



## THE SECURITY CHALLENGES OF ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS

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### Abstract

Modern ecological movements, while being key actors in the positive global initiative for environmental protection and the fight against climate change, face challenges that can potentially undermine security and political stability. The radicalisation of certain factions within these movements, their connections with extremist groups, and the possibility of negative, subversive instrumentalisation by foreign actors pose serious threats to both the public order and the constitutional system. This paper, aiming to provide a scientific contribution to social ecology as a branch of sociology, analyses the dynamic relationship between ecological activism and national security. It explores how and under what conditions ecological movements, engaged in the protection of natural resources, might endanger political stability in democratic societies. This is achieved through the study of current techniques for identifying and preventing security threats. Special emphasis is placed on counterintelligence protection and the challenges posed by radicalised ecological activists. By analysing both international and domestic cases, the paper examines threats to the constitutional order as well as strategies for achieving the necessary balance between, on the one hand, the right to free assembly and ecological activism, and, on the other hand, the right to national security.

**Key words:** ecological movements, security, radicalisation, constitutional order, counterintelligence protection, counterterrorism, democracy.

## БЕЗБЕДНОСНИ ИЗАЗОВИ ЕКОЛОШКИХ ПОКРЕТА

### Апстракт

Савремени еколошки покрети, иако су кључни актери у позитивној глобалној иницијативи за очување природне средине и борби против климатских промена, суочавају се са изазовима који се могу трансформисати у потенцијално нарушавање безбедности и политичке стабилности. Радикализација одређених фракција унутар ових покрета, повезаност са екстремистичким групама, као и могућност негативне,

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субверзивне инструментализације од страних актера, представљају озбиљне претње како за јавни ред, тако и за уставни поредак. Овај рад, чији је циљ пружање научног доприноса социјалној екологији као грани социологије, анализира динамичан однос између еколошког активизма и националне безбедности и истражује како и под којим условима еколошки покрети, који се баве питањима заштите природних ресурса, могу угрозити политичку стабилност у демократским друштвима, што се постиже проучавањем актуелних техника за препознавање и превенцију безбедносних претњи. Посебан нагласак стављен је на контраобавештајну заштиту, као и на изазове које представљају радикализовани еколошки активисти. Кроз анализу међународних и домаћих примера, разматрају се опасности по уставни поредак, као и стратегије за постизање неопходног баланса између, са једне стране, права на слободно окупљање и еколошки активизам и, са друге стране, права на националну безбедност.

**Кључне речи:** еколошки покрети, безбедност, радикализација, уставни поредак, контраобавештајна заштита, контратероризам, демократија.

### INTRODUCTION

Environmental movements, as organisations and initiatives dedicated to environmental preservation, have played a significant role in raising ecological awareness and initiating legislative changes worldwide. Their core mission—protecting natural resources, combating climate change, and ensuring sustainable development—has become a priority in modern society. However, in recent decades, these movements have faced challenges related to the radicalisation of certain factions and potential security threats (Klein, 2014; McCright & Dunlap, 2010), as well as accusations of employing violent methods, sabotage, and blockades, and fostering social instability and other challenges to democratic processes (Giddens, 2011) in order to highlight real or artificially generated and exacerbated systemic deficiencies in addressing environmental issues. These activities, though carried out by a small fraction of these structures, undermine the legitimacy of entire movements and create space for intelligence agencies' disruptive actions and the emergence of threats to the constitutional order of states. Connections with foreign actors further complicate the situation, as some environmental movements become instruments of political strategies directed against national interests. These tendencies reflect a broader security context, encompassing not only physical security but also the protection of fundamental state functions. The national context in which these movements operate is a crucial factor in shaping their relationship with state institutions. For example, Finland has developed a 'comprehensive security' model that involves cooperation between state agencies and civil society to address multiple challenges. This model demonstrates how a multidisciplinary approach can respond to threats linked to ecological crises while also highlighting the difficulties in implementing such policies (Räsänen et al., 2021).

