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# The Main Directions of Improving the Effectiveness of Countering the Ideology and Practice of Extremism and Terrorism

## ABSTRACT

Level of extremism in Russia is increasing steadily. One of the main reasons why is in the condition of value and regulatory vacuum (anomie) which is related to overcoming crisis developments by the society. The report states a set of core actions as a part of improvement of anti-extremist activity, including, careful definition of targeted audience for carrying out works on prevention extremism, development more effective methods of operational investigations, high-quality re-organization of work in the Internet, enhanced staff training and etc.

**Key words:** *extremism, anomie, anti-extremist activity, targeted audience of anti-extremist activity.*

Undoubtedly this problem is important today and it arose long before November 2014, when on the meeting of the Security Council of the Russian Federation the preliminary strategy for countering extremism has been discussed. Beginning from 2009 in Russia is recording a steady growth of crimes of extremist nature, which amounts to 20 % annually. In 2013, according to Timur Valiulin, the Head of the Department for Countering Extremism of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, the number of recorded crimes of extremism nature has been by one third more than a year ago. And the number of persons who committed such crimes increased approximately by as many.

It appears that the basic growth driver of extremist moods in post-Soviet Russia is so-called anomie described by E. Durkheim, a condition of value and regulatory vacuum, typical for transition and crisis periods and states of the society, when old standards and values become inoperative, but a new one are not set yet.

Young population is in particular subject to anomie; this may be due, on one hand, to absence of formed perceptions about standards of public morals, and, on the other hand, due to impossibility to create these standards because of absence of their appraisal criteria recognized by the society. It is not by chance that the President of Russia among directions for countering extremism marked out youth outreach as the key element of the system, because: “especially among young people leaders of extremist organizations are trying to recruit their members, conduct propaganda, first of all, via the world Internet”.

There is no telling that little attention is giving to the problem of countering extremism. Regularly from the upper tiers we can hear politically balanced, absolutely correct and necessary words, but ... as soon as the formal part comes to end and behind-the-scenes conversations start, one and the same phrases are sounding: “the approach should be changes”, “principles should be changed”, “it is necessary to get talking to people”, “it is necessary to be based upon civil society”, “another methods should be used for working in the Internet”, “it is necessary to make use of bloggers’ assistance” ... And every time there about one and a half dozens of these “it is necessary” and “should be”, but everything ends in talks and this remains constant.

What should be done as a matter of priority for to improve anti-extremist activities?

**Talking point 1.** It is necessary to define the targeted audience and methods of dealing with it.

When forming a generalized character of extremist basing on reports and information statements of law enforcement agencies, executed criminal cases files and publications in mass media, it is arguable that the present-day extremist, for the most part, is a young person at the age from 14 to 30 years old, mainly, male, activity status – either any general education school leaver who failed to enter any higher educational institution, or a student of first courses of higher education institution. As regards temper, this is a person with deformed system of moral and legal values, sure of force dictation efficiency who is in need of self-affirmation.

Whether our anti-extremist policy is reaching the specified environment? It is very doubtful, as, if the best happened, we are dealing with young people organized in schools or higher education institutions. But it’s easy to work with warm and fuzzy: these young people are oriented on career, they are paying for education and it is unlikely that they will risk their investments. But how to approach to young men and girls from among “street and entrance hall” youth who has got no formed stable value system, has a low level of legal understanding; there is an impression that neither police, nor the society do not know what is generating their opinion that nobody needs them, and they are easily responding to the calls of extremists calling to settle any challenging social problems by means violence.

This targeted audience should become of top-priority in ideological struggle; however, the arguments which are quite natural to consequent opponents of extremism are non-effective. It is much simpler to talk about harm of terror to those who already sure in it and it is much more difficult to deal with more difficult, unruly and contradictory audience.

**Talking point 2.** It is not necessary to protect what should not be protected.

In their agitation extremists from the Bolotnaya Square are actively refer to the facts of corruption of officials of senior level, holding themselves out as alternative to “the rotten system of power”.

For this reason it is counterproductively to protect high-ranking thieves; it is necessary severely guarantee the principle of unavoidability of punishment filling it up with obligatory adequacy of this punishment. That particular the society failed to see the sadly-remembered case of Serdyukov, Vasiljeva and others. As a positive example we can mention a set of measures executed in this year by bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and aimed to elimination of corrupted generals and officers the main anti-corruption office - Department of countering economic crimes.

**Talking point 3.** It is necessary to analyze constantly efficiency of the carried-out anti-extremist actions as plurality should not be posited without necessity.

So, according to National anti-terrorist committee during a year and a half within the frameworks of educational work with young people in territorial entities of the Russian Federation holding of more than 1,5 thousand conferences, forums, festivals, competitions and exhibitions, and about 20 thousand actions on anti-terrorist themes, have been organized. Without doubt it was major efforts and useful work. But a number of natural questions arise: 1500 conferences and 20 000 actions – is it much or a little? What was the practical output from all contributed efforts and assets, as, according to statistics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs no considerable reduction of extremism level in the country have been noted? At the date there are no answers to these questions.

