



## EXTREMISM IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Khoshimov Ulugbek Mukhiddin ugli

Doctoral student of the basic doctoral program of the Faculty of Postgraduate Education of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Captain

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**Abstract:** The article addresses the increasing incidence of extremism in the field of information technology. In the era of modern technological innovations, the internet and social networks are widely used as new channels for disseminating extremist ideas. This article analyzes the methods extremists use to exploit information technologies, their impact on society, including the risks of organizing terrorism and other illegal activities through high-tech means. The article presents proposals for improving counter-extremism measures, information security strategies, and identifying and preventing extremist elements in cyberspace. Special attention is paid to the importance of cooperation between the state, society, and technology companies in protecting information technologies from extremism.

**Keywords:** information technology, extremism, internet, cybersecurity, social networks, cyberterrorism.

**Introduction:** In today's globalized world, amid emerging conflicts and disputes at international and regional levels, the issue of combating destructive ideologies such as extremism, radicalism, and terrorism is becoming an urgent topic on the agenda. This can be attributed to the fact that the majority of people falling under the influence of extremist and foreign ideas are young people, and their numbers are growing. In this regard, our esteemed President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, in his address to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan on December 20, 2022, stated: "We will mobilize all our strength and capabilities to further strengthen the atmosphere of interethnic friendship, harmony between religious confessions, and social tolerance. The growing threats of radicalism, extremism, terrorism, human trafficking, and drug addiction around the world, unfortunately, do not bypass us either. But I repeat, in our land, where great scholars like Imam Bukhari, Imam Termizi, and Imam Moturidi have taught the Muslim ummah, could there be those who have strayed from this path, those who have succumbed to the ideas of radicalism and extremism? We will not allow any radicalization in our society, poisoning the minds of our youth with destructive foreign ideas, using religion for political purposes, or allowing ignorance to replace enlightenment[1]."

As the head of our state emphasized, terrorism, extremism, and fundamentalism are recognized by all countries of the world as aggression that threatens peace and tranquility in society. Combating such vices and preventing their negative consequences is one of the urgent topics of today. Currently, extremism, with its negative impact on the life of society and the disruption of the social system, is causing concern in all countries of the world.

The dissemination of extremist materials through social networks on the Internet further accelerates the processes of radicalization. The Internet audience primarily consists of young people. The technical capabilities of information and telecommunication systems used in the creation and dissemination of extremist information allow for achieving effective

propaganda with minimal costs. Currently, most terrorist acts are aimed at exerting informational and psychological influence on the general public, which, in turn, creates favorable conditions for terrorists to achieve their criminal goals.

In addition, at the initiative of the head of our state, in order to ensure the peace of the country and the tranquility of citizens, it is no coincidence that in accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated July 1, 2021 No. 6255 "On Approving the National Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Combating Extremism and Terrorism for 2021-2026," attention is paid to the issues of combating extremism and terrorism and minimizing its negative consequences.

In turn, specialists and scientists have divided extremism into several parts, Doctor of Philosophy A.Yu. Lavrentyeva[2], D.V. Molenkov[3] and A.G. Nikitin[4] scientifically substantiated the existence of religious, political, national, and economic types of extremist activity.

Agreeing with the opinions of the above-mentioned scholars, it can be said that the main part of the unrest and disorder occurring in the countries of the world today is related to religious, political, and economic issues. From this, it is clear that extremism manifests itself not in one specific area, but in several characteristics. S.V.Ivantsov, S.V.Borisov, G.I.Uzembraeva, T.L.Muzychuk, and Yu.Yu.Tishchenko, who conducted research within the framework of the branch of religious extremism, emphasized that religious extremism poses a greater danger to society than other branches of extremism. Extremism develops simultaneously with destructive ideas closely related in meaning, such as terrorism, fundamentalism, and radicalism.

Extremism[6] in the Uzbek language literally means adherence to extreme, extraordinary methods in politics and ideology, and adherence to drastic measures. Furthermore, Article 3 of the Law "On Combating Extremism" of June 28, 2018, defines it as an expression of extreme forms of actions aimed at destabilizing the socio-political situation, forcibly changing the constitutional order of the Republic of Uzbekistan, forcibly seizing power and appropriating its powers, inciting national, racial, ethnic, or religious hatred[7].

In this regard, the Islamic scholar K.Dustmukhammad[8] evaluates extremism as an "Extreme" value, seeing it as a value in relations from the highest to the lowest, according to which extreme deviation of people from religious and secular norms expresses this, and specialist A.Ziyadullaev[9] evaluated it as the rejection of traditional religious values and beliefs for society, the promotion of ideas contrary to them through deception and violence. Doctor of Juridical Sciences, Ruslan Sugapovich Tamaev[10] evaluates extremism as a firm commitment to one's beliefs and convictions. N.V. Valodina[11] assessed extremism as a feeling of the extreme value of the ideas being believed in, unconditional complete submission to the methods of achieving the chosen goals.