In this study, radicalisation is examined as a political, social, psychological, and group process that leads to circumstances where certain political beliefs are accompanied by individuals' and groups' willingness to engage in violent extremism and terrorist acts (Jugović & Živaljević, 2021). Radicalisation, as a socio-political and security phenomenon, and thus in the context of the misuse of environmental movements, is often associated with social crises that result in a loss of trust in institutions (Živaljević, 2022). These crises erode the core of every society and significantly influence the emergence of socially negative phenomena and processes. Such conditions create confusion in individuals' moral consciousness, leading to societal disorientation in the search for socially desirable behaviour patterns, which in turn weakens social control and fosters mass deviant behaviour (Merdović & Živaljević, 2020).

Social crises that spill over into state institutions often slow down systemic responses to urgent problems. Simultaneously, radicalisation within movements usually stems from citizens' deep frustration, particularly when institutions fail to provide adequate responses to pressing environmental issues. Environmental movements, although initially and declaratively focused on protecting natural resources, become susceptible to radicalisation due to the sense of urgency arising from increasingly severe climate change and other topics of the so-called environmental agenda. This sense of urgency can be based on objective circumstances but can also be artificially induced and exaggerated to create conditions for fostering and escalating crises in a state targeted by foreign intelligence and subversive actions (Parezanović, Željki, Stajić, 2024). In such cases, these social crises can be exploited by foreign actors to intensify the destabilisation of ruling structures and support political factions opposed to the existing constitutional order. By presenting examples of environmental movement radicalisation, this study provides a detailed analysis of counterintelligence protection challenges in the context of preventing and responding to the misuse of environmental activism by foreign actors and/or extremist groups.

#### *ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS: GENESIS, GOALS, AND CONTEMPORARY FRAMEWORK*

Environmental movements have evolved throughout history from local initiatives aimed at preserving natural resources to global movements focused on addressing key issues in modern society, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation. This evolution has been driven by changes in social, economic, and political circumstances, as well as by an increasing awareness of the importance of environmental protection for the survival of human civilization (Nadić, 2020). Environmental movements have their roots in the Industrial Revolution,

when scientists and social reformers began highlighting the negative consequences of accelerated industrialisation on the environment. In the 19th century, pioneering movements such as naturalist societies in the United Kingdom and the United States sought to promote nature conservation through education and political engagement (Guha, 2000). Early examples of these movements in the U.S. included initiatives for forest and wildlife protection led by pioneers like John Muir and Gifford Pinchot (Dryzek et al., 2003).

Modern environmental movements gained prominence during the 20th century, particularly after the publication of *Silent Spring* in 1962, which drew attention to the negative effects of pesticides on ecosystems (Carson, 1962). In Europe, similar movements developed in the mid-20th century, focusing on issues such as industrial pollution and nuclear energy, exemplified by the anti-nuclear movement in Germany during the 1970s (Rootes, 2004). Global awareness of environmental issues during this period further increased, leading to the expansion and diversification of these movements, including international organisations such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Greenpeace, and Friends of the Earth (FOTE). These movements focused on direct action and political pressure on governments and corporations. In recent decades, environmental movements have undergone significant transformation (Marković, 2015). Rather than focusing solely on local issues, modern movements now address global concerns such as climate change and sustainable development. At the same time, digitalisation has enabled greater mobilisation, networking, and coordination of activities, making these movements even more influential and organised. The digital age has facilitated the global reach of these movements, which has increased both their capacity to mobilise broader social groups and the risk of radicalisation (Tufekci, 2017).

### *THE GOALS AND METHODS OF ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS*

Environmental movements aim to achieve a variety of objectives, including the preservation of natural resources, combating climate change, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, protecting biodiversity and natural habitats, and promoting sustainable development and renewable energy sources. Their goals also depend on the regional context. While in industrialised nations the focus is on reducing carbon dioxide emissions, in developing countries, priorities include forest conservation and sustainable use of natural resources (Martinez-Alier, 2002), particularly freshwater sources. Methods of action range from traditional approaches such as educational campaigns, lobbying, and peaceful protests, to more radical tactics, including direct action, protests, blockades, and other forms of civil disobedience. Examples of peaceful protests include global climate marches organised by movements like Fridays for Future, while more

radical actions, such as those carried out by the international ‘nonviolent’ civil disobedience movement – Extinction Rebellion – often involve traffic blockades or the occupation of public spaces (Klein, 2014), such as squares, the perimeters of key state institutions, and symbols of authority. Although these approaches are fundamentally nonviolent, certain segments resort to more extreme methods, including sabotage of industrial facilities, blockades of critical infrastructure, and cyberattacks on corporations violating environmental standards (McCright & Dunlap, 2010), and in some cases, this also includes vandalising buildings in which certain institutions or organisations are located and marked as ‘hostile.’

