

SYSTEM OF PROTECTION AND RESCUE IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to present to which extent the protection and rescue forces of the Republic of Serbia are trained and qualified to act either when emergency situations and changed circumstances occur or to act preventively in protection and saving of lives, personal and proprietary safety of citizens. The role of police units is incontestably important when responding to natural disasters, technical and technological accidents and other dangers. The preventive methods used by the police agencies can contribute to the prevention of many occurrences which might have the character of emergency situations. The Sector for Emergency Management is the key bearer in protection and rescue actions in emergency situations. Nevertheless, in order to successfully respond to emergency situations, it is necessary that Sector cooperates with the special units of the Ministry of Interior. The role of the special units in peacetime emergency situations is multidimensional and complex and it derives from the scope and competencies of organization of their work, which is being adapted according to the current needs. The police agencies have special and important function in the field of fire prevention, transport of dangerous materials, road traffic safety, as well as in the overall security and safety of all citizens.

Keywords: emergency situation, security, subjects of prevention, safety.

INTRODUCTION

Emergency situations are being remembered for a long time by their consequences, and demand quick response of all forces of social community in their prevention, protection and saving of people, material and cultural goods, and elimination of consequences that have occurred. Regardless of whether the risks are of natural or social character, they represent the potential danger threat to the balance in society nature system, and cause the occurrence of adverse situation, extreme event or emergency situation. The analysis of response of the services in cases of emergency situation (incidents, breakdowns and natural disasters) in Serbia, as well as in the world, points to flaws, both in organization and methodology of response and management of emergency situations, and recovery [4]. That's why it is necessary to develop emergency management decision support system, as well as systems for education and training of bearers of the emergency situations management process. The development of these systems should be based upon contemporary information technologies which would allow relevant, efficient and effective functioning of institutions, services and individuals participants in management process. Such emergency management decision support systems should provide better communication and exchange of information between services responsible for emergency management [5].

The classification of emergency situations regarding the character of phenomena and processes they cause is of the utmost practical value. According to it, there are three groups of emergency situations:

- emergency situations of technogenous character (transport accidents, fires, explosions, breakdowns in industrial, electro-energetic and utility systems etc.);
- emergency situations of natural character (floods, earthquakes, landslides, hurricanes, natural fires, epidemics, pandemics, etc.) and
- emergency situations of ecological character (degradation of natural resources, climate changes, temperature inversions, disappearance of plant and animal species, etc. [3].

The last period was characterized by numerous rescue actions in our country and abroad. The most of them were due to occurrence of different accidents and forest fires. In situations such as these, different organizational units (fire-fighters, first aid service, army, police and citizens), were coming to the spot at the same time, very often and helicopters or planes for fire distinction (unfortunately, the water bombs sometimes cause the loss of human lives). It is evident that the vast number of performed rescue actions was not based on consolidated and coordinated operation management.

PROCEDURES AND COORDINATION OF SERVICES IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

In order to eliminate the adverse consequences occurred as a result of emergency situation, it is necessary to constitute certain bodies. Some countries establish a separate coordination body, which is not the case in our

country, where such body is being established if necessary. The Government forms the Coordination Body, and its main task is to coordinate the ministries, agencies, and other participants in recovery from emergency situation. The Government's Coordination Body estimates the current needs, and provides logistics and financing, free flow of information between participants at state level, and gives information on the course of event, authorized by the Government. The purpose of existence of such a body is to predict the possible events, that is, measures that should be taken, as well as to manage rescue actions in organized manner. Measures that are being taken in cases of these events must be entirely coordinated. The priority task in cases of emergency is joint action, command, coordination and control at the emergency situation scene.

In the Republic of Serbia, the field of protection and rescue is within the competencies of the Ministry of Interior. Within the competent Ministry, a special organizational unit called the Sector for Emergency Management was formed. The Sector for Emergency Management of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia is the basic organizational frame for prevention and recovery from the consequences of natural, technical and technological accidents. The Sector for Emergency Management performs normative, administrative, organizational-technical, preventive, preventive-technical, educational, informative-educational and other jobs for organization, planning, conducting and control of measures for protection of life, health and material assets of citizens, preservation of conditions necessary for life and preparation for overcoming the situations in cases of fire, natural disasters, technical and technological accidents, effects of dangerous materials, and other largescale emergency states which may endanger health and lives of people and environment, or to cause major damage, as well as giving support in recovery from consequences (mitigation and recovery) caused by emergency situations [1].

Involvement of particular subjects in protection and rescue actions depends on the level of the accident, that is, emergency situation. Practically, there are:

- accidents with several injured persons, and minor material damage, everyday level of work;
- massive accidents, where the number of injured and material damage overcome the possibilities of everyday work and require call for help from additional manpower and additional resources, and
- catastrophes which are followed by enormously large number of injured and dead, vast destructions, the whole community is affected this situation requires all available manpower and resources, as well as additional help from other countries.

The first and main participants in joint protection and rescue actions are the service 112, the police, fire department, emergency medical aid, hospitals, and if necessary local community and other specific services. In case emergency situation escalates, the need for trained rescuers emerges. In that respect, we may observe the activities of the following special units in emergency situations: the Gendarmery, the Special Anti-Terrorist Unit, the Counter-Terrorist Unit and the Helicopter Unit. All these units represent the operational part of the security system of the Republic of Serbia, which, on the one hand, performs its legally determined and defined jobs, and on the other hand, provides professional support to the other participants in protection and rescuing actions. These units are trained and qualified to perform basic tasks, but their human and material resources could be engaged in protection and rescue activities during the peacetime emergency situations. The adequacy and successfulness of their functioning regarding emergency situations, depends upon the law regulations and their preparedness, that is, training to respond to emergency situations.

