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Organization of psychological support on releasing hostages in cases of terrorist acts.

The structure and methods of work of Ministry of Internal Affairs psychological service during the counter-terrorist operations are analysed in the article. The authors designate the service's aims, tasks, functions, and mutual relations with other organizations and departments, who take part in the emergency consequences elimination.

Psychological methods of work of the service are demonstrated with the examples of elimination of tragic events consequences in 2004: explosion in Moscow Metro (February and August), capture of airliners (August), and terrorist act in Beslan (September). The work of psychological service of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Chechen Republic is worthy to be praised.

The authors offer some methods for increasing the effectiveness of the system of psychological support of activity on prevention and liquidation of the terrorist acts consequences in the Russian Federation.

Keywords: *terrorism, psychological support, psychological service of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, counter-terrorist operations, Beslan.*

The federal statute # 130 of 25th of July 1998 "On the struggle against terrorism" has defined legal and organizational bases of the struggle against terrorism in the Russian Federation, the order of coordination of activity of the federal executive authorities, the executive authorities of subjects of the Russian Federation, public associations and funds that carry out the struggle against terrorism.

It is underlined in the law, that for direct management of the counter-terrorist operation in accordance with the decision of the Government of the Russian Federation, an operational staff, headed by the representative of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation or Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation (depending on what federal executive authority will have more power in carrying out this counter-terrorist operation) is created.

The operational staff that controls the counter-terrorist operations in the subject (region) of the Russian Federation is headed by the chief of territorial body of the department that will have predominant power in carrying out the concrete counter-terrorist operation.

For the counter-terrorist operation realization, the operational staff

involves necessary forces and means of the federal executive authorities, which take part in the struggle against terrorism.

Among the main federal authorities responsible for carrying out the counter-terrorist operation are the following:

- Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation,
- Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation,
- External Reconnaissance Service of the Russian Federation,
- Federal Custodial Service of the Russian Federation,
- Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation,
- Federal Frontier Service of the Russian Federation.

At the same time, the other federal authorities and departments are also subjects of counter-terrorist activity within the range of their competence. The list of such departments is supplementary defined by the Government of the Russian Federation.

All military men, employees, and experts, who are involved in the performance of the counter-terrorist operation, submit to the head of the operational staff. The head of the operational staff takes a decision of use of forces and means involved in carrying out the specified operation. Interference of any other person, irrespective of the position occupied, in a management of counter-terrorist operation is not allowed.

In the area of carrying out the counter-terrorist operation, the special legal regime is entered, which is provided with forces and means mainly belonging to the structure of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Thus, according to the law “On struggle against terrorism”, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia is one of the basic agents participating in the prevention, revealing, and suppression of terrorist acts and playing one of the leading roles in the activity on releasing hostages under conditions of terrorist act.

The word “terror” has a Latin origin and means “horror (fear)”, it has a special psychological notion defining a strongly pronounced emotional state, which arise as reaction for the actions aimed to cause the very state among those, who is the subject of such acts or those, who witnesses it (D.V.Olshansky, 2002).

From this it follows, that terrorism, as a general notion, implies the phenomenon, composed of fear and horror as an aim of certain terrorist acts and actions, the acts and actions themselves, their concrete results, and all spectrum of consequences.

The above-mentioned has predetermined an active participation of the psychological service of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs in the realization of counter-terrorism activity by employees of domestic affairs

authorities, RS (riot squad), and special-purpose police platoon on the territories of the North-Caucasian region. This work has been started in 1995, and since 1999 till present time it proceeds at a new organizational level.

The special Program of medico-psychological support of the employees of internal affairs departments and soldiers of internal forces carrying out duty combat mission on the territory of the North-Caucasian region is developed in the framework of this direction of activity and for the purpose of increasing its efficiency.

