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Analytical Work on Missing Persons Search: Modern View of the Problem

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of law enforcement agencies' activities to search for missing persons. The purpose of the study is to examine the peculiarities of the analytical work of law enforcement agencies on missing person's search. The methodological bases are general scientific and special scientific methods and techniques of scientific knowledge (systemic, formal-logical, structural-functional, sociological, historical and axiological). It is concluded that the criteria for law enforcement agencies to search for missing persons are the general state of search work, search for certain categories of missing persons, trends and processes that cause missing persons, causes and conditions of missing persons, results of police operations and special operations conduct. It is determined that the consolidation and combination of efforts of different units and services during the search work helps to increase the number of facts of locating missing persons. Attention is paid to the identification of factors influencing the assessment of the search work. The state of the international search for

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missing persons is analyzed. The necessity of using the positive experience of European countries in the outlined activities is substantiated.

Keywords: analytical work; law enforcement agencies; missing person; crime; digital forensics.

Trabajo analítico sobre la búsqueda de personas desaparecidas: Vías modernas de los problemas

Resumen

El artículo está dedicado al análisis de las actividades de los organismos encargados de hacer cumplir la ley para buscar personas desaparecidas. El propósito del estudio fue examinar las peculiaridades del trabajo analítico de los organismos encargados de hacer cumplir la ley sobre la búsqueda de personas desaparecidas. Las bases metodológicas fueron los métodos y técnicas científicas generales y científicas especiales del conocimiento (sistémico, formal-lógico, estructural-funcional, sociológico, histórico y axiológico). Se concluye que los criterios para que los cuerpos y fuerzas de seguridad busquen a las personas desaparecidas son el estado general del trabajo de búsqueda, búsqueda de ciertas categorías de personas desaparecidas, tendencias, causas y condiciones de las personas desaparecidas, resultados de las operaciones policiales y realización de operaciones especiales. Se determinó que la consolidación y combinación de esfuerzos de diferentes unidades y servicios durante el trabajo de búsqueda ayuda a incrementar el número de hechos de localización de personas desaparecidas. Se prestó atención a la identificación de los factores que influyen en la evaluación del trabajo de búsqueda.

Palabras clave: trabajo analítico; las fuerzas del orden; persona desaparecida; crimen; forense digital.

Introduction

The search for missing persons is directly related to the modern methods of combating crime and is one of the main principles for ensuring the safety of individuals by law enforcement agencies, the central place among which belongs to police organizations.

The basis of the organization of police activities is analytical work, which is a constant research process of management, covering a wide range of organizational measures and methodological techniques for studying and

evaluating information about the state of research work, the structure and dynamics of crime, the level of public order and security, the results of practical activities of relevant government agencies, as well as the conditions under which these tasks are undertaken.

A slight tendency towards insufficient increase in the number of unidentified persons is observed in Ukraine in recent years. If 13.4 thousand people were wanted at the end of 2019 according to statistics, then the number of wanted in this category amounted to 13.9 thousand people (+ 1.3%) at the end of 2020 (Statistics, 2020). The increase in these indicators is primarily due to improved quality of response to applications and reports of citizens and the transparency of their registration by law enforcement agencies. This makes it possible to obtain reliable data on missing persons.

However, statistics do not fully reflect the real state of the problem, as crimes committed against missing persons are characterized by a high degree of latency. Therefore, paying attention to the analytical work of criminal police units by the scientists will allow not only to study the quantitative indicators of activity, but also to take into account the specifics of the region where the missing occurred, peculiarities of the specific situation of the missing and the category of wanted. Qualitative analysis of the state of search work allows to give a correct assessment of the situation and to develop effective measures to search for missing persons.

1. Theoretical framework

The analysis of scientific publications shows that Fedorenko *et al.* (2020); Ishchuk (2016); Kryvolapchuk *et al.* (2020); Ostapovich *et al.* (2020); Pleskach and Stashchak (2018); Valieiev *et al.* (2019) made a significant contribution to the development of theoretical provisions on the search for missing persons, the organization of law enforcement personnel management, and the definition of areas for optimizing search work.

Some aspects of the investigation of crimes related to missing persons are also presented in the works of the following scientists: Albul (2010); Boichuk (2018); Nykyforchuk and Chemerys (2020); Shapovalenko (2018); Yevdokimova *et al.* (2020).

