UDC 327:341.4:343.9
DOI: 10.46493/2663-2675.34(1).2024.71

Iryna Dziublenko*
PhD in Historical Sciences, Associate Professor
National Pedagogical Dragomanov University
02000, 9 Pirogova St., Kyiv, Ukraine
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5274-3258
Nataliia Zhabinets
PhD in Political Sciences, Associate Professor
National Pedagogical Dragomanov University
02000, 9 Pirogova St., Kyiv, Ukraine
https://orcid.org/0009-0002-8054-4202

Current trends in international organised crime combating cooperation

Abstract. Organised crime is one of the most serious problems of our time, causing damage to the environment, and economy and hindering the sustainable development of modern society. The study aims to analyse the regional, historical, socio-political and other factors that affect the quality and effectiveness of international cooperation in the fight against organised crime. The study is based on an analysis of several critical factors that determine effective international cooperation in the fight against organised crime. The methodological basis of the study consists of such methods as comparative and structural-functional analysis, and formal legal methods, which were used to study the current state of organised crime, international mechanisms for combating it and their regulatory framework. The analysis was based on the experience of international cooperation in such countries as the United States, Ukraine, Japan, Australia and Cameroon. The study identified trends in the correlation between the level of organised crime and the level of corruption, regional factors, and the level of civil society development. The findings of the study confirm the view that the international legal obligations assumed by national governments only slightly affect the level of involvement of national authorities in the fight against international organised crime. The study establishes that high-quality international cooperation most often occurs between democracies, but cases of such cooperation between authoritarian and democratic governments are not an exception. The results of the study provide important conclusions for further analysis of organised crime and the possibilities of international cooperation between state authorities and other actors of international relations involved in the fight against organised crime

Keywords: corruption; historical background; regional factor; sustainability; democracy; authoritarianism

Introduction

Organised crime, as of 2024, remains one of the major factors hindering the sustainable development of a society, a state, or even an entire region. Apart from the most obvious financial threats, organised crime has an impact on all spheres of public life, which worsens the country's international image. According to the UN, organised crime affects political and governance processes and includes trafficking in firearms, drugs, cultural property and medicines, and money laundering. Trafficking in human beings is the most violent manifestation of organised crime. An obstacle in countering the functioning of such criminal groups is that they evolve along with the overall development of modern society and become more flexible, conducting their activities, generating income, and leaving witnesses and victims in many different countries. In addition, the online aspect of criminal groups' activities is being added, which significantly increases their reach and damage. That is why there is a need to build high-quality and effective mechanisms for international cooperation in combating organised crime (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d.). International cooperation is an integral part of the development of counteraction strategies, coordination between public authorities and governments, and development of new or adaptation of existing legislation, both international and national, to coordinate efforts and actions in the fight against organised crime (Tymoshenko

Received: 29.10.2023, Revised: 30.01.2024, Accepted: 29.02.2024

Suggested Citation:
Dziublenko, I., & Zhabinets, N. (2024). Current trends in international organised crime combating cooperation. *Foreign Affairs*, 34(1), 71-78. doi: 10.46493/2663-2675.34(1).2024.71.

**Corresponding author*

& Makarenko, 2022). It is important that all actors involved in the fight against organised crime, regardless of their political, economic or social preferences, are aware of the growing threat posed by organised crime, as only this approach will ensure coherence in their actions (Movchan & Yablonskyi, 2021).

In the context of the study of international cooperation, the issues faced by organised crime targets should be considered. A.V. Movchan & R.S. Yablonskyi (2022) note that the results of the Europol SOCTA-2021 survey show that billions of euros of illicit profits generated by organised crime in the EU were invested in the legal economy. Such corruption operations, as noted, can run through several jurisdictions, making police investigations more difficult and complex.

T.L. Syroid (2023) emphasises the experience of the European Union in the fight against organised crime, as exemplified by the European Interdisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats, approved in May 2021. The scientist examined the priority measures and directions in the fight against organised crime, which are planned to be implemented in the period from 2022 to 2025. The researcher emphasises the need to combat criminal networks, cyber-attacks, human trafficking, child sexual exploitation, smuggling of migrants, drug trafficking, fraud, economic and financial crimes, environmental crimes, and firearms trafficking. L.A. Filianina (2019) points out that the process of legalisation of the mechanism for combating organised crime is extremely slow, not always consistent and it is not always clear which forms – contractual or institutional - should be preferred in this process.

