

## On the Criminogenic Situation in Russia and Its Significance to the Security of Citizens

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**Abstract:** the article examines certain issues of the present-day criminogenic situation in Russia and its significance to the security of citizens through an analysis of official statistics, scientific and the author's proposed methods. The author points out a direct link between the criminogenic situation in the RF and criminological security. The author also points out the insufficiency and low efficacy of measures taken by the government and society, which reveals the need of a comprehensive and systemic approach to neutralizing criminogenic factors to ensure public and personal security.

**Key words:** Issues • Present-day • Criminogenic situation • Russia • Security of citizens • Analysis • Official statistics • Approaches

### INTRODUCTION

As we know, reforms in the political and socio-economic spheres implemented in the Russian Federation (hereinafter "Russia", "the RF") starting from the 90s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century led to the development of new market relations, which envisaged de-monopolizing state ownership and embracing the multiplicity of forms of ownership, freedom of entrepreneurship and any other economic activity. This said, the process turned out to be complicated and economically unstable and entailed negative consequences in the socio-economic area, as well as a considerable increase in both the rate of regular crime and that of new types of crime.

For comparison, if as of 1990 year-end there were 1839451 crimes recorded in the RSFSR (the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic within the Soviet Union), in (new) Russia there were 2173074 crimes recorded as of 1991 year-end, 2755669 – in 1995, 3001748 – in 1999 and 2952367 crimes – in 2000 [1, p. 158]. The last crime rate indicators had been holding up over the first five years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as well. This period saw increases for not only the absolute indicators but the crime coefficients (for instance, if in 1986-1990 there were 983 registered crimes per 100 thousand people, in 1991-1995 there were 1770 and in 1996-2000 – 1854 crimes registered), the share of grave and especially grave crimes (for instance, in 1997, the

share of such crimes was 59,3%; in 1999 – 61,5%, etc.) [1, p. 183] and other crime rate indicators. Concurrently, the structure of crime changed, where regular, street, crime was replaced with organized crime, corruption in institutions of authority, drugs and weapons trade, ordered assassinations, terrorism and its other manifestations.

All this indicates there were substantial problems in ensuring public security and law and order in Russia at that time.

Based on the above, the following issues come into the spotlight: what the criminogenic situation is in Russia at present; what the criminological characteristics of crime are, including specific types of crimes; what the state of citizens' security is in Russia.

Although there are numerous publications dedicated to the analysis of the criminogenic situation in Russia and its regions, the criminological characteristics of crime and its certain types and security, including criminological, among which of major interest are the studies by I.V. Aikalo [2], V.N. Zhadan [3],[4], Y.B. Ditsevich [5], I.V. Dyomin [6] and O.A. Kolotkina [7], this by no means prevents us from continuing to study these live issues. Therefore, the subject of our study will revolve around certain issues and indicators which characterize the present-day criminogenic situation in Russia over the last several years and its significance to the security of the country's citizens.

Each state, region, city/town, or even settlement is characterized by not only natural-climatic, socio-economic, etc. indicators, but not in the least the state of public security and law and order. So how is life for Russian citizens and visiting foreigners in regions, cities/towns and other settlements, what is the criminogenic situation in them, is the government taking the right measures to ensure their security?

At the present stage of the RF's development, its citizens, just like the global community at large, are most acutely faced with issues of governance, ecology, proliferation of crime in the form of terrorism and extremism, religious radicalism and nationalism, outrage and violence on the grounds of inter-ethnic, cross-national and inter-confessional enmity (for instance, the mass unrest on ethnic grounds in August-September 2006 in the Karelian town of Kondopog; the explosions at the *Eurasia* market in August 2007, the explosions at Moscow's *Domodedovo* airport in January 2011, etc.), as well as the growing migration of people from other countries.

There is no doubt that the government is trying to regulate interpersonal relations by creating regulations and statutes (administrative, criminal, etc.), rules of conduct and regulations which envisage corresponding forms of and measures for liability for violating the norms of conduct in society.

Before we get to the analysis of the present-day situation in Russia, we should define some of the terms we're going to be using in this paper.