The program regulates an order of organization of the psychological selection, the psychological training, support, and conducting the rehabilitation actions among the personnel. In accordance with this program, psychological support of the counter-terrorist operation provides for:

- inspection and estimation of psychic state of the personnel and conducting the psycho-correctional actions,
- study of socio-psychological atmosphere in the personnel and prevention of possible interpersonal and inter-group conflicts,
- consultation for managers and employees,
- participation in maintenance of separate special operations.

Now, several groups of psychologists work with the personnel of the temporary operational forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia on the territory of the North-Caucasian region. For last years only, more than 200 psychologists have been sent to the region, psychologists of territorial authorities of subjects of the Federation were also sent to all temporary departments and composite groups of militia.

Today, the psychological service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Chechen Republic is formed, where psychologists from regions work on a contract basis, as well as trained specialists of Chechen nationality. The number of staff psychologists of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Chechen Republic comes to 21 men.

Psychological rehabilitation centres are equipped and function in temporal grouping elements, in Hankala settlement, in Grozny, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Chechen Republic, and in regional police stations. Trainings, sessions on psychological self-regulation, consultation of managers and employees on sustaining a necessary level of work efficiency are organized on the basis of these centres.

On the territory of Chechen Republic, psychologists render assistance to more than 2 thousand employees every year, study socially-psychological climate in more than 100 elements, develop recommendations on prevention and preventive measures for various

emergencies and conflicts in service collectives.

In the development of this direction of psychological service activity, on the basis of scientific research results and significant experience of working in the state of emergency caused by capture of hostages, explosion of houses, and disaster, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia has elaborated Regulations on organization of the psychological support of the activity of employees of internal affairs department in the state of emergency, including the release of hostages during the acts of terrorism.

These Regulations define the aims, problems, functions and mutual relations between psychological service of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs and organizations and departments participating in the force majeure elimination. The structure of these Regulations includes organizational aspects of psychologists' activity, the program of their special training and material support.

In each subject of the Russian Federation the composite groups of psychological maintenance have been formed and completed with the most trained psychologists of internal affairs department and psychotherapists of preventive treatment establishments.

The size of psychological support crew makes no less than five psychologists, including the medical worker as an indispensable condition. The head of the group of psychologists can belong to the working machinery of the operational staff.

At long and large-scale nature of emergency, in accordance with the decision of the group manager, and in coordination with an operational staff, an additional number of psychologists and experts of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Municipal Department of Internal Affairs, the Department of Internal Affairs of the subjects of the Russian Federation, being in reserve at the place of emergency, and if necessary – the experts of other Ministries of Internal Affairs, the Municipal Department of Internal Affairs, the Department of Internal Affairs of subjects of the Russian Federation, educational institutes of vocational training of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia are recruited.

The main tasks and functions of groups are:

1. In the field of psychological support of the activity of authorities and elements of internal affairs:

- to develop offers on psychological support of the activity of authorities and elements of internal affairs and to represent them to the governing body of an operational staff for the purpose of mass disorders suppression, panic avoidance, and overcoming of aggressive manifestations among the population;

- to fulfil gathering and analysis of the information on sources of

negative information-psychological influence upon the employees and population and to develop offers for the governing body about measures for their neutralization;

- to fulfil psychological consultation for managers of the operational staff and employees carrying out the special operations;

- to participate in meetings with civilians, representatives of the local administration, law machinery and other associated authorities, to study socio-psychological situation, analyse it and predict possible directions of its development;

- to inform an operational staff of revealed offences among citizens and about the persons provoking to mass riots and spreading panic, to offer suggestions on their preventive measures;

- to take part in the organization of the actions on rumours distribution prevention and mass negative psychological reactions occurrence;

- to inform in proper time the police service of public security about any disturbance of the limited access to the places crowded with persons - not the representatives of departments and organizations participating in rendering psychological and medical assistance to victims;

- to take part in the development of strategy and psychological support during negotiations for releasing hostages and at the time of threat of future acts of terrorism.

