

ISSUES OF ENHANCING THE ACTIVITIES OF JUDICIAL AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS BODIES IN THE UZBEK SSR

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Annotation

This article examines the measures implemented in the Uzbek SSR between 1968 and 1975 to improve the activities of internal affairs bodies, strengthen the investigative system, and enhance the fight against crime. Based on archival documents, the study analyzes structural reforms within the internal affairs system, the expansion of investigative units, trends in criminal activity, preventive measures aimed at reducing juvenile delinquency, and efforts to improve the effectiveness of judicial and law-enforcement institutions. Particular attention is paid to the Namangan region, where crime statistics, challenges encountered in investigative practice, and measures undertaken to address these issues are assessed from a historical perspective. The article also highlights the role of preventive policies and institutional reforms in maintaining public order and strengthening the law-enforcement system during the period under study.

Keywords: Uzbek SSR, internal affairs bodies, militia, investigative system, crime, crime prevention, law enforcement, juvenile delinquency, Namangan region, investigative apparatus, judicial institutions, public order, criminal justice, preventive measures, Ministry of Internal Affairs.

INTRODUCTION

During the period under study, significant institutional changes were implemented within the Soviet law-enforcement system. One of the most important reforms was the reorganization of the USSR Ministry for the Protection of Public Order, which was subsequently renamed the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This transformation was aimed at improving the overall effectiveness of law-enforcement agencies and adapting their activities to the growing social and security challenges of the time.

Alongside the organizational restructuring, a number of strategic tasks were assigned to the Ministry and its subordinate bodies. These included strengthening the fight against crime, enhancing mechanisms for the prevention of offenses, improving the maintenance of public order, and increasing the effectiveness of operational and investigative activities. Particular emphasis was placed on developing preventive measures designed to address the root causes of criminal behavior and reduce the incidence of offenses within society.

Another important direction of reform involved expanding cooperation between militia bodies and voluntary people's patrol groups. The Soviet leadership regarded public participation as an essential component of maintaining social stability and strengthening law and order. Therefore, efforts were made to improve coordination between law-enforcement institutions and community-based organizations, enabling a more effective response to criminal activities and public security concerns.

Furthermore, considerable attention was devoted to personnel policy within the internal affairs system. Measures were introduced to attract highly qualified specialists, improve professional training, and strengthen the overall human resource capacity of law-enforcement agencies. The enhancement of educational standards, professional competence, and practical skills of militia officers was considered a key factor in increasing the effectiveness of internal affairs bodies. As a result, special attention was paid to the recruitment, training, and continuous professional development of personnel, which became one of the central priorities of state policy in the field of law enforcement [1].



The primary reason behind these structural and organizational reforms within the internal affairs system was the steady growth of crime rates by the late 1960s. During this period, criminal activity increased not only across the Soviet Union as a whole but also within the territory of the Uzbek SSR. At the same time, shortcomings in investigative procedures and crime-prevention mechanisms became increasingly evident. Consequently, improving the effectiveness of crime prevention, enhancing investigative practices, and increasing the detection rate of criminal offenses emerged as urgent priorities for law-enforcement agencies.

Archival sources indicate that the crime situation in Namangan region deteriorated noticeably during these years. In 1968, a total of 1,171 crimes were officially registered, while in 1969 this figure rose to 1,327. During the first eleven months of 1970, the number of recorded crimes reached 1,423 cases [2]. Statistical analysis demonstrates that overall crime levels increased by more than 20 percent within a relatively short period. The situation was particularly alarming with regard to serious and violent crimes. For example, the number of intentional homicide cases doubled from 8 incidents recorded during the first nine months of 1969 to 16 during the corresponding period of 1970. Similarly, cases of robbery and violent theft showed a significant upward trend, reflecting the growing complexity of the criminal environment [3].

In addition to violent offenses, law-enforcement agencies faced a considerable rise in crimes involving the embezzlement and misappropriation of state property. Numerous criminal investigations were initiated in connection with such offenses. According to official records, the total financial damage inflicted upon the state amounted to 518,781 rubles. As a result of investigative measures carried out by internal affairs bodies and subsequent court proceedings, 364,698 rubles—representing more than 70 percent of the total losses—were recovered and returned to the state budget [4].

Despite intensified efforts aimed at crime prevention and law enforcement, the overall situation did not stabilize in the following years. In Namangan region, 1,583 crimes were registered in 1971, while the figure increased slightly to 1,588 in 1972 [5]. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that 299 of the crimes recorded in 1972 were committed by previously convicted individuals. This circumstance suggests that existing mechanisms for monitoring, supervising, and rehabilitating former offenders were not sufficiently effective. The data indicate the presence of significant shortcomings in preventive work with individuals who had previously been involved in criminal activities, thereby highlighting the need for more comprehensive approaches to crime prevention and social reintegration.

