

PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF MASS DISORDERS IN THE BORDER ZONE AND BORDER AREA OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA

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Abstract: *The article "Prevention and Control of Mass Disorders in the Border Zone and Border Area of the Republic of Latvia" focuses on evaluating the likelihood of mass disorders and assessing the preventive and control measures implemented by the State Border Guard of Latvia. The study aims to analyze the effectiveness of border surveillance in the 12-meter-wide border zone and the 2-kilometer-wide borders, with particular attention to potential threats along the Latvian - Belarus border. The study concludes that proactive measures and sufficient resource allocation are crucial for maintaining border stability. This article aims to study and evaluate the existing mass disorder prevention and control mechanisms in the state border zone and border zone of the Republic of Latvia. As well as develop recommendations for their improvement (Leonard.S. & Kaunert.C., 2021). Research methods: Several research methods were used in the study, including analysis of documents and legal acts, quantitative and qualitative data analysis, as well as case studies of previous incidents of mass disorders on the border of the EU. Primary and secondary sources (scientific literature) were used for data extraction.*

The tasks of the article are:

- 1. To analyze the current regulatory framework and operational strategies of the Border Guard.*
- 2. To assess the experience of Latvia and other European Union countries in this field.*
- 3. Identify the main risk factors and threats that can cause mass disorders in the border area.*
- 4. Develop recommendations for the improvement of regulatory framework and operational activities.*

Keywords: *border strip, control, external border, mass disorder, prevention, state border strips,*

Introduction

The state borders and the border zone of the Republic of Latvia are a strategically important territory that ensures the security and stability of the country. Today's security challenges, including increasing volumes of migration flows, hybrid threats, and possible mass disorders, create the need to strengthen prevention and control mechanisms in this area. Latvia's experience, as well as international practice, show that effective prevention and control of mass disorders is essential not only for the security of the national border but also for the peace and order of society. The relevance of

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this study is also reinforced by the importance of the external border of the European Union, which requires coordinated actions and exchange of experience between member states.

Study period: The study was conducted in the period from January 2022 to January 2023. During this period, current data was analyzed as well as the history of border incidents, which helped to identify the main risk factors and problems (Latvian State Border Guard Annual Report, 2022).

Hypothesis: The research hypothesizes that the existing mass disorder prevention and control strategies in the state border zone and border zone of the Republic of Latvia are not effective enough to adequately respond to the growing security challenges. This situation may pose risks to national security and public order if the necessary improvements are not made.

The concept and nature of mass disorders

Mass disorders are a tool of public or civil expression, during which a large number of people participate in violent, uncontrolled, and provocative activities that threaten public order, security, and peace. Such disorders are often associated with public discontent and can take many forms, from protests to large-scale disorders of a highly violent nature.

The causes of mass disorders can be varied, but they often stem from deep dissatisfaction with the existing situation or specific events. Disorders have several characteristics that distinguish them from other social disorders: an activity involving large numbers of people, the expression of violence, chaos, and unpredictable actions that have political and social objectives. Riots can have both short and long-term consequences in terms of loss of life and property, polarisation of society, financial losses, and political consequences. The containment and control of riots is a complex process that requires a careful approach, respecting fundamental human rights and human rights at the same time, aimed at public security. To prevent disorder, it is important to promote social justice, create dialogue with the public, maintain effective law and order, and educate the public about civil rights and methods of peaceful conflict resolution. Mass disorders are a complex social phenomenon, the causes and manifestations of which are diverse. To effectively control and prevent them, a balanced approach is needed, which includes both preventive measures and responsible behavior in crises (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2022).

Factors contributing to mass disorder on the external state border of the Republic of Latvia

The Republic of Latvia is a member of the European Union and the Schengen Agreement, which serves as a tempting factor for those who like the illegal state border and encourages them to go to the Latvian state border and cross it illegally. The flow or crowding of large people contributes to the occurrence of mass disorders, the factors that provoke the occurrence of mass disorders on the external state border of the Republic of Latvia can be different and include various social, political, economic, and environmental aspects.

