



ESTONIAN  
INTERNAL  
SECURITY  
SERVICE

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ANNUAL REVIEW

20|21  
22|

<b>FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL</b>	<b>2</b>
<hr/>	
<b>DEFENDING THE CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER</b>	<b>4</b>
The Kremlin's war against Ukraine	4
Kremlin propaganda portrays it as a human rights and humanitarian aid champion	12
How to reduce the impact of Kremlin-controlled media	16
The Kremlin uses right-wing extremists to further its interests	17
Malicious encouragement of social tensions	18
<hr/>	
<b>COUNTERINTELLIGENCE</b>	<b>20</b>
Kremlin spies in Estonia	22
China's hybrid and influence activities are growing	23
Chinese Communist Party's interest in Estonian elections	24
The protection of state secrets	25
<hr/>	
<b>CYBERSECURITY</b>	<b>26</b>
Security depends on cyber defence capability	27
War in Ukraine echoing in cyberspace	28
<hr/>	
<b>PREVENTION OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM</b>	<b>28</b>
Terrorist organisations are fighting for survival	30
Politicisation and influence of Islamic communities	32
Failure to surrender explosives is punishable	35
Attempted murder with an improvised explosive device	36
<hr/>	
<b>ECONOMIC SECURITY</b>	<b>38</b>
Sanctions must be complied with because they are effective	38
Know your business partner	39
Hostile interest in business secrets is growing	40
Time is not on our side	41
<hr/>	
<b>THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION</b>	<b>42</b>
Publicising lobbying protects officials	42
Porto Franco corruption case	44
Can I count on you if they come for me?	45
A procedural restriction breach in the Defence Forces	47
<hr/>	
<b>HISTORY: THE ESTONIAN DISSIDENT MOVEMENT AND THE KGB</b>	<b>48</b>
<i>USSR KGB Sbornik</i> No 81	50
<hr/>	
<b>ENDNOTES</b>	<b>56</b>



## Dear reader,

Russia's war against the state and people of Ukraine, which began on Estonia's 2022 Independence Day, frames our annual review this year.

Created in the aftermath of the horrors of World War II, the United Nations Charter was designed to ensure world peace. Russia, led by the Kremlin, is now attacking the world order it helped create. The masks have fallen, and all the talk of guaranteeing the human rights of Russian citizens that are being violated is hollow and meaningless. One could summarise recent events through the observation that Russia is an exceptional country that fights for the human rights of its citizens exclusively outside its own territory.

We do not know and will never know the greatest thief throughout history, but today's greatest bandit sits in the Kremlin. I am not talking about the earthly wealth he has accumulated but about something that cannot be weighed or measured – he has stolen the present and future of his people and many others, and sometimes also their past.

Many of us love history; some are more fascinated by it than the average person. However, the situation is very different when a history enthusiast who wants to change the course of history according to his will, and personal judgement of what is right and fair, holds the nuclear button. We cannot imagine the former great powers in Europe claiming their former conquered or annexed territories as the Kremlin does. Can we imagine our close neighbour Sweden demanding the return of Estonia and Livonia? That would be ridiculous.

Evidently, power and glory are more important to the Kremlin than peace in countries bordering Russia or around the world. The Kremlin leader's opinion about the collapse of the Soviet Union being the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century is deeply misguided. The Soviet Union disintegrated primarily due to a lack of an efficient economic model and freedom that fosters development, not due to mystical pressure from the US and the Western allies or some Cold War conspiracy.

By declaring Ukraine a Western colony and denying the existence of Ukrainians as a nation, the Kremlin leader leaves no opportunity for a sensible dialogue. Dialogue with the Kremlin over Ukraine is a bad parody of a blind man talking to a deaf man.

In this annual review, we provide an overview of counterintelligence and the protection of constitutional order.

People who admire or support the Kremlin's policies are, both directly and indirectly, a threat to our constitutional order. Such a threat is often not palpable or imminent, but people who support Kremlin policies provide an excuse for Russia to intervene, no matter how absurd its accusations are. Of course, admiration for the Kremlin does not always present a threat that requires criminal-law intervention. Still, information must be gathered to understand the intentions of these "useful idiots" and whether they are simply supporters of a chauvinist worldview or paid Kremlin agents. Identifying and prosecuting persons involved in secret cooperation with the Russian special services is a key task for the Internal Security Service (KAPO). It should also be noted that it has been necessary to focus more and more attention on the intelligence activities of the People's Republic of China in Estonia in recent years because this global power is interested in us as a member of NATO and the European Union.

Unfortunately, we also need to pay a lot of attention to right-wing extremists. Although their activities tend to be more symbolic and limited to social networks, a combination of unfavourable factors can lead to attacks against people's lives, health or property. This is why we discuss the potential for far-right terrorism. A new era of Covid restrictions has brought a broad spectrum of characters to the streets, both people who feel they have good reason to vent their frustration and adventurers who have a business interest in protesting against everything and everyone. The protest movement as a business idea is a lucrative source of income for some people.

Counterintelligence and the protection of the constitutional order are not the only relevant areas here. We are also paying more and more attention to the prevention of terrorism, especially identifying persons arriving from third countries who may support Islamist terrorism or carry out terrorist attacks. Terrorist financing and modern financing platform are an area that requires full attention. With limited resources, choices must be made, and not everything can be combated or prevented. However, we need to build situational awareness, especially regarding modern virtual currencies.

Radicalisation and terrorist financing are areas where we need to monitor the situation effectively and intervene proactively when necessary. Radicalisation is a process that may lead to terrorism. A person's starting point for radicalisation does not necessarily matter, as the basic ideology may be different, but the process and the end result are still very similar. Without mentioning specific individuals, I can say that we have seen cases where radicalised young people have started as supporters of Islamism, then changed direction and supported the far right, and eventually grown out of their youthful radicalism and become ordinary citizens. We could even say that once-fashionable movements such as punk and hippies are now, for some, replaced by Islamist or right-wing extremism.

KAPO and other agencies must also take into consideration that Estonia, lying at a crossroads in Northern Europe, is sometimes – albeit rarely – used as a migration route by people suspected of Islamist terrorism on their way from Scandinavia to the Balkans and the Middle East and back. When combating terrorism, it is crucial to identify the manufacturers of explosives, ammunition and explosive devices while also finding the brokers, stockholders and technical equipment.

Today, it is vital to protect a country's information in cyberspace and to be able to distinguish between ordinary crime and cyberattacks by state actors. State-sponsored attacks in cyberspace can often

be carried out in cooperation with criminal groups. Cyber attacks are a threat because a single successful attack can, figuratively speaking, result in truckloads of documents falling into the possession of the adversary.

Another topic covered in this annual review is anti-corruption. Although we have succeeded as a state, corruption has not disappeared and will obviously never disappear. Where temptation is high and supervision is weak, public procurement may be organised for personal gain.

Economic security and the non-proliferation of dual-use goods and weapons of mass destruction are crucial areas addressed in our annual review.

We also continue to discuss the activities of the Soviet occupation powers in Estonia; this year, for example, we published a report on the actions of the Committee for State Security (KGB) of the Estonia SSR dating from the late 1970s.

Finally, I would like to quote an excerpt from an article by the Estonian historian and statesman Jüri Uluots, which he wrote before leaving his country in 1944. "Due to the primordial nature of its socio-political ideology, the nation of Greater Russia cannot help but continue to invade the living space of other nations, attack them, harm them and conquer them. At the same time, new reasons and theories for the attacks are found again and again."<sup>1</sup> This observation is very relevant in 2022. Now, 78 years on, we should only add that it is the Kremlin rather than the nation we should discuss. To pose a rhetorical question: when was the last time we talked about Moldova or Georgia?

I wish you happy reading.

**Arnold Sinisalu**

# DEFENDING THE CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER

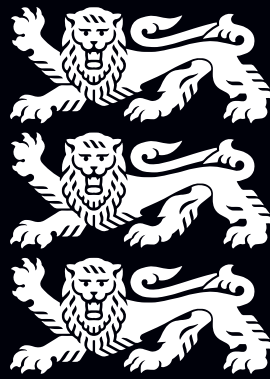
## The Kremlin's war against Ukraine

30 November 2021 marked a historic day for Estonia – the country's constitutional order had de facto been in force longer than the combined eras of occupation in the 20th century. We celebrated the 100th anniversary of Estonian statehood in 2018 and the 30th anniversary of the restoration of Estonia's independence in 2021. The period during which the people of Estonia have enjoyed constitutional rights and freedoms in their everyday lives has been just a little longer than the totalitarian rule that marked their absence.

With this in mind, we must be aware that there is a full-scale war waging in Europe, of a kind we last experienced during World War II. The Russian Federation, led by Vladimir Putin, first invaded the Republic of Ukraine in 2014, annexing and occupying Crimea with the threat of a military conflict. Putin's regime continued to commit crimes against Ukrainian sovereignty by sending its troops, disguised as "green men", to Donetsk and Luhansk in a flagrant violation of international law, initially denying the intervention but later openly acknowledging it.<sup>2</sup> However, the threat of military force and the perpetuation of military conflict did not deter Ukraine from striving for full membership in associations of peaceful democracies for the self-determination and protection of its people.

The Kremlin began gathering troops along the Ukrainian border in 2021. It launched a full-scale war against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, contrary to many analysts' views that the Kremlin was merely seeking better negotiating terms or other strategic advantages by concentrating its forces. Those who believed that the Russian army would defeat Ukraine with a rapid attack without much resistance were also mistaken. The Ukrainians' selfless courage has won the support of the entire peaceful world. Putin's regime – in fact, the whole Russian Federation – is intentionally committing numerous crimes against peace and indiscriminately killing ordinary citizens in large numbers, all of which are crimes without statutory limitation. Putin's war has brought an unprecedented influx of war refugees to countries that help and support Ukraine and its people.

The invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, the anniversary of the Republic of Estonia, did not mark the beginning of Putin's aggressive foreign policy but only its continuation with military means. The groundwork for this aggression was laid by Russia's special services, the Russian presidential administration and the entire establishment with all the tools they have been using for years to increase their influence. Alongside massive suppression of



popular resistance at home, the Kremlin has sought to increase the number of people, target groups and governments that are either dependent on it or seek personal gain from it. To prove their venality, they've had to meet the Kremlin's expectations while retaining only a degree of independence or, if less capable, subjecting themselves completely to Soviet-style decrees and annual plans.

Since the Soviet Union collapsed under the loss of its future prospects, Russia's foreign policy goals have posed security threats to the neighbouring countries. Both its cultural ties and economic relations serve these policy goals. Russia simply lacks the classic soft power to build good neighbourly relations. The first premise for this would be a sincere will to promote the interests of both sides. However, for Russia, any success won by another country represents Russia's loss.

The freedom regained with the Singing Revolution did not lull Estonia's security and national defence policy into the naive belief that protecting the country against the Kremlin's ambitions was no longer an issue. On the contrary, ever since restoring its independence, Estonia has made concerted efforts to reduce the Kremlin's influence as much as possible.

This is the background against which we assess the threats to Estonia's constitutional order over the past year, even more so this year.

There are several helpful ways to categorise threats to the constitutional order. A common distinction is between military and non-military threats. Today, primarily because of the Kremlin's actions, the buzzword is "hybrid threat", meaning the combined use of military and non-military methods to achieve military and political goals. As a civilian service, we do not analyse military threats but can confirm that, according to our domestic partners, Estonia is not facing any direct military threats at this time. We realise that, due to the full-scale war launched by the Kremlin against Ukraine, these words are not too reassuring. Instead, they beg the question of what "direct" and "at this time" mean.

Attempts have been made worldwide in recent years to analyse Russia and Putin's regime, but the start of the war has shown that no one has a complete explanation. However, our geopolitical situation has offered Estonia, and KAPO in particular, an opportunity to study the adversary closely.

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## What lessons have we learned?

The Kremlin does what it is allowed to do. In other words, Russia does not stop before it is stopped. Unfortunately, the attack on Ukraine shows that Russia is using its own imagined and staged misconception of reality as the *casus belli*, the pretext for war. The unfounded accusations of Nazism and Russophobia, massive persecution of Russian-speaking people and posing a military threat to Russia are especially familiar to Russia's neighbours, who want to live in peace and democracy and depend as little as possible on the whims of its aggressively behaved neighbour.

Typical of an authoritarian system, nobody usually dares to adequately describe reality to Russia's highest leadership, as repressions would follow.

For years, Russia has been spending considerable time and money to discredit Estonia. Although the results have been marginal, Estonia has sought to expose all the Kremlin's influence operations to defend our credibility without a shadow of a doubt and to maintain an adequate threat perception for ourselves and our Western allies. Our efforts are also aimed at those who have wanted to believe the Kremlin's two-faced talk of dialogue and partnership promises.

People's fears are exploited to divide societies. Drawing on Estonians' rightly felt contempt for pro-Kremlin activists, Russia is seeking to present that sentiment as extending to all Russian speakers, at the same time giving a lot of media attention to people talking about a massive fifth column in Estonia. Instead of buying into this myth, it is best to be guided by direct and indirect factual evidence rather than unsubstantiated fears.

For example, candidates directly representing the Kremlin's interests have not been elected to the Estonian Parliament, local councils or the European Parliament. However, the Kremlin-controlled media has indeed been able to sway many people in Estonia, especially among Russian speakers. Even a neutral attitude to the Putin regime's war crimes, so glaringly evident now, is quite difficult to understand. It is not a question of political sentiment or worldview. The question to be answered now is: how should we live peacefully in Estonia with people who rationalise the brutal killing of ordinary people by Putin's criminal regime occupying Ukraine? While it is natural for a person with an adequate worldview to be on Ukraine's side, it is clearly a challenge, and rightly so, to be pro-Kremlin in Estonian society. It is not a question of nationality or even citizenship.

Europe is at war. Ukraine is fighting for the country's survival and its people in a conventional military conflict, while the rest of Europe is fighting on all other fronts – diplomatic, economic and informational. Proponents of severe crimes against humanity are despised in any free society, and with good reason. These advocates justify crimes that deprive people and nations of something fundamental – the right to life.

However, there is no place for generalisation based on nationality, citizenship or any other group identity when attributing complicity. People whose views deserve contempt must perceive this precisely as aimed at their behaviour that justifies crimes against humanity rather than their innate characteristics. Citizens are clearly presumed to be loyal to their country, and presumptions tend to materialise unless this possibility is eliminated.

### **Shooting clubs and gun owners are under close proactive scrutiny**

KAPO and the police keep a close eye on gun clubs engaged in shooting sports or hunting. As weapons are a significant source of danger, strict legal requirements apply to obtaining a weapons permit, and a number of circumstances may preclude it. The Supreme Court has ruled that the citizenship requirement for obtaining a permit unduly restricts non-citizens' rights, and all permanent residents should have an equal right to obtain a permit.

Understandably, the Kremlin's war against Ukraine has raised the question of whether there are gun owners in Estonia who would act against the state at Putin's call. We can confirm that no armed organisations are operating in Estonia that would act against the state. KAPO assesses the potential threat in each case, including whether the person's behaviour suggests that they would pose a threat to national security as weapon owners. Whenever signals of danger are perceived, the permit and the weapon can be withdrawn, either temporarily or, in extreme cases, permanently.





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## An example of the Kremlin's modus operandi: recruiting a local content creator to serve Russia's politics of division

- **In 2010**, after the Bronze Soldier debates had subsided, the activists previously engaged in defending this World War II memorial set up an organisation to protect Russian-language education in Estonia. Individual B is elected to the organisation's leadership. The organisation's main output is through street politics.
- **In 2012**, having proven himself during street actions and demonstrated a suitable mentality, Individual B is invited to attend conferences of the World Without Nazism organisation in Moscow and Strasbourg. In his presentation in Moscow, Individual B claims that ethnic minorities are treated intolerantly in Estonia and attempts are made to assimilate them forcibly (collaboration with the Russian political organisation World Without Nazism has also paved the way for other activists from Estonia and our neighbouring countries to big politics in Estonia and the EU).
- **In 2013**, Individual B participates as a delegate in the regional conference of the Coordination Council of Russian Compatriots, which operates under the Russian Embassy.
- **In 2013**, Individual B attends a gathering of "anti-fascists" from the Baltic states in Latvia.
- Individual B runs **in the 2013** local government elections and receives 25 votes.
- A few weeks before the Russian occupation of Crimea **in 2014**, Individual B joins the World Without Nazism roundtable "Democratic Process and the Threat of Radicalisation in Ukraine" in Kyiv.
- **In 2014**, the Russian Embassy in Estonia, with funding from the Foundation for Supporting and Protecting the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad, sends Individual B to the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Russian Embassy preapproves the talking points Individual B presents. **(Photo 1)**
- **In 2014**, Individual B attends courses in the Minorities Fellowship Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the recommendation of the Russian Embassy. Thanks to the connections established during the courses, Individual B's organisation has the opportunity to provide input to the UN Human Rights Report on Estonia.
- **In 2015**, Individual B receives a grant from the Russkiy Mir Foundation to make a film about Russian-language education in Estonia.
- **In 2016**, Individual B participates in Poland's Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) congress. The Russian Embassy covers his travel expenses. **(Photo 2)**
- **In 2016**, with funding from the Compatriots Foundation, the Russian Embassy in Estonia once again sends Individual B to the OSCE ODIHR's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. The talking points he presents are preapproved by the Russian Embassy.
- **In 2017**, Individual B receives a grant from the Russkiy Mir Foundation to make a film about Russian-language schools in Estonia.
- **In 2017**, the Russian Embassy sends Individual B to a FUEN Congress in Romania and pays Individual B's FUEN membership fee for 2017–21.
- **In 2017**, Individual B participates in the Eurasian Young Leaders Forum at the Academy of National Economy and Public Administration in Moscow.
- **In 2017**, Individual B participates in the Baltic Compatriots Forum in the Leningrad Oblast
- **In 2017**, Individual B participates in the European Russian Youth Forum in the European Parliament. **(Photo 3)**
- **In 2018**, the Russian Embassy sends Individual B to the UN Human Rights Council's annual meeting in Geneva. **(Photo 4)**
- **In 2018**, Individual B is elected as a reserve candidate for the Coordination Council of Russian Compatriots under the Russian Embassy.
- **In 2018**, the Russian Embassy sends Individual B as an observer to the presidential election in Moscow.
- **In 2018**, Individual B participates in an Immortal Regiment action in Moscow.
- **In 2018**, the Russian Embassy sends Individual B to an OSCE conference in Italy, dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the Bolzano Agreement.
- **In 2018**, Individual B participates in the Baltic Compatriots Forum in the Leningrad Oblast.
- **In 2019**, Individual B starts receiving a salary from Rossiya Segodnya and is employed by Sputnik. **(Photo 5)**
- **In 2019**, Individual B's organisation wants to organise a FUEN Congress in Tallinn. The Russian Embassy pays for the video clip made in preparation for the Congress.
- **In 2019**, the Russian Embassy sends Individual B to a FUEN Congress in Bratislava.
- **In 2021**, the Russian Embassy sends Individual B to a conference organised by the Council of Europe in Hungary.
- **In 2021**, Individual B receives 34 votes in the local government election. **(Photo 6)**
- **In 2021**, Individual B participates as an observer in the State Duma elections in Russia. **(Photo 7)**



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## Threats before the war

In 2022, the world witnessed Russia's consistent use of non-military means of influence to lay the groundwork and create pretexts for military action against a sovereign state.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, it is not the first time this century that the Kremlin's imperialist ambitions – sometimes incomprehensible to the West – claim thousands of lives, cost states their territorial integrity, and cause a violent regime change. Hopefully, the last closed eyes and ears have now opened, as our security environment has changed decisively.

