

The Impact of Internal Affairs Bodies' Activity on Social Well-Being in the Context of the World Happiness Report

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Abstract

This article analyzes the impact of the activity of internal affairs bodies on the population's level of happiness and social well-being within the framework of the World Happiness Report published by the United Nations. The study examines security, the rule of law, and the maintenance of public order as key factors in citizens' well-being.

The article explores the reforms being implemented in Uzbekistan and modern approaches to ensuring public safety in relation to World Happiness Report indicators. It also examines the impact on the population's happiness of the trust and cooperation between security agencies and society. The study concludes with practical recommendations aimed at improving the work of internal affairs bodies and increasing societal well-being.

Keywords: World Happiness Report, internal affairs bodies, security, public safety, Uzbekistan, happiness index, reforms, civic peace of mind.

Introduction

One of the key indicators of a society's growth and development is the level of happiness of its population. History shows that the strength and stability of states are determined not only by economic indicators and the level of security, but also by the quality of life of citizens and their degree of spiritual satisfaction. In the modern world, the population's level of happiness is increasingly regarded as one of the principal indicators of a state's development.

In this process, the role of internal affairs bodies is of particular importance. By ensuring public safety, preventing offenses, and protecting citizens' rights and freedoms, they strengthen peace and stability in society. As a result, public trust in the state grows, and people's satisfaction with life and level of happiness rise accordingly.

The World Happiness Report, published regularly by the United Nations since 2012, is a major international study that makes it possible to measure and compare the subjective sense of happiness among citizens of countries around the world. This report is recognized as one of the most authoritative and influential international documents analyzing human happiness and well-being on a global scale, and assessing state policies aimed at ensuring them. Every year, countries around the world strive to implement various reforms and measures to improve their standing in this report.

This report covers not only economic indicators but also factors such as social support, life expectancy, freedom of choice, generosity, the level of corruption, and — most importantly — security. At the same time, a distinctive feature of the World Happiness Report's methodology is its comprehensive assessment of countries not solely in terms of material well-being, but encompassing all essential aspects of human life. This approach is also directly

aligned with the substance of the work carried out by internal affairs bodies. Indeed, tasks such as ensuring public safety, preventing offenses, and protecting citizens' rights and freedoms have a direct effect on the population's subjective happiness and life satisfaction.

Within the methodology, each factor is analyzed separately to determine its contribution to a country's overall happiness index, which is then compared internationally. From this standpoint, in evaluating the effectiveness of internal affairs bodies, it is important to take into account not only crime statistics, but also indicators such as the population's sense of security, their trust in law-enforcement agencies, and their perceived level of social justice. This, in turn, points to the need to further improve the work of internal affairs bodies based on the modern principles of "human-centered security."

Issues of security and the maintenance of public order occupy an important place in how the Happiness Report evaluates countries. After all, a person can only think about other needs and goals once they feel that they and their family are safe. In this regard, it is worth noting that according to the hierarchy-of-needs theory of the American psychologist Abraham Maslow, *security* is one of the most fundamental human needs, and if this need is not met, an individual cannot develop fully and will face difficulties in leading a happy life. For this reason, indicators such as crime rates, public safety, and citizens' sense of legal protection carry significant weight in the World Happiness Report.

The activity of internal affairs bodies is of particular importance for ensuring security. By carrying out tasks such as crime prevention, maintaining public order, protecting citizens' rights and freedoms, and ensuring peace and stability, internal affairs bodies have a direct effect on the population's sense of calm and, consequently, on their level of happiness. Law-enforcement agencies make a major contribution to citizens' psychological well-being not only by identifying and punishing offenders, but also by creating an environment of safety in society, maintaining public order, and ensuring tranquility in citizens' daily lives. This, in turn, has a positive effect on the overall standard of living and the subjective sense of happiness of citizens.

In recent years, the broad-ranging reforms being carried out within the system of internal affairs bodies of the Republic of Uzbekistan — improving relations between the population and the police, strengthening public oversight, and introducing modern technologies — have had a positive effect on the country's standing in the World Happiness Report. As part of these reforms, the principles of communicating with the public, paying attention to citizens' appeals, and serving citizens are being reinforced under the guiding principle that "human interests are above all else." Through institutions such as "serving the people," "dialogue with the people," "meetings of people's deputies," and "support points of internal affairs bodies," cooperation between the population and internal affairs bodies is being raised to a new level.

