

## **INTERNAL SECURITY CHALLENGES OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

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### **Abstract**

To define the internal security challenges of a country today when preserving peace and stability in the world is very far behind the geographical boundaries of the country, and the threats and risks getting even more universal and unpredictable character, indivisibility of security gets real confirmation and the construction of joint security policies between countries becomes urgent need and necessity. The modern world in which we live on the one hand is a world of uncertainties, risks and threats, and on the other hand is a world of new trends of rapid technological development and a world that requires new and modern security concepts and solutions. Emerging threats and risks are mostly unconventional, unpredictable and usually invisible and unexpected, but essentially are asymmetrical, with massive consequences and losses in people, technical resources and basic goods.

Although perhaps in the long run there is no danger of conventional war on the European continent, however consequences of dissolution of the former socialist countries, the negative effects posed by globalization and national, religious and territorial confrontation - are potential and real risks and dangers that can lead to crises and conflicts in certain geographical areas. Security challenges are defined according to national interests and the security doctrine of states in the world.

**Keywords:** security risks, terrorism, organized crime, illegal migration, illegal trafficking.

### **Introduction**

Today's world is characterized by rapid and dynamic changes that bring with it new and often unpredictable risks and dangers for the security of states. Although the danger of a classic military threat in the long run is not expected, non-war threats have not only gained diversity but have also increased in intensity, space and time. National Concept for Security and Defense. (2003).

The countries of Southeast Europe, despite the efforts they are undertaking to improve the security situation, remain a region where security threats still exist. It is thought that the roots of this problem can be found in political extremism, extreme nationalism, religious and racial intolerance, which together with the existence of weak state institutions and the lack of rule of law, as well as global security threats, are the basis for a high degree of risks and dangers for the states located in this region, including our country.

From a security point of view, the Republic of Macedonia, because of its geographical location, is one of the junctions of the main avenues of terrorism, illegal migration, illegal drug trafficking, weapons and people from the Middle East (but also from Africa) to Western Europe. Despite all the efforts it is investing in the protection of state borders, our country is aware that it cannot solve transnational dangers without help and cooperation from the countries in the region, but also from the international community itself.

In the National Concept for Security and Defence of the Republic of Macedonia, risks and threats to the security of the state are listed:

- The possible manifestations of extreme nationalism, racial and religious intolerance;
- The forms and activities related to international terrorism, organized crime, illegal migration, trafficking in drugs, arms and people, strategic and dual-use materials, also and the consequences of the use of resources for mass destruction;
- Possession of large amounts of illegal weapons;
- Transitional problems such as: corruption, urban terrorism, severe crime, including extortion, racketeering, murder and attacks on property of citizens, economic crime, tax evasion, insufficient construction of the institutions of the democratic system, problems in the functioning of the judiciary, social problems and unemployment;
- Activities of foreign special services aimed at worsening security situation, which slowing the democratic and integration processes, particularly those to the EU and NATO;
- The consequences of a conflict of interest for the use of sources and routes of strategic energy resources, as well as preventing and blocking their importation into the Republic of Macedonia;
- Elementary and other disasters, technical and technological disasters, infectious diseases of humans and animals caused by domestic and / or external stakeholders;
- Cyber crime, piracy and misuse of information technology, especially in the part of personal data of citizens, business, official and state secret;
- The degradation and destruction of the environment.

It is necessary harmonized and coordinated actions of the legislative and executive authorities in order to realize a policy of internal security, continuous progress of democratic processes, building a state of law and ensuring the rule of law, all in order to improve the level of confidence of citizens in the institutions of country.

Targeting internal security challenges, finding solutions for dealing with them and their removal is what we all must do. Only in this way we can build a stable, functional and secure legal state.

## **Terrorism as a safety threat**

Global security threats are entirely threats of the new time, which pose a serious threat to international peace and security. Terrorism only increases that danger, which is strengthened more and more with each passing day. Namely, it does not apply only to an isolated society, that is, it is not directed only against the interests of a state, but it puts all states at risk.

It is very difficult for many to quit the question of why and why the terrorism is, that is, the darkness. There is a very complicated and complicated phenomenon, whose occasions are more aggravated every day, and similar to that and you do not have a consequence.

Terrorism can be defined as an illegal, unlawful application of a threat to the use of force and the use of systematic violence, i.e. the execution of murders, threats, sowing fear by individuals, groups or organizations directed against the innocent population (or parts thereof), property and government, in order to change the political course and achieve their political and social goals. Budzhakoski, S. (2005).

But if terrorism is an answer to an individual or a particular group, and to a country as a whole, which is aimed at achieving specific socio-political and / or economic-financial goals, then what are the factors that contribute to this evil to appear?