What happened in Ukraine is dangerously close to the Kremlin's decades-long pattern of behaviour towards the Baltic states. Our annual reviews have described the Kremlin's aggressive influence operations in Estonia since the 1990s. The Kremlin eventually failed to crush Estonia's Western integration efforts, having placed its bets on chauvinist Russian activists to create a "frozen conflict zone" in Estonia with the support of the local Russian community. Subsequent enlargements of NATO and the European Union<sup>4</sup> led to a strategy change by our militant eastern neighbour. Pursuing a politics of division, specialised state associations ramped up ideological and financial support to hostile influence operations based on the Russian World (Russkiy Mir) concept.<sup>5</sup> Working with pro-Kremlin activists and propaganda channels, they were tasked with fabricating false information and half-truths on two main issues: the alleged systematic violation of the rights of Russian-speaking people in Estonia and, as Russia sees it, a reassessment of World War II that reduces the USSR's contribution to the victory over Nazism.

An important part of the process is advocacy in international organisations, where pro-Russian activists from Estonia pose as independent experts to present anti-Estonian accusations concocted by them and disseminated via Russian propaganda channels. These are elaborated into narratives coordinated with the Russian embassy and funded by the Kremlin. In addition to this rhetoric, the Kremlin broadcasts almost daily news reports about a NATO-besieged Russia to its domestic audiences.

In Estonia, wider influence operations were actively organised until 2014, albeit failing to directly threaten our constitutional order or international relations and position in the international community. Since then, the Kremlin has aimed more resources against Ukraine's territorial integrity to create political and economic instability in the country with the help of Russian special services to prevent Ukraine from associating with the West. The Russian GONGOS implementing its politics of division, particularly Rossotrudnichestvo and the recently formed Foundation for Supporting and Protecting the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad (Compatriots Foundation), have an important supporting role in these operations.

The Kremlin's hostile activities towards Estonia since 2014 have received less funding but have become more focused. For example, the issue of protecting the rights of the Russian-speaking population has been pressed primarily at the international level, using specific spokespersons. The Russian special services' role in hostile influence operations is illustrated by the September 2021 case of Sergei Serechenko, who is accused of maintaining relationships hostile to the Estonian state. In addition, Russia, applying international law selectively, has recently made legislative amendments – in its constitution, criminal code and citizenship law – to provide a legal basis for new military aggression and assert the supremacy of Russian law over international treaties and decisions if these contradict the Russian constitution, as judged by the Kremlin.

In particular, our NATO membership and cooperation with the security authorities of the EU and other countries have ensured the Kremlin's reluctance to use the combination of non-military and military means, known as the Gerasimov Doctrine, against the Baltic states. The marginal support among the Russian diaspora for the military activities of the Russian Federation in Ukraine indicates that their perception of the "Russian world" is radically different from the Kremlin's vision. This fact should give pause to the pro-Kremlin elements in Estonia who are playing with the idea of increasing their support base by recruiting the support of Ukrainian war refugees or de-



In cooperation with several Russian associations, a seminar was held in Brussels in 2021 on identifying and preventing fake news spread by Western countries in (social) media. The Kremlin likes to pose as a champion of free media to mask its influence activities

manding special rights from the Estonian state in the context of Russia's military activities.

The answer to the question of who is disturbed by our statehood and democracy is still the same: the Kremlin's criminal regime. It is equally disturbed by the independence of its other neighbouring countries and their movement toward democracy and Western values. In recent years, the Kremlin has stepped up its international influence efforts in the field of human rights, in particular, campaigning in many international organisations. This is a response to international sanctions, which in the Kremlin's opinion, have also led to massive violations of the rights of Russian speakers abroad. Engaged in these efforts are the more active elements of the Kremlin-funded network implementing its politics of division, tasked with fabricating accusations and disseminating these in the media.

The Kremlin's influence activities against Estonia in 2021 were revived by Estonia's temporary membership of the UN Security Council. According to

the wishes of the Kremlin, its divisive policy activists organised several propaganda events and information attacks accusing Estonia, as well as Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine, of violating the human rights of the Russian-speaking population while international organisations give their tacit approval.

One example was the meeting of the UN Security Council on "the situation with national minorities and the glorification of Nazism in Baltic and Black Sea regions", organised by Russia in December 2021, just before the end of Estonia's temporary membership. The Russian Embassy in Tallinn involved the Kremlin-funded NGOs Russian School in Estonia and Legal Information Centre for Human Rights – the same associations and people that are used to achieve the Kremlin's goals on various other topics and in different formats. To their dismay, the carefully doctored propaganda messages designed to implicate Estonia did not find the desired response at the meeting. Instead, they brought about a joint statement by countries condemning such campaigns by Russia.



## Kremlin propaganda portrays it as a human rights and humanitarian aid champion

The Kremlin has been trying for years to paint a picture of itself as a human rights and humanitarian aid activist. It uses considerable creativity in cultivating this misconception. Last year, for example, Western countries and their Russian-speaking communities were approached about selling them the Sputnik V vaccine or giving it away for free. This initiative was explained as defending people's rights to medical care. Russia can exploit any topic under the pretext of protecting what it sees as its compatriots abroad.

Against the background of the events in Ukraine, it is astounding that the Kremlin's propaganda paints Estonia as one of the most significant human rights violators. In December 2021, Alexandr

Udaltsov, head of the Foundation for Supporting and Protecting the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad, stated that the foundation receives the largest number of appeals and complaints about violations of the rights of Russian-speakers from Estonia. He also claimed that the foundation mainly deals with political cases, offering the closure of the Russian-language basic school in Keila outside Tallinn (in fact, the school was gradually merged with the local secondary school) and Sergei Seredenko's court case as examples. The Compatriots Foundation has promised financial support to cover litigation costs in both instances. In return, the Kremlin requires the activists to ensure widespread media coverage of the topics and their presentation to international organisations (the UN, OSCE and FUE).

The Kremlin's "humanitarian mission" seems to serve at least two purposes: a reputation-building aspect accompanying an aggressive foreign policy



Meetings to discuss alleged violations of Russian citizens' rights and ways to protect them are really a warped platform to vilify Western countries

to divert attention from Russia's human rights record and a desire to undermine the unity of the West and the European Union, including their foreign and sanctions policies. What the Russian authorities call an international struggle for human rights amounts to accusing other countries of violating the rights of their Russian-speaking populations, which in Ukraine resulted in military aggression.

Kremlin collaborators are universal tools. For example, Maria Butina, a former gun activist who was arrested in the United States in 2018 and served a prison sentence for acting as an unregistered foreign agent, is now aspiring to become a spokesperson in the legal field. Her projects are primarily propagandistic, for example, promoting Russia's interests in the international media and international organisations in cooperation with the Russia Today network.

The Kremlin seeks to convince the Russian-speaking audiences that sanctions are imposed on the

Russian nation rather than on the corrupt regime. As part of this delusion, the Kremlin sees the legal situation of Russian-speaking people living abroad as deteriorating. Since the illegally annexed Crimea is one of the reasons for the sanctions, the Kremlin is deliberately holding international meetings there under the name of the Livadia Forum. One of the topics of the 2021 meetings was "Protecting the rights of Russian citizens and compatriots in the new geopolitical conditions" (see photographs). A representative of a dormant GONGO based in Estonia took part in this event, which accused Western countries of massive human rights violations.

The Compatriots Foundation allocates money for influence projects based on applications, while Moscow clearly favours some projects over others. This does not mean that those who have been faithfully involved in the Kremlin's operations for years will be cast aside – they continue to be held on a leash for minimal rewards.



Representatives of Kremlin-related associations that focus on the alleged discrimination of Russian-speaking people abroad rather than protecting the domestic population's rights

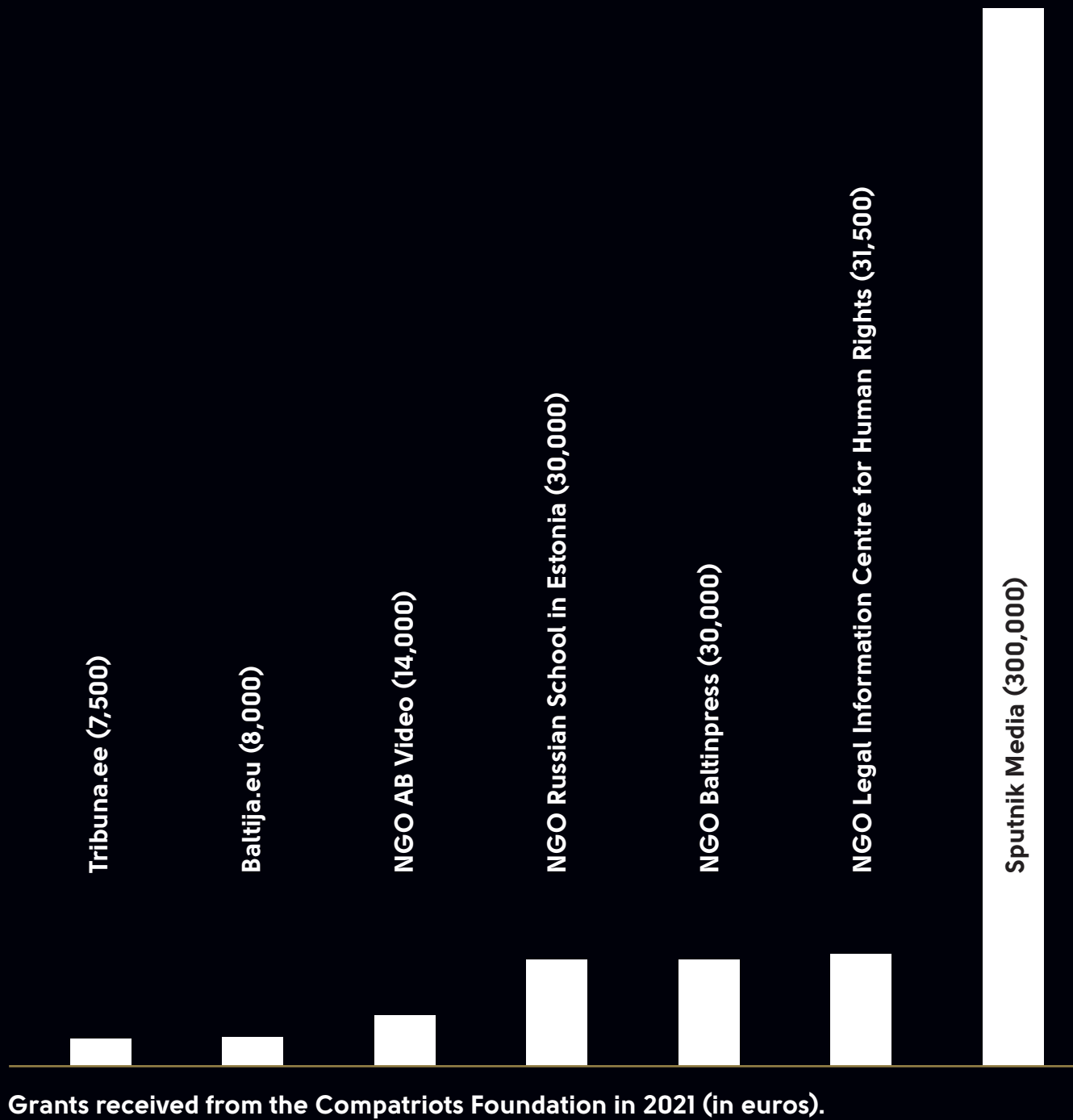


For example, in 2021, the portal Tribuna.ee applied for an operating grant of 15,000 euros from the Compatriots Foundation, but it received instead 7,500 euros. The portal Baltija.eu applied for 11,000 euros but received 8,000. Both projects received less money than requested, despite the Russian ambassador's letter of support. At the same time, Yelena Cherysheva, a representative of the former Sputnik Media, applied for almost 300,000 euros through several applications, which were all granted in full. Instead of going to the embassy, it paid her to travel to Moscow, where the important financial decisions are made.

Alongside the Compatriots Foundation, the Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund also financed the Kremlin's influence operations in 2021. In cooperation with several Russian associations, some of which have connections in Estonia, a seminar was held in Brussels on identifying and preventing fake news spread by Western countries in (social) media. The event can be associated with the Kremlin's goal of expanding the "human rights agenda" in the media. However, Russian activists in Estonia see this as an opportunity to request money from Russian funds for new influence projects.



Sputnik Media's influence in the Estonian media space is almost non-existent, but its editor-in-chief is a skilled saleswoman: Cherysheva negotiated a cash injection for her portal totalling 40 times as much as the financing received by some others





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## Kremlin influence operations in the media

The Kremlin's messengers, who call themselves journalists, have repeatedly emphasised that the Russian state media is a weapons system. Margarita Simonyan, CEO of RT and Rossiya Segodnya, said in an interview that the organisations she leads "are needed for about the same reason the country needs a defence ministry" to achieve the Kremlin's goals.<sup>6</sup> Like Russia's other neighbours, the Kremlin-controlled state media also reaches Estonia's Russian-speaking audiences. In our opinion, this is a dangerous influence, including an indirect threat to national security.

Estonia is ranked 135 places higher than Russia on the International Press Freedom Index.<sup>7</sup> The reason is clear – it is by no means acceptable for the government, parliament or president to make substantive editorial decisions in the free world. In our previous annual reviews, we have described examples of Kremlin media workers being refused entry at the Estonian border when arriving to interview local Kremlin activists and well-intentioned spokespersons, whose words would be twisted according to the context of the task. They came to fulfil a government order.

Among the most-watched Russian-language TV channels in Estonia in 2021 was PBK, which broadcasts the content of both RTR and Russia's Pervyi Kanal. These channels are mainly aimed at domestic audiences in Russia; for example, the Kremlin makes efforts to denigrate the Ukrainian state, portray it as an enemy and justify aggression against Ukraine. However, thousands of people in Estonia watch the same content. No online channel or other medium controlled by the Kremlin comes even close<sup>8</sup> in terms of audience size.

According to 2021 survey results,<sup>9</sup> Russian-speaking people in Estonia had significantly lost confidence in the Russian media. In some cases, the viewers' confidence has shifted from Russian controlled channels to Estonia's local Russian-language channels (confidence ratings of 25% and 50%, respectively). Behind this is the exceptional contribution of the Russian-speaking journalists of Estonian Public Broadcasting (ERR), Postimees, Delfi and Äripäev.

The growing threat of war has increased people's need for information since the mobilisation of the

Russian military to the Ukrainian border in the second half of 2021. Various types of media have been consumed more than before, including Kremlin-controlled channels.

## How to reduce the impact of Kremlin-controlled media

The impact of Kremlin-controlled information channels and related threats to Estonian society was strongly felt in April 2007 in the "Bronze Night" riots in Tallinn, when years of incitement to hatred pushed one segment of society into action. The Kremlin formed a united front to escalate possible tensions – the local Russian embassy, pro-Kremlin activists and its state media were deployed in a coordinated manner. At the time, RTR and other media channels broadcast deliberate distortions and staged events. Even a violent coup was on the agenda, as one of the riot activists announced on Russian television that the next day would see a new government at Toompea. Information and influence operations following the same logic were used in Georgia in 2008 and have been used in Ukraine at least since 2014. Some of the people involved were applying their experience gained in Estonia.

Since 2007, however, the threat perception in Estonia has decreased despite various prognoses. On the other hand, Latvia has stepped up its media surveillance in recent years and has shown that Kremlin-controlled channels systematically violate the EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive and Latvia's national law. Latvia has suspended licences to broadcast Russian channels for inciting hatred against the Ukrainian state and people, among other things.

As the full range of violations is broad, Latvia has also created an additional layer of protection, permitted by EU law, in the form of a retransmission licence, to ensure that channels broadcast in Latvia do not abuse free media space, in which case they face suspension. As of mid-March 2022, the licences of 17 Russian TV and online channels had been suspended or cancelled in Latvia.

KAPO conducted proceedings based on a legal aid request in a Latvian criminal case investigating the activities of the Latvian media management company BMA, which violated EU sanctions imposed on Yuri Kovalchuk by doing business with PBK and other channels broadcasting Pervyi Kanal. Kovalchuk,

a person close to Putin, is the chairman of the board of Rossiya Bank and has direct ownership in and influence over other channels through Pervyi Kanal and the National Media Group (NMG).

In February 2022, a Latvian court convicted BMA owner Oleg Solodov and Estonian media businessman Margus Merima of violating EU sanctions and confiscated more than 3.1 million euros worth of BMA assets. In the light of the criminal proceedings, the Tallinn City Government ended cooperation in 2021 with the companies that mediated PBK in Estonia, thus avoiding a potential violation of EU sanctions. The fate of companies that continue to do business with PBK intermediaries in Estonia, possibly giving persons subject to international sanctions access to economic resources, depends on the usability of the Latvian evidence and conviction.

Estonia has applied EU sanctions against various individuals who have used funds as owners or managers and participated in the Kremlin's aggression against Ukraine. Sputnik, a sub-organisation of the Kremlin's propaganda centre Rossiya Segodnya, was forced to cease activities in Estonia, as Dmitry Kiselyov, the leader of Rossiya Segodnya, is subject to EU sanctions for supporting the aggression against Ukraine.

The Kremlin's war crimes have led the EU to use sanctions more extensively than before to stop Putin's aggression. While earlier sanctions concerned the Kremlin-controlled media relatively little, the number of sanctioned individuals and channels has now grown sharply. The EU sanctions applied hamper the Kremlin's influence operations against the West, including Estonia, but only if they are properly implemented, and violators are brought to justice. We discuss sanctions in more detail in the chapter on economic security.