The following researchers should be noted among foreign scientists on the subject: Amooore and De Goede (2005); Birzu (2017); Bjerregaard and Lord (2004); Bufkin (2004); Butorac *et al.* (2015); Holmes (2016); Mikšaj-Todorović and Butorac (2017); Newiss (2004); Paşniciuc (2017); Plass (2007); Sozer (2014); Stevenson and Woolnough (2016). It is established that the works of these scientists cover a wide range of issues:

motives that provoke a person to leave the place of residence, anthropology (identification) of missing persons, geography of missing persons, study of the living environment of missing persons, peculiarities of their DNA identification, directions and prospects of police organizations' activities, etc. However, the issue of analyzing the state of law enforcement search work requires additional scientific study.

Given the above, the purpose of the study is to examine the peculiarities of the analytical work of law enforcement agencies on missing person's search. The main tasks of the study are to assess the state of modern police activities in the search for missing persons, as well as to identify directions for improvement.

2. Methodology

The methodological basis of the research was the involvement of systematic and operational approaches, which allowed to determine the state of police activities, to identify patterns of relationships inherent in its structural elements, as well as to define directions for improving law enforcement search work to achieve positive results.

The methods of comparative jurisprudence were used in the work (during the analysis of legal norms regulating the activities of various subjects in the field of search for missing persons), content analysis of documents, publications of scientists on this topic, formal-logical (in studying legislative and departmental regulatory enactments), structural and functional method, as well as elements of sociological, historical and axiological methods of cognition.

These methods have comprehensively allowed identifying the directions and boundaries of the study of the problem, as well as provided an opportunity to fully and comprehensively disclose it, to develop the doctrine of the police search for missing persons.

The information base of the research consisted of police materials, statistical information and the results of opinion polls, in particular:

- assessment of the activities of the National Police of Ukraine with the help of a survey of criminal police officers of 12 oblasts of Ukraine, conducted during January-May 2021 (a total of 145 people);
- statistics and examples of Interpol's activities (Interpol, 2021);
- Europol information resources (Europol, 2021).

The survey was conducted according to a specially designed questionnaire among 145 criminal police officers from 12 oblasts of Ukraine

who took advanced training courses at the National Academy of Internal Affairs (Kyiv, Ukraine).

The research was performed according to the requirements of the Regulations on Academic Honesty of the National Academy of Internal Affairs, which were developed based on Ukrainian and world experience of ethical rulemaking. This document was approved by the Academic Council of the National Academy of Internal Affairs (Protocol No. 5 of March 27) and implemented by the order of the Rector of the Academy (Order No. 422 of March 30).

According to its provisions, the members of the scientific community are guided by the rules of ethical conduct and professional communication; respect the principles, values, norms, rules, and conditions of academic honesty in their activities. The preliminary consent to participate in the research was obtained from all respondents.

3. Results

Analytical work should be considered as the basis of law enforcement activities, which is an ongoing research management process, covering a wide range of organizational measures and methodological techniques for studying and evaluating information about the state of search work, the structure and dynamics of crime, the level of public order and security, the results of practical activities of state bodies to perform their law enforcement tasks, as well as the conditions under which these tasks are undertaken, which provides targeted management and evaluation of the effectiveness of management influences.

According to the organization of the National Police (Law of Ukraine on the National Police, 2015), the analysis and assessment of the criminogenic situation are carried out by the departments of organizational and analytical support and rapid response, which includes analysis of the state of public safety and order, protection of human rights and freedoms, public and state interests, as well as the fight against crime.

The functions of these units include monitoring the criminogenic situation and organizing the response to its changes:

1. collection, assessment, analysis of information on the criminogenic situation within the service area, criminal offenses, violations of public safety and order, other emergencies and response measures taken by units of the Chief Directorate to eliminate deficiencies;
2. preparation of reports on criminal offenses and other events not related to them, as well as the exchange of information about them with other state authorities;

3. participation in the organization of the activities of situational centers / departments, working groups for coordination of actions and management of police forces and means during mass events, public holidays and emergencies;
4. participation in the development and control over the implementation of standard operation plans together with the interested police units.

Indicators of the state of search for missing persons partially reflect the criminogenic situation (Parr and Fyfe, 2012). Therefore, monitoring of data on the status of the search for such persons should include information on the number of missing persons of different categories and unidentified corpses at the beginning and end of the reporting period, the presence of coincidences on the distinguishing features of missing persons and unidentified corpses, detection of criminal signs of missing persons or unidentified corpses with signs of violent death, territorial belonging to the support agency of the police, where the registration of the relevant fact took place.