2. In the field of organization and realization of the psychological, psycho-therapeutic aid to employees:

- to provide a psychological support to the personnel, to define a level of working capacity of employees and to control their functional condition;

- to render psychological, and if necessary psychotherapeutic and rehabilitation aid to employees, to carry out actions focused on maintenance of high psychological stability level, overstrain state correction, and other unfavourable mental states;

- to study operational formation groups in the subdivisions involved in the fulfilment of operational-duty missions and carry out actions focused on maintenance a favorable socio-psychological atmosphere within these groups;

- to consult the managers of services and subdivisions of internal affairs on the organization of work with the personnel and maintenance of employees working capacity.

3. In the field of organization of interaction with psychological and other services of various ministries and departments:

- to cooperate with psychological and other services of various departments in psychological consultation, rendering citizens a

psychological aid in critical situation;

- to render victims a psychological and psychotherapeutic help, detecting persons with invariable behaviour and mental deviations being in critical stressful state, and apply medico-psychological treatment mode to them;

- to study and carry out analysis of socio-psychological processes and phenomena among the population;

- to participate in actions of internal affairs authorities and psychological services of other departments on stabilization of negative socially-psychological signs among the population;

- together with psychologists of other departments, to develop recommendations for civilians on overcoming psychological difficulties and banning unfavourable consequences of being in extremal condition.

4. In the field of cooperation with mass media:

- to carry out cooperation with the service of information and public relations of internal affairs authorities;

- to develop suggestion on interaction between the representatives of internal affairs authorities and mass media;

- to participate in the project development of addresses of representatives of internal affairs authorities and local authorities to the population by means of mass media;

- to analyse the content of mass media publications and broadcasts, to reveal the possible direct and further negative socio-psychological consequences of such publications.

Thus, as the latest years experience of psychological service of internal affairs authorities show, organizational questions of activity of psychologists of such a “power” department as the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, are basically solved.

Therefore, in 2004 psychologists of internal affairs authorities were allowed to take an active part in the elimination of the terrorist acts consequences. In each case, the priority actions on rendering the relatives of victims a psychological aid were organized, as well as a psychological support to employees participating in elimination of the tragic events consequences.

The psychologists worked after explosions in Moscow Metro in February and August of 2004, illegal armed unit attack on the Republic of Ingushetia in June of current year, terrorist acts involving the capture of two air liners that had departed the airport “Domodedovo” in August, 24, 2004, and loss of passengers in the air crashes above Rostov and Tula.

Rendering relatives arriving in the airport “Domodedovo” a psychological aid began at 3 o'clock in August, 24 first by 3 psychologists

of the Moscow Department of Internal Affairs on Water and Air Transport (the chief - Protsenko I.V.). The work was carried out in the temporary centre of rehabilitation and by telephone hot line jointly with an operational staff and psychologists of other departments and organizations.

For rendering a psychological aid to a big number of arrived relatives of the lost passengers, 7 more psychologists of the Moscow central administrative board of internal affairs (the head of psychological service - Levashova T.N.) and central administrative board of internal affairs of Moscow region (the head of psychological service - Zakharova S.I.) were recruited.

In Tula and Rostov regions, at the places of crashes, 2 groups of psychologists consisted of 10 experts (4 psychologists and 1 psychotherapist) worked with relatives of victims and with the employees searching the victims' bodies (head of psychological services of the Internal Affairs Department in Tula region - Skoroletova Z.V., head of the Municipal Department of Internal Affairs in Rostov region - Bykova N.A.).

The most shocking terrorist act of the current year is certainly the capture of high school # 1 in the town Beslan of Republic Northern Osetia-Alania that had terrible consequences.

On the 1st of September, having received an information on hostages capture, the group of psychological support, composed of 9 psychologists of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republic Northern Osetia-Alania, arrived in Beslan (the head of the group - Tuayeva M.V.).

That same day, the necessary information on the mood of civilians, and employees of the internal affairs authorities, cordoning off the area and standing sentinel, was collected.