In an effort to strengthen public order and improve the effectiveness of judicial and law-enforcement institutions, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Council of Ministers of the USSR adopted the resolution “On Measures to Improve the Activities of Prosecutorial and Judicial Bodies” on 30 July 1970. The document emphasized a number of shortcomings in the functioning of prosecutorial and judicial institutions, particularly their insufficient cooperation with state and public organizations, the inadequate implementation of legal education among young people, and weaknesses in crime-prevention activities. The resolution outlined specific measures aimed at reinforcing legality, improving the investigative system, and enhancing the overall effectiveness of combating crime [6].

Internal affairs bodies played an active role in implementing the provisions of this resolution. As part of broader efforts to improve investigative work, a number of organizational reforms were introduced within the internal affairs system. Prior to 1970, investigative units mainly operated within the structure of the republican Ministry of Internal Affairs and regional or city departments. Beginning in 1970, however, specialized investigative divisions and investigative groups were established within district and city internal affairs departments. Furthermore, in 1972 an investigative apparatus was created within the transport internal affairs administration,



thereby expanding the institutional capacity of law-enforcement agencies to conduct criminal investigations more effectively [7].

Nevertheless, despite the implementation of various reforms intended to strengthen the investigative system and increase its efficiency, the expected results were not fully achieved in all regions of the republic. Archival records reveal that during the first nine months of 1974 a number of deficiencies were identified in the work of investigators from both the Namangan Regional Prosecutor's Office and the internal affairs bodies. For example, while 17 criminal cases submitted to court by prosecutors were returned for additional investigation in 1973, this figure increased to 22 cases in 1974. Most of these cases originated from Namangan city as well as Pop and Chust districts. Similar shortcomings were observed in cases handled by investigators of the internal affairs bodies. In 1973, 22 criminal cases were returned for supplementary or repeated investigation, whereas in 1974 this number rose to 24. The highest concentration of such cases was recorded in Namangan city and in the Uychi and Yangikurgan districts, where investigations were frequently returned due to insufficient evidence or because investigative procedures had not been completed properly [8].

These shortcomings were not unique to Namangan region but were also evident in other parts of the republic. Such circumstances indicate deficiencies in the professional training and practical performance of certain investigators. According to archival evidence, several criminal cases that had been sent back for additional investigation in Namangan region were eventually terminated because no elements of a crime could be established or because the guilt of the accused could not be proven [9]. Comparable situations were reported in Samarkand region, where criminal investigations that were legally required to be completed within one month sometimes remained unresolved for as long as nine months. As a consequence, some individuals were held in pre-trial detention facilities for extended periods, resulting in violations of their legal rights and legitimate interests.

Importantly, these difficulties were not confined to the Uzbek SSR but represented a broader challenge throughout the Soviet Union. Analysis of archival and statistical materials demonstrates that a considerable number of criminal cases were also returned for supplementary investigation in the Turkmen SSR, Armenian SSR, Kalmyk ASSR, and in several regions of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, including Belgorod, Ivanovo, and Tyumen. These developments suggest the existence of systemic problems within the Soviet investigative apparatus, highlighting persistent shortcomings in the quality of preliminary investigations, evidence collection, and procedural compliance across multiple jurisdictions.

Another serious challenge faced by law-enforcement agencies during the period under review was the growing incidence of juvenile delinquency and youth crime. Statistical data indicate a steady increase in offenses committed by young people. In Tashkent region alone, 208 crimes were committed by juveniles in 1969. This figure rose to 263 in 1970 and reached 324 cases in 1971, clearly demonstrating an upward trend in youth criminal activity. The increasing involvement of minors in unlawful behavior became a matter of concern for both governmental institutions and law-enforcement authorities.

The issue of rising juvenile crime was repeatedly discussed at the republican level, prompting the development of a range of preventive and corrective measures. In response to this growing problem, on 18 July 1972 a joint meeting was held involving the Presidium of the Supreme Court of the Uzbek SSR, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Prosecutor's Office. As a result of this meeting, a resolution entitled "On Strengthening Efforts to Combat Juvenile Neglect and Crime among Youth" was adopted. The document emphasized the necessity of improving educational and preventive work among young people, expanding crime-prevention programs, increasing the responsibility of educational institutions and public organizations, and enhancing mechanisms designed to prevent juvenile delinquency.



The implementation of this resolution produced positive results in a number of regions. Reports submitted to the Prosecutor's Office of the Uzbek SSR indicate that preventive measures aimed at reducing youth crime contributed to a decline in serious and particularly serious offenses committed by minors in several areas of the republic. These outcomes demonstrated the effectiveness of coordinated efforts involving law-enforcement bodies, educational institutions, and community organizations.

In Tashkent region, for example, the number of crimes committed by juveniles decreased from 321 cases in 1972 to 257 cases in 1973. Positive developments were also recorded at the district level. In Almalyk, the number of youth-related crimes declined from 69 to 58 cases, while in Angren the figure fell from 47 to 36. An even more substantial reduction was observed in Bostanlyk district, where the number of offenses dropped from 20 to 7. Nevertheless, the situation remained problematic in certain localities. In Chirchik, juvenile crime increased from 42 to 47 cases, while in Bekabad district the number of offenses rose from 9 to 16 cases, indicating that preventive measures did not produce uniform results across all territories [10].

