



LEGAL FOUNDATIONS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES IN PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

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Annotation: This article examines the legal foundations of law enforcement activities in preventing violence against children. It analyzes the regulatory framework, including national legislation and international conventions, governing the functioning of police and other law enforcement bodies. The study highlights children's rights, protection mechanisms, the effectiveness of preventive measures, and the practical significance of legal interventions.

Keywords: Children's rights, violence prevention, law enforcement, legal foundations, state policy, protective measures.

Introduction and relevance

Violence against children remains a critical social issue worldwide, posing serious threats to their physical, psychological, and emotional well-being. Preventing such violence requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach, where law enforcement agencies play a central role. In this context, the legal framework governing the activities of internal affairs bodies is fundamental for ensuring that preventive measures are conducted systematically, ethically, and effectively. The relevance of this study lies in the increasing recognition that children's rights must be actively protected through legal, organizational, and social mechanisms. Recent trends indicate a rise in incidents of violence and abuse against minors, highlighting the urgent need for robust legal measures and well-structured preventive practices. By analyzing the statutory regulations, international conventions, and national policies that guide the operations of internal affairs bodies, this research aims to provide a clear understanding of how law enforcement can prevent violence against children and safeguard their rights.

Furthermore, this topic is highly significant for the development of state policy and social welfare programs, as effective law enforcement interventions not only protect children from immediate harm but also contribute to long-term social stability and the creation of a safe environment for younger generations. The study also underscores the importance of cooperation between state agencies, families, educational institutions, and civil society to achieve a comprehensive and preventive approach.

Methods and level of study

This study employs a combination of qualitative and normative-legal research methods to examine the legal foundations of internal affairs bodies in preventing violence against children. The research primarily relies on the analysis of legislation, government decrees, regulations, and international conventions relevant to child protection and law enforcement activities. Comparative and analytical methods are also used to evaluate the effectiveness of existing legal frameworks and preventive mechanisms in both national and international contexts.

The level of study encompasses both theoretical and practical dimensions. The theoretical aspect focuses on understanding the legal principles, norms, and doctrines that regulate law enforcement interventions aimed at safeguarding children. The practical dimension analyzes the implementation of these legal norms by internal affairs agencies, including preventive programs, monitoring, and cooperation with families, schools, and civil society organizations. Additionally, the study applies a systematic approach to assess the coordination of state bodies and the efficiency of preventive measures in real-world scenarios. By combining legislative analysis with practical evaluation, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of how law enforcement can effectively prevent violence against children while ensuring adherence to legal standards and human rights principles.

Research results

The study reveals that the legal framework regulating the activities of internal affairs bodies plays a critical role in preventing violence against children. Analysis of national legislation, including the Criminal Code, the Law on the Protection of Children's Rights, and regulations on juvenile delinquency prevention, demonstrates that the state has established comprehensive mechanisms to monitor, intervene, and provide protection for at-risk minors. Results indicate that internal affairs agencies implement multi-level preventive measures, including early identification of vulnerable children, monitoring families and social environments, and cooperating with educational institutions and community organizations. These measures are supported by clearly defined legal norms, which ensure that interventions respect human rights and operate within a structured, lawful framework.

Comparative analysis with international standards shows that Uzbekistan's legal provisions align with global best practices, emphasizing both protective and corrective approaches. The study also highlights the importance of continuous professional training for law enforcement officers, the application of evidence-based strategies, and the integration of social services to enhance the effectiveness of child protection efforts. Overall, the research confirms that a legally grounded and methodically organized approach significantly improves the capacity of internal affairs bodies to prevent violence, reduce juvenile victimization, and promote the overall safety and well-being of children.

In our country, targeted measures are being implemented to prevent crimes committed by minors, ensure their legal protection, and provide effective preventive influence. These measures aim to prevent offenses among minors and youth, enhance their legal awareness and civic culture, and liberalize the penalties applied to them while safeguarding their rights.

According to the principle "From action strategy to development strategy," our state emphasizes justice and the rule of law as essential prerequisites for progress. The New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022–2026 and the corresponding "Year of Honoring Human Dignity and Active Neighborhoods" State Program underscore the need to study juvenile delinquency and devise effective prevention mechanisms.

Despite ongoing efforts to guarantee the rights and legal interests of children, crimes committed by minors remain a concern. Globally, over three million people fall victim to human trafficking annually, with women and young girls accounting for 72% of victims. This reality highlights the importance of implementing effective victimological prevention mechanisms, supported by modern information technologies, cooperation between state bodies, community

organizations, and active citizen participation. Furthermore, public awareness campaigns are conducted to educate individuals on protecting themselves from criminal encroachments.

Victimological prevention of juvenile delinquency is primarily grounded in studying both criminogenic factors-conditions that may induce a minor to commit an offense-and victimogenic factors, which increase the likelihood of being affected by criminal acts. Research in criminology and victimology emphasizes that antisocial behaviors, lifestyles, and negative interpersonal relations among minors serve as key criminogenic factors, while specific individual and environmental characteristics act as victimogenic factors. It is crucial to note that the subjective (individual behavioral traits) and objective (environmental and situational) factors often reinforce each other, forming a causal and correlational link between criminogenic events and victimization. Consequently, continuous victimological preventive work, tailored to minors with high susceptibility based on their age and personal characteristics, is essential.

