

# Perspectives of the organised crime and terrorism growth

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## **Abstract**

Organised crime and terrorism are the forms of group-crime. Despite various differences, there are also many similarities between them, such as their dynamic development. Variety of factors contribute to this, including globalization and technological progress. The former affects their international character, while the latter allows the flexibility of adaptation to changing conditions. For some terrorist organizations their source of income is a criminal activity, so the involvement of criminal groups in the actions of terrorist groups cannot be excluded. It is visible that these forms of crime are becoming more and more similar, both of them looking for new opportunities for their business.

**Keywords:** organised crime, terrorism, the perspective of organised crime and terrorism, the similarity of organised crime and terrorism

About 200 years ago, organised crime was a phenomenon known only in some areas of the world and was a rather local problem of those communities. Influence of social, economic, historical, or political changes, together with the development of technology caused organised crime to become a problem of international scope. Present terrorism and its scale, which threaten modern social, political and economic order, show similar characteristics as organised crime.

Statistical figures, collected by specific services, uniformed services, analysts and scientists, are most helpful in order to attempt to assess present threats of organised crime and terrorism, and predict most probable directions of their growth. Any attempt of forecasting changes or directions of future threats must be based on objective analysis of the current interests of organised crime and terrorist groups, correlations of current social and economic situation in the area of their operation and their future activity, as well as effectiveness of means devoted to combating them. (<sup>1</sup>Misiuk A. (ed.), *Centralne Biuro Śledcze. Dziesięć lat doświadczeń (2000-2010)*. Szczytno 2010, p. 22.)

Those who research organized crime, indicate various factors of its development: socio-economic, related to the crime itself (i.e. seeking more sophisticated, and thus effective, ways of committing crimes); resulting from ineffectiveness of law enforcement authorities operation or delays in preparation of the proper legal solutions; psychological (a sense of danger, helplessness or ineffectiveness of police, prosecutors, or judicial authorities).

(<sup>2</sup><http://www.nauki-spoeczne.info/przestepczosc-zorganizowana>, accessed on 10.10.2016)

Complex criminal groups, developing especially fast in states with weak central authorities, countries during political system transformation, or those ethnically heterogeneous, aim at keeping the existing political and social order unchanged. Internal weaknesses of the country enable and favour creation of the parallel authorities beside the officially existing, but inefficient, ones. In such case, criminal structures take control over roles that normally the legal authorities are in charge of. These cover the security, fiscal, or even judicial functions and bodies.<sup>(3)</sup>Cichomski M., Madej K., Przenikanie się przestępczości zorganizowanej i terroryzmu [in:] Zubrzycki W. (ed.), *Przeciwdziałanie zagrożeniom terrorystycznym w Polsce*, Warsaw 2011, p. 97–98.)

Organised crime is an international phenomenon. It demonstrates high level of trans-regional movement and cooperation, too. Criminals use modern communication means, which include data transformation, radio communication, or airline connections. Influencing the authorities is another important factor that impedes combating organised crime. Such actions involve influencing police authorities, as well as industrial, construction, immigrant, or duty authorities, bodies in charge of issuing permits for driving vehicles and authorisations of these vehicles in a public traffic, fiscal and tax authorities, prosecutors and courts of law, or residency offices. It should be noted that organised crime aims at activities which generate the highest financial resources. In turn, general criminality targets protecting the interests being realised and securing them from another competitive criminal groups.<sup>(4)</sup>Aleksandrowicz T., *Terroryzm międzynarodowy*, Warsaw 2008, p. 321.)

The most lucrative activities of organised crime groups, not only in Europe, but also globally, include: the production and trafficking of drugs, trafficking of weapons, and increasingly human trafficking. Other significant financial sources involve: trafficking of stolen luxurious cars, pieces of art, forced exactions, financial crimes, money laundering, prostitution, or computer crimes. Financial means obtained from these sources are invested in properties on the French Riviera, in Alps, or luxurious districts in Paris, as well as in purchasing expensive hotels, restaurants, casinos, or shares in large industrial plants. The money, obtained through crimes, are laundered most often in Germany or on Caribbean islands (<sup>5</sup>Rau Z., *Przestępczość zorganizowana w Polsce i jej zwalczanie*, Cracow 2002, p. 59.) Another significant activity of transnational organised groups is weapons and their parts trafficking.