These units' engagement in protection and rescue activities is not regulated normatively, but these units are engaged when emergency situation emerges, and with the approval of the Director of the police. The important component and determinant for engagement of special units of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia is their clearly defined role in emergency situation procedure plans.

The special units, besides their regular activities regarding monitoring phenomena and events at particular territory, may note and suggest the potential danger, and inform the competent bodies and population which is threatened by this incoming danger [2].

The cooperation between the Ministry's special units and other participants and subjects in protection and rescue activities, is achieved through mutual initiatives, in three basic ways: informing, providing professional support and cooperation in specific activities. The preventive methods used by the special units can contribute to the prevention of many occurrences which might have the character of emergency situations [1].

The Counter-Terrorist Unit of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia is assigned to: plan, organize and perform the most complex security tasks in cases of terrorism suppression (recording, monitoring, comparing and predicting phenomena and events which contain elements of domestic and international terrorism; detecting of criminal acts of terrorism; securing material evidence and apprehension of suspects; preventive antiterrorist activity; direct intervention aiming at eliminating terrorist groups and breaking organized terrorist nets).

Besides activities related to training of police officers to perform basic tasks, the Counter-Terrorist Unit

periodically organize training in support providing in emergency situations. One such activity was the conducted training with the Mountain Rescue Service in summer and winter, and demonstrative training with the Sector for Emergency Management [1].

The Gendarmerie of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia is assigned to: plan, organize and perform the most complex security tasks in fighting terrorism, securing public order and peace in cases of high-risk situations, securing certain facilities and providing support in emergency situations.

The ambition of the Gendarmerie is manifested in highly professional service, with legal and responsible exercising of authorities, with the aim to protect and respect personal freedoms and human rights.

This unit provides the following services:

- fight against terrorism;
- securing public order and peace in high-risk situations;
- securing certain facilities;
- providing support to other state bodies;
- providing support in emergency situations.

Thought by the experience from earlier years, and driven by the ambition to mitigate the consequences of emergency situations, the Gendarmerie has become the essential participant, in coordination with the Sector for Emergency Management, in peacetime emergency situations.

The Special Anti-Terrorist Unit of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia represents the modern highly professional anti-terrorist police unit, specifically specialized for performing complex and high-risk tasks of protecting and securing the Republic of Serbia and its citizens. This refers mainly to tactical fight against terrorism, as well as providing support to the Crime Investigation Police Department and other units of the Ministry of Interior in cases of apprehension of dangerous criminals and criminal groups, especially in situations when the suspect is expected to resist by using firearms. When emergency situation occurs in an inapproachable place, the role and task of the Special Anti-Terrorist Unit is to prepare and provide conditions for easy access and functioning of the protection and rescue service.

In cases of natural disaster, for instance fires, important and unavoidable participant is the Helicopter Unit. In fire distinction actions, the Helicopter Units participate alongside with the other organizational units of the Ministry of Interior, which are equipped and qualified for fire distinction. The Helicopter Unit can be engaged as follows:

- in direct fire distinction by using water buckets;
- in evacuation of people from burning buildings by using helicopter and other equipment;
- in monitoring, control and localization of forest fires on accessible and inaccessible terrains.

Search and rescue operations are conducted in order to find and rescue endangered, missing persons, vehicles, aircrafts, by using the helicopter's special equipment and rescue teams. The spectrum of activities and concentration of complex operations that the Helicopter Unit successfully performs, are directed towards: providing support to the other organizational units of the Police Directorate and the Ministry of Interior in coordinated and joint work. Special place in security tasks has joint training and work with special units, such as the Gendarmerie, the Special Anti-Terrorist Unit and the Counter-Terrorist Unit. This form of security engagement has a special place in a long-term successful functioning of the Helicopter Unit.

CONCLUSION

Emergency situations are complex phenomena, which may partially, as well as entirely, disrupt the everyday rhythm of living; on the one hand, the everyday regime of life and routine activities change, and on the other hand the need for engagement of vast number of people in rescue activities grows. This scenario requires immediate response; there is no room for delaying activities that have to be conducted instantly. Bearing in mind that emergency situation represents a set of adverse factors and occurrences that endanger human life, block production, economy and other activities, as well as everyday activities, it means that they are special kind of challenge in which not everyone can participate. The competency, professionalism, responsibility and self-sacrifice are the characteristics according to which people should be selected for these jobs. Emergency situations are being remembered for a long time by their consequences, and demand quick response of all forces of social community in their prevention, protection and rescuing of people, material and cultural goods, and elimination of consequences that have occurred.

Given that the Republic of Serbia is facing permanent security risks in this region, it was necessary to organize an integral protection and rescue system.

When the Sector for Emergency Management was established, the conditions for functioning of an integral protection system were created in Serbia. This system implies uniting of all services that deal with protection of citizens in emergency situations.

The Sector for Emergency Management is the key bearer in protection and rescue actions in emergency situations. Nevertheless, in order to successfully respond to emergency situations, it is necessary that Sector cooperates with the special units of the Ministry of Interior. The role of the special units in peacetime emergency situations is multidimensional and complex and it derives from the scope and competencies of organization of their work, which is being adapted according to the current needs.

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