

Prevention of Pressure and Violence Against Minors and Crimes Committed by Them

Abdusalomova Khurshidabonu Nasirdinovna

Senior Inspector-Psychologist, Lieutenant Colonel, Department of Public Safety and Preventive Service, Kibrai District Internal Affairs Department, Uzbekistan

Received: 28 February 2025; **Accepted:** 40 March 2025; **Published:** 30 April 2025

Abstract: The article analyzes the prevention of bullying and violence against minors and the prevention of crimes committed by them as an interrelated criminological task. The study examines the family, educational, social and institutional factors that affect the victimization of a child and the formation of deviant behavior, based on scientific literature, international standards and research by foreign scientists D. Farrington, B. Welsh, R. Loeber, D. Finkelhor and other scientists, and reveals the importance of early prevention, family control, repeated victimization and referral of the child to a safe environment.

Keywords: Minors, bullying, violence, victimological prevention, crime prevention, inspector-psychologist, family, neighborhood, social prevention, interagency cooperation, early detection, risk factors.

Introduction: Protecting the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of minors should be considered in today's criminological policy not only as a matter of social protection, but also as a strategic direction for crime prevention. While oppression and violence against children, on the one hand, directly harm their lives, health and spiritual development, on the other hand, when combined with lack of supervision, family conflict, educational exclusion, negative peer influence and social exclusion, they can create a dangerous environment for subsequent deviant or criminal behavior.

The scale of the problem is also clearly visible in international studies. A systematic analysis by S. Hillis, J. Mercy, A. Amobi and H. Kress based on data from 96 countries estimated that more than half of children aged 2–17, that is, at least 1 billion children, were exposed to some form of physical, sexual or emotional violence or neglect in a given year. This figure shows the need to assess violence not as an isolated family event, but as a mass threat that requires a systemic preventive approach.

According to the results of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) conducted in Uzbekistan in 2021–2022, 62 percent of children aged 1–14 had been subjected to violent disciplinary methods—involving physical punishment and/or psychological

aggression—in the month preceding the survey. This figure stood at 64 percent for boys and 60 percent for girls, and at 65 percent in rural areas compared to 59 percent in urban areas. These data, presented in the 2022 MICS report, indicate that prevention efforts should not be limited to law enforcement measures alone but must also encompass family child-rearing cultures, social services, and early child support.

As of March 2024, the protection of children's rights and the prevention of juvenile delinquency in the national legal system is regulated by several interrelated normative legal acts. Articles 77–78 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the new edition of 2023 establish the obligation of parents to take care of the child's upbringing, upbringing and education, as well as the task of the state and society to ensure and protect the rights and legitimate interests of the child. The Law "On Guarantees of the Rights of the Child" of 2008, the Law "On Prevention of Neglect and Delinquency among Minors" of 2010, and the Law "On Prevention of Delinquency" of 2014 formed the main legal foundation in this area. Law No. ZURQ-829 of April 11, 2023 strengthened legal guarantees aimed at reliable protection of the rights of women and children. Also, Decree No. PF-82 of June 1, 2023 established the National Agency for Social Protection and "Inson" social service centers in districts

(cities), and Decree No. PF-209 of December 21, 2023 strengthened the legal basis for coordinating cooperation at the mahalla level through the institution of "mahalla sevens".

METHODOLOGY

The article used the methods of formal-legal, comparative-legal, criminological analysis, synthesis of scientific sources, and secondary analysis of open statistical data. The scientific basis was taken from studies in the field of developmental and life-course criminology, which studied the factors of development of juvenile crime, the concept of polyvictimization in child victimology, and evidence-based recommendations of WHO and UNICEF on violence prevention. National regulatory legal acts, the results of MICS in 2021–2022, the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on Uzbekistan in 2022, and open data published to date.

Criminological connection between victimization of minors and the formation of criminal behavior

Studying a minor only as a "victim" or only as an "offender" often narrows the real picture of prevention. Childhood violence, neglect, constant conflict in the family, school absence, and negative peer influence can combine to become factors that increase both victimization and illegal behavior. In this sense, criminological prevention should simultaneously address the violence committed against the child and take into account his subsequent socialization trajectory.