Most often such an activity is performed by highly specialised corporations and international companies, set up even just for one transaction. It is also common that illegal transactions are covered by small consulting companies operation. Such companies most often disappear after the completed transaction. It is very alarming that not only the demand for rifles, pistols, or grenades is rising, but also the demand for tanks, torpedo boats, latest combat aircrafts, or nuclear rocket launchers. The most common recipients of such transactions involve countries in which regular military conflicts take place, especially in Africa, Asia, Middle and Near East or Balkans.

Another dangerous type of crime, which has risen in the recent years, is human trafficking. It is estimated that 4-6 million people are illegally smuggled in the world every year, which brings about 5 billion dollars yearly to the organised groups involved in this activity (<sup>6</sup>Mądrzejowski W., *Przestępczość zorganizowana. System zwalczania*, Warsaw 2008, p. 72.) Such criminals look for people whose current situation is difficult – unemployed, people with many problems or debtors. They rather choose young and poor people. Many victims are forced for prostitution or to work in the pornography industry. Human trafficking may also involve forcing to work as a home help service, to work in a farming industry, or to work in companies focused on the exploitation of a labor force. To recruit men, women and children, criminals most often use force, deception, or coercion. In order to subordinate the victims, criminals also rape, beat and imprison their victims. Physical violence is present mostly in the first phase of repression, labelled the adaptation period. False job offers are also a typical way of recruiting people. For instance, women and children apply for the offers for bartenders, home help, or dancers abroad, and after arriving are forced into prostitution.

Given the globalised nature of transnational organised crime, new areas of the organised crime groups' interests are worth noting. Very dangerous, as well as widely widespread, is human organ trade. Turkish mafia, which specialises in human smuggling to Europe, is one of mostly advanced groups involved in the organ trafficking. Another sad fact is organ trade involving children and citizens of the poorest post-communist countries. Unofficial sources report that a kidney on the eastern black market costs approximately 1500 dollars. Transplantations are most often performed in Greece or Turkey.

Romanian and Bulgarian organised crime groups began to specialise in information technology criminality. Romanian groups specialise in phishing and skimming. Phishing involves setting up fake websites of banks or credit institutions. After they became publicly available, criminals send emails to the bank customers and ask for access credentials, codes and passwords for their private accounts. Skimming involves copying magnetic stripes of the credit cards. When criminals obtain the stripe of the card, they produce a copy of it, which may be used as the original one. In order to acquire PIN number, they install electronic devices in ATM machines (e.g. mini cameras). It is also common to install miniature data

readers on the payment terminals in supermarkets or restaurants (<sup>7</sup>Filipkowski W., *Zwalczanie przestępczości zorganizowanej w aspekcie finansowym*, Cracow 2004, p. 29.)

The number of organised crime groups which commit economic crimes is rising quickly. International organised crime displaces money from the territories of the countries, which threatens legal financial operations, corrupts financial markets, lowers trust to financial and banking systems, damages fair and proper economic competition, and finally leads to the slowdown of economic growth (<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p.31.) Organised crime significantly influences destabilisation of the state, too. It may even lead to collapse of some specific branches of industry and significantly decrease fiscal budget of the state (<sup>9</sup>Aleksandrowicz T., *Terroryzm...*, *op. cit.*, p. 321.) It is obvious that this kind of criminality will spread, not only locally, but also in a global scale. New generations of organised crime groups members value education, speak foreign languages. Ongoing globalisation causes that the physical frontiers are not real barriers anymore. Highly educated and qualified people are employed by the organised groups to commit specific types of crimes, or commit these crimes by themselves taking benefit of their unique qualifications.

The world of the organised crime is full of big money, ruthlessness and brutality, very often connected to the world of politics and business, which makes it very difficult to combat this type of crime. One of the biggest challenges to the current world is transnational organised crime, which systematically increases its turnover. Terrorist organisations are also developing dynamically, especially in the areas of weak power of state authorities and services. There is, however, significant difference between terrorist organisations and organised crime groups. The latter benefit from the aforementioned weakness of state bodies, so as to introduce new system, demanded by those communities. So the target is not to introduce parallel authorities, as in the case of organised crime groups, but to introduce new, alternative power taking control over the area. So the essence of functioning of terrorist organisations and radical communities connected with them is the confrontation based on actions of asymmetric character – the confronted sides are not equivalent and have different resources and possibilities of fighting (<sup>10</sup>Cichomski M., Madej K., *Przenikanie się...*, *op. cit.*, p. 99.)