According to Professor Mitko Kotovcevski, the most important factors contributing to the creation of terrorist violence are:

- Political: unpopular, repressive and corrupt government;
- Social: the existence of a middle class combined with total discrimination;
- Economic: unbearable poverty, i.e. total impoverishment of the population and high unemployment;
- Ideological: existence of political philosophies with strongly expressed opposition;
- Geopolitical: the presence of a large number of residents from other countries, or riots, such as border clashes or civil and other types of conflicts in the immediate environment;
- Religious: religious conflicts or religious violence;
- External: the external support of the activities of the influence of the dissidents or the extreme enemy political emigration. Kotovcevski, M. (2003).

International terrorism has begun to manifest itself strongly today. There was an international problem with very negative implications with the launch of a new cycle of terrorist activity that began in the late sixties of the 20th century and continues to this day. Most of the terrorist organizations have an international character stemming from the belonging of their members, their movement and shelter, objects of attack, similarity of the methods and techniques used by terrorist organizations, etc. Budzhakoski, S. (2014).

The most striking type of terrorism that has been increasingly used lately is: the nationalist; religious; reckless or ideological and emigrant terrorism. Stajić, Lj. (1999).

I believe that the authorities in charge of the security and defense of the Republic of Macedonia should closely follow the tendencies towards the manifestation of these types of theorists.

Nationalist terrorism is a kind of endangerment performed by nationalist organizations fighting for political independence in the part of the territory inhabited by their national minorities or ethnic groups. More recently, a number of separatist movements have been used with the methods of terrorist acts in order to activate the international community to resolve their problems. The terrorists of these organizations, most often, fight the state in which they live, but in certain situations and against the state they previously abandoned.

Religious terrorism is a kind of endangerment carried out by certain fanatical, religiously blinded groups for achieving radical political changes and reorganizing society on religious grounds, that is, for the establishment of religious social values.

Reverse or ideological terrorism is the kind of threat where actors of endangering are determined by radical groups that are struggling to establish fundamental political or economic changes, as well as changing the holders of power in the state.

Immigrant terrorism is most often carried out by representatives of certain dissatisfied extreme and political immigrant circles, immigrant groups (organizations) dissatisfied with their overall status, as well as from the state of the overall social relations in the country. Terrorist acts are prepared outside the country, and are carried out with illegal assassinations of terrorists in the country or by performing certain actions on certain diplomatic-consular missions and their representatives. Budzhakoski, S. (2014).

In this section, we must inevitably mention the goals of terrorism. The goals of terrorism are most often associated with the ultimate effect to be achieved with the action, that is, what was previously planned and predicted by the actors of the act.

The most common goals can be listed as follows:

- obtaining full worldwide, national and regional support for the purpose of the perpetrators of the terrorist act;
- provocation of the authorities and its organs and causing a situation where the need for rapid, decisive and strict action by the security organs is inevitable, and then creating an atmosphere of inclination towards terrorists;
- through a direct attack with direct armed actions to achieve a weakening of the security forces and the effect of distrust among the population in their own security organs;
- alienation in order to obtain money, assets, weapons and equipment;
- destroying the strategic, tactical goals and infrastructure necessary for the smooth existence;
- distraction of foreign investments and national development plans;
- exercising influence on government decisions, legislation, independent state institutions and imposing violent solutions during election campaigns or current national elections and other democratic processes;
- revenge and reprisals;
- change of outcome or support of already started guerrilla, sabotage or rebellious actions of a state;
- preparation of the ground for future more concrete and more pronounced actions;

- support and defense of various criminogenic operations and factors. Dimovski, Z. (2007). Significantly for the terrorist actions is that their effectiveness is not only contained in the terrorist act, but also in the level of reaction of the public or the government.

### **Illegal migration as a security threat**

In the basic strategic document for the security of the Republic of Macedonia, adopted in 2003, the National Concept for Security and Defense states that Macedonia with its central location represents a natural and geographical crossroads between Europe, Asia and Africa, and with the very fact that our country is one of the crossroads of the main avenues of terrorism, illegal migration, illegal drug trafficking, weapons and people from Asia and Africa to Western Europe.

Positioned centrally in the Balkans, the Republic of Macedonia is vulnerable to illegal migration. Developments in the Middle East, but also in North Africa in recent years have significantly affected and still affect the ongoing migration processes in the world, but appear to be most pronounced on the Balkan Peninsula, as migrants (especially those from the Middle East) choose our country as part of its route of entry to the countries of Western Europe.

