

## **Prevention of Extremism and Terrorism in the Republic of Tatarstan: The Experience of the Realization of the Continuing Education Programs**

Bolshakov Andrey Georgiyevich and Mavrin Oleg Viktorovich  
Kazan (Volga) Federal University, Kremlevskaya Street 18, 420008 Kazan, Russia

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**Abstract:** There are receiving increased attention to the causes emergence of extremism and terrorism in modern society which is a prerequisite of a number of political conflicts and crises. This study describes the experience of regional educational programs for the prevention of extremism and terrorism carried out by the Department of Conflict Studies at the Centre for Mediation, Conflict Settlement and Prevention of extremism in Kazan Federal University.

**Key words:** Prevention program, extremism, terrorism, public safety, region, Tatarstan, Kazan State University, Department of Conflict, Center for Mediation, conflict resolution and prevention of extremism

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### **INTRODUCTION**

From the beginning of the 21st century the threats of the terrorist attacks experienced by many states and which consequences cause severe damage are possible reasons of the origin of the political conflicts of different levels. Generally, the solution of the problem of the prevention of extremism and terrorism is one of the most important tasks of any state's national security policy. The effort to elaborate several recommendations for prevention of these negative phenomena is a distinctive way to counter extremist activities and to prevent terrorist acts (DAC, 2003).

Both terrorism and extremism are recognized as the most dangerous threats for public safety perceived at a global, national and regional levels. The fight against extremism and terrorism is inefficient within the limits and using the resources of one state because as the specialists state in addition to military financial, informational, ideological and legislative measures are also needed.

Extremist and terrorist signs can be found in the activity of some anti-system rioting forces fighting against the state practically in every world region and most often they are linked to other threats caused by social-economic downswing, organized crime, drug, weapon and people trafficking, religious fundamentalism, spread of weapon of mass destruction, crimes in the information technology field (Sakhiev, 2007).

Terms extremism and terrorism used in this article need to be interpreted according to the Russian legislation. Following Federal Law N 114 FL "On the

counteraction of extremist activity" of 25 July, 2002 as an extremist activity (extremism) the following activity is recognized (Article 1):

- The forcible change of the foundations of the constitutional system and the violation of the integrity of the Russian Federation
- The exercise of terrorist activity and its justification
- The excitation of racial, national or religious strife
- The propaganda of the exclusiveness of individuals on the basis of their attitude to religion, social, racial, national, religious or linguistic identity
- The violation of human rights on the basis of social, racial, national, religious, linguistic factor
- The obstruction of the exercise by citizens of their electoral rights combined with violence or threat of the use thereof
- The obstruction of the lawful activities of state authorities, local authorities, electoral commissions, public and religious associations, combined with violence or threat of the use thereof, etc.

According to this law the federal state authorities, state authorities of constituent entities of the Russian Federation and local authorities shall participate in combating extremist activity within the limits of their competence (Article 4).

Unlawful acts performed out of religious motives concern lately the public more than usual. Russian researches consider under religious extremism "an extreme form of realization of the radical religious ideology that

materializes into unlawful acts out of the religious intolerance motives by a person and (or) a group adherent of a certain dogma and into public calls for a performance of such acts against social groups that do not share beliefs and views of the extremists as well" (Timofeev, 2012). The criteria of the religious extremism are not defined precisely in the law. Russian scientists place emphasis onto the following religious extremism indication:

- Presence of the religious ideology preaching non-tolerance for other religion beliefs adherents
- Ideological approval for the usage of strong-arm and violence
- Domination of the emotional approach to propagation of the ideas
- Reference to people's feelings and not to their conscience
- Creation of a charismatic, "infallible" leader's figure
- Domination of the religious doctrine in the minds of the organizations' members and denial of the rest of the world's norms (Pominov, 2007)

As it can be seen from the above the approval of the commitment of unlawful acts by an organization, a group of people, a person, based on the religious intolerance is the main index for the religions extremism.