Analyzing the criminological and forensic aspects of juvenile offenses allows specialists to identify the factors that prompt minors to commit crimes, enabling the development of more effective preventive strategies and interventions to reduce juvenile delinquency and protect young victims. According to the survey conducted during the study, the behavior of minors has been identified as a significant factor contributing to their victimization in the commission of crimes. The analysis revealed that in cases of intentional homicide, victim vulnerability arose from physical weakness (12%), fearfulness (1%), immorality (23%), negative interactions with offenders (10%), and persistent aggression (11%). In cases of theft, contributing factors included habitual carelessness with property (22%), failure to follow recommendations for using security systems (27%), neglecting to monitor vehicles (29%), indulgence in showing off wealth (16%), and general negligence (5%). Regarding offenses against honor and dignity, the primary factors were weakness (42%), immorality (30%), gullibility (13%), and simplicity of character (15%). For intentional bodily harm, contributing circumstances included domestic dissatisfaction (15%), deficiencies in upbringing (40%), insincere relationships with offenders (19%), disregard for reputation and dignity (10%), and involvement in family disputes (45%).

The impact of victim-related factors in theft cases has been confirmed by court materials analyzing criminal cases. In 2021, in the Kashkadarya region, the main contributing factors to thefts were identified as negligence (70.5%), failure to utilize security systems (10.8%), leaving homes unattended for extended periods (9.9%), and improper management of keys or reliance on others for access (8.8%). Furthermore, only 12% of victims actively defended themselves during offenses, while 88% remained passive, highlighting the influence of victim behavior on subsequent criminal acts. Survey participants reported reasons for not immediately notifying authorities about threats or violence, including continuous pressure from the offender (11.9%), personal fear (4.6%), and threats of severe harm if a complaint was filed (13%). Research also confirmed that victim-related factors significantly influence the occurrence of crimes against minors in domestic settings, including threats to their life and health.

In conclusion, a comprehensive analysis of factors shaping and reinforcing victimization among minors is crucial for identifying and mitigating conditions that lead to their involvement in crime. The timely identification and resolution of these issues are essential components of the victimological prevention strategies implemented by law enforcement agencies. The case of 8th-grade student A. Botirov from Kokand illustrates these dynamics. On March 2, 2022, he broke into a shop in the "Vaqf Chorsu" neighborhood, stealing electronic cigarettes worth

300,000 UZS, a surveillance camera worth 800,000 UZS, and cash totaling 300,000 UZS. The incident was facilitated by insufficient preventive work by inspectors-psychologists, neighborhood activists, and school administration, inadequate supervision of his school attendance, and lack of engagement in constructive extracurricular activities. Parental or guardian negligence further contributed to the minor's opportunity to commit the crime.

These findings underscore the importance of proactive preventive measures, collaboration between law enforcement, educational institutions, and communities, and close monitoring of minors' activities to effectively reduce juvenile delinquency and prevent victimization. In 2022, the incidence of grievous bodily harm committed by minors decreased by 6% compared to the previous year (from 79 to 74 cases). However, 57% of such crimes (42 cases) were concentrated in the regions of Fergana (15 cases), Andijan (10 cases), and Kashkadarya (17 cases), while in Jizzakh (0/5 cases) this type of offense saw a sharp increase.

The analysis revealed that preventive measures in general education schools, conducted by inspector-psychologists, aimed at early prevention of juvenile delinquency, were insufficiently organized. As a result, of the 2,404 crimes committed in 2022, 2,089 involved school students-an increase of 234 minors (12.6%) compared to 1,855 students in the previous year. Regionally, Tashkent city accounted for 176 students (197/373), Tashkent region 44 (180/224), Bukhara 32 (92/124), Namangan 30 (144/174), Syrdarya 29 (25/54), Kashkadarya 24 (91/115), Jizzakh 8 (26/34), Navoi 8 (33/41), Karakalpakstan 7 (39/46), and Samarkand 4 (95/99).

For example, on May 16, 2022, minor F. Berdimuradov, a 9th-grade student of School No. 28 in the "Dam" neighborhood of Jarkurgan district, broke into the home of M. Rakhmanova, stealing 500 USD and 10 million soums from a safe. Notably, Berdimuradov was already under probation for a prior offense committed on August 1, 2021, under Article 169 of the Criminal Code of Uzbekistan.

The analysis identified key contributing factors to juvenile crime: preventive measures by schools, neighborhoods, probation services, and inspector-psychologists were poorly organized; minors' school attendance and participation in extracurricular activities were insufficiently monitored; and family conditions, including low income, unemployment, and inadequate parental supervision, created an enabling environment for criminal behavior. According to the 2021 Presidential Decree No. 5050, 2,000 inspector-psychologist positions were established within district and city law enforcement units to address juvenile issues. In 2022, preventive measures conducted with 89,098 at-risk students resulted in positive behavioral changes for 62,312 minors. However, in Tashkent city (5,203 minors), Karakalpakstan (3,527), Andijan (3,511), Samarkand (2,445), Tashkent region (2,427), and Fergana (2,357), preventive programs were inadequately implemented, leading to unchanged behaviors.