This information is tracked at different intervals: monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, and annually.

The analysis of data for the month is carried out in the territorial and subordinate police bodies for timely response to changes in the operational situation, making the necessary adjustments to the planned activities, deployment of forces and means involved in the search.

It is also needed to assess the state of the search work with the obligatory reflection of the changes that have taken place in its dynamics, to explain the reasons for such changes, the most relevant and specific to the region problems, as well as to develop comprehensive measures to improve the organization of the search. Information on the number of opened and closed missing person cases is subject to analysis.

The validity, timeliness of their opening, centralized registration and deregistration of persons and vehicles, the circumstances of the search (time, place, method, etc.) and the effectiveness of search activities, the role and contribution of other police bodies and units in the search are analyzed.

Analysis of the state of the criminogenic situation in general, and search work in particular, is important in organizing the activities of criminal police units to search for missing persons. First of all, the concentration of all information coming from different sources for its further use is organized in the relevant departments. In addition, the materials of criminal proceedings, the results of police operations, individual measures, etc. are subject to study.

Criminal police units that search for missing persons analyze the work at various levels including national, regional and local. In general, analysis is a

method of scientific research of objects, phenomena, etc. by decomposition, division into constituent parts as opposed to synthesis.

The search work on missing persons should be analyzed in the following areas (Table 1):

- information on the search for missing persons (all categories);
- among them became victims of criminal offenses;
- among them minors (separately upon the missing of which criminal proceedings have been instituted, missing in the territory of hostilities, female minors, those who have become victims of criminal offenses, including women, among them the ones who have left home or special institutions);
- adult women;
- other categories of wanted persons (among them, mentally sick);
- among them in the territory of hostilities.

Table 1. Quantitative indicators of missing persons in Ukraine for 2016-2020

Years	Total number of missing persons	Became victims of crimes	Minors	Women	Mentally sick	Missing in the territory of hostilities	Changes in indicators in percentage
2016	12900	76	70	2873	792	508	–
2017	13100	33	91	3048	857	533	+1.3 %
2018	13400	23	60	3054	912	689	+ 2.4 %
2019	13700	12	65	3117	974	790	+ 2.2 %
2020	13900	11	67	3162	988	815	+ 1.3 %

Source: authorship.

Apparently, considerable attention is paid to vulnerable categories of persons: minors, women, mentally sick, as well as missing persons in the territory of hostilities in eastern Ukraine. This is typical not only for Ukraine, but also for other states. For example, according to a 2017 report by the International Narcotics Control Board, the proportion of victims of physical and sexual violence among women in the world is very high at 40 to 70 per cent, especially for women providing sexual services (Report of the International Narcotics Control Board, 2017). At that time, it should be noted that according to the head of the National Police of Ukraine, this indicator remains quite high in 2019-2020, despite the significant efforts of the police (Report of the Head of the National Police of Ukraine, 2020).

In addition, according to Interpol, the international wanted list accounted 7552 missing persons from around the world including 164 Ukrainians as of early June 2021.

The state of the international search for missing persons in Ukraine is presented in Table 2 in general.

Table 2. Quantitative indicators of internationally wanted persons in Ukraine for 2016-2020

Years	Declared internationally wanted	Criminal proceedings have been instituted	Became victims of crimes	Minors	Women	Mentally sick	Changes in indicators in percentage
2016	116	108	–	5	30	1	–
2017	240	234	–	6	55	1	+51.7 %
2018	294	286	–	7	68	1	+ 18.4 %
2019	343	330	–	5	75	2	+ 14.3 %
2020	393	382	–	6	81	2	+ 12.8 %

Source: authorship.

There is a positive trend towards an increase in the number of missing persons on the international wanted list, which allows to significantly involve the capabilities of international police organizations and national law enforcement agencies of Interpol member states. It should be emphasized that the reasons for such growth are the termination of cooperation between Ukraine and many countries around the world; Ukraine’s integration into Europe; strengthening economic cooperation with EU countries; migration processes, etc.

In the context of international cooperation concerning the search for missing drivers of vehicles, it is established that criminal groups operate in the European Union, whose members are involved in kidnappings, premeditated murders and involvement of drivers in criminal activities using secure mobile communication systems, devices for blocking GPS / GSM signals and means of counteracting their detection.

It has been proven that the most effective counteraction to such criminal acts is carried out by Europol, whose experts use digital forensics tools such as a mobile field office equipped with a universal forensic extraction device – UFED.