The 2026 World Happiness Report was released on the eve of March 20 — International Day of Happiness — and noted that Uzbekistan ranked 53rd in the global rating. According to the findings of this study, the average life-satisfaction score of the country's population was assessed at 6.283 points [1].

The report is prepared annually by the University of Oxford's Wellbeing Research Centre in cooperation with Gallup and the United Nations [2]. The study involved surveys conducted in more than 140 countries and territories, with nearly 100,000 respondents taking part.

Methodologically, respondents rate their quality of life on the Cantril Ladder scale, where a score of 0 represents the lowest possible standard of living and a score of 10 represents the highest [3]. In addition, the rating takes into account, in a comprehensive manner, indicators such as GDP per capita, the level of personal freedom, perceptions of corruption, and average life expectancy.

Regional comparisons show that among the CIS countries, Kazakhstan holds the leading position, ranking 33rd. Among the other countries, Kyrgyzstan ranks 66th, Moldova 77th, and Russia 79th. Tajikistan, Armenia, and Azerbaijan are recorded at 88th, 89th, and 102nd place, respectively [4].

In the global rating, Finland was recognized as the happiest country in the world for the ninth consecutive time. Iceland, Denmark, Costa Rica, and Sweden also took top positions. The top ten also included Norway, the Netherlands, Israel, Luxembourg, and Switzerland.

According to the study's findings, Afghanistan occupies the lowest position in the rating, with low indicators also recorded in countries such as Botswana, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Sierra Leone [5].

The report specifically notes that the impact of digital technologies on young people's well-being is twofold in nature. In particular, the reasonable use of the internet for educational, social, and creative purposes can increase life satisfaction. However, uncontrolled and aimless use of the digital environment — particularly excessive time spent on social networks and games — can, conversely, lead to a decline in subjective well-being indicators.

The result noted above represents international recognition of the reforms being carried out in the country, particularly the positive changes in the sphere of public safety. In terms of security indicators in particular, Uzbekistan holds a fairly high position, demonstrating the effectiveness of the country's policy in this area. Surveys conducted among the population of Uzbekistan show that citizens' sense of security and their level of trust in internal affairs bodies are increasing year by year.

The main purpose of this article is to analyze the methodology of the World Happiness Report and its constituent components, to determine the role of security and the rule of law in the happiness index, and to study the impact on the country's happiness level of the reforms being implemented by internal affairs bodies in Uzbekistan. The article examines in detail various aspects of the activity of internal affairs bodies, their role in ensuring citizens' safety and peace of mind, as well as new initiatives and innovative approaches in this field. The findings of the study are of both theoretical and practical significance, serving as an important resource for shaping future policy on ensuring public safety and raising the population's level of happiness in the country.

Materials and Methods

The following set of scientific methods was applied in this study:

1. Content analysis method

Data from the World Happiness Report for 2012–2025, official documents of state bodies, relevant scholarly literature, and reports on the activity of internal affairs bodies were comprehensively analyzed.

2. Comparative analysis method

The relationship between the level of legal order, public safety, and the rule of law in various countries and the happiness index was studied in depth. Uzbekistan's relevant indicators were analyzed in comparison with those of Central Asian and CIS countries.

3. Statistical analysis method

The correlations between the dynamic changes in the happiness index, crime rates, and public-safety indicators were identified and assessed using mathematical methods.

4. Systemic approach

Various areas of activity of internal affairs bodies and the reforms carried out were examined comprehensively, in their interconnection with one another.

Sources of the study

The following official sources and databases were used for the study:

- Official World Happiness Report data of the United Nations
- Safety Perception Index
- Global Peace Index

- Reports of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Documents of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
- Relevant reports of other authoritative international organizations

Results and Discussion

1. The World Happiness Report: methodology and key components

The World Happiness Report has been published annually since 2012 as part of the United Nations' sustainable-development initiative [6]. Since 2024, the report has been prepared by the University of Oxford's Wellbeing Research Centre in cooperation with the Gallup Institute [7].

The country rankings in the World Happiness Report are determined based on the following key components:

- **GDP per capita** — an indicator of economic well-being.
- **Social support** — the degree to which people can rely on help in difficult situations.
- **Healthy life expectancy** — healthy life expectancy at birth.
- **Freedom to make life choices** — the ability to make independent decisions about one's life.
- **Generosity** — the degree of altruism and mutual assistance in society.
- **Perceptions of corruption** — the level of corruption in state bodies and the private sector.