Growth of terrorism is reflected in rising number and quality of terrorist attacks, as well as in terrorists' motivation and types of resources used by them. An important threat is their possibility to use weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, biological, chemical and radiological). Recently, many terrorist groups have shown an interest in obtaining such weapons, because it enables mass attack on people and animals, as well as mass destruction and pollution of infrastructure, grounds and huge areas in a relatively short time. (<sup>11</sup>Marcinko M., *Terroryzm nuklearny — realne zagrożenie czy political fiction?*, [www.psz.pl/content/view/2242/](http://www.psz.pl/content/view/2242/), accessed on 10.10.2016)

Perspectives of growth of terrorism result from internal circumstances and situation in specific countries and their external policy. From a European perspective, the situation in the Near East is especially concerning, e.g. because of numerous immigrants from those regions in Europe. Currently, Europe is becoming more and more diverse in terms of culture, religion, and language. Mobility of people and migration processes are another additional factors that influence social structures in majority of European countries. Immigrant communities do not easily assimilate with locals, leading to separate themselves in ethnic minorities and possible promotion of anti-western opinions and policy. Multicultural society, which consists of people of diverse beliefs, habits, and values, can become a source of conflict. Rising unemployment and decrease of social benefits are problems which almost all European countries face nowadays. Social conflicts, resulting from these problems, may eventually lead to future terrorist actions. It is also possible, that similar actions may be performed by disappointed and embittered European citizens. (<sup>12</sup><http://www.terroryzm.com/przyszlosc-terroryzmu/>, accessed on 10.10.2016.)

Most probably, fanatic Islamic extremists and terrorist attacks organised by them will remain a big threat in Europe. This is because the religious norms and rules are a core of modern terrorism. In the 20th century, the number of such groups increased significantly. Nowadays, radical factions of Islamic fundamentalism have become an especially dangerous aspect of religious terrorism. They believe that terrorism is a proper form of fight and a way to create a Muslim world. For those terrorists, violence is the sacramental act, or their responsibility coming from god's precept. Muslims believe that Islam is universal and should be a religion of all humans in the world, and using terrorist methods for its spread is, to some extent, a way of Islamic societies' revolt against the influx of western culture, values and patterns. The terrorism of immigrants sympathizing with Islamism should be considered, too. On the other hand, an outburst of the rightist extremism against emigrants and ethnic minorities may also be potentially dangerous. It would probably result in the response of the attacked communities. Countries with the numerous Muslim minorities, reluctant to integration, are especially exposed for such confrontation. These include e.g. France, Netherlands, or Germany. (<sup>13</sup>Zubrzycki W., *Terroryzm jako zagrożenie dzisiejszego i przyszłego bezpieczeństwa* [in:] Nowakowska-Krystman A., Zubrzycki W., Daniluk P., Mazur-Cieślak E., *Terroryzm w ujęciu analiz strategicznych*, Warsaw 2015, p. 98.)

It is rather improbable that ethnic and ideological conflicts would not happen in the following years. The policy of civil freedom, or freedom of ethnic, religious and sexual minorities, can also cause dissatisfaction of specific groups of society and lead to use of drastic means as a resistance to that policy. It is also worth noting that civil rights and freedom, introduced in European countries, favour such activities.

Internal terrorism has been disappearing in the recent years. However, despite the peace process, resumption of the organisations, such as ETA or IRA, is not impossible. It is probable that Islamic terrorists may try to recruit their members from European extremists. New leftist organisations may emerge (anarchist communities, alter-globalists, radical environmentalists, animal rights supporters, or even homosexual groups) in response to problems of widely understood globalisation processes (unemployment, cultural stagnation). It may be expected that incidental terrorism will also occur, and will be performed by new social movements (ecological, animalistic, feministic, or even homosexual), or desperate individuals. In the first case, such terrorism may be a tool used for getting public opinion attention and avoiding victims, although its evolution towards extremist methods cannot be excluded.<sup>(14)</sup><http://www.terroryzm.com/przyszlosc-terroryzmu/>, accessed on 10.10.2016.)

