

EMERGING CHALLENGES IN ORGANIZED CRIME

Dr. Anil B. Gaikwad

Asst. Professor, Legal Studies & Research, Himalayan University, Itanagar, A.P

Talat Anjum

Assistant Professor, ILSR, Mangalayatan University, Beswan, Uttar Pradesh.

Mr. Animesh Rishi

Faculty Associate, Usha Martin University, Ranchi, Jharkhand.

ABSTRACT

The European Union and Lithuania's attitudes on organized crime are compared in this study. It is hoped that it would have a positive impact on the economy and society. On the basis of this research, the author examined European Union and national strategic documents identifying the threats of organised criminality; he also assessed organised crime groups; their spheres of activity; their impact on social security; and factors that determine the peculiarities of organised criminality's development. For the purposes outlined in this article, organised crime is being examined in terms of its threat to national security, as well as its structure, activities, so-called "engines," and the main "crime enabler" factors that influence the evolution of criminality; and 3) to assess new threats and propose specific measures to combat organised crime as an issue. Analysis of legal precedents and documents are among the tools used by the author. Interviews with civil servants and operational officers yielded additional material, which is also included in the report.

KEYWORDS: *Challenges, Organized Crime, traditional criminals*

INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, the phenomenon of organized crime has grown to alarming proportions. Transnational criminal organisations have benefited from the growing trend of globalization, urbanization, and industrialization. Organized criminals from one country have been linked to crimes committed in another country by others from that country's organization. As a result of increased technology, criminals have been able to carry out their crimes in a more complex and sophisticated manner than ever before. When it comes to running an organized crime operation, criminals need a lot of money. As a result, in order to make quick money, they've been involved in criminal activities such as drug and human trafficking, currency counterfeiting, con games, and other types of economic fraud.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Georgios A. Antonopoulos, Hybrid (2020) Analysis and synthesis of research on organized crime from a number of sources comprise Trends in Organized Crime. Annotated passages from major government papers are also included, along with peer-reviewed original research. In addition, book reviews and commentary on current organized crime topics are included in the content. In addition to academics and practitioners, Trends in Organized Crime is a valuable resource. In collaboration with the International Association for Research on Organized Crime, this journal is released (IASOC). Analysis and syntheses on organized crime are presented from a number of sources in this compilation. Published original research as well as snippets from important government papers that have been peer-reviewed Published by the International Association for the Study of Organized Crime (IASOC) (IASOC)

Minakshi Sinha(2015) "Organized Crime and Emerging Challenges to Criminal Justice Functionaries: Measures for Prevention and Control (A Sociolegal Study)" was conducted with the following five objectives in mind: (1) study the recent trend of organized crime and its ramifications in India, (2) analyses the diverse forces operative in the process of perpetration of organized crime in India, (3) identify the problems and constraints faced by Criminal Justice Functionaries, and (4) examine the impact of organised crime on the economy and society in India.

Klaidas Kuchalskis(2018) Organized crime has long been considered a danger to national security at the political level. Although this threat has been debunked, the real urgency of this issue has not. What's the deal with this "securitized" issue? Alternatively, should it be included in the list of the most serious threats? Isn't it possible that this is just a standard problem that can be treated in the usual way? Questions like these are the focus of this article. The European Union and Lithuania's attitudes on organised crime are compared in this study. It is hoped that it would have a positive impact on the economy and society. According to this study, the author reviewed EU and national strategic papers to determine which organised crime groups constitute the greatest threat to national and international security, as well as the elements that determine how organised crime develops and the connections between them. These are the aims of this article: 1) to examine threats from organised criminal groups in relation to Lithuania and the European Union; 2) to analyse structures of organised criminal groups, illicit activity areas, so-called "engines of crime," and the primary "crime enablers" driving criminality's growth; The third objective is to evaluate new threats to national security posed by organised crime and propose specific strategies to counter those threats. The author employs a variety of methodologies, including document examination, comparison, and analysis. Additionally, discussions with government officials and operational executives have yielded valuable information.

