

# Counter-terrorism Units of the Police Force of Slovak Republic

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**Abstract—** This study has been dedicated to counter-terrorism forces which form part of the Police Force. Its officers deal with physical neutralisation of terror threats and they take part in fighting against organised crimes on the Slovak Republic territory. The material also addresses the issue of special use of firearms by operators and police sharpshooters who perform their daily duty in specialized counter-terrorism units. The study has been prepared within the framework of the realization of international scientific and research project implemented under the Horizon 2020-FCT-2015 operational programme, No: 700688, entitled: Understand the Dimensions of Organized Crime and Terrorist Networks for Developing Effective and Efficient Security Solutions for First-Line-Practitioners and Professionals.

**Index Terms—** the Slovak Republic, Counter-terrorism, Police Force, protection of people and property, internal security system, Takedown-Horizon 2020

## I. INTRODUCTION

Issues involving citizens' safety are not only essential for the constitutional authorities in each democratic country but they are also an indispensable element of evolution and permanent development of those societies. It is the case also with regards to the Slovak Republic. It is the country with approx. 5,5 million inhabitants (area of 48 thousands km<sup>2</sup>) which has functioned as an autonomic state since 1993, pursuant to democratic changes in Europe (nonviolent breakdown of Czechoslovakia), including also its full membership in the EU (since May 2004).

A positive tendency of improvement of internal security level has been visible in this country for the past few years, a reflection of which has been a dropping amount of reported crimes and a visible increase of social support for the institution

of police. The largest Slovak uniform formation that carries out tasks in the area of internal security is the Police Force of the Slovak Republic. The safety of citizens, including their lives and health, depend strongly on the effectiveness and professionalism of policemen. Slovak law enforcement officers use a series of classic, proven and innovative tactical and technical solutions in their actions, the use of which in special operations as well as in everyday routine service is an indispensable element of police intervention.

This study has been dedicated to counter-terrorism forces which form part of the Police Force. Its officers deal with physical neutralisation of terror threats and they take part in fighting against organised crimes on the Slovak Republic territory. The material also addresses the issue of special use of firearms by operators and police sharpshooters who perform their daily duty in specialized counter-terrorism units.

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## II. POLICE FORCE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC. ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONING. INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUES

Police Force plays the main role amongst the country uniform formations in the field of internal security in the Slovak Republic. This formation is present in various fields and areas of public life, appreciating high public support for many years. Organization of the Police Force and the tasks and powers of officers entrusted to it are detailed in the Act of the National



Council of the Slovak Republic on the Police Force from 6 June 1993 (Act no. 171 of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on Police Corps, 1993:770-784). This act has been amended many times, which was connected with evolutionary transformations of the Slovak society in new democratic realities and the need to implement adequate, pro-social changes to this legal act, and furthermore it resulted from the pro-European foreign policy of the state and the undertaken efforts to integrate with other EU countries.

In § 1 point 1 of Act No. 171/93, the Police Force has been characterized as an armed security corps that implements tasks in the area of public safety and order, fights all forms of crime, including organized and international crime and performs other tasks in the area of security, resulting from international obligations in this regard assumed by the Slovak Republic.

Police Force is regulated by National Council and the government of the Slovak Republic. This formation operates within the limits of law, according to the Constitution, general acts of law and other juridical acts, as well as in compliance with the international acts ratified by the Slovak Republic.

Officers of the Slovak Republic Police Force in the scope of the statutory entrusted tasks and by virtue of international agreements:

- actively take part in safeguarding of fundamental laws and freedoms, especially in life, health, personal freedom protection and citizens' security and protection of their property;
- detect crimes and pursue perpetrators;
- take part in countering financial crimes and illegal financial operations and circulation of funds from illegal sources, as well as actions aimed at preventing the financing of terrorism;
- conduct preliminary proceedings;
- combat terrorism and organised crime;
- protect the President, President of the National Council, Prime Minister, Chief of Justice and Minister of Internal Affairs of the Slovak Republic and other important officials for the country;
- protect diplomatic units and other government facilities that are subject to mandatory protection under relevant legislation, as well as cooperate in the field of physical protection of nuclear power plants;
- guarantee the security of state border;
- carry out activities aimed at ensuring public order, and in the event of violation they take steps designated at restoring security;
- carry out supervisory, control and preventive activities aimed at improving road safety;
- detect offences and pursue perpetrators of such offences, and carry out proceedings in cases of these offences if the act provides for such actions;
- realize operational-adjudicatory actions and investigatory activities, among others, in terms of regaining stolen items and missing and wanted people;
- provide protection to persons at risk and witnesses covered by the security program;

- realize tasks in terms of technical and criminalistics safeguarding of the process of preventing and combating crime, including by carrying out research-implementation works, comparative and expert studies in the field of criminalistics;
- cooperate in the protection of civil aviation facilities and infrastructure;
- reveal cases of violation of the existing anti-alcohol regulations, in particular the sale of alcohol to unauthorized persons (minors, intoxicated persons) and inform local administration units about this locally;
- supervise security and public order in the railway premises;
- participate in work aimed at identification of potential threats in the public area;
- cooperate in terms of security activities which are realized during radioactive materials transport or other dangerous substances or devices' transport;
- organize preventive actions and campaigns in the field of broadly understood crime prevention.

The Police Force of the Slovak Republic is directly subordinated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The professional status of this formation, defined in 2018 for 24,167 police positions, is determined on an annual basis by the Slovak government in the Budget Act. It should be added at this point that the lack of interest in serving in the Police Force has been noticed for several years in Slovakia. In June 2018, only 21,991 officers served in the Police Force, which translated into a 9% level of vacant positions. Several factors contribute to this situation, including among others very good economic situation of the country - equating the budget for the first time in 25 years (state treasury expenses and incomings to the national budget have been balanced), large volumes of well-paid jobs, labour migration of young Slovaks to other European Union countries, low salaries offered to newly appointed officers and a reduction of part of the social entitlements, to which officers were legally entitled a few years before.

The management of the organizational units of the Police Force and organizational units of the Presidium of the Police Force in Bratislava (organizational unit conceptually equivalent to the Police Headquarters in Warsaw) is subordinated to the President of the Slovak Republic Police Force, who is appointed and dismissed by the minister of internal affairs. The President of the Police Force is the central government administration authority competent in matters of protecting civil security and maintaining public order and security in the Slovak Republic. The President of the Police Force has three deputies who are nominated and dismissed by the minister at his request. The terrain core of the Police Force organizational units consists of 8 provincial headquarters and 53 district committees, 230 police stations and 5 police checkpoints.

The organization and general characteristics of selected counter-terrorist, Slovak police special units have been provided in the further part of the study, as well as the procedures for the conduct of officers undertaking interventions with the use of firearms.

### III. POLICE COUNTER-TERRORISM UNITS AND THE POLICE FORCES OF THE POLICE FORCE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

In the area of undertaken activities, among others, in case of particularly dangerous criminals, including those preparing a terrorist attack or perpetrators of terrorist attacks, members of organized crime as well as armed attackers (e.g. an active shooter) or perpetrators of kidnapping, the leading role is played by officers serving in specialized police units and counter-terrorist cells. The operators of these units also perform tasks in the field of public safety, for example during securing visits of well-known personalities, as part of protection of the most important persons in the state or protection of Slovak diplomatic missions located outside the territory of the republic.

A leading role in the police counter-terrorist special operations, carried out throughout Slovakia, is played by Special Destination Department of the Presidium of the Police Force (Útvar osobitného určenia Prezídia Policajného zboru).

In addition, such specialized components of the Slovak internal security system include: Police Rapid Response Units (Pohotovostné policajné útvary) located in the prevention structures of all provincial headquarters of the Police Force, Intervention Group of the National Criminal Agency Police Presidium, Department of Security Special Bureau of Conservation of State Constitutional and Diplomatic Missions of the Ministry of the Internal Affairs, Intervention Unit of the Bureau for Foreigners and Borderland Police, Presidium of the Police Force, Intervention Unit of the Office of Criminal Financial Intelligence and the Intervention Unit of the Prison Guard and Court Protection.