For example, a large-scale operation in January-July 2020 on the exposure of the Encroached encrypted telephone network, which was used by the members of organized crime groups in the EU and the UK,

made it possible to reduce the impact on the crime situation. Appropriate conditions were created for the installation of technical equipment in order to overcome the encryption technique and obtain access to user correspondence as a result of the actions of law enforcement officers.

A large number of violent crimes (including premeditated murders) and crimes related to drug trafficking were prevented and solved in the process of the special operation. About 800 people involved in committing criminal offenses in European countries were arrested (Interpol, 2021).

At that time, according to Europol data for 2021, 19 people were exposed and taken into custody by police forces of Spain, Portugal and Bulgaria, under the auspices of Europol, in the process of conducting a joint operation on documentation of the activities of a criminal group with international relations, which was engaged in car theft in Madrid (Spain). 85 wanted cars were searched. GPS / GSM signals blocking devices of all types and means of counteracting their detection were seized during the searches (Europol, 2021).

The analysis of statistical data during police operations at the state or regional levels also deserves attention. Such operations are carried out on the basis of an analysis of the state of search work, when negative trends are identified, for example, a significant increase in the number of unidentified missing persons within the reporting period.

Such operations are aimed at stabilizing the criminogenic situation within the service area. Concentrating police efforts on search work usually helps to reduce the number of missing persons, including the identification of unidentified corpses.

Assessment of the search work can be carried out at several levels: national, regional and local. If statistical data are of primary importance at the first two levels, then it is impossible to give an objective assessment of the activities of a particular body or unit without taking into account the specifics of the work at the local level.

It is possible to identify factors that may affect the assessment of analytical and search work given the experience of the authors (Fyfe *et al.*, 2014; Kryvolapchuk *et al.*, 2020; Newiss, 2006; Parr and Fyfe, 2012).

1. Geographical location of the service area:

- urban or rural area;
- resort village or region;
- the presence of reservoirs;
- the presence of forests;

- a large number of abandoned areas of industrial enterprises;
- features and number of adjacent agencies;
- the state border crossing through the service area.

2. Socio-demographic peculiarities:

- a large number of people who go to work in other settlements and abroad;
- a large number of people engaged in vagrancy;
- the presence of ethnic minority settlements;
- a large number of people who abuse alcohol and drug users.

According to the State Statistics Service, the migration reduction in 2020 amounted to 7635 people, in 2019 – 8765 people (while in 2014 – 22592 people) due to the events in eastern Ukraine and the financial crisis (Statistics, 2020).

Along with this, the migration of the population from small and medium-sized cities to large ones quite often becomes a factor that negatively affects the criminogenic situation in the region (Nykyforchuk, 2019; Parr and Fyfe, 2012).

Availability of institutions for the care of socially vulnerable persons and closed medical institutions (including private ones) within the service area:

- location of boarding schools and other institutions for the care of orphans and children with mental and physical disabilities;
- availability of psychoneurological institutions;
- availability of anti-tuberculosis dispensaries;
- availability of rehabilitation centers and religious organizations that can provide shelter to the homeless and provide treatment for drug and alcohol addicts.

On January 24, 2020, the police officers of the Chief Directorate of the National Police of Ukraine in the Donetsk oblast exposed a group of persons engaged in labor exploitation of vulnerable categories of citizens such as drug addicts, homeless people, etc. About 30 people were held in a house called the Temple. Some of these individuals were reported missing (Report of the Head of the National Police of Ukraine; 2020).

3. Location of transport infrastructure facilities:

- availability of large railway junctions, stations, bus stations, air, river and seaports;

- location of large enterprises with their own trucking stations that carry goods over long distances;
- passage of long-distance and international routes through the service area.

It should be noted that transport facilities are an important means of transporting drugs, weapons and ammunition, currency, petroleum products and precious metals for organized crime. Sophisticated systems of smuggling of these items are created on leased or purchased tourist and charter flights.

To illustrate these positions, let us give the following example. The coordinator of the criminal group, who arrived from Turkey, was detained at Lviv airport on May 31, 2021. This person belonged to a group of persons who committed crimes in the Transcarpathian oblast.

A total of seven members of the group, which systematically committed serious and especially serious crimes (including kidnappings), were reportedly suspected and detained. 23 searches were conducted in Lviv and Mukachevo, during which more than 50 firearms, 15 automatic weapons, two pump-action rifles, ten PM pistols, five Fort-17 pistols, and five TT pistols, six grenades, more than 40 magazines, ammunition, devices for silent firing were confiscated.

