

Judicial police, functions and its development in Albania

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Abstract

This article aims at a consistent search of the opinions about the judicial police as one of the subjects, contained in the Albanian criminal procedural law. In article 30 of the Albanian Criminal Procedure Code, are sanctioned the functions, division, addition and judicial police duties. In the initial phase, the preliminary investigations are the basis of criminal proceedings. This phase includes evidences that cannot be replicated, the security measures are set, it is performed the notice of suit and necessary datas are collected.

Searching, tracking, capture and bringing before trial of the perpetrators is considered as one of the oldest activities of human being. The need to ensure these regulations and the aim to prevent the consequences of any criminal activity has forced societies and different states to establish special investigative bodies (investigation) and to determine by time their rights and obligations. So judicial police organs were provided and charged with competences and legal responsibility for the detection, crime preventions and research, capturing and bringing before the court, individuals or groups who commit criminal activities. From a comparative overview of legislation of the judicial police in several countries around the world, it is shown that there is no extreme change in structures and organizational patterns of these bodies, missions, powers and responsibilities they exercise (Elezi, 1997, 13).

Judicial police in Albania has also been and is one of the important subjects of the criminal proceedings. In the historical perspective these bodies have had mixed origins and nature, and in different times they were military or civilian institutions. In this context, main purpose of this paper is the analysis of judicial police in Albania.

Keywords: Judicial Police, Functions, Investigation, Organic Law, Code of Criminal Procedure.

Introduction

During preliminary investigations, a number of important problems of criminal proceedings are resolved. Besides the prosecutor, appointed by law (Code of Criminal Procedure and the organic law on Judicial Police), it is also the *judicial police* to conduct the preliminary investigations. Searching, tracking, capture and bringing before the legal responsibility the criminal offenders is regarded as one of the earliest activities of human being. Since the ancient time, the human society has reacted to actions and behaviors that violate the interests, values and vital norms set by it. The need to ensure compliance of these norms with the regulations, and aim to prevent the consequences of any criminal activity, has forced different societies and states to establish special investigative (investigation) bodies, and by time to determine their rights and obligations. In view of this goal, police services are set up to respond to

any criminal activity. From a comparative overview of the legislation of the judicial police in several countries around the world, it is showed that there is no extreme change in organizational structures and patterns of these bodies, in missions, powers and responsibilities they exercise.

History of the investigation bodies

By the end of 18-th century, in Albanian - speaking areas (lands) conquered by the Ottoman Empire, it was applied the criminal procedural legislation under Shariah Law based on the Koran. Under this legislation, the right to exercise the functions of investigation and trial had Sheriah Councils (Elezi, 1997, 13). In 1878 (1274 according to the Old Calendar Turkish Code) during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II, kanunamatet (codes) were issued, among them the Code of Ottoman Criminal Procedure, which was a copy of the Code of French Criminal Procedure of the year 1808, which came into force and was applied in Albania for a long time from the binding position of a country that was ruled by the Turkish empire. In the first part of this code is provided the judicial police as the subject of criminal proceedings, as well as its functions which were "tracking the crimes, offenses, violations, collection of evidence and submission of the authors to courts charged with the punishment." Whereas in Article 9 of the first chapter (head) of this Code it is stipulated that: "The judicial police shall be exercised under the authority of the courts ordered by the judge in conformity with special provisions that will be set below by vice-prefects, mayors, commissioners of police, the state prosecutors, investigating judges, officers of the gendarmerie, elders of villages, members of elderly, the village guards and forest guards.¹ In the following provisions of this code are sanctioned investigative actions that would be carried out by the above entities, including preparing the conditions for the criminal prosecution, the method of preparation of procedural acts, the rules of the investigation to be met, etc."

In 1913, after the Albanian independence, the Ottoman legislation continued to be in force. This fact does not undermine either the legal status of the Albanian institutions of public order and safety, nor their national character.² Even in the Organic Statute of Albania drafted and approved on the 10-th of April 1914, included inter alia, certain principles and norms that meant to investigate, arrest and detect the Albanian citizens in violation of personal freedom, inviolability of residence, etc. Organizations and amendments in the judiciary were made also after the Congress of Lushnja, but the position, functions and reports in the criminal proceedings, were the same as the people who exercised the attributes of the judicial police, done by the Code of Ottoman Criminal Procedure (Rica, 2011, 28).