### IV. THE SPECIAL DESTINATION DEPARTMENT OF THE POLICE FORCE PRESIDUM (ÚTVAR OSOBITNÉHO URČENIA PREZÍDIA POLICAJNÉHO ZBORU)

The roots of the Special Forces Unit of the Presidium of Police Force reach back to the early 1980s. The Rapid Reaction Unit (Útvar rýchleho nasazení), which in the realities of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (1960-1990), the Czechoslovak Federal Republic (1990), and the Czech and Slovak Federal Republics (1990-1992) carried out tasks i.e. in the field of physical counter-terrorism and taking action against particularly dangerous criminals as a component of police forces. Members of this specialized unit, which in the Czech Republic operates under the unchanged name to this day (currently in the structures of the Czech police) at that time came from the territory of two-federal state.

After the peaceful breakdown of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic in 1993 into two independent state organisms, one of the three field divisions (Division of Rapid Reaction was based in Prague, while field branches were based in Brno and Bratislava) of the Rapid Reaction Unit, it was transformed into a Rapid Response Unit located in the structures of the created Police Force of the Slovak Republic. The unit, which was joined by Slovak members of the Rapid Reaction Department<sup>2</sup>, was located in Bratislava and was initially located in the official and organizational subordination of the Commander of the

Police of the Police Force for the capital city. Within a short period of time after reforming, Slovak police specialists took up a series of complex actions in the realities of the newly formed state, including, for example, operations against a criminal armed with firearms and explosives, who in the Bratislava furniture factory imprisoned a dozen or so hostages (1993) or against the man who girded with mining explosives took bus passengers as hostages in the village of Dunajská Lužná (1995). In 1996, the creation of a new, independent tactically and organizationally police counter-terrorism unit was launched, and a year later a Special Destination Department of the Police Force Presidium was formed in Bratislava.

Currently, the list of tasks that these Unit's officers carry out includes:

- undertaking activities in the field of physical combating terrorism, interventions against the perpetrators of kidnapping of persons and abductions of means of transport, arresting members of organized criminal groups and especially dangerous criminals;
- participation in rescue operations, especially in the case of natural disasters and in connection with the occurrence of serious industrial accidents as well as traffic disasters;
- protection of citizens' lives, health and property;
- creating and updating typical scenarios of crisis situations correlated with the possibility of a terrorist attack directed against strategically and economically important industrial facilities, such as nuclear power plants, hydroelectric power plants and dams, enterprises that use in a large extent in their production process dangerous compounds and chemicals, and also in the case of attacks aimed at the objects of state administration and the premises of public media;
- carrying out protective activities with the participation of important personalities, including cooperation with specialized foreign security formations;
- coordination of the training process and professional development of the Police Force officers in the field of, among others, altitudinal techniques, actions on water reservoirs, diving, parachuting;
- organization and realisation of courses for police negotiators;
- organization and cooperative exercises in Slovakia with police specialties from EU countries and counter-terrorist formations of NATO;
- participation in international anti-terrorist trainings and exercises;
- organization and realisation of convoys (with increased protection degree) of cash and valuable items;
- conducting qualification tests for candidates for service in the unit;
- protection of the Slovak Republic consular facilities located in dangerous places around the world.

The President of the Police Force decides about the use of the officers of the Special Destination in the activities. The organizational structure of the Unit is made up of realisation

and logistics units, including: Special Purpose Unit (within this structure, the following are in service: officers realizing the tasks of observers and snipers, among others), Training Section, Analysis and Documentation Section, Special Action and Logistics Unit (Officers of this organizational cell deal with a broadly-understood operational technique for the purpose of realizing tasks of the battlefield teams). In addition, within the framework of the Unit's operations there is a Staff, which includes: commander and deputy commander of the Unit, commander and deputy of the Special Action and Logistics Unit, commander and deputy commander of the Special Purpose Unit and the commander of combat teams. A policeman-analyst and a policeman documenting the course of action participate in every intervention of the Unit.

Each police officer can aspire to the service in the Unit, provided that he or she is healthy, can swim and has driving licence – at least of B category. After the announcement of recruitment for service in the Department by the President of the Police Force, candidates are subjected to physical fitness tests, participate in a psychological examination and go through the so called murderous week in field conditions. The last stage of the qualification procedure to the Unit is an incentive interview with members of the qualification commission. Detailed principles of the operation of the Unit, the applied tactics and intervention techniques, and equipment owned by the operators are covered by the security clause.

Among the information available to the public, one can point out that the basic armaments of the Department's operators are Sig Sauer P226 pistols and Glock pistols, various types of MP5 series machine guns, HKG36 automatic rifles and pump action shotguns Winchester Defender 1300 and Benelli Su-pernova as well as equipment used by sharpshooters, including SIG SAUER SSG 3000 rifles.

It should be noted that modern procedures of activities of the Slovak counter-terrorist units are based primarily on the coordinated actions of police negotiators, and in the absence of such possibilities, they take into account the resolution of crisis situations using the overwhelming advantage in both tactical and technical dimensions. Keeping in custody or interventions are always accompanied by a concern for safety of the officers, bystanders as well as persons against whom intervention is undertaken.

#### V. RAPID RESPONSE UNIT (SLOV. POHOTOVOSTNÝ POLICAJNÝ ÚTVAR) OF THE PREVENTION UNIT OF THE PROVINCIAL POLICE FORCE

The first two Rapid Response Units were founded on the territory of the Slovakian Federation on the 1st of February 1991. They were located in the Police Force Presidium in Bratislava and in the Provincial Police Force in Koszyce (Kočan, Selinger, 2013:42-44). From the moment they were founded until 1993 their officers were on regular patrol and intervention duty on the streets of the aforementioned cities, mainly as motorized patrols. A significant difference - in relation to other prevention officers, in terms of their preparation to fulfil their duties was participation in activities,

such as self-defence classes, tactical shooting, black tactic, high-altitude techniques and activities in water. Between 1991 and 1993, the aforementioned activities with the Slovakian officers were led by the instructors from the Rapid Response Unit in Prague (Filák, Porada, 2006:12). Thanks to special preparation, the officers from Rapid Response Units were gaining skills that would enable them to carry out more effective actions on their everyday service. In those years, some new elements were also implemented into the training course, connected, among other things, with tactics to intercept some particularly dangerous criminals and physical ways to prevent terrorism.

On the 1st of September 1994 the structure of the field police special forces was modified. Two existing units (Bratislava, Koszyce) were joined by the Rapid Response Unit in Banska Bystrzyca and the authority over it was taken by the Prevention Bureau of the Police Force Presidium in Bratislava. New structural changes became official on the 1st of March 1997 along with the conversion of the Rapid Response Units into Police Operation and Training Divisions forming part of the organizational structure of the Provincial Police Force in Bratislava, Koszyce and Banska Bystrzyca. The last organizational changes took place on the 1st of October 2000, the result of which was changing the existing structures to Rapid Response Units, placing them in the organizational structures of the Prevention Divisions of the Provincial Police Force. At the same time, such units were created in the remaining provincial headquarters.

In light of the current ordinance by the President of the Slovak Republic's Police Force referring to the actions of the Rapid Response Units of the Prevention Divisions of the Provincial Police Force (Ordinance of the President of the Police Corps of the Slovak Republic on actions of Rapid Response Units, Departments of Prevention of Provincial Departments of the Police Corps, 2009), which fulfil professional tasks mainly in the territory of each province, in the general catalogue of tasks carried out by these special groups we can include:

- fight against crime;
- protection of people temporarily under the protection of the Police Force (Regulation of the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Slovak Republic on cooperation and organization of protection tasks towards the selected persons, specific objects and foreign delegatures, 1997);
- protection of life, health and property of citizens;
- conveying and escorting;
- guarantee of safety and public order;
- fulfilment of special tasks;
- organizing and performing specialized trainings.

Given the fact that the Rapid Response Units (located on the territories of all seven provinces of the Slovak Republic) (Rapid Response Units function within the Provincial Departments of the Police Corps in Bratislava, Trnava, Nitr, Žylin, Baňska Bystrzyca, Preszowo and Koszyce) statistically complete the majority of tasks during the year - including the counter-terrorist ones, the list below contains an extension of the

catalogue of their assigned tasks.