According to the Federal Law N 35 FL of 6 March 2006 terrorism is "the ideology of violence and the practice of influencing the adoption of a decision by public authorities, local self-government bodies or international organizations connected with frightening the population and (or) other forms of unlawful violent actions" (Article 3). From Russian researcher's, Pain (2002) perspective terrorism is the ultimate violent form of extremism. The meaning of the concept "terrorist act" is described in this same law: "making an explosion, arson or other actions connected with frightening the population and posing the danger of loss of life of causing considerable damage to property or the onset of an ecological catastrophe as well as other especially grave consequences for the purpose of unlawful influence upon adoption of a decision by public authorities, local self-government bodies or international organizations as well as the threat of committing the said actions for the same purpose" (Article 3). The accent in both concepts is put on the goals of the activity the ambition to influence the public authorities', international organizations' decisions.

The religious extremism means the commitment of unlawful acts out of the religions motives. Terrorism as an "ideology and impact practice" and terrorist act

commitment of an injurious to the public act suppose influence on function of the public authorities and herewith the reasons and the motives of the terrorist actors are not mentioned in the law.

Several aspects that need a more careful examination still exist despite careful attention to the problem of religions extremism and terrorism on behalf of the authorities. Now a days the following aspects of this problem do not get enough attention in scale of Russia.

An imperfect study of the Russian legislation where general justification of extremism in contrast to mass justification of terrorism is not punished under penal code although the first term is the precondition for the second one. There is also a lack of the legal regulation of some part of the information space's resources of the internet which has become by now an accessible and almost omnipresent instrument for obtaining of the information. As a result, the implication into extremist groups is realized not only with mass propaganda among residents "on the street" but also by means of the modern information and telecommunication technology as well as the internet-resources.

A main unified (coordinating) public authority realizing supervisory function is absent from the nation-wide extremism countermeasures system. It is possible to agree with the colleagues from the Federal Security Service stating that such an authority in the terrorism countermeasures system is the National Antiterrorism Committee and there is a lack of a decisive head body among the institutions fighting against extremism touching different spheres of the society (Bashkatov *et al.*, 2007) and there exists a problem of cooperation between such agencies as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Federal Security Service and the Public Prosecution, since the extremism counteraction falls under their competence. A lack of unified recommended educational prevention programmes.

Nevertheless, it is clearly possible to claim that the modern educational system has different possibilities to assure the necessary literacy rate of the population of Russia in the field of extremism and terrorism counteraction, sufficient enough to guarantee the public and state security. These programmes should aim forehanded exposure of the extremist and terrorist tendencies which can further help to prevent their negative consequences.

As long as there is a wide range of antisystem forms of combat against the state, the researchers find it rather hard to analyze all of the methods of counteraction to the examined phenomena in the scope of this research. It is rather important to focus on and scrutinize several

elaboration and realization problems of the educational programmes on the prevention of extremism and terrorism in the regional level context.

It can be supposed that the elaboration of unified educational prevention programmes would be better performed centrally from the federal centre into the regions and sure not vice-versa. Moreover, during their realization and implementation it is necessary to take into account the specificity of each territory separately if not the programme will be ineffective. It comes out that some sort of an “impulse” for their implementation has to proceed namely from the regions and the involvement of the federal centre representatives is reasonable afterwards for a necessary adjustment to their realization quality increase.

The realization of the extremism and terrorism prevention programme in the Republic of Tatarstan starts in 2008 because it is the time that the Republican extremism and terrorism prevention target programme for 2009-2012 was approved which elaboration was prorogated for 2012-2014. The significance of the professional development programme in Tatarstan is defined in the first place by the tragic events which took place 19 July, 2012 in Kazan assassination attempt on and murder of the Spiritual Directorate’s of the Muslims leaders’. Approximately, at the same time the car of Tatarstan’s mufti I. Faizov exploded and the head of the education department V. Yakupov was murdered near his house.

The educational professional development programme within the scope of extremism and terrorism prevention programme in the Republic of Tatarstan was prepared by the researchers of the Department of Conflict at the Kazan (Volga Region) State University at the very beginning 2012 through the realization development programme of the Kazan Federal University. The main goal of this programme was the prevention of extremist and terrorist signs in the Republic of Tatarstan. At first, it contained modules on the following topics:

**Religious and ethnic extremism in the contemporary world and in Russia:** In this case, an attempt to reveal similarities and diversities of religious and ethnic extremism and terrorism was made and a role of religious factor in the genesis of extremism and terrorism was disclosed. A special attention was given to the demonstration of the influence of the totalitarian sects’ activity and to the growth of the extremist and terrorist organizations in the society. The islamism was analyzed as a part of the religious political extremism. There was an attempt to dissect the salafist (Wahhabite) ideology. The

activity of extremist religious political structures and the ethnic situation in the Republic of Tatarstan in general were examined.