It was noted, that the employees estimated the situation adequately and were ready to perform the set duty-combat mission. And at the same day, the governing body of the operational personnel assigned the psychologists of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia a task: to organize a coordination of actions of psychological experts from different departments for the purpose of increasing an efficiency of psychological aid to relatives of the hostages.

On the 2nd of September, extra psychologists of Central administrative board of internal affairs of Krasnodar region (5 specialists, the head - Savina S.I.), Central administrative board of internal affairs of Stavropol region (8 specialists, the head - Akinin V.V.), Central administrative board of internal affairs of Rostov region (7 specialists, the head - Bykova N.A.), as well as psychologists of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republic of Northern Osetia-Alania (20 specialists), divided into 3 groups and directed for work with employees and population, were taken

on. On the 2nd of September, the general number of psychologists made up 43 persons (the head - candidate of psychological sciences - Adayev A.I.).

On the 3rd of September, psychologists of the internal affairs authorities took an active part in psychological support of the organization of the hostages releasing: bringing children and victims to cars and sending wounded men to hospitals. The work among employees, adults, kids, and schoolchildren, who had suffered from terrorist act, was organized. That day, according to expert estimations, the significant majority of civilians had:

- stress reactions, shock;
- heightened aggression, fear of an attack, death fear, a state of mental exhaustion;
- disbelief in future, psychosomatic disorders, trauma muscular blocking, sensation of a life time ending, etc.

At the same time, the specialists noted that the employees, who took part in carrying out the operation on setting free the hostages and provided a public order in Beslan, showed:

- a distressing feeling of fault,
- suffer from a professional impropriety,
- insuperable sensation of civilians aggression;
- feeling of isolation.

Within the day and on the 4th of September, more than 100 adults and 50 children of hostages got the psychological support. They were in agitated and stuporous state of psychic shock. The majority of former hostages had the muscular dystrophy, the tremor of extremities, and the fear of enclosed space.

Example. The victim, 34 years old. She was among hostages along with the daughter and experienced a severe shock. Her reaction was characterized by disorder of consciousness, nonsensical and chaotic movements. She did not recognize her relatives, there was no adequate contact, and her speech was incoherent. Any sound and touch strengthened the fear. Using psychotherapeutic methods of influence, specialists treated her for psychic shock, transferring the crisis state into the phase of reaction and processing. The woman was able to recall the consecution of the happening, to know and recognize her husband.

The child of 9 years had been in the captured school along with his grandmother, who had died there. The boy was in stuporous state of catalepsy, did not move, and did not recognize his relatives. His recollection was episodic and incoherent. The child had an aversion of the death of his grandmother, who had brought up the boy. Using the psychotherapeutic methods (the art-therapy, games with plasticine and

soap bubbles), psychologists managed to restore the child's speech and memory; he recognized his mother, father and other relatives.

Besides, at the same time, psychologists of the internal affairs department took an active part in the work with civilians, who attended at meetings on the main square of Vladikavkaz. Work at the meetings was directed on suppression of the emotional outbursts, normalization of the situation using psychological method of observation and influence.

On the 6-13th of September, to promote the work efficiency and to prevent the possible interethnic armed conflict, the complex psychological work was performed among the employees of 13 regional and village police stations and departments that patrolled the border between Republic of Northern Osetia-Alania and Republic of Ingushetia.

More than 1500 employees of Regional Department of Internal Affairs in Prigorodny, Chermensky, Octyabrsky, Sunzhensky, and Maysky regions; battalion of Police Patrol Forces; Pravoberezhny and Kirov RDIA (regional department of Internal affairs), settlements Olginskogo PF (patrol force); Irystonsy RDIA, Industrial, Zatrechny, Northwest municipal districts of Vladikavkaz; divisions of Ministry of Internal Affairs RNO-Alania have taken part in this work.