In terms of fighting against crime, the officers of the units:

- individually or in cooperation with other units of the Police Force place particularly dangerous criminals under detention;
- individually or in cooperation with other units of the Police Force complete tasks within the framework of reactions to high-profile incidents;
- perform periodic actions correlated with the protection of civil air transport, in compliance with the applied protection plans in this field;
- support organizational units of the Police Force Presidium and organizational departments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the officers of which perform work tasks of confidential nature;
- participate in search operations;
- participate in operations initiated by law enforcement authorities (prosecutors) and judiciaries (courts).

In terms of protection of people under temporary physical protection, the officers:

- while remaining under a direct command of the operational officer from the Bureau for the Protection of Constitutional State Officials and Diplomatic Missions of the Police Force Presidium, escort people under the protection of the police, ensure physical safety for members of foreign delegations remaining on the territory of Slovakia
- upon request of other organizational units of the Police Force, periodically ensure protection of people who are in danger, especially witnesses participating in the most serious court cases.

In terms of protection of life, health and property of the citizens, the officers:

- directly take part in rescue tasks and actions initiated by, among others, provincial staffs of crisis management, in terms of protection of life, health and property connected with the occurrence of national disasters, ecological, communication and industrial catastrophes;
- individually carry out or co-participate in convoying transports of radioactive materials or other hazardous chemical particles or substances that can put lives and health in danger or cause a wide extent of damage or bring on an ecological disaster
- participate in actions designated to protect nuclear plants, including technical and technological infrastructure of these facilities
- in terms of the integrated security system (Act no 129 of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on Integrated Agricultural System as amended, 2002) take part in the process of removing the consequences of catastrophes and natural disasters
- protect selected facilities for special purposes on the basis of separate laws.
- In terms of convoying and escorting, the police officers of the Slovak rapid response units:
- perform convoys of money and valuable objects on the

basis of separate laws (Act no 129 of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on Integrated Agricultural System as amended, 2002),

- offer support in escorting foreigners on the basis of separate laws
- offer support in carrying out convoys and police investigations (also in the framework of contracts and international agreements)
- individually or in cooperation with other units of the Police Force carry out convoys of especially dangerous criminals.

In terms of protection of public order, the officers of the Rapid Response unit:

- perform work tasks as a compact sub-unit as part of police operations which aim at keeping up safety during outdoor mass events (concerts, festivals, picnics, exhibitions etc.) and, in case of a collective violation of public order, take action - with the use of a special tactic and specialist equipment, the aim of which it is to restore the legal and socially expected state of security;
- participate in protection of mass sports events, protests and social demonstrations, as well as other forms, guaranteed for the citizens by the constitution of collective manifestation of own views and beliefs;
- carry out interventions the aim of which it is to restore the affected security and public order;
- upon written request of the District Police Force Chief, periodically strengthen (as motorized patrols) the current patrol and intervention task force.

In terms of assigned special tasks, the police officers undertake:

- minelaying-pyrotechnic actions, including, among others: identification and neutralization of ammunition, pyrotechnic substances, improvised explosives, as well as conduct of specialist courses and trainings for the officers in the field of minelaying-pyrotechnic identification and participation in the transport of the revealed explosives
- actions based on the chosen methods and forms of the operational work, including observation, following objects, ambush
- actions (including specialist courses and trainings) provided for parachutists, scuba divers, concerning altitude techniques and actions in water bodies, including in the form of cooperation with the officers from the national and foreign counter-terrorist units
- actions (tactical, training) provided for marksmen
- actions (tactical, training) provided for police negotiators
- actions with the use of police dogs (if structure of the unit includes presence of such a unit)
- actions in the scope of physical protection and special actions in the centres of air transport based within the remit of the Bureau for the Protection of Constitutional State Officials and Diplomatic Missions of the Police Force Presidium

- actions (including trainings) with the use of specialist transport equipment (special, armoured vehicles) at the disposal of the Police Force
- Spec-policemen in the scope of specialist trainings and remaining organizational and training activities:
- take care of preparation and implementation of testing grounds in terms of tactical preparation of the counter-terrorist units (mainly from the black tactics);
- conduct physical activity tests, shooting and self-defence trainings for all officers of the Provincial Police Force;
- secure facilities required to conduct training in the field of shooting, physical education, concerning tactical trainings and altitude techniques, and tasks in water for the officers of the unit;
- conduct physical performance tests for the candidates for service in the Police Force and the policemen applying for service in the rapid response units
- organize sports competitions for officers in the chosen, utilitarian disciplines, such as martial arts, shooting, swimming;
- take part in instructive-methodical workshops in the field of physical education, shooting preparation, self-defence, special tactic and anti-chemical protection organized by the Police Force Presidium in Bratislava;
- take part in instructive-methodical workshops in the field of altitude techniques and tasks in water, and actions of the police negotiators, organized by the Special Purpose Division of the Police Force Presidium
- take part in instructive-methodical workshops in the field of emergency medical care organized by the Crisis Management and Civil Security Section of the Ministry of Internal Affairs;
- conduct training in the field of physical education, shooting practice and the tactic of actions for the instructor-officers in the field units of the Police Force and control their work;
- organize and conduct trainings in the field of physical education, shooting practice and the tactic of actions for the officers in the freelance rapid response units;
- perform functions of consultants, coordinators and controllers in terms of the training and professional preparation conducted in the field units of the Police Force.

As seen within the catalogue of tasks that the officers of the Rapid Response Unit need to cope with on a daily basis, the range of actions is very wide and the completion factor (on average 1,6 interventions daily) constitutes an authentic indicator of an enormous commitment in the statutorily assigned tasks.

Referring to the question of directing the officers of the Rapid Response Unit to undertake field operations, it should be pointed out that the authority here is the Provincial Police Force Chief (or their Deputy). All of the Provincial Police Force Chief's commands relating to launching an intervention of the police commandos require written consent with reasoning. In

exceptional, urgent cases, for example when the citizens' life or health are in danger or property is under threat in large quantities, the policemen are delegated to their tasks based on a spoken command, which later on requires written reasoning. If the tactical situation forces the policemen to continue their actions on the territory of a different province, the Provincial Police Force Chief issues a written consent, which allows for the continuation of the operation for the time that is necessary to complete it. In all agreements referring to the policemen's actions outside of their area of operation, the presence of the locally appropriate Provincial Police Force Chief is required, or of an officer authorized by him. If the Rapid Response Unit completes tasks ordered by the organizational division of the Police Force Presidium in Bratislava or on behalf of the organizational divisions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the decision-makers of each aforementioned institution need to be informed about every change in the location of the operation (province change).

In their actions, if the operative-tactical situation requires it, the policemen from rapid response units can use the means of operational work, including those enabling camouflage of duty vehicles (such as a change of license plates, registrations) or conducting discrete observation (such as the use of optical gear and devices enabling discrete video surveillance). In synergic operations, requiring force intervention, as well as specific operational actions, essentially the ones in charge are the policemen who in the rapid response units are responsible for special tasks.

The number of officers and their personal squad, in each case individually - depending on the tactical circumstances of the intervention - is decided by the unit's leader or the leader of the special tasks' section, and, in case of their absence, a unit's officer qualified for it. The operations are undertaken by the officers who completed a full cycle of special training. All decisions regarding the use of spec-policemen as part of the actions of compact sub-divisions are consulted by the unit's management with the leaders of the police operations. During police operation, the supervisor of anti-terrorists is the operation leader, while performance of the physical intervention is decided and led by an officer from the rapid response unit. The unit always, regardless of the specifics of the task, makes use of its own personal potential, including the marksmen, scuba-divers, paramedics, police negotiators and officers specializing in altitude techniques and tasks carried out in water.

Each intervention is carefully documented by the unit's leader, in which he includes, among others, information about the tasks' tactic and measures of direct coercion used by the policemen.

The operational readiness of the Rapid Response Unit is exemplified in the policemen regular time of duty (Monday-Friday 7am-3pm), emergency unit (24h, weekend shifts) and the current administration (registry management of the unit in the hours of operation of the Provincial Police Force Headquarters).