The period 1913-1939 is considered as the time of establishment and the basis of the Albanian judicial police activity as a subject of criminal proceedings. The

¹ Ottoman Criminal Procedure in force in Albania (translation), 10.

² Saving the criminal law and Ottoman procedural legislation was sanctioned by the Decision of Council of Ministers and was communicated with the circular of the Ministry of Interior, dated May 12th, 1913, stating: "Until the implementation of new laws, are left in force the laws and regulations of the Ottoman government." (AQSHA, p. 71, Doc. 11171).

distinguishing feature of these years is that the circle of people who were entitled to exercise the attributes of the judicial police was quite spacious, including prefects, deputy prefects, gendarmerie officers, mayors, guards etc. With the occupation of Albania by Italy, the criminal procedural activity was associated with the immediate establishment of new structures of judicial police by adapting the Italian model in synchronization with the law on war. After the end of World War II, the establishment and development of institutions of law in general and of the criminal proceedings in particular was associated with the foundation and development of communism. Initially, under the law on the interim judicial organization from 1945 the function of the investigating judge was upheld. Such a judge was present at each court and prefecture. Administratively they depended from the Ministry of Justice and operated under the control of the prosecutor's approval. With the establishment of prosecution, the function of an investigating judge was abolished and its duties were ordered to the prosecutor (Gjika, 1981, 272). With the establishment of the communist state institutions in Albania, criminal offences were charged by bodies of internal affairs, the prosecuting authorities and other bodies such as secretaries and chairmen of people's councils where there was no police and prosecutor.

However, the court could adjudicate the issue in the absence of the defendant only in three cases: a) when the crime, for which the defendant was accused, was not provided by law; b) when the defendant required it by itself and the court acknowledged it; c) when it was proven that the defendant was hiding to judgment. The term "Judicial Police" is no longer used in the new legal framework by investigation bodies. The basic function of these bodies was the discovery and investigation of criminal offenses. Investigation bodies were an important subject of criminal procedural activity. Their procedural position in relation to the other participants (subjects) of criminal proceedings charged them with very specific rights and obligations. Investigators at the prosecution bodies developed investigations for criminal and more complex issues, with the exception of crimes against the state, which were subject of the state security organs. With the exception of the state security bodies and the police, the other investigators were part of the prosecution. Their investigative work was followed and monitored by the respective prosecutions, though to investigators the right to act independently (by initiative) was recognized by law.

Data coming from the development of the investigations were considered confidential and they couldn't be spread without the permission of the investigating bodies. Their illegal spreading was punished according to the law.³ This organization of investigative bodies remained until 1974. With Decree no. 5139, dated January 30th, 1974 "On the unification of the investigation", these bodies were unified and structured in the Ministry of Interior. The focus of the investigative structures, distributed in a single hand, was taken on the ground to better organize work and to enhance the quality and speed investigations. Centralized (unified) guidance was supposed to facilitate the rational allocation of work, the generalization of investigative experience, staff profiling, research work, etc.

After unification, the investigation was acting with initiative, unattended by the

³ Article 120 of the Criminal Procedure Code drafted and approved in 1953.

prosecutor, for the management and development of investigations for the detection of offenses and offenders, in making any decision.⁴ The prosecution controlled the precise and uniform application of laws throughout the criminal procedural activity and took measures not to act in contradiction to them.

The concentration of investigation in the Ministry of Internal Affairs brought the reduction of professional level and the increase of criminal and procedural law violations during preliminary investigations. This is known as the period when individual rights in criminal proceedings were more violated, hostile groups were invented and many innocent people were condemned, whose reasons relate to politics and ideology of the time. Mythologization of state security bodies and the total submission of the activity of judicial bodies by the commanding role of party-state created the deformation of criminal processes with serious consequences for proceeding subjects. The period 1974-1982 will be remembered as the period that took a step backwards in the organization and functioning of the investigation organs in Albania. The unification and concentration of investigative bodies in the Ministry of Internal Affairs was considered a wrong solution, accepted also by the authorities of the time, who suggested a reorganization of the investigation and separating it from the bodies of internal affairs, to eliminate the influence of operative sector (state security) on the investigations.

