

BALANCING NATIONAL SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION IN WARTIME POLICING STRATEGIES IN LATVIA, LITHUANIA, AND UKRAINE

Darius DZIKAS,

*PhD Candidate, Daugavpils
University, Latvia*

<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-3293-4577>

In the current context of military conflicts, the issue of balancing national security and human rights protection is particularly important. Given the geopolitical challenges, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine are forced to adapt their police strategies to the realities of wartime, ensuring both public order and human rights. Studying their experience is extremely important for developing effective approaches to law enforcement in times of crisis. The purpose of the study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of wartime police strategies in Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine aimed at maintaining national security and protecting human rights, as well as to assess the effectiveness of legal mechanisms for controlling the activities of law enforcement agencies. Methods. The study uses the comparative legal method and the method of systematic analysis. Applying these approaches allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the legal framework and practical aspects of police activity in wartime. The study found that Latvia, Lithuania, and Ukraine use different approaches to ensure national security, but all of them are focused on compliance with international human rights standards. It has been found that the effectiveness of police strategies largely depends on the existence of clearly defined legal mechanisms for controlling the activities of law enforcement agencies, as well as the level of public trust in the police. Key challenges are identified, including the risk of abuse of power during martial law and the need to improve accountability procedures.

Keywords: *law enforcement agencies, public order, right to liberty, privacy, right to a fair trial.*

Introduction

In a rule-of-law democratic state, the activities of law enforcement agencies play a key role in the system of ensuring the rights and freedoms of citizens. In wartime, when national security becomes a top priority, the role of the police in maintaining public order and protecting human rights is particularly important. However, during this period, there was a conflict between the need to use extraordinary measures to ensure the security of the state and the protection of citizens' fundamental rights, such as the right to liberty, privacy, and fair trial. This balance is a challenge for law enforcement agencies, as human rights violations can lead to a loss of public trust and a weakening of institutional legitimacy.

The peculiarities of police strategies in countries such as Latvia, Lithuania, and Ukraine during wartime require in-depth analysis, as each of these countries has its own specific legal and socio-political context. On the one hand, they face the need to strengthen security, and on the other hand, they must ensure respect for human rights, even in situations that threaten the territorial integrity of the state. The study of police strategies in these

countries allows us to determine which mechanisms for ensuring human rights in wartime are effective and meet the requirements of international standards.

Literature review

The study of the problem of balancing national security and human rights protection in wartime police strategies is a topical area of contemporary scientific debate. The works of I. Reinholde [1] examines the peculiarities of civil service reform in Latvia, particularly in the context of national security, which is an important basis for analysing the activities of law enforcement agencies in crisis conditions. The work of P. Suve et al. [2] contain an indepth analysis of the models of police activity in Estonia, which allows us to assess their relevance in developing security strategies that are also relevant for the Baltic States in the context of military threats.

A. Zavackis and J. Nicmanis [3] focus on criminal justice reform issues in Latvia, focusing on rehabilitation approaches as part of a broader strategy for human rights in crises. The research by M. Beilmann and L. Lilleoja [4] reveals the interconnection of social trust and shared values, which affects the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in ensuring public order and interaction with the population.

Ukrainian authors also actively study the issues of police activity in wartime. The work of A. Kubayenko [5] proposes algorithms for assessing the effectiveness of management in the national police, which is extremely important for ensuring both national security and human rights protection. At the same time, E. Skiba and K. Tkachenko [6] analyse the philosophical foundations of community policing as a new approach to police activities that helps to build trust between law enforcement officers and citizens.

Of particular interest are the studies by M. Rogers [7], devoted to transforming the criminal justice system in Lithuania. It highlights the main trends in reforming and functioning law enforcement agencies, which creates a valuable basis for comparison with the experience of Latvia and Ukraine.

At the same time, the analysis of scientific sources revealed several unresolved issues. In particular, the effectiveness of legal mechanisms for controlling the activities of law enforcement agencies in wartime and their impact on preventing abuse has not been sufficiently studied. Integrating international human rights standards into national policing strategies in the context of military conflicts also requires further study. This underscores the importance of a comprehensive approach to studying these issues, which is the purpose of this article.

Purpose and objectives of the study

The study aims to analyse and assess the balance between national security and human rights protection in wartime police strategies in Latvia, Lithuania, and Ukraine, as well as to determine the effectiveness of the legal and practical approaches used in these countries.

Objectives of the study:

- To assess the legal context and approaches to national security in Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine in wartime;
- to analyse the main strategies used by police authorities in these countries to maintain public order and security during military conflicts;
- to investigate the specifics of legal mechanisms for controlling the activities of law enforcement agencies in wartime and the effectiveness of their application to prevent abuse.

