
Interview of the Chairman of the Investigative Committee of Russia to TASS informational agency



On September 20, an 18-year-old freshman student staged a shooting at the Perm National Research University, which killed six people and injured about 40. The Chairman of the Investigative Committee of Russia Alexander Bastrykin explained TASS why such tragedies are increasingly occurring in educational institutions, what is the impact of the Internet and social networks on young people, how to protect children and what measures are needed to prevent such situations in future.

- Alexander Ivanovich, what do you think is the main reason for such tragedies?

- First of all, I would like to express my deep condolences to all the families of those killed and injured at the Perm State National Research University. The armed attack against people is a big tragedy for every citizen of our country. I wish all the injured to get well soon. The Investigative Committee of Russia will support students and their parents who survived this tragedy. The main

reasons for this and other similar cases are related to the fact that teenagers do not receive a sufficient level of education and culture. Many of their moral values and guidelines are blurred. Their main desire is to obtain material prosperity by any means. The Internet, television, social networks have become a source of education that cultivates violence, indifference to the problems of peers, and immorality. Children should be taken out of the Internet, and not immersed there for budget money.

- Who, in your opinion, is responsible for the incident?

- Unfortunately, no lessons have been learned from previous tragedies, no conclusions have been drawn. As before in cases of other similar incidents, the society raises questions to law enforcement agencies. It is fair, but, unfortunately, we have to admit that the specialized state bodies, which are authorized to deal not only with the educational process, but also with the upbringing of our youth, still fail to take sufficient measures in their main area of activity. Earlier, I have repeatedly proposed to intensify the work of the organization "Russian movement of schoolchildren", which has been operating for several years, which should help in these matters. But I asked a lot of people and only a few had heard about this movement. And what measures are they taking and what initiatives are they implementing to educate spiritual and moral values in children and adolescents? The activities of this organization are rather formal in nature and have not acquired an all-encompassing character and cannot have any positive impact on the formation of moral guidelines among young people.

We have repeatedly called on the leadership of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Ministry of Education for a constructive dialogue, but to no avail. The attacks continue, people are dying. In recent years, there have been about a dozen attacks on educational institutions in various regions.

I have recently been to Perm, where I met with the students of the University where the tragedy occurred. The students are confused, worried and do not know what to do, how to live further, they do not feel safe.

- Do you see the main problem of the tragedies that have taken place in those who the adolescents are seeing as heroes?

- If there is no one to give the youth the correct guidelines and values, they will look at what is around, and this is often self-interest, selfishness, anger and hatred. All this contributes to the formation of certain personality traits and, as a result, leads to aggression.

Teenagers are guided by the heroes of computer games who solve problems "simply" - by eliminating the opponent. Now this has been added to the mass of various negative content on the Internet. In pursuit of profit and fame, bloggers create videos of bullying people, committing dubious acts, often illegal. Their posts are viewed by millions of teenagers who may follow a bad example. What more can I say, if even in theatrical performances and feature films funded by the

state, created supposedly with a good purpose, they manage to distort the classics, making the protagonists those who recently opened fire at schools? And what values can be formed in adolescents who watch all this? The answer is obvious. Often, when reading news about a particular exhibition or production, the essence of which outrages the public, I give instructions to pay attention to them, to study them, because we are talking about our values, if we lose them, we will lose our humanity.

This is a big problem of the modern society. We are used to saying that children are our future. And in the current conditions, we see a situation in which there can be no talk of the formation of a healthy psyche and generally accepted norms of behavior in these people. Striving for material goods is normal, but the willingness to violate the law and morality at the same time leads to no good.

- It is known that similar attacks were carried out in educational institutions of other regions, mainly in schools. Has any research been conducted to show who is most susceptible to this behavior? Does the Internet have any influence on this?

- Based on the analysis carried out by the Investigative Committee, we came to the conclusion that the main risk group for committing these crimes is minors aged 13 to 16 years or who have recently reached the age of majority. Such adolescents have a problem of socialization, difficulties in communicating with peers, which is most often manifested as a subjective rejection of themselves in society. Moreover, bullying or physical violence by classmates does not always take place.

Most often, the problem of socialization has the nature of opposing oneself to society, unwillingness, inability to communicate with others, and is associated with a subjective feeling of one's uniqueness, isolation, feeling chosen, or a direct aggressive attitude towards peers. All of these minors are registered in social networks. There they acquire information on ways and methods of committing offenses. In closed groups, the participants unite and form a sense of belonging to a group of like-minded people, a sense of identification with the "chosen ones", opposed to the "ordinary" majority of people. The destructive information received by adolescents on the Web leads to the fact that violence in the minds of children becomes natural and normal, and they also see that the attackers turn into heroes in the media and social networks. This is very dangerous.

It should also be noted that people like-minded with these antiheroes who shoot in educational institutions appear very quickly. They literally protect them, considering them almost victims of circumstances, raise funds to support them, write positive comments on social networks. Such false assessments by young people of what is happening are also dangerous, and we need to work with it. The impact of the incident in Perm encouraged other minors to want to repeat such actions. Recently the investigative authorities initiated verification of data from social networks about the similar offenses being prepared in Rostov-On-Don and Vologda Region. In the Krasnoyarsk Territory, an attack on a technical school was prevented and a young man who intended to commit such a deed was detained.

- Do the educational institutions themselves have to solve such problems?

- They have to participate in this process more actively. I'm talking about that because this issue is also relevant for us, as the Investigative Committee has a quite developed network of educational institutions. After the tragedy in Kazan, where nine students were shot in May of this year, the leadership of educational institutions throughout the country was obliged to strengthen the security measures for schoolchildren, students and teachers, introducing video surveillance systems and electronic access to buildings, metal detector frames, and alarm buttons everywhere. Ensure comprehensive interaction in this important area with representatives of all law enforcement agencies. However, that wasn't done. The tragedy in Perm showed the lack of a clear algorithm for actions in extreme situations among the responsible officials of the administration and personnel.

