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GROUP VIOLATIONS OF PUBLIC ORDER: METHODS AND PROCEDURES FOR AMELIORATING CRISIS SITUATIONS

TALMACI Valentin

Military Academy "Alexandru cel Bun", Republic of Moldova

Abstract

The present article describes the evolution of group violations of public order during mass demonstrations, but also some methods and procedures for ameliorating crisis situations. In the context of the elaborated study, the circumstances in which peaceful demonstrations turn into violent ones are formulated, based on the indicators that characterize the process of their degeneration, the influence of the number of people who join the gathering. The tense conditions of the situation are described, with an emphasis on those case in which the manifestation can be difficult to control. The stages of transition from peaceful to violent demonstrations are also presented during the chapters of this paper. The conditions for the emergence and tension of conflict situations are described, based on some requirements of the participants, which can be: economic, political, social, religious. The study aims to take a look at the broad description of the methods of amelioration of crisis situations and the principles of involvement of public order forces, but also to determine the proper directions of communication, in order to avoid tensions and violence, which may take place during public demonstrations. Research of the indicated subject with proposals regarding the improvement and development of the public order system will also be an objective of the final part of the paper.

Key Words: public order; crisis management public manifestations, demonstrations, conflict situations

1. Introduction

The socio-economic and political situation in the country in certain circumstances can cause social tensions and conflicts, which lead to consequences in the field of public order and security. The psychological pressure of the masses of people can exceed the minimum level of severity and turn into violence. National and international practice has demonstrated that the undecided actions, unjustified intervention or tactical errors of the public order forces generate tragic consequences, resulting in human and material losses. In this sense, the study of the evolution of group violations of public order during demonstrations, but also the methods of improving the crisis situation, is motivated. This approach assumes, first of all, the description of the evolution of group violations of public order, as well as the circumstances in which peaceful demonstrations can be transformed into violent ones, indicators that characterize the given transformation process, the influence of the number of people who join the gathering.

The destabilization of public order includes stages of transition from peaceful demonstrations to violence, which are the following: organizational, initial, active and final. The conditions for the appearance and tension of conflict situations, the requirements of the participants are described. The conditions in which the aggressive crowd moves to actions, their character and consequences, the actions of law enforcement bodies in combating and liquidating the consequences of mass disturbances are described.

The issue in question requires the analysis of the methods of improving crisis situations and the principles of involvement of public order forces. These are based on the main directions of communication in order to avoid tensions and violence that may occur during public demonstrations, but also the need for the psychological knowledge of the crowd by the law enforcement agencies in



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the actions to ensure and restore public order. In the circumstances where the public demonstration is not aimed at breaking the law, the actions of the public order forces must not produce negative effects.

The discussion of the problem assumes a systemic approach to public order in the case of illegal demonstrations, which implies the improvement and development of the public order system, such as: reorganization of the current system and architecture of public order and security; the reorganization of the General Carabineer Inspectorate into Carabineer Troops within the Ministry of Internal Affairs with an increase in the number of military personnel; equipping the special forces with high-performance protective equipment, combat weapons, modern technology; creation of animal maintenance and training subdivisions (dogs and horses) to ensure, maintain and restore public order.

2. Particularities of The Development of Violations of Public Order

The analysis of the demonstrations that took place in the country and beyond its borders have shown that the representatives of the law enforcement forces, but also the local and central authorities, are not always aware in time of the evolution of the transformation from a peaceful demonstration to a violent one, as well as the result of this fact, which can follow in following the violent actions of the protesters.

A relatively peaceful demonstration can turn into a violent one in case of conflict situations. The respective situations can be determined by mobilizing speeches, by the appearance of some people who are treated with hostility or by the decrease in the intensity of the specific measures of law enforcement [11,p.5-9].

Recently, illegalities committed by various internal social groups, as well as transnational ones, have increased and become widespread [2],[4,p143],[14, p. 272-274]. A category of such manifestations are mass disorders, based on a series of factors from the fields of: economic, social, political, religious, race relations, nationality, the presence or absence of moral values and attitudes, armed conflicts and wars in region, near the country's borders etc.

In the process of transforming peaceful assemblies into violent ones, the following is attested:

- Non-subordination of the crowd to the legal request of the authorities to disperse and stop any illegal actions.
- The submission of illegal demands by the demonstrators, with the aim of provoking the representatives of the law.
- Aggressive behavior, manifested by the demonstrators committing massacres, causing fires, robberies, vandalism, pogroms, destruction and other similar actions.
- Resisting legal authorities, with the use of weapons or other objects dangerous to life.
- The actions, characteristic of the criminal elements on the part of the demonstrators.