The case of Ukraine shows that the political order in Europe is not stable. It is obviously happening in the East, but also to a lesser extent, in the western Europe. Western political crisis results from political and economic crisis of the euro zone in stagnation and deflation. It affects not only economy as a whole, but also politics, which is even more dangerous. It is visible in the lack of European solidarity and growth in popularity of anti-western and anti-European and pro-Russian extreme leftist and rightist political parties.<sup>(15)</sup>Rostowski J., *Europa dwóch kryzysów*,[http://m.wyborcza.pl/wyborcza/1,105405,17348772,Europa\\_dwoch\\_kryzysow.html](http://m.wyborcza.pl/wyborcza/1,105405,17348772,Europa_dwoch_kryzysow.html), accessed on 10.10.2016.)

European countries do not demonstrate the unity against Russian aggression in Ukraine. From a broader perspective of that conflict, USA and Russia as recent allies in the fight against terrorism, also expose different positions. Such a situation favours external threats, including intensification of terrorist organisations activities in the Near East.<sup>(16)</sup>Zubrzycki W., *Terroryzm jako zagrożenie ...*, op. cit., p. 98.)

When it comes to types and potential terrorist attacks targets, radical changes should not be expected. Widely available public areas will remain most exposed to the attacks. They include public transport, mass events, hotels and tourist attractions, crowded and busy municipal areas. Another type of potential targets include state and public administration offices, industrial plants, national defence infrastructure, or national and religious symbols. Critical infrastructure may also be targeted by the terrorists. There are two factors of the number of victims of such terrorist attacks. The first one is terrorists' motivation. Islamic organisations tend to maximise number of killed and injured victims, whereas the attacks of separatist groups are of less destructive impact in order to avoid pointed negative reception. The second element contains technical and organisational resources and possibilities of a specific terrorist group. They play a key role in a level of sophistication of the planned attack,

as well as a choice of means used during the action.<sup>(17)</sup>Ibid.) Terrorism experts also warn that suicidal terrorism may reach every country in the world, even geographically and religiously very distant from its source. It may not only be related exclusively to the religion of attackers, but also to the politics.<sup>(18)</sup>Reuter C., *Zamachowcy-samobójcy. Współczesność i historia*, Warsaw 2003, p. 289.)

In order to achieve political goals, the engagement of criminal groups in terrorist activities, as well as cooperation with them, cannot be excluded, too. In such cases, criminal groups would be treated instrumentally and used because of their potential and mobility. Organised crime may act as a criminal support to realise the political program of parties of extreme views and methods of operation, or separatist standpoint. It is possible that the activity of criminal groups would couple with terrorist actions. On the other hand, the conclusion that typical criminal groups activities, and methods used by them, will be used exclusively for the realisation of political targets and their character will gradually change to political terrorism, is rather too broad. It should not be omitted though that terrorist organisations may exploit their criminal potential and mobility in order to achieve own goals.<sup>(19)</sup>Pływaczewski E., *Wokół związków terroryzmu z przestępczością zorganizowaną*, „Policja” 2008, No 1, p. 18.)

In 1995, 17 categories of transnational crimes, committed by organised crime groups or ideological groups, were set within the United Nations organisation. They include:

- 1) Money laundering;
- 2) Terrorism;
- 3) Theft of pieces of art and material culture objects;
- 4) Theft of intellectual property;
- 5) Illegal weapons trafficking;
- 6) Aircrafts hijacking;
- 7) Maritime piracy;
- 8) Seizure of land transport means;
- 9) Insurance frauds;
- 10) Computer crime;
- 11) Ecological crime;
- 12) Human trafficking;
- 13) Trafficking of human organs;
- 14) Illegal drug trafficking;
- 15) Fraudulent bankruptcy;
- 16) Penetration of organised crime groups into legitimate business activity
- 17) Corruption and bribery in public administration.

The 17 abovementioned categories obviously do not cover all the crimes, because both types of groups are in constant transformation. Mutual diffusion of organised crime phenomenon and international terrorism becomes more and more visible in the modern world, though. It also becomes more and more difficult to distinguish between pure terrorist and criminal activity. Terrorism and organised crime exploit the same transport and information channels, and oftentimes terrorists are engaged in strictly criminal activities. For some terrorist groups, the main source of financial means remains ordinary banditry, including bank and money convoy robberies. Another typical activity of terrorist groups is smuggling.<sup>(20)</sup>Rau Z., *Przestępczość zorganizowana...*, op. cit., p. 159.) The evolution of the way terrorism is financed, and seeking for new and enhanced ways of financial sources, increase similarity between terrorist and organised crime groups.