D. Farrington and B. Welsh's risk-based concept of prevention identifies weak parental control, family conflict, broken family relationships, and an antisocial environment as family factors that increase the likelihood of subsequent delinquency. The authors emphasize that the effectiveness of prevention depends on identifying risk factors at an early stage of childhood and targeting them. Thus, it is necessary to analyze not a one-time conversation after the offense, but the point of emergence of the risk - family, school, leisure, and peer environment.

R. Loeber and D. Farrington's study of the development of young offenders showed that children who start delinquency before the age of 13 are 2–3 times more likely to become serious, violent, and chronic offenders than those who start later. This finding adds a more precise temporal context to the concept of "early prevention": it is advisable not to wait for dangerous behavior to manifest itself in the form of delinquency for the first time, but to begin work at the stage when the first signals appear, such as truancy, absenteeism, unsupervised spending time, aggressive behavior, harmful habits, and family conflicts.

It is also important to note that a child may be exposed to multiple forms of violence and victimization at the same time. D. Finkelhor, R. Ormrod, and H. Turner found that 22 percent of children in a national sample of 2,030 children experienced four or more types of victimization in a year, and that multiple victimizations were a strong predictor of traumatic symptoms. Therefore, it is scientifically sound to assess a child who is being bullied at home, bullied at school, and spends time in an unsupervised environment as part of a single risk profile, rather than as three separate "events."

The importance of early prevention, inspector-psychologist and interagency cooperation

If the task of the inspector-psychologist in working with minors is limited to recording the fact of a crime or conducting a preventive interview, the factors that caused the risk may not change. The inspector-psychologist should be a connecting entity for information and actions between the child, family, educational organization, internal affairs bodies and social services. In this case, the question "what risk was identified, to whom was it directed, what services were provided and did the result change?" is a better indicator of the quality of prevention than the question "which child was taken into account?"

In its concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan in 2022, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child paid attention to the issues of preventing violence against children, changing social attitudes towards corporal punishment, creating child-friendly reporting mechanisms, and strengthening specialized psychological and social services. The data from the 2021–2022 MICS, which showed that 62 percent of children aged 1–14 years were exposed to violent disciplinary methods, also shows the importance of early identification and linking the child to practical assistance. Decree No. PF-82 of 2023 stipulates the organization of social protection up to the mahalla level, providing services to individuals in difficult life situations based on an individual approach, and identifying families at risk and covering them with comprehensive social services. This situation shows that in prevention, "identification" itself is not the result, but connecting the identified child to appropriate services is a crucial stage.

The INSPIRE technical package, developed under the leadership of the WHO, recommends the combined implementation of seven interconnected strategies to reduce violence: law enforcement, safe environments, support for parents and caregivers, economic strengthening, response and support services, and education and life skills. In the context of Uzbekistan, this approach aligns with the principle of formulating a

coordinated, case-specific plan involving the "Mahalla Seven" (local community support teams), educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, "Inson" social service centers, and healthcare and guardianship authorities.

The Importance of the "Submission" Mechanism in Eliminating the Causes of and Conditions Conducive to Offenses

Evaluating an offense committed by a minor solely as an "act committed" fails to address the root cause of potential recurrence. If underlying issues—such as truancy, a lack of parental supervision, a dysfunctional family environment, peer influence, unsupervised leisure time, or preventive shortcomings within an organization—persist, any legal intervention may yield only short-term results. The risk-factor approach advocated by Farrington and Welsh similarly demonstrates that preventive measures can achieve sustainable outcomes only when targeted at the specific factors driving the risk.

The 2010 Law "On the Prevention of Neglect and Delinquency Among Minors" and the 2014 Law "On the Prevention of Offenses" inextricably link prevention efforts to the identification and elimination of the causes of offenses and the conditions that facilitate them. Therefore, when examining each offense committed by a minor on an individual basis, factors such as their participation in education, parental supervision, family environment, use of leisure time, peer influence, employment status, and other social factors must be assessed collectively. Such an analysis allows preventive measures to move beyond a merely formal response to the act itself and instead target the root causes driving its recurrence.