**International security, armed conflicts and contemporary terrorism:** This module is dedicated to an overview of the essential notions and also of the factors and characteristics of the international security in the era of globalization. A close look at international security, regional security, national security, altogether with possible risks and threats to the international security is given. Armed conflicts are compared with political terrorism as a threat to the international security.

**Foreign countries’ experience in an extremism and terrorism prevention domain:** The counterterrorist activity of states is considered in the third module. Essential measures for elimination of the social basis of extremism and terrorism are exposed. A cooperation of special services and law enforcement authorities in the extremism and terrorism counteraction system is analyzed. The Russian Federation’s national security main strategies are defined and possible ways of some measures’ implementation are discussed.

**Russian Federation state policy on terrorism and extremism counteraction:** Here, the alteration of Russian law in the field of extremism and terrorism counteraction in the last years is overviewed, the institutional basis of the national extremism and terrorism counteraction system in Russia is explained, the extremism and terrorism counteraction system is discussed, extremism and terrorism prevention programmes in the Russian Federation are compared, the examples of examination of mass-media materials, content analysis of the Internet resources, agitation and other material with respect to presence of extremist statements and propaganda of extremism and terrorism activity are demonstrated.

**Extremism and terrorism prevention among youth:** Basic forms of aberrant and delinquent behavior of modern youth, their causes and consequences are analyzed in this part of the programme. Sociological monitoring of youth ubiety in the Republic of Tatarstan compared to the youth ubiety in other regions is presented. Deputy corps activity in the Republic of Tatarstan aimed to prevent delinquencies and extremism amongst different citizen classes is explained. Main technologies to disclose extremist tendencies in the young environment are clarified.

**Critical situations and extremism and terrorism psychology:** The whole module is dedicated to the study of critical situations. Crisis forms and their stages are examined. Close attention is brought to an extremism and terrorism psychology. Terrorism as a social psychological phenomenon and different terrorism motivating factors are analyzed. Principal ways to overcome critical and extreme situations are evoked. Psychological consequences of terrorist activity and problems of psychological reaction evaluation are determined.

**Extremism and terrorism as a form of conflict behavior:** Following notions are quite clearly shown within this module: “social (civil) security”, “political radicalism”, “political conflict”, “political extremism”, “political terrorism”. Goals and methods of terrorist activity are defined. Specificity of Russian political extremism and terrorism as also their main forms, reasons and principles of extension are carefully examined.

In addition to identification of methodological problems of the extremism and terrorism phenomena research, the role of conflictology and conflictology formation for the study of extremism and terrorism is brought up.

This programme embraces all possible extremism and terrorism extension tendencies and allows to lighten up the accumulated experience of the extremism and terrorism prevention as well as to investigate the possibilities of its usage in upcoming additional educational programmes.

October 2011 a specialized Centre for mediation, conflict resolution and extremism prevention was created at the Kazan Federal University and the educational programme for extremism and terrorism prevention is put into practice on its basis.

Composed by Kazan specialists a short-term professional development programme was launched for the first time in the context of realization of the state extremism and terrorism prevention target program in the Republic of Tatarstan 2012-2014 for people engaged in extremism and terrorism prevention activity in the institutes of higher education at the Centre for Mediation, conflict resolution and extremism prevention the 23 April, 2012. Other than that researchers of different departments as well as experts in practice from the department of Emergency Control Ministry of Russia in the Republic of Tatarstan, the Centre for extremism counteraction of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the Republic of Tatarstan, etc. were invited to hold exhibitory lectures, presentations and workshops.

The programme was finished by a round-table discussion where the overall results of the course were summed up the 2 July, 2012. The relevant questions of the

problem of detection of aggressive inclinations among people in educational institution that the listeners had were discussed. All of the graduates of this programme agreed on a common stand that such courses are extremely important because many of them don't have any clue what to do and how to behave themselves in case of threats of extremism emergence and they also underlined the need for their systematic conducting. All disputants participated in the elaboration of the universal organizational technologies for the detection of extremism oriented activities and on their counteraction on the basis of the existing legislation norms, ethical traditions of different institutes of higher education.