A legal dictionary defines the criminogenic situation as a situation characterized by the incidence of criminal acts, which begets crimes and facilitates the augmentation of the crime rate [8]. In this regard, certain Western studies use the terms "criminal situation"[9], "crime situation"[10]. Furthermore, all of these studies construe the criminogenic situation as an aggregate of factors facilitating the preservation or augmentation of the crime rate (specific forms or types of it) in a specific territory [8] and criminological research implies describing the attributes, patterns and consequences of crime (specific forms or types of it), as well as the attributes of the criminal's personality (a specific type of it) [8]. Certain Western studies lay major emphasis upon the situational factor as a constitutive element of the criminogenic situation [11]. Western studies consider the criminogenic situation as a factor that forms criminal behavior [12]. Of interest is also the term "security" – it implies a state of the vital interests of individuals, society and the state being protected from potential or actually existing threats and perils [13].

It is commonly recognized that criminological characteristics of the crime rate include the indicators of state, dynamics, share, structure and others, which we'll be using in characterizing the present-day criminogenic situation in Russia.

Thus, there were 2302,2 thousand crimes registered in Russia as of 2012 year-end, which is 4,3% less than as of the previous year-end (hereinafter "PYE"), while the share of grave and especially grave crimes in the total number of crimes registered was 24,8% [14]. There were 2404,8 thousand crimes registered as of 2011 year-end, which is 8,5% less than as of the PYE, with the share of grave and especially grave crimes being 25,3% [15]. There were 2628,8 thousand crimes registered as of 2010 year-end, which is 12,2% less than as of the PYE, the share of grave and especially grave being 26,0% [16]. The year 2009 saw 2994,8 thousand crimes registered, which is 6,7% less than as of the PYE, the share of grave and especially grave crimes being 26,6% [17]. At the same time, there were 3209,9 thousand crimes registered as of 2008 year-end, which is 10,4% less than as of the PYE, the share of grave and especially grave crimes being 26,5% [18].

This information reveals that there were 907,7 thousand fewer crimes registered as of 2012 year-end compared with 2008. Note that there is a decrease in the number of crimes registered both overall and that of grave and especially grave crimes, as well as in their share. These figures in now way mitigate the social dangers of crime and their impact on public security, law and order and Russia's socio-economic development.

It should be noted that there is a decrease in the number of crimes registered for certain types of crime as of 2012 year-end [14]: 1) 38,7 thousand people, (-3,45%) compared to the PYE, died as a result of criminal encroachments; 2) 48,7%, which is nearly half of all the crimes registered, is constituted by the crimes of theft of another's property perpetrated by way of: theft – 992,2 thousand (-4,5%), larceny – 110,1 thousand (-13,9%), robbery – 18,6 thousand (-7,3%), compared with the PYE; 3) there were 26,5 thousand crimes associated with illicit arms trafficking, which is 5,9% less than as of the PYE; 4) there were 1,4 thousand cases of theft and extortion of arms, ammunition, explosive materials and explosion devices, which is 7,6% less than as of the PYE; 5) there were 27,58 thousand ecological, which is 5,4% less than as of the PYE; 6) there were 173 thousand economic crimes, which is 14,6% less than as of the PYE, while the share of these crimes was 7,5%, etc.

Let's also analyze the structure of crime, which exhibits an increase in the number of crimes registered as of 2012 year-end [14]: 1) as a result of criminal

encroachments, grave damage was inflicted on the health of 50,6 thousand people (+2,4%); 2) there were 219 thousand crimes related to illicit drug trafficking, which is 1,7% more than as of the PYE; 3) there were 637 (+2,4%) crimes related to terrorism and 696 (+11,9%) crimes related to extremism; 4) there were 714 thousand (+12,4%) crimes committed in public places; more specifically, there were 466,1 thousand (+13,0%) crimes committed in streets, squares, parks and public gardens, including 210,2 thousand (+20,6%) thefts, 7,6 thousand (+1,8%) robberies; 5) there were 110 (+46,7%) cases of illicit acquisition, transfer, sale, possession, transportation and carry of arms, ammunition, explosive materials and explosion devices; 7) there were 17,3 thousand (+2,4%) grave and especially grave crimes committed by organized groups and criminal societies, with their share increasing from 5,2% in 2011 to 5,7%, etc.

One of the crucial indicators of the efficiency of work done by law-enforcement agencies is the rate of solving crimes.