In this context, the analytical substance of the "submission" mechanism—designed to eliminate the causes of and conditions facilitating offenses by minors—is of critical importance. The practical effectiveness of this mechanism is ensured by including specific details in the submission: the identified causes and risk factors, remedial measures, the responsible entity, the implementation deadline, performance indicators, and the date for re-evaluating the risk of recurrence.

With this approach, the submission transforms from a mere formal letter into a structured "cause—measure—responsible party—result" chain. Consequently, the focus shifts from the consequences of the offense to its underlying causes, thereby reducing the risk of repeat offenses and negligent implementation. Early Risk Identification and Re-engagement in Education through the "Student" Initiative around Educational Institutions

Spending time outside of school—such as in internet cafes, computer gaming centers, or other entertainment venues—during school hours is not, in itself, a crime. However, when combined with truancy, a lack of parental supervision, harmful habits, negative peer influences, and other factors conducive to delinquency, it serves as an "early warning sign." Research by Loeber and Farrington demonstrates that school, peer, and family factors play a combined role in delinquency trajectories that begin in childhood. In this context, the initiative is significant because its focus lies on identifying the child's risk profile rather than on punishment.

A practical operational algorithm is crucial here: for any student found out of school during class hours, the reason for the absence is verified with the educational institution that same day; if the incident recurs, a conversation with parents and an assessment of the home environment are conducted; and if harmful habits, violence, a lack of supervision, or other risks are identified, an individualized prevention plan is developed. Such an approach transforms the "raid" from a mere statistical exercise into a case-management mechanism that facilitates the child's return to education. As part of the "O'quvchi" (Student) initiative, a crucial aspect of preventive work involves the early detection of instances where students are left unsupervised during school hours in internet cafes, computer centers, and other entertainment venues. It also entails identifying cases of alcoholism, smoking, drug or substance abuse, the use of psychotropic or mind-altering substances, and the unauthorized operation of vehicles. Systematizing individual interventions involves assessing each identified case using a brief evaluation form covering the following elements: reason for truancy, family situation, risk level, and required services.

Consequently, unsupervised time is reduced, the root causes of repeated truancy are identified sooner, students are reintegrated into the educational process more quickly, and risk factors leading to delinquency are addressed before criminal behavior can develop.

Comprehensive assessment of a "problem" student's household and targeted social prevention via the "Mahalla Seven"

From a scientific perspective, attributing negative changes in a minor's behavior solely to their personal "upbringing" is one-sided. Factors such as a lack of parental supervision, family conflict, financial hardship, violence, alcohol dependency, housing issues, parental employment status, and indifference toward the child can simultaneously heighten the risks of both victimization and delinquency. Farrington and Welch

have identified weak supervision and family conflict as consistent predictors among family-related risk factors. Therefore, assessing the household should not be limited to merely noting the presence or absence of basic living conditions. Instead, specific evaluations must be conducted regarding the child's safety, parental supervision, school attendance, family members' employment status, the presence of violence or harmful habits, the need for social assistance, and the child's own views. If this information is conveyed to the "Mahalla Seven" in the form of concrete tasks rather than general descriptions, social prevention efforts become truly targeted. Integrating the findings of household assessments through the collaboration of prevention inspectors, social workers, and other responsible entities within the *mahalla* serves as a logical extension of individualized prevention efforts. It is possible to coordinate the resolution of identified issues across relevant sectors within the framework of the "Mahalla Seven" (*mahalla yettiligi*)—a system institutionalized by Decree No. PF-209 of December 2023. Specifying the appropriate service for each risk factor—such as employment support, financial aid, psychological counseling, medical care, parenting skills training, educational reintegration, or legal protection—along with the designated implementing agency, facilitates the organization of targeted preventive measures.