I.M. Legan (2021a) identified the peculiarities of international cooperation and the criminological principles of preventing and combating certain types of transnational crime within the framework of the UN, Interpol, and Europol. R. Orlovsky (2023) analysed the sphere of combating money laundering and, using the comparative method, characterises the specifics of criminal law relations in Ukraine, Western Europe and the United States. The study emphasises the impossibility of combating transnational high-tech crimes within the borders of only one state. The author points to the insufficient use of international cooperation mechanisms as a reason for the ineffectiveness of the fight against cybercrime. The need for close international cooperation, according to M.V. Hutsaliuk (2021), is caused by cyberattacks from countries where the attacked information resources are not located. I.M. Legan (2021b) considered the issues of preventing and combating cybercrime and cyberterrorism and emphasised the need for constant exchange of information between law enforcement agencies and their colleagues in all matters, the need for interaction and cooperation of various actors, both public and private. The study by J. Lusthaus *et al.* (2023) notes several cases of organised cybercrime in the UK involving offenders of the same language, national or regional origin. The researchers argue that in the context of rapid technological development, social networks are the place where organised criminal groups look for victims, accomplices, and informants.

J. Yunbo *et al*. (2021) note that China is starting to play a key role in building regional cooperation to strengthen international legal cooperation in combating wildlife trafficking between Southeast Asia and China. The authors highlight several programmes, seminars, visits and forums in which China has positioned itself as one of the main actors in the Asian region in the fight against organised crime.

Given the rapid development of information technology and the comprehensive digitalisation of all spheres of social and political life, and the increasing risks posed by organised crime both online and in the traditional environment, the study aims to examine trends in international cooperation and identify the most effective strategies used worldwide to combat organised crime. Thus, the object of the study is organised crime, and the subject is the peculiarities that affect the state's involvement in the fight against organised crime at the international level.

Materials and Methods

To analyse the current trends in international cooperation in the fight against organised crime, the study used various sources, such as indices and statistical indicators of the levels of corruption facilitation and resilience to organised crime provided by international non-governmental organisations Transparency International (Corruption Perceptions Index, 2024) and The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime (Global Organised Crime Index, 2024). These data were used to assess potential risks to the overall level of corruption-related crime. The analysis of these indices contributed to the selection of countries for further research. A sample consisting of the United States, Ukraine, Japan, Australia and Cameroon was used for comparison. Each of these countries is a party to several major international legal instruments aimed at combating organised crime. All countries are members of Interpol, the largest international police organisation. This sample is based on the desire to obtain results from countries that differ in their political system, geography, economic wealth, political experience, cultural differences and regional development.

Among the international legal documents that have an impact and shape international strategies to combat organised crime are the Budapest Convention (Convention on Cybercrime, 2001), the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988), the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (2003) and the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (2000). These documents were addressed in an analysis of the legal framework for international organisations and national governments that have ratified these documents aimed at combating organised crime.

Additionally, the study analysed and noted the effectiveness of international cooperation between national governments and the international police organisation Interpol (2022). The analysis included a study of the main aspects of Interpol's activities and its role in combating organised crime, in the Central African region, namely the Economic Community of Central African States. A comprehensive approach to the analysis of sources revealed the current trends in international cooperation and allowed us to form an idea of the level of effectiveness of such cooperation between countries that are similar and fundamentally different in terms of geography, political system, social wealth, worldview, historical background and other characteristics. The methods used in this analysis include comparative (used to compare the fight against organised crime in different countries), structural and functional analysis (to study the mechanism of combating international crime), and formal legal method (to analyse international documents that constitute the regulatory framework for combating organised crime and international cooperation in this area).

Results

The United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (2000) defines an organised criminal group as "a structured group of three or more persons who have existed for a period of time and who act as a group to commit one or more serious crimes or offences outlined in this Convention to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit". The constant dynamic development of modern society is inevitably accompanied by an increase in both the risks associated with organised crime and the ability to respond to it. Given the constant dynamics of political, social and economic processes in today's globalised world, to succeed in the fight against organised crime, each country in the world must be equally committed to international cooperation in combating organised crime, despite internal and external political difficulties.

The well-established systematic approach to combating organised crime at the international level is a synthesis of a country's commitment to the ideals of the civilised world and elements of theoretical and practical activities at the level of national authorities. In addition, the effectiveness of international cooperation is influenced by the level of practical application in a country of the provisions of international legal acts that form the basis for combating organised crime. The wide range of problems covered by international cooperation prevents a unified approach to addressing the problem of organised crime. The transnational factor in the activities of organised criminal groups provides an advantage to them, as weaker countries in economic, political and social terms become a platform for circumventing international law (Interpol, 2022).

