

On the current state of corruption crime in Russia: impact on the economy, statistics and analysis of corruption against the background of the spread of COVID-19

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The author has carried out a comprehensive analysis of the state of corruption crime in Russia and the impact of corruption as a negative social phenomenon on the economic state of the state and the social sphere, including during the spread of the new coronavirus infection COVID-19. The article analyzes the current statistical indicators of crime in the field of corruption, presented by the General Prosecutor's Office of Russia, the Investigative Committee of Russia, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, Transparency International Russia, and the Federal State Statistics Service. The author's point of view is based on data provided by official representatives of government agencies and services. The main goal of the study is to demonstrate the current state of corruption crime in Russia based on reliable data from official sources and a comprehensive analysis of the existence of corruption in the realities of 2020-2021. In the course of the study, scientific literature, regulatory documents and judicial practice in the field of combating corruption were studied, general scientific and private scientific methods were used, such as theoretical analysis, systematization, building logical conclusions, and the comparative method. In the final part of the work, the author gives some recommendations for improving the anti-corruption policy in Russia and formulates conclusions based on the results of the work carried out.

Keywords: corruption, corruption-related crimes, statistics, analytics, indicators, economics.

Corruption as a negative social phenomenon affects all spheres of society and is actively adapting to all processes taking place in Russia. There is no period in the history of our state when statistical indicators in the field of corruption crime analytics have been declining rapidly. On the contrary, corruption crimes are qualitatively changing, transforming, acquiring new forms so that the latency of this category of crimes is striking in its scale, and some detected corruption crimes, especially in the field of activities of state and municipal employees, cannot but cause concern due to the huge amounts of bribes, "kickbacks", etc. Unfortunately, it should be stated that corruption, "eating up" the Russian economy from the inside, causing colossal material harm, remains an integral part of the life of Russian society and continues to "adapt" to modern realities.

The above confirms the relevance of research related to the peculiarities of preventing, disclosing and investigating corruption-related crimes, and the priority of the listed areas of work of law enforcement agencies, including the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, substantiates the practical importance of scientific and methodological developments on combating

corruption. In addition, the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin at an expanded meeting of the collegium of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia on March 3, 2021, once again noted that further decriminalization of the economy and combating corruption remains one of the highest priority tasks. "It is necessary to more actively identify and suppress the facts of embezzlement of budget funds, including those allocated for the fight against coronavirus infection, to react harshly to attempts to create shadow schemes and illegal withdrawal of capital abroad", the President of the Russian Federation summed up part of his speech on combating corruption [1].

Analyzing the current state of anti-corruption policy, we consider it appropriate to provide some statistical indicators on corruption in Russia. Thus, according to the General Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation, corruption continues to grow (+ 1.6%); in 2019, 30,991 corruption crimes were registered. Every year, more corruption-related crimes committed on a large or especially large scale or causing especially large damage are registered (in 2019 - 5408, in 2018 - 5365, in 2017 - 5136). The situation is similar with bribes, mediation in bribery [2]. The total damage from corruption is 55.1 billion rubles, which is 8.8% of the damage caused by all crimes. According to the data of the Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation dated February 2, 2021, in 2020 the level of corruption crimes increased by 0.5% [3]. However, the structure of corruption has changed significantly, including due to the spread of coronavirus infection and the remote work format of citizens - in 2020 the number of registered frauds more than doubled (38.6%), in 2019 - 17.2%. And the damage to the state amounted to 58.4 billion rubles (11.4% of the amount of damage caused by all types of crimes) [4].

Interesting is the study of the International Anti-Corruption Movement Transparency International Russia, which annually study in detail corruption phenomena and the state of corruption crime in every country in the world [5].

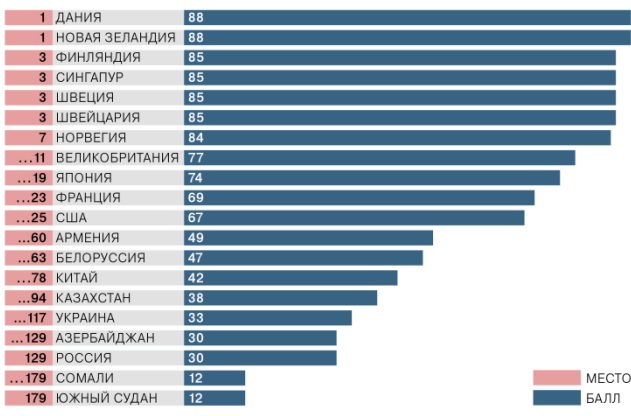
Some of the results of their work at the end of 2020 are shown in the infographic.