In the Republic of Latvia, mass unrest can be caused and includes various social, political, and economic factors. These factors can affect the situation at the external state border of the Republic of Latvia, creating various challenges and risks. Some of the factors contributing to mass unrest can be:

- **Illegal migration:** Uncontrolled and massive illegal migration flows can create situations when migrants try to cross the external state border of the Republic of Latvia in an uncontrolled and illegal manner, and this can provoke mass unrest on the external state border. The reasons can be both economic and political, as well as humanitarian.
- **Political situation in the country:** Political instability in third countries or neighboring countries can create pressure on the external border of the Republic of Latvia. Uncontrolled flows of refugees, protests or conflicts in third countries or neighboring countries can provoke migration flows and unrest on the external border of the Republic of Latvia.
- **Economic and social:** Economic decline and recession in neighboring countries can lead to illegal migration among citizens of neighboring countries seeking a better life and income.
- **Human trafficking and organized crime:** The external state border of the Republic of Latvia can be a place for illegal activities, which may include human trafficking, which would contribute to disorder on the external state border of the Republic of Latvia and the formation of organized criminal groups.
- **Tension and conflict between neighboring countries:** State disputes between neighboring countries can cause unrest on the external state border, which may develop into protests (peaceful or non-violent), as well as the blocking of border crossing points.
- **Internal discontent:** Internal discontent includes protests and social discontent within the country, which may spread to the border area and provoke mass unrest.

- Natural disasters: Natural disasters can cause uncontrolled mass illegal migration, which will go hand in hand with famine, and can create chaos on the external border of a country, as people seek help in neighboring countries. Lack of information or disinformation: Information that allows for the manipulation and control of groups of people to achieve certain goals, misleading people about the true beneficiary.

To prevent or deal with mass disorders close to the external state border of the Republic of Latvia, the state border guard, police, and other law enforcement agencies carry out stricter border control and border surveillance in response to the causes of the crisis. Likewise, international cooperation, effective migration policy, and respect for human rights can be important factors that help prevent mass disorders on the external border of the Republic of Latvia (International Organization for Migration, 2022).

The role of the State Border Guard in the prevention and control of mass disorders in the state border zone and border zone of the Republic of Latvia

The State Border Guard of the Republic of Latvia is a state law enforcement institution responsible for border control and security within the state borders. The main task of the State Border Guard is to ensure the inviolability of the national territory and protect it from illegal crossing of the national border in both directions. The State Border Guard operates in several areas (Latvian State Border Guard overview of border incidents, 2023):

- Border control: The State Border Guard monitors the national border to prevent illegal entry into the national territory. This includes patrolling, operating border checkpoints, and using technology to monitor the border area.
- Inspection of people and goods: The National Border Guard checks people's documents and identity at border checkpoints to ensure that the internal border is crossed legally. In addition, it controls cross-border transport of goods and vehicles.
- Human rights: The State Border Guard is concerned with respect for human rights, especially about the protection of migrants and refugees. Its activities must comply with international regulations and humanitarian values.
- Crisis response: The State Border Guard is ready to respond to various events and crises that may occur near the border, including mass disorders, humanitarian crises, or disasters.

- Cooperation with other institutions: The State Border Guard cooperates with other state security and police institutions, as well as international organizations to ensure effective border control and security.

The State Border Guard is responsible for the public safety of the Republic of Latvia and the inviolability of the national territory.

The role of the State Border Guard of the Republic of Latvia in the prevention and control of mass disorders in the state border zone and border zone of the Republic of Latvia is very important.

The state border strip is a special state territory that starts from the state border and is subject to special rules and restrictions. The national border strip is designed to ensure the security of the external state border of the Republic of Latvia, control border crossing, and ensure national sovereignty. The width of the state border strip with the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation is 12 meters, which the state border strip regime operates, which includes several state border monitoring measures or sets of measures that help the State Border Guard control the situation on the external state border of the Republic of Latvia.