Uzbek Islamic scholar M.Abduhamidov notes that today extremism manifests itself in the form of political, religious, ideological, economic, ethnocultural and other phenomena, has a modern and individual vision, ideological pressure, ideological persecution, violence, extermination and murder, which are extremist approaches based on any manifestation of behavior, which contradict the principles of democracy, justice, and humanism that the modern enlightened world strives for. Therefore, he believes that extremist behavior, in whatever form it is carried out, is essentially a crime against humanity[12].



Having considered the opinions of such specialists as K.Dustmukhammad, A.Ziyadullaev, N.V.Valodina, and R.Tamaev, and supplementing their reflections, extremism can be assessed as a strong belief in Islam without a proper understanding of its true essence, rejection of changes in society, excessive delving into religion, and at the same time, attempting to apply their ideas in society, mainly opposing the adoption of new laws and values, and opposing certain social and political changes.

Regarding when and how extremism emerged, several scholars, in particular historians J.M. Berger[13] and Umayr Mirza[14], believe that the first appearance of extremism is associated with the Kharijites of the 7th century, specifically with the Kharijites' opposition to Caliph Ali and their harsh attitude towards his fatwas. Another group of scholars, M. Lerua[15] and A. Lutoev[16], believe that extremism by the 20th century had transitioned to its mode of manifestation, since they considered extremists to be supporters of political parties based on dogmatic ideas. When we analyze the research processes of M. Lerua and A. Lutoev, we see that they did not deeply interpret religious extremism, since they mainly focused on the theory of political extremism, therefore, from the point of view of the history of extremism, the views of J.M. Berger and Umayr Mirza can be considered valid, since it is no secret that since the emergence of Islam, there have been different views and different interpretations of it.

From this, it can be said that extremism has been associated with the formation of a strong attitude towards the principles of law and the basis of its implementation since the emergence of Islam.

According to the collected data, religious extremism is the most widespread in the countries of the world, which is also called Islamic extremism. However, this definition is used unreasonably, because extremism can be found not only in Islam but in many other world religions, particularly Christianity, Buddhism, and others. B.A. Matlyubov, in his textbook "Combating Terrorism and Extremism: Problems and Solutions," assessed extremism as one of the most widespread manifestations of modern terrorism, pursuing certain political goals using certain religious dogmas and restructuring the world of politics based on its own principles, influencing people's consciousness based on religious dogmas and values[17].

From foreign countries, the Federal Law of the Russian Federation No. 114 "On Combating Extremist Activity" of July 22, 2002, adopts the concepts of "extremism" and "extremist activity" in the same sense, indicating a list of actions that form the basis of these concepts.

Such actions, in particular:

- Forcible change of the foundations of the constitutional order and violation of the integrity of the Russian Federation;
- mass justification of terrorism and other terrorist activities;
- incitement of social, racial, national or religious hatred;
- promoting an individual's exclusivity, superiority, or inferiority based on their social, racial, national, religious, or linguistic affiliation or attitude towards religion;
- violation of the rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests of a person and citizen based on their social, racial, national, religious, or linguistic affiliation or attitude towards religion;
- financing the specified acts or providing other assistance in their organization, preparation and implementation, including by providing educational, printing and material



and technical means, telephone and other types of communication or information services[18].

- in combination with obstruction of the exercise of citizens' electoral rights and the right to participate in the referendum or violation of the secrecy of voting, violence or threats of its use;

- obstruction of the lawful activity of state bodies, local government bodies, election commissions, public and religious associations or other organizations, combined with the threat of violence or its use;

The fact that the main part of crimes related to extremism is committed today precisely through information technologies and the Internet has made it even more difficult to fight against it. It is no secret that information technologies in human life (including the Internet) not only make life easier, but also pose a number of dangers. After all, among internet users there are carriers and disseminators of extremist ideas and views, the influence of which can fall on any person. Along with the development of information technologies, related fields have also risen to certain levels. At this point, it should be noted that along with the proper use of the Internet, there are cases of its use for criminal purposes, that is, the theft of information from other persons, the dissemination of false information, the organization of cyberattacks, conducting hidden communications, and a number of other negative situations.

Information, online extremism should be understood as "the achievement of public and illegal goals, carried out using information technologies, associated with forms of socio-psychological and mediated physical destructive influence, the result of which is public and illegal"[19].

Due to active development in the last decade, the Internet is increasingly used in the global segment by terrorist and extremist organizations for their propaganda purposes. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the weakness of the ability to control websites complicates and costs the fight against destructive trends[20].