БАЛЛ	СТРАНА/ТЕРРИТОРИЯ	ПОЗИЦИЯ	БАЛЛ	СТРАНА/ТЕРРИТОРИЯ	ПОЗИЦИЯ
56	Грузия	45	35	Северная Македония	111
49	Армения	60	34	Молдова	115
47	Беларусь	63	33	Украина	117
45	Черногория	67	31	Кыргызстан	124
40	Турция	86	30	Азербайджан	129
38	Казахстан	94	30	Россия	129
38	Сербия	94	26	Узбекистан	146
36	Албания	104	25	Таджикистан	149
36	Косово	104	19	Туркменистан	165
35	Босния и Герцеговина	111			

ИНДЕКС ВОСПРИЯТИЯ КОРРУПЦИИ В ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОМ СЕКТОРЕ ЗА 2020 ГОД

ИСТОЧНИК: TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL.



In 2020, Russia fell three lines in the ranking, gaining 30 points and taking 129th place out of 180 (2019 - 126th place out of 180). Note: Countries are ranked on a scale from 0 to 100, with 0 representing the highest perceived corruption level and 100 - the lowest.

The indicator of Russia testifies to a high level of perception of corruption in our country. 30 points equates Russia to Azerbaijan, Gabon, Mali, Malawi, Lebanon, Mexico. Russia has occupied low positions in the rating for many years, which indicates a low level of anti-corruption and the lack of systematic work in the field of anti-corruption policy. Although, it is assumed that such work began in 2008 with the adoption of the Federal Law "On Combating Corruption" [6], and intensified in 2010 with the publication of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy [7].

At the same time, it is fair to say that the reason for the negative dynamics of corruption in Russia and many other countries was the situation associated with COVID-19. So, already in January-July 2020, not 371, but 811 billion rubles (+ 119%) were invested in healthcare [8]. At the same time, a budget of 320.7 billion was planned in 2020, which is twice as much as in 2019 (160 billion). However, in the first half of 2020, regional spending in the healthcare sector exceeded 700 billion rubles.

Huge additional appropriations from the budget could not but affect the state of crime, including corruption. According to the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation, corruption crimes in the healthcare sector in 2020 amounted to 68.4 percent in relation to other national projects [9]. These figures testify not only to lack of control, but also to low morality and social responsibility of persons who commit corruption crimes and profit from the health of citizens. Thus, at the same time, enormous damage was caused to the economy and the social sphere.

This fact cannot but cause concern on the part of the state and law enforcement agencies. Especially considering that the volume of this study will not be enough to list at least a small part of corruption crimes committed by state, municipal officials related to healthcare and social sphere, officials holding senior positions in the healthcare system, doctors and medical personnel. So, in the summer of 2020, in Vladimir Oblast, the chief physician of the regional clinical hospital received a



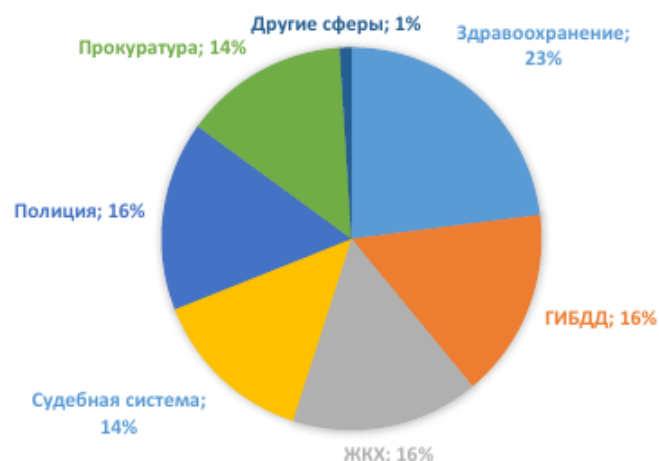
bribe of 1.5 million rubles for violations during the bidding for the national project "Healthcare" (the object of purchase is a CT scanner), in December 2020, the chief physician of Krai clinical hospital of Zabaikalsky Krai was convicted of a bribe in the form of kickbacks for ensuring the smooth conclusion of contracts for the supply of medical equipment (according to the RF IC, the total amount of the bribe was 13 million rubles) and other high-profile corruption crimes [10].

