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## **ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF UKRAINIAN POLICE REFORM**

It's been two years since Ukraine's new National Police officially replaced the old militia. But now, the National Police's effectiveness is being called into question due to a recent series of high profile murders and crimes. Though the authorities maintain that the police system is undergoing changes, advocates for reforms and law enforcement reform experts are taking a more critical stance on their progress. During the 2013-2014 Euromaidan Revolution, Ukrainian security forces fired on protesters, killing around a hundred people. The new government under Petro Poroshenko held the Berkut special police force largely responsible. In response, the government initiated a plan to reform Ukrainian law enforcement by replacing the old patrol police force (the Militsiya) and dissolving the Berkut completely.

In July 2015, Ukrainian Minister of Internal Affairs Arsen Avakov launched the new patrol police force in the country's capital, Kyiv. The process was then repeated with the establishment of new

patrol police departments in regional capitals across Ukraine. Departments were also set up in other key towns, focusing on Ukraine's borders with the European Union and the frontline of the war in Donbas. On November 7, 2015, the new National Police officially replaced the old militia.

The creation of the new patrol police is often heralded as one of the few successful reforms of Ukrainian law enforcement. Law enforcement reform expert Eugene Krapivin underscored that "all other initiatives" aimed at police reform in the wake of Maidan - Including those targeting the criminal police and investigative forces

- were "just plans."

Although Avakov allegedly planned to fully replace the Militsiya, Krapivin claims that of the number of new patrol police accounts for just 12,000 of the 140,000 police officers in the country

- less than ten percent. Krapivin has also called into question the effectiveness of the mechanisms used for replacing former Militsiya officers. "Eight percent of previous militia were dismissed by the results of attestation," he said. "And half of them were returned [to the police] by court decision." Krapivin suggested that this is due to legislation that allows former officers to return to the police force after being dismissed. "And our country pays them nearly 55 billion hryvnia [over \$2 billion] because they didn't work [in] this past year after attestation," he said.

Ahead of Ukraine's 2019 Presidential and Parliamentary elections the issue of police reforms is critical. And changes to the patrol police provide some hope for further developments. "I can't say everything is going badly. There are positive aspects, part of them is the little changes to the police's work and some positive experience in different regions [of Ukraine]," Kobzin said. We can see that future of Ukraine's law enforcement reforms remains unclear. Police reform is a slow-going reform and we really don't know the direction of this reform.

Nevertheless, Avakov maintains that the Ministry is making progress. "The police reform hasn't come to an end yet. I believe that we have gone through about 25-30% of the police reform," he said. In his words, even Strategy 2020 - the Ministry of Internal Affairs'

recently announced development strategy - Is “an abstract document” lacking “concrete measures”. Avakov presented Strategy 2020 at a meeting of Ukraine’s Cabinet of Ministers.

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