As it was indicated before, the whole of unit's officers' professional preparation is a responsibility of its leader, who

organizes a year-long cycle of classes through the instructors and their combined percentage cannot make up less than 30% of the policemen's duty time. The candidates for service in the unit who have completed the basic course for the officers of the Police Force and have served in this formation for at least 2 years (in addition, candidates must have an authorization to drive vehicles – at least cat. B and the ability to swim), after the Provincial Chief's announcement of a vacancy in the Police Force, enter a multilevel process, during which they take part:

- in psychological tests
- in a job interview
- in a physical performance test (currently valid physical performance tests: pull-ups - maximum number of repetitions, sit-ups - maximum number in 2 minutes, rope climbing /8-12 m, using only hands/ with a stopwatch, run 100 m, Cooper Test /at least 3000 m/, swimming 100 and 400 m, self-defence exercise on a mat - individual evaluation of skills by the instructor.)
- in a shooting exam (shooting range (count: time and points for accuracy) with dynamic shooting (including while running).

Passing all levels of the qualification process, which is a *sine qua non* condition for a further consideration of the person's candidature, does not guarantee being accepted into the special policemen unit. The final decision always remains within the remit of the unit's leader.

The organizational structure of the Rapid Response Units in the Provincial Police Force consists of: a combat section, training section and an extended section for special tasks (including teams of: marksmen, police negotiators, scuba-divers, mine-pyrotechnic, operators of special vehicles, police cynology, altitude techniques and tasks in water) and a team for the administrative-logistical support. In terms of the equipment of the Rapid Response Unit's officers, the gear (individual weapons, support weapons, expert weapons, shields and further ballistic protection, transportation equipment), as well as the uniforms are continuously supplied as part of the central purchases organized cyclically by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. These measures do not differ from the equipment that is at the disposal of the Special Purpose Division of the Police Force Presidium.

#### VI. SPECIAL SECURITY DEPARTMENT OF THE BUREAU OF SECURITY OF CONSTITUTIONAL STATE OFFICIALS AND DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Characterizing the last discussed Slovak counter-terrorist unit presented in this study, which in its structures contains a specialized instrument for the physical neutralization of threats in the form of its marksmen (Special Security Department), the function of the Bureau of Security of Constitutional State Officials and Diplomatic Missions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs should be outlined in order to present the full picture of the topic. This group, placed in terms of its organization and substance within the structures of the Police Force Presidium

(though the name might be misleading) - despite the name suggesting placement of the object in the organizational structure of the ministry of internal affairs, the Bureau actually belongs to the Police Force, which stems mainly from the possibility of using the logistical facilities of the corps by the unit's leaders and officers, a force specializing in security, is subject to a direct leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

The Bureau takes care of the security of people and objects that are valuable for the country. The people who, by law, are entitled to this kind of security, include: the President of the Slovak Republic, the Leader of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, the Prime Minister, the President of the Tribunal Court, the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Justice and the judges of the Special Criminal Court (*Headquarters of the Special Criminal Court (it is the substantial equivalent of the Polish State Court) is located in the Bratislava-Pezinok area and the long-distance department is located also in Banska-Bystrzyca. The name Special Court was effective until the 17th of July 2009 and then it was changed (including the organizational structure) to the Special Criminal Court. Source: Bill by the National Council of the Slovak Republic dated 21st of October 2003 on creating the Special Court and the Special Prosecutor's Office with later changes (Bill Collection number 458 of 2003, part 199, pp 3533-3545)) and the prosecutors of the Special Prosecutor's Office (The Special Prosecutor's Office (Bratislava-Pezionok) is a separate organizational unit, placed in the structures of the General Prosecutor's Office in the Slovak Republic. These bodies of the Slovak legal-criminal system have their jurisdiction on the territory of the whole country and their actions aim towards achieving the highest specialization in the statutorily entrusted range of tasks, connected with the fight against the forms of crime that are most dangerous for the country).* The officers of the Bureau also ensure physical security for people, who receive protection based on an international agreement, including members of foreign delegations and employees of certain diplomatic facilities of foreign countries, residing on the territory of the Slovak Republic. In case of the emergence of credible information concerning a potential threat to life or health of other constitutional country's officials, as well as leaders of political parties and church officials, the Minister of Internal Affairs can assign the Bureau protection to these people for a defined period of time. The objects that are protected on a full-time basis by Bureau's officers include selected diplomatic facilities located on the territory of Bratislava and consular offices in Kosice and Presov. The President of the Republic (protected for life), the Leader of the National Council and the Prime Minister are under physical 24h protection, while the other people can count on other forms of protection (personal, technical, combined), depending on the current needs and information regarding the current level of threat. All constitutional country's officials who are under physical protection, reserve the right to it for 90 days after the end of their mandate.

The organizational structure of the Bureau of Security of Constitutional State Officials and Diplomatic Missions of the

Police Force Presidium consists of nine organizational units, different in terms of the number of officers and specification of the tasks.

The Operative-Organizational Department ensures the current 24h coordination of the Bureau's operations, including the transfer, through an operational position, information concerning the movement of the officers with the protected people and the current tactical situation. The officers of the Department of Individual and Technical Protection ensure direct physical protection of the aforementioned country's officials, people relevant for the country's well-being and foreign diplomats and members of their families. Actions of the Bureau are carried out in the place of the protected people's residence, as well as on the route of their travels. The protection is concentrated on the whole catalogue of contemporary threats, but among the most serious distractors of physical safety of the protected people, the leaders of the Bureau currently name terrorist attacks with the use of improvised explosives. Using their own past experiences, the policemen, as part of their tasks, check, among others, hygienic and toxicological safety of food and drinks served for the protected people in different places and institutions. Moreover, the officers undertake a range of tasks in terms of the anti-spy protection, especially including anti-listening surveillance. Among the most commonly carried out activities in this scope we can include: inspection of devices and telephone cords, inspection of the junction box and the inner space of the telephone control room, electrical measurements of the telephone line, refractometric analysis, detection of nonlinear connectors, identifying radio frequencies, disturbing the work of the dictation and fax machines and portable memory cards. The department also ensures service of connectivity and TV and computer systems used by the officers of the Bureau.

The VIP Transport Security Department takes care of all convoys and motorized escorts that include the protected people, as well as, as part of the operations coordinated with other security parties (also from other countries), secures the transport of foreign delegations (Regulation of the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Slovak Republic, 1997). The officers from this organizational unit work closely together with the road traffic of the Police Force, deciding on, for example, the dislocation of service by uniformed policemen on the Bureau vehicles' route and in sensitive areas (like big intersections). The department also ensures motorcycle honorary assistance, protecting the ride of the most important people in the country. The range of the transportation vehicles at the officers' disposal is very wide, from tourist motorcycles and quads to limousines (including the armoured ones) and 4x4 off-road vehicles, and special vehicles called Aligator (*Floating armoured vehicle produced by the Slovak company Keramtal. Dimensions: length 447 cm, width 232 cm, height 238 cm; mass: 6000 kg, maximum mass: 6700 kg; engine capacity 7143 cm<sup>3</sup>, power: 141 kW; maximum speed on hardened surface road 120 km/h, floating speed 5 km/h; fuel consumption 20 l/100 km, in water 14 litres per working hour; ballistic protection against anti-tank bullets with cal. 7,62 mm x 39 shot from the distance of 30 m*). The basic service and driving improvement are pursued internally

by the department.

The Object Security Department's task is a 24h personal and technical monitoring of selected buildings and rooms, in which people who are currently under physical protection perform their professional responsibilities. The policemen control people who enter and move within the area of the protected objects, and control the items that are brought in or taken out of the area, luggage, objects, unauthorized electronic devices, memory cards etc. The place of residence of the President of the Slovak Republic is protected physically 24h a day and the remaining constitutional officials are subjected to other forms of personal and technical protection operations.

The Operational Security Department, while working closely with the criminal department and the units and bodies of the Police Force which take care of detecting and eradicating terrorist threats, as well as with national intelligence services, obtains and analyses information about potential threats for the protected people and their families, about criminal/terrorist actions directed towards diplomatic facilities or protected objects.