In the first two months of 2024, 359 minors committed 339 crimes-30 fewer than the previous period-representing an 8.1% decrease, accounting for 2.2% of all crimes. Regional dynamics showed increases in Karakalpakstan (283.3%), Syrdarya (83.3%), Tashkent city (65.3%), Khorezm (42.9%), Jizzakh (40%), and Tashkent region (20%). Meanwhile, Bukhara, Fergana, Namangan, Kashkadarya, Navoi, Surkhandarya, Samarkand, and Andijan observed declines ranging from 14.3% to 58.3%.



Of the minors involved in crimes, 218 (61%) were school students, 50 (14%) attended academic lyceums or colleges, 32 (9%) were employed, and 59 (16%) had dropped out of school. Among offenses, there were 6 cases of grievous bodily harm, 8 of sexual assault, 151 thefts, 12 embezzlements, 6 robberies, 21 frauds, 38 hooliganism, 9 vehicle thefts, and 88 other crimes.

Analysis of familial backgrounds revealed that:

- 1.299 minors (83%) were raised in families with negligent parenting;
- 2.25 (7%) came from divorced families;
- 3.14 (4%) had one parent abroad;
- 4.5 (1.4%) were from families with habitual alcohol abuse;
- 5.5 (1.4%) were orphans or in guardianship;
- 6.5 (1.4%) were from families under preventive supervision;
- 4.4 (1.1%) came from conflict-prone families;
- 8.2 (0.7%) lived with parents who had a criminal record.

This data demonstrates that inadequate family support, combined with poorly implemented preventive measures, significantly contributes to the likelihood of minors committing offenses, highlighting the critical need for effective, targeted intervention programs.

A three-year analysis of crimes committed by school students was conducted, involving 2,155 schools where students had engaged in unlawful activities. Senior officials from law enforcement agencies were assigned to these schools. Administrative measures under Article 47 of the Code of Administrative Liability were applied to 29,583 parents who failed to fulfill their responsibilities. Meanwhile, 1,321 minors (825 boys and 496 girls) left without proper supervision were placed in social and legal assistance centers, where they received comprehensive support.

As of the first two months of 2024, 1,113 of these minors were returned to their parents or guardians, 4 were placed in the Republican Boys' Educational Institution, 6 in family-type children's homes, 114 under guardianship authorities, and 11 in specialized educational institutions. However, due to the lack of a unified approach in working with minors, the centers' full potential in ensuring at-risk, unsupervised minors adopt a healthy lifestyle has not been fully utilized. Insufficient attention to effectively organizing center activities has led to increased cases of unsupervised minors and a rise in various levels of offenses committed by them.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the social and legal protection of minors:

1. Develop new mechanisms for cooperation between social and legal assistance centers, territorial law enforcement services, other governmental bodies, and civil society institutions, with appropriate amendments to regulatory frameworks.

2. Allocate budgetary funds to social and legal assistance centers with clear social objectives, and establish indicators to monitor and evaluate the efficiency of resource utilization.

3. Expand the use of state grants to finance socially targeted projects through social and legal assistance centers, ensuring effective implementation of social programs.



4. Increase the scope of functions performed by social and legal assistance centers on behalf of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

5. Integrate the activities of social and legal assistance centers into school curricula and manuals for the subject “Prevention of Offenses,” and organize regular specialized training courses for government officials and civil society representatives.

6. Institutionalize annual public hearings, conducted by the Public Chamber and regional community councils, on issues related to the rights and legal protection of minors in cooperation with civil society institutions.

7. Support the professional development of social and legal assistance centers’ staff and incentivize their active participation in service delivery.

These measures aim to create a comprehensive, well-coordinated system to prevent juvenile delinquency, ensure proper supervision, and provide minors with the guidance and support needed for safe and healthy development.

Conclusions

The study concludes that the legal foundations of internal affairs bodies are essential for effectively preventing violence against children. A robust legal framework ensures that interventions are conducted lawfully, ethically, and systematically, providing protection for minors in various social and familial contexts.

The analysis demonstrates that preventive measures, when legally supported, allow law enforcement to identify vulnerable children early, intervene in potentially harmful situations, and collaborate effectively with schools, social services, and community organizations. Such coordination strengthens child protection, reduces risks of abuse and neglect, and fosters safer environments.

Furthermore, aligning national legislation with international standards enhances both the credibility and effectiveness of preventive actions. Continuous professional development, evidence-based practices, and integration of social support mechanisms are critical for sustaining long-term results.

In summary, the legal regulation of internal affairs activities forms the cornerstone of child protection, ensuring that efforts to prevent violence are not only reactive but also proactive, comprehensive, and sustainable, ultimately contributing to the well-being and safety of children in society.

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