In addition to international sanctions, national media regulators and the Estonian Agency for Consumer Protection and Technical Supervision also play an important role in curbing the harmful effects of the Kremlin's media weapons. Since the outbreak of the war, the Agency has restricted the spread of Kremlin-controlled channels in Estonia, as these incited anger and justified crimes against peace. The updated EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive, which Estonia incorporated into national law on 9 March, provides a more effective means for intervening in the event of a threat. In addition

to audiovisual media, the Agency now also controls media platforms and internet service providers. Media freedom is highly valued in the EU. Still, its protection does not cover blatant violations of the rules agreed in Europe, which the Kremlin commits to stifle free speech with its hostile propaganda.

## **The Kremlin uses right-wing extremists to further its interests**

We already looked at how the Kremlin uses right-wing extremist movements to further its interests in our annual review in 2016, when a provocatively tattooed far-right extremist from Saint Petersburg sought to join a memorial service for Estonian World War II veterans and stage an opportunity to publicly accuse Estonia of supporting Nazism. In February 2021, local Russian-speaking skinheads were seen in front of the Russian Embassy in Tallinn, joining the Immortal Regiment in a demonstration to vilify Alexei Navalny.

The Immortal Regiment activists are led by a person convicted of inciting national and racial hatred, previously involved with the far-right Barkashovians, who is now acting in the interests of Russian propaganda channels. Exploiting various extremists is in line with Russian military doctrine – to approach conflicts by employing political, economic, informational and other non-military methods as well as military ones, exploiting the protest potential of the local population.

The threat of the concept of accelerationism, borrowed from Siege ideology disseminated through the Iron March far-right online forum, is illustrated by the fact that it also inspired the mass murderers responsible for the 2019 terrorist acts in New Zealand and the US. Proponents of Siege Culture around the world, including in Estonia, see these as a role model. Siege ideology targets marginalised young people who feel alone with their concerns. It incites hatred against certain groups in society and involves the heroisation of Nazism.

While the members of the different groups may never meet in real life, the misconceptions picked up online may induce some to plan real-life attacks. This is a particular threat with young people and mentally unstable individuals, especially if they have an interest in or access to (their parents') legal firearms. These chat rooms are also visited by young people in Estonia, who have spread violent propaganda there and recruited new members. To

prevent threats, KAPO detained two young men in October 2021 who were linked to the Feuerkrieg Division, declared a terrorist organisation in the United Kingdom, and who were suspected of inciting or threatening to commit terrorist offences.

### Incitement to right-wing extremist terrorism

In the context of threat prevention, the most dangerous development in recent years has been the arrival in Estonia of Siege Culture, which incites terrorism. The trend is named after a series of articles published in the 1980s by American right-wing extremist James Mason, which focused on accelerating the collapse of society through terrorist attacks and subsequent racial war. Previously rejected as too extreme by right-wing extremists, the theory was spread by a younger generation of right-wing extremists on the international internet forum Iron March, which operated from 2011–17.

It inspired a number of pro-violence groups whose members have been convicted of murder and terrorist acts. The forum was created and led by Alisher Mukhitdinov, a Russian citizen who studied at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations

(MGIMO), a university under the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His book, which justifies and glorifies violence, has been found in the possession of Estonian right-wing extremists.

### Malicious encouragement of social tensions

The Covid pandemic led to restrictions to prevent the spread of the virus worldwide, which in turn led to the emergence of rebellious groups, widespread opposition and divisions in society. Against this background, the one-sided information spread in social media echo chambers profoundly impacts people's behaviour. Confrontation is also growing within families, where social media connections are increasingly displacing family ties. As typical in a crisis, conspiracy theories spread online. All this drives some people to radicalise.

The past year has seen a growing trend of intentional disinformation, either for political profit or economic gain (e.g. donation campaigns). Disinformation seeks to create the impression that various processes taking place in society pose a threat. The pattern of behaviour emerging in Estonia is similar to that of dissenters in other Western countries.



14 February 2021. Cooperation between Immortal Regiment activists and Russian right-wing extremists (skinheads) in a provocative counter-action to a demonstration in Tallinn supporting Navalny and other Russian political prisoners. Photo courtesy of Õhtuleht





False claims about the forced vaccination of children are used to radicalise people and justify the possible use of violence.  
Photo by Sander Ilvest, *Postimees*

People meet at unregistered demonstrations against COVID-19 measures and then gather in social media groups. A common topic besides COVID-19 measures and anti-vaccine moods is preparing for the end of the current world order.

Online groups host large open-air events where survival techniques and weapons handling are taught. Regional leaders are appointed across Estonia.

Misinformation is spread at protest events, suggesting that government officials are planning to forcibly enter people's homes and vaccinate children. Vaccination and vaccine passports are declared a form of terrorism, against which any means are justified. The possibility of a civil war is suggested.

A group of individuals emerges for whom the original broader groups and their leaders are not radical enough. Smaller groups are created under the pretext of protecting homes. The original leaders are pushed out.

These smaller groups consider acquiring weapons, discuss defence tactics and organise field trips. Despite the intention of protecting the community, they can become a threat to the general public because of their misconceptions. To date, these groups in Estonia have not yet radicalised to an extent requiring KAPO to intervene.

KAPO is actively gathering information about violent extremism, and we are ready to intervene early if a threat emerges.



# COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

War in Europe is a clear threat to our security – not only in terms of a threat of military conflict but also in terms of the tensions and challenges that Russia's actions have created for Europe. Our new focus is on the need to help Ukrainian war refugees and prevent anyone who is a security threat from entering Estonia and the European Union. Different states are taking different measures to protect their territories, but these measures are well-coordinated, and there is a systematic exchange of information. Europe is up to the challenges lying ahead.

While defending their territories, European countries are also putting pressure on Russia to end hostilities against Ukraine with economic sanctions, the suspension of Russia's membership in international organisations, the expulsion of Russian diplomats, restrictions on issuing visas, and entry restrictions. Understandably, Europe cannot treat individuals with links to Russia and especially to the Russian authorities in the same way as before the war. Military activity in Ukraine will have long-term consequences for Russia in its economy, diplomacy, international cooperation, sports and all other areas of life. However, Europe will also experience consequences, mainly economic, which all of us will have to face and the responsibility for which lies solely with the Kremlin and Russia's leadership.

However, for the Kremlin itself, the war has not gone as expected, and a lightning campaign has turned into a protracted struggle. As typical for a totalitarian regime, it only took a couple of weeks before a hunt for the culprits began. Sergei Beseda, director of the Federal Security Service's (FSB) Department for Operational Information (known as the Fifth Service), and his deputy, Anatoly Bolyukh, were the first to be arrested on 11 March and later released. This was reportedly due to faulty intelligence on Ukraine provided by the Fifth Service leading up to the conflict. Misappropriation of operating funds within the FSB has also been cited as a reason. Both theories may turn out to be true.

It is an open secret that the Russian leadership has been fed a diet of biased information for years; in some cases, self-censorship is applied right from the beginning of intelligence production and certainly from the middle management up. Putin and the other leaders are provided only the information they want to see. The average civil servant in the Russian state apparatus has routinely been building a Potemkin village for years. This situation has been very frustrating for the more intelligent and independent-minded staff members, who will now certainly consider their options for an honest life in the free world. It is understandable because no one wants a future for themselves and their families in a society run by a totalitarian government built on lies.



## Activities of the Russian special services

The pre-war year of 2021 was challenging for the Russian special services, marked by political tensions between the Russian Federation and the EU and NATO members. The year will be remembered for the exposure of Russia's foreign military intelligence (GRU) network in Bulgaria and the unmasking of the GRU's role in the 2014 explosions at the ammunition depots in Vrbovec, Czech Republic. There were also a number of minor scandals. Worth noting are the alleged cooperation between one of the Russian special services and a Latvian member of parliament, and the exposed collaboration between an Italian naval officer and a Russian intelligence operative with diplomatic cover. Arrests were also made in several other EU and NATO member states for cooperation with Russian intelligence services.

In response to these incidents, a number of Russian spies under diplomatic cover were expelled from the Europe in 2021. NATO headquarters accreditation was cancelled with respect to eight intelligence workers using Russian diplomatic cover. After the start of hostilities in Ukraine, the US, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Netherlands, Ireland, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Bulgaria, Romania, Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, North Macedonia and Montenegro rapid-

ly reduced the number of Russian diplomats in their countries in February and March 2022. The European Union reduced the number of accredited Russian Federation diplomats by 19.

Reciprocal expulsions by countries within and outside the EU and NATO are likely to continue during 2022. At the time of publishing this annual review, the Russian diplomat-spies expelled by different countries significantly outnumber the expulsions of 2018 after the poisoning of the Skripals in the UK. The Czech Republic and the Baltic states also closed all of the Russian Federation consulate on their territories, and Slovakia decided to cut the local Russian diplomatic corps in half. Today we can safely say that there is unified opposition to the Russian special services' activities in Europe, and the methods are well coordinated between different countries. In addition to national security agencies, the international press has done remarkable work raising public awareness of the intelligence threat posed by Russia.

In addition to the steps taken by various countries and intelligence agencies, it is only fair to highlight the remarkable work done by the international press and investigative journalism in explaining and drawing attention to the threat posed by Russian intelligence agencies.



## TÄHELEPANU!

KAS SUL KÄSTI KOGUDA INFOT VÕI TEHA PILTE EESTI PIIRAJATISTEST, MILITAAR- JA SISEJULGEOLEKU OBJEKTIDEST? PUUTUSID KOKKU VÕÕRRIIGI ERITEENISTUSE TÖÖTAJAGA VÕI KAHTLUSTAD SEDA? EESTI AITAB SIND, ENNE AGA

## TEATA VÕÕRRIIGI VAENULIKUST TEGEVUSEST!

KUI SUL OLI ENDAL KONTAKT VÕI TEATE KEDAGI, KES TEEB VENEMAA JA VALGEVENE ERITEENISTUSTEGA KOOSTÖÖD, SIIS TEAVITAGE SELLEST KAITSEPOLITSEIAMETIT E-POSTI AADRESSIL [INFO24@KAPO.EE](mailto:INFO24@KAPO.EE) KUI E-KIRJA SAATA POLE VÕIMALIK, SIIS TEAVITA KOHAPEAL EESTI PIIRIVALVUREID.

## ATTENTION!

DID SOMEBODY ASK YOU TO TAKE PICTURES OF THE BORDER STRUCTURES OF ESTONIA? DID YOU HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH ANY INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES? OR DO YOU HAVE ANY SUSPICIONS OF SUCH CONTACTS? ESTONIA WILL HELP YOU, BUT FIRST

## REPORT MALIGN ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES

DID YOU HAVE ANY CONTACT OR DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO HAS HAD ANY CONTACT WITH THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES OF RUSSIA OR BELARUS? REPORT THESE INSTANCES TO THE ESTONIAN INTERNAL SECURITY SERVICE [KAPO VIA E-MAIL INFO24@KAPO.EE](mailto:KAPO VIA E-MAIL INFO24@KAPO.EE) OR REPORT THIS TO THE ESTONIAN BORDER GUARD AT THE ESTONIAN BORDER.

KAITSEPOLITSEIAMET



ESTONIAN INTERNAL SECURITY SERVICE

## Kremlin spies in Estonia

As in other parts of the world, Russia did not scale down its special services' activities in Estonia in 2021. Espionage has continued under diplomatic cover from the Russian Embassy in Estonia or from Russia. While in our previous annual review we reported that Covid had hampered Russia's intelligence activities, at least in terms of physical contacts, and shifted them toward virtual activities, 2021 has seen some physical contacts re-established. Both the FSB and GRU seek contact with many Estonian citizens and residents who travel to Russia.

Active recruitment by Russian special services was significantly affected by the start of the military assault on Ukraine. In addition to fear of espionage, Russia's revealing its true colours has undoubtedly opened the eyes of many who were previously neutral towards Russia, making it much more difficult for Russia's special services to find sympathisers to be approached as prospective agents.

To further mitigate threats to Estonia's security and prevent the involvement of Estonian citizens and residents in the affairs of hostile intelligence services, we launched a campaign with the Police and Border Guard Board on 10 March 2022 to inform border crossers about recruitment attempts in the territory of Russia and encourage them to report such attempts to us.

In addition, Estonia has declared six Russian diplomats personae non gratae since the beginning of 2021, three of them in March 2022 in connection with Russia's military activities in Ukraine. Understandably, Russia's aggression against Ukraine was not the only reason for their expulsion. Two of the other diplomats were expelled at least partly in response to the Kremlin's hostile actions towards our diplomats and our allies: the involvement of Russian special services in the attack on the Vrbětice ammunition warehouses in the Czech Republic in 2014 and the FSB's clearly provocative behaviour towards the

Estonian consul in Saint Petersburg in the summer of 2021.<sup>10</sup> One Russian diplomat was expelled in 2021 for actions not in line with the Vienna Convention. Typically, the status of *persona non grata* means that the borders of the Schengen area and western countries will remain closed to the person for a considerable period.

### China's hybrid and influence activities are growing

China's attitude towards the Russian military assault against Ukraine is thought-provoking. China was aware of Russia's planned aggression in Ukraine, and Russia has continued to coordinate its actions with China throughout the war. Although Russia's actions are diplomatically inconvenient for China by

putting pressure on China and diverting attention from issues that are important to it, China has not openly condemned the war. Neither has it shown any substantial support for Russia's military action, despite using some of Russia's rhetoric in its diplomatic communication. Instead, China continues to look for ways to pursue its interests in the post-war world without publicly choosing sides. The Chinese Embassy in Tallinn closely monitors the development of the Ukrainian issue in the Estonian media, uses the Kremlin's rhetoric in its statements, but avoids openly taking sides. When talking about China, we should always consider whether the expected economic benefits of cooperating with China outweigh the reputational damage of dealing with a country that prefers to reap the economic benefits of the situation rather than condemning military action against the civilian population.



A photograph showing the 39th Overseas Chinese Community Leaders Seminar. In the middle of the first row (blue tie) is Mr Tan Tianxing, OCAO Deputy Director 2012–18 and UFWD Deputy Minister since 2018



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China's influence and propaganda activities across Europe are growing year by year. Beijing is increasingly interested in mineral resources, maritime affairs, major infrastructure projects, and scientific and technological information. It continues to be interested in investing in start-ups, as this will give it a say in the sectors of interest in the longer run. Unlike Western investors, Chinese investment decisions are often not driven by a desire to make money but by Beijing's guidelines designed to give it a seat at the table in one sector or another.

Simultaneously with economic influence operations in various countries, it is important for China to control members of the Chinese communities living abroad and to ensure their ideological purity and loyalty to the ruling Communist Party (CCP). The CCP's United Front Work Department (UFWD) is an essential tool in working with the Chinese communities. The UFWD is a CCP subdivision responsible for controlling and influencing social life in China and abroad (government agencies, universities, organisations, private companies, including foreign companies in China, etc.) to ensure that nothing in the goals and activities of these organisations conflicts with the CCP's official views or interests. The Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (OCAO) reports to the UFWD and coordinates the activities required by the CCP concerning Chinese communities abroad and their organisations, including in Estonia. To ensure the obedience of all Chinese people abroad and to call potential dissidents to order, selected leaders of Chinese communities in a foreign country are trained and used.

The role of the CCP extends beyond Chinese organisations to Chinese-owned companies around the world. Party cells are also formed within foreign companies, making any economic cooperation with China dependent on Chinese politics and government and subjecting it to monitoring by China's intelligence services. The European Parliament has drawn attention to this trend. These developments need to be monitored. Agents in technology companies may create back doors in their products and services for China's special services; they may also engage in influence activities within the company.

## **Chinese Communist Party's interest in Estonian elections**

All Chinese state institutions, including intelligence services, seek to recruit and exploit Chinese citizens living abroad. This is particularly important from an intelligence perspective, as COVID-19 has restricted the normal movement of Chinese intelligence operatives. We see Chinese state propaganda in Estonia becoming stronger, and more efforts are being made to involve the local Chinese community in pursuing the goals of Chinese espionage and the CCP. For example, there has been a growing interest in Estonian politics and elections among the community.

Regarding Chinese state propaganda, Estonia is in a somewhat unique situation compared with other Baltic and Scandinavian countries. Unlike in many neighbouring countries, China has not achieved its goals in the Estonian media landscape, as the majority of the Estonian press is no longer publishing the official views of the Chinese Embassy. The embassy has responded by launching a new initiative for state propaganda.

In May 2021, the Chinese Embassy in Tallinn began sending a newsletter titled *China Watch* to its contacts. Its creation was the embassy's reaction to a public address in the newspaper *Postimees* on 13 April 2021,<sup>11</sup> which described China's influence operations as threatening academic and press freedom. The embassy's circular has been covered by both the press and the Estonian Foreign Intelligence Agency's 2022 annual report, which is why government employees are well aware of the nature of this propaganda pamphlet. As a result, the Chinese Embassy has shifted its focus to local governments and academic circles. In some instances, recipients have expressed gratitude to the Chinese Embassy for useful information sent to them.

## Social media activities

Various Chinese organisations and individuals have attempted to approach Estonian officials and public servants, researchers and opinion leaders on LinkedIn or other social media platforms and by email during the year. In addition to official communication channels, direct contacts are sought with people of interest. This is a global trend that we have highlighted in our previous annual reviews. Seemingly incredible job offers made through social media and coming from unknown and unverifiable sources or from the territory of China can often be intelligence-related. KAPO encourages all recipients to report such offers.

## The protection of state secrets

One of the focal points of KAPO's counterintelligence activities is the protection of state secrets, both against malicious interest and negligence. The measures taken to prevent negligence and thereby the disclosure of state secrets must be adequate and up-to-date. KAPO monitors compliance with the procedure for processing state secrets.