The Diplomatic Missions Security Department provides, in accordance with *The Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations* (Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1965) protection of selected diplomatic facilities and residences of foreign diplomatic officials residing on the territory of Slovakia. Physical protection is carried out non-stop, with the use of uniformed and non-uniformed patrols and with the support of technical protectors. The level and form of protective operations are modified depending on the information received about the state of security in the world and the region.

The role of the Professional Improvement and Liaison Officers' Department, which is characterized by a clear, substantial specificity, is to conduct courses and trainings concerning the shooting and physical performance for the officers of the Bureau, and the current service of liaison officers representing the police forces of other countries. The officers of this department coordinate cooperation between the foreign policemen accredited in the country, especially in the scope of their cooperation with other Slovak national administration institutions, with council units, social organizations and legal and natural persons.

The Constitutional Court (this adjudicating body takes a special place in the legal-criminal system of the Slovak Republic. The Constitutional Court protects the Constitution and its main task is controlling the compliance of lower level laws with higher level laws, especially with the fundamental law and some international laws) and Diplomatic Missions Security Department in Kosice provides physical and technical protection of objects belonging to the aforementioned, most important judicial authority in Slovakia, as well as consular offices based on the territories of two provincial cities, Kosice (the General Consulate of the Hungarian Republic) and Presov (the General Consulate of Ukraine).

The last of the discussed units of the Bureau of Security of Constitutional State Officials and Diplomatic Missions of the Police Force Presidium, to which this part of the study refers, is the Special Security Department. The crucial task of this highly



specialized Bureau's instrument, founded in 2003, is protection of the public officers, consisting of the Special Criminal Court (13 judges) and the Special Prosecutor's Office (8 prosecutors), all of whom reside in Bratislava-Pezinek. Moreover, the policemen of the department participate in all protections of visits on the national level, which take place on the territory of the Slovak Republic. The structure of the department and its functioning are secret, but it is worth pointing out that this unit possesses personal-technical potential of a defensive character (analytics, observers, planners), as well as an offensive character (combat teams, marksmen).

#### VII. LEGAL AND ORGANISATIONAL REGULATIONS ON THE USE OF FIREARMS BY THE OFFICERS OF THE POLICE FORCE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

The issue of special use of firearms by the officers of the Police Force of the Slovak Republic is a principal matter, which must have due place in the study - being at the same time a direct reference to the monothematic problem, multi-authored dissertation edited by K. Jabloszynski.

Recalling the definition of firearms applicable in our southern neighbors, included in annex no. 6, point A. (a), of the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic of April 23, 2003 on Firearms and Ammunition, it should be pointed out that this term is understood as "... a weapon, which functioning is based on immediate release of energy as a result of a chemical reaction" (Act no 190 of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on firearms and ammunition, 2003).

It should be noted that 2016 brought significant changes to the officers of the formations in the ministries of home affairs, defence, finance and justice, in the area of personal equipment with new firearms. Ministry of Home Affairs bought 46 thousand pieces of handguns (Glock and CZ 100 pistols) and support weapons (Brügger & Thomet APC9 submachine guns) for over 23 million euros. Old CZ 82 pistols and vz. 58 assault rifles, which officers received in the early 90s of the last century, are already being withdrawn of use.

The further part of the study discusses legal regulations, rules and restrictions on the use of firearms by Slovak policemen as part of their official tasks.

#### VIII. THE USE OF FIREARMS IN THE LIGHT OF ACT NO. 171 OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SLOVAK REPUBLIC OF 6 JULY 1993 ON THE POLICE FORCE

Cases of the use of firearms by officers are included in § 61 and § 62, point 1 (c-f), while the use of special ammunition is included in § 61a of the Act no. 171 of the National Council of the Slovak Republic of 6 July 1993 on the Police Force.

Pursuant to § 61, point 1 (a-i), a police officer can use this kind of direct coercion only:

- as part of a necessary defence;
- where there is an emergency;
- as part of an intervention against a dangerous criminal,

who did not follow the officer's request to immediately surrender or leave a place of difficult accessibility;

- if it is impossible to overcome in any other way the resistance of the culprit in an attempt to thwart the policeman's intervention;
- to prevent the escape of a dangerous criminal, if it is impossible to stop them in any other way
- against a person who has received a warning about the use of a firearm, at whom a warning shot was fired and who does not apply to a call to immediately stop his unlawful act, while simultaneously posing a direct threat to the life or health of a police officer or any other person;
- if it is impossible in any other way to stop a vehicle, driver of which poses a direct threat to human life and health, and does not react to repeated calls or signals issued on the basis of separate regulations;
- to repel a dangerous attack on a protected facility or a no-admission zone, after an unsuccessful call to stop it;
- to incapacitate an animal, which behaviour poses a direct threat to human life and health;
- to immobilise a vehicle in the direct zone of the state border, driver of which does not react to a repeated call or a signal to stop the vehicle issued on the basis of separate regulations.

In reference to the record included in point 2, on the weapons used by officers during an intervention, it should be pointed out that under this term the legislator means firearms (pistol, revolver, sniper rifle), cold steel (knife, bayonet) and weapon capable of simultaneous destruction or incapacitation of multiple targets (submachine gun, machine gun, grenade).

Before using firearm, an officer is obliged to call the person to whom he intervenes to comply with the law and to warn against the possibility of using this coercive measure. If the call is ineffective, an officer fires a warning shot in a safe direction. The above procedure of firearm use by an officer, i.e. calling the culprit to comply with the law and firing a warning shot, can be ignored if a police officer or any other person face direct danger of losing life or health. When using a firearm, an officer is required to exercise greatest caution, especially in the context of the safety of third parties, and to try to do the least damage to the person against whom the weapon is used, taking into account the destructive possibilities of this direct coercion measure. It should be added, that according to the quoted act (§ 59), a police officer is entitled to use firearms as part of necessary defence and to break active resistance, if he cannot achieve it with any other instruments of coercion.

Pursuant to § 61a, officers of the Police Force in their activities are entitled to use special ammunition, to which the Slovak legislator includes ammunition with non-penetrating bullets (shot from smoothbore shotguns, flare guns, revolvers), ammunition with colouring bullets and ammunition filled with chemical incapacitating agents.

A police officer may use ammunition with non-penetrating bullets:

- as part of a necessary defence;

- where there is an emergency;
- as part of an intervention, if there are no premises for the use of firearms, and it is impossible to force the culprit to stop the unlawful conduct;
- if it is impossible to stop in any other way the passive resistance of the culprit, whose behaviour leads up to thwart the policeman's intervention.

The ammunition with a colouring agent is used to mark initiators and participants of a collective violation of public order. This helps in the later phase - to identify the perpetrators of riots after dispersal of the aggressive crowd and restoring public order (Augustín, 2013:74). The ammunition filled with chemical incapacitating agent is also of similar use and it is also used in case of an intervention against a person who did not comply with the officer's request to immediately surrender or leave a place of difficult accessibility. As in the case of firearms, an officer using special ammunition is obliged to take care of the safety of third parties and to comply to the principle of minimising the consequences.

From the index of special measures of direct coercion included in § 62 of the Police Force Act, referring to firearms, the following weapons should also be specified: a weapon with a silencer (only counter terrorist police units are equipped with it), a firearm with devices allowing the illumination of a target (more commonly in a possession of police officers) and sniper rifles (only counter terrorist police units are equipped with it).

The decision on which of the direct coercion measures will be used during the intervention, is made individually by an officer taking into account the development of the situation, while the intensity of the measure used must be adequate to the threat, and the action should be aimed to achieve the assumed intervention goal, that is restoration of the lawful state.

If a person is injured as a result of a use of a direct coercion measure, and the circumstances of the given incident allow it, the officer is obliged to provide first aid and, if necessary, ensure that qualified first aid service is called (§ 63).

A police officer is obliged to inform the supervisor about any intervention during which he used a direct coercion measure. If an officer uses a measure of direct coercion on a territory subordinate to another organisational unit, the officer is obliged to notify the representative of this unit about this fact. If any doubts arise as to whether the use of direct coercion measures was lawful, there were indications justifying the necessity of providing a qualified first aid, or death, health impairment of the person or damage to property of a significant value occurred, the competent supervisor is required to establish (by making an official note) whether the policeman's conduct was in the accordance with the law (§ 64).