The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (2003) states that active international cooperation between states to prevent and detect corruption, as well as to recover the proceeds of crime, is the basis for eliminating the possibility for corrupt officials to hide their illicit gains in the future. This convention is especially important for developing countries, where corrupt officials embezzle national wealth while new governments lack the resources to rebuild, restore and reconstruct the country. The United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988) also recognises the importance of international cooperation as a basis for strengthening and improving the legal means that already exist. At the same time, the document also addresses aspects of organised crime that have not yet been addressed in existing international legal instruments.

An important aspect of this study is the implementation of the above documents in the practice and legislation of individual countries. Cameroon is the fastest-growing country in ECOCAS (Economic Community of Central African States) with abundant natural resources but suffers from systemic corruption (Table 1), and poverty is growing rapidly in some parts of the country. Human trafficking and smuggling are prevalent in the country, as well as arms trafficking, illegal logging and drug trafficking. Even though Cameroon is a signatory to many international legal instruments to combat organised crime and is a member state of Interpol, the lack of transformation in the country's domestic political life and difficulties in implementing it do not allow it to build resilience to the threats identified. Since its independence, Cameroon has been ruled by only one political party and two authoritarian presidents, with constant ethno-political tensions (Badiora & Ojewale, 2022).

Table 1. Corruption Perceptions Index 2021-2023 with position among 180 countries

Country	Country's ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index		
	2021	2022	2023
USA	27	24	24
Ukraine	122	116	104
Japan	18	18	16
Australia	18	13	14
Cameroon	144	142	140

Source: Corruption Perceptions Index (2024)

The country actively cooperates with INTERPOL and is a member of the I-CEMAC programme, along with CAR (Central African Republic), Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Chad, to strengthen border checks and optimise access to INTERPOL systems among beneficiary countries (Interpol, 2022). As of January 2023, Cameroon has implemented INTERPOL's global communication network (I-24/7) and a database for law enforcement at international airports, seaports and strategic border crossings. In the first 72 hours, more than 6,000 search requests were made with matches leading to investigations between Cameroon and other member states, showing a positive trend in the fight against organised crime in the country (Securing borders in the Central Africa region. **(**2024).

Ukraine has similar crime rates to Cameroon (Fig. 1) but has several factors that make it more resilient. Ukraine is also a signatory to many international legal instruments on the prevention of organised crime, and actively cooperates with international organisations, but is severely affected by corruption (Table 1) in the judiciary. Since its independence, Ukraine has suffered from racketeering in the industrial sector, until 2014 from the sale of Soviet weapons, illegal deforestation, and a smaller drug market compared to Cameroon.

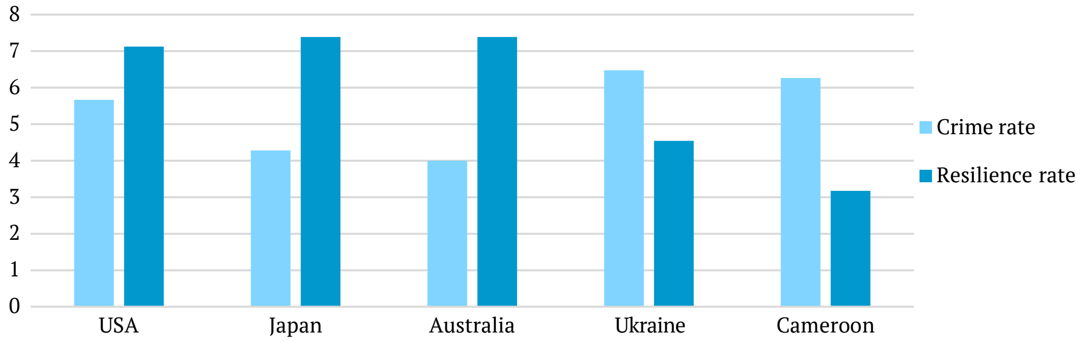

Figure 1. Gradual economic integration in the European Union
Source: Global Organized Crime Index (2024)

