

SUMMARY UPON RESULTS OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH  
PUBLIC OPINION OF RESIDENTS OF OSH CITY  
AND POLICE OFFICERS OF THE OSH POLICE (UVD)

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## ***Introduction***

In the frames of the OSCE Police Assistance Programme for the Kyrgyz Republic, there is a project on introducing principles of community policing at the level of Osh City **Department of Internal Affairs** (hereinafter referred as **UVD**). One of the project realization stages considers conducting a public opinion poll in order to learn the priority issues of community safety among the residents of Osh City in – the southern capital of KR and police officers of the Osh City UVD. Public poll was conducted from the 9<sup>th</sup> of October to the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2006.

## ***1. Research methodology***

Method of standardized interview (face-to-face interview) has been used in order to research opinion about the Osh UVD activity.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the overall number of random selection sampling was 625 respondents. This volume of the random sampling ensures a good representativeness of results with preciseness (+ - 4%) and reliability level of 0,95.

Data obtained from the Ministry of the Interior of the Kyrgyz Republic (MoI KR) and OSCE Police Assistance Programme for the Kyrgyz Republic (OSCE Center in Kyrgyz Republic) show that the territory of the Osh city is serviced by 5 sub-stations, which compose the Osh City UVD. In each territory serviced by sub-stations there were interviewed 125 respondents.

Random selection of respondent could reflect the structure of the adult population living in Osh according to the major social-demographic peculiarities (gender, age and ethnic identity).

Processing of the research results were done with the help of the special software called Statistical Package for Social Sciences for statistical and econometric modeling SPSS (v.12.0).

## ***Results of the public opinion poll among residents of Osh city***

The Southern region (in particular, Osh city) of the country has its own specific characters.

Respondents always asked about the guaranty of anonymity when the questions related to powers/authorities. But, based on the experience, the question of anonymity *always* was more critical in the south of the country.

The majority of interviewed respondents evaluated UVD of Osh city as "good".

The higher is education of respondents – the more negative are answers, and visa versa, the lower is education – the less are negative answers.

Reasons of shortcomings of Osh city UVD performance the interviewed respondents connect with first of all to low salary of UVD police officers, corruption in interiors – law enforcement bodies, and shortcomings in personnel recruitment.

In the group of respondents with higher education more than 40% are unsatisfied with UVD performance.

Businessmen more than others are unsatisfied by attitude of UVD police officers to their applications and claims.

The higher is education of interviewed respondents – the more negative is their evaluation.

One third of interviewed respondents of Osh city think that the attitude to Osh city residents from police officers is positive in general.

It was interesting to see that one third of respondents of other ethnic groups evaluated the willingness of police officers to help as «very bad» and «bad». At the same time only 13,5% of interviewed of this group of respondents evaluated the attitude of police to citizens negatively. It seems that these two criteria of UVD work are inter-related; therefore, this deviated on in answers raised the attention.

40,5% of respondents of this group evaluated the UVD work in general positively

73,3% of interviewed have favorable impression about the work of Neighborhood Police officer, whom they met

78,4% of interviewed of this group did not meet UVD police officers for the past two years, in other words, they have no experience of direct communication with UVD police officers

50,0% of respondents, out of those who applied to UVD, evaluated the efforts of police officers with positive or satisfactory evaluations

Interviewed residents of Osh city recognized high level of corruption among the UVD police officers. The data obtained from the next block of questions will confirm such statement.

Police treats everybody equally

UVD police officers give preferential treatment to their friends only  
Police give preferential treatment to them who offer money or other favors  
Police serves only to those who offer money or other favors  
Police has no other choice but to provide service to those who offer money or other favors due to low salary (of police officers)

It is worth to stress that 6-7 people out of each 10 interviewed in each social and demographic group, each occupation group and territorial residence of Sub-station have agreed with the statement that «**UVD police officers give preferential treatment to their friends only**», and they believe that this is the reality.

64,1% of interviewed respondents agreed with the statement that «**Police serves to the government more than people/public**». 18,3% disagreed, and 17,5% had difficulties to answer.