In addition, an arsenal of cold steel weapons, thermal imagers, radios, GPS trackers, special-purpose clothes and bulletproof vests used in criminal activities were found. Swiss watches, gold jewelry, valuables, currency, six vehicles used to prepare and commit crimes, and drugs were detected at the residence of the members of the criminal organization (Nykyforchuk and Chemerys, 2020).

Large-scale penetration of criminal groups is also observed in seaports, through which transit of prohibited items through the territory of Ukraine takes place.

Continuing our research, it should be noted that the presence or absence of these factors must be taken into account when assessing the search work of the police. For example, the number of unidentified missing minors in one district of the city where the boarding school is located will be higher than in the adjacent district of the same locality without such institutions.

In our opinion, it is appropriate to identify the following factors of the criminogenic situation in a large city that affect the organization and procedure of search activities, including in the direction of searching for missing persons:

- availability of close ethnic, family and cultural ties;

- high intensity of migration;
- formation of compact social groups of migrants who do not recognize the principles of dominant culture, legal norms, have anti-social orientation;
- the presence of high demand among migrants for “services” of corrupt officials of public authorities and local governments;
- formation of a basis for strengthening the influence of transnational criminal groups;
- increasing the level of social tension in society, the spread of ideas of racial and national intolerance;
- “export” of crimes, the commission of which is not typical for the respective territories (or isolated cases of their commission are registered).

The specifics of resort settlements and localities deserve special attention during the analysis and assessment of search work (Palanychko, 2012). After all, the functional purpose or specialization of the resort region determines the qualitative and quantitative specifics of the contingent of people coming for treatment and recreation, and the level of socio-economic development is determined by the infrastructure of the settlement, the volume of services provided to meet the needs of the pleasers. In addition, the specifics of the organization of operational units are influenced by the category of the resort town or region.

Let us note that it is impossible to make a comprehensive analysis of the criminogenic situation, as well as to correctly assess the tasks to be solved, for the following reasons:

- 1) latency of crimes;
- 2) intentional recharacterization of crimes when accepting applications and notifications of crimes from citizens for various reasons;
- 3) distrust of the population in law-enforcement bodies;
- 4) constant amendments to the current legislation;
- 5) incomplete and comprehensive consideration of applications and notifications of missing;
- 6) making a decision on applications and notifications of citizens, which does not correspond to reality.

The work on establishing the location of the missing person begins from the moment of receiving the application (notification) for the missing person. Accordingly, the analysis of the search work can be carried out

taking into account the criminogenic situation within the service area of a particular agency. Success in finding people often depends on the level of awareness of National Police officers about the work situation.

According to the authors, this includes knowledge of the circumstances of missing persons (theory, data of persons and their distinguishing features) that took place within the service area of a particular agency and related police units. Awareness of the facts of detection of unidentified corpses and their distinguishing features. As a rule, the National Police is informed about the fact of missing persons through the operator of the police telephone line.

Information on the number of missing persons, whose whereabouts are established during the period of 24 hours, i. e. before the opening of criminal proceedings and entering information into the Unified Register of pre-trial investigations is important to analyze and assess the criminogenic situation within a particular area.

In our opinion, police officers have the opportunity to establish the fact that the murders in different regions were committed by the same persons thanks to the qualified analysis of the criminogenic situation and the assessment of the data obtained during the search for the missing persons. In such situations, an important place is occupied by the study of data on the situation of a missing person, as these data are the core of analytical work (Newiss, 2006).

This is logical, because these data contain information about other elements of the forensic characteristics of crimes, most often determine the method of committing this illegal act, affect the specifics and structure of the mechanism of the crime, including premeditated murder; to a large extent when studying the situation of committing a particular crime, you can see the manifestations of some personality traits.

That is, it is necessary to have information about the situation of committing specific crimes within the service area in order to assess the operational situation within the service area as a whole. The situation of commission of a crime should be considered as a certain system, which sees different kinds of interaction between objects, processes and phenomena both before and at the time of the commission of a criminal offense.

Whereupon characterizing the place, time, climatic, material, industrial and other environmental conditions, as well as the specifics of the behavior of persons involved in the illegal act, should include psychological links between them and other factors of objective reality.

It is necessary to develop a new digital model of analysis of the search work, integrated with the existing databases of the National Police in order to optimize the search work. Digital forensics tools (VICAP, 2021) are used

in Western countries to solve a number of tasks, including those related to analytics. After all, the effectiveness of criminal police units in locating missing persons depends on analytical activities, the basis of which is the monitoring of search performance that is currently carried out with the widespread use of IT technologies.