Pursuant to § 65 of the Police Force Act, an officer who intervenes against women with visible pregnancy, elderly people, people with visible disabilities and people whose appearance indicates that they are aged up to 15 years old, may only use incapacitating grapples, throws and handcuffs. Referring to the mentioned category of people, it should be pointed out that the use of other direct coercive measures by an officer is only possible in the case of resisting a life or health threatening attack on the officer or any other person, as well as

on properties of significant value, if the circumstances of the given incident make it impossible to incapacitate the mentioned persons in any other way.

#### IX. THE REGULATION OF THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS OF SLOVAK REPUBLIC OF OCTOBER 15, 2004, ON THE POLICE FORCE'S SNIPERS

The Regulation of the Ministry of Home Affairs of Slovak Republic of October 15, 2004, on the Police Force's Snipers is a comprehensive legal regulation on the operation of snipers in the structures of special police units (Official Journal of Ministry of Home Affairs, 2004). This normative act includes issues related to the realisation of tasks entrusted to snipers, the principles of their involvement in activities and cooperation with other officers, as well as the selection, training and equipping snipers with specialised equipment as well as enabling them to properly execute the official duties.

In the mentioned regulation, it was explicitly indicated which Slovak counter terrorist and protective police units may have sniper teams in their organisational structure: Special Destination Unit of the Police Force Presidium (Útvar osobitného určenia Prezídia Policajného zboru), Police Rapid Response Units (Pohotovostné policajné útvary) and Ministry of the Home Affairs (Úrad pre ochranu ústavných činiteľov a diplomatických misií MV SR) (Dworzecki, 2014:76-78).

The list of tasks assigned to the snipers includes:

- undertaking actions against terrorists, kidnappers, assassins, armed criminal groups, dangerous criminals;
- protection of witnesses and people covered by police protection programs;
- protection of selected facilities important for the national interest;
- participation in securing convoys (with a higher degree of protection) of cash and valuable items;
- providing support for physical security of constitutional state officials, facilities important for the national interest, foreign diplomats, and selected diplomatic establishments of foreign states in the Slovak Republic;
- providing support for physical security provided to judges from the Special Criminal Court and prosecutors from the Special Prosecutor's Office;
- protection of citizen's life, health and property in connection with conducted interventions, actions and police operations.

Organisational changes related to snipers, including placing them in the structure of a given unit/office, are decided by the President of the Police Force (regarding the Special Destination Unit of the Police Force Presidium and Rapid Response Units from the Voivodship Headquarters) and the office director (regarding the Bureau for the Protection of Constitutional State Officials and Diplomatic Missions of the Ministry of Home Affairs).

Only officers of very good health, appropriate mental predispositions and physical fitness, and with at least three years of service experience, can apply for taking part in the

competition for the position of a sniper. The competition commission consists of: the commander of the counter terrorist unit, the instructor responsible for the professional development process in this unit, a police psychologist and a doctor who is employed by the Police Force. The regulations state that each counter terrorist unit of the Police Force must have at least two snipers in active service.

An officer who becomes a sniper is then directed to a specialised basic training, during which, under the supervision of the instructors of the Training Department of the Police Force Presidium, he gains the theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary for the proper realisation of the official duties. Next, in the professional development process carried out in the unit/office, policemen polish their practical skills and probe the used procedures of action.

Twice a year, snipers participate in improvement courses organised by the Training Department of the Police Force Presidium (in agreement with the administration of counter terrorist units), during which they master their practical skills and broaden their theoretical knowledge. The courses end with an exam consisting of a written and practical part submitted to a three-member committee, led by the Chief of the Training Department of the Police Force Presidium. An officer who obtains a positive result, which is not a common practice, receives a written sniper patent of the Police Force, entitling him to perform official duties in that position for three consecutive years.

Dislocations and the use of snipers in actions taken by particular units of Police Force, are decided by - the President of Police Force in relation to the Special Destination Unit, the Voivodeship Commandant of the Police Force in relation to the Rapid Response Unit and the bureau director in the field of actions of the Bureau for the Protection of Constitutional State Officials and Diplomatic Missions of the Ministry of Home Affairs. In case of the necessity to obtain snipers' support, Police Force units and other formations liable to the Ministry of Home Affairs must submit a written request to authorised policymakers. In specific, urgent cases, snipers act on the basis of oral instructions, which requires a written justification at a later time. Snipers are working in groups of at least two persons. In the case of coordinated police operations involving snipers from various organisational units of the Police Force, the command of the sniper activities is taken over by the officer of the Special Destination Unit or the police officer from the Rapid Response Unit of the territory on which the action is carried out. Essentially, such a cooperation of snipers from different units is practiced to prevent an assault on human life or health, and in the event of an extraordinary affair – the so-called highly profiled incident (e.g. a hostage situation, an active shooter, protective actions). Coordination and later evaluation of snipers' cooperative actions remain the responsibility of the Police Force Presidium.

It should be noted here, that the content of the legal act in question does not contain any regulations referring to extraordinary, special use of firearms by police officers. Whereas its immanent element is an attachment indicating the basic equipment standards that should be met during the

creation/further functioning of sniper cells in police counter terrorist units.

GUIDELINES NO. 108-43 OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE POLICE FORCE OF FEBRUARY 10, 2010 ON REACTION TO A HIGHLY PROFILED INCIDENT

The Guidelines no. 108-43 of the President of the Police Force on reaction to a highly profiled incident are legal regulations, which contain instructions on the action tactics (including counterterrorism) undertaken by, among others, police special units. The concept of a highly profiled incident has been characterised as "... a real crisis situation or the probability of a threat, which is or will be initiated by a natural person or a group of people, resulting in a real threat of loss of life by one or many people, deliberate induction of serious injuries by perpetrator or perpetrators, the destruction of property to a large extent, as well as invoking other serious, unlawful situations, such as taking hostages, deprivation of liberty or kidnapping regardless of their subsequent legal qualification" (Act of the President of the Police Force on reaction to a highly profiled incident, 2010). The regulation also includes other concepts, integrally occurring in the case of a highly profiled incident, i.e. command body of the operation, crisis management, operation commander, intervention group commander, physical targets of operations, operation location, static situation, dynamic situation, negotiations, security cordon, contact with the media, intervention, force solution, reaction option, crisis response scenario, operation command base, post-intervention activities, documentation or the area of personal verification.

The rules catalog (article 3), that must be followed during proceedings by police officers commanding/participating in operations related to the highly profiled incident, contains the following indications:

- safety of the policemen and the bystanders, as well as the aspiration to capture the perpetrators/subjects of intervention while maintaining the principle of minimising the consequences, are the issues of most importance;
- limiting the damage of properties occurred during the activities;
- the activities on the operation location are managed by one commanding body;
- officers should seek contact with the perpetrator/object of the intervention to create conditions for negotiation and ending the intervention avoiding a force solution;
- non-force solutions are prioritised over force solutions;
- while conducting negotiations leading to an end of the intervention without using force, a variant of using a force solution should also be prepared, regardless of the optimistic development of the situation;
- as a part of a highly profiled incident intervention, a crisis response option is prepared first;
- as a part of the crisis response option, a scenario for a crisis situation response is immediately created;

- officers should strive to use the maximum of forces and measures to transform an incident from the dynamic into a static situation;
- the commanding body has full powers over the components of the operation in the field of resolving the incident and is responsible for all actions until the decision (including) is made to implement the reaction option. Both, the decision on taking a specific action option and the discussion that accompanied it, as well as the course of the operation, must be fully documented. The commander of the intervention group is responsible for the implementation of the reaction option and the intervention, until the handover of the operation location to officers responsible for post-intervention actions (such as medical aid services, mine and pyrotechnic controls) and to policemen from investigation group, securing the operation;
- if the Special Destination Unit participates in the operation, the commander of the Rapid Response Unit executes the orders of the officer in charge of the force's intervention (Ordinance of the President of the Police Corps of the Slovak Republic on actions of Rapid Response Units, Departments of Prevention of Provincial Departments of the Police Corps, 2009).
- The principal division included in the Guidelines (article 4) on highly profiled incidents classifies such situations in following three threat categories:
  - taking one or many hostages;
  - threats of the perpetrator/object of the intervention towards other people or property, regarding the use of firearm, dangerous substance (such as chemical compounds in a significant amount) and explosives;
  - public suicide attempts.
- The next issues included (in the form of 28 articles) in the guidelines refer to such matters as:
  - the procedures related to the receipt of information about the incident;
  - verification and the flow of information;
  - actions taken by operational position of the County Headquarters of the Police Force;
  - actions taken by operational position of the Voivodeship Headquarters of the Police Force;
  - actions taken by operational position of the Presidium of the Police Force;
  - management system;
  - solving any competence conflicts;
  - the composition of members of the crisis staff;
  - actions of the body in command of the operation;
  - actions of the management of individual organisational units of the Voivodeship Headquarters of the Police Force;
  - actions of the counter terrorist police units;
  - actions of the management of individual organisational units of the Presidium of the Police Force;
  - evacuation actions undertaken by police officers;

- cooperation of the crisis staff with the institutions of the state and local government administrations;
- cooperation of the crisis staff with the media.

