of extremism based on the analysis of official statistical data of the Federal State Institution "Main Information and Analysis Center of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russian Federation" (information on the state of crime and the results of crime investigation for the period from 2017 to 2021), judicial materials, fundamental provisions of domestic criminology.

5. Research Methods

The research is based on the general scientific dialectical method of cognition. In addition, a set of research methods approved in criminological science was used, such as: analysis, synthesis, deduction, induction, system-structural (when studying the volume of extremist and terrorist crimes and identifying their trends), statistical (when studying statistical data characterizing the number of reported extremist and terrorist crimes), formal-logical (in identifying the main trends of extremism and criminological forecasting), differentiation, integration, etc., which allowed the team of authors to achieve the goal.

6. Findings

The results of the study allow us to state the following.

Extremism in all its manifestations, despite the activities aimed at identifying and addressing its causes, as well as preventing, suppressing, uncovering and investigating extremist and terrorist crimes, minimizing and (or) eliminating their consequences, is considered as one of the serious threats to peace and security, both at the national and international levels.

Modern trends of extremism, qualitative and quantitative characteristics of extremist and terrorist crimes do not allow any state in the world to abstract from interstate interaction, require a rethinking of common views on the basic principles and vectors of cooperation development, improving coordination of joint actions, identifying priority areas, developing innovative forms and mechanisms for the joint engagement development.

International cooperation should include not only the formation of an effective legal framework, but also the practical implementation of relevant legal provisions. Due to the diversity of extremism, it is advisable to intensify joint comprehensive research projects related to the problems of countering this negative phenomenon of society.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, we note that the effectiveness of actions to counter extremism largely depends on proper scientific support. Improving the effectiveness of ongoing interdepartmental preventive,

operational-search activities and special operations is conditional on improving the application of science-based technologies, methods and technical solutions in the law enforcement. Considering that extremism poses a global security threat to the entire world community, international cooperation should be increased toward preventing this phenomenon. Measures to counter extremism should be constantly improved, have a comprehensive, regular and offensive character. These must be developed with regard to the current trends of the phenomenon under study, national interests and strategic national priorities of the Russian Federation.

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