Summarizing the answers of respondents to the above presented questions, it is possible to conclude that the financial status and work of a person play an important role in any relationships.

The next section/block of questions was devoted to the problem of public order in city.

Safety in the region depends on time: day or night. Some respondents indicated that the possibility to become a victim rises at weekends and holidays.

Among crimes the largest concern is raised by drug-addiction and drug dealing industry. Many respondents stressed that drug-addiction is getting younger and therefore, are very much concerned for their children.

Respondents indicated that offenses/crimes committed in public places by drunken people became more often.

Victims of crimes can be divided by types of crimes and presented as following:

- Street robbery without arms - 39,6%
- Stealing from apartment - 22,6%
- Physical damage/wounds - 15,1%
- Stealing from pocket - 5,7%
- Hooliganism - 3,8%
- Stealing from car 3,8
- Car accident - 1,9%
- Fraud - 1,9%
- Stealing in public places - 1,9%
- Other - 3,8%
- 56,6% of total respondents – victims of crimes, reported to police.

The main reason why crime victims didn't apply to police is that they didn't believe in capability of police to search for and punish the criminal.

39% of respondents had difficulties to answer the question «Which measures conducted by police in your place of residence you have heard about/known/seen?», because they never interacted with police or haven't seen them in their region. The remaining respondents indicated the following:

- Investigation of crimes – 17,7% of total interviewed
- Walk patrolling – 14,2%
- Car patrolling – 11,7%
- Arrival of police to phone calls – 11,5%
- Presence of neighborhood police officer – 10,1%
- Measures for those who are below 18 – 9,3%
- Patrolling of auto-inspection – 9,2%
- Availability of police at work days – 8,1%
- Passport examination – 8,1%
- Prevention works against crimes – 4,9%
- Communication of police with community – 4,9%

In the process of interview some respondents suggested their solutions for public order problems in Osh city, which can be summarized as following:

- Organize street lighting

- Form the groups of public constables
- Strengthen the preventive work among the youngsters, especially teenagers. Prophylactic must be the main criteria of work of the neighborhood police officers and shall be conducted on continuing basis
- Control the migration in and out from other countries (to conduct registration). The cases of children stealing increased. Also, increased the propaganda of religious groups from Uzbekistan.
- To limit the work hours of cafes, restaurants and other recreation places until 23.00 (11 p.m.).
- To prohibit the sale of alcohol beverages in shops and kiosks of city after 22.00 (10 p.m.).
- To conduct a strict control over prohibition of alcohol sale to young people under 18

Based on conducted opinion poll of residents of Osh city it is possible to make the following conclusions:

Community is not ready for open discussions of police problems, due to fear to be prosecuted by police, and low legal culture. Residents of Osh city in general gave positive evaluation of UVD performance.

At the same time only 39,2% of total respondents who applied to UVD positively evaluated those whom they met. In reality it is widely perceived that the UVD police officers are not capable to timely and, most important, fairly and honestly resolve the problems of citizens.

The capability of police to protect the rights of citizens and trust to UVD is characterized by the fact that half of respondents didn't apply for help to UVD police officers, after suffering from a crime.

Results of the opinion poll demonstrate high level of corruption at UVD. It is symptomatic that some respondents consider it as natural. Majority of respondents are sure that the attitude of UVD police officer is determined by work and financial status of a person.

Respondents think that main causes of shortcomings of UVD work are low salary and corruption at UVD, and think that the removal of the first problem will decrease the second.

Community declared its readiness to participate in measures to decrease the crime in city. Majority of interviewed (86,0%) consider necessary to involve the public into preventive work, help police to fight the crime.

### ***3. Results of the public opinion poll among police officers of the Osh UVD***

In order to understand the results of the public opinion poll among the police officers of the Osh UVD, it is necessary to take into consideration some peculiarities of the groups, which influenced the peculiarities of answers of the targeted group in general:

The Osh UVD police officers who «demonstrated» the readiness to joint work and «willingly» contacted the interviewer. In this group of the respondents the major part consisted of those who were informed (from different sources) about the Police Assistance Programme for the Kyrgyz Republic implementation at the district police units of the Bishkek city.