Reorganization of the investigative bodies was associated with amendments of the constitution,⁵ and the drafting of a special law for the investigation.⁶ According to the law no. 6800, dated June 29th, 1983 "On the Investigation in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania" and the amendments subsequently made to the Criminal Procedure Code, none of the police bodies, or other state authorities had any right to conduct procedural (investigative) actions. Even prosecutors were deprived to start by themselves criminal issues and to conduct investigative actions. Sanctioning the investigation as a separate body beyond the influence of the Ministry of Interior and other state bodies, including those of justice, was taken as an original form of organization that would separate definitively the investigations from the state security (Ministry of Interior). Establishment of the investigation as a special sphere of state activity regulated by the constitutional amendments, was considered an important organization and legal measure. According to the new constitutional framework of the law, the functions of the justice authorities were divided in the following way: a) investigation body used to investigate criminal offenses, b) the court made its judgment, c) while the prosecutor controlled the law enforcement.

The investigation body was organized and operated under the unique direction. The investigation bodies consisted of the General Investigation in the center (the capital) and investigation offices in the districts. General Investigation body was the highest investigation authority and consisted of the chairman, his deputies, departments and sectors. Departments were built along the lines of the most important offenses, while sectors by ancillary activity were needed for the investigative activity. Investigation offices in districts consisted of chairman, deputy and investigators.⁷

⁴ Article 7 of the Criminal Procedure Code drafted and approved in 1979.

⁵ Law No. 6799, on June 29th, 1983.

⁶ Law No. 6800, on June 29th, 1983.

The investigator was the main procedural figure, without whom no investigative action could be performed. The investigator used to act with initiative for the direction and development of investigations, for the detection of the offense and the author (guilty) and making any decision. The investigator was forced to conduct comprehensive, complete and objective investigations, as well as to apply the orders and instructions given by their superiors (President of Investigation in the district and President of the General Investigation). When the investigator didn't agree with the order given by its chairman in the district, he had the right to complain to the President of the General Investigation.

This organization manner of investigative bodies in Albania continued until June 1992. With the entry into force of Law no. 7574, dated June 24th, 1992 "On the organization of justice and some amendments in the codes of criminal and civil proceedings", Law no. 6800 dated June 29th, 1983 was repealed "On the Investigation Body in the People's Social Republic of Albania", decree for judicial organization and the law "On prosecution". With the relevant legal amendments, it was returned to the traditional right of the prosecution body to conduct investigative actions by itself, when valuating it reasonably. Meanwhile, it was returned to the prosecutor the function to exercise criminal investigation, as well as the right to direct and control the investigations.

The bodies and persons who had the right to conduct investigation of criminal offenses, after 1992, were: a) the prosecutor, when appreciated it reasonably, b) investigation body and c) the investigation police, included within the structures of the Ministry of Public Order. The Police Officers who had the right to conduct investigations, were assigned and removed from this duty upon approval of the Minister of Public Order and Minister of Justice, after receiving the opinion of the General Prosecutor. This organization level of investigation structures in Albania continued until 1995, when the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code were approved.

Code of Criminal Procedure was drafted and approved in 1995,⁸ and abolished the old code of 1979. The new code made a complete change as in the conception of criminal proceedings, as well as in the principles to be applied and in the operation of criminal procedural activity of each entity. Innovation of this code was the establishment of the judicial police as a special subject of criminal proceedings and the determination of legal status, composition, function and reports to the prosecution, court and other entities.

The lack of special legal norms was completed immediately by the decree no. 1188, dated August 10th, 1995 "On the Judicial Police." The decree in question arranged in detail the organization and operation of services and sections of the judicial police, the conditions for appointment, transfer, removal from office and disciplinary measures that could be taken against the employees of this service. In compliance with the new legal framework, it was possible to fully organize all services of the judicial police. In following at any district prosecution office, there were established sections of the judicial police, which had a duty to investigate the criminal offenses. In addition to these sections, the right to investigate enjoyed also the police at the

⁷ Articles 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the Law No. 6800, dated 29.06.1983 "On PSRA Investigation Office."