Returning to the general analysis of corruption crime in Russia and its impact on the economy, let us turn to statistics again. In 2020, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation opened 15,217 criminal cases on corruption-related crimes, which is 4% more than in 2019 [11]. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, 23576 crimes of corruption were detected in 2020, which is almost a quarter of the total number of crimes of an economic nature and 0.6% more than in the previous reporting year [12].

Considering the above figures, it is safe to assume that, despite the years of implementation of measures of the state's anti-corruption policy, it was not possible to achieve a decrease in the number of corruption-related crimes. According to the Accounting Board of the Russian Federation, the damage from corruption in Russia is measured in trillions of rubles. Judging by the criminal cases, about 2-3 trillion rubles are being stolen from the budget, - noted Aleksey Kudrin [13]. Based on data from open sources, including arrests of civil servants with seizures of amounts in billions of rubles (Zakharchenko - 8.5 billion, Arashukov - 30 billion, Lazarev - 3.2 billion, etc.), and, understanding the latency of corruption crime, it can be assumed that the amount of real damage to the country's economy should be estimated at 6-8 trillion rubles. In addition, without going into details, we will list the most notorious corruption crimes (summaries and information about the cases are publicly available on the Internet), for example, the sensational defense service cases, when the cost of damage amounted to more than three billion, and after an investigation it turned out that the final damage is about thirteen billion, the case of the Russian Register or, for example, the Rosagroleasing case, where the state suffered losses in the amount of about thirty billion rubles and other high-profile cases [14].

Note that the federal budget revenue for 2021 is 18.7 trillion rubles [15]. The ratio of the numbers clearly demonstrates the impact of corruption on the economy and is definitely thought provoking.

Over the past decade, while characterizing the emerging socio-political and economic situation in Russia, the negative fact of the active spread of corruption and the strengthening of its introduction into all spheres of the life of the state and society has been consistently stated. Corruption has acquired a scale that really threatens the security of the state, the normal functioning of public authorities, the rule of law, democracy, human rights and social justice. According to VTsIOM, the most corrupt spheres of society are the following (see infographics).



It is important to add that corruption leads to the development of the shadow sector of the economy, which, in turn, causes a decrease in tax collections and the emergence of a budget deficit, which can lead to social problems. Corruption also impedes competition within the country and makes Russian goods less competitive on the world market: it is not the enterprises that are most effective that succeed, but those that have certain agreements with officials. Also, corruption leads to a slowdown in economic growth; differentiation of the population (the rich get richer, the poor get poorer); this leads to another negative consequence - violation of human rights [16, p. 5].

The foregoing allows us to speak of the need to reform and modernize the state budget management system, strengthen the system of law enforcement agencies of the Russian Federation, strengthen public control over the activities of state (municipal) employees, digitalize the entire public administration system, and increase its transparency [17, p. 320]. Among the most important areas of combating corruption, we highlight the following: regulation of anti-corruption legislation in the field of tenders and public procurement; improvement of measures for the application of uniform methods to enhance mechanisms for resolving conflicts of interest; careful control over the process of providing information on income, expenses and acquired property of state civil (municipal) employees; improvement of measures to combat corruption in the field of business, including the protection of business entities from abuse of office by officials; improving the legal framework of anti-corruption legislation, as well as modernizing relations in the international arena in the field of anti-corruption policy in order to the authority of our country [18, p.202].

In our opinion, in order to implement optimal and effective anti-corruption activities, it is necessary to apply a set of measures taking into account political and ideological measures, socio-legal, economic, as well as organizational and technical measures [19, p.490]. Each measures should represent a single algorithm of actions aimed at combating corruption in the relevant sphere of the life of society and the state and act to achieve a single goal - the eradication of corruption.

Thus, anti-corruption activities in Russia should be based on due attention on the part of interested state bodies to the normative legal regulation of anti-corruption legislation, elimination of conflicts of existing norms, and measures to combat corruption, limited by a certain legal framework, should be regularly supported by not single methods, but by complexes of measures in various sectors and spheres of public and political state life [20, p.148]. In addition, it seems necessary to strengthen control over the implementation of these complexes of measures and the need for full responsibility of state civil and municipal employees for the implementation of anti-corruption policies, as well as strict comprehensive accountability to citizens. Optimization of measures aimed at combating corruption presupposes consistency of regulatory and practical activities, constant updating of the sentences imposed and other measures of a criminal and administrative legal nature. Unfortunately, at the present time it remains to state that statistics in the field of corruption crime shows negative dynamics, and corruption as a phenomenon has successfully adapted to the "information society" and continues to have a negative impact on all spheres of society and the state, especially in the field of economics.

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