Radical factions may also exploit legitimate platforms of larger organisations to pursue their goals, complicating the formation of appropriate security responses. This strategy allows them to conceal their activities within broader legitimate structures, making it more difficult to identify potential threats. Legitimate platforms are an integral part of globalisation, which has significantly influenced environmental movements both positively and negatively. On one hand, global connectivity has enabled the exchange of knowledge and resources between organisations, making movements more effective. On the other hand, global economic interests, in certain cases, conflict with the objectives of environmental initiatives, creating additional challenges (Nadić, 2021). Instead of merely addressing the consequences of environmental problems, movements are increasingly focusing on prevention through the promotion of renewable energy sources, circular economies, and green technologies (Hajer, 1997).

#### *SECURITY CHALLENGES: CONNECTIONS WITH FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES AND EXTREMIST GROUPS*

As previously mentioned, a serious challenge associated with environmental movements is the potential for their instrumentalisation by foreign intelligence services or extremist groups. According to a Europol report from 2021, certain radical environmental organisations have connections with groups promoting anarchism or other forms of extremism, while some foreign intelligence services use environmental issues to destabilise the political systems of targeted countries (Europol, 2021). Examples include propaganda campaigns aimed at undermining trust in democratic institutions under the guise of supporting environmental goals. These activities have been particularly visible in recent decades and have further complicated efforts by governments to maintain internal stability and protect the constitutional order. Foreign intelligence services and extremist organisations increasingly use radicalised environmental movements or encourage their radicalisation and extremism in order to destabilise political systems through subversive activities, as well as to jeopardise the economic and energy security of countries perceived as ri-

vals. Such agendas are often part of what is known as the aggressive foreign policy discourse of many states (Šuvaković, 2009). Examining the functioning of social movements, including environmental groups, within a political and cultural context, along with forms of radicalisation within social protests, Meyer and Tarrow emphasise that this instrumentalisation often includes funding radical factions, spreading propaganda, and manipulating information to provoke internal conflicts (Meyer & Tarrow, 2018). For example, Russian intelligence services have been accused of supporting certain environmental groups in Europe to weaken the energy policies of the European Union (EU) (Polyakova, 2022), although such accusations typically remain vague and are not supported by adequate evidence. On the other hand, intelligence services and powerful corporations, either in collaboration or independently, may encourage the destructive actions of 'environmental extremists' to undermine certain large-scale business ventures, often to disrupt competition and clear the path for entities they control or support. In this context, mass protests escalating into violence, as well as large-scale blockades of energy facilities, supported by foreign factors, can jeopardise key elements of the constitutional order, including the rule of law. They may cause political destabilisation, disrupt the functioning of state systems and critical infrastructure, economic disruptions, and social conflicts, further eroding trust in state institutions (Giddens, 2011).

### *CHALLENGES IN GOVERNMENT RESPONSES*

Democratic governments face a range of complex challenges when responding to security threats arising from the radicalisation of environmental movements. On one hand, protecting citizens' rights to freedom of expression and assembly is a cornerstone of democratic societies. On the other hand, maintaining public order, stability, and national security requires strong yet proportionate measures to address violent activities from radical groups. One key challenge lies in balancing the legitimate right to protest with the need to prevent activities that escalate into violence. For instance, protests organised by the group Extinction Rebellion often involve road blockades and occupying public spaces. While these actions generally do not involve direct violence, their consequences, such as economic losses and traffic disruptions, along with legitimate dissatisfaction from citizens who suffer collateral damage, can provoke a response from the authorities that is often perceived by environmental activists as excessive, further polarising public opinion.

Moreover, the challenge of identifying the line between legitimate activism and potential radicalisation remains. Radicalized groups, such as the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), often operate in a grey area where their activities range from civil disobedience to criminal acts like sabotage and

arson. According to the FBI, these forms of ‘ecoterrorism’ are directed at corporations and infrastructure projects, thereby disrupting public order and security, while simultaneously appealing to moral and environmental justice (Jarboe, 2002).