Having a preliminary agreement with the police officers about the time and place of interview, it was not always possible to catch the respondents at preliminary agreed time, especially at sub-stations. As a rule, it was necessary to appoint a new time and place for the interviews.

Majority of the respondents of this group assume that «it is not possible to evaluate the work as «bad», because the work, no matter what kind of, is still provided/delivered».

For the police officers of the head office, in comparison with the respondents interviewed at sub-stations, the following issues have higher importance: inappropriateness of the norms and laws regulating the police activities, and weak/lack of correlation between the career promotion and work results.

The majority of interviewed Osh UVD police officers do not consider important the following as the reasons for shortages of the UVD work and performance – non-professionalism or incompetence, low moral status of the police officers, lack of publicity, transparency for mass media and public, weak knowledge of Kyrgyz or Russian language.

The Neighborhood Police Officers themselves indicated that they rarely manage to interact or work with the public. In their comments to justify/explain this they refer to the lack of time (many meetings, gatherings at UVD), overloaded work consisted of the unusual and irrelevant functional responsibilities (investigation and disclosure of the crime, work on the so-called «suspended files», «unevident crimes», and increased «paper» work).

Despite all these problems indicated by the respondents, practically all the police officers are willing to continue their work at the police station, but they consider necessary to resolve these problems as soon as possible:

First of all, to increase the salary of UVD officers

Second, to eliminate the external interference /pressure on the work of UVD officers.

The reason of insufficient professionalism of UVD officers, according to the opinion of respondents, is the high personnel turnover, when the most capable and experienced officers leave the police authorities, and join other organization or private business.

The interviewed have common opinion in evaluation of UVD police officers by the following criteria: attitude to public, willingness to help, and appearance. In each of these criteria dominate the following answers: «good» and «satisfactory». And they made up in average 70-85% of total answers to each criteria.

7 out of every 10 interviewed in general at UVD think that the Osh police officers have a cooperation of high level with the public.

At the same time, based on the opinion of the respondents, the organization and form of cooperation between police and public are still not worked out. Such situation is mainly explained by distrust of citizens to interiors. Often replacements at the Neighborhood Police also have a negative impact on cooperation with public. At the same time the respondents indicated that they are worried by the public safety – this is a common task, and it will not be possible to get along without the wide participation of public.

Practically all the interviewed at UVD of Osh city agreed with the statement that **«community members should be actively involved in preventive work and help police in fighting against crime»**.

The respondents think that the following could be the forms of mutual work: help from the “court of Aksakals” (court of elders), quarter committees and heads of House/Quarter Representatives/Groups. A possibility to attract wider community is doubtful.

Practically all the respondents - 96,3% say that they possess sufficient education and training to fulfill their functional responsibilities professionally. Such distribution of answers again contradict the answers given to the next question: «What in most extent hampers your professional growth?».

The majority (54,7% of total interviewed at UVD of Osh city) of respondents agree that the «police work is a noble/honorary profession», and 25,2% of respondents are confident about it. According to the comments of this group of respondents almost all of them dreamed about this profession, selected it by themselves, consider it noble, but ungrateful.

With the statement that **«major role of the police is crime detection and arresting criminals. Other services shall exist to fulfill preventive measures, warning of drug use and maintenance of the relationships with public»** agreed 8 out of every 10 interviewed at UVD of Osh city. A little bit over 15% of respondents disagreed with this statement.

The UVD police officers themselves were crime victims in 23 cases. Out of them 19 cases occurred with the police officers from sub-stations. The majority of cases occurred when fulfilling their professional responsibilities (detaining criminals, public order protection in the process of pickets, strikes and so forth).

13 respondents, officers of sub-stations, who became victims of crimes/law offenses, reported about it to the UVD of Osh city, because these cases occurred during their service. 6 interviewed respondents from sub-stations did not apply for help to colleagues.

To the question «In your opinion, what type of your work has no any effect/results/use?» answered almost all respondents of UVD. 15-20% of interviewed think that «there is no work which is non-useful», or couldn't answer to this question because there is «too much» of work. These were the police officers from the central office of UVD.