The courage and impertinence of the members of a demonstration increases simultaneously with the number of people who join the gathering. The leaders of the demonstration consistently design their actions to convert and attract curious people to the mood of the crowd.

The tendencies to commit antisocial acts are much more obvious, they can take an acute collective form and in a short time they can reach the peak of criminality. At this stage the manifestation is very difficult to control. A crowd can also become tense due to fear or hatred and produce violence or deep negative states. Tense situations can also occur due to the incitement and inappropriate actions of some people or an opposing group.



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3. Stages Of Escalation In Violence

As a result of studying the cases of involvement of public order forces to resolve conflict situations in demonstrations, a set of stages of escalation from peaceful demonstrations to violent ones was determined. The given stages can arise both spontaneously and planned to the intentions and interests of some people or groups [5, p.160-167],[10,p.5-9],[12, 206, 214].

Escalation involves the following stages:

The organizational stage. The organizers and those in charge of the future protest meet and discuss the plan, requirements, intentions, actions, material, financial, logistical assurance and approach of the protest, as well as its authorization or non-authorization in the legal courts. The plans of its actions, of protesters and supporters, the manner and forms of protest, the leaders' speeches, the travel routes to the place of the event and those of withdrawal are also coordinated.

Taking into account the intentions of the organizers, the actions of well-prepared groups in the field of provocations of violence and material devastation during the event can also be discussed. At this stage, the public order forces often do not have extensive information about the upcoming protest. In the given case, through methods of infiltration of liaison agents, through secret and conspiratorial actions, necessary data is obtained for the management of the situation of the planned event.

The initial stage. This stage is characterized by the emergence and tension of conflict situations. These situations can be diverse, expressed through dissatisfaction regarding the organization of events and protests against certain actions of the authorities. The conflict situation can arise both gradually and spontaneously, including due to incorrect actions of law enforcement officials.

Often, the appearance of forces equipped with shields, batons, helmets and other equipment or special means of combat is perceived as a limitation of freedoms. The representatives of the civil society who participate in the meetings hardly believe in the peaceful intentions of the representatives of the legal bodies, aimed only at ensuring public security.

Active stage. This stage represents a period when the aggressive crowd moves to actions, if the demands are rejected. As a rule, these actions are illegal, and the consequences are serious. Participants can block traffic arteries, disrupt the normal rhythm of activity in the conflict zone, overturn cars, devastate, set fire, vandalize, profane, commit acts of violence, etc.

The final stage. The final stage is characterized by the annihilation of the aggressive actions of the crowd following the complex actions of law enforcement agencies in combating and liquidating the consequences of mass disturbances. The police and the carabinieri undertake special operations in order to disperse the crowd, identify, detain and prosecute the guilty persons based on the evidence collected.

4. Improvement of Crisis Situations Through The Involvement Of Public Order Forces

In order to avoid tensions and violence that may occur during public demonstrations, the communication component of the intervention must be directed towards the following:

- Negotiation of controversial issues before the public demonstration;
- Establishing agreements between the representatives of public order forces and those who wish to express their opinions through public demonstration;
- Knowing the goals of a demonstration and the responsibilities of public order forces.

Well-organized public demonstrations, led by a leader to achieve illegal goals, are more difficult to keep under control and meet the conditions of medium or high risk degrees. In the case of illegal public demonstrations, they must be dispersed peacefully, diplomatically, skillfully and calmly. In such cases law enforcement may themselves cause disorder if they display indiscretion,



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hostility, preconceived notions, indecisiveness, untimely intervention or use of force beyond what is necessary.

During the intervention of law enforcement in ensuring public security, a series of ethical and tactical principles must be respected. Law enforcement representatives must avoid excessive emotional involvement, they will be neutral and will not make comments. As a matter of priority, the measures that do not arouse negative reactions among the demonstrators are imposed. For this purpose, the method of persuasion is applied, which can be expressed in various forms: dialogue, addresses, explanations, negotiations, mediation [13]. The final goal involves reconciliation or refusal to violent actions. Celebrities, leaders, well-known athletes or artists, clergy can be involved as negotiators.

If the method of persuasion does not provide results, and the conflict has an aggressive character, accompanied by violence from the crowd, the tactic of the law enforcement forces should be different. In such situations, the application, within the limits of the law, of the coercive measures method is justified [15, p.169-173]. In the given case, the main condition is that law enforcement must be maximally active, take the initiative, the actions must have an offensive character, but with the condition that the damage caused to bodily, moral or patrimonial integrity is minimal.