The next step of the realization of the extremism and terrorism prevention programme took place from 25-27 September 2012. This course was prepared for the secretaries of the antiterrorist commissions of 45 municipal units of Tatarstan. The programme has experienced several changes upon the recommendation of the senior management of the Antiterrorist Commission of the Republic of Tatarstan. In particular, it involved three main modules.

**Religious extremism and terrorism:** In the context of this module the examination started with the presentation of the norms of the Russian legislation in the field of extremism and terrorism counteraction. Afterwards the listeners analyzed and reviewed radical religious tendencies in the Republic of Tatarstan where a special discussion was held on the extremist trends in Islam and the examples of countering religious extremism in the Republic of Tatarstan were worked out. A regional measurement of religious conflicts in Russia with an approximate determination of the situation and a compilation of prospects of traditional Islam expansion in Tatarstan also were marked as important issues.

**Problem of youth extremism and security during World Student Games 2013 in Kazan:** In this part of the programme, psychological aspects of extremist and terrorist activity were scrutinized. Specific peculiarities of a mental state of people disposed to performing a terrorist act were explained to the students. Technologies of defining of extremist inclinations among youth such as consultation, mediation, negotiation were brought up in this module. The listeners found out security methods used during large-scale sport events (by the example of World Student Games in China). The unit was ended up by a discussion of main directions of the youth policy for extremism and terrorism prevention in the Republic of Tatarstan.

**State and public extremist and terrorist activity counteraction:** Present module covered the discussion of legal and organizational aspects of the antiterrorist policy of the Russian Federation. Extremism and terrorism prevention programmes in municipal units and particularly the procedure of their composition and concomitant complexities were of primary concern. One of the main discussed questions of this part of the course was the defining of ways and methods of extremism prevention among migrants where also the activity of extremist groups operating on the territory of the Republic of Tatarstan was analyzed.

Not only the experts of the Department of Conflict of the Kazan State University were invited to deliver lectures but also the representatives of security institutions, Ministries and Agencies of the Republic of Tatarstan, directly those taking part in the work connected to extremist activities and terrorist act counteraction, namely deputy Minister of the Youth Affairs, Sports and Tourism Ministry of the Republic of Tatarstan A. Kodratyev, representative of the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Tatarstan in charge of cooperation with the religious associations, vice president of the Autonomous non profit organization Executive Committee “Kazan-2013”, head of Kazan interregional expertise centre, head of the scientific advisory board of the Centre “Iman” as well as president of the Islamic University R. Mukhametshin.

At the end a seminar on the extremist and terrorist activity prevention in the Republic of Tatarstan took place where participants of the antiterrorist commissions made their reports about the situation in their districts. It was discovered that there was also a large interest of participation in the study through this programme but it is not as strongly marked as in the first case. In that regard one can presume that low effectiveness of extremism and terrorism prevention can be explained through the lack of the material interest as well as their linkage to the workplace. Some changes occurred in this sphere 2013 the antiterrorist commission representatives obtained a long-awaited status of municipal officials in the districts.

As long as the main reasons of the realization of the state target programme for extremism and terrorism prevention in the Republic of Tatarstan 2012-2014 are the avoidance and prevention of conflicts on the social, ethnic and confessional basis; the formation of public opinion in regard to shaping of a zero tolerance of population towards the emergence of extremism and terrorism ideology; than it is possible to conclude that the educational programme on extremism and terrorism prevention of the Kazan Federal University improves its quality in the process of its development.

The next stage of the realization of this programme was accomplished in the first semester 2013. It was prepared for agitators and propagandists (in the counterterrorist field) working with the population of different regions of the Republic of Tatarstan. Above-mentioned stage included three modules:

**Theoretical and methodological basis of propaganda:** This module begins with the explanation of the organizational and legal framework of extremist and terrorist activity where video materials as well as the examples accompanied by the commentaries of experts of such activity in the Tatarstan regions are used.