However, illegal migration is not a problem for only one country. All the countries that are on the "Balkan Route" are facing the challenge of facing this burning problem. But this also does not excuse the countries of Western Europe from responsibility, because migrants as the ultimate deer are choosing exactly them.

According to FRONTEX (Agency of the European Union for Security of the External Borders), Macedonia is part of the so-called: The "Balkan Route", which has the following flow: migrants cross the Turkish-Greek border, where they have three options to leave the country: the first is by air; the second is by waterway and the third option is by land route (for which they most often decide).

One of the factors facilitating illegal migration is Turkey's liberal visa policy towards the countries of North Africa and the Middle East, including a visa-free regime with Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, etc. In addition, "Turkish Airlines" has established direct flights with all Western Balkan countries, as well as with many African countries, making those more easily connected and more attractive to those migrants who use forged documents (forged passports or identity cards, but also false work permits or student visas). The strategic position of the Western Balkans, which links "east" and "west", serves as a factor attracting migrants (pull factor). Macedonia with its central position is no exception. Lembovska, M. (2013).

Once the migrants cross the Greek-Macedonian border, some immediately continue their way towards the Republic of Serbia, but many of them decide to spend some time in villages near the Serbian border. However, as I pointed out above, the countries of the Balkan Peninsula are not the final destination of migrants. But security services from these countries must be extremely careful when it comes to monitoring migrants, as it is not excluded the possibility of moving members of certain terrorist organizations together with them.

The legal framework that exists in the Republic of Macedonia for dealing with illegal migration is in line with the EU legislation and with the relevant international standards. However, problems arise in the implementation of applicable legal regulations, because there are, for example, difficulties in determining the identity of migrants, there is further problematic implementation of readmission agreements due to various objective and/or subjective factors, etc.

Illegal migration is a complex phenomenon and a regional approach is needed. Macedonia is involved in all regional initiatives that deal with this issue, but many more things need to be done. The Western Balkan countries need support from the international community, especially the European Union, in order to strengthen their capacities for prevention, detection and dealing with illegal migration. Bearing in mind that the Western Balkans is not their ultimate goal, but a transit zone, competent institutions may not have the same level of motivation to detect illegal migrants because it costs a lot, and sometimes they prefer to “look through their fingers”. It is in the best interest of EU member states to provide support to the Western Balkan countries and to prevent migrants’ attempts to reach richer EU member states. Lembovska, M. (2013).

### **Illegal trafficking in drugs, weapons and people as a safety threat**

The basis of the legal state consists of the individual freedoms and rights and the common functions of life that are necessary for their protection, realization and development. These goods are often endangered by forms of organized crime that cause paralysis of protective mechanisms. On the other hand, organized crime undermines the very democratic foundations of the rule of law. With its concealment and continuous action, and especially with the system of protection that provides actual immunity to the perpetrators, it poses a direct threat to the institutions of the system, promoting its own, parallel system of relations, rules and control, untouchable, especially for the democratic control of the public. Kambovski, V. (2005).

Organized crime poses a threat to the smooth and full functioning of democracy for all countries in the world, especially for developing countries and for all post-communist transition countries. The activities of organized crime can impede and marginalize democracy, paralyze the functioning of the legal institutions of government, economically exhaust the country, and thus undermine the independence and sovereignty of the state. Major disruptions and threats to the internal security of the state in certain situations can also mean the loss of its independence and sovereignty. Kotovcevski, M. (2007).

In the last few years, an increased internationalization of organized crime activities has occurred. The connection of organized crime with riots, ethno-national conflicts and terrorism seems to be much more widespread than it was several years ago. Connection stems from increasingly aggressive and sophisticated funding, or perhaps changing the motivations of organized crime groups into motivations that are much more closely related to political goals and

gaining power than just business or profits. The instability and conflicts marked the region since the early 1990s. The dissolution of the SFRY and the wars that led to the increase of organized criminal activity in Southeast Europe. The need for financing the war has led to the emergence of the so-called "war economy", for the acquisition of its own funds from illegal activities, especially from drug trafficking and arms trafficking. The networks and markets created during the war remained in operation after the end of the war, as they proved to be very profitable. After 1990, various factors influence the increase in organized crime as a security-political and destabilizing factor for societies in transition. Much of the productive economic capacities were destroyed during the war or were completely neglected during the 1990s, losing in that way the international markets in which they had previously been placed. During the "lost decade" great attention was paid to the trade in legal and illegal products, significantly increasing the costs of regional trade. The rising proportions of smuggling and trafficking followed the same trend, creating a fertile ground for organized crime, which seems to have turned into a key mechanism for the unlawful redeployment of national wealth in the region. Partners in crime: the risk of symbiosis between the security sector and organized crime in Southeast Europe. (2004).