If the situation requires the intervention of force to ensure public order, then the provisions of the Code of Conduct for persons responsible for maintaining law and order, as well as the basic principles regarding the use of force and firearms, must be strictly observed.

Coercion methods also involve actions such as the forced dispersal of the meeting, which consists of the following steps [5, p.167],[7]:

- the event organizer's request that the participants leave the meeting place;
- giving the participants a reasonable time to leave the meeting place;
- repeated warning, after giving the participants a reasonable time to leave the meeting place;
- after the repeated warning, the police will take active measures to disperse the meeting at the request of the representative of the local public administration. The police authorities will draw up a report on the fact of the forced dispersal of the meeting, indicating the reason and basis.

5. System Improvement Particulars For Insurance Of Public Order (case of the Republic of Moldova)

Analyzing the situation of the Republic of Moldova, the intervention to restore order and public safety is carried out at the national level by the specialized structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The other structures participate in the execution of the intervention to restore public order according to their legal powers and competences. It is necessary to mention that the current model is not perfect and sufficient to meet all challenges and threats. The current system of ensuring, maintaining and restoring public order cannot cover all the needs, in exceptional cases and mass disturbances throughout the territory of the Republic of Moldova, due to insufficient forces and means.

The General Carabineer Inspectorate of the MAI, according to the National Strategy for order and public security, has the main responsibilities and obligations to restore public order[3],[8], which is still on the way to reforms, where at the moment, they cannot by itself meets the necessary number of personnel intended for the management of crisis situations. The current strategy does not provide how exactly the carabineer act, under what conditions, with what forces, means, weaponry, technique, what combat devices to have in general and how much effective minimum is needed.

The architecture of the public order and security system does not have an integrated, interoperable and compatible character, it does not correspond to the current requirements, which arise from situations of challenges and direct and indirect threats from inside and outside the



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country. This situation also does not provide for a single, modern, appropriate and broad leadership with all possible state institutions, involved at the national level in crisis situations. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, according to its competences, cannot take over the total leadership of all the forces and institutions involved at the national level. In order to effectively carry out the necessary actions, it is important that the Ministry of Internal Affairs organizes the qualitative training of human resources and structures involved in ensuring, maintaining and restoring public order.

From these considerations, some directions for reforming the national system of ensuring, maintaining and restoring public order are clearly required, such as:

1. The need to reorganize the current system and architecture of order and public security in a system capable of ensuring quality public services and the safety of society and the state.
2. Reorganization of the General Carabineer Inspectorate into Carabineer Troops within the Ministry of Internal Affairs by increasing the number of military personnel.
3. Equipping the special forces with high-performance personal protection equipment, special means, combat weapons, modern technology-intervention helicopters, armored, semi-armored tankers with water cannon, special intervention vehicles for different groups of combat devices, means of special transport for the force, drones and unmanned aerial vehicles for documenting crisis situations, special means permitted by law, devices with a temporary effect of visual blindness and auditory blocking.
4. Within the General Inspectorate of Carabineer, it will be reasonable to create subdivisions for the maintenance and training of dogs and horses to ensure, maintain and restore public order.

6. Conclusion

From the experience of the demonstrations that took place, it was demonstrated that the representatives of the public order forces, but also the local and central authorities, are not always aware in time of the evolution of the transformation from a peaceful demonstration to a violent one, as well as the result of the consequences, which may follow the actions violent protests. From these considerations, it is necessary to describe the evolution of group violations of public order, the circumstances in which peaceful demonstrations can be transformed into violent ones, indicators that characterize the described process, stages of transition from peaceful demonstrations to violent ones: organizational, initial, active and the final. Conditions for the emergence and tension of conflict situations are described, as well as the requirements of the participants, which can be economic, political, social, and religious.

In the context of managing a crisis of this kind, the strictures of coercion relate to communication in order to avoid tensions and violence, the need for the psychological knowledge of the crowd for the law enforcement agencies, the need to respect the ethical and tactical principles, specific to the activity of the law enforcement forces during the intervention to ensure security public.

In the context of the aforementioned, the systemic approach to the national capacity to combat mass disorder remains a decisive landmark. This fact is directly related to the improvement and development of the public order system, which include the reorganization of the current public order and security system and architecture, the reorganization of the General Carabineer Inspectorate into Carabineer Troops with an increase in the number of military personnel, equipping the special forces with high-performance equipment personal protection, special means, combat weapons, modern technique, creation of animal maintenance and training subdivisions (dogs and horses) to ensure, maintain and restore public order.



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