The scientific novelty of the study

This study is new since, for the first time, in the framework of comparative analysis, the police strategies of Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine are studied simultaneously in the context of two interrelated but often opposing tasks - ensuring national security and observance of human rights in wartime. In particular, special attention is paid to how law enforcement agencies in these countries, which have different political, social and legal contexts, apply police strategies to ensure public order and security while also considering the need to protect the rights and freedoms of citizens.

Summary of the main material

The police are one of the key institutions that ensure the implementation of state policy in the field of law and order, and the level of public trust in state bodies, in general, depends on its effectiveness and adherence to the rule of law. In today's global democratic society, it is crucial that law enforcement agencies implement the highest professional standards, respect human rights, and be guided by the principles of legality in all their actions and intentions. This helps to build public trust in the police, maintain stability in society and promote the rule of law.

This problem becomes especially relevant in wartime when the balance between national security and human rights protection becomes vulnerable and requires additional control mechanisms. In such circumstances, it is important that the police be held accountable to the public for any illegal or unlawful actions and that citizens' complaints about human rights violations are effectively considered and impartially investigated. This is the key to preserving democratic values even in the face of threats to national security.

Police structures, acting within their competence, play an important role in safeguarding the public interest, resolving conflicts and maintaining public order. At the same time, police activities should be based on strict compliance with legal norms and human rights standards, which requires a balance between the independence of police institutions and proper control over their actions. On the one hand, unrestricted freedom of action of law enforcement agencies is unacceptable, as it may lead to abuse of power. On the other hand, the independence and professional autonomy of the police are a prerequisite for the adequate performance of their functions.

The concept of police activity is based on the idea of the public good and has historically been considered from a philosophical and legal point of view. In particular, S. A. Myroniuk and R. V. Myroniuk [8] define police activity as

a specific form of implementation of state functions, which involves the targeted influence of relevant state institutions on social relations. E. M. Viegas Ferreira emphasises that police activity is a state, legal and socially helpful activity aimed at protecting and defending human rights, stopping or considering violations of law and order, their detection and investigation with mandatory compliance with legal procedures, as well as restoring violated rights and applying legal measures of state coercion to offenders [9]. The definition of police activity proposed by K.J. Boyte emphasises the importance of state coercion and the use of armed forces to ensure law and order [10, p. 112].

In the context of wartime, the issue of reconciling national security and human rights in the activities of police structures requires special attention. The experience of Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine, which are facing similar security challenges, is extremely important for developing effective strategies to ensure both law and order and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms.

The State Police of the Republic of Latvia, which operates under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior, is the main law enforcement agency responsible for maintaining public safety, fighting crime and ensuring the protection of citizens' rights and freedoms [11]. The State Police, established under the Law on Police, is a centralised body tasked with countering criminal activity and wider public threats. This legal framework provides a detailed structure for police activities, focusing on transparency, accountability and efficiency.

The state police is organised at several levels, including central and regional departments, allowing for strategic oversight and local implementation of public security measures. At the central level, specialised units, such as the Criminal Police Department and the Public Order Department, deal with specific aspects of law enforcement. Regional police units are tasked with dealing with local issues, ensuring that police operations are responsive to the community's needs.

The Latvian police system emphasises coordination between different levels of government and sectors. For example, the municipal police work together with the state police to address security issues at the local level, especially in cities such as Riga. These municipal units focus on issues such as traffic management, community engagement and minor public order offences, allowing the state police to focus on more complex criminal cases.

One of the cornerstones of the Latvian law enforcement strategy is the fight against corruption. The Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau (KNAB) is Latvia's leading anti-corruption agency, working with the State Police to prevent, investigate and prosecute corruption offences. KNAB operates independently of the State Police, which ensures that its activities remain impartial and free from undue influence. Educational initiatives and public awareness campaigns are an integral part of KNAB's efforts to promote a culture of integrity in Latvian society.

In the context of wartime, the role of the police as a guarantor of national security becomes even more critical. Ensuring a balance between protecting state interests and respecting human rights in the face of the threat of armed conflict requires specialised approaches to law enforcement. That is why the experience of Latvia, Lithuania, and Ukraine in formulating and implementing police strategies during wartime deserves indepth scientific analysis. The need to develop effective mechanisms for coordination between different levels of government, compliance with legal standards, and implementation of international practices is becoming a key task in ensuring public safety and stability in the region.

Over the past decades, the Republic of Latvia has implemented comprehensive reforms to modernise its police system in line with international standards and the specifics of law enforcement in the context of modern global challenges. The amendments to the Law on Police were aimed at increasing the professionalism of police officers, improving training standards and adapting law enforcement practices to the norms and principles of the European Union. One of the key aspects of these reforms was the increased community orientation of police activities, which helped to build trust between law enforcement agencies and society. This approach encourages the active participation of citizens in maintaining public order and provides effective feedback mechanisms on the quality of police work.

An important component of the reform process was the introduction of digital technologies, which radically changed the operational activities of the Latvian police. The use of real-time data analysis systems and electronic platforms for filing complaints and reporting crimes has significantly optimised workflows and increased the speed of response to offences. These tools are particularly valuable in combating modern threats such as cybercrime and transnational organised crime, ensuring effective interaction between units and timely decision-making.

However, despite the successes achieved, the Latvian police face a number of pressing challenges. Integration of national minorities, particularly the Russian-speaking population, remains one of the key tasks that requires a comprehensive approach and the implementation of targeted programmes. In this context, cultural sensitivity and communication training are important to help build mutual trust and increase the effectiveness of law enforcement in a multicultural environment. At the same time, ensuring adequate funding for police units and infrastructure modernisation remains a challenge, especially in rural areas, where the resource base is often limited [12, p. 43].

At the international level, Latvia's participation in law enforcement networks opens up new opportunities for professional growth and the introduction of innovative approaches. Cooperation with organisations such as Europol, Interpol and the Baltic States strengthens Latvia's ability to combat cross-border crime, illegal migration, human trafficking and cyber threats. These partnerships facilitate the exchange of best practices, joint operations and training programmes, which ensures the professional

development of Latvian law enforcement officers and improves international cooperation mechanisms.

The Government of the Republic of Lithuania has established the Police Department as the main law enforcement agency operating under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior. The main tasks of this body are to ensure public order, combat crime, implement preventive programs and protect the rights and freedoms of citizens. An important area of Lithuanian police activity is cooperation with foreign countries, international organizations and public associations, which involves preparing joint programs, exchanging delegations and practical experience, analysing the crime situation and forecasting crime trends.

Integration processes in Lithuania stimulate active socio-economic and political changes that affect the state border protection system. In this context, the problem of methods of protecting the internal borders of the European Union is of particular importance. With the application of the provisions of the Schengen legislation, the issue of internal security has become a pan-European one, requiring joint decisions and enhanced coordination between the EU member states. In this regard, Lithuania emphasizes the need to strengthen control over internal borders through effective international cooperation and information exchange measures.

A special role in the activities of the Lithuanian police is played by implementing the “community policing” model, which is based on a partnership between law enforcement agencies and the public. This approach involves abandoning the repressive function of the police in favour of providing law enforcement services focused on the needs of the population. The main result of the implementation of this model was a change in the philosophy of police officers, who now act not only as law enforcement officers but also as active participants in public life, which helps to strengthen public confidence in the law enforcement system [13, p. 485].

Reforms aimed at modernizing police activities in Lithuania have reduced the level of state interference in the daily lives of citizens and reoriented law enforcement agencies to provide quality administrative services. These changes have been positively received by society and have created the preconditions for further improvement of the public security system based on transparency, accountability and efficiency.

In the process of reforming the internal affairs bodies of Ukraine, it is necessary to improve, specify and adjust certain provisions of the current Law of Ukraine “On the National Police” [14] and clearly define the competence of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and the National Police of Ukraine. At the stage of reform, it is necessary to define the functions of individual structural units of the IAA, improve their professional activities, improve their logistics, and bring them closer to the population, which will contribute to a change in the philosophy of the IAA service and the formation of a new police officer’s personality.

The importance of control in police activity is determined by several circumstances: first, police activity includes the widest infrastructure for ensuring public safety, protection of human rights and freedoms, maintaining public order, and preventing offences; second, police bodies and officials carry out law enforcement activities within the limits of their authority; third, the police have broad powers to apply administrative measures to citizens [15, p. 193].

Ensuring public order and security is one of the most important tasks of law enforcement agencies. Although municipal institutions play an important role in ensuring it, problems arise in practice, particularly the lack of material, technical and human resources, which becomes especially noticeable during mass events [8, p. 379].