For example, with the opening of Albania, after the fall of communism, "the kleptocratic elite who secretly appropriated the funds of the state literally assumed power. However, their reign was weak in breath because the collapse of a pyramid schemes in 1997 pushed Albania into the chaos of powerlessness and the wars between rival clans. During this period, police and military arsenals were massively robbed." Miloshevska, T. (2011).

It is estimated that in 1999, 20.000 to 30.000 light weapons were sent from Albania to Kosovo through Macedonia. Perry, D. (2000).

Trafficking in human beings, especially with women and children, is a global problem that is reflected in the Republic of Macedonia. It appears in various forms and aims through various forms of exploitation, to use the victim for as much profit as possible.

Analyzes carried out by the expert services of the Ministry of Interior, victims of trafficking in human beings in the Republic of Macedonia were mostly girls and women of origin from the countries of the former Soviet Union, as well as those belonging to the socialist bloc of states (Moldova, Romania, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Bulgaria), who illegally entered or have been entered through already established networks for illegal migrants' transit in the Republic of Macedonia, and some have made legal entry on the territory of our country.

According to the findings, part of the women victims of trafficking who crossed the state border of the Republic of Macedonia in an illegal way, through organized channels, are transferred to the neighboring countries where for a certain financial compensation they are sold to organized criminal groups from these countries, while a smaller number of them are transferred to Italy and other Western European countries. In the field of illegal migration, and on the basis of the previous police experience, the territory of the Republic of Macedonia is used as a transit country, with the most current illegal passage through the corridors west - east and north - south.

A minority of women who illegally entered the territory of our country, most often remain in the western part of the country, where, through various false promises of employment in catering facilities, they are drawn into the chain of their illegal sale and bringing prostitution.

In addition to the foreign ones, recently, several Macedonian citizens, mostly minors, are being registered for prostitution, which increases the likelihood of falling into the trafficking chain. On the basis of analytical observations, in most of the unrealized cases, there is the occurrence of forced prostitution of foreign nationals in rented or private apartments, houses and holiday houses. Control of this kind of facilities is especially needed since these are not just places where forced prostitution is carried out, but also places where victims of trafficking are sheltered until their sale. Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration in the Republic of Macedonia. (2006).

## **Conclusion**

At the beginning of this scientific paper, I mentioned that to define the internal security challenges of a state, today when the preservation of peace and stability in the world is very far behind the geographical boundaries of the state, and threats and risks even more gain a universal and unpredictable character, the indivisibility of security gets a real confirmation, and building up common security policies between states becomes an urgent need and necessity. This is primarily due to the fact that today's world is characterized by rapid and dynamic changes that bring with it new and often unpredictable risks and dangers in the security of states.

From a security point of view, the Republic of Macedonia, due to its geographical location, is one of the crossroads of the main avenues of terrorism, illegal migration, illegal drug trafficking, weapons and people from the Middle and Middle East to Western Europe. That is why, in this paper, I decided to write about terrorism, illegal migration, illegal drug trafficking, weapons and people as internal security challenges of the Republic of Macedonia.

First of all, I wrote about the terrorism and the dangers that hide this evil. I believe that the authorities in charge of security and defense of the Republic of Macedonia should closely follow the tendency towards the emergence of some of the new forms of terrorism. Above all, particular attention should be paid to religious, transcendental or ideological, as well as to immigrant terrorism.

As the next threat to the internal security of the Republic of Macedonia I dealt with illegal migration. I mentioned that it is an issue that is important from the aspect of state and personal security and is most often related to serious and organized crime and human rights violations. Macedonia with its central location represents a natural and geographical crossroads between Europe, Asia and Africa, and therefore our country is one of the crossroads of the main roads of illegal migration, that is, migrants from the Middle East to the countries of Western Europe. In that part, I noted that illegal migration is a complex phenomenon and that a regional approach is



needed to deal with it in order to strengthen the capacities for prevention, detection and dealing with the illegal migration of the states that will cooperate on this issue.

As the last but not the least important challenge to the security of our country, I dealt with the illegal trade in drugs, weapons and people. In that section, we concluded that organized crime remains a synonym for supra-national organization and concentration of huge financial power. After 1990, various factors influence the increase of organized crime as a security-political and destabilizing factor of the countries in transition, including the Republic of Macedonia. Illegal trafficking in drugs and weapons did not recognize national boundaries. Military conflicts and crisis hot spots are extremely favorable for their development. In addition, trafficking in human beings leads to the indulgence of these people in the chain of their illegal trafficking and inciting prostitution.

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