The border strip is a 2-kilometer wide national territory that adjoins the national border and the national border strip is one of its constituent parts, but it is not directly connected to the national border and is located inside the country. This territory is typical for countries with external borders of the European Union. The border strip plays an important role in ensuring the inviolability of the state border and in the prevention of mass disorders because in the given territory the state border guard controls the activities of people and economic activity, entry into the specified territory is allowed only with special passes issued by the state border guard after a detailed examination of persons.



Fig.1 State border strip of the Republic of Latvia, 12 meters wide, with zone divisions (created by the authors)

The State Border Guard is the primary law enforcement agency responsible for intercepting violators at the national border, ensuring they

do not cross illegally, and safeguarding the nation's territorial integrity. The main task of the State Border Guard is to ensure the inviolability and security of the territory of the Republic of Latvia, which also includes measures to prevent mass disorders and control the border to prevent illegal crossing. To achieve this, the State Border Guard carries out the following preventive actions (National Security Strategy, 2022):

- Regular patrolling of the state border, engagement of Frontex experts, technologies to monitor the state border, state border zone, and border zone;
- Inspection of people's documents, to clarify the identity of a person, to prevent illegal entry, entry into the border lane.
- Document and physical control of vehicles to prevent illegal smuggling of people and goods in the border lane.

The given set of measures are components of the border surveillance system, which serves as a prevention of mass disorders on the external state border of the Republic of Latvia. The State Border Guard is ready to react and in the context of Belarus reacts to the threat of mass disorder that could occur near the border, when a large number of people want to illegally cross the state border, but the State Border Guard of the Republic of Latvia and other law enforcement agencies do not allow them to do so. The prevention of mass disorders also includes cooperation with other security institutions, an example of which the authors note is the cooperation of the State Border Guard and the National Armed Forces, the purpose of which is to ensure public safety and protect the interests of the state in the eastern part of Latvia.

The State Border Guard, upon detecting mass disorders on the State border, takes measures to stabilize the situation and take control of a large crowd of people. During mass disorders, control mechanisms are an essential part of maintaining order and ensuring public safety. These control mechanisms can be the actions of border guards, police, and other law enforcement agencies, as well as the self-regulation and participation of society. The authors of the paper point to some examples of how control can be ensured during mass disorders (Frontex Risk Analysis, 2022):

- Border Guard and Security Forces: The Border Guard and other security forces are responsible for riot control and surveillance. (Schengen Borders Code, 2016).
- They can use several actions to limit violence and maintain public safety, such as restricting access to certain areas, using mass security, and arresting people who participate in violent activities or try to cross the border illegally.
- Communications and surveillance: Border Patrol can use communications and surveillance tools to identify and cover violent

actors and groups. This includes video surveillance, mobile tracking, and other technological means (Schengen Borders Code, 2016).

- Cooperation of peaceful crowd members: Leaders and organizers can help maintain order by communicating with peaceful crowd members and trying to prevent violence. They can call on the members of the peaceful crowd to respect the rules and not provoke the border guards and other security forces.
- Medical and humanitarian assistance: Control mechanisms may also include medical assistance to victims and humanitarian assistance to those who may be at risk during mass disorders. This may include striking out to save people from dangerous situations.
- Legal system: After disorders, legal investigations are launched and violent actors can be prosecuted under the law. This can include arrests, deportation charges, and other court proceedings.
- Community participation and education: Community participation and education about civic rights and responsibilities can be very important in the community of origin before mass disorders occur. This can help prevent violence and improve public awareness of resolving conflicts peacefully and legally (Schengen Borders Code, 2016).

Control mechanisms during mass disorders on the State border must be adapted to specific situations and respect human rights and laws to maintain justice and order in society. Excessive use of power or unnecessary repression can lead to conflict and escalate the situation (Baltic Security Strategy Project, 2022).