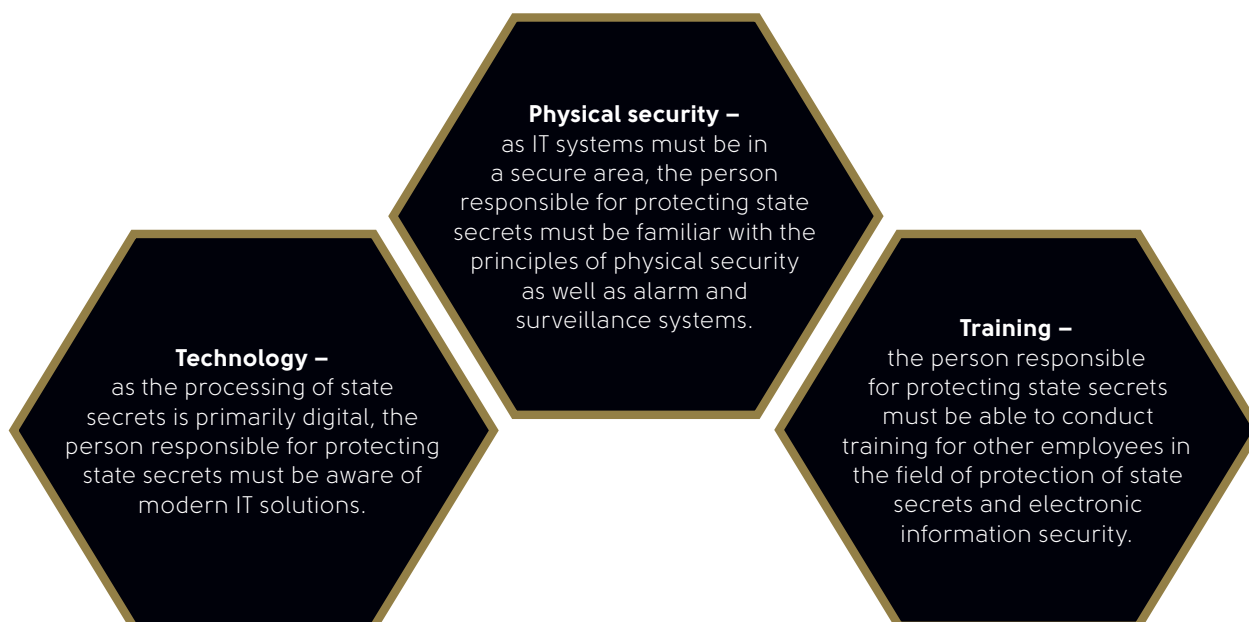
Inspections in recent years have revealed shortcomings in recognising security threats and insufficient allocation of resources to protect information

classified as a state secret and ensure its physical safety. We often see that the relevant legislation is not being followed carefully enough. We need to reiterate that institutions handling state secrets must report any breaches immediately, not weeks or months after the fact.

The protection of state secrets is often organised in the "comfort zone". To ensure state secrets are protected, the security situation and physical environment must be analysed on an ongoing basis, and protective measures strengthened accordingly. The staff members organising the protection of state secrets must have extensive professional knowledge to perform this task in the best way possible. This knowledge should cover the following:

Staff members responsible for organising the protection of state secrets often perform this task alongside their main job or other duties, which is why the staffing, time and technical resources devoted to this area are often insufficient.

In 2021, KAPO specialists in protecting state secrets conducted more than 20 training events with different content for both state agencies and private companies. We work with persons organising the protection of state secrets to ensure physical security and raise awareness of security threats practically on a daily basis.





# CYBERSECURITY

In 2021, hostile cyber activity continued worldwide, with various campaigns that also targeted Estonia. Cyberattacks on a global scale have confirmed the continuity and evolution of the threat they pose, highlighting our need for a constantly renewed defence capability and a high level of cooperation. Attacks against the Microsoft Exchange system in early 2021 showed that attackers shared knowledge about the security vulnerabilities identified and access gained. This forced countries to apply security patches on a large scale.<sup>12</sup> The operation against the American company SolarWinds at the end of 2020 and the APT29 (“Cozy Bear”) campaigns detected in 2021 drew attention to the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR).<sup>13</sup> The SVR had previously been relatively obscure in the cyber threat landscape, but these incidents provided an opportunity to gain valuable insight into its cyber capabilities and modus operandi.<sup>14</sup> The cyber-supported information operations of the Ghostwriter campaign, attributed to Russia by the international community, gave an idea of the possibilities of using hostile cyber activities in the context of hybrid attacks.<sup>15</sup>

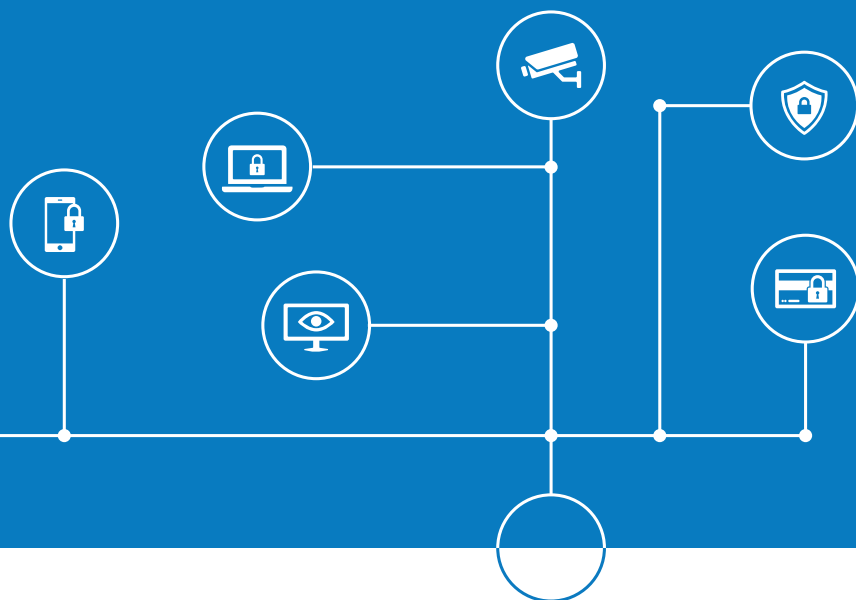
For Estonia, state-sponsored attacks from Russia and China continue to be the most significant cybersecurity threat. We observed a slight upward trend in state-sponsored attacks originating in China. Foreign-origin attacks persist – in the absence of security patches, vulnerabilities in our networks will be quickly discovered and exploited to steal information instantly.

## Security depends on cyber defence capability

Attempts to gain access to the computer systems of key Estonian institutions and critical infrastructure and to search for security vulnerabilities in these systems will continue. We have seen that any security vulnerabilities found by an attacker are immediately exploited, and all systems where the vulnerabilities occur are attacked. At the same time, there is always the risk that an attacker will use them to prepare for a more significant attack in the future. Moreover, direct attacks are only the visible part of the threat, the tip of the iceberg, while the knowledge about our computer network vulnerabilities, national cyber capabilities and the functioning of critical infrastructure gained from hostile cyber activity is much more difficult to assess.

The more widely publicised cyber incidents in Estonia last year – a business data breach<sup>16</sup> and the theft of 290,000 document photos<sup>17</sup> – were made possible by security flaws in national systems and outdated software. These mistakes could have been easily prevented. As the Estonian Information System Authority (RIA) points out, our national authorities do not react quickly enough to serious security threats.<sup>18</sup>

These incidents also raise the question of whether we can identify as yet unidentified vulnerabilities if we are not taking known vulnerabilities seriously enough; our dilemma is not just about software and hardware but also about people. Cybersecurity



threats do not exist only on networks and computers; efforts are typically made to place recruits in advantageous positions during hostile intelligence activity.

The IT labour market is global, and every country seeks talented professionals, including Estonia. In the case of government IT developments, we need to consider the possibility that hostile intelligence services may target foreign citizens. Due to outsourcing, the contracting authority may not even know that its networks are being accessed by someone who should not have access. To avoid this risk, contracting authorities for public IT developments should ensure that they are well informed and have control over any subcontractors. Last year, for example, people with indirect links to the Russian military and aerospace industries were about to be involved in IT development procured by Estonia authorities. Individuals with such connections are very likely known to and observed by the Russian special services. It would be naive to assume that their access to Estonian networks would have gone unnoticed or unexploited had they been hired.

Another significant aspect of last year is the increase in cybercrime worldwide, especially ransomware attacks against public and critical infrastructure institutions. The boundaries between cyberattacks by state actors and cybercrime are becoming somewhat blurred. The defence of the networks and systems we rely on must withstand both threats, whether from hostile states' special services or criminals seeking financial gain. As a security authority, we must always be alert to the possibility that attackers may cooperate with hostile intelligence services, sell

information stolen during an attack, or use the information or the fact that an attack has taken place to damage our international reputation. Therefore, no threat to cybersecurity should be underestimated, and no compromises should be made for the sake of convenience or economising.

## War in Ukraine echoing in cyberspace

The Kremlin's shocking aggression against a country in the heart of Europe that – like Estonia – shares a border with Russia and a deep sense of the threat it poses also raises questions of whether Russia would use its cyber capabilities in war and to what extent. For many years, we have seen and analysed the activities of the cyber units of Russian military intelligence in Estonia, Europe and the world at large. We have concluded that Russia has both the capability and the willingness to use cyberattacks, either directly or as a supporting element in its military activities. These threat assessments may now become a reality.

On the positive side, just as Russia's conventional military forces were largely unprepared for the war in Ukraine, it seems at the moment that they were also unprepared for the need for (coordinated) attacks in cyberspace. However, Western countries have warned of the imminent threat of Russian cyberattacks against critical infrastructure and public networks. Estonia must also be ready for it. Now more than ever, we need responsible cyber behaviour, identification and removal of potential security vulnerabilities in our systems, and useful cooperation at the national and international levels to ensure that Estonia is protected in cyberspace.





# PREVENTION OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

The Taliban's rise to power in Afghanistan in autumn 2021 was a victory over the Western powers and civilisation in the eyes of Islamist terrorist organisations. It is used to inspire new supporters and existing fighters hoping to reach new heights, or at least a return to the 2014–18 situation, where creating an Islamic caliphate was the principal project.

Last year marked the 20th anniversary of Al Qaeda's attack on the World Trade Center in New York in 2001. Last year also saw the end of a 20-year war on terrorism in Afghanistan, which claimed the lives of roughly 3,500 allied soldiers. Nine members of the Estonian Defence Forces were also killed and 92 injured.

The ideology of Islamist terrorism, or jihadist terrorism, has not changed during this period. The terrorist organisations' goal is to create a caliphate governed by Islamic religious law or sharia.

Daesh, at times known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, succeeded in establishing a caliphate in Syria and Iraq during the highwater mark of its rule. When the Taliban regained power in Afghanistan after being ousted for its support of al-Qaeda, it restored the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, its name under the group's original period of rule. The head of state is the emir, and the state is governed according to sharia law or religious regulations.

The threat of Islamist terrorism in Europe will not subside in the coming years. The biggest threats are Daesh and Al-Qaeda with their affiliates and allies. Other Islamist terrorist organisations focus on regional conflicts and are unable or unwilling to carry out terrorist attacks in Europe. However, these smaller organisations are just as dangerous in spreading the ideology of Islamist terrorism, inciting radicalisation, and recruiting new fighters and supporters.

Although Russia's military action in Ukraine may appear unrelated to Islamic extremism and terrorism, there is a link.

To dispel the Muslim population's reservations about participating in the fighting, the leaders of Russia's Muslim organisations announced a fatwa<sup>19</sup> supporting the war against Ukraine at a conference on 16 March 2022. In essence, the fatwa approves Islamic extremists participating in the aggression against Ukraine, recognising fallen Muslims on the Russian side as martyrs.

In contrast to Russia's Islamic religious leaders, Daesh called on Muslims not to fight in Ukraine, as the conflict in Europe weakens European countries as well as the United States and Russia, limiting their ability to fight Islamic terrorism and therefore serving Islamist interests.



## الافتتاحية ٣

العدد ٢٢٨  
الخميس ٢٠ رجب، ١٤٤٣ هـ

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم



م  
"حروب"  
صليبية-  
صليبية"  
م

وبسط سيطرتهم عليها، وهو تدافع خاص يتفرع عن سنة التدافع العام لقوله تعالى: (وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ، وَيَعْبُرُ عَنْ ذَلِكَ أَيْضًا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: {وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ يَكْفُرْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ}، قال ابن زيد رحمه الله: "أى: تسلط بعض الظلمة على بعض، الأوقات، تصاعد نشاط الدجاجة الصغار ووسائل إعلامهم في تهوين الكفر للناس، كما رأينا من دعوتهم للمسلمين الغاضبين في روسيا وأوكرانيا للالتحاق والمشاركة في هذه الحرب قتالا في سبيل الطاغوت! ونود أن نشير هنا إلى لفظة مهمة، وهي أنه مهما تعلقت المشهد وتضاعفت

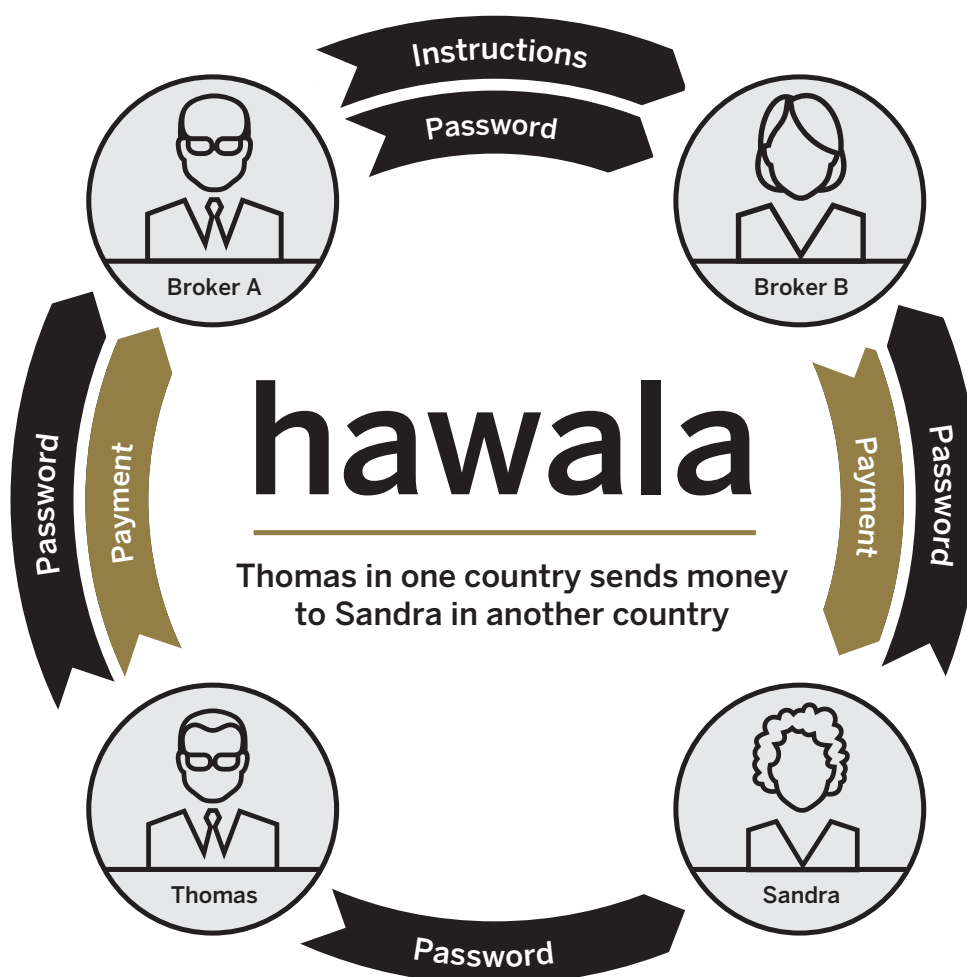
In contrast to Russia's Islamic religious leaders, the terrorist organisation Daesh called on Muslims not to fight in Ukraine, as the conflict in Europe weakens European countries as well as the United States and Russia, limiting their ability to fight Islamic terrorism and therefore serving Islamist interests

## Terrorist organisations are fighting for survival

The fight against terrorism, particularly against Daesh and al-Qaeda, has forced these organisations to fight for their survival and shift their focus from Europe to their host country. However, these organisations are not on the brink of extinction but have adapted to the situation and, with their allies, pose a particular threat to countries in the Middle East and the Sahel region of sub-Saharan Africa. Although currently incapable of carrying out large-

scale attacks in Europe, they are inciting local sympathisers to do so. In 2021, individuals carried out attacks in Europe who had no identifiable contact with terrorist organisations or their networks. With scarce funding, logistic difficulties and no training, the attacks are basic – using a sharp object, vehicle or explosives – and depend on the capabilities of the perpetrator.

Several key leaders of Islamist movements have been killed, and the organisations have been deprived of their experience and knowledge. The spread of propaganda relies on the personal fanati-



Hawala is a traditional trust-based method of transferring money in Islamic countries that does not require the payment to physically travel to the recipient. Instead of cash, the *hawaladar*, or broker, may also accept valuables, immovables or movables that are converted into cash handed over to the recipient.

cism of people in Europe rather than sophisticated campaigns. Communication platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Reddit and Telegram are mainly used for this purpose. Meaningful communication and radicalisation take place on platforms allowing for greater anonymity.

Terrorism is financed with legal income as well as crimes perpetrated in Europe, including robbery, theft, smuggling and drug trafficking. Cash delivery solutions to conflict areas (wire transfers, cash in transit and hawala), online transfer services and virtual currencies play an essential role.

### **Radicalised organisations exploit migration crises**

There are thousands of people across Europe with links to Islamist terrorism, both ideological supporters and returning foreign fighters. Only a fraction of the perpetrators of terrorist acts are converts – 90 per cent have an Islamic background. People arriving in the European Union as refugees must be vetted for terrorist links or extremist views. This screening process is very labour- and resource-intensive but extremely important to ensure the security of Estonia and the European Union.

In the last five years, almost half a million people each year have applied for international protection in the EU.<sup>20</sup> People disguise their identities using forged documents and mutilate their fingerprints. Migration crises are being exploited.

The illegal migration route to Europe created by the Belarus-initiated hybrid attack in the summer of 2021 tested Latvia, Lithuania and Poland's border protection and refugee processing capability – systems created to operate under normal circumstances.

Previous experience with the Mediterranean migration routes and refugee flows was beneficial here. Similar to past experiences on those Mediterranean routes, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Germany identified dozens of illegal immigrants as having direct or indirect links with terrorism. The necessary deci-

sions to mitigate security threats were taken quickly. During the first 20 days of the war in Ukraine, almost 100,000 citizens from high-risk countries fled Ukraine and entered the EU. By comparison, 123,318 migrants arrived in Europe via the Mediterranean routes in 2021, among them individuals who were identified and detained because they were wanted for terrorist activity or had links with terrorism.

### **The situation in Estonia**

The level of terrorist threat in Estonia is low, but possible terrorist attacks cannot be ruled out. Every year, about 40–50 persons known to the security authorities visit or travel through Estonia. Last year, we detained three people with terrorist ties.

Among the detainees were two Iraqi nationals linked to Daesh, who were most likely involved in the massacre of hundreds of people in Iraq. They were transferred to their country of residence. The migration route opened up by the Belarusian hybrid attack was used by a Russian citizen who sought secretly to reach Finland with the help of the Finnish Chechen community. The man was detained in Tallinn. He had previously served a sentence for terrorist offences in Russia and was deported from Estonia.

Around twenty people with ties to Estonia have been to or remain in the Syria-Iraq conflict zone. It is unlikely that any of them will be able to return from there in the near future. There are also those still interested in travelling to the conflict zone.