Cyberspace, as a core layer of modern information exchange, is a sphere of positive cooperation, leading to the development in areas such as education, social communication, national economy, or national security, but it may also lead to negative cooperation. The latter may involve:

- Cyber invigilation (mass surveillance – control over the society through the ICT network in authoritarian and totalitarian states);
- Cybercrime (use of cyberspace for criminal activities, especially in the context of organised crime and financial crime);
- Cyberterrorism (use of cyberspace for terrorist activities);

Cyberwarfare (use of cyberspace as a fourth, among land, sea, and air, dimension of warfare).

(<sup>21</sup>Sienkiewicz P., *Terroryzm w cybernetycznej przestrzeni* [in:] Jemiolo T., Kisielnicki J., Rajchel K. (ed.), *Cyberterroryzm nowe wyzwania XXI wieku*, WSZiA, WSPol., AON, Warsaw 2009, p. 46.)

There exist several main reasons for use of cybercrime and cyberterrorism so as to achieve specific goals. They include low cost of operation (which includes just the average hardware, internet access and some IT skills), disappearance of any borders (states lose part of their sovereignty, the boundary between private and state, or military and commercial resources becomes vague etc.), possibility of instant and unexpected actions (victims are completely unaware and unprepared for an attack), anonymity of attackers (which enables them to manipulate information and makes it difficult to protect against an attack), or minimised risk of discovery of the prepared attack. In terms of terrorist activities, another reason may be a possibility of paralysing the whole system of an enemy state, instead of a direct attack against innocent victims, as well as clear propaganda effect and broad public recognition.<sup>(22)</sup>Szubrycht T., *Cyberterroryzm jako nowa forma zagrożenia terrorystycznego*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Marynarki Wojennej” 2005, Rok XLVI, No 1(160), p. 50.)



Technological development enables the attack using new resources, different from explosives, kidnapping, or abduction of communication vehicles. Cyberspace creates new additional area for activities used for state destabilisation, as well as gaining and transferring financial resources for terrorist operations.

Development of information technology causes new types of crimes, new threats and challenges to emerge. Given the fact that every network user can become a cybercriminal makes these challenges even harder.<sup>(23)</sup><http://www.policja.pl/pol/aktualnosci/10562,Co-to-jest-cyberprzestepstwo.html>, accessed on 10.10.2016.) Cybercrime and cyberterrorism are flexible and very adaptive, adequately to the development of new IT technologies and tools. Looking for and inventing new ways of the cyberattacks, aiming at profit maximisation, makes it necessary to treat cyberterrorism and cybercrime as a serious and real threat. One of the biggest challenges, in terms of cyberspace, is lack of territorial borders crossing and means of effective control over what is transferred, who and to whom transfers, when it is transferred etc. (<sup>24</sup>Bógdał-Brzezińska A., Gawrycki M., *Cyberterroryzm i problemy bezpieczeństwa informacyjnego we współczesnym świecie*, Warsaw 2003, p. 27.)

Criminal activities are in a constantly adaptive process, appropriate to emerging new technologies. Common internet access and global character of a cyberspace, together with a relative anonymity, enable conducting criminal activity, including committing crimes in one state while operating from the other. In a majority of cases though, cyberspace does not create new kinds of crime, but supply additional resources or methods for criminal activities, or adds new area in which these activities may be conducted.<sup>(25)</sup>Program przeciwdziałania i zwalczania przestępczości gospodarczej na lata 2015–2020, Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, Ministerstwo Finansów, Prokuratura Generalna, Warsaw 2015, p. 7.)

Globalisation and, in the context of the Schengen Zone – the physical openness of European borders, are special challenges nowadays. Cooperation between organised crime groups and radical communities or organisations may depend mainly on people smuggling, or conducting criminal activities by migrants (within ethnic groups, international groups or requested by organised crime groups).

Both organised crime and terrorism have been traditionally classified as specific forms of group criminality, although they are of clearly different character – the dissimilarity is reflected mainly in their ideologies. Although they both have different targets nowadays, it cannot be excluded they will be transformed in the future. Their cooperation may be so tight that organised crime groups may start using terrorist methods for enforcing changes and concessions on states, e.g. in law. Unfortunately, the pattern of improving this cooperation is visible everywhere in the world. Knowledge of the essence of these two phenomena, their determinants and mechanisms, as well as joint elements and mutual interdependencies, is

one of factors of effective combating them, in order to assure both national, and international security.

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