For the purpose of this study, only Art. 17-18 of the guidelines will be discussed, regarding reactions to a high-profile incident by Rapid Reaction Force and Special Purpose Force.

In actions taken by Rapid Reaction Forces, due to a high profile incident (Art. 17), one of the key issues is closing - in cooperation with other Police forces, the operation area, so as to e.g. prevent the perpetrator from a possible escape with the support of other offenders. Force Officers, after familiarising themselves with the operational situation, take immediate actions consisting in creating inner security cordon and area of individual verification. At the same time, also snipers take convenient observational positions, being in constant contact with the operation commander, crisis staff and commander in charge of the forces in the place of action. After receiving all essential information useful in effective intervention, the officers prepare a scenario and variants of reacting in a crisis situation, including indication of members of group intended to physical intervention.

Together with creation of intervention scenario, attempts to contact the perpetrator/subject of the incident are taken, aiming to resolve the situation in a nonviolent way. The situation development at the operation scene and adopted intervention variants are reported on an ongoing basis to the Special Purpose Force Presidium of Police Force commander or the operations officer of this force. In case of the direct contact with the perpetrator/subject of the incident, actions involving a police negotiator supported by police psychologists from the Police Force Provincial Police Command take place. If the perpetrator/subject of the incident contacted other police officer and wants to continue negotiation only with him, the police negotiator directly supports the intermediary officer.

In the event that the body commanding the operation takes a decision to introduce one of the intervention variants, reaction against the perpetrator/subject of the incident is taken by officers from the group intended to physical intervention. If the commanding body takes the decision to solve the incident using forces and means of the Special Purpose Force, it passes on the leadership of Force, as well as forces and means held at disposal of the Rapid Reaction Force to the officer in charge in the place of the action. Within the post-intervention actions, officers from the Rapid Reaction Force check the operation scene for mines and pyrotechnical objects - and if it is needed - based on the order of the officer who presides investigation actions at the scene, escort the perpetrator/subject of the incident.

The Special Purpose Force Presidium of Police Force, according to instructions of Art. 18 of the Guidelines 108-43, is formally informed about the existence of a high profile incident by the operational position from the Provincial Police Command or operational position from Presidium of Police Force. If the operational and tactical situation calls for it, and any delay in information transfer could increase the level of the threat to victims and third parties of the incident, it is possible to establish an informal contact between the Rapid Reaction

Force Commander and Special Purpose Force Commander. However, all arrangements should be given an official form. On the grounds of the official request made by the person who commands the operation or the decision made by the President of Police Force, the commander of the force sends held forces and means to the incident scene, which he commands himself, or assigns this duty to another subordinate. Depending on the type of the incident, the support of the Force for the police reaction to the high profile incident consists in:

- sending the reconnaissance group which task is to assess the situation, provide operational support and advise the operation commander;
- sending officers experienced in solving crisis situations in order to substantively enhance the operation headquarters, aiming at preventing the escalation of the incident and minimising potential negative effects of the situation;
- sending experts of special operations tactics, including negotiators, pyrotechnics, snipers, scuba divers, dog handlers, paratroopers or special vehicles operators together with equipment;
- sending combat team (personal technical fully complete) (The term of fully complete personal-technical combat team refers to a human group that is comprised of representatives of all specialities of the Special Purpose Force Presidium of Police Corps);
- sending enhanced personal-technically on duty battlegroup;
- sending the entire Force.

If the commander and vice commander of the force as well as commander and vice

commander of the Special Purpose Force are absent, the combat team realises assignments on its own under the direction of the officer designated by the operation commander. In such situation, the force combat team does not create combined groups with officers from the Rapid Reaction Force of the Provincial Police Command of Police Force. After the arrival at the incident scene, the Special Purpose Force officers participate in actions realised in accordance with the variant beforehand developed by police officers from the Rapid Reaction Force, until forces and means of the force are ready to realise their own variants of action. At this stage of action, snipers and watchers take positions convenient for them, and when they move to their shooting points, they go in pairs with a sidearm that is locked and loaded. Variants of action prepared by the Force are presented to the operation commander with a comprehensive commentary, taking into account any potential aftermath. The intervention group commander is required to fully respect the decision made by the operation commander about the adopted variant of action (Kočan, Löffler, Zámek, 2013:110). From the moment when the decision about intervention with force has been made, it is the intervention group commander who is responsible for its realisation and to whom all anti-terrorists are subordinate. If, during the intervention, bystanders are hurt or any danger to human life or health connected, for example, with an outbreak of the fire, gas

explosion, leakage of dangerous substances and chemicals occurs, officers are required to ensure security for members of the rescue services both at the scene, for example, while providing first aid, as well as during the evacuation from the dangerous area.

When the action is finished, the force police officers examine the intervention scene for mines or pyrotechnical objects and pass the findings together with the physical operation targets (perpetrators/operation subject) to the operation commander.

#### MILITARY ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE COUNTER-TERRORIST UNITS OFFICERS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC POLICE FORCE. CASE STUDY

In what follows, criminal events (hostage situation, intentional confrontation of the criminal with officers, active shooter) are described, which took place in the Slovak Republic and were neutralised by officers from the Special Purpose Force Presidium of Police Force.

#### KIDNAPPING OF THE POLICE FORCE OFFICERS AND USING A SNIPER - JULY 21, 2010, NITRANSKY HRÁDOK COMMUNE

The first case concerning Martin H. is a typical example of the hostage situation. This addicted to drugs criminal was penalised multiple times for mugging committed both in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Before the dramatic events in Nitransky hrádok commune, Court of the Czech Republic (on June 10, 2010) sentenced him to 13 years detention for mugging with the use of a firearm, as a result of which one person died.

The incident in which Martin H. suffered death started on July 21, 2010 around 9:30 pm. in the Komjatice commune. The Police Force officers attempted to stop a vehicle - Skoda Felicia that was driven by two men for a roadside check. The driver did not stop when the police ordered him so and started a furious escape. After about 3 km the car was abandoned in a cornfield and the officers who conducted a direct pursuit managed to catch the passenger from the escaping car, who was Kristian H. While the driver, who turned out to be Martin H., was wanted by the officers from the police station of the Police Force in Močenok. After 10 pm. the police officers were informed that the driver was in his house in Kráľová nad Váhom. A two member uniformed patrol was sent to this location. The patrol was disarmed by Martin H. on his premises with the use of Type 58 Assault Rifle owned illegally. Then, the offender forced the officers to drive the police car to Nitra, a city located in the central part of Slovakia. During the ride to the voivodship city mentioned above, Martin H. forced the officers to draft their female colleague in to duty. Then he terrorised her too. Having three hostages, the kidnapper pointed another riding direction. On route, Martin H. was embattled by the Police Force. Faced with such circumstances, the kidnapper communicated the information that if during further drive he saw even one police car, he would shoot the kidnapped officers. Later the tracing of the police car with the kidnapper was carried out only with unmarked police cars. Martin H. and the hostage officers