Thousands of individuals currently in Europe or third countries have seen active combat in Syria and Iraq or supported terrorist objectives through their actions. When returning to their homeland, some have served a sentence while others have escaped criminal charges. Although they may not pose an immediate threat to national security and public order in the future, they can remain active supporters and disseminators of terrorist or extremist ideology or become subject to manipulation.



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## Politicisation and influence of Islamic communities

There are examples in Europe of uniting and institutionalising Muslim communities to reduce fragmentation and increase their influence in society. Organisations that also represent the interests of third countries play an essential role in this. Estonian imam Ildar Mukhamedshin is associated with the European Muslim Forum (EMF), established in October 2018. In addition to community support activities, the EMF promotes Islamic culture and religion and provides financial support.

EMF members are leaders of Islamic communities of Tatar and Caucasus origin in Russia, Belarus, the Balkans and the European Union. The leaders of

Russian Islamic organisations, who are members of the Central Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Russia and the Russian Council of Muftis, also play an important role in the leadership of the EMF, as well as serving on the Russian Presidential Council for Cooperation with Religious Associations.

On 27 August 2021, the EMF held a conference, "Islam in the Baltic States: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow", in Tallinn, around the 30th anniversary of Estonia's regained independence. According to Russian media reports, the conference was scheduled to mark the 70th birthday of Akhmad-Khadzhi Kadyrov, the former leader of Chechnya. The Estonian imam and a representative of the Swedish Muslim community gave on-site interviews against a backdrop of Kadyrov posters prepared for the occasion.





### Foreign fighters and travellers to conflict zones

The Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan unleashed a mass exodus. The cooperation partners of Mondo, an Estonian non-profit, and their families were evacuated to Estonia; 16 people have arrived so far. However, there are also individuals for whom the Taliban takeover is a reason to travel to Afghanistan. The country is in an economic crisis, and travelling there is much more difficult than travelling to Syria or Iraq between 2013 and 2018.

Travellers to conflict zones are not just radicalised Islamist sympathisers looking to fight. They also include more than a thousand women that have left Europe (including Estonia) for the Syria-Iraq conflict zone to marry or live with their husbands.

Given the increased number of citizens from high-risk countries living in Estonia, permanent residents here (regardless of their citizenship) may also be interested in travelling to different conflict zones. In order to prevent this, friends, loved ones and other community members should cooperate with the state authorities to prevent their travel and involve them in a prevention programme.

### The Estonian fintech sector is a cause for concern

The threats of terrorist financing in Estonia discussed in our previous annual review continue to be a concern for KAPO. Estonia is unique in Europe in terms of the volume of virtual currency licences held by the fintech sector. As of February 2022, according to the Register of Economic Activities, 16 companies have a virtual currency wallet service licence, 18 have a virtual currency exchange service licence, and 396 have a virtual currency licence. According to the Estonian Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and KAPO, many companies in the sector do not comply with the requirements of the Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Prevention Act.

The activities of virtual currency service providers holding an activity licence issued in Estonia but conducting business outside Estonia likely pose a higher risk. As a rule, such service providers are not familiar enough with Estonian law and fail to follow local guidelines. Although all transactions in the blockchain are supposedly easy to trace, this is of little use if the service provider does not apply due diligence. The nature of the problem and the risks involved are also reflected in Estonia's recent national risk assessment.<sup>21</sup>

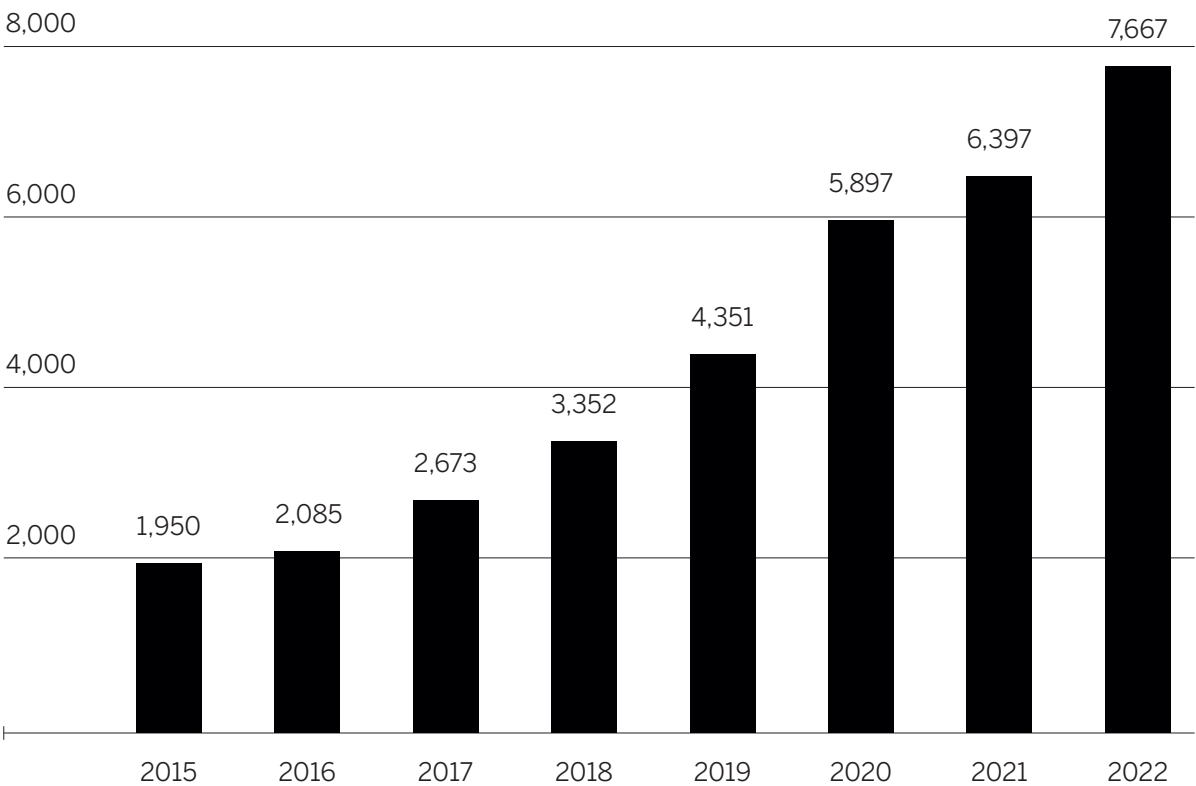
Only 2% of service providers apply the due diligence measures required by law and have reported transactions involving a risk of terrorist financing to the FIU. At the same time, inspections have revealed transactions related to high-risk countries, including conflict zones, that should have been reported. In cooperation with the FIU, we have identified at least five Islamic extremists who have carried out financial transactions through Estonian market participants. We have also found five individuals involved in Islamic extremism who have been granted Estonian e-residency. It is important to enhance cooperation and exchange of information between the state and the private sector and to raise the awareness of market participants about the risks of terrorist financing. Working with the FIU, we have updated the guidance material to help identify the risk of terrorist financing and distinguish it from suspicious transactions. We reiterate that market participants should identify virtual currency traders

on the basis of a valid identity document, regularly check their contact numbers and use blockchain analysis software.

**The interest of citizens of high-risk countries in Estonia**

Ideological confrontation with Western social order, closed communities, ethnic crime groups, growing anti-immigration and far-right extremism, the radicalisation of immigrants, terrorist attacks – these problems that have emerged in Central and Western European countries also await Estonia if there is a significant growth of communities from high-risk countries.<sup>22</sup>

The effects of migration take many years to manifest and they affect a number of areas. The integration of ethnic communities that grow with the arrival of



Number of citizens of high-risk countries with a residence permit and right of residence

new immigrants needs to be addressed immediately. Talking about immigrants only as a labour force obscures the fact that they are human beings and bring with them all aspects of humanity – including risks that the state must consider. It should not be assumed that immigrants see themselves as cheap labour and, in the long run, would be enthusiastic about jobs that the locals refuse. Wrong assumptions and expectations and misunderstanding each other's cultures lead to tensions that can develop into security risks.

We have covered the increasing number of citizens from high-risk countries in Estonia and the associated security threats in our last two annual reviews. Considering the economic and security situation in the main countries of origin, migration to Europe and also Estonia will increase. In 2020, COVID-19 restrictions reduced immigration to Estonia. As the pandemic eases, the impact of migration restrictions is diminishing.

African, Middle Eastern and Central Asian communities in Estonia have grown significantly, and their peacefulness and prosperity in Estonia depend on the opportunities for integration aimed at them. It is equally important to ensure the inclusion of their children – second- and third-generation immigrants – in Estonian society. Existing integration programmes tend to focus on Russian and English speakers, and those aimed at speakers of other languages are very small. Unfortunately, this means that immigrants from Central Asia, for example, must integrate into Estonian society through the Russian language and its information space. Considering the still unresolved problems with integrating the Russian-speaking population in Estonia, this may exacerbate the situation.

Every year, KAPO identifies persons involved in terrorism among the users of legal and illegal migration routes. People involved in terrorism use all the options – visas, residence permits and e-residency procedures.

## **Failure to surrender explosives is punishable**

In 2021, the illegal handling of explosives led to three explosions in Estonia. Most recently, an explosion on the Pääsküla recreation trail on 12 December 2021 caused one death. A total of three people have died in explosions over the past five years. All three deaths could have been prevented if KAPO or the Rescue Board had been notified of the illegal explosives.

Although statistics from recent years show fewer incidents with explosives and the number of fatalities is not comparable to 10 or 20 years ago, the illicit handling of explosives remains a problem. Together with the Rescue Board, we call on people to voluntarily surrender any explosives they find and welcome any information on the illegal handling of explosives.

Storing tens and even hundreds of kilograms of war-time munitions in garages, houses and apartment buildings has been a recurring pattern over the years. Right there, attempts are made to extract the explosives using power tools or by melting. All these activities pose a huge and immediate risk to the perpetrator and everyone around them. Unfortunately, criminal proceedings reveal that co-workers, neighbours and family members often know about this "hobby" and yet fail to inform the police or the Rescue Board.

Incidents with explosives in recent years have shown that neighbours or loved ones who notice the activities of detectorists tend not to perceive the danger to the individual and those around them. Notifying KAPO, the Police and Border Guard Board or the Rescue Board of persons who collect and handle explosives, World War II explosive devices, weapons or ammunition can be an invaluable service and help save lives.



On 11 October 2021, Tartu County Court heard a case concerning the illegal handling of explosives, explosive devices and firearms in Tartu and Jõgeva counties. The court ruling imposed a three-year suspended sentence on Kunnar (born in 1965), who acquired and kept in his home about 1.8 kg of explosives, hand grenades, various firearms and key components of firearms.

### Attempted murder with an improvised explosive device

Late on Saturday evening on 13 March 2021, an improvised explosive device exploded under the bench of the waiting pavilion at a bus stop in Laagri, Tallinn. The device detonated while two women were at the bus stop. One of them was the target of the attack, according to the statement of charges sent to the court by the Northern District Prosecutor's Office on 3 September 2021.

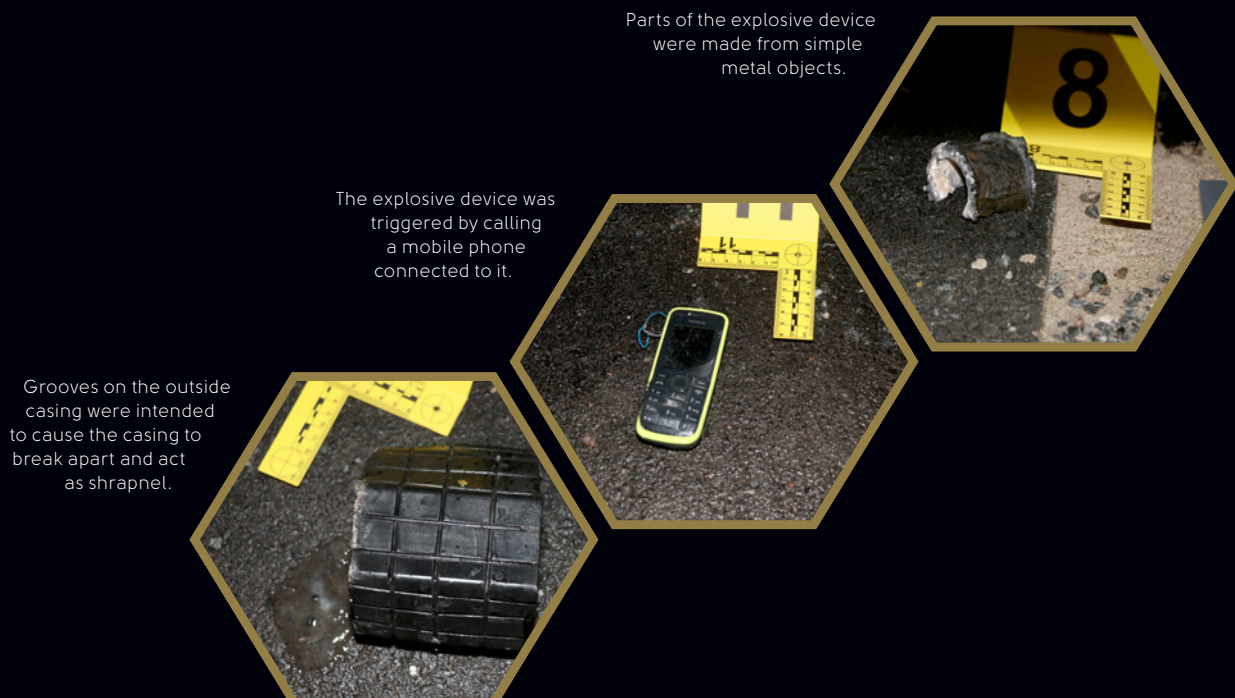
Fortunately, as the explosive used in the device did not detonate in full, the women escaped practically unharmed. One woman's leg was hit and her clothes were damaged by heat and soot. The Rescue Board bomb disposal unit responded along with police and KAPO officers, gathering all the parts of the explosive device left at the scene.

The investigation revealed that the device could be detonated at the desired time from a distance using a mobile phone. The investigation also revealed that the explosive device had been manufactured by the accused, who had knowledge of electronics and metalwork, using illegally held industrial-grade explosive.

When the accused made sure that his target – one of the two women – was at the bus stop, he called a mobile phone connected to the explosive device and triggered it. The man was not discouraged by the presence of the other person, whom he did not even know.

According to the expert report, the device may have contained up to 70 grams of explosive, the equivalent of 5–30 grams of TNT. The investigation identified grooves on the outside casing and screws placed inside the device – as a rule, these increase the shrapnel damage caused by the explosion.

KAPO detained A. G., born in 1966, two days after the explosion. The man had a weapons permit and owned several legal firearms. Four illegal firearms, including an automatic weapon prohibited for civilian use and a large amount of prohibited ammunition, were uncovered when searching his residence. The person is accused of causing an explosion, the



illegal handling of explosives and explosive devices, attempted murder, and the illegal handling of firearms and ammunition, including firearms and ammunition prohibited for civilian use.

## **Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction**

Sanctions imposed by the European Union and other democracies have not removed the ambitions of hostile states to ramp up their military capability. The interests of Russian and other sanctioned countries, including Iran, North Korea and Libya, are certainly not limited to the items on the strategic goods list.

Estonia is in danger of being used as a transit country in these schemes. Russia prefers to acquire more sophisticated technology primarily from Western European and US manufacturers. Equipment and technology designed for civilian use may also find a military use in some sanctioned states.

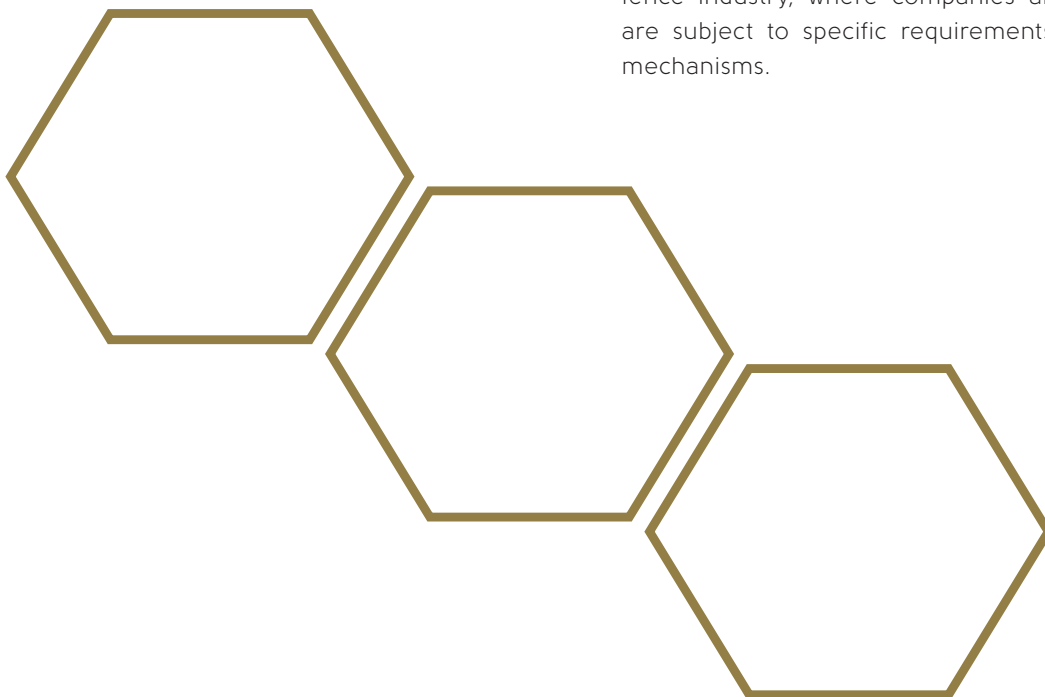
For both strategic goods and goods produced for civilian use, sanctioned countries often provide false information in order to disguise their end-use. Research institutes and universities are presented as procurers of equipment and technology, while in reality, the goods will be diverted to military use within the country.

## **Contractors' backgrounds must be checked**

In 2020 and 2021, the Estonian Strategic Goods Commission, one of the members of which is a representative of KAPO, adopted several decisions prohibiting the export of goods that could be used for military purposes as a weapon or weapon component. Despite this, attempts to transport such goods across the Russian border with forged documents have been uncovered, and in the second half of 2021, KAPO initiated criminal proceedings. This confirms the readiness of hostile countries to use any method available to source goods and technology from the West and, if necessary, to provide forged documents for their transport.

It would help the work of the European Union's export licencing agencies and security authorities if companies producing goods of interest to sanctioned countries applied a "know your customer" policy and looked deeper into the background of their contractual partners. The Estonian Strategic Goods Commission is ready to advise entrepreneurs on potential contractual partners to help prevent violations of sanctions and avoid partners with a suspicious background. If a company has decided to turn a blind eye to a customer's background, the state will not.