This approach shifts the prevention model from mere "registration" to "problem resolution." Mitigating family-based risks at an early stage reduces the likelihood of a child remaining in a harmful environment, as well as the risks of re-offending or victimization.

Placement of neglected or abandoned children under the age of three in a safe environment and family-based care

Children under the age of three cannot ensure their own safety; neglect itself can pose a significant threat to their life and health. From the moment the child is identified, the simultaneous initiation of medical examination, determination of legal status, involvement of the guardianship body and safe placement ensures continuity of protection. And current scientific evidence favors a family environment over long-term institutional care. Better cognitive outcomes in young children transferred from institutional to family care in the Bucharest Early Intervention Project.

In its 2022 concluding observations on Uzbekistan, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child noted the high rate of placing children in institutions—including a rising proportion of children under the age of three—

and recommended accelerating the deinstitutionalization process while prioritizing the development of family-based care. As of March 2024, the legal framework for placing children deprived of parental care—through guardianship, trusteeship, and family-based upbringing—was established by the Family Code, the 2014 Law "On Guardianship and Trusteeship," and related subordinate legislation. Pursuant to Decree No. PF-82, the transfer of children's homes and orphanages to the system of the National Agency for Social Protection, effective January 1, 2024, created the institutional conditions necessary to coordinate child protection and social services based on a unified approach.

When an unattended or abandoned child under the age of three is discovered, the process of immediately securing their protection, conducting a medical assessment, and arranging safe placement—carried out with the participation of representatives from guardianship and healthcare authorities—constitutes a series of interconnected steps. Regarding placement, priority should be given to assessing options provided for under current family and guardianship laws, such as care by relatives, guardianship or trusteeship, foster care, or other forms of family-based upbringing. Institutional placement should be viewed as a measure to be used only when necessary to ensure the child's immediate safety and when no suitable family-based option exists; furthermore, every decision must be periodically re-evaluated in light of the child's best interests.

In this way, the child is immediately removed from a dangerous environment, and continuous medical and legal protection is ensured. Simultaneously, the risk of long-term institutionalization is reduced, and a family-like environment is prioritized for the child's development. Promptly referring children from troubled families—where abuse and violence are present—for social and legal assistance

When a child's own family becomes the primary source of danger, a simple preventive conversation or a warning to the parents is insufficient. Recurring violence, alcohol dependency, cruel treatment, and the combination of multiple forms of victimization increase the risk of psychological trauma, running away, dropping out of school, and aggressive behavior in the child. Findings by Finkelhor and colleagues regarding poly-victimization reinforce the scientific basis for a comprehensive assessment of the various risks simultaneously affecting the child.

The legal and institutional framework as of March 2024—comprising the laws "On Guarantees of Children's Rights," "On the Prevention of Neglect and

Delinquency Among Minors," and "On Guardianship and Trusteeship," as well as Decree No. PF-82—enables the management of cases involving children at risk of violence not merely as isolated actions by a single agency, but as part of an integrated system of protective measures and social assistance. The establishment of "Inson" social service centers has created a new institutional mechanism for the individual assessment of families and children facing difficult life circumstances and for referring them to appropriate services. In this context, work with children must be carried out through an integrated chain of actions: risk assessment, ensuring safety, providing psychological and legal assistance, working with the family, and monitoring the situation thereafter.

Under these conditions, cooperation among guardianship and trusteeship bodies, "Inson" social service centers, and agencies responsible for internal affairs, healthcare, and education plays a crucial role—particularly in protecting minors within dysfunctional families where parents subject their children to harassment, violence, or cruel treatment, or suffer from alcohol abuse. During the referral process, specifically documenting the child's risk level, health, psychological state, need for legal protection, and the feasibility of family reunification helps to precisely determine subsequent protection and rehabilitation measures.

As a result, protection against repeated violence is strengthened, and the child is provided with a temporarily safe environment and comprehensive rehabilitation services. At the same time, this reduces the likelihood of information being lost between agencies or cases being closed simply with a "forwarded" status.

