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ORGANIZED CRIME IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The main object of the article is to give the information about criminal activity in the United Kingdom.

The National Crime Agency has estimated that £90 bn of criminal money is being laundered through the UK every year, 4% of the country's GDP. London has become the global capital of money-laundering and the beating heart of European organized crime.

According to the National Crime Agency (NCA), there are over 350 000 individuals estimated to be involved in organized criminal activity in the UK, with just under 5 000 different organized crime groups thought to be operating in the country. Mafia-style groups are not particularly pervasive in the UK, but there are several organized crime groups in some of the country's major cities that display a number of the key characteristics of such groups, including control of local territory and high levels of access to weapons. Nevertheless, such groups – traditionally family-based syndicates – have declined substantially over the past decades, with loose criminal networks playing a far greater role in the country's organized crime landscape. A prime example of the type of criminal networks dominating the scene in the UK is the drug-trafficking networks involved in the county-lines phenomenon. Most illicit economies in the country are, in fact, controlled by such networks: in particular, the human trafficking and smuggling markets, as well as the drug markets.

Several forms of human trafficking are prevalent in the UK, victimizing foreign nationals from all across the world as well as British citizens. The two primary forms of trafficking perpetrated in the country are forced labour and trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, which affect adults and children alike. Victims are forced to work in various economic sectors, both licit, such as agriculture, construction, textiles and domestic service, and illicit, notably within the drug trade. Indeed, the exploitation of youth in the so-called 'county lines' phenomenon – in which children and vulnerable adults are trafficked and exploited as drug couriers transporting crack cocaine and heroin from major cities to rural areas across the country – has continued to rise in recent years. Furthermore, the growth of online child sexual exploitation witnessed over the past decade is most likely to have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, the human trafficking illicit economy in the UK is highly organized, involving a range of foreign criminal groups as well as domestic criminal actors.

The UK is an important destination country for human smuggling but, although the human smuggling illicit industry may

garner far greater attention in the media than does human trafficking, its criminal economy is not as widespread across the country. Moreover, it involves fewer sophisticated organized crime groups in the UK; the professionalization of the criminal market is largely limited to the activities taking place on the French side of the Channel. There do exist, however, domestic groups that either liaise with groups based in France and Belgium or directly organize the irregular crossings across the Channel. The number of individuals irregularly crossing the Channel in 2020 increased significantly from the previous year. While this may suggest an increased ability of smuggling networks to circumvent law enforcement efforts to clamp down on the crossings on both sides of the Channel, the increase is largely the manifestation of a displacement effect caused by the shutting down of formal channels through which individuals can seek asylum in the UK. The refugee resettlement scheme was paused in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, not resuming until the end of the year, which pushed migrants towards the use of smuggling networks instead.

Drug trafficking remains a key component of the organized crime landscape in the UK, and drug use and drug-related deaths are at record levels. While drug-related harm affects all four nations of the UK, Scotland in particular is acutely affected by drug-related deaths, with one of the highest drug-related death rates in Europe. The UK has among the highest prevalence of cocaine users in Europe, and deaths related to cocaine use have increased significantly over the past decade. The majority of cocaine in the UK is supplied by the major global suppliers of Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador. The principal method of transportation of cocaine to the UK is via maritime routes across the Atlantic, using Spain, Belgium or the Netherlands as the main transit hubs. The criminal groups involved in the cocaine market are highly organized and extremely professional, and foreign criminal groups have strengthened their foothold in the UK market in recent years, in particular Albanian organized crime groups. While violence is limited in the market for powder cocaine, which is considered a largely middle-class drug, the crack cocaine market is far more violent and involves significant levels of exploitation on behalf of the criminal actors behind the illicit trade. A common feature of county-lines trafficking, whereby organized crime groups traffic drugs from major cities to smaller, often rural areas, is the exploitation of young and vulnerable individuals.

On the whole, the UK has among the lowest levels of firearm offences in the region and gun regulations in the country are extremely tight. Arms trafficking is not a particularly lucrative market in and of itself in the UK and, as such, does not represent a major source of income for organized criminal groups. This notwithstanding, gun seizures have increased substantially over the past five years, with the most common source countries being other states in Europe, primarily in Central and Eastern Europe, often transiting through France, Belgium

or the Netherlands. There are several distribution channels for arms trafficked into UK, primarily across the Channel but also via Northern Ireland. Furthermore, there is considerable overlap between the presence of illicit firearms and drug supply within the UK. A key feature of the illicit arms market in the country is the prevalence of modified, converted or reactivated firearms.

The UK government is extremely vocal in its desire to tackle serious and organized crime, with significant focus placed on a number of different criminal markets, such as human trafficking, wildlife crime and the drug markets.

In conclusion, this article tells us about criminal activity in the UK and gives analysis on different spheres, where crime is spread.

Список використаних джерел

1. Inside the 21st-century British criminal underworld. The Guardian, 2019. URL: www.amp.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/04/htm.

П'явка О.,

здобувач ступеня вищої освіти бакалавра
Національної академії внутрішніх справ
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FOREIGN EXPERIENCE OF COMBATING DRUG TRAFFICKING: THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

Using drugs is one of the most essential diseases of American society. The spread of drug abuse in the United States is just incredible – there are now consumed about three-quarters of the cocaine produced in the world, over two and a half million Americans «sit on the needle» or regularly use drugs in other ways, and we are not talking about relatively «easy», say about marijuana, which since the sixties has become almost an organic part of the subculture, and about drugs «heavy» – about two million cocaine addicts, does not less than percent of the total population; a huge army of consumers of heroin, crack and other means. In General, it is believed that one in ten Americans, including schoolchildren, is addicted to drugs.

Today, Mexico is the main supplier of drugs to the United States. As you know, the United States ranks first in the world in drug consumption, respectively, neighboring Mexico at one point became profitable to use this American weakness. Drug trafficking in the country began to flourish, and with it began to appear the first drug cartels. Between 2005 and 2010 alone, seizures of marijuana increased by 49 %, methamphetamine by 54 %, heroin by 297 %, and ecstasy by 839 % at the southern border of the United States [1].

In 1947 a special police was created, the main purpose of which was the fight against drugs, but in fact its leadership was involved in the implementation of drug trafficking, because the police could easily be bribed.