In total there were outspoken 250 claims to the work they do at present. Very often the respondents indicated that the listed types of work are beyond their responsibilities, or non-useful from the point of view of their efficiency for public order in city.

53,3% of total respondents at UVD complain about the multiple work meetings at UVD. This is especially important for the sub-station police officers. For different types of meetings they spend about 40% of their time. The police officers of central office “loose” about 20-30% of their time.

About 30% of time the respondents spend for non-useful – according to their opinion, “paper” work. The present statistical reporting of interiors is useless, because it is accompanied by filling out useless papers, cards and so forth, nobody never uses these data because of its poor information.

Overloaded work, unlimited work day, poor criteria of work evaluation make worried every second interviewed at UVD.

The main suggestions of interviewed respondents regarding the management changes can be summarized as following:

- To change the evaluation criteria of work of police officers of all UVD services
- To secure 8 hour work regime with one day-off
- To stop involving the UVD officers to public order protection measures at mass meetings of people

- To improve the material and technical supplies (cell phone/radio connection, handcuffs, rubber truncheons, mobile lamps, office furniture, computers/office equipment, cars)
- To increase the social protection of UVD police officers (help to resolve the housing problem, increase the salary, municipal and medical privileges)
- To have a clear separation of functional responsibilities of UVD services
- To decrease the number of paper forms/number of statistical reports
- To supply with uniforms on systematic/continuous basis

The respondents think that the large problems for Osh city are the following: growth of drug-addiction among the youngsters, murders and robberies. It is also interesting that the respondents are strongly worried by activation of religious and extremist movements in the south of Kyrgyzstan.

The question: «What types of crime in Osh city raise your largest concern?» give mainly the following types of crime: robbery, stealing from houses/apartments and murders.

In crowded public places and recreation zones, according to the opinion of respondents, mainly occur hooliganism, crimes/offenses committed by youngsters.

In the process of interview some respondents presented their vision of how the public order problems in Osh city could be resolved, which can be summarized as following:

- Increase the material and technical supply of police (special stress is made on salary increase)
- To provide the social and legal protection of police officers (8 hour work day, one day-off per week, vacation)
- To establish an independent committee of detectives (for effective investigation), and prevent interference into investigation process of crimes/offenses
- In order to increase the professionalism of UVD and continuity of experience (and strengthen such work by moral or material incentives), to provide the experience exchange, information exchange, establish relationships not only with the colleagues from other regions of the country, but the countries of Central Asia.
- To review the legal base/clauses of punishments taking into consideration the present time (liberalization of criminal policy of KR)
- To strengthen the passport regime with Uzbekistan
- To minimize different meetings and gatherings at UVD of Osh city
- To provide the police officers with the most needed means for work (special means, office supplies)
- Mayor's office and other municipal services shall secure the street lightening in dark places.
- Special attention shall be paid to religious and extremist movements and strengthen the measures against them.
- Open medical "vytrezvitel" (special places where drunk people are brought in, and they remain there until they get sober) in Osh city or increase the fines for drinking alcohol in public places.
- Develop measures in order to unify the police efforts and public efforts to fight against crime (implementation of passport regime, participation of house committees in preventive work against domestic crimes and so on)

### Conclusions of the survey results:

The UVD police officers of Osh city in general decline to give very high evaluation of UVD performance. Only 2 respondents of total interviewed consider the UVD performance as unsatisfactory. The answers are grounded on availability of high professionals and high percentage of crime disclosure.

The UVD police officers are not ready for large and open/sincere discussion of existing problems, and this conclusion is confirmed by evaluations and comments of police officers. Seems that, the overstatement of all criteria of UVD police officers is related to office interests.

The police officers are unhappy with the existing criteria of work evaluation at UVD, when, first of all is evaluated the percentage of crimes' disclosure, which led to the overstatement of UVD performance. Logically, it must be visa versa, the less there are crimes and offenses, the better works police.

Respondents acknowledged corruption at UVD, but justify it by poor material status of officers.