One of the most vulnerable sectors since the start of the full-scale invasion has been cybersecurity. According to a report by the Security Information and Event Management System (SIEM) based on the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), Ukraine experienced an unprecedented number of cyberattacks between March and May 2022. While the maximum number of detected cyber incidents was 121 in January 2022, in March-May this figure increased to 827 critical information security events. In 2022-2024. Ukraine experienced more than 9,000 cyberattacks (Melnyk, 2024). This experience in combating cyber threats is an important factor for the future of cybercrime for the entire European region. The Ukrainian experience demonstrates both high-quality international cooperation before the full-scale intrusion and a wide range of opportunities for information and experience exchange between partner countries today and in the future. One example of such close cooperation is Ukraine's accession to NATO's CCDCOE (Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence), an advanced cyber knowledge centre and research institution (Ukraine to be accepted..., n.d.). The Russia-Ukraine war combines both conventional and cyber warfare, and this cyber dimension provides an extremely interesting insight into what modern warfare may look like in the future (Guitton & Fréchette, 2023). It is worth noting that organised crime is not the preserve of non-state actors in international relations but can also include structures within state actors (Vatral, 2023).

Addressing such countries as the United States, Australia and Japan, it is worth noting that one of the most significant differences from the previously described countries is the low level of corruption (Table 1) on the one hand and a conscious civil society with democratic principles of development on the other. The United States of America is a target for organised crime, which leads to similar manifestations of crime in Cameroon and Ukraine. Human smuggling, especially in the Mexican border, has been one of the most discussed topics in recent years both in the United States and around the world. Despite the measures taken to combat human smuggling, the number of people wishing to enter the United States and pursue the "American dream" remains high. Hundreds of counterfeit products, including electronics from Asia, enter the country every year. The illegal trade includes animals, plants, gold, tobacco, and drugs, which are closely linked to the activities of Mexican mafia groups (Interpol, 2022).

Japan has one of the best resilience scores among the countries selected in the study in terms of crime. In general, the scope of organised crime in Japan does not differ significantly from the previously studied countries, but due to its historical identity and geographical location, it has its peculiarities. For example, exotic pets and precious seafood are illegally traded in Japan. Japan also has world-famous Yakuza mafia groups, although their influence has declined significantly in recent decades (Kleemans & van Koppen, 2020). This has become possible due to increased law enforcement and international cooperation in the fight against organised crime. Instead, classic mafia groups are increasingly turning their attention to cybercrime.

Although Japan is a signatory to many international legal treaties and a member of international organisations fighting against organised crime, national legislation does not fully meet this goal, as there is still no direct prohibition of the existence of the Yakuza and other mafia groups in Japan. Therefore, Japan is experiencing a significant impact of organised crime, which affects both the economic and political aspects of the country's life. However, the democratic and transparent way in which Japan has been developing in recent decades, and its commitment to both international law and international cooperation, significantly reduces the risks associated with the activities of organised crime groups (Kirchner & Dorussen, 2020). As Japanese criminal groups are involved in transnational criminal schemes, the international community is beginning to play a significant role in countering their activities. For example, in 2012, the United States froze the assets of some members of Japan's largest criminal organisation, the Yamaguchi-Gumi (Treasury Sanctions Members..., 2012), and in 2016, it imposed sanctions on the Kobe Yamaguchi-Gumi syndicate (Treasury Department Targets..., 2016). The prosecution of organised crime in the United States has also influenced the Japanese government in its fight against the yakuza. For instance, according to D.N. Moorman (2020), the development of such sanctions measures in the United States was influenced by the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organisations Act (Law of USA No. 100617..., 1985). In turn, the scholar points out, that the political movement "War on Drugs" in the United States has already influenced Japan, which has begun to develop laws to combat organised crime.

Turning now to the activities of organised criminal groups in Australia. International cooperation is one of the key factors for Australia in the fight against organised crime. Australia is a signatory to several international legal treaties, as well as a member of Interpol and Europol, which has a qualitative impact on the exchange of experience, knowledge and information with other actors in international relations (Lusthaus *et al*., 2023). The Global Initiative Against Organised Crime (2024) in its 2023 report indicates that such a factor of states' resilience to organised crime as their international cooperation has improved. The Nordic countries have a score of 7.24 out of 10 (Global Initiative Against Organised Crime, 2024), which is the best score among the rest of the world. Central and Eastern Europe has a lower resilience score and is noted as being under-prepared to face the threat of organised crime. The crime rate in Australia was high in the period from 2021 to 2023, second only to the countries of Northern Europe.

The United States, Japan and Australia have a favourable geographical location in terms of the almost non-existent possibility of territorial disputes with their neighbours. The United States is bordering the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and shares borders with Canada and Mexico. Japan, although having tense relations with some countries in East and Southeast Asia, faces no significant challenges in building a competitive economic model given its geographical location. A similar conclusion can be drawn from an analysis of Australia. The situation in the geographical location of Cameroon and Ukraine is radically different. Cameroon's development has much in common with that of other African countries. Having gained independence at a crucial moment for the entire African continent, the so-called Year of Africa, the country was accompanied by numerous internal and border conflicts, ethnic clashes and religious wars. In general, this trend is observed in most post-colonial countries in Africa (Akaliyski & Reeskens, 2023).