Detailed analysis of traditional and radical Islam emergence follows afterwards. Since, electronic media is also quite popular in the regions it is important to take into consideration the possible ways of antiterrorist propaganda in the internet.

**Active listening techniques as the propaganda base:** One of the main working skills for a professional agitator as it see the researchers of the programme, is the effective communication and consequently a big part of this unit is dedicated to the question of establishing of an effective communication. Psychology of communication, general techniques of active listening, principles of rhetoric used for research with population are closely examined with the agitators.

**Methods of propaganda:** After obtaining new skills and knowledge it seems important to study informational campaigns from the practical point of view. It is followed by the formation of the agitators regarding the research with the media their role in coverage of the extremist and terrorist activity and analysis of propaganda materials for the counterterrorism activity.

The necessity of the informational campaigns study is explained by the perception of the information coming through the media channels by a broader audience as the most important and relevant. The functioning of the Russian media is regulated by the law of the Russian Federation “On mass media” of 27.12.1991, N 2124-1. Traditional media (television, radio and press) create topics for public discussion, influence public opinion. The modern media transforms not just into an instrument of reflection but of constructing of a social reality. That is why, it is crucial to understand which “reality impressions” of terroristic acts are build by mass-media (Nurutdinova, 2013). The absence of feedback, impossibility for the audience to reply is one the major disadvantages of traditional media.

The opportunity to influence the character of the information spread is granted in the internet. A new

communicative sphere generated absolutely new communication conditions a person is able not just to respond to a message (two-way communication), he or she can become communicator himself/herself, so to say the dichotomy communicator/recipient is not that rigid. More than that new communication possibilities are used for the spread of materials with extremist ideas despite the attempt of censure implementation in the internet. One of the examples of the internet communication effectiveness was the arrival to Moscow of more than a thousand residents of South regions of Russia December 2010 in order to support the representatives of ethnic minorities victims of street riots. End 2013 the representatives of Caucas ethnics succeeded to prepare a massive hundred thousand participant demonstration in Moscow for the protection of migrants in the capital from the arbitrariness of right-wing extremists. And only because of agile and adequate actions of the authorities, diaspora leaders and public such a demonstration was prevented.

During the educational courses the listeners obtained skills of analysis of evident and latent content of the media messages of finding materials with an extremist orientation of reaction to a spread of “doubtful” information.

Summer 2013 another stage of formation for the antiterrorist committees members from municipal districts took place. By that time they had already changed their status and composition (>80%). The programme went afterwards into the cities and regions of republic on the basis of itinerant sessions and preventive readings (lectures, talks, discussions, seminars) for various citizen groups. Among them were public education workers, specialized and technical schools students, educators. The potential of work with the representatives of staff, middle and senior managers, trade union activists is not fully exhausted.

The 2012 extremism and terrorism prevention programmes were fulfilled for the first time by the Department of Conflict and Centre for mediation, conflict resolution and extremism prevention employees on the commercial basis outside of the Republic of Tatarstan. Specialized courses were held particularly in the Republic of Bashkortostan, the Tyumen Oblast, the Chuvash Republic. Applications for the organization of the special courses on extremism and terrorism prevention were received from the republics of the North Caucas and the Krasnodar Region. Fall 2014 (September to October) a traditional professional development for the antiterrorist Committees members from municipal districts is planned.

So that the courses graduates do not lose the obtained knowledge on the topic, the lecturing staff has prepared an electronic educational course (accessible on

the Kazan Federal University web-page) not only for the benefit of further remote support of the listeners graduated the courses but for anyone interested in the topic. Each registered in the “Electronic University” can obtain the possibility to familiarize with it distantly. On the basis of the above considerations it’s reasonable to conclude that:

It is necessary to increase constantly the scientific and methodical levels of educational programmes on extremism and terrorism prevention. The programmes that are based on the invariance of study postulates of extremism and terrorism prevention can not be effective.

An important part of the professional development courses is the system approach to their realization. It means in this context a specification of audience going through professional development and a special training for lecturing staff to satisfy their needs. Such a way of accomplishment of an educational prevention programme allows its high-quality fulfillment. It is also possible to agree with the statement of Russian conflictologist Tereshina (2012) saying it is obligatory to adjust constantly the teaching method during the process of presenting of the informational material to the listeners. Teaching method is not a code of hard and fast rules or technologies. It should be revised and improved regularly (Tereshina, 2012).