Alpert, g., smith, m., kaminski, r., fridell, l., macdonald, j. And kubu, b. (2011) During incidents involving the use of force, both law enforcement officials and civilians can sustain injuries. The majority of force used by officers is modest, with them pushing or pulling a suspect with their hands, arms, or body. Officers are also taught how to overcome opposition with a variety of other methods of force and weapons. Other less deadly weapons include pepper spray, batons, and conducted energy devices (CED) like Tasers. Additionally, they can use firearms to protect themselves and others from harm. Pepper spray and CEDs can considerably minimise the injuries to suspects, and CEDs can lessen the injuries to officers, according to the findings of the study, which were not uniform across all agencies. All injuries, according to the researchers, should be handled seriously. Concerns about police abuse develop when officers employ force and an injury occurs, and lawsuits frequently follow. The reputation of the police is also jeopardised. Also, medical bills for impoverished suspects, workers' compensation claims for injured cops, or damages paid out in legal settlements or judgments, all add up to a lot of money.

Braga, a., flynn, e., kelling, g., and cole, c. (2011) Many essential aspects of the investigation process appear to have remained unaffected by considerable changes in policing, the crime problem and technology advancements made in the last 30 years. Progress in police criminal investigation remains mainly detached, in our opinion, from more comprehensive police attempts to address the whole crime problem in a better, more efficient, and even-handed manner.

ASSESSMENT OF ORGANISED CRIME

It is impossible to separate Lithuanian organised crime from the rest of the European Union. In order to deal with the challenges posed by international organised crime, governments must work together. According to the Pre-Accession Pact on Organized Crime, signed in 1998 by EU Member States, Central and Eastern European and Cypriot applicants, organised crime is a serious threat to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law because "it penetrates, contaminates, and defiles the structure of governments, legitimate commercial and financial business and society at all levels.".. 20 In spite of the fact that "the security challenges in Eastern Europe have been alleviated by the battle against terrorism and the migrant crisis,"²¹ these issues remain a top priority for both the European Union and NATO. A serious and organised crime threat assessment (hereinafter: SOCTA) was carried out in 2017 by Europol, the European Union's law enforcement agency, and a set of recommendations on the most significant criminal dangers to the European Union was issued. The SOCTA Report serves as the basis for EU Member States' discussions on combatting criminal risks. 23 Between 2018 and 2021, the European Union's Policy Cycle on Organized Crime required the completion of this study. 24 The Policy Cycle attempts to identify criminal threats, approve them at

the political level, and achieve strategic and operational goals based on real data from criminal intelligence and an interdisciplinary perspective.

ORGANISED CRIMINAL GROUPS

More than 5,000 organised criminal organisations can be found, according to the SOCTA. As a point of reference, Europol was able to identify 3,6 thousand organisations in 2013. There is a huge increase, but this does not necessarily reflect an increase in organised crime. Better criminal intelligence data and more in-depth research, according to the author, may have a greater impact. 32 There is a wide range in the structure, size, and scope of criminal organisations: Most criminal gangs have six or more members, accounting for roughly 3,800 of them. 33 More than 40,000 criminals are believed to be operating throughout the European Union. How many people live in the European Union, 742 million of them? It's impossible to tell, but we'll discover later that the profits generated by this population—0.005 per cent—are shocking. More than 180 different nationalities are represented among the members of organised crime groups, with European Union residents accounting for 60% of that number. 34 Seven out of ten groups operate in three or more countries (ten percent of criminal groups operate in seven or more countries);³⁵ this shows that organised crime is transnational and that criminal gangs are very mobile. It was common for them to specialise in a certain field, such as robbery or drug trafficking, while others were developing synthetic substances. These fads are quickly fading away in the current world. About 45 per cent of criminal groups are engaged in so-called "poly-criminality," in which the focus is on profit rather than committing a specific crime. In part, the current migration crisis is to blame for the growth of this problem. Organized crime has been able to adapt and retrain because of the high demand for illegal smuggling services. This lucrative and easy-to-operate field has attracted criminal gangs formerly engaged in a variety of other crimes.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANISED CRIME