The regenerative actions, directed on psychological study of impressions, normalization of a condition through discussion of feelings, cognitive organization of the experience by understanding the events, decrease in an individual and group pressure, mobilization of internal and external group resources, and strengthening of group support and solidarity were carried out by the staff. For this purpose, special group trainings on rallying service collectives, removal of emotional intensity, and increase of working capacity were spent; the attitude of employees to tragical events of last days was studied and corrected.

As a result, the certain positive results at the majority of employees of militia and the population, received the psychological help, have been reached; employees, children, and adult population, requiring in the additional psychological help, concerning which the complex of necessary actions has been developed, are revealed.

Psychological work with staff of law-enforcement bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republic Northern Osetia-Alania, Republic of Ingushetia, and the population of these republics, directed on decrease in psychological consequences of act of terrorism, prevention of interethnic conflicts, rendering of the psychological help by the victim, and practical help in the organization of work with the employees, begun on the 1st of September, 2004, after capture of hostages and has been continued from the 6th till the 15th of October, same year.

With this purpose, to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republic of Northern Osetia-Alania and Republic of Ingushetia have been directed two more mobile groups of psychologists of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republic Kabardino-Balkariya (the head - Taumurzaeva R.K.), Central administrative board of internal affairs of the Volgograd area (the head - Baskakov V.T.), as well as employees of Central administrative board of internal affairs of Perm, Moscow, and Chelyabinsk areas, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republic Tatarstan. Twenty-five experts carried out the psychological work (the head - the candidate of psychological sciences Adajev A.I.).

During this period of time, in 40 days after the first victims of act of terrorism, significant number of employees had the condition of chronic overfatigue, the raised level of emotional intensity, and uneasiness; many of them had symptoms of aggravation of chronic diseases.

In the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republic Northern Osetia-Alania psychological work has been continued with employees of riot squad, group of emergency platoon, management of the state inspection of road traffic safety, the Department of Internal Affairs of Pravoberezhny and Prigorodny areas, and village police stations on prevention of interethnic conflicts. In these divisions the special attention was given to the staff, carried out the service on liquidations of negative consequences of the act of terrorism; to the employees, who had received wounds; the persons, who had visited hostages and members of their families.

Similar actions have been lead with the staff of law-enforcement bodies of Republic Ingushetia: with employees of the device of the Ministry, emergency platoons, militia special function detachments, management of the state inspection of road traffic safety, a shelf patrol-sentry duty, Nazran MDIA (municipal department of internal affairs), Nazran DIA (department of internal affairs), and Karabulak and Sunzha RDIA. Simultaneously, with the administrative board of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republic Northern Osetia-Alania and Republic of Ingushetia, the conversations and psychological trainings have been conducted; with psychologists - practical trainings on forms and methods of rendering the psychological help to employees and on improvement of socio-psychological atmosphere in the collectives. As a result of all performed work, including the work of psychological service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, socio-psychological conditions in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republic Northern Osetia-Alania and Republic of Ingushetia has been stabilized.

For increasing the system effectiveness of psychological support of activity on prevention and liquidation of acts of terrorism consequences in

the Russian Federation and taking into account the gained experience, we offer the following:

1. Within the limits of Russian psychological society, to create the public interdepartmental coordination methodical centre of psychological support of Federal executive power activity and the executive power departments on terrorist character crimes prevention and their consequences liquidation in the subjects of the Russian Federation.

2. Together with the interested Federal ministries and departments, to develop offers on creation of system of preparation, retraining and improvement of professional skill of psychologists for the executive power authorities, which are responsible for carrying out the counter-terrorist operation, releasing hostages and liquidation of consequences of acts of terrorism in the territory of the Russian Federation.

Authors of the article express sincere gratitude to the psychologists of internal affairs departments of the Russian Federation - the active participants of liquidation of consequences of the acts of terrorism in the territory of the Russian Federation in 2004 - for the heavy, but extremely important work they had done, as well as for the given opportunity to generalize the collected material.

Central administrative board of the staff of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia