DIGITALIZATION AND TRUST: REFORMS OF THE KAZAKHSTAN POLICE IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGY

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This article analyzes reforms to Kazakhstan's law enforcement system aimed at increasing public trust in the police amid rapid digitalization and technological development. Five key areas of reform arehighlighted: anti-corruption measures, improving human rights compliance and interaction with citizens, reforming the control and investigation system, professionalizing the police, and strengthening work with vulnerable groups. The article discusses the implementation of initiatives such as digital platforms for feedback ("E-government," "E-survey," "E-complaint"), mandatory video recording of arrests and interrogations, human rights training for police officers, community policing, public accountability, and the creation of independent commissions to investigate complaints and public councils attached to the police.

Keywords: Law Enforcement System, Police, Public Trust In The Police, Digitalization, Reforms

The issue of public trust in law enforcement agencies is one of the key problems for any state, and the Republic of Kazakhstan is no exception.

Public trust in the police is the foundation for the effective functioning of law enforcement agencies, as it is through trust that the opportunity for constructive interaction between the police and society is created. Without this trust, citizens will not turn to law enforcement for help, and police officers themselves will not be able to effectively perform their duties to ensure the safety and protection of citizens' rights.

Only a comprehensive approach, including reforming the internal structure of the police, increasing transparency, and improving interaction with the population, can contribute to improving the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in Kazakhstan [1].

However, despite the state's efforts to raise the level of trust in the police in Kazakhstan, there are also specific problems, such as:

- The historical legacy and perception of the police is a significant problem. During the Soviet period, law enforcement agencies were part of a system of repression, and many citizens continued to perceive the police as an instrument of power rather than a service focused on protecting human rights. Despite the changes that have taken place since Kazakhstan's independence, many of these stereotypes remain.
- Corruption remains one of the most pressing issues in police forces around the world. Despite efforts to combat corruption and the adoption of a number of anti-corruption laws, unscrupulous practices continue to exist. Corruption in law enforcement undermines trust in the system. It destroys not only trust in specific officers, but also in law enforcement as a whole, as it demonstrates the imperfection of the system and the lack of real mechanisms to combat corruption.

Human rights violations are another serious problem. Examples of such incidents, which often become the subject of public debate, undermine citizens' trust not only in specific police officers, but also in law enforcement agencies as a whole. This leads citizens to perceive the police not as defenders of rights and freedoms, but as an authority capable of using force for repression.

- Lack of transparency and accountability. Issues of uncertainty in police activities, insufficient openness, and sometimes inaction in investigating citizens' complaints about the actions of law enforcement officers also contribute to a decline in trust. When citizens are unsure about the transparency of police actions, when they do not see real results from the investigation of complaints or violations by law enforcement officers, it causes them to feel alienated and dissatisfied. For example, the lengthy investigation of complaints against police officers, the lack of proper oversight, and the low level of accountability of police officers for their actions continue to be a problem.

For a significant portion of the population, the police are still associated with violations of their rights, which does not contribute to strengthening trust in law enforcement agencies. Restoring trust requires not only legislative reforms, but also a change in the public's perception of the police.

An important challenge is the need for profound changes within the system itself. This involves not only legal and organizational reforms, but also cultural and value changes among police officers. It is important to change the attitude of police officers towards their work and their community. This

requires higher standards of professionalism, ethics, and human rights practices [2].

In recent years, Kazakhstan has made significant efforts to reform its law enforcement system in order to improve citizens' attitudes toward the police and increase trust in them. The reforms cover various aspects of police work, including improving the professionalism of officers, increasing transparency and accountability, and actively engaging with the community. The main reforms aimed at strengthening public trust in the Kazakh police can be divided into several key areas:

1.Anti-corruption measures

Corruption in law enforcement agencies is one of the main problems undermining public trust in the police. In response, Kazakhstan has introduced several initiatives aimed at combating corruption and increasing transparency in the work of the police [3].

Introduction of the "E-government" system: One of the main reforms was the creation of digital platforms for citizens to interact with the police. In particular, the "E-survey" and "E-complaint" systems allow citizens to anonymously report offences committed by police officers and evaluate the quality of law enforcement agencies' work. This increases the level of transparency and openness in police activities and helps reduce opportunities for corrupt practices.