I would also like to note that in order to prevent youth and teenage aggression, the Investigative Committee has repeatedly come up with an initiative to increase the staffing and financial support of the psychological service in educational organizations. Qualified psychologists who are proficient in innovative methods and technologies for the prevention of illegal behavior can take timely measures to provide psychological and pedagogical assistance to students.

It is also necessary to strengthen state control over the work of private security companies that ensure the safety of educational institutions, and to thoroughly check their readiness to perform their functions. Introduce uniform security standards everywhere, including for security equipment - video surveillance and alarms. It is also necessary to significantly improve the quality of the provided security services, primarily the technical equipment of the security personnel. In addition, it has already been repeatedly said that the criterion for the selection of private security organizations should not be the low cost of services, but the qualifications of the employees.

At the same time, parental committees should more actively monitor the quality of the security services provided. This is a very effective tool, since claims, which are often fair, lead to verification of the activities of private security companies. And the result of this may be the revocation of the license.

- The young man from Perm posed threats to a teacher, while studying in school. Why did nobody take it seriously?

- This is a good question. Of course, as part of the criminal case, the investigators will study what those threats were, where and how he expressed them, and they will interrogate witnesses. Obviously, you won't surprise anyone with such remarks, many are accustomed to hearing different kinds of negativity. And in this situation, I can assume that, on the one hand, his peers who heard something like that from him simply did not take these words seriously. On the other hand, they were focused only on themselves, the problems of others did not bother them.

We understand that there should be a completely different reaction and concrete response to such

words and statements. After all, a person cannot talk about the desire to kill someone just like that. As a rule, there are specific reasons - dissatisfaction with the behavior of others, their own lives, unfulfilled dreams, envy, and other factors. But such problems can be resolved in the course of normal human communication, the work of psychologists, the help of friends and relatives. And we must do everything so that internal psychological problems are solved this way.

- Now digitalization processes continue in our country and in the world. The attitude to this can be different. Do you think this phenomenon can contribute to the safety of children if lessons are delivered online?

- Digitalization helps in achieving many goals and simplifies individual processes, which is undoubtedly positive, but at the same time it simplifies the consciousness and behavior of people. Online communication in the absence of personal communication can also have negative consequences. It is important to work with young people already at the stage of the formation of their individual psychological personality traits. This process is much more effective in the course of direct communication in a social group.

Remember how people lived earlier? In the Soviet Union, there were student detachments, whose members took part in the construction of various objects, and pioneer camps. Hundreds of thousands of students were involved in the youth movement every year. Now this movement continues to work within the framework of a public organization, but its scale needs to be expanded.

The other issue is obtaining higher education. Previously, it was completely free, now more and more students in prestigious universities study on a paid basis. The availability of high-quality higher education is important for the society.

It is necessary to provide students with worthy scholarships, actively develop student self-government. This will open up opportunities for them to actively participate in the life of universities and teach them not only to express their point of view, but also to hear the opinions of others, to solve problems together. I am sure that then young people will have completely different views of themselves and those around them.

- Let's sum up. Which of the listed measures are the key ones in your opinion?

- First of all, it is necessary to continue reforming of the educational system. Strengthen its educational potential, for which it is necessary to consistently increase funding for educational institutions, increasing the prestige of the profession of teachers and psychologists. The level of mutual trust of children, their parents and teachers is extremely important. If it is high, the effectiveness of prevention of deviant behavior in adolescents and prevention of problem situations in interpersonal communication increases. This is what we should strive for.

Secondly, to take additional measures to protect young people from information that threatens their

well-being, security and development. As well as measures for prevention, suppression and disclosure of crimes related to the manipulation of the consciousness of citizens, including minors, through social networks. It is necessary to adopt the updated Concept of Integrated Information Security as soon as possible.

Thirdly, to impose restrictions on the demonstration of scenes of violence, cruelty, various manifestations of immoralism and immorality on public federal channels, to exclude various talk and reality shows that desocialize young people. The connection between them and aggression has been proven for a long time, as well as the influence of such broadcasts on youth crime and the intellectual development of minors. It's no secret that many of them go headlong into social networks and computer games, completely forgetting about real life. It is necessary to strive to ensure that children and adolescents learn to distinguish, as Vladimir Mayakovsky wrote, "what is good and what is bad." To do this, it is necessary to actively disseminate social advertising, promote a healthy lifestyle and sports.

Fourth, it is necessary to widely introduce constant psychological testing of students of educational institutions for the prevention of delinquency in the youth environment and identification of risk groups.

And finally, to encourage and develop children's and youth movements, to take measures to revive and modernize all-Russian sports events. Moreover, it should be done exclusively at the amateur level for adolescents and young people with the introduction of a bonus fund, which will allow young people to spend their physical energy and at the same time dramatically increase the number of participants, enhance their motivation to win.

We must follow the path of forming high moral values, clear life guidelines among young people, so that they can set goals in life and at the same time adequately analyze and evaluate various situations and actions of others. To take care of and notice the problems of those who are nearby, to understand when and how to provide assistance to comrades, involving adults and specialists in this process.

In conclusion, I would like to note that a caring attitude towards the younger generation today is of key importance for our country, because it is the youth that is the main potential of modern Russia, which will ensure the dynamic development of our country. Even people who found themselves in the terrible conditions of besieged Leningrad during the Great Patriotic War took care of their children, tried not only to protect and save their lives, but also to raise a generation that would be worth their ancestors.

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