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TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE FIELD OF CIVIL PROTECTION IN TIMES OF WAR: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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The full-scale military operations in Ukraine that have been underway since 2022 have become an unprecedented challenge for the entire public administration system. One of the key areas that has experienced a significant burden is the civil protection system, a set of measures aimed at protecting the life, health and safety of citizens in emergency situations. The current war, which is accompanied by massive shelling, destruction of critical infrastructure, and forced displacement of the population, requires a rethinking of both the functional and strategic approach to managing this area [1].

Thus, the study of the transformation of public administration in the field of civil protection in wartime is extremely important from both scientific and theoretical and practical points of view, as it contributes to the development of comprehensive approaches to strengthening the security capabilities of the state in conditions of long-term instability.

In the process of transformation of public administration in the field of civil protection in wartime, special attention should be paid to identifying the key problems that hinder the effective implementation of management decisions, so the analysis of the main challenges allows for a deeper understanding of the systemic constraints faced by the authorities and determining the vectors of further changes in the regulatory, organizational and resource dimensions [2].

The main challenges of transformation of public administration in the field of civil protection in the conditions of war:

1) Low institutional readiness for crisis response – most public authorities were not structurally, staffed and resourced to fulfill their tasks in the context of large-scale hostilities. The absence of pre-rehearsed response scenarios led to complications in the coordination and management of civilian protection.

2) Insufficient level of interagency and vertical coordination – uncoordinated interaction between central, regional and local authorities, as well as with law enforcement agencies, humanitarian organizations and volunteer initiatives, makes it difficult to form a single management space in the field of public security.

3) Fragmented legal framework – the existing legal framework in many cases does not meet the realities of modern hybrid warfare, which complicates prompt decision-making, distribution of powers and resources, and implementation of preventive measures.

4) Limited resource potential – the shortage of financial, material and human resources at the local level, especially in communities affected by hostilities, significantly reduces the effectiveness of civil protection measures, including evacuation, medical care, sheltering and infrastructure restoration.

5) Low level of digital integration and cybersecurity – in times of war, information security and digital resilience of public authorities are of particular importance. At the same time, many structures do not have the proper hardware, software, or trained personnel to deal with cyber challenges.

6) Lack of a proper system of strategic communications – the lack of clear, coordinated, transparent communication with the public makes it difficult to build trust in the government, spreads panic, promotes disinformation and weakens the mobilization readiness of the population.

7) Insufficient involvement of civil society – despite the active role of volunteers and non-governmental organizations, their participation in systemic public administration and decision-making remains limited. The lack of mechanisms for partnership and integration of civic initiatives weakens the overall effectiveness of civil protection [3].

The identified challenges demonstrate the systemic vulnerability of the existing model of public administration in the field of civil protection, which makes it impossible to respond effectively to war threats. In this context, it is of particular importance to identify strategic priorities, the implementation of which should become the basis for modernizing governance mechanisms and

ensuring the sustainability of the state in a protracted military crisis. Understanding the large-scale challenges faced by the system of public administration in the field of civil protection in times of war necessitates the identification of strategic priorities aimed at its deep transformation and adaptation to modern security realities. Strategic priorities for the transformation of public administration in the sphere of civil protection in time of war:

1) Strengthening the institutional capacity of public authorities – formation of an effective, adaptive and sustainable management vertical in the civil protection system. Particular attention should be paid to the development of crisis management, improvement of the organizational structure and professional development of personnel at all levels of public administration.

2) Decentralization of civil protection management – expanding the powers and resources of local governments in the field of public safety, creating conditions for effective response to emergencies at the level of territorial communities, and introducing mechanisms of local crisis management.

3) Reforming the regulatory framework for civil protection – updating the legislative framework to take into account the challenges of hybrid warfare and the standards of the European Union. It is necessary to create a comprehensive system of legal regulation that will clearly define the powers, areas of responsibility and tools for interagency cooperation [4].

4) Integration of digital technologies into management processes – implementation of intelligent monitoring, early warning, risk management and coordination systems. The development of digital infrastructure, cyber defense and information interaction between civil protection actors are key conditions for modern response to threats.

5) Development of partnership mechanisms between the state, civil society and international organizations – formation of a resilience network through the involvement of the public, volunteer associations, business and international partners in the implementation of civil protection measures. It is important to ensure institutionalization of such interactions and their regulatory consolidation.

6) Formation of an effective system of strategic communications – establishment of transparent, targeted and crisis-resistant channels of communication between the authorities and the population. Ensuring timely information, countering disinformation, and strengthening public trust in public authorities are essential for national security.

7) Development of the system of training and education in the field of civil protection – institutionalization of continuous training, professional development of employees, implementation of training programs for the population focused on actions in crisis situations. An important aspect is also training taking into account modern military and technological threats [5].

Thus, the conditions of a full-scale war have become a powerful catalyst for transformation processes in the public administration system, especially in such a critical area as civil protection. An analysis of the functioning of state institutions under martial law has revealed numerous challenges: institutional unpreparedness, insufficient interagency coordination, fragmented legal and regulatory framework, limited resource potential, poor digital integration, and low efficiency of strategic communications. At the same time, the war also revealed a significant potential for renewing public administration. The main priorities include strengthening the institutional capacity of public authorities, decentralization of governance, updating the regulatory framework, digitalization of management processes, developing partnerships with civil society and international organizations, creating an effective system of strategic communications, and forming a comprehensive system of education and training.

The implementation of these priorities is possible only if there is political will, targeted state policy, interagency cooperation and broad public participation. The transformation of public administration in the field of civil protection should be seen not only as a response to the threats of war, but as a foundation for building a new, sustainable, flexible and human-centered system of public administration in the post-war future.

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