The relationship between parental responsibility, legal measures and social support

The prolonged failure of parents or caregivers to fulfill their responsibilities to provide for, raise and educate a child can not only violate the rights of the child, but also increase the child's lack of control and propensity to commit crimes. At the same time, solving all family problems with punishment is not effective: in some cases, the root cause of the problem is poverty, unemployment, lack of parenting skills, mental health or dependency. Therefore, the use of legal responsibility and social support as complementary mechanisms will more fully ensure the interests of the child.

The 2020 UNICEF methodological recommendations on parenting programs note that strengthening positive, non-violent discipline and effective parent-child communication can reduce the practice of harsh

punishment, improve relationships and communication with the child. While Law No. ZRK-829 of 2023 strengthened legal guarantees aimed at protecting children's rights, Decree No. PF-82 formed a system of providing individual and comprehensive social services to families in difficult life situations. Thus, as of March 2024, there was a legal and institutional basis for the harmonious application of legal liability measures with family support, improvement of parenting skills, and socio-psychological assistance.

In our view, it is advisable to institute a requirement for submitting findings to the relevant competent authorities and the Commission on Children's Affairs when addressing the issue of taking legal action against parents or guardians who evade or inadequately fulfill their obligations regarding the support, upbringing, and education of minors, or who negatively influence a child's behavior or treat them cruelly. Including information in the documentation regarding social services previously provided to the family, their outcomes, the risk of recurrence, and an assessment of the child's best interests enhances the substantiation of decisions made.

Such an approach ensures an effective legal response to ongoing neglect and violence against the child without making punishment an automatic objective. In cases where parental responsibility can be restored, legal measures are implemented in conjunction with social and psychological support.

CONCLUSION

Preventing harassment and violence against minors and preventing crimes committed by them are two interconnected areas that need to be organized within a unified criminological system. Scientific research indicates that a lack of family supervision during childhood, conflict, school dropout, negative peer influence, and repeated victimization heighten the risk of future delinquency and traumatic consequences. Therefore, the central objective of prevention is not merely to take action after a crime has occurred, but to identify risks early and address their sources through targeted interventions.

The six approaches analyzed in the article—issuing formal recommendations to eliminate the causes of delinquency; early risk detection via the "O'quvchi" (Student) initiative; comprehensive household assessments and targeted work with the "Mahalla Seven" (local community leadership groups); immediate protective measures for unsupervised children under the age of three; referring children from high-risk families for social and legal assistance; and balancing legal measures against parents with social

support—form a complementary chain of preventive actions. Their scientific significance lies in the fact that each approach is linked to a specific risk factor, an evidentiary basis, and a measurable preventive outcome. These approaches rely on the legal and institutional frameworks in place as of March 2024.