A similar downward trend was observed in Khorezm region. Whereas 68 crimes committed by juveniles were recorded in 1971, the figure declined to 46 in 1972. Significant reductions were noted in several districts and cities of the region. In Urgench city, the number of juvenile offenses decreased from 31 to 21 cases; in Urgench district, from 9 to 3 cases; and in Hazorasp district, from 11 to 4 cases. However, not all areas experienced positive changes. In Yangiariq and Bogot districts, crime rates among minors showed a moderate increase, illustrating the uneven nature of efforts to combat juvenile delinquency across the region [11].

These developments demonstrate that juvenile crime remained one of the most pressing social and legal issues of the period. Although preventive policies and educational measures produced encouraging results in many areas, the persistence of rising crime rates in certain districts highlighted the need for more comprehensive approaches aimed at strengthening social control, improving youth education, and enhancing cooperation between law-enforcement agencies, schools, families, and public organizations.

A similar decline in juvenile crime was observed in Samarkand region. According to available records, 184 offenses committed by young people were registered in 1971, whereas this number decreased to 159 in 1972. Most of these crimes were concentrated in Samarkand city and in the districts of Kattakurgan, Khatirchi, Oqdaryo, and Pastdargom [12]. At the same time, improvements in the effectiveness of law-enforcement agencies contributed to higher crime detection rates, particularly in relation to serious offenses. For instance, while 92 percent of intentional homicide cases were solved in the region in 1970, this figure increased to 97.5 percent by 1975, reflecting the growing efficiency of investigative and operational activities [13].

A positive trend was also recorded in Fergana region with regard to juvenile delinquency. Statistical data indicate that the number of criminal cases involving minors declined from 160 in 1971 to 129 in 1972. During the same period, criminal proceedings were initiated against 149 juvenile offenders, highlighting both the scale of the problem and the efforts undertaken by law-enforcement institutions to address youth crime [14].

Nevertheless, the preventive and educational measures introduced during this period did not yield uniform results across all regions of the republic. In several areas, juvenile crime continued to increase despite intensified preventive efforts. In Namangan region, for example, 25 crimes involving young offenders were recorded during the first quarter of 1972, resulting in 21 individuals being held criminally liable. During the corresponding period of 1973, however, the number of registered offenses rose to 31, and criminal proceedings were initiated against 33 individuals. A comparable situation was observed in the Karakalpak ASSR, where the number of crimes committed by juveniles increased from 110 in 1971 to 125 in 1972 [51]. These figures demonstrate that regional differences significantly influenced the effectiveness of anti-crime policies and preventive programs.



Recognizing the growing importance of combating juvenile delinquency and strengthening public order, Soviet authorities adopted a number of legislative and regulatory measures at the union level. One of the most significant was the Resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, adopted on 8 June 1973, entitled “On the Fundamental Rights and Duties of the Soviet Militia in Maintaining Public Order and Combating Crime.” This document broadened the understanding of the responsibilities of internal affairs bodies. It emphasized that the primary function of the militia should not be limited solely to detecting and solving crimes. Instead, law-enforcement agencies were expected to focus on preventing criminal activity, identifying the underlying causes and conditions that contributed to offenses, strengthening preventive work, and eliminating factors that encouraged unlawful behavior [15].

The adoption of this resolution reflected a gradual shift in Soviet law-enforcement policy from a predominantly reactive approach toward a more preventive model of crime control. Greater attention was devoted to educational initiatives, social supervision, and cooperation between state institutions and public organizations. Consequently, preventive activities became an increasingly important component of the work carried out by internal affairs bodies, particularly in relation to juveniles and young people who were considered one of the most vulnerable social groups.

Conclusion

The analysis of archival materials demonstrates that the period between 1968 and 1975 represented an important stage in the development of judicial and internal affairs institutions in the Uzbek SSR. Growing crime rates, deficiencies in investigative procedures, and the increasing involvement of juveniles in criminal activities prompted the Soviet authorities to introduce a series of organizational and legal reforms aimed at strengthening public order and improving the effectiveness of law-enforcement agencies. These reforms included the reorganization of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the expansion of investigative structures, the enhancement of crime-prevention mechanisms, and the adoption of new regulatory measures designed to improve cooperation between state institutions and the public.

The study reveals that although crime rates increased significantly in a number of regions during the late 1960s and early 1970s, law-enforcement agencies gradually improved their operational and investigative capacities. The establishment of investigative divisions at district and city levels, together with efforts to strengthen prosecutorial and judicial oversight, contributed to higher crime detection rates and more effective enforcement practices. At the same time, archival evidence indicates that serious shortcomings remained within the investigative system, including procedural errors, delays in criminal investigations, and the return of numerous cases for additional inquiry. These problems reflected broader systemic challenges that affected not only the Uzbek SSR but also other republics of the Soviet Union.

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