A factor contributing to effective international cooperation is the low level of corruption in the country under study. Data from the Corruption Perceptions Index (2024) indicate extremely low corruption risks in the United States, Japan and Australia, while the situation with corruption in Cameroon and Ukraine suggests that countries are unwilling or do not have effective methods to combat it. The need for effective international cooperation becomes especially noticeable when a state is faced with fraudulent schemes in the transfer of assets abroad and the lack of the possibility to turn to national legislation to counteract this phenomenon (Carlos, 2022).

The shadow nature of organised crime cannot be overemphasised when describing its functioning. It is this factor that does not provide a full understanding of all the risks and threats of organised crime, which is hidden from the eyes of ordinary citizens. On the other hand, there are cases in world practice where international cooperation has become comprehensive and intensive since the entire world's population has directly or indirectly faced and experienced certain difficulties.

The Ukrainian and Cameroonian experience demonstrates commitment to the ideals of fighting organised crime, but each country has unique challenges and a radically different level of capacity to respond to them. In the context of the study of Cameroon's international cooperation, the question arises of the implementation of the agreements undertaken following international legal documents. The civil society institution is still in the process of its formation, which could allow for a timely response and counteraction to organised crime. Nevertheless, there have been positive developments in the context of the country's cooperation with Interpol, which resulted in participation in the I-CEMAC programme, which brings border checks to a new level (Interpol, 2023; Securing borders in the Central Africa region, 2023).

On the other hand, an analysis of Ukrainian international cooperation demonstrates the benefits for other actors in international relations. Today, in the era of informatisation and digitalisation of almost all spheres of political and social life, experience in countering cybercrime is an advantageous aspect in building further multilateral relations in the international arena, implementing new strategies to combat cyber threats both for the European region and the whole world.

The United States of America plays a key role in the modern world order. With a range of factors contributing to its sustainable development, such as the presence of innovation and widespread adoption of modern technology, an attractive business environment, high-quality education, and efficient use of capital, the country is of particular interest to organised crime. The study demonstrates that the crime rate in the United States is very close to that of Cameroon (Table 1), but the effectiveness of the fight against organised crime, including through international cooperation, shows the difference between developed and developing countries. Australia and Japan, despite their high level of resilience to organised crime, have unique and specific challenges, including those related to mafia groups and imperfect national legislation.

The practical experience of the United States, Australia and Japan in fighting organised crime best illustrates the successful concept of international cooperation. At the same time, their experience is not very useful for authoritarian countries and transitional regimes where corruption remains high. The analysis of the Global Organised Crime Index (2024) and Corruption Perceptions Index (2024) data shows an inverse relationship between the corruption index and organised crime in the countries studied ($r = -0.86$, where r is the correlation coefficient). A stronger correlation can be noted between the corruption index and the organised crime resilience index ($r = 0.99$). This correlation is even higher than the correlation between the crime index and the resilience index ($r = -0.81$). Such results may indicate that about 74% (r^2) of organised crime exists due to or is caused by corruption, or vice versa (causality is not considered). At the same time, the linear relationship between the corruption index and the organised crime resilience index shows that measures to combat organised crime have a positive impact on reducing corruption. The difference in dependence indicates that the level of organised crime also depends on other factors that are not affected by either the fight against corruption or the measures against organised crime that make up the resilience index: political leadership and governance, government transparency and accountability, national policy and legislation, judiciary and detention, law enforcement, territorial integrity, anti-money laundering, economic regulatory capacity, victim and witness support, prevention, international cooperation, and so on. Regarding the latter, it is worth noting that according to the Global Organised Crime Index (2024), Ukraine made a significant jump in international cooperation from 5 to 7.5 points in 2021-2023, while at the same time making a similar jump in the corruption index ranking (*r* between the international cooperation factor and the corruption index is 0.94). Cameroon, which did not improve its cooperation with partners, moved up only 4 positions in the corruption index ranking between 2021 and 2023, while Ukraine moved up 18 positions (Table 1). This shows that international cooperation plays a very important role in the fight against corruption, which is essential for the existence and spread of organised crime.