KAPO continues to pay close attention to the defence industry, where companies and individuals are subject to specific requirements and control mechanisms.





# ECONOMIC SECURITY

International sanctions are a non-military means of compelling states or persons to comply with international law. The large-scale sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation in connection with its assault and continued aggression against Ukraine aim to restore peace and ensure international security. Since 2014 Estonia has been closely following the list of people sanctioned in order to identify sanctions violations. Therefore, the sanctions regime imposed on Russia is familiar to us, and we have learned to live with it.

From 2021, EU sanctions are also applied to persons with links to Belarus and restrict economic activities, which will further affect our region and Estonia, given the country's proximity.

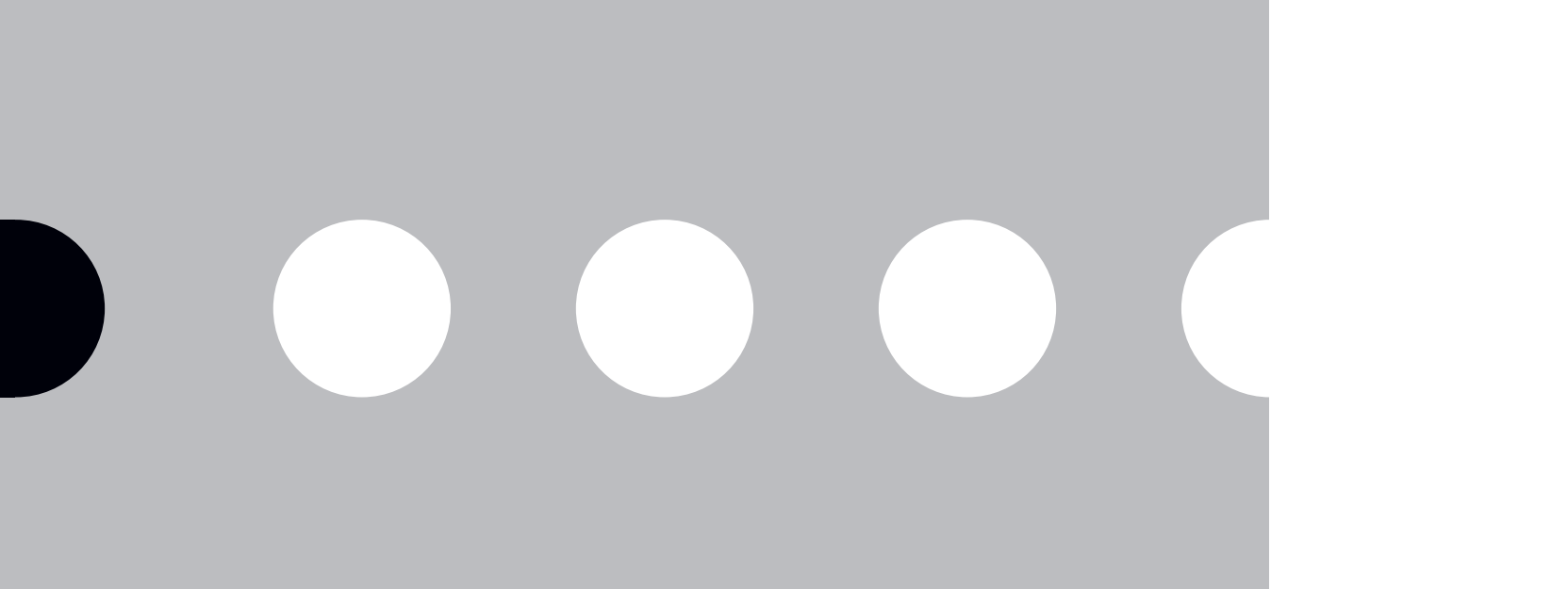
## **Sanctions must be complied with because they are effective**

A successful sanctions policy is important for Estonia's security. This measure continues to be used increasingly, both regionally and globally. The more effective the economic sanctions imposed on Russia and the more isolated the Russian economy is from the international economy, the weaker Rus-

sia's ability to pose a military threat or carry out aggression and hostilities. Fewer economic ties with Russia help strengthen Estonia's security. It is critical to understand the impact of additional sanctions regimes on security and our future economic development. The state has to make continuous, coordinated efforts to raise awareness and cooperate with the private sector.

International sanctions are effective against the targeted countries and individuals. This conviction is supported by our experience in preventing and investigating violations of international sanctions, as well as cooperation with our domestic and foreign partners. Sanctions have the most significant impact immediately after application, as they paralyse normal economic operations and business channels. The impact of sanctions on Russia is long-term and progressive. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that the large-scale sanctions on Russia will increase the pressure to circumvent them. The Russian Federation will actively seek opportunities to do this.

In our judgment, it is difficult for Russia to evade the sanctions because individuals and companies do not want to risk being associated with the aggressor.



Many international businesses have ceased their operations in the country or have independently limited their economic relations with Russia, adding to the effectiveness of the sanctions.

The authorities applying or monitoring the sanctions are ready to deter any attempts to circumvent sanctions. It should be borne in mind that establishing new business channels is time- and resource-intensive and carries a constant risk of supply chain disruption if the breach is detected.

### **Know your business partner**

Sanctions have a two-way effect. When imposing sanctions, a choice is made between business interests on the one hand and human rights and democratic values on the other. If one of the parties to a business is a collaborator of a hostile foreign country or a state-owned enterprise, normal business may no longer be possible at some point. Sanctions as a means of influence are increasingly used both regionally and globally. Estonian entrepreneurs should also carefully consider their prospective business partners. As a reminder, the EU Sanctions Map<sup>23</sup> contains up-to-date information on all restrictive measures in force in the European Union.

There is a 2021 example of an Estonian company basing its business model on raw materials imported from a sanctioned country. Thanks to cheap raw materials, the company stayed ahead of competitors, participated in procurements and won contracts. However, importing raw materials from the sanctioned country eventually became impossible, and the company could not meet its contractual obligations. Overlooking sanctions is not a stable business strategy.

Entrepreneurs depend on foreign partners and, in certain business models, partners in sanctioned regions. Economic logic disappears where politics shapes, directs and controls the economy. Entrepreneurs must understand that doing business with sanctioned countries reduces the security of Estonia and its allies, and is detrimental to the entrepreneur.



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## **Hostile interest in business secrets is growing**

The international sanctions policy directly impacts the Estonian business environment and entrepreneurs. Both the Covid pandemic and the Russian aggression in Ukraine have hampered economic development, which has put pressure on or disrupted supply chains and traditional target markets and changed the consumption habits of the population. These events have highlighted the need for the European Union to understand who is behind companies operating in critical areas for economic stability and development, and why foreign capital is looking for investment opportunities. Much more attention is now being paid to foreign investment, especially in sectors of strategic importance.

In 2021, the KAPO noticed the growing interest of foreign countries in technological know-how in Estonia, especially in strategic sectors and in the production of goods for which there is a growing demand. Information of interest is accessed using both technological means and employees. KAPO considers it important that companies operating in Estonia and their know-how should be protected against potential theft of technical information as well as physical and political influence.

Estonia's industrial and research units carry out world-class development of new and emerging technologies and strategically significant raw materials. When European or third-country journalists unexpectedly appear at such facilities and inquire about the technologies and development activities, it is advisable to examine their background and previous (journalistic) activities before answering any questions. The same goes for when a company's employees start receiving phone calls and offers from various research companies, or think tanks offer money, for example, for a short interview about the company's activities.

## **Suspicious contacts should be reported**

Cases like those described above occurred in 2021, with evidence suggesting that the interest of special services of hostile foreign powers was behind these efforts. Given the scale of the sanctions against Russia, the efforts to acquire know-how will intensify significantly.

We call on companies operating in relevant areas to report similar incidents to KAPO. Companies should also inform their employees about what constitutes a business secret for them and how it should be protected.

It is essential to prevent Russian and Chinese influence on critical infrastructure. The background of potential foreign investment should be investigated to find out possible foreign national interests behind these and prevent the negative impact of high-risk investments on the economy and national security. Like other European Union countries and our foreign partners, Estonia needs an effective mechanism to help screen and prevent hostile foreign investments, improving the conditions for fair competition based on economic goals.

Estonian entrepreneurs may also be exploited for political influence – to persuade the government or the public through lobbying in the interests of, for example, the Russian Federation. It is reasonable to avoid such partnerships.

## No energy security without security of supply

Independence from energy carriers exported by aggressive countries is essential for maintaining economic security and independence. How can we find a balance between the transition to renewable energy and dependence on third-country energy carriers? As recently as in February, this seemed to be one of the main economic security challenges for Estonia and the European Union for the next 5 to 15 years. Due to Russia's aggression in Ukraine, the answers to this question must be found within months.

With energy prices rising over the past year, the public is rightly concerned about the availability of electricity and supply security. For KAPO, the electricity supply is critical for economic security. Ensuring supply security must consider the impact on national security.

We believe that when talking about the future of energy, it is important to realise that there is no such thing as energy independence. Instead, we should ask what dependencies our country and society can tolerate and whether these pose a threat to the survival of the state and the constitutional order.

## Time is not on our side

Ensuring energy security requires a long-term strategy and its gradual implementation. Unfortunately, there are no quick or safe solutions in this area. Before each subsequent step, thorough consideration must be given to its impact on the state and society, and the time it will take to implement the decision. It is important to emphasise that KAPO does not prefer one energy carrier or technology over any other. We lack the competence and knowledge for this assessment. The longer our energy future remains uncertain, the greater the temptation for hostile countries to exploit our weaknesses against us. And we can confirm that our opposing teams are ready for this game.

When ensuring energy security as part of economic security, the different conflicting interests must be taken into account. Regarding technological developments in renewable energy, both Russia and China are clearly interested in influencing projects in our region. Should hostile interests materialise in our production and infrastructure developments, this would pose a serious threat to our economic security and allow the Estonian energy market to be manipulated.

A business secret is a competitive advantage for an enterprise.<sup>24</sup> A business secret is, in particular, information of a commercial or technical nature that is not in the public domain and is kept secret by the enterprise because unauthorised disclosure would harm the enterprise's commercial interests.

According to the Estonian Restriction of Unfair Competition and Protection of Business Secrets Act (section 5 (2)), a business secret meets the following requirements:

1. It is not, in its entirety or in the precise configuration and assembly of its components, generally known among or readily accessible to persons within the circles that normally deal with the kind of information in question.
2. It has commercial value due to its secrecy.
3. The person lawfully in control of the information has taken reasonable measures under the circumstances to keep it secret.

# THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

In Estonia, the fight against organised crime and corruption is seen as part of national security. Corruption is not just another type of crime; politicians' and public officials' venality threatens independence and sovereignty. Corruption or moral disintegration is the essential export from countries hostile to Estonia seeking to undermine the Estonian people's and our allies' confidence in our state.

The higher the level of corruption, the lower the country's resilience and the lower its citizens' faith in the functioning of the state and their willingness to defend the country. The Russian and Belarusian authorities' actions have made international security extremely unstable. The Kremlin and its satellite in Minsk have hybrid attacks and other activities that violate international law in their toolbox.

KAPO's task is to prevent and suppress corruption that threatens national security, collect and process the information necessary for this purpose, and investigate corruption offences committed by senior officials and those that pose a security threat. The easier it is to commit crimes of corruption in Estonia, the more likely it is that the Russian special services will try to take advantage of this to further the Kremlin's interests.

Estonia has a low level of corruption. Underreporting, covert deals and bribery have become the exception today, unlike 30 years ago. Despite the

progress made, we must remain vigilant to avoid a gradual onslaught of corruption leading the country into a downward spiral. Corruption is multi-faceted and must be tackled on many fronts.

## **Publicising lobbying protects officials**

Our previous annual reviews have repeatedly drawn attention to the need to regulate lobbying, which is critical for corruption prevention. Regulation can be moral (self-regulatory recommendations for behaviour) or legal (prohibitions and obligations laid down in law). The Estonian government approved the Good Practice in Communicating with Lobbyists on 18 March 2021, a decision aimed at officials and civil servants. It is a step in the right direction.

Now top officials must make meetings with lobbyists public as quickly as possible, transparently and in an understandable way. This is not a burdensome duty imposed on civil servants but an opportunity to plainly demonstrate their impartiality and avoid future malicious accusations of collusion or underhand deals. Disclosing meetings with lobbyists will also curb the enthusiasm of those who seek to exploit contact with a public official for their own gain.

State and local authorities and legal persons governed by public law (i.e. institutions with a public-law function) are responsible for ensuring that their staff are aware of corruption and check for their adher-



ence to obligations, such as procedural restrictions. Past years have shown that the interests of ministerial political advisers and factors influencing the performance of their official duties must also be scrutinised. On 28 January 2021, the Estonian government approved a draft law to reduce the risk of corruption, introducing the obligation for ministerial political advisers to declare their interests.

Unfortunately, there are examples from last year where compliance with internal rules could have prevented professional offences that led to criminal proceedings.

### **Procedural restrictions and the prevention of conflicts of interest**

When a public servant's official assignment involves their private acquaintances, family ties, financial interests or other connections, they must withdraw from the assignment. This rule applies even if the person is not making decisions or taking actions guided by a private interest in such a situation.

Contrary to misleading claims by some high-profile lawyers, the rules do not require a public servant to renounce private interests and lead a reclusive life. Procedural restrictions aim to protect the fair and impartial performance of public tasks. The Anti-corruption Act<sup>25</sup> identifies private interests that

may be prejudicial to a public servant's honest and impartial decisions and actions. The public servant must refrain from any decisions or actions involving their private interests.

Although the legal obligation to declare interests only applies to a limited set of public servants, the option to introduce internal guidelines requiring the declaration of interests as an anti-corruption measure deserves wider application in public authorities. Disclosing private interest is a valuable preventive measure at several levels.

First, it increases public servants' awareness of vested interests that would require them to remove themselves from decisions and actions. Second, it enables the public authority to organise its work so that staff members cannot take decisions or actions involving a conflict of interest for them. The more discretionary power a public servant has, the greater the potential impact of declaring interests on the fair and impartial performance of public duties.

### **Corruption is a covert crime**

Anyone can report a case of corruption to law enforcement authorities, and we will ensure the confidentiality of the reporting. This does not mean that there is nothing more the notifier can do to uncover corruption; it is possible to submit requests for information, formal notices, make requests for ex-



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planations, or contact the press. In Estonia, investigative journalism makes an indispensable contribution to defending democratic values. This improves the transparency and impartiality of public servants' decisions and actions, forcing those in power to explain better how and why decisions are taken.

Corruption is a covert criminal activity whereby a public servant and a private individual make an illegal deal and conclude a transaction, usually without anybody else being aware of it. Suspicions of corruption help to point out inconsistencies in official decisions, and systematic and targeted work can lead to evidence of such agreements. Corrupt agreements are made based on trust; no written record is kept, and conversations are usually not recorded. Since there are no records, surveillance is allowed when investigating corruption offences.

Surveillance interferes with a person's fundamental rights and must be highly justified and proportionate. The intensity of the infringement of fundamental rights also justifies judicial and public debates about the scope of surveillance and the appropriateness of the rules governing it. On the other hand, judicial practice is making it more and more difficult for investigative authorities to establish the truth in cases of suspected covert offences, including the existence or absence of a conspiracy to commit an offence. The trend in case law is that the prosecution increasingly requires direct evidence to substantiate the charge while the possibilities of gathering such authentic evidence are increasingly limited.

Increasingly, perpetrators of corruption are using encrypted communications and virtual means to hide the proceeds of corruption, which are not subject to financial supervision. However, traces are always left behind in various digital environments and can later be found. International cooperation in tracing the proceeds of crime is becoming increasingly important, as people often hide assets abroad or try to cover their tracks by moving money through foreign countries.

Public interest in getting clear answers quickly in corruption scandals is understandable. Still, it must be understood that evidence-gathering in criminal proceedings is subject to stringent procedures arising from legislation and case law, which necessarily take time to complete. Tighter procedural deadlines will not help. The longer and more extensive the perpetrators' activities, the longer it takes to gather evidence.

It can take months to put together the facts and a detailed picture. In Estonia, as in other countries, reaching a first-instance court decision tends to be the most time-consuming process after the crime has come to light. In many cases, the duration of judicial proceedings is longer than the pre-trial investigation. It is not in the interest of the investigating authorities to prolong criminal proceedings but to reach a legal solution as quickly as possible. KAPO will do its utmost to bring to light corruption hidden from the public and ensure that such criminal proceedings reach a swift court decision. We use the best international experience and modern technical solutions, but excessive pressure to expedite proceedings cannot come at the expense of a thorough investigation and individuals' rights.

## **Porto Franco corruption case**

On 12 January 2021, KAPO staff arrested several people, including Hillar Teder, an entrepreneur, and Kersti Kracht, an adviser to the Minister of Finance, as suspects in possible corruption offences related to the Porto Franco real estate development in Tallinn. A suspicion was filed against Mihhail Korb, the Estonian Centre Party's secretary-general. The criminal case will reach a court soon, and we trust that all parties will do their best to ensure a speedy judicial proceeding.

Without going into the details of the suspected offences, we will outline the elements of corruption that we observed in the Porto Franco case and will continue to monitor closely.

- Time pressure. In the context of the crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic, new aid measures and simplified support procedures had to be developed rapidly to support the economy effectively. But fast-track decision-making creates a breeding ground for mistakes and malicious exploitation.
- Political pressure. Both the coalition parties and ministerial political advisers have extensive access to public servants at the state and local government levels. This access makes it possible to pressure public servants and influence their decisions for partisan or personal interests.
- A specific issue is handled at a high political level. It is a clear warning sign when the political leadership of a ministry or local government gets involved in a matter relating to a specific real estate development, company or entrepreneur. Policymaking is about solving general social and economic problems rather than fighting for the interests of an individual entrepreneur, especially a party's permanent donor.
- The declaration of interests by political advisers. Ministerial political advisers have extensive access to the civil service, which creates opportunities to influence departmental decisions. If political advisers have declared their interests openly, this provides an opportunity (as discussed earlier, even for the declarers themselves) to better assess political activity.

## Former police officer Dmitri Polyakov taking bribes

On 10 November 2020, Dmitri Polyakov, a background check officer at the Internal Control Bureau of the Police and Border Guard Board (PPA), was detained on suspicion of extensive bribe-taking. Polyakov had limited security clearance and more extensive access to PPA information systems and databases than an ordinary police officer.

At the same time, Ilya Dyagelev, the de facto head and owner of the savings and loan association Erial, was detained on suspicion of large-scale bribery, investment fraud and embezzlement.