The report also takes into account a number of additional factors, including:

- **Social security and stability** — the degree to which citizens feel safe [8].
- **Trust in state institutions** — including the level of trust in internal affairs bodies [9].
- **A sense of equality and justice** — the perception of fairness and equal opportunity in society [10].

The 2024 World Happiness Report placed particular emphasis on examining levels of happiness by age. The report showed that the level of happiness among young people varies across different regions of the world. In North America, the happiness level of young people aged 15–24 was found to have declined sharply, with this age group reporting lower happiness than older people [11].

2. Security and the rule of law: their place in the happiness index

Research shows that security and the rule of law are among the most important components of the World Happiness Report. There are several reasons for this:

First, security and stability are among the basic needs of human life. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, security comes immediately after physiological needs, meaning it constitutes a fundamental life necessity.

Second, in societies with high crime rates and inadequate security, people's happiness indicators are significantly lower. Studies have shown that the experience of being a victim of crime has a negative impact on a person's long-term psychological well-being [12].

Third, trust in state bodies, particularly internal affairs bodies, is an important factor in citizens' happiness. In societies with a high level of trust in internal affairs bodies and other law-enforcement agencies, people feel safe and protected, which has a positive effect on overall happiness levels [13].

Furthermore, the "Caring and Sharing" study found that seeing kindness and goodness in society brings people greater happiness than merely the absence of violence and crime [14]. This highlights the importance of approaches such as community policing, since they serve not only to combat crime but also to create a positive atmosphere within society.

The world's happiest countries (Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, and Norway) are at the same time among the safest countries. In these countries, the level of trust in police agencies is high, the level of corruption is low, and social services are of high quality [15].

3. Implementation of the Community Policing concept

Community policing is an approach based on close cooperation between the police and the local population, whereby the police not only respond to crimes but also actively participate in resolving local problems. In Uzbekistan, this concept is being implemented through the “Mahalla Posboni” (Neighborhood Guardian) system.

As part of the program “Strengthening Community Resilience and Policing in Uzbekistan,” supported by the Embassy of the United States of America, employees of Uzbekistan’s law-enforcement agencies are studying best practices in community policing.

According to UN data, reorienting policing toward people’s needs yields the greatest effect in ensuring public safety. The work being carried out in this regard in Uzbekistan serves to strengthen trust between the population and the police, thereby increasing people’s sense of security.

4.2. Introduction of “smart” technologies

Within the framework of the “Safe City” concept, video-surveillance systems, artificial-intelligence technologies, and digital platforms are being introduced in Uzbekistan. These technologies make it possible not only to monitor crime, but also to maintain public order, ensure road-traffic safety, and respond quickly to emergency situations.

The widespread introduction of video-surveillance systems increases the population’s sense of security, which in turn contributes to a rise in the happiness index. Likewise, the broad application of information technologies ensures the transparency of police services and reduces the risk of corruption.

4.3. Improving the qualifications of police officers and their professional ethics

A number of measures are being implemented in Uzbekistan to raise the professional training of internal affairs personnel, strengthen their knowledge of human rights, and ensure adherence to ethical standards in their dealings with the public.

In cooperation with the OSCE, a series of webinars on “Trends in Modern Policing” is being held at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. These events are aimed at informing the Academy’s students and staff about the key trends and achievements in modern policing [16].

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is implementing programs aimed at strengthening the capacity of Uzbekistan’s law-enforcement agencies, reinforcing partnership relations with the public, and ensuring public safety.

4.4. Combating corruption and increasing transparency

The level of corruption is one of the important indicators in the World Happiness Report. A number of measures are being implemented in Uzbekistan’s internal affairs bodies to combat corruption, including:

- The system for monitoring the activity of internal affairs personnel is being improved.
- Public oversight is being strengthened.

Recent legislative reforms are creating a favorable environment for strengthening dialogue in the social sphere, combating corruption, and improving human-rights practice. This, in turn, serves to raise the population’s level of happiness by increasing trust in state bodies, particularly internal affairs bodies.

