

One-Third of Russian Militiamen Psychopaths or Alcoholics, Expert Says

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VIENNA — Nearly one in every three policemen in Russia is likely a psychopath or an alcoholic, the result, a leading specialist says, of the attraction that police service has for such people, the end of psychological screening of applicants, and the sense among many in the service that, as militiamen, they are beyond the reach of the law.

In an interview published in today's Novaya Izvestia, Mikhail Vinogradov, the director of the Moscow Center for Legal and Psychological Assistance in Extreme Situations, says that as a result of this combination, [many unhealthy and even dangerous people](#) are to be found in militia ranks.

Screening applicants is extremely critical, Vinogradov says, and he dismissed the concerns of those who say that if such testing were to be introduced, Russia would have a hard time attracting enough people. That is simply not the case, he continues, because Russia "has significantly more militiamen than life requires."

Moreover, pay for militiamen, historically extremely low and one of the reasons for the widespread corruption in militia ranks, Vinogradov says, is being increased. And third, when testing did exist at the end of the Soviet period, 30 percent of the militiamen were removed from the ranks, and as a result, "crime in the militia fell sharply."

Unfortunately, such screening ended in the 1990s. It should be restored, he argues, as should another reform: There should be no special camps for former militiamen. They should be placed in regular prison camps. The threat of that alone, Vinogradov continues, would "restrain very many from committing crimes."

While most militiamen are honest, the dishonest and sick ones are a threat, even though it is almost impossible for anyone except a psychological specialist to identify the latter with confidence. To deal with them, he argues, not only should the powers that be reintroduce testing, but they should increase the role of the FSB in the militia.

The reason for that, Vinogradov argues, is that all officers of that agency continue to be subject to psychological and psychiatric screening. Consequently, most of those who might engage in the kind of actions that some militiamen do are either denied the chance to serve in the FSB or excluded from its ranks early on.

But testing alone, he acknowledges, is not enough. Too often, militiamen assume that they will not be held accountable regardless of what they do. "Look at how Yevsyukov conducts himself in court. He is threatened with life imprisonment. He killed several people and wounded several more." "But he is certain," Vinogradov says, that he will find a way out of what looks to others to be a blind alley.

That sense of being beyond the reach of the law affects not only the militia but also the radical right, according to the parents of Anastasia Baburova, the Novaya Gazeta journalist who was murdered in the streets of Moscow a year ago along with rights activist Stanislav Markelov.

In a statement published in today's Novaya Gazeta on the eve of the first anniversary of these murders, Baburova's parents say that those who ordered her murder chose to have it conducted "by day in the center of Moscow in the presence of a multitude of witnesses as a demonstration of their strength, power, and impunity from punishment."

Saying that "this is Russia, this is Moscow, this is fascism," [the two Baburovs argue that](#) the individual who committed the murder are certain that he will not be given up, and that "you have your own people everywhere."

"The united ideologues of patriotism and fascism ever more penetrate all strata of Russian society from top to bottom," they write. "The neo-Nazis are now in the law enforcement organs, in the executive and legislative structures." And as a result, there is "a real chance" that "fascists will come to power."

Anastasia Baburova was the granddaughter of two heroes of the fight against German fascism during World War II, her parents say, and that makes it especially tragic that she was killed "in the center of Moscow alongside the Kremlin in peacetime" by neo-Nazis who hated her for her work in exposing them.

The two Baburovs say that however much those who ordered her killing try to hide their tracks, "everything secret will sometime or other become known. And, they warn, "even if your identities are revealed only after your deaths, all the same, eternal shame will be on your heads and on your names."

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