Polyakov took a bribe from Dyagelev to build a house in the rural municipality of Saku outside Tallinn. According to the agreement, Dyagelev was to organise the preparation of the building design, the application for a building permit and hiring the necessary specialists. He offered Polyakov the necessary materials as well as the design and furnishing of the house below market prices.

To return the favour, Polyakov used his position as a police officer; he passed inside information to Dyagelev and used his professional contacts to help Dyagelev steer the decisions of the Financial Supervision and Resolution Authority, the police, and other authorities in relation to him and the companies under his control, and to damage the businesses' competitors. Polyakov accepted at least 61,000 euros in assets.

## Can I count on you if they come for me?

Polyakov and Dyagelev concealed their relationship. Third parties passed on the benefits by using international e-payment services and seemingly unrelated email accounts while avoiding telecommunications to transmit information. The businessman referred to Polyakov as his "man in internal control", "our guy, with contacts in all the police buildings". The way they talked to each other showed trust. For example, Polyakov said, "Can I count on you if there's something about the materials?" Dyagelev responded, "But can I count on you? If they come for me."

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Polyakov gave the businessman the impression of being able to gather information from other police partner agencies and influence their decision-making. The investigation confirmed that Polyakov collected and processed official information in the interests of Dyagelev and Erial, but ultimately Polyakov failed to take advantage of his position. Estonia's national financial supervision has a solid foundation, and criminals can't acquire licences more easily. Erial was not issued a licence.

On 4 August 2021, the Harju County Court sentenced Dmitry Polyakov to two-and-a-half years imprisonment, with a four-year probation. Based on the judgment, the 61,030.97 euros deposited by Dmitry Polyakov in the account of the Prosecutor's Office was confiscated. Dmitry Polyakov's property in the rural municipality of Saku was subject to a judicial mortgage of 42,827.89 euros during the preliminary investigation, and the mortgage was cancelled with the court judgment. This case is another example of the close cooperation between National Criminal Police and KAPO. Dyagelev's investment fraud and embezzlement were investigated by the National Criminal Police, and his judicial proceedings continue.

### **A procedural restriction breach by a former chair of the Jõhvi municipal council**

In late 2017, KAPO opened criminal proceedings for bribery and bribe-taking and large-scale breaches of procedural restrictions. The Viru District Prosecutor's Office brought three accused persons to trial: Niina Neglason, the former chairwoman of the Jõhvi municipal council, Tiiu Sepp, who has both friendly professional and personal relations with the former chairwoman, and OÜ Corrigo, a company owned by Sepp and in a contractual relationship with Neglason at the time.

The Tartu Circuit Court annulled the Viru County Court's earlier decision on 14 September 2021 and convicted Neglason of intentional, extensive breach of procedural restrictions. Neglason was sentenced to a fine of 100 daily rates, the equivalent of 14,340 euros at the time of sentencing. She was also ordered to pay 876 euros in compensation levies and

cover 4,948.80 euros of her defence costs. The Supreme Court did not hear an appeal, and the Tartu Circuit Court's decision stood.

In court, Neglason was found guilty of lobbying for favourable conditions for a company linked to herself while acting as municipal council head. OÜ Corrigo and the Jõhvi municipal council agreed that the company would rent premises at 3 Kaare Street, Jõhvi, for 10 years at 1 euro per square metre. The 10-year lease amounted to 48,444 euros. All court levels confirmed that Neglason had breached procedural restrictions set out in the Anti-corruption Act.

### **A former customs official takes bribes**

On 9 April 2021, Pärnu County Court convicted Heiki Raivo, a senior consultant for the Pärnu service office of the Service Department of the Tax and Customs Board, of taking bribes. Every week between 2018 and 2021, Raivo issued customs declarations for consignments of meat and fish to a specific customs broker without checking the goods.

Raivo's activities were systematic, and he had established a price list for "carrying out" customs formalities: 32 euros for a lorry and 20 euros for a van. He also had a bookkeeping system where he wrote down the dates, the amount invoiced for each shipment and the bribe received.

The briber was a customs broker who could offer their clients a "quick and easy" customs clearance process. The money, 7,165 euros in total, was handed over every month on at least 36 occasions. The court subsequently ordered Raivo to repay this amount, although the money had already been spent. Heiki Raivo was sentenced to four years imprisonment with a four-year probation. The briber, a customs broker, was sentenced to three years imprisonment, with a three-year probation. Both had to serve two months of imprisonment immediately.

The case shows that corruption never pays off, as the entire proceeds of corruption are recovered from the guilty party on conviction, even after spending the bribe money. Such a scheme could also be an opportunity for a foreign intelligence service to exploit a "transit gateway" created by a corrupt official.

## A case of data leakage damaging criminal proceedings

In May 2021, an incident occurred involving a financial crime suspect who managed to start destroying potentially incriminating data before a search. An investigation into the suspect's "good fortune" revealed that investigation data had been leaked, and an investigator from the tax and cross-border crime unit was to blame.

While communicating with a third party linked to the suspect, the investigator had disclosed information about imminent investigative activities. In addition to undermining the particular criminal proceedings, this incident also harmed trust-based cooperation between different law enforcement authorities in the fight against cross-border crime.

A swift and thorough criminal investigation led to the dismissal of the leaker and restored trust and meaningful cooperation between the different authorities. As the prosecutor's office assessed the charges of the former investigator and the public interest in the proceedings as small, the criminal proceedings were terminated on 29 December 2021 without going to court, on the condition that the perpetrator paid 500 euros to the state.



The corrupt customs officer received bribes regularly once every month on at least 36 occasions, 7,165 euros in total

## A procedural restriction breach in the Defence Forces

In 2021, KAPO conducted criminal proceedings against an Air Force Major of the Estonian Defence Forces. The service member was allegedly involved in preparing and implementing two public contracts between 2017 and 2021. As an Air Force Major in the Defence Forces, he made decisions regarding the companies participating in the procurements while receiving remuneration/salary for (allowed) ancillary activity from these companies. The decisions taken with the Major's participation were evaluated at more than 2.8 million euros, which is why we accused the serviceman of a procedural restriction breach to a particularly large extent.

The Defence Forces have thankfully introduced an obligation for their officers to declare their ancillary activities, and the suspect also informed his employer about the ancillary activities. On the other hand, both the declarants and the employer had failed to ensure that service members were excluded from the Defence Forces' decision-making regarding persons related to them through their declared ancillary activities.

Since the prosecutor's office considered the public interest in the proceedings and the suspect's guilt to be small in this case, the criminal proceedings were terminated without indictment on 16 December 2021, on the condition that the perpetrator paid 3,000 euros to the state.





# HISTORY: THE ESTONIAN DISSIDENT MOVEMENT AND THE KGB

In 1972, a memorandum was sent from Estonia to the UN General Assembly, reminding the world of the continuing Soviet occupation and reconfirming Estonians' will to be free. The memorandum consisted of 11 theses on Estonians' history and current situation and a programme for changing the situation. It was accompanied by a cover letter to UN secretary general Kurt Waldheim, which dealt primarily with Estonia's recent history and ongoing Russification. The primary demand of the memorandum was strong – the complete restoration of the Republic of Estonia. It stressed the need to abolish the colonial administration and remove the Soviet occupation forces' military bases, place Estonia under UN administration until the restoration of national authorities, and allow the return of all those who had been forced to leave or had chosen to do so for political reasons.

The memorandum was dated 24 October 1972 (the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations) and bore the seals of the Estonian National Front (Eesti Rahvusrinne) and the Estonian Democratic Movement (Eesti Demokraatlik Liikumine). Although unsigned to prevent immediate arrests, this anonymous document still marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of the Estonian resistance movement. Naturally, there was no official response from the UN, nor had the authors expected one. Far more important was the compelling mes-

sage it gave to the West – for the first time in years – that Estonia's struggle against the brutal communist regime persisted.

A broader response to the memorandum came, with some delay, in 1974. The Estonian National Foundation in Stockholm printed 3,000 copies of the document, and the Baltic Committee published a Swedish translation; the exile organisation Baltic Appeal to the United Nations (BATUN) published an English translation. The memorandum was covered in Western newspapers and on Voice of America radio programmes. The British periodical *Soviet Analyst* published a report on the memorandum on 17 October 1974. It said that even if it was a forgery by émigrés, the text was still notable: "Most importantly, however, the logic of the arguments presented here and the facts used are indisputable, whoever the author is."

For the KGB, the memorandum, and particularly the fact that it was publicised in the Western world, was a serious failure, causing damage to the Soviet Union's seemingly impeccable facade and the impression of a "peace-loving policy" cultivated by propaganda. The Chekists responded by using the only method they knew – violence and repression. On the night of 13 December 1974, Artyom Yuskevich, Mati Kiirend, Kalju Mätik, and Arvo-Gunnar Varato were arrested. On 4 January 1975, Sergei Soldatov was detained.



The memorandum turned out to be only one part of their underground activities. Large quantities of literature banned in the USSR, written or translated by the accused between 1968 and 1974, were confiscated during searches. The Estonian Democratic Movement (EDM), the Estonian National Front (ENF), and related smaller groups published three periodicals: *Demokraat* (*The Democrat*), *Eesti Rahvuslik Hää* (*Estonian National Voice*), and *Vabaduskiir* (*Ray of Freedom*). In 1972, the EDM completed its programme (code-named Suur Siga or Great Hog), setting out the principles for overthrowing the Soviet communist regime. It then began to draft the organisation's strategy and tactics (code-named Must Kass or Black Cat). This was an extensive plan to unite the anti-regime and dissident elements in the USSR into a single strike force. The draft was never completed due to the arrests of those involved. The Democratic Movement's document on strategy and tactics was intended to be like an ominous black cat suddenly crossing the path of the Soviet occupation regime to sow fear and panic. The memorandum for the UN General Assembly was code-named Väike Siga (Little Pig) by the authors.

One of the most active "democrats" and dissidents in Estonia in the early 1970s was

Sergei Soldatov, who initiated the formation of the Democratic Movement of the Soviet Union (DMSU) there. It was intended to become the umbrella organisation for all resistance groups. Although this ambition was not realised, two new cells grew out of the DMSU's ranks: the Estonian National Front (headed by Kalju Mätik and Arvo-Gunnar Varato) and the Estonian Democratic Movement (headed by Mati Kiirend and Artyom Yuskevich), whose agenda was to restore Estonia's independence as well as to ensure democratisation in general. An unambiguous aspiration to restore Estonia's statehood was the main feature that distinguished Estonian dissidents from their Russian counterparts.



Members of the Estonian Democratic Movement in 1980: Artyom Yuskevich, Mati Kiirend, Kalju Mätik, and freedom fighter Endel Ratas

At a hearing of the Supreme Court of the USSR on 21–23 October 1975, Sergei Soldatov and Kalju Mätik were sentenced to six years in a prison camp; Mati Kiirend and Artyom Yuskevich received five years. Arvo-Gunnar Varato confessed and received three years of probation. The 61-volume criminal case put together by the KGB of the Estonian SSR and submitted to the court is kept in the Estonian National Archives (ERAF.129SM.1.29079).

More information on the history, activities, and members of the Estonian National Front and the Estonian Democratic Movement can be found on the website of the NGO FND MUST KASS (<https://demokraatlikliikumine.ee/>) in the publication *Dissident Movement in Estonia in 1972–1987: A Collection of Documents* (*Dissidentlik liikumine Eestis aastatel 1972–1987: Dokumentide kogumik*, 2009), compiled by Arvo Pesti, and in Viktor Niitsoo's book *Resistance 1955–1985* (*Vastupanu 1955–1985*, 1997). The article reprinted below, "A Dangerous Anti-Soviet Group Exposed by Estonian Chekists", was first

published in 1979 in KGB Review No 81. The *USSR KGB Review* (*Сборник*) was a top-secret in-house journal published by the KGB to discuss ways to improve intelligence and counterintelligence, provide guidelines for improving the effectiveness of such activities, and analyse key cases.

An article by Leo Võime, head of the Fifth Department of the ESSR KGB, and Leonid Nikitin, head of the Investigation Department, describes the repression of Estonian freedom fighters and their pre-trial "processing" (investigation). The original aim of the article was to emphasise the effective and inventive working methods of Chekists operating in Estonia to stifle "anti-Soviet activity". The Fifth Department led the preparation of criminal cases against these and other Estonian dissidents. Its operative work with agents and special equipment helped establish an overview of the dissidents' activities and connections and collect the "evidence" necessary to convict them. The KGB's Investigation Department collected this information through searches, confiscations, and interrogations and put together a criminal case in a way that ensured the "culprits" would be convicted in court.

The article provides today's readers insight into the KGB's work at the coalface – the internal working methods, including the use of agents, special equipment, and covert surveillance, which had to be kept out of the court files. As such, it is a valuable supplement to the source material on the history of the Estonian resistance movement and struggle for freedom.

**USSR KGB Sbornik No 81**  
**1979, pp. 54–61**

Colonel L. Võime<sup>26</sup> and Colonel L. Nikitin<sup>27</sup>

A Dangerous Anti-Soviet Group Exposed  
by Estonian Chekists

The Estonian Committee for State Security began to receive information that Soldatov, an engineer residing in Tallinn, and Yuskevich, a translator, were attempting to establish an illegal anti-Soviet organisa-



tion and establish contacts with other hostile elements, distributing defamatory documents among like-minded individuals. Verification showed that Soldatov<sup>28</sup> and Yuskevich<sup>29</sup> met with Gavrilov and Kossyrev<sup>30</sup> (who had previously been processed by the Special Department of the Baltic Fleet and convicted of agitation and propaganda against the Soviet Union) in order to develop a common platform and tactics for illegal activities; Soldatov repeatedly met Yakir<sup>31</sup> and Krassin in Moscow, negotiating on behalf of the illegal group apparently operating in Tallinn; Yuskevich sought to recruit new people into the group, which aimed to “fight the existing regime”.

This led to the opening of the operative processing file “Conspirators”.<sup>32</sup> The Chekists working on it immediately ran into difficulties. Namely, Soldatov and Yuskevich were previously examined as witnesses in the Gavrilov case, and their apartments were searched. Both of them, naturally, realised that they had come under the attention of state security agencies, and so, for example, in an attempt to discover their surveillance, resorted to various tricks that made covert surveillance difficult and were cautious about any new acquaintances. Agents’ access to the individuals being processed was made more difficult by the fact that for several years, neither held a permanent job. Soldatov refused to invite acquaintances to his apartment and did not use the telephone at home. Yuskevich lived in a private house on the outskirts of the city, where everyone knew each other well. This made it difficult to monitor the site or install equipment in his home long-term.

The tasks arising during the processing work could only be solved as a result of the complex and manoeuvrable use of operative forces and equipment.

Penetrating the group with agents was of paramount importance. Introducing Agent Yakov to Soldatov’s processing and getting to know Yuskevich with the help of Pastukhov, a person known and trusted by him, failed to yield significant results. It was decided to step up the processing of Yuskevich using the controlled agent Polev. For this purpose, an operative combination was set up, taking advantage of the subject’s interest in receiving materials for translation. The fact that Polev had previously been convicted for membership in an anti-Soviet organisation led the subject to trust him. Yuskevich did not hide

his hostile views but, at the same time, refrained from involving the agent in anti-Soviet activities. It was later established that Yuskevich was apprehensive about direct contact with previously convicted anti-Soviet individuals, believing that contact with them could lead to his capture.

Agent Tark, who was taking part in the processing, reported that when visiting close acquaintances who shared a private house with Mätik,<sup>33</sup> a teacher at the Tallinn Polytechnic Institute, he discovered a pack of anti-Soviet photocopies in an adjacent space. It contained the Democratic Movement of the Soviet Union’s “Programme”, the organisation’s “Tactical Foundations”, and other documents, which were photographed.

The KGB had no compromising materials on the agent’s acquaintances, but Mätik had previously attracted the attention of the state security agencies. Although Tark, who lived near Tallinn, was also able to visit the home of his acquaintances in their absence, his relationship with Mätik was somewhat estranged, which is why the agent was given just one task – to monitor the individual.

According to Tark, and with the help of covert surveillance, it was possible to establish that Mätik was visited by Soldatov and that they took photographs.

Mätik was subjected to processing. Attention was drawn to his contact with Varato,<sup>34</sup> a medical doctor with nationalist views who bought large quantities of typewriter paper and used code in telephone conversations with Mätik. These circumstances suggested that he and Varato were involved in illegal activity. However, the assumptions could not be convincingly confirmed.

Processing revealed that, in addition to Soldatov, Mätik also maintained contact with Yuskevich and visited his apartment.

Covert surveillance determined that Yuskevich was visited by Kiirend,<sup>35</sup> an engineer, and Roots,<sup>36</sup> a driver. The discussion between Yuskevich, Mätik, and Kiirend on the reproduction of anti-Soviet literature was verified with the help of operative equipment installed in the apartment of the processed individuals (with the active participation of Agent Polev).

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Significant progress was made after Oks and Savi joined the processing work. The fact that they had been “thoroughly vetted” by Torn<sup>37</sup> and Roots, accomplices of the processed, played a not-insignificant role in the fact that these agents gained Yuskevich’s trust relatively quickly. Nevertheless, they were repeatedly scrutinised.

Through Oks and Savi, who were supplied with generous quantities of anti-Soviet literature by Yuskevich during the processing, access was gained and photographs taken of the programme of the Estonian Democratic Movement, individual issues of the illegal magazines *Vabaduskiir* and *Eesti Demokraat*, articles with nationalist content entitled “The Birth of the Republic of Estonia and the Development of its Political Structure”, and other anti-Soviet documents. Analysis of these materials showed that the illegal group’s principal ideas and programmatic views were derived from the document “Programme of the Democratic Movement of the Soviet Union”, an anti-Soviet concoction produced abroad, and from nationalist broadcasts by foreign radio stations.

In his open conversations with the agents, Yuskevich emphasised that one of the main tasks of the anti-Soviet group was to disseminate illegal literature and attract people to fight against the current regime. The processed individuals also expressed the idea that in case of a serious deterioration of the international situation, it was possible for the members of the group to transition to an illegal posture for “partisan fighting”. This information received from the agents was confirmed by intercepted materials.

Yuskevich also talked to Mätik and Kiirend about armed action – preparations for a “popular uprising” to be led by members of the group. The ultimate goal for Yuskevich was restoring the bourgeois order in Estonia and separating it by force from the USSR.

Extensive operative resources and equipment were required not only to identify all members of the anti-Soviet group and their connections but also to define precisely their relationships, roles, and responsibilities and to learn their personal characteristics. In determining the nature of Yuskevich’s relation-

ship with Soldatov, Savi’s report on their serious differences over anti-Soviet tactics and Soldatov’s reluctance to play a subordinate role to Yuskevich were essential. Naturally, this was taken into account when considering further operative moves against Soldatov. Materials began to be received suggesting that while he continued to maintain contact with Yuskevich, he no longer worked so closely with him and instead focused his main efforts to identify and incite anti-Soviet tendencies in ecclesiastical/secular and literary youth circles. These facts were used by the Chekists to find possible witnesses who could testify about Soldatov’s anti-Soviet activities when the case was carried out.