Ideological opposition to extremism is a comprehensive and challenging problem, and none of the countries achieved success in this sphere.

However to prevent appearance “extremism in mode”, to take its gloss off for normal young people who are looking for their track of life, to forbid it to expanse – this is a task in hand.

**Talking point 4.** The police which is a head body in countering extremism should generate effective operational search practices of countering this dangerous phenomenon.

In relationship between marginal young people and the police the emphasis on force methods of repression of protests among young people is traced. But these methods, inevitably, result in further radicalization of young population. It is quite natural, as there is an impact on the result of phenomenon, but not on its reason. Russian history strongly indicates that the similar approach can provoke into transition from extremist methods to terrorist one. For to deny such progression of events, it is necessary to work for anticipation, to develop technologies of human-intelligence prevention of extremism on the basis of deterrence of young people from realization the extremist intentions, reorientation of radical youth to other values, self-decomposition of extremist communities, elimination of any circumstances producing extremism in the youth environment.

**Talking point 5.** It is necessary to develop and to exercise a package of measures aimed on restriction the flood of information on violence falling on the population, and first of all on young people, from screens of TVs, cinemas, monitors of computers.

When informing the population about demonstrations of extremism and terrorism it is necessary to take into consideration a targeted audience, forms of data submission and the argumentation level. Against the shift of values and morals deformation the massed submission of criminal data operates in contra. This day for a certain part of young people extremism and terrorism turned to be a trend, a style, and involving them in extremist and terrorist organizations all over the world. Social problems against active promotion of violence are pushing young people to a radical change of their way of life. From the law-abiding person a young man turns into a furious animal revenging to everything and to everybody. In order to make sure it is necessary to remember recent events in Ukraine. A special feature of this phenomenon is increasing the degree of cynicism and cruelty, violation of all moral and human installations. A regular demonstration of mass theatric executions on one hand, and participation in these executions representatives of European countries and America, are not only injury mentality of people, but also generate unhealthy interest among certain part of young people and that results in increased influx of young people in extremist and terrorist structures.

It seems that the number of plots and publications on extremist and terrorist topics exceeded a certain “critical limit”, and certain domestic mass media lost not only sense of “political correctness” but also a common sense “in nature” illustrating manifestations of extremism and terrorism. Plots and comments of this sort are filling the air, pages of newspapers and magazines, Internet resources, facilitating to extremists to settle their main object to bring their ideological attitudes to the society and to frighten population.

The most surprising that their contribution to formation such situation makes those who more than others should be interested in prevention and minimization consequences of manifestation extremism and terrorism. First of all, these are press services of law enforcement agencies whose outreach impress on the society that criminality is an ordinary newsworthy occurrence.

It is necessary to restrict the flow of information relating to criminal manifestations. This is not about censorship. For demonstration such items special reports and programs can be used, as well as departmental sites of law enforcement agencies devoted to review of criminal news. Those who are interested in such problems will be able to familiarize themselves with such news and their constitutional law to obtain information will not be restrained. At the same time criminal information will not be obtruded along with the wrap-up on young people and persons far removed from criminal topics.

**Talking point 6.** It is necessary to reconstruct work in the Internet in a quality manner.

In the Countering extremism policy in Russia until 2025 the Internet has been specified as the main channel of its distribution.

The present day the number of those who go online in Russia at least one time a day is more than 52 million persons. Social networking services and blogosphere which turned to be universal modes of communication, for a long time are objects of regard of various extremist groups.

Methods of information influence which using enlists and disseminators of extremist ideas are not new: juggling with facts, using lack of education or unfamiliarity with certain items, manipulation with tendentiously selected news and flights of eloquence.

Total controlling over the Internet is expensively and politically unnecessary, and the President of Russia on repeated occasions told about it. Therefore the coordinated actions of power and the society should hinder diffusion of extremist ideology.

It seems that so called “doubting audience” should be the main object of influence; it should be held on the side of law, but in reasoned form consequences of its violation should be explained to them.

For the purpose of effective counteraction to distribution of the content containing any illegal information, it is necessary to improve the mechanism of interaction between the society and the power.

**Talking point 7.** Training of personnel qualifies for realization the anti-extremist technologies.

For to talk round any young but already formed extremist, no superficial understanding of the problem will be sufficient; there should be intentionally trained staff possessing system knowledge. As practice shows not only to any junior policeman of “E” center, but his senior partners not always able to understand essence of extremism, its moral and legal aspects, to carry out well founded discussion and in the course of it to change the hardened beliefs of the person who got used to settle any deep social and political problems by means of violence. As regards to the staff of local authorities and the staff of public authorities of territorial entities s of the Russian Federation, the situation is even worse. So, it is necessary based on assistance of higher school to ensure a target training of specialists on countering extremism.