5. Assessing the effectiveness of internal affairs bodies’ activity and its impact on the happiness index

Alongside the traditional indicators for assessing the effectiveness of internal affairs bodies’ activity (crime statistics, response-time indicators), the following social indicators are also of considerable importance:

- **The population’s level of trust in internal affairs bodies** — determined through sociological surveys.

- **Perceived safety** — the degree to which citizens feel safe in their place of residence.
- **Satisfaction with the services of internal affairs bodies** — the level of satisfaction with services provided, among citizens who have interacted with personnel.

Studies show a direct relationship between these indicators and the happiness index. In societies with a high level of trust in internal affairs bodies, people feel safer, and the overall level of happiness is higher.

The most recent studies on Uzbekistan show that the population's level of trust in internal affairs bodies has been rising in recent years. However, it remains necessary to continue reforming internal affairs bodies, strengthen trust in security forces, and intensify efforts to eliminate corruption and abuse of office.

6. Directions for improving security and the happiness index

To raise the population's level of happiness in Uzbekistan and to strengthen the country's position in the World Happiness Report, it would be appropriate to improve the following areas of internal affairs bodies' activity:

6.1. Wider implementation of community-policing principles

It is necessary to strengthen trust-based relations between internal affairs bodies and the local population, and to involve residents in jointly combating crime and maintaining public order. In this process, it is important to further strengthen the role of the mahalla (neighborhood community) institution and to improve the "Mahalla Posboni" institution.

Activity oriented toward cooperation with the public — strengthening the role of prevention inspectors at the mahalla level — should train them not only to combat offenses, but also to resolve social problems.

6.2. Accelerating digital transformation

The broad introduction of modern technologies to digitize the activity of internal affairs bodies, the development of the "smart city" concept, and the effective use of artificial-intelligence systems increase the population's sense of security. At the same time, digital technologies also serve as a tool for ensuring the transparency of internal affairs bodies' activity and combating corruption.

6.3. Strengthening human-rights practice

It is important for internal affairs bodies to observe human rights, adhere to standards of professional ethics, and foster positive relations in their dealings with the public. In this regard, it is necessary to regularly upgrade staff qualifications, study international standards and advanced foreign practice, and conduct human-rights training for personnel.

6.4. Increasing accountability and transparency

It is necessary to ensure the transparency of internal affairs bodies' activity, strengthen public oversight, and improve the system for effectively responding to citizens' complaints and appeals. This increases trust in internal affairs bodies and, accordingly, has a positive effect on the population's overall level of happiness.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of the study conducted on the World Happiness Report and Uzbekistan's position within it, particularly regarding the impact of internal affairs bodies' activity on the country's happiness index, allow the following conclusions to be drawn:

- Security and the rule of law are among the most important components of the World Happiness Report. The level of trust in state bodies, particularly internal affairs bodies, is a key predictor of citizens' happiness level.
- In recent years, Uzbekistan has maintained a relatively stable position in the World Happiness Report and continues to hold a leading position among CIS countries. According to the 2025 report, the country ranked 53rd.
- The level of security in Uzbekistan is high: the country ranks 25th in the world and is recognized as the safest country in Central Asia.

• In recent years, the reforms implemented within Uzbekistan's system of internal affairs bodies (cooperation with the public, the introduction of "smart" technologies, improving staff qualifications, and combating corruption) have served to increase the population's sense of security, which has had a positive effect on the country's happiness index.

Based on the above, the following recommendations have been developed:

• **Improving the system for assessing the effectiveness of internal affairs bodies' activity** — paying attention, alongside traditional quantitative indicators (the number of solved crimes), to qualitative indicators such as the population's level of trust in the police, their sense of security, and their level of satisfaction with services.

• **Developing open dialogue between internal affairs bodies and the population** — strengthening information campaigns, regularly publishing reports on the sector's activity, and increasing engagement on social networks.

• **Strengthening preventive work** — prioritizing the prevention of crimes rather than merely reacting to them, and taking measures to raise legal culture.

• **Developing human capital** — regularly upgrading the professional skills and moral-ethical qualities of internal affairs personnel, and training them in line with international standards.

• **Expanding international cooperation** — studying and applying advanced foreign experience in the field of security, and strengthening cooperative ties with international organizations.

Implementing the conclusions and recommendations presented above will serve to further increase the population's sense of security in Uzbekistan, strengthen trust in internal affairs bodies, raise citizens' level of happiness, and, as a result, improve the country's standing in the World Happiness Report.

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