In today's technological age, criminality is on the rise. The primary motivation is to make money, regardless of whether that money is earned by stealing or the smuggling of illegal items. Criminals are well-versed in adjusting to changing geopolitical conditions, are adaptable in their methods of crime commission, and take use of organised criminal networks. As civilization advances, so does crime, which tends to concentrate in areas with the highest levels of welfare since committing crimes there is simpler. As a result of their ability to quickly identify society requirements, criminals are able to swiftly supply commodities and services that the market lacks. Document fraud, money laundering, and the online trafficking of unlawful products and services are the three main 'engines'

of organised crime. It's impossible to separate these dangers from other forms of organised crime. Organised crime's business models, which encompass a wide spectrum of significant criminal activities, are frequently predicated on the availability of fake documents and the ability to successfully legalise illegal funds. Interventions by law enforcement in the deconstruction of such schemes significantly decrease the prospects for criminal groups to build and expand their unlawful operations and penetrate legal business. It is possible for criminal organisations to invest funds earned via unlawful activity in both the legal and illicit economies through the process of money laundering. Most organised crime rings are compelled to "launder" their funds in some fashion. Legal financial systems hide transactions, making it harder for law enforcement to link them to criminals or their criminal operations. This makes tracking unlawful money flows difficult for law enforcement. To combat money laundering, law enforcement faces a tremendous technological problem as more and more criminals are turning to bitcoin and other forms of anonymous payment. Emerging new online platforms and non-traditional money transfer systems are typically regulated by laws that are unregulated or operate "on the verge of legality". In addition, cash is smuggled through the postal service. Investing in higher-value items, real estate, or gambling with small and medium-scale money laundering. Legal business structures, certified public accountants, and other financial services are employed for this purpose. Those involved in large-scale money laundering employ high-tech, novel methods. They take advantage of the banking system to their own advantage, opening new accounts and establishing payment networks between front firms and foreign subsidiaries.

ORGANISED CRIME ACTIVITY AREAS

While crime rates in Lithuania decreased between 2014 and 2016, the total number of crimes reported in 2017 climbed dramatically, from 5 thousand to 61 thousand, compared to the previous year. 55 There has been an ongoing decline in the criminogenic backdrop of major and very serious crimes since 2014. (2.1 thousand such crimes were registered in 2017). There were more drug-related crimes in 2016-2017 than robbery and fraud; the latter two were in the second and third spots. There has also been a rise in the number of brutal killings, leading some to feel that the overall criminogenic condition in the dominating crime region remains a threat and requires ongoing political and operational attention. An overview of EU priorities in the fight against organised crime for the years 2018–2021, as outlined below. The European Union's Council of Ministers has agreed on ten key areas for combating organised crime:

- **Cybercrime.** Across the world, people are experiencing this. As the saying goes, cybercrime has no borders. Society has gone digital, and criminals have taken advantage of this by developing new

illegal business models that take advantage of technical advancements as well. On an annual basis, cyberattacks cost 400 billion euros and expose 2 billion private data records to cyber risks. The most serious dangers were attacks on information systems, non-cash payment fraud, and the transmission of child abuse material. 58 Non-cash payment fraud is a major problem in Lithuania, and criminal gangs are actively engaged in it. Future cybercrime risks are almost certain to be relevant.

- **Drugs. Illicit drug trafficking remains the biggest criminal area:** 40% of European criminal organisations are involved in drug production and delivery. 59 This type of criminal behaviour creates enormous revenues, which are then used to fund other criminal action. The European Union has become the world's primary source of synthetic pharmaceuticals because of its industrial-scale manufacture. For the same cost, criminals are putting money into new technology in an effort to increase drug yields and profits. Europol has noted an upsurge in heroin and synthetic drug trafficking organisations in Lithuania. The manufacture, distribution, and exchange of drugs will continue to be a serious problem in the future.

- **Illegal migration.** Illegal migration has become one of the most lucrative and extensive areas of organised crime, comparable to drug trafficking, because of the tremendous surge in movement. People worry that the current migrant crisis will serve as a spark for more widespread human trafficking. Due to their illegal presence in the European Union, large groups of migrants become potential victims. 90% of migrants pay human traffickers in order to get to Europe. This area is anticipated to become a magnet for organised crime and a big concern, despite the fact that the scale of migration reduced significantly in 2017 owing to military conflicts and poverty in certain places of the world.

- **Organised property crime.** For a long time, these offences were not considered serious enough to warrant attention. Crimes such as this have recently risen, particularly among highly mobile and transnationally organised gangs operating in the European Union (EU). In order to carry out organised robberies and burglaries, such gangs take advantage of the lack of compatibility of cross-border surveillance tools. Stolen products can now be sold more easily because to the growth of online shopping. Lithuanian criminal organisations are considered to be among the most active in the world. " Despite the increasing operations of highly mobile organised criminal organisations, it must be remembered that most countries do not prioritise investigations into the aforementioned crimes; they are not viewed as major acts of crime.