## RESULTS

Main problems of extremist and terrorist activity, particularly in Tatarstan are not researched well enough. It is only possibly to estimate roughly the number of people sympathizing extremist ideologies but it not likely to speak about specific factors that brought a person or a group into an extremist environment. These conclusions base upon separate trivial observations in many respects and not upon strictly scientific researches. That’s why, the study process should be built on the basis of extremism and terrorist communities research as well as it should attract actively the representatives of the scientific world for applied consultations in the frame of the extremism and terrorism counteraction.

Methodic materials (booklets, handbooks, CD’s, etc.) based on the results of realization of each prevention programme should be prepared and issued for their hand out among people risking to be introduced into the organizations of an extremist or terrorist nature. If somebody professing extremist ideas is revealed, then it would be correct to prepare and to implement just now psychological correction programmes favoring their “come back” into an everyday reality that should be made by court’s ruling. A number of issues rise in the process

of realization of a prevention programme which should be resolved to the extent possible. Let's focus on some of them.

The first issue is linked to the "reverse effect" of prevention programmes as they capture an unnecessary interest, attract people by magnificent foreign words, especially the youth. People need to be explained that terrorism is the biggest evil crime against morality, ethics. Killing people in peace time can not be justified by any good will. Unhealthy interest born among youngsters after watching a broadcast about a closure of a radical religions parish, a deletion of certain websites can sometimes provoke their attraction towards "forbidden fruit", prompt them to search for possibilities to participate in extremist groups and organizations.

The second issue is related to a minimum role of civil society structures in the prevention research. Even members of the antiterrorist committees want to be a part of the wheels of state, risen their status but it is only possible to suppress extremism and terrorism working in network forms as the state is not capable of it being in essence hierarchical structure. A close interaction of the civil society with the state is essential in order to eliminate those social conditions causing extremism and terrorism.

The third issue has to do with the fact that prevention programmes should modernize along with the higher education system taking particularly in consideration the promotion of the Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University in "Top-100" programme.

The rise of quantity of foreign students from China, India, Thailand, Indonesia, African and Arabic countries shows a presence of many risks. Ample changes in the composition of professor and student corps of the university that are going to be made in the upcoming years will demand different personnel management, a vast modification of pastoral work and of the character of most events on extremist prevention.

Russia has just eliminated the possibilities of Islamic education abroad but now we are obliged to open other "loopholes" for salafist ideas infiltration into Russia which is contradictory to the traditions and leads towards dysfunctional proneness to conflict, extremism and terrorism. Risks need to be measured and eliminated. Revision of the Russian education is vital for the Russian Federation. The globalized growing-points in the Russian educational system should not be a threat for the national sovereignty and security but work for the raise of effectiveness and quality of the domestic university community.

The fourth issue is connected to the financing of the prevention and security programmes. This function

is performed traditionally by the state. There are programmes on the federal and regional levels many municipal programmes have appeared recently. However, local government in Russia is more of a continuation of state functions rather than an element of civil society.

Business entities usually do not have a desire to finance counteraction programmes or security projects. But the expectation of economic effect in this case is unjustifiable. Still the decrease of extremism and terrorist threats facilitates not only social stability but also germinates positive social practices.

The fifth issue is a not always adequate content of prevention programmes which are concentrated in most cases on lectures, discussions, "round tables", conferences. There is no doubt that these forms are essential and useful in extremism and terrorism prevention but such a social group as youth is not adapted to traditional methods of antiterrorist propaganda, finds them boring and useless. That's why, the role of visual agitation forms that include demonstration of videos, their analysis with the help of professors, substitution of written texts with electronic presentation rises significantly nowadays. Special electronic applications for tablet PC's and mobile phones are of a great importance.

It is clear that there are more problems of execution of extremism and terrorism prevention programmes. But the above-mentioned are essential in the opinion. Their effective resolution will promote higher potency of the existing prevention programmes and rise of the productivity of counter-terror activity.

## CONCLUSION

Thereby, extremism and terrorism prevention is a permanently transforming process that embraces more and more new practices since the constant change of modern society causes agile development of different methods of dissemination of these negative phenomena.

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