Given the national and regional characteristics of other states, the results of the study suggest that the analysed factors of successful international cooperation can be applied to other countries in the world whose security is affected by the activities of organised criminal groups. The general situation with modern international cooperation in combating organised crime in Cameroon is similar to other African countries, as the vast majority of them have failed to build effective institutions of government after a long colonial period, have not built democratic state institutions and continue to suffer from racial, religious and other conflicts. In contrast, when analysing trends in international cooperation in Ukraine, certain trends and conclusions can be extrapolated to Eastern European countries.

Discussion

In a study on Japanese cooperation policy with Latin America and the Caribbean, D. Carlos (2022) notes that the development of the new world architecture is closely linked to the factors of alliances, strategic partnerships, rivalry or competition, as the political component begins to play a major role in international cooperation. It is noted that cooperation between governments is most effective when their domestic and foreign policy interests are similar. S.C. Schwuchow (2023) comes to a similar conclusion to the one presented in this study, stating that societies with weak property rights, lack of socially established norms to counteract corruption risks and unequal income distribution are more likely to face the problem of cooperation between security forces and criminal organisations.

E.J. Kirchner & H. Dorussen (2020) cite another factor in the difference in the effectiveness of international cooperation. Analysing the cooperation between the EU and Japan in the period from 1990 to 2017, the authors emphasise the different levels of threat perception. For example, in their perception of the threat of terrorism, their views differ dramatically – while Japan does not consider terrorism to be an urgent problem, the EU reflects a high level of concern on this issue.

The principles of Japanese international cooperation policy are regularly published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (White Paper on Development Cooperation, 2023). The latest available White Paper on Development Cooperation, 2022, emphasises that transnational organised crime and terrorist acts continue to pose a threat to the entire international community. An effective response to these threats cannot be achieved by the efforts of one nation alone. Thus, in addition to strengthening countermeasures by individual nations, the entire international community must cooperate to help build justice and law enforcement capacity in developing countries.

M. Rubakha *et al*. (2023) address the issue of resistance to corruption risks and note that transparent and independent operation of national anti-corruption institutions is of paramount importance for achieving proper effectiveness in combating various manifestations of corruption. It is worth noting that to ensure the effectiveness of the fight against corruption in Europe and its prevention in the world, some countries should incorporate cooperation with international governmental and non-governmental organisations into their legislation and anti-corruption policies, as such cooperation makes them more open. At the same time, it is noted that Ukraine has many corruption risks associated with a lower level of digitalisation of public services compared to Bulgaria and Georgia, which are studied in the article. The research of scientists confirms the thesis formulated in the study that the high level of corruption in the country is one of the factors that negatively affects the quality of international cooperation in the fight against organised crime.

E. Kleemans & V. van Koppen (2020) argue that the business activities of organised criminal groups, such as arms and drug trafficking, smuggling of illegal immigrants, trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation and other types of organised crime, are a feature of non-democratic countries. For democracies, however, the presence of organised crime is perceived as an exception rather than a commonplace. However, as noted above, the United States also faces similar challenges, but to a lesser extent. Thus, the lack of these phenomena should not be considered a complete absence, but rather a smaller share in the overall level of organised criminal activity. This lower level of extreme manifestations of organised crime confirms the view that democratically developed countries with an effective legal system and experience of international cooperation have greater opportunities and a higher degree of resilience to the illegal activities of organised criminal groups. This approach contributes to the development of long-term international cooperation, considering the experience and best practices in the fight against organised crime following international law.

F. Di Pillo *et al*. (2020), in their study, suggest that the impact of organised crime is stronger in macro-regions where organised crime has historical roots. It is difficult to disagree with this statement, but the example of Japan with the Yakuza mafia groups suggests that even historically rooted organised crime within a particular country can be levelled by the simultaneous implementation of effective national legislation and international cooperation.

Since international cooperation is closely related to national police and other law enforcement agencies, it is appropriate to refer to the findings of L. O'Shea (2021). The researcher believes that successful law enforcement reforms require the state to increase control over these structures by raising salaries and strengthening bureaucratic control. However, such actions can only be successful if the national authorities are interested in implementing reforms. The issue is that even democratically elected politicians can behave in an authoritarian or neo-patrimonial manner. In such circumstances, the behaviour of law enforcement agencies is likely to be subject to corrupt political leaders, and the agencies themselves will operate in a limited and undemocratic manner. This data once again confirms the result of the study that only democratically elected and democratic regimes that rely on cooperation with other democratic countries have significant advantages in terms of effective international cooperation in the fight against organised crime. This observation is important in deconstructing the popular mythology of the "strong hand" that authoritarian leaders may use.