To confirm this position, we present the results of a survey of 145 criminal police officers from 12 oblasts of Ukraine who took advanced training courses at the National Academy of Internal Affairs. 97% of respondents consider it appropriate to constantly improve existing databases in accordance with the needs of the search work. 73% supported the need to use mathematical models in the analysis of the criminogenic situation, 75% of respondents believe that such an analysis increases the possibility of establishing the facts of a series of crimes with regard to missing persons.

In addition, 95% of police officers surveyed stressed the need to improve the existing police information and search systems in terms of automating the process of detecting matches on the features: “missing person – unidentified corpse”. Instead, 64% of respondents consider it appropriate to expand the capabilities of the existing electronic systems by integrating new subsystems, which will increase the amount of information processed by the program and speed up the search process.

4. Discussion

It is worth agreeing with Ishchuk (2016) on the need to adopt the best practices of the United States and the EU in the solving of murders related to missing persons, where promising directions are the use of information and analytical systems in creating a psychological portrait of an unknown criminal, as well as improvement of forensic records in terms of identifying unidentified corpses. The successful experience of the United Arab Emirates appears interesting in creating a national DNA database.

In addition, Sozer (2014) devotes his research to the peculiarities of DNA identification of the bodies of those killed in mass deaths, which is becoming relevant for the establishment of missing persons in eastern Ukraine in the war zone.

In this context, the research of Shapovalenko (2018) on the use of information and telecommunication technologies and measures related to obtaining information in the field of telecommunications is also of interest for the research. It should be noted here that Ukraine does not yet have sufficient technical capacity to use the results of such studies in full in practice, in contrast to European countries. This is due to the need to retrofit hardware by telecom operators to the latest fifth generation standards (“5G”).

Research and scientific inquiries of such scientists as Aleksandrov *et al.*, (2021); Birzu (2017); Kubaienko *et al.* (2021); Mannapova *et al.* (2020); Newiss (2004); Zeigler-Hill *et al.* (2017) rightly emphasize the study of individual characteristics of a particular missing person, as well as the characteristics of the last place of residence (stay) of the missing person and his reference environment (possible acts of violence, the nature of interpersonal relations with other people, etc.). This approach is undoubtedly of great practical importance, because, as practice shows, a significant number of missing cases occur repeatedly.

Thus, our research expands the horizons of analytical work on the search for missing persons in Ukraine. This makes it possible to attract positive foreign experience, as well as to qualitatively organize further actions of law enforcement agencies and ensure their interaction in the direction of establishing the location of missing persons.

Conclusions

Our research, which was based on the analysis of modern scientific approaches and statistics, as well as the viewpoints of police practitioners, allowed us to draw the following conclusions.

Analytical work allows tracking the work of law enforcement agencies to search for missing persons according to the following criteria:

- the general state of the search for missing persons in general or within a certain service area (in the area of hostilities);
- the state of search for certain categories of missing persons (minors, women, mentally sick, foreigners, etc.);
- identification of the categories of missing persons most vulnerable to the commission of crimes against them (female minors, truck drivers, prostitutes, etc.);
- trends and processes that cause persons' missing;
- causes and conditions of missing persons;
- priority areas of search work to increase the efficiency of the relevant units of the Police;
- results of police operations and special operations conduct, etc.

The assessment of the search work of law enforcement agencies at the local level is influenced by the following factors: geographical location of the service area; socio-demographic factors; availability of transport infrastructure facilities.

The implementation of high-quality analytical work by the police on the search for missing persons provides an opportunity to detect latent crimes and serial killings of persons of this category. Conducting police operations to search for missing persons ensures the consolidation of the efforts of various units of the Police in search work and helps to reduce the number of undetected missing persons.

In today's reality, the analytical work of the Police requires the use of IT technologies, namely: the creation of a digital model of the operational environment with the possibility of its automatic analysis. It is a spatial information model that is as close as possible to real time and combines all the data on missing persons and their associates.

Data on the state of the search for missing persons are the initial information in the implementation of analytical work by criminal police units.

The state of search work reflects the criminogenic situation within the service area of the police agency. Although the search work differs in its own specifics, it has much in common with the work on the solving of crimes, the central place in which is taken by the analysis of the criminogenic situation. This is directly related to the processes of ensuring law and order in the development of modern society.

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