In general the shortcomings of UVD are comprised of weak material and technical base, insufficient transportation and communication facilities. Weak partnership relationships with public are justified by lack of time.

Overloaded work, multiple functional responsibilities are recognized by the majority of interviewed respondents. But, the neighborhood policemen less than policemen of central office paid attention to unusual works and assignments.

In order to improve the UVD performance, the majority of interviewed suggest strengthening the material and technical base of region police station and increasing the material status of police officers. Other solutions for efficient work of region police station by respondents are presented less.

#### ***4. General and specific points in evaluating the problems regarding community safety by residents and police officers of Osh city***

Police, due to its specific position, can either smoothen the problems, or deepen them depending on its role in the society. By this the Police is quite in a complicated and contradicting situation: implementing the law enforcement function it should protect the rights and interests of citizens, and on the other hand – interests of the state.

The police officers and city residents admitted existence of corruption. The justifying arguments presented by both parties are practically similar. The difference between two groups of respondents is extremely minor.

Police officers try to compensate the work hardships by power they have for personal interests. For citizens it is one of arguments to mistrust and blame police in corruption, for policemen it is a forced way of surviving.

Large difference in opinions was indicated for the statement that «Police serves only to those who offer money or other favors». Majority of citizens (62,7% of total respondents) agreed with this statement. Only 4,4% of interviewed police officers agreed with this statement.

When evaluating the crimes and their impact on life quality the police officers based their opinion on criminal difficulty and difficulty to investigate; while residents were declined to evaluate the psychological, moral and financial consequences of crimes. That is why the responses of citizens the prior importance was given to municipal problems, not the types of crimes.

In the process of opinion poll the respondents of both groups were offered to answer the question: «Have you suffered from a crime for the past two years, but which you did not report to police? »

According to the opinion poll, there is no significant difference. The reasons why the victims did not apply to police are different. Police officers – victims of crimes, have prevailing other reasons.

Victims of crimes can be divided by types of crimes and presented as following:

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- Hooliganism - 3,8%
- Stealing from car 3,8
- Car accident - 1,9%
- Fraud - 1,9%
- Stealing in public places - 1,9%
- Other - 3,8%

56,6% of total respondents – victims of crimes, reported to police.

#### **Conclusions:**

- Complicated social and economic situation of country in south is added by problems of Fergana valley. No wonder that the majority of migrants who work in Kazakhstan and Russia are inhabitants from South. At the same time the inflow of migrants from the neighboring Uzbekistan is growing.
- There is some tension in relationships between police and community.
- Both groups of respondents recognize that the work of police in some extent hampered by poor laws and mechanisms of their implementation and control.
- Respondents-citizens and the police officers themselves admitted low salary of policemen, and, as a consequence, high corruption among UVD police officers.
- Both groups of respondents indicated low level of material and technical supply of UVD of Osh city.
- Problems in relationships between community and police officers are raised by situation that police itself often violated the law. This is what citizens said, and some UVD police officers recognized that.
- Community of Osh city, should be taken into consideration when developing the constructive mechanisms, is ready to cooperate with police to prevent crimes and offenses.

In conclusion, it is possible formulate several suggestions which permit increase the efficiency of UVD of Osh city:

- to install more strict recruitment of personnel to UVD, and increase the professionalism of staff
- to resolve the problem of social protection, improve the social and life conditions, inform each officer about perspectives and criteria for career growth, and to improve material and technical supply of UVD.
- it is required to develop measures which shall establish “transparency” of police for community. Establishment of this can help overcome the “mistrust zone” between police and citizens.

- in order to establish the interaction between UVD and citizens it is required to implement qualitative development/upgrading of Neighborhood Police, which at present remains beyond the understanding.

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**NOTE:** This is a short version summary of the Public Opinion Poll. For the complete version of this document please refer to OSCE Police Assistance Programme office.

720001, Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek, Sydykova St, bld #152

Tel: 996-312-62 13 77, 66 46 24; Fax: 996-312-66 13 29; E-mail: [office@policeprog.kg](mailto:office@policeprog.kg)