Conclusions

The factors influencing the quality and effectiveness of international cooperation in the field of combating organised crime were considered in the study. This study highlights that organised crime, which is transforming and acquiring new forms of influence, is a serious problem for the sustainable development of modern society. Several factors that directly or indirectly affect the quality of international cooperation in the field of combating organised crime were considered. The results obtained indicate a difference in the approach of countries to the fight against organised crime, which does not correlate with the presence or absence of the latter as signatories to the main international legal instruments but proves the importance of the level of corruption and traditional informal institutions that have been formed historically. At the same time, the latter, as shown by the results of the analysis of corruption and organised crime indices, play a much smaller role. This is a positive message for developing countries, as it indicates that the impact of organised crime can be significantly reduced by well-established and universal measures, among which international cooperation plays a key role. The analysis found that international cooperation is effective when the state is committed to democratic values and there are no historically established criminal groups in society. At the same time, in recent decades, there has been a tendency to improve international cooperation between authoritarian, underdeveloped post-colonial and democratic countries.

The author established that the level of corruption risks is related to the ability of organised criminal groups to operate freely and adapt to ineffective resistance by public authorities. This study determined that the fight against even historically established organised criminal groups in a country can reach a qualitatively new level through international cooperation, especially between countries with the same or similar political, legal, social, economic and administrative systems, since the assets of organised criminal groups may be located within the jurisdictions of countries around the world and threaten their economic security.

Future research on international cooperation in the field of combating organised crime could cover a wide range of unresolved issues and problems. For instance, regional peculiarities of international cooperation, a detailed analysis of the latest international legal practices, shortcomings in the coordination of actions to combat organised crime by actors in international relations, and the role of non-state actors in the fight against organised crime may be relevant for consideration.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of interests

None.

References

[1] Akaliyski, P., & Reeskens, T. (2023). Ukrainian values: Between the Slavic-Orthodox legacy and Europe's allure. *European Societies*, 1-30. doi: 10.1080/14616696.2023.2206901.
[2] Badiora, A., & Ojewale, O. (2022). Organized crime across the sub-Saharan African States: The case of corruption in Cameroon and Nigeria. *African Journal of Governance and Public Leadership*, 1(3), 8-27.
[3] Carlos, D. (2022). Japan's international cooperation to Latin America and the Caribbean in the changing development landscape. *Estudios Internacionales*, 201, 89-125.
[4] Convention on Cybercrime. (2001, November). Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/1680081561.
[5] Corruption perceptions index. (2024). *Transparency International*. Retrieved from https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023.
[6] Di Pillo, F., Levialdi, N., & Marzano, R. (2020). Organized crime and waste management costs. *Regional Studies*, 57(1), 168-180. doi: 10.1080/00343404.2022.2053094.
[7] Filianina, L.A. (2019). International experience in preventing and combating organised crime. *Legal Scientific Electronic Journal*, 6, 434-436. doi: 10.32782/2524-0374/2019-6/107.
[8] Global Initiative Against Organized Crime. (2024). *Continental overviews and results*. Retrieved from https://ocindex.net/report/2023/04-continental-overview.html.
[9] Global Organized Crime Index. (2024). Retrieved from https://ocindex.net/.
[10] Guitton, M., & Fréchette, J. (2023). Facing cyberthreats in a crisis and post-crisis era: Rethinking security services response strategy. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*, 10, article number 100282. doi: 10.1016/j.chbr.2023.100282.
[11] Hutsaliuk, M.V. (2021). Directions for strengthening international cooperation in combating cybercrime. *Information and Law*, 4(39), 141-147.
[12] Interpol. (2022). *Annual report*. Lyon: Interpol.
[13] Kirchner, E.J., & Dorussen, H. (2020). New horizons in EU–Japan security cooperation. *Asia Europe Journal*, 19, 27-41. doi: 10.1007/s10308-020-00586-z.