Ministry of Public Order, the military police, financial police and forestry police. For the progress of the work of these other bodies that were entitled to the investigation, there were issued also the relevant normative as the law "On Police of Public Order", the law "On State Police", the Law "On the service of internal control at the Ministry of Interior", the law "On Prisons Police", the law "On Financial Police" (which later was dissolved to establish the customs police and tax police), the law "On Forest Police", the law "On Military Police", the law "On Electrical Police", the law "On the Construction Inspectorate", the law "On the Organization and Functioning of the Municipal Police", etc. Most of these state bodies performed the investigative (procedural) activities under the direction and control of the prosecutor, and by the administrative side they were under leaders of respective structures where they took part. Finally it was accepted the system of Double Investigation Dependency (Judicial Police). This double dependency made it necessary to issue orders and common instructions of the General Prosecutor with the Minister of Finance and Minister of Interior.⁹

Laws and regulations have recently sanctioned precise rules for the functioning of the activities of services and sections of the judicial police. The Organic Law of the Judicial Police requires every officer and agent of the judicial police to respect the legal, procedural and material requirements, recognition, preservation and protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights, professionalism, integrity and secrecy of the investigation.¹⁰ Adhering to the duties specified in the law on the organization and functioning of the judicial police and the Criminal Procedure Code,¹¹ for keeping the confidentiality during the investigative process ensuring in this way normal investigative activity and avoiding any consequences that can induce the spread of secrecy of the investigation. Diffusion of investigation data is punished criminally under articles 295, 313/a and 313/b of the Criminal Code.

Judicial police, organization and functions in modern times

The organization of judicial police is regulated by the Criminal Procedure Code and Law No. 8677, dated November 02nd, 2000, "On the organization and functioning of the judicial police", as amended. The Criminal Procedure Code stipulates that judicial police functions are carried out: "From the officers and agents of the judicial police who belong to bodies, imposed by the law with the duty to investigate from the moment they become aware of the offense; by sections of the judicial police established at any district prosecution office and composed of judicial police personnel and judicial police services provided by the law".¹² While the organic law determines special arrangements for services and sections in line with the structures and new grades of

⁹ Two orders with the Ministry of Finance (No. 54, dated March 18th, 2002, "On the functioning of the judicial police services in tax police" and No. 56, on March 18th, 2002, "On the functioning of the judicial police sections") and common order of Ministry of Interior and the Prosecutor General No. 1227, dated April 01st, 2008 and No. 1075, dated April 15th, 2008, "On the functioning of the judicial police services in the State Police."

¹⁰ Articles 2 and 67 of Law no. 10 301, dated July 15th, 2010, On some amendments and additions to the Law Nr. 8677, dated November 02nd, 2000, "On the organization and functioning of the judicial police."

¹¹ Article 279/1 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

¹² Article 31 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

the new law no. 10301, dated July 15th, 2010, as well as other organic laws of the respective police.¹³ In other words, we can say that the judicial police in Albania is not only organized and functions in a single structure, but in some structures. Thus the judicial police is organized and functions: a) at any district prosecution and b) at any other state body that by law, is charged with the duty to investigate. The first are named sections of the judicial police and the latter are named services of the judicial police.

a) Judicial police sections

Sections of the judicial police are established and operate:

§ in prosecutions at criminal courts of first instance;

§ in prosecutions before other criminal courts of the judicial system.

Sections of the judicial police at the prosecutions consist of officers and agents of the judicial police designated by the competent heads of the police and other public institutions, lawyers and specialists from various fields of expertise. The organizational sections of the judicial police are determined in accordance with the needs and requirements for the fight against crime, taking into account the number of prosecutors and police personnel in service at each territorial unit, where the relevant prosecution exercises its jurisdiction. The General Prosecutor, in coordination with the Minister of Interior, Minister of Justice and the Ministers who have the competence police forces, exercising judicial police functions, every two years, based on the needs and requirements of the fight against crime, by joint order set:

§ the organization chart for each section of the Judicial Police;

§ Report of the employees assigned by the General Prosecutor with employees of police forces;

§ Police composition;

§ The appropriate number of staff to be appointed by each police force.