Although democratic governments face numerous challenges in curbing radical behaviour within environmental movements, modern technologies offer new opportunities for monitoring and analysing threats. Data repositories and artificial intelligence enable the identification of behavioural patterns and networks connected to radical groups. Software solutions, such as predictive models for risk recognition, are employed to monitor online communications and identify potential security challenges. However, the use of these technologies raises concerns regarding privacy and the potential misuse of data. Critics argue that excessive use of such tools could erode citizens’ trust in the government, especially if these technologies are used in ways that are not transparent or are not under democratic control (Zuboff, 2019).

Another aspect of the challenge is international cooperation. Environmental movements, in the current context, increasingly transcend national borders and operate across them, necessitating coordination between different countries and international organisations. Europol has identified networks using environmental movements to spread extremist ideologies and destabilise entire regions (Europol, 2021). However, differing legal frameworks and political agendas among the involved and interested countries make it difficult to align efforts to address these issues, potentially leading to an ineffective collective response to transnational threats.

Authorities also face the challenge of crafting a narrative that clearly distinguishes legitimate environmental demands from radical or violent activities. Failing to communicate these distinctions adequately can lead to the generalisation and stigmatisation of entire movements, potentially fuelling further radicalisation among their members. In the United States, for instance, labelling certain environmental groups as threats to national security has sparked controversy and debates about the political instrumentalisation of security discourse (Monbiot, 2017). Similar reactions are present in Serbia, where security services and other state bodies’ actions against radical actions from movements with an ecological agenda are often interpreted as political misuse. Addressing these challenges requires a balanced approach that includes developing a legal framework that clearly defines the line between legitimate protest and activities that threaten security; transparency in the use of modern technologies for monitoring and analysing threats; strengthening international cooperation in monitoring and neutralising transnational threats; and enhancing communication between authorities, citizens, and environmental movements to avoid mistrust and escalation of conflict.

*EXAMPLES FROM DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES**An Attempt to Instrumentalise Environmental Protests in Serbia*

The protests against lithium mining in Serbia, which became a central point of ecological and political tensions, triggered not only local but also international reactions. The mining project planned by the multinational company Rio Tinto in the Jadar region sparked significant ecological resistance, and the protests grew larger and more organised during 2021 and 2022. Through these protests, environmental activists expressed concerns about the potential environmental damage that the mining project could cause, but doubts also arose about the existence of external interests behind the organisation of these protests (Lanlan & Yuwei, 2024). The protests in Serbia against the lithium mining project have become one of the most prominent issues in recent years, both politically and in terms of security, to the extent that two new terms were introduced in this context: ‘politicisation of ecology’ and ‘post-politicisation of ecology.’ The politicisation of ecology refers to the use of environmental issues for short-term political gains, while post-politicisation denotes the transformation of environmental movements into traditional political movements (Nadić, 2022). At the core of the protests is the issue of the environmental risks of mining, but many analysts argue that these protests have begun to attract broader political and geopolitical interests. There are strong indications that some of these protests have been attempted to be instrumentalised by foreign actors, who used the opportunity to destabilise the political system of Serbia and influence internal political dynamics. Media reports indicated that certain foreign factors, including foreign governmental agencies and non-governmental organisations, directly supported these protests with the aim of influencing internal political decisions in the country, particularly regarding mining projects and political stances towards the West (Euronews, 2024). The protests against lithium mining in Serbia were linked to global environmental movements, which, although largely peaceful, sometimes resort to controversial actions and methods, appearing as actors or instruments in different, usually antagonistic geopolitical interests. Certain foreign entities used these protests to channel citizens’ discontent against the Serbian government, resulting in increased political tensions and disagreements within the country. Additionally, analyses note that influential and globally present foreign media, such as Reuters and The Guardian, played a significant role in shaping international views on Serbia in the context of these protests. Due to the high degree of international interest, these protests gained a much broader political dimension, with foreign influence being directed at Serbia’s domestic issues through support for environmental protests, while simultaneously attributing even deeper political and geopolitical significance to these events.