According to the Statistics Agency in September 2024, as of January 1, 2024, the number of subscribers connected to the Internet in Uzbekistan was 30.1 million. This indicator increased by 12.5% compared to the corresponding period last year. The largest number of subscribers was in the city of Tashkent - 6.3 million, and the smallest number of subscribers was in the Syrdarya region - 0.7 million.

In addition, according to the data provided for January 2024, the level of internet use in Uzbekistan was 83.3% of the total population. In numerical terms, this means 29.52 million users.

Cyber-extremism can be considered one of the subtypes of "information extremism," which, in turn, is characterized by the following parameters[22]:

- 1) impersonality, anonymity;
- 2) immorality (fragmentary functioning of the spiritual and moral space);
- 3) radicalism;
- 4) antisosity (creates a space for conflict);
- 5) Institutionalality (at the level of marginal space);
- 6) disruption of political and legal thinking;
- 7) illegality of the results.

According to the analysis, from January 2023 to January 2024, the number of internet users in Uzbekistan increased by 436,000 people, or by 1.5%. Interestingly, at the beginning



of 2024, 5.91 million people did not use the internet at all. This means that 16.7% of the population was offline[23]. Currently, there is a need to clarify the concepts of increasingly popular extremist materials and extremist content and to introduce them into legislation. The concept of extremist material[24] is defined in the Law on Combating Extremism as a document or other information in any medium intended for dissemination that publicly calls for the implementation of extremist activity or substantiates or publicly justifies the need to carry out such activity.

However, clarifying the concepts of content and extremist content presents some difficulties. Because the concept of content is given different definitions in scientific explanations, and the word content in dictionaries is derived from the English word [content[25]] and means meaning, content, content, topic, event, event. In some Russian sources, Content (derived from the English word "content") is defined as a general term describing any information on the pages of a website, indicating that it can be texts, audio and video files, graphic images, animation that the user can read, see, or hear on the site[26]. Among Russian scholars, Tatiana Sergeevna Pavlenko[27] in her articles assessed the concept of content as "information that comes to us from the virtual field of the media communication sphere in the form of photographs, images, video, and audio files." Another scholar, Anastasia Uminskaya[28], believes that literature, music, films, television programs and series, meaningful texts, graphics, video and audio materials posted on the Internet are called content.

Agreeing with the opinion of the above-mentioned scientists, it can be said that content can be assessed as a set of digital data that is prepared, distributed, and displayed through information technologies, social networks of the Internet, and web pages, but is not physically available.

Based on this, it is advisable to assess the concept of "extremist content" as digital information prepared, distributed, and displayed through information technologies, social networks, and web pages that promote political, social, and religious extremism, enriched with the content of fundamentalism and fanaticism, or causing interethnic, racial, and religious conflicts.

Thus, the main difference between extremist content and extremist materials is that extremist content is information in digital formats that does not exist in real life, cannot be physically connected and transported, and can only be viewed, heard, read, watched, and distributed through social networks and websites.

According to Doctor of Juridical Sciences Rudik Mikhail Viktorovich and Volkov Dmitry Vasilyevich, "information extremism on social networks is a multi-level concept that embodies the manipulation of public consciousness, the incitement of interethnic and interreligious hatred, and the dissemination of artificially created rumors"[29]. In particular, in this regard, lawyers A.S. Nerubekov and E.S. Eliseeva[30] substantiated in their research that the Internet allows concealing both the author and the source of the publication for a certain period of time, while printed materials require all grounds for initiating legal proceedings and bringing content creators to criminal responsibility. Often, sources of extremism are located outside the country, which makes it difficult to block information and prevent its promotion and dissemination.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the main part of crimes committed through information communications and the Internet consists of types of crimes related to



extremism. We have analyzed the opinions of specialists and scientists on this issue. From this, it can be seen that the main part of the information on the Internet is presented directly to the attention of people without filtering (not from a reliable source). This leads to people who are not directly aware of this situation falling under the influence of false information.

In connection with these facts, one of the priority tasks of the state is to ensure national security in the field of information and digital technologies by improving the regulatory framework and introducing new technical means that contribute to the implementation of preventive measures against the spread of extremist ideology in the unified information space of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The lack of control, which leads to the impunity of the dissemination of prohibited information on the Internet, is the reason for the increased criminal activity of extremist organizations.

In order to prevent such negative influences and timely detect this type of crime, there is a need to study and implement the practical experience of developed countries, to monitor and analyze various content in messengers, which are popular on social networks.

The operational situation regarding the prevention, detection, suppression, and exposure of extremist crimes, as well as the organization, coordination, and support of such activities by internal affairs bodies, remains difficult. The fight against extremist movements is becoming one of the priority areas of the operational activities of internal affairs bodies today.

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