[14] Kleemans, E., & van Koppen, V. (2020). Organized crime and criminal careers. *Crime and Justice*, 49, 385-423. doi: 10.1086/707318.
[15] Law of USA No. 100617 "RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act) Statute – Implications for Organized Labor". (1985, May). Retrieved from https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/tg1722.
[16] Legan, I.M. (2021a). *International cooperation in preventing and combating transnational crime*. Chernihiv: National University of Chernihiv P=olytechnic.
[17] Legan, I.M. (2021b). Features of international cooperation in preventing and combating cybercrime and cyberterrorism. *Scientific Bulletin of the International Humanitarian University*, 50, 118-121. doi: 10.32841/2307-1745.2021.50.25.
[18] Lusthaus, J., Kleemans, E., Leukfeldt, R., Levi, M., & Holt, T. (2023). Cybercriminal networks in the UK and Beyond: Network structure, criminal cooperation and external interactions. *Trends in Organized Crime*, 26(4). doi: 10.1007/s12117-022-09476-9.
[19] Melnyk, T. (2024). *SBU repels over 9000 cyberattacks in two years of full-scale war*. Retrieved from https://forbes.ua/news/sbu-vidbila-ponad-9000-kiberatak-za-dva-roki-povnomasshtabnoi-viyni-05032024-19667.
[20] Moorman, D.N. (2020). The yakuza: Organized crime in Japan. *The Downtown Review*, 7(1), article number 1.
[21] Movchan, A., & Yablonskyi, R. (2021). Current problems of system improvement combating organized crime in Ukraine. *Social and Legal Studios*, 4(4), 69-75. doi: 10.32518/2617-4162-2021-4-69-75
[22] Movchan, A.V., & Yablonsky, R.S. (2022). Problems of combating organised crime and corruption in the international dimension. implementation of the state anti-corruption policy in the international dimension. In *Proceedings of the VII International Scientific and Practical Conference "Implementation of the state anti-corruption policy in the international dimension"* (pp. 59-62). Kyiv: National Academy of Internal Affairs.
[23] O'Shea, L. (2023). Why democratic police reform mostly fails and sometimes succeeds: police reform and low state capacity, authoritarianism and neo-patrimonial politics (in the former Soviet Union). *Policing and Society*, 33(3), 245-263. doi: 10.1080/10439463.2022.2106983.
[24] Orlovsky, R. (2023). Legalization of criminally obtained property committed by organized criminal groups: European and Ukrainian standards. *Jurídicas CUC*, 19(1), 197-230. doi: 10.17981/juridcuc.19.1.2023.07.
[25] Rubakha, M., Tkachyk, L., & Horodniak, I. (2023). Modeling the impact of macroeconomic indicators on the Corruption Perceptions Index: Example of Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Georgia. *Regional Science Policy & Practice*, 15(9), 2295-2319. doi: 10.1111/rsp3.12691.
[26] Schwuchow, S.C. (2023). Organized crime as a link between inequality and corruption. *European Journal of Law and Economies*, 55, 469-509.
[27] Securing borders in the Central Africa region. (2023). *Interpol*. Retrieved from https://www.interpol.int/How-we-work/Border-management/I-CEMAC.
[28] Syroid, T.L. (2023). International criminal law counteraction to transnational crimes. *Scientific Bulletin of Uzhhorod National University*, 77(2), 304-309.
[29] Treasury department targets new Yakuza syndicate. (2016). Retrieved from https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jl0694.
[30] Treasury sanctions members and associates of Japanese criminal organization. (2012). Retrieved from https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/tg1722.
[31] Tymoshenko, V., & Makarenko, L. (2022). The impact of globalisation on legal conduct. *Scientific Journal of the National Academy of Internal Affairs*, 27(1), 20-29. doi: 10.56215/0122271.20
[32] Ukraine to be accepted as a Contributing Participant to NATO CCDCOE. (n.d.). *The NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence*. Retrieved from https://ccdcoe.org/news/2022/ukraine-to-be-accepted-as-a-contributing-participant-to-nato-ccdcoe/.
[33] United Nations Convention Against Corruption. (2003, October). Retrieved from https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/uncac.html.
[34] United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. (1988, December). Retrieved from https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1990/11/19901111%2008-29%20AM/Ch_VI_19p.pdf.
[35] United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto. (2000, November). Retrieved from https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNTOC/Publications/TOC%20Convention/TOCebook-e.pdf.
[36] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (n.d.). *Organized crime*. Retrieved from https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro.html.
[37] Vatral, A. (2023). Legal regulation of combating organised crime in Ukraine: Current state and areas of improvement. *Scientific Journal of the National Academy of Internal Affairs*, 28(3), 17-27. doi: 10.56215/naia-herald/3.2023.17
[38] White Paper on Development Cooperation. (2023). Retrieved from https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/100600876.pdf.
[39] Yunbo, J., Pichamon, Y., & Tien Ming, L. (2021). Strengthening international legal cooperation to combat the illegal wildlife trade between Southeast Asia and China. *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*, 9, article number 645427. doi: 10.3389/fevo.2021.645427.