Maintaining a balance between security needs and respect for the fundamental rights of citizens is an important task, especially in

Table 1

Comparative analysis of wartime policing strategies in Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine

| Latvia | Lithuania | Ukraine |
|--|---|---|
| Protection of human rights | | |
| Compliance with international standards, minimizing restrictions | Balance of security and freedoms, control over the observance of rights | Balance between security and rights, mechanisms of public control |
| The level of restrictions during the war | | |
| Moderate restrictions with due regard for human rights | Stricter security measures to minimize rights violations | High level of restrictions due to active hostilities |
| Effectiveness of law enforcement agencies | | |
| High efficiency through training and coordination | Efficiency and coherence of actions in crisis situations | Adaptability to military conditions, mobility and efficiency |
| International cooperation | | |
| Cooperation with the EU and NATO, exchange of experience | Active participation in international security programs | Support from international partners, involvement in assistance programs |
| Challenges and problems | | |
| The threat of cyberattacks, the need to improve training | Balancing security and human rights, risks of escalation | Military aggression, the need for rapid adaptation of legal mechanisms |

Source: author's own elaboration

times of crisis. In democratic societies, this balance is the basis of trust in state institutions, especially law enforcement agencies. Security measures should be proportionate to the threat, and restrictions on rights should be minimal and justified.

For a deeper understanding of the specifics of balancing national security and human rights protection in wartime police strategies in Latvia,

Lithuania and Ukraine, it is useful to analyze the main approaches used in these countries. Table 1 below summarizes the key aspects of policy and practice in each of the countries studied.

Legislation should clearly define any restrictions on the rights of citizens, and in the context of a state of emergency or martial law, effective mechanisms for monitoring the actions of law enforcement agencies should be established to prevent abuse. The observance of citizens' rights should be constantly checked in court, and citizens should be able to appeal against the actions of law enforcement officers in case of violation of their rights.

Transparency of security measures and informing the public about the measures taken are key elements of trust in the state. Even during a state of emergency, some rights, such as the right to life, the prohibition of torture and the right to a fair trial, remain inviolable.

The involvement of civil society in addressing security issues helps to ensure that the rights and needs of the population are taken into account and builds trust in law enforcement agencies. It is important to ensure that police officers are adequately trained in human rights protection to minimise the risks of human rights violations in their duties.

With the development of technology, the state is gaining more opportunities for monitoring, which may violate the right to privacy. Therefore, it is necessary to regulate the use of surveillance technologies.

To strike a balance between security and respect for the fundamental rights of citizens, constant attention and a responsible approach by the state is required. This is achieved through transparency, accountability, respect for human rights and active participation of citizens in shaping security policy. Building and maintaining public trust in the police is a strategic process requiring community engagement, reform advocacy, and open dialogue.

One of the key aspects of the effectiveness of the legal system is the establishment of generally binding rules and standards that define the boundaries of acceptable behavior for each citizen. As a component of the legal system, the police are aimed at strengthening public order and preventing crime.

Effective interaction between the police and the public contributes to the increase of trust in law enforcement agencies. However, it requires a balanced approach so as not to negatively affect the performance of police officers in their direct duties. Public oversight of police activities is important to ensure accountability and respect for human rights. Improving the mechanism of public administration towards democratisation implies a change in the vector of control: the people, as the source of power, have the right to effective control over the activities of state institutions, including law enforcement agencies. Taking into account international experience in this process will help to increase the efficiency and transparency of the Ukrainian police.

Successful implementation of reforms requires creating an effective system of monitoring and evaluation of law enforcement agencies, as well as

the development of mechanisms of public control. Improving the qualifications of police officers, developing professional training programs, and implementing international best practices will help build trust in the police and increase its effectiveness.

Conclusions

The study has achieved its objectives, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the balance between national security and human rights protection in wartime police strategies in Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine.

The assessment of the legal context showed that all three countries have a well- established legal framework adapted to martial law. At the same time, Latvia and Lithuania are guided by the standards of the European Union and NATO, while Ukraine is in the process of regulatory harmonisation with these institutions. Particular attention is paid to the observance of international human rights standards, even in the face of restrictions dictated by military necessity.

The analysis of police strategies showed that all three countries apply comprehensive approaches to ensuring public order and security, including through enhanced coordination between law enforcement agencies and military units and using digital technologies to monitor the situation and respond quickly to threats. In Latvia and Lithuania, there is a particular emphasis on preventive measures and communication with citizens. At the same time, in Ukraine, the involvement of volunteer formations and territorial defence plays a significant role.

The study of legal mechanisms for controlling law enforcement agencies' activities revealed common features and certain differences. In Latvia and Lithuania, independent supervisory bodies function effectively to ensure transparency and accountability of the police. In Ukraine, despite similar institutions, their work is complicated by the scale of the conflict and the need for rapid decision-making. At the same time, all three countries are trying to minimise the risks of abuse and strengthen human rights mechanisms.

Prospects for further research include an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of human rights mechanisms in wartime, in particular by comparing the practical application of legal norms in different countries. An important area is to study the impact of international standards and recommendations on national law enforcement practice and assess the long-term consequences of adopted policy strategies for public security and democratic development.

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