At the beginning of 2022, Belarusian authorities supported a rapid and growing trend of illegal migration to the European Union from the Republic of Belarus to the Republic of Latvia.

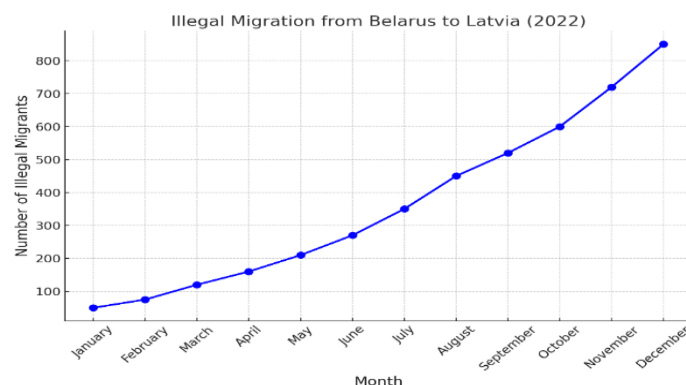


Fig.2 Indicates an increase in the number of migration cases from the Republic of Belarus to the Republic of Latvia in 2022 (created by the authors)

This figure shows the increase in the number of cases of illegal migration from the Republic of Belarus to the Republic of Latvia in 2022. The data shows a sharp and gradual increase, indicating a steady upward trend throughout the year. Such graphic representations are essential to understanding the dynamics of migration flows and to creating effective prevention and control strategies (UNHCR Forced Displacement, 2022).



Fig.3 Mass disorders on the border between Poland and Belarus
(Claudia Ciobanu, 2022)

Conclusions and suggestions

Conclusions

1. Border surveillance on the external state border of the Republic of Latvia is a set of measures that include strategically important moments that ensure national security and stability, as the external state border of Latvia is on the external border of the European Union. Timely response to threats is essential to control migration flows and mass unrest on the external state border.
2. The State Border Guard plays a crucial role in ensuring the inviolability of the external state border of Latvia. It is the initial line of defense against illegal crossing and mass unrest, especially in connection with the growing pressure from the neighboring Republic of Belarus.
3. The possibility of mass unrest on the external state border of Latvia between Latvia and Belarus poses a threat to mass unrest, threatening national security, public order and the external border of the European Union.
4. The prevention of mass unrest requires the involvement of several institutions: the State Border Guard, the State Police and other law enforcement agencies. which would include greater control in the border zone of the Republic of Latvia.

5. Effective or integrated border management (IBM) and prevention of mass unrest require international intervention, from the European Union.
6. The working study shows that the current prevention and suppression of mass unrest, as well as the control strategy, are insufficient to address the growing security problems at the external state borders of Latvia. It is necessary to improve the prevention, suppression, and control mechanisms to respond to the threat (mass unrest).
7. Mass unrest on the external state border of Latvia can be caused by various factors, illegal migration, political fragmentation, the economic situation of the country, external and internal pressure. The above-mentioned threats can cause serious consequences, including loss of human life, damage to property and public dissatisfaction.

Recommendations

1. Invest in technology and human resources to immediately detect potential places and causes of mass unrest, which would facilitate response capabilities.
2. Improve the legal and regulatory framework governing border control and the prevention and control of mass unrest.
3. Improve cooperation with neighbouring countries and EU Member States, FRONTEX, to cooperate with intelligence, compare best practices in the prevention of mass unrest at the external borders.
4. Improve the capacity of the State Border Guard and other law enforcement agencies through training, additional resources and coordination mechanisms to improve their ability to deal with complex border situations.
5. It is necessary to educate and involve local residents in the prevention of mass unrest, especially those living near the external state border.
6. Establish contingency plans that include clear instructions on the prevention of mass unrest, ensuring a coordinated and effective response of all relevant authorities.
7. Regularly implement monitoring and evaluation of preventive and control measures to assess their effectiveness and make necessary adjustments based on new challenges and threats.

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