As of 2012 year-end [14], 1252,8 thousand (-4,5%) crimes were solved, while 1014,7 thousand crimes were not, which is 6,1% less than as of the PYE. At the same time, the share of grave and especially grave crimes in the total number of unsolved crimes was 24,2% (in 2011 – 24,8%). Thus, 1,8 thousand (-14,8%) murders and attempted murders remained unsolved, as did 5,2 thousand (-13,5%) cases of deliberate infliction of grave damage on someone's health, 615,8 thousand (-6,0%) thefts, 56 thousand (-18,1%) larcenies, 6,3 thousand (-13,1%) robberies. These findings are, no doubt, not quite optimistic and indicate the need for radically improving the work of law-enforcement agencies.

The criminogenic situation in Russia includes other indicators – the state, dynamics, structure, etc., of crimes, data on individuals who committed them and other information that requires to be studied independently.

On the strength of the above criminological indicators, we can conclude that crime in Russia has a negative impact on the state of all the spheres of people's activity, that of society and the state, as well as negatively affects Russia's socio-economic development and tells on its international standing. Note that the international community, first of all in the West, is worried about the criminogenic situation with reference to organized crime and corruption, which is considered by many Western researchers as menacing [19].

And here we come across a well-founded question: what is the reason, despite all the efforts by the country's law-enforcement agencies, behind the fact that crime not

only doesn't yield to government control, but, on the contrary, poses a real threat to citizens and the country's national security at large?

The science of criminology offers a number of foundational approaches to exploring, predicting and forestalling crime, which for many decades of the Soviet period were employed by law-enforcement agencies and gradually turned from commonly used into hackneyed, having lost their flexibility, capacity for self-evolution and getting streamlined, ability to provide an accurate and timely answer to new challenges thrown by modern criminals. Therefore, we concur with the scientific stance in that the conceptual basics of combating crime have in many aspects become outmoded and lost their efficacy. In some cases, we need them to be corrected, while in others – to be entirely replaced.

This paper doesn't seek to have new methods for preventing and forestalling crime worked out, but rather call our attention to the immediate link between the criminogenic situation in Russia and the security of its citizens and foreigners visiting the country.

As everyone knows, security is crucial to the existence of man, along with one's need of food, water, clothing, shelter, etc. At the same time, we should note that the other component of public security is criminological security, which belongs to the crucial values the guarding and protection whereof is guaranteed by the RF Constitution.

Without going into scientific discussion on the notion of criminological security, we'll use a scientific approach. The author concurs with the scientific stance of V.A. Pleshakov who believes that "criminological" security is an objective state of vital and other substantial interests of individuals, society and the state being protected from criminal encroachments and threats of such encroachments, which are generated by various criminogenic factors (phenomena and processes), as well as one's awareness of being protected in such a way" [20, p. 31].

Based on the criminological indicators, Russia's law-enforcement agencies have achieved little in trying to bring the criminogenic situation in the country, which we've examined above, under control and come up with an effective mechanism for government control. Therefore, we concur with the scientific stance in that the political and economic transformations effected in Russia at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century entailed negative consequences from the socio-economic and psychological standpoint and for the state of individuals, society and the state, which resulted in the absence of the ideology of counteracting crime itself.

We also believe it should be noted that when it comes to the state of criminological security one has to address the issue of how criminological security is ensured, that is a set of government and public measures aimed at neutralizing negative factors, which would make living conditions for the population more secure, help reduce the scale of damage from criminal encroachments, mitigate the criminal impact on the economy, etc.

In conclusion, it should be noted that society, the state and man, with all his social relations, are a single, indissoluble, entity. Therefore, when talking of the significance of security to Russia's citizens and foreigners, we should consider it "as an indispensable property of any system, which is reflected in such system attributes as integrity, relative self-reliance and sustainability. Losing one of these attributes will ultimately lead to the system's demise" [21, p. 28].

We believe that our analysis of specific indicators for the criminological characteristics of registered crimes will enable us to have a better focus on the present-day criminogenic situation in Russia. We'd also like to point out that despite positive trends in combating crime over the last few years, the latter remains a complicated issue and requires a consistent and effective effort on the part of all law-enforcement agencies, state and public control bodies, for each Russian citizen and visiting foreigner to feel secure irrespective of the place and time of their stay.

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