Verifying claims that the processed individuals were in possession of weapons, Agent Oks established the following: Yuskevich, accompanied by Mätik and Torn, drove to a forest to pick up a rifle that Torn had hidden in the post-war period. The rifle was recovered and handed over to Yuskevich. Torn later distanced himself from the group and held a grudge against Yuskevich after Roots, on Yuskevich’s orders, physically threatened him for having spoken indiscreetly while under the influence of alcohol. When the case was carried out, he became a witness. During the preliminary investigation and in court, Torn testified on the gun-related episode and the anti-Soviet activities of the individuals involved. Torn’s rifle was confiscated from a hiding place in Mätik’s home during a search.

Attending gatherings at Yuskevich’s home, Agent Savi had the opportunity to approach several members of the illegal group who were previously unknown to the security agencies. Thus, the KGB became aware of Saarma, who worked as an engineer at the Tallinn Thermal Power Station. An agent discovered that Saarma had a typewriter at home on which he typed an anti-Soviet document on orders from Yuskevich. After using the machine, he always hid it carefully and destroyed the carbon paper he had used. These facts and Yuskevich’s characterisation of Saarma as “an old and trusted comrade-in-arms” suggested he had repeatedly fulfilled these orders in the past.

Also among the subjects was Terin,<sup>38</sup> an administrator of a symphony orchestra, who participated in the gatherings at Yuskevich’s home and, as it turned



out, “specialised” in the reproduction and distribution of lampoons by Solzhenitsyn and other slanderers.

Chekists received considerable information about the leading role of Yuskevich, Mätik, and Kiirend in the activities of the illegal group.

The implementation of operational equipment made it possible to verify the activities of the “headquarters” of the anti-Soviet group and, according to the information received, to introduce improvements in the Chekists’ work.

The material obtained by means of operational equipment significantly added to the agents’ reports; it also helped to adjust their activities in a timely manner and determine the most appropriate moment and method to withdraw agents.

The equipment helped to confirm agents’ reports indicating that Yuskevich and his accomplices were eagerly seeking ways to produce an improvised printing device, experimenting in that direction and intending to acquire a farm to be used as an underground printing house.

The group’s activities in this direction were placed under surveillance. With the participation of Agent Oks, a combination [of moves] was implemented by agents to offer up a farm as a decoy. Agent Savi drove to the farm, where he played the role of housekeeper. At the final stages of processing, that position allowed the agent, essentially without any involvement in the group’s activities, to be aware of its plans and intentions.

The analysis of wiretapping showed that Yuskevich did not keep anti-Soviet literature at home but often asked Mätik or Kiirend to fetch this or that document, sometimes giving them documents for safekeeping.

This information was taken into account when briefing the agents. Tark managed to find two hiding places in Mätik’s residence containing a large amount of anti-Soviet materials. During their covert examination, the programme documents of the so-called “Estonian Democratic Movement”, chapters from the anti-Soviet book *EDM Strategy and Tactics*, handwritten drafts for other hostile doc-

uments compiled by Mätik, and blueprints for the cover pages of illegal magazines *Eesti Demokraat* and *Eesti Rahvuslik Hääl* were photographed. The uncovered hiding places were inspected periodically and provided substantial evidence of the crimes of the illegal group.

On one occasion, the chapters prepared by Yuskevich for *EDM Strategy and Tactics*, the overall structure of this “work”, and the prospects for the “movement” were discussed at Yuskevich’s apartment with the participation of Mätik and Kiirend. The final version of *EDM Strategy and Tactics* (code-named Black Cat) was to include chapters on the ideological and organisational structure of the “movement”, an analysis of the causes of past failures of illegal anti-Soviet organisations, “the present situation and relative strengths of the different sides”, guidelines on violent and non-violent methods, and so on. Yuskevich believed that materials such as “the EDM statutes and oath, legislative basis, rules for partisan activity, and training material for compiling and distributing literature” should be prepared separately from the “main work” and distributed using non-contact methods in areas territorially distant from the group members’ places of residence. In his view, these documents would help organise the anti-socialist individuals who did not have a personal platform and provide them with a “practical training tool” for carrying out anti-Soviet activities. Special hopes were attached to the youth. Mätik and Kiirend suggested only insignificant changes to the structure of the “work”. The participants also discussed measures to strengthen contacts in Moscow, Tartu, and other cities.

With the help of a trustee, a trip was organised for Kiirend to go to Tartu and establish connections there. The subject’s meetings with Ehasalu, a collaborator of the university’s sociology laboratory in Tartu, were recorded. Later, a search of his home revealed anti-Soviet documents, including the EDM programme.<sup>39</sup>

Information was also obtained about Yuskevich’s attempt to renew contacts in Moscow through Saarma.

The analysis of this material showed that the subjects were in the process of finalising the programmatic and technical documents for the so-called “dem-

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ocratic movement” and intended to intensify their activities towards establishing an anti-Soviet organisation.

Further measures were aimed at preparing to carry out the case and, if necessary, prevent public anti-Soviet action.

An operative-investigative group was set up. Working closely together, the operatives and investigators carefully prepared a plan for carrying out the case.

In fact, cooperation between operative and investigative units began much earlier. The heads of the Investigation Department acquainted themselves with the processing materials, repeatedly shared related recommendations, and assisted in documenting the criminal activities of the subjects. Before the case was carried out, a memorandum was prepared that facilitated the investigators’ work with the extensive materials and their use during the preliminary investigation. On the recommendation of the Investigation Department, several anti-Soviet documents were legalised [declassified], which became evidence in the criminal case in court. The KGB operative unit, as the investigating body, informed the Investigation Department about the documents of the so-called “Estonian Democratic Movement” and “Estonian National Front” published by the foreign press and anti-Soviet radio stations, as well as official reports about Yuskevich’s anti-Soviet activities received by the preliminary investigation bodies, documents received from other KGB bodies titled “Programme of the Estonian National Front” and “Russian Colonialism in Estonia”, and further materials that testified to the hostile actions of Yuskevich, Soldatov, Mätik, Kiirend, Varato, and other individuals.

Due to the growing social threat posed by the illegal group intent on reproducing and disseminating anti-Soviet documents and the so-called “democratic movement’s” defamatory appeal to the UN, which had been published abroad, it was decided to carry out the operative processing by bringing criminal charges against the most active subjects.

The Investigation Department initiated a criminal case on the grounds of Section 68 of the Criminal

Code of the USSR (anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda).

The preliminary investigation was carried out under a special plan. Latvian KGB investigators were involved in the preliminary investigation with the approval of the USSR KGB leadership.

The operational and investigative measures were coordinated by the Operational Staff, which consisted of senior personnel from the Investigation Department and Fifth Department of the Estonian KGB.

The searches of Mätik, Kiirend, Yuskevich, and Varato revealed and seized a large number of defamatory anti-Soviet documents, including programmatic and organisational documents of the “Estonian Democratic Movement”, the “Estonian National Front” and the “Soviet Union Democratic Movement”; the illegal typescript magazines *Demokraat*, *Vabaduskiir*, and *Vaba Mõte*; collections titled *Jooksvate Sündmuste Kroonika* [Chronicle of Current Events]; “memoranda” to the UN in Estonian, English, and Russian, etc.

Particularly large quantities of documentary material were taken from the residences of Mätik and Varato.

When searching Mätik’s home, the Chekists had to conceal from him their awareness of the locations of hiding places. The investigators and operatives developed appropriate search tactics. For six hours, they only focused on the room and the common areas and only then conducted a similar thorough search of the garage and shed, where the anti-Soviet documents were hidden. In the process, another hiding place was discovered, containing two rifles and a large amount of ammunition. Mätik was led to believe that the hiding places were found by chance as a result of the persistent and meticulous work of the operative group.

As the processing file contained insufficient information on Varato’s anti-Soviet activities, he was initially questioned as a witness. During the interrogation, he said he kept some books with nationalist content in his apartment. The search did not yield anything of substance. The operatives were about to

leave when one of them noticed a stroller standing in the stairwell with a blanket piled unusually high. Underneath it were anti-Soviet documents prepared by Varato and his collaborators (it emerged that they had been hidden there by Varato's wife, who by chance had heard about his summons to questioning).

In the course of the work carried out by agents and operatives, the conversations of the main subjects were intercepted.

After the searches of Yuskevich, Soldatov, and Terin, interesting information was obtained about the connections of the accused, their trips outside Tallinn, and some facts about their criminal activities.

The operatives and investigators did a great deal of work to learn the reasons and circumstances contributing to the crimes being committed. In the course of the investigation process, notifications were sent to the rectors of Tartu State University and Tallinn Pedagogical Institute, the directors of the Tallinn Thermal Power Station, Valgus Publishing House, and the ESSR State Central Historical Archives; the Estonian SSR Council of Ministers was also informed about violations of the procedures for the control and use of copying equipment at some institutions and enterprises. Appropriate measures were taken regarding these findings.

The volume of the work carried out in the criminal case is evidenced by the following figures: 240 witnesses were questioned; 36 expert assessments were ordered and conducted; more than 250 unique anti-Soviet documents were seized during searches, including 670 copies of typewritten and manuscript documents (a total of 8,000 pages), 256 photographic films (3,500 frames), 46 sets of photocopies with anti-Soviet texts (1,200 pages), 200 print publications and 50 audiotapes with recordings of foreign anti-Soviet radio stations, etc., were examined.

The preliminary investigation revealed materials for the additional screening of 42 people.

Extensive prophylactic [preventive] and educational work was carried out during the investigation process. By the time the investigation was completed, the Fifth Department had carried out prophylac-

tic treatment<sup>40</sup> on 31 individuals, one of whom received an official warning.

A public trial<sup>41</sup> was held in Tallinn in this case. The Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court of the Estonian SSR convicted the defendants under subsection 1 of Section 68 of the Criminal Code of the ESSR and sentenced Mätik and Soldatov to six years and Kiirend and Yuskevich to five years in a strict-regime corrective labour colony. Varato, who sincerely regretted the crime and helped solve it with his testimony, was sentenced to three years of imprisonment.

Varato's positive behaviour in court was preceded by extensive and laborious work by the investigator. Kiirend and Varato were the only defendants prosecuted in the criminal case who testified about the crimes committed by them or their collaborators from the first interrogations. Kiirend later showed hesitation and indecision and sought to change his earlier testimony, completely withdrawing some statements.

Varato, on the other hand, proved to be the most open of all the accused.

From one interrogation to the next, Varato explained the details of the crime. On the basis of Varato's testimony (we note that the investigators had no other information in this regard), a search was carried out at the home of his acquaintance Siivelt,<sup>42</sup> which resulted in the seizure of a large number of anti-Soviet documents. The accused also informed the investigators of other individuals with whom he had criminal ties and from whom he received anti-Soviet literature with nationalist content. Varato later testified to investigators about numerous specific criminal facts about Yuskevich, Kiirend, Mätik, and Soldatov, with whom he was actively involved in the production, reproduction, and distribution of defamatory anti-Soviet documents. Varato's behaviour contributed in many ways to the uncovering of a dangerous crime. Varato's conduct during the investigation and trial and his release from custody in the courtroom also contributed a great deal to help cipher [protect the anonymity of] the agents involved.

**Tallinn**

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## ENDNOTES

- 1 Jüri Uluots. Seaduse sünd. Eesti õiguse ajalugu. Tartu, 2004, p. 402.

## DEFENDING THE CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER

- 2 [www.washingtonpost.com/world/putin-changes-course-admits-russian-troops-were-in-crimea-before-vote/2014/04/17/b3300a54-c617-11e3-bf7a-be01a9b69cf1\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/putin-changes-course-admits-russian-troops-were-in-crimea-before-vote/2014/04/17/b3300a54-c617-11e3-bf7a-be01a9b69cf1_story.html).
- 3 Army General Valery Gerasimov's doctrine (2013) requires combining military means with non-military ones to achieve political and strategic goals.
- 4 In 2005, Vladimir Putin described the collapse of the Soviet Union as "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century".
- 5 The Russkiy Mir Foundation, the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo) and the Foundation for Supporting and Protecting the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad.
- 6 <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/chief-editor-rt-is-like-a-defence-ministry/>
- 7 In the Reporters Without Borders 2021 World Press Freedom Index, Estonia and Russia rank 15th and 150th, respectively.
- 8 Reference to audience data from EMOR and others
- 9 State perception survey and integration survey.

## COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

- 10 <https://news.err.ee/1608297339/russia-says-expelled-estonian-diplomat-enquiring-about-its-arctic-strategy>  
<https://news.err.ee/1608297918/foreign-ministry-fsb-latte-video-a-masterful-production>
- 11 <https://arvamus.postimees.ee/7223744/hiina-mojutustegevus-ohustab-akadeemilisi-vabadusi-ja-ajakirjandusvabadust>

## CYBERSECURITY

- 12 For an example of measures taken by the US Department of Justice, see [www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-court-authorized-effort-disrupt-exploitation-microsoft-exchange](https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-court-authorized-effort-disrupt-exploitation-microsoft-exchange)
- 13 Служба внешней разведки Российской Федерации
- 14 US-CERT's 26 April 2021 overview of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service's cyber operations, [www.cisa.gov/uscert/ncas/alerts/aa21-116a](https://www.cisa.gov/uscert/ncas/alerts/aa21-116a)
- 15 Council of the European Union declaration of 24 September 2021, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/09/24/declaration-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-european-union-on-respect-for-the-eu-s-democratic-processes/>
- 16 [www.ria.ee/et/uudised/riigiportaalis-olid-kattesaadavad-ule-300-000-inimese-andmed.html](https://www.ria.ee/et/uudised/riigiportaalis-olid-kattesaadavad-ule-300-000-inimese-andmed.html)
- 17 [www.ria.ee/et/uudised/ppa-ja-ria-peatasid-andmete-ebaseadusliku-allalaadimise.html](https://www.ria.ee/et/uudised/ppa-ja-ria-peatasid-andmete-ebaseadusliku-allalaadimise.html)
- 18 [www.ria.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/kuberturve/2021\\_aprill\\_lingiga.pdf](https://www.ria.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/kuberturve/2021_aprill_lingiga.pdf)

## PREVENTION OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

- 19 A ruling based on sharia law.
- 20 <https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EASO-Asylum-Report-2021.pdf>
- 21 [www.rahendusministeerium.ee/et/finants-ja-ettevotlusp-politika/rahapesu-ja-terrorismi-rahastamise-tokestamine](https://www.rahendusministeerium.ee/et/finants-ja-ettevotlusp-politika/rahapesu-ja-terrorismi-rahastamise-tokestamine)
- 22 High-risk countries are characterised by ongoing armed conflict, active terrorist organisations and the government's lack of ability or willingness to prevent the spread of terrorism and radical Islamic ideology.

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## ECONOMIC SECURITY

23 [www.sanctionsmap.eu/#/main](http://www.sanctionsmap.eu/#/main)

24 [www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/520122018013/consolide](http://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/520122018013/consolide)

## THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

25 Clauses 1–4 of section 7 (1) and section 14 of the Anti-corruption Act.

## HISTORY: THE ESTONIAN DISSIDENT MOVEMENT AND THE KGB

- 26 Leo Võime (1933–2018), a USSR KGB officer active from 1952 to 1991, whose identity was disclosed by the Estonian Internal Security Service in 2005. From 1954 to 1978, Võime worked in the Estonian SSR KGB, heading the local Fifth Department from 1971 to 1978. He then served in the central apparatus of the USSR KGB in Moscow and as chairman of the Yakutian KGB in 1984–1988.
- 27 Leonid Nikitin (1924–2008), a KGB officer active from 1944 to 1985, whose identity was disclosed by the Estonian Internal Security Service in 1997. Nikitin worked in the Investigation Department of the KGB of the Estonian SSR from 1949 to 1985, including as deputy head and later head of the Investigation Department between 1969 and 1975.
- 28 Sergei Soldatov (1933–2003) was deported from the USSR with his wife after serving his sentence in 1981 and settled in Munich, Germany. He returned to Estonia in 2003.
- 29 Artyom Yuskevich (1931–1982).
- 30 Gennadi Gavrilov (1939–2016) and Alexei Kossyrev (1942– ) were officers at the Soviet naval base in Paldiski, Estonia, and established the Union for the Fight for Political Freedom. The members of the group were arrested in the summer of 1969. A military tribunal sentenced Gavrilov to six years in prison and Kossyrev to two years.
- 31 Pyotr Yakir (1923–1982) and Viktor Krassin (1929–2017) were well-known Soviet dissidents who formed the Initiative Group for the Defence of Human Rights in the USSR in 1969. Both were arrested in 1972.
- 32 In Russian, *дело оперативной разработки (ДОР) “Заговорщики”*. The KGB counterintelligence services created such files to identify, alert, and deter hostile activities by Soviet citizens and foreigners visiting the USSR on which reliable information had been obtained (KGB Counterintelligence Dictionary, 1972, p. 81).
- 33 Kalju Mätik (1932–2019).
- 34 Arvo-Gunnar Varato (1932–2001).
- 35 Mati Kiirend (1939– ).
- 36 The Estonian SSR KGB interrogated Oskar Joost (1943–2002) as a witness. Joost worked as a driver in a Tallinn construction plant (ERAF.129SM.1.29079). Although this article was “top secret”, the surnames Roots, Torn, Saarma, Terin, and Ehasalu were still pseudonyms (see the notes below for these names).
- 37 Feliks Horn (1929–1986) was questioned as a witness.
- 38 Oleg Tyutryumov (1921–1984), director of the Estonian Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra (ERSO), was heard as a witness.
- 39 Peeter Einasto (1939–2020), an employee at the Sociology Laboratory of the University of Tartu, was interrogated as a witness, and the documents mentioned were confiscated from him during a search.
- 40 Cautionary interviews conducted by the KGB with individuals to prevent them from engaging in anti-Soviet activities (see *KGB Counterintelligence Dictionary*, 1972, pp. 163, 237–38). Prevention was often accompanied by threats, expulsion from school or university, dismissal, travel bans, and other punishments.
- 41 The trial of the members of the Estonian National Front and the Estonian Democratic Movement took place on 21–31 October 1975 in the Supreme Court of the Estonian SSR. It was held behind closed doors, and only the closest relatives of the defendants were admitted. The proceedings were conducted mainly in Russian.
- 42 Tiit Siivelt (1937–1974), together with Arvo Varato, published a series of underground books under the name of the Estonian National Resistance Movement in 1972–1974.



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