In this way, environmental movements in Serbia, although based on real environmental issues, face serious challenges in terms of protection from external instrumentalisation, which complicates the positioning of protests as purely domestic civil movements, rather than as potential tools in the political games of major international powers. Furthermore, this situation complicates the issue of security and the protection of constitutional order for security services, which recognise foreign malign influence aimed at undermining political stability in the country.

#### *Protests against the Adani Mine in Australia*

The protests against the construction of the Adani coal mine in the Australian state of Queensland represent one of the most significant environmental movements of the past decade. Activists argued that the mine would contribute further to global warming and threaten the Great Barrier Reef. Non-violent methods, such as traffic blockades and protests, were dominant, but some more radical actors resorted to sabotage of construction equipment (Colvin, 2020). The Australian government responded with increased law enforcement, including higher penalties for blocking public spaces and specialised measures to monitor protest groups. This sparked a debate on the balance between protecting the right to protest and maintaining public order. This case highlights the tension between environmental concerns and economic development (Šuvaković & Nadić, 2012), as well as the vulnerability of democratic procedures in the face of pressures from environmental movements.

#### *The 'ZAD' Movement in France: Notre-Dame-des-Landes*

One of the most well-known examples of radicalisation in the environmental movement is the 'ZAD' (Zone à Défendre) movement in France. This movement formed in reaction to plans to build an airport in Notre-Dame-des-Landes, which, according to the activists' view, would threaten the local ecosystem and agricultural land. Activists occupied the site and declared it a 'zone of defence,' predominantly using non-violent methods, but occasionally resorting to violence to prevent police interventions (Vanderschelden, 2023). This led to the French government eventually abandoning the project in 2018, which was interpreted as a victory for the movement. However, this case raised questions about the legitimacy of so-called occupations and the long-term consequences of radical environmental methods on the legal order and social cohesion. The ZAD case is often cited as an example of the success of grassroots movements, but also as a warning about the risks of radicalisation within environmental activist groups (Almeida, 2019).

### COUNTERINTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY PROTECTION

Counterintelligence protection is a key component of national security, aimed at safeguarding the constitutional order from external and internal subversive and intelligence activities. There are various definitions of counterintelligence protection. Some authors think that counterintelligence protection involves activities focused on identifying and neutralising foreign intelligence operations that may threaten national security, including espionage, subversion, and terrorism (Lowenthal, 2017). It represents a comprehensive process aimed at protecting state interests through information control, threat identification, and the neutralisation of hostile intelligence activities, both in peacetime and during conflict (Herman, 2009). *In essence, counterintelligence protection involves a range of activities and measures undertaken by the services responsible for state security to detect, monitor, and neutralise threats from foreign intelligence services, internal extremist and secessionist groups, and other actors seeking to undermine the constitutional order and the integrity of key state institutions.*

The primary objectives of counterintelligence protection include safeguarding confidential information, preventing espionage, subversion, and terrorism, protecting against cyber threats, and defending against hybrid and asymmetric attacks (Parezanović, Željki, Jevtić, 2020). The rise of environmental movements has been accompanied by accusations of potential abuse by foreign actors aimed at destabilising the constitutional order. Environmental movements, due to their role in society, often straddle the line between legitimate environmental preservation efforts and activities that may jeopardise public order, internal security, or political stability. In this context, the need to establish and analyse potential links between environmental movements and intelligence agencies becomes critical to ensure the protection of political, economic, and social stability. In this regard, counterintelligence and security protection play a crucial role in identifying and neutralising potential threats that arise from radicalised factions within environmental movements or their connections with foreign services and extremist organisations. New challenges in this area require a broad range of activities from state security services, including monitoring foreign influences, identifying extremist groups, and implementing security measures. The function of the counterintelligence apparatus in this regard is primarily preventive, but it also has a strong reactive component.

Once environmental movements become the target of foreign intelligence services seeking to exploit their social and political power to destabilise democratic systems, they must be monitored by the services responsible for national security protection. Their involvement in this context requires a multidisciplinary approach, including intelligence gathering, financial flow analysis, surveillance of communication channels, in-

ternational connections of intelligence-relevant individuals or groups, and/or radical elements, as well as the continuous monitoring of public protests to identify possible subversive factors. According to an analysis by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the main challenge in this process is distinguishing legitimate environmental activities from those that have been instrumentalised for political purposes (IISS, 2022). Counterintelligence agencies play a crucial role in these activities.