REFERENCES

1. Ўзбекистон Республикаси Конституцияси (янги таҳрир). 2023 йил 30 апрелда умумхалқ референдумида қабул қилинган. 77–78-моддалар. <https://constitution.uz/uz>
2. Ўзбекистон Республикасининг 2008 йил 7 январдаги ЎРҚ–139-сон «Бола ҳуқуқларининг кафолатлари тўғрисида»ги Қонуни. <https://lex.uz/docs/-1297315>
3. Ўзбекистон Республикасининг 2010 йил 29 сентябрдаги ЎРҚ–263-сон «Вояга етмаганлар ўртасида назоратсизлик ва ҳуқуқбузарликларнинг профилактикаси тўғрисида»ги Қонуни. <https://lex.uz/docs/-1685726>
4. Ўзбекистон Республикасининг 2014 йил 2 январдаги ЎРҚ–364-сон «Васийлик ва ҳомийлик тўғрисида»ги Қонуни. <https://lex.uz/acts/-2307826>
5. Ўзбекистон Республикасининг 2014 йил 14 майдаги ЎРҚ–371-сон «Ҳуқуқбузарликлар профилактикаси тўғрисида»ги Қонуни. <https://lex.uz/docs/-2387357>
6. Ўзбекистон Республикасининг 2023 йил 11 апрелдаги ЎРҚ–829-сон «Хотин-қизлар ва болалар ҳуқуқлари, эркинликлари ҳамда қонуний манфаатларини ишончли ҳимоя қилиш тизими янада такомиллаштирилиши муносабати билан Ўзбекистон Республикасининг айрим қонун ҳужжатларига ўзгартиш ва қўшимчалар киритиш тўғрисида»ги Қонуни. <https://lex.uz/docs/-6430272>
7. Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президентининг 2023 йил 1 июндаги ПФ–82-сон «Аҳолига сифатли ижтимоий хизмат ва ёрдам кўрсатиш ҳамда унинг самарали назорат тизимини йўлга қўйиш бўйича комплекс чора-тадбирлар тўғрисида»ги Фармони. <https://lex.uz/docs/-6480342>
8. Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президентининг 2023 йил 21 декабрдаги ПФ–209-сон «Маҳалла институтининг жамиятдаги ролини тубдан ошириш ва унинг аҳоли муаммоларини ҳал этишда биринчи бўлин сифатида ишлашни таъминлашга қаратилган чора-тадбирлар тўғрисида»ги Фармони. <https://lex.uz/docs/-6705763>
9. State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics; United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). 2021–2022 Uzbekistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Survey Findings Report. Tashkent, 2022. https://mics.unicef.org/sites/mics/files/Uzbekistan%202021-22%20MICS%20SFR_English%20%5B2023-02-23%5D.pdf
10. Committee on the Rights of the Child. Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan. CRC/C/UZB/CO/5. 27 October 2022. <https://docs.un.org/CRC/C/UZB/CO/5>
11. World Health Organization. INSPIRE: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children. Geneva: WHO, 2016. ISBN 978-92-4-156535-6. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565356>
12. Hillis S., Mercy J., Amobi A., Kress H. Global Prevalence of Past-year Violence Against Children: A Systematic Review and Minimum Estimates // Pediatrics. 2016. Vol. 137, No. 3. e20154079. DOI: 10.1542/peds.2015-4079.
13. Farrington D.P., Welsh B.C. Saving Children from a Life of Crime: Early Risk Factors and Effective Interventions. Oxford University Press, 2006. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195304091.001.0001.
14. Loeber R., Farrington D.P. Young Children Who Commit Crime: Epidemiology, Developmental Origins, Risk Factors, Early Interventions, and Policy Implications // Development and Psychopathology. 2000. Vol. 12, No. 4. P. 737–762. DOI: 10.1017/S0954579400004107.
15. Finkelhor D., Ormrod R.K., Turner H.A. Poly-victimization: A Neglected Component in Child Victimization // Child Abuse & Neglect. 2007. Vol. 31, No. 1. P. 7–26. DOI: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2006.06.008.
16. Nelson C.A. III, Zeanah C.H., Fox N.A., Marshall P.J., Smyke A.T., Guthrie D. Cognitive Recovery in Socially Deprived Young Children: The Bucharest Early Intervention Project // Science. 2007. Vol. 318, No. 5858. P. 1937–1940. DOI: 10.1126/science.1143921.
17. UNICEF. Designing Parenting Programmes for Violence Prevention: A Guidance Note. New York: UNICEF, 2020. <https://www.unicef.org/documents/designing-parenting-programmes-violence-prevention-guidance-note>.
18. Ўзбекистон Республикасининг Оила кодекси. 1998 йил 30 апрелда қабул қилинган (2024 йил март ойи ҳолатидаги таҳрир).

<https://lex.uz/docs/-104720>

19. Ўзбекистон Республикаси Вазирлар
Маҳкамасининг 2014 йил 22 сентябрдаги 269-
сон «“Васийлик ва ҳомийлик тўғрисида”ги
Ўзбекистон Республикаси Қонунини амалга
оширишга доир норматив-ҳуқуқий
ҳужжатларни тасдиқлаш ҳақида»ги қарори.
<https://lex.uz/docs/-2467536>