continued driving on route Komjatice-Nové Zámky-Šurany the whole night. Only once did they stop at the petrol station to tank and buy alcohol. In the morning the kidnapped police car with the kidnapper and officers stopped near the fish reservoir in Nitriansky Hrádok commune. Martin H. released one of the policewomen. During the whole hostage situation he did not allow to establish a contact with police negotiators, and he did not let the hostages out of the vehicle. The contemporary Police Force President Gen. J. Packa decided to include into action the Special Purpose Force to neutralise the assailant. After arrival to the place, the Force based on the action variant deployed the forces prepared to the force intervention. Snipers took convenient positions. At 8:24 am the police operation commander gave an order to attack of which the component of force was a sniper shot and an attack of the battlegroup operators. As a result of the intervention, Martin H., hit by a bullet from the sniper's weapon (from a distance of about 100 metres), suffered an instant death. A control procedure conducted by the Department of Control and Inspection Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs did not reveal any errors in procedure or law and the whole intervention was assessed to be in compliance with legislation in force. The Department of Control and Inspection Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs is a self-dependent organisational unit whose management is directly subordinate to the Minister. The role of this unit is to record and verify information and notifications of the cases of suspicion of committing a crime by officers and civilian employees from the Police Corps, firefighters and employees of National Firefighting and Rescue System, rescuers from Mountain Rescue Service and officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Within the detection procedure, the Department officials use all available forms of operational research and use technical measures as well as police/ministerial IT databases. Moreover, the Department participates in efforts of proactive and instructional nature addressed to all subjects substantively and organisationally subordinated to the Minister of Internal Affairs. DCIS of the Ministry of Internal Affairs is the key component of the internal control system which has been in operations in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Slovak Republic since 1997.

#### ASSAULT AND FIREFIGHT IN LIPTOVSKY MIKULAS – AUGUST 5, 2014

Second of the discussed cases in which a firearm was used during the firefight with an armed perpetrator was on August 5, 2014 in Liptovský Mikuláš. Ján A., former officer of the criminal division of the District Police Office of the Police Force in Liptovský Mikuláš, was expelled from the formation after the proceeding of the Department of Control and Inspection Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs that proved him guilty of participation in several robberies with the use of firearms that took place on the premises of Žilinský province between September and December 2013. For several months the former policeman, a member of the unestablished police tactical group and master of Mixed Martial Arts, was avoiding the arrest. On August 4, 2014 around 8 pm. police

officers of the Rapid Reaction Force from Žilina together with the officers from Liptovský Mikuláš proceeded with arresting Ján A., who remained in his family house located in detached houses estate in Liptovský Mikuláš. During the intervention, Ján A. responded to the assault of operators with fire, injuring one of the officers (with a handgun) and barricaded himself in the attic of the house. Reinforcements of battlegroups of the Presov Rapid Reaction Force and the Special Purpose Force of Police Force Presidium were brought to the place. In total, the operation was participated by 55 officers, including five negotiators together with the Special Purpose Force commander, Col. Štefan Harman, who headed the operation. For 10 hours the police negotiators, who together with the members of the battlegroup took basement rooms in the building, tried to establish contact with Ján A. In the attempt of establishing contact person familiar to the offender (members of family, friends) were also involved. Ján A. was not responding to the police calls, repetitively firing shots towards the place from which the voice of police negotiator was heard. As one of the arrested co-perpetrators of robberies (from 2013) pointed out, Ján A., being aware of the arrest was preparing himself to confront the officers. Staying at the broad, darkened attic he did not reveal to the place where he was. On August 5, around 6 am the decision about the battlegroup assault in the attic of the building was made. Lachrymators and flash bangs were thrown into the attic, simultaneously to climbing the storm ladder into the attic. Ján A., when forced to leave the smoky attic, responded with a fire. He fired several shots towards the assault team. One of the bullets bounced off the lower edge of the battle shield, broke in half, and its fragment injured a shield man in his underbelly (under the bulletproof vest). The perpetrator was shot in the hand (in which he held the weapon) and in the calf by the second policeman of the formation. Immediately after the incapacitating, first aid was provided to the perpetrator and the injured policeman by medical rescuers from the assault team. After the end of the intervention the building was checked by pyrotechnics and put at disposal of the investigation group. In this case also the Department of Control and Inspection Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs had no reservations to the officers' intervention. Ján A. was sentenced to 22 years' detention.

#### ACTIVE SHOOTER – AUGUST 30, 2010, BRATISLAVA, DEVÍNSKA NOVÁ VES DISTRICT

The last of the cases discussed in the present study is a situation known in the source literature as active shooter. The term active shooter means a mentally and emotionally unstable person who attempts to kill as many surrounding them people as possible (without a specific victim profile) in heavily populated places and facilities that comprise so-called soft targets (e.g. in schools, places of work, shopping centres, great population centres), in a short time, usually using a firearm, attempting against one's own life at the same time. High profile incident which took place on August 30, 2010 in Devínska Nová Ves, a district of Bratislava fits into the above definition.

48-years-old Ľubomír H., living alone in one of the blocks in

the estate located in the district mentioned above, using a legally owned automatic weapon (a sport version of Type 58 Assault Rifle) for which he obtained a licence (including 6 firearms) as a member of shooting club, shot a total of 7 people and 15 was heavily injured. Around 10 am Ľubomír H. invaded one of the flats on the second floor of the building in which he lived (on the first floor) and killed three women, a child and a man in cold blood. Then, while he was going out of the block, on the pavement in front of the staircase he shot another person, a man – member of the previously murdered family. The victims represented the Roma minority. In the past, the perpetrator spoke about representatives of this ethnic minority very unflatteringly, with a full dose of hatred. Then, with an ear protector on his head, he was moving among multi-storey residential buildings and firing shots to people (including children) on balconies, in windows, as well as to people walking the pavement and driving cars on the inside estate roads. After about 2 minutes from the phone call informing about the incident, the first Police Force patrols from the local police station arrived at the scene. One of the first heavily injured victims was the officer of the Police Force who intervened on the perpetrator. The officer was shot in his face from the distance of about 70 metres. Ľubomír H. was carrying 8 full magazines (30 cartridges in each). Another patrol that arrived at the scene forced the active shooter to hide behind concrete barriers between two blocks. The perpetrator was shelling the police cars and officers hiding behind them. After about 20 minutes, armoured police vehicles and reinforced personally and technically battlegroup on duty of the Special Purpose Force Presidium of Police Force arrived at the scene. A lot of information flowed in to the commanding point, including the information indicating the greater amount of shooters. The officers in attack formation, armed with battle shields were combing areas among the blocks, heading for the shooter. Snipers took their positions and after tracing of Ľubomír H. a shot towards him was fired, depriving him of capability to operate with his right, leading hand. The injured perpetrator hid behind the concrete barrier, and then took his own life with a headshot. In total, all intervening officers fired sixteen shots. The after intervention operations, including raking the estate area closed with the police cordon and checking all flats of the shelled blocks, lasted till the evening hours. Due to the tragedy described above, the Government of the Slovak Republic announced September 2, 2010 as a national day of mourning.

The reaction of the Management of the Department of Internal Affairs to the incident was, among other things, to arm all uniformed patrols with machine pistols, The Škorpion vz. 61. Moreover, a decision to change the procedures of granting firearm licences was made. All automatic firearm licences were retracted, including those granted for sports and instructional purposes, and the obligation to be psychologically evaluated not only before the licence is granted but also every five years after the granting of appropriate permissions, was implemented. Changes were also introduced in programmes of training and professional development for officers that were prepared to an appropriate reaction to the high profile incidents of this kind.

## X. CONCLUSION

In terms of the improvement of internal security level in Slovakia, actions taken by the Government of this country take multidimensional form and are centred on, among other things, increasing the status of full-time employment of the Police Force, adopting new social benefits (i.e. additional leave in virtue of the service in the directly life-threatening conditions e.g. counter-terrorist actions, benefits for night duty), adopting the budget covering 15-25% of salary rise for officers, implementing of motivating salary and rewarding system and increasing the status of full-time employment of counter-terrorist units in the Provincial Police Offices. Whether the assumptions made will be realised, and thus whether it will translate into the increase of the security level of the Slovak Republic citizens, will reveal itself in the years ahead.

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