The competent ministers, within sixty days from the determination of the organization chart of the sections of the judicial police, are obliged to make the fulfillment of the respective organic number of officers and agents, provided for the sections of the judicial police. Members of the judicial police sections cannot be removed from the activity of the judicial police without the consent of the General Prosecutor. They cannot be replaced or removed from the concrete investigations assigned to them, despite the procedural moment in which this investigation is, except by decision of the director of prosecution.

b) Judicial police services

To complete the criminal procedural activity, in addition to sections of the judicial police, available to prosecutors and courts at all levels, it is also the staff of the judicial police services. This kind of service is included in all units of the state police as Criminal Police, Order Police, Traffic Police, Border Police, etc., but also in other polices as Military Police, Customs, Tax, Construction, Prisons Police, etc. This quality has any police officer that by organic law is entitled to investigate. The governing bodies of these services have an obligation to take care for the establishment of judicial police services. Judicial police services, when they become aware of the existence of a criminal

¹³ Articles 6-8 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

offense, shall be obliged to conduct procedural actions for detecting and documenting the crime and its perpetrator, to refer to the prosecutor without delay and to apply any order and instruction. With simple words, an officer of the state police in the service of the war against drugs or other police services, for as long as he doesn't perform the investigation of any offense, he is an ordinary officer and performs its functional tasks, provided in the legislation for the state police. But from the moment he comes into contact with a criminal offense and carries out investigations for its detection and documenting, this state police officer exercises immediately the functions of the judicial police officer pursuant to the criminal procedural provisions. The services of the judicial police, other from sections of the judicial police, that work permanently in the prosecutor's office and do not exercise any other function than that of the investigation, these services perform other functions in the state police for which they are specialized. Such services we have in the tax investigation units, customs investigative bodies, forest police and military police.

In terms of Article 31 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, there are services of judicial police all units of the State Police, of the police and other public institutions, to which, by law, the competent authority imposes the primary and continued task of performing functions provided for in Article 30 of this code.

The judicial police officer, with the duty of the higher management level that runs the services of the judicial police is responsible before the prosecutor leading the investigation for the implementation of tasks provided in the Code of Criminal Procedure and other legal provisions by the officers and agents of the judicial police under it. In cases when the service of the judicial police is organized and performs its functions in territorial national extension or in territorial jurisdiction of more than one court, the judicial police officer of the higher management level for the service, is responsible to the investigation before the prosecutor of the prosecution, leading the investigation by territorial or subject matter competence, defined for the latter in the Code of Criminal Procedure.

In all other cases, the judicial police officer of the highest management level for the service is responsible before the Head of the Prosecution, in whose territorial jurisdiction is placed the judicial police service center. The judicial police officer of the highest management level of service, submits to the competent Head of Prosecution the list of names, the level and respective grade of employees who take part in the judicial police services. This list is updated in cases of transfers, promotions or dismissals of employees within 10 days. The list is sent to the Head of competent Prosecution within 5 days of its update.

Transfer to another job, or promotion of the leaders of the judicial police services is performed by the respective police titular, after having obtained the prior consent of the General Prosecutor or the prosecutor to whom has been delegated this right by him. The objection of the General Prosecutor must be motivated and can not be made in cases of promotion of directors of the services of the judicial police. Requirement of prior consent of the General Prosecutor regarding the promotion, the role or rank, should be required for up to two years from the date when the head of the judicial police service is transferred or exercises no longer such functions.

Functions of the judicial police

With the judicial police functions should be understood all the legal and procedural duties that must meet (carry out) this subject of criminal proceedings, in addition to the activity carried out by other procedural subjects to detect and prevent criminal activity. Legal and procedural activities of the judicial police include a series of actions to be carried out by the judicial police, before, during the criminal proceeding and after issuing the final decision by the competent court. This activity is realized by the judicial police through the fulfillment of procedural and administrative functions.