- **Trafficking in human beings.** Trafficking in human beings has been fueled by the economic disparity between countries. Human trafficking generates an annual profit of 29.4 billion euros around the world. 60 The rise of the shadow economy, the decline in wages, and the reduction in

economic growth are all made worse because organised criminal groups target more vulnerable people in the areas of sexual and labour exploitation. In 2017, victims of labour abuse came from 58 different countries. 61 There were undoubtedly more victims than the official data indicate, making victim identification and protection one of the most pressing concerns for law enforcement.

- **Fraud.** According to the European Union and its Member States, criminal gangs abusing the VAT system on cross-border transactions steal 60 billion euros every year, which could be spent in infrastructure projects and regional development. 62 Excise fraud (smuggling of alcohol, tobacco, and fuel) and Missing Trader Intra-Community fraud account for the majority of the losses. There are Lithuanian criminals involved in excise fraud, along with other criminal gangs.

ORGANISED CRIME AND TERRORISM

Organized crime is typically found to interact with other dangers while assessing it. It examines the connections between organised crime, corruption, cybercrime, immigration, and the European Union's neighbouring countries. In Lithuania, the threat of hybrid threats is also widely explored. Organized crime and unrestricted migration are two possible tactics of hybrid threats. According to British writer Edward Lucas, the Kremlin is employing a variety of "toxic methods," including cyber-attacks and organised crime networks aimed at influencing public opinion and decision-makers. 64 The linkages between organised crime and terrorism should be examined in greater detail. Arms trafficking, funding, document fraud, and radicalization are all manifestations of this link, which is especially strong in jails. As a result, the same logistics and infrastructure systems are used by both organised and terrorist groups (e.g., the Balkans) to achieve their goals. Terrorist attacks are made easier by crimes like document fraud and the illegal trafficking of weaponry. In 2016, a Tunisian refugee who had his asylum application rejected carried out a vehicle attack at a Berlin Christmas market that killed 12 people by using a number of documents with multiple identities to travel through Europe. Terrorist incidents in Paris in 2015 and Brussels in 2016 lead investigators to suspects with ties to organised crime. 65 Terrorist groups aim to amass criminal gains that they can subsequently use to fund their actions. Organized crime and terrorist groups both use the services of money laundering gangs. Because of the current migrant issue, terrorists were able to convey some of their trustees to Europe with the help of organised groups. The dangers of a link between terrorism and organised crime are threefold. To begin, terrorists may be able to obtain lethal and dangerous weaponry through the use of organised crime infrastructure (such as acquiring weapons or paperwork and transporting individuals). There are two reasons why terrorism-related activities benefit from terrorists' involvement in organised crime. Europol has identified only 5,5% of persons linked to terrorism as being involved in criminal activity, but the radicalization of this small

percentage is causing tremendous worry. Terrorism is frequently birthed within the confines of a prison. This issue will grow more important in the future because of the adaptability and flexibility of modern criminals. It is one of the most important signs that organised crime is not only detrimental in the community. It should be seen as a national security danger. In spite of the fact that Lithuania does not have many organised crime and terrorist groups, a well-known occurrence—when Lithuanian criminals attempted to supply weapons and explosives to the Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA)⁶⁷—succinctly illustrates the existence of such opportunities, which should be treated as a matter of utmost concern by intelligence and operational services.

CONCLUSION

No doubt that organised crime is a serious problem in Lithuania and the European Union, based on the findings of this investigation. International organised crime poses a significant and growing threat to national and international security, as can be seen by looking at the extent to which it has infiltrated legitimate businesses, as well as the amount of money it has generated, the effect it has on the economies and social development of the countries it has affected, and the links it has with other threats (illegal migration, corruption, cyberattacks, terrorism). Aside from endangering lives and threatening democratic institutions and the global economy, it also threatens global safety, health, and prosperity. As a phenomena, organised crime evolves in the same way society does; it becomes more adaptable and dynamic and takes on new forms of expression. In order to tackle transnational organised crime, there must be an inventive approach to these concerns.

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