Mandatory electronic cameras: In 2019, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan introduced a system of mandatory video recording during arrests and interrogations. This has significantly increased the level of accountability of employees and provided additional protection for citizens' rights.

2. Human rights reform and improved interaction with citizens

One of the main goals of the reforms is to improve human rights compliance in police activities and enhance the professionalism of police officers in their work with the public [4].

Human rights training for police officers: As part of the reforms, mandatory training for police officers on human rights and peaceful conflict resolution techniques has been introduced. The training programs cover topics related to the rights of detainees, rules on the use of force, and interaction with different categories of citizens, including vulnerable groups.

Improving interaction with the population: The Kazakh police have begun to actively implement community policing, an approach in which police officers interact with local communities, actively participate in the life of the city or region, hold meetings with citizens, and participate in public events. This helps build trust and eliminate stereotypes about the police as an institution that only punishes and suppresses [5].

Publication of reports: One important step was the introduction of public reporting and transparency in the activities of law enforcement agencies. The Ministry of Internal Affairs regularly publishes data on its work, discloses statistics on investigations and actions taken in response to citizen complaints, which contributes to greater transparency and accountability of the police [6].

3. Reform of the control and investigation system

One of the problems faced by Kazakhstan's law enforcement agencies is the lack of transparency in investigations of police actions. In response, measures have been introduced to improve control mechanisms and ensure independence in investigations.

Independent commissions for investigating complaints: Independent commissions have been established in Kazakhstan to investigate citizens' complaints about police actions. These commissions work with civil society organizations and human rights defenders, which helps to ensure the independence of investigations and prevents possible abuses.

Public councils under the Ministry of Internal Affairs: To strengthen civilian oversight of law enforcement agencies, public councils have been established under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, comprising representatives of various public organizations, human rights defenders, and experts. The councils participate in monitoring police activities, reviewing citizen complaints, and proposing measures to improve the work of law enforcement agencies [7].

4. Professionalization of the police

The professionalism of police officers is another key component of trust in law enforcement agencies. Kazakhstan is making efforts to improve the quality of police work by improving the training and professional development of officers.

Improvement of educational programs: Kazakhstan is reforming educational institutions for training police officers. New courses are being introduced that teach police officers not only the basics of law, but also human rights issues, communication psychology, and critical thinking in stressful situations. These measures help to develop a higher level of professionalism among police officers and increase their ability to effectively solve problems without using excessive force.

Support for career growth and professional development: An important step is the creation of a career growth system for police officers that allows

them to improve their qualifications and encourages their desire for professional development. This includes regular training, professional development, and opportunities to participate in international exchanges and programs to improve law enforcement practices.

5. Strengthening work with vulnerable groups

Particular attention in the reform of the Kazakh police is paid to protecting the rights of vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and ethnic and religious minorities.

Programs for women and children: The police are actively working to improve their work with victims of violence, including domestic violence. Special departments for working with women and children are being strengthened, which helps to protect their rights and prevent repeat violations.

State prevention programs: Kazakhstan is developing and implementing state programs aimed at preventing youth delinquency and reducing crime. This includes projects on social rehabilitation, drug prevention, and working with neglected children [8].

Thus, reforms in Kazakhstan's law enforcement system are aimed at significantly improving police interaction with the population and increasing citizens' trust in law enforcement agencies. Measures to combat corruption, enhance professionalism, improve police training, and increase police transparency and accountability lay the groundwork for a more just and effective law enforcement system. However, restoring public trust requires time, consistency, and a willingness to continue reforms in this direction, as well as actively involving society in the process of monitoring the actions of law enforcement agencies.

Public trust in the Kazakh police is an important indicator of the health of society, its legal culture, and democratic values. To achieve sustainable change, it is necessary to continue reforms aimed at increasing the transparency, effectiveness, and accountability of law enforcement agencies. However, in addition to institutional changes, it is crucial to change the perception of the police as an institution that serves society rather than the authorities. Only then will it be possible to restore trust and create a truly safe and fair system of law and order in the country.

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