Administrative activity of judicial police involves the application of coercive force of the law in order to prevent and detect possible criminal activity. In summary, administrative functions of all police authorities are the police tracing and law-enforcement and public safety, protection of life and property, supervision and control of state borders, supervision and control of traffic rules, preservation of institutions, facilities and certain facilities from potential risks, the restoration of order, aid in cases of natural disasters, etc. Given the mission, the number of organic composition, responsibilities and tasks, state police services bear the brunt in the entire activity of police services in the country. However, the other police services, such as tax investigation units, customs investigation authorities, military police and forestry police, although they are part of the judicial police services; the functions they exercise are mainly of administrative and preventive character. Thus, the administrative function of the structure of the tax investigation is to verify the registration and issuing tax certificates to all entities that conduct business activities, the implementation of austerity measures for tax collection, verification of documentation on the movement of goods and passengers in all kinds of transport, verification of using the excise stamps, etc. The administrative function of the customs authorities is to carry out inspection of goods, vehicles and passengers passing through customs areas and along the border by land, water and air, verifying the existence and authenticity of documents, examining their accounts and conducting other verifications according to the rules defined in the Customs Code. Administrative function of the military police is to maintain military rule in the Armed Forces, protection of military property in management and use, control of movement and use of funds and military technique, etc. Administrative function of forestry police is to control the implementation of legislation related to forests, pastures, protected areas, wild flora and fauna, hunting activities and other activities that take place in the national forest fund by different entities (Rica, 2011, 126). Administrative activity of all the services of the judicial police precedes the criminal proceedings. This phase of the administrative activity creates conditions for the start of proceedings, the gathering of required information (data), and taking preventive measures for the possible consequences associated with criminal activity. During this administrative activity when it is noticed the violation of the law, and this offense contains elements of a criminal offense, then the official of structures of tax investigation, of customs authorities, of military police or forest police, with the double attribution he enjoys under organic law and the Code of Criminal Procedure, shall exercise the duties as an officer or agent of the judicial police and performs all necessary procedural actions authorized by law and ordered

by the prosecutor.¹⁴ Other services such as construction and urban planning inspectorate, municipal police, electric police and prisons police do not enjoy the double attribution of the judicial police. These services, when during their work ascertain the elements of any criminal offense, are forced to denounce at criminal prosecuting authorities (prosecutor or judicial police). Performing the verification and investigation operations for these charges is determined by the prosecutor, according to subject matter and land jurisdiction, or because of related proceedings. The procedural activity of judicial police includes all the actions to be carried out during criminal proceedings to executing final court decisions. Judicial police functions are defined in Article 30 of the Criminal Procedure Code and Article 2 of Law no. 10.301, dated July 15th, 2010, On some amendments and additions to the Law Nr. 8677, dated November 02nd, 2000, "On the organization and functioning of the judicial police."

Conclusions

This paper analyzed the legal provisions related to the judicial police in different periods in Albania coming to the conclusion that there is a big difference in the organization of judicial police. Differentiation between them comes to the fact that the provisions of the organic law on judicial police are amended and improved several times in accordance with the requirements dictated by time, while the criminal procedural provisions for judicial police, are the same since 1995, when the Criminal Procedure Code was drafted the adopted. Such a situation calls for changes in the Criminal Procedure Code, as the same institutes (functions in this case) cannot have different definitions in different laws.

We think that the subject that should perform the investigation of the criminal trial must be the one and only and it is the *judicial police* under the leadership and direction of the prosecution as the only criminal and procedural entity that carries out criminal prosecution, investigates, controls preliminary investigations and brings the case before court. On the other hand, we believe that the role and function of the state police should only be reconnaissance, tracking, preventive, informative, reporting and delegating. Duality of functions of the judicial police in the investigation in other entities would create stagnation and would bring embarrassment and arbitrariness.

Collection of investigative powers only in a single hand of the judicial police, and not in the hands of other police entities, would bring enough efficiency and accountability of the investigation. We note that the leader and the head of the investigation of the criminal proceedings should be only the prosecution as a subject of criminal procedural law.

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