Key methods include coordination between different security services and transparent communication with the public to avoid the perception of repression. For example, events in France in 2018 related to the ‘Yellow Vests’ demonstrated how ignoring the demands of civil movements can lead to conflict escalation, while a measured, balanced, highly professional, and decisive approach reduces tensions and enables effective crisis management.

#### *ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS, SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS, AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE*

Contemporary environmental movements, like other important societal segments, have recognised the significance and opportunities that digital platforms and the advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) offer for more effective action. In the current period, amid the ‘race’ between major global players such as the U.S. and China, and other interested parties, AI technologies are reaching unprecedented dimensions and applications.

By providing a wide range of possibilities for rapid and effective data collection, analysis, synthesis of vast amounts of valuable information, and their distribution and further utilisation, AI tools have given environmental movements an exceptional opportunity to expand their societal influence and visibility, both on national and international levels. A direct, fundamentally positive outcome of this has been the increase in overall ecological awareness within our civilization, which is a fundamental prerequisite for engaging in mass actions. Furthermore, AI and digital platforms have significantly contributed to the easier creation of global alliances among environmental movements and made the coordination of their actions far more efficient, including organising environmental protests and increasing their visibility to the public through various media and social networks.

However, these technologies can also be misused, leading to polarisation and the spread of disinformation about environmental issues (McCright & Dunlap, 2010), serving as a powerful tool for manipulation by malicious actors, including some intelligence and security agencies, lobbying groups, etc. In this context, the use of AI brings a broad spectrum of challenges, primarily related to ethics, as their algorithms reduce transparency and obscure the accountability or culpability of those apply-

ing them (Spalević & Ilić, 2024: 747). This is especially relevant when AI is used for negative or subversive purposes aimed at undermining the legitimate and democratically organised state and social order. In such cases, AI can be instrumentalised to create a radical atmosphere within a society, where, from a sociological perspective, institutions are not merely state creations but also socially responsible entities that must prevent the problems caused by the advent of such highly automated tools, which stimulate concerns regarding human rights protection (Škorić & Galetin, 2024: 566). In this context, propaganda, or the spreading of disinformation, forms part of psychological operations conducted by foreign intelligence services. The goal is to cause specific psychological effects in the target, such as fear, heightened tensions, or indecisiveness, which, in various situations, can have a determining influence on their behaviour (Miljković & Pešić, 2019: 1084). Recently, significant actors include radicalised environmental movements, which, by disseminating unverified information about certain projects and strategies, undermine the integrity of state institutions.

The use of relevant databases and available innovative tools, such as social media analytics software, predictive models, and, more recently, artificial intelligence, alongside other state and socially responsible institutions, also enables security services to identify potentially radical groups before their activities escalate into violence (Tufekci, 2017). This is of paramount importance for appropriately directing the responses of relevant state bodies and coordinated actions aimed at preventing the infiltration of destructive elements into a given environmental movement, with the intention of taking influential positions to implement their radical plans.

#### *CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS: THE CHALLENGES OF COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROTECTION*

In line with globalisation and significant technological advancements, the activities of anti-state structures have become more sophisticated, posing considerable challenges for modern counterintelligence protection, including digital threats, hybrid warfare, and the globalisation of environmental issues (Nadić, 2023). Strategic documents, such as the United States National Counterintelligence Strategy (2020), emphasise the risks associated with the misuse of social movements for political and intelligence purposes, as well as the growing concerns regarding potential threats related to the influence of foreign organisations on domestic state processes (National Counterintelligence Strategy, 2020).

In modern defence systems, which incorporate various security services, sometimes with overlapping jurisdictions, their full cooperation remains a challenge and, often, a practical problem, representing a root cause of significant security risks. In this regard, the effective integration

of a state's counterintelligence capabilities and establishing functional cooperation with various security agencies, such as joint intelligence centres and teams, significantly enhances efficiency in countering threats from so-called ecological radicalism. Examples such as the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force in the U.S. have proven successful in combating domestic and international terrorist networks (War Room, 2021), and a similar principle could be applied to extremist elements within environmental movements.

What should be particularly noted is that counterintelligence protection mechanisms may sometimes be non-functional due to deep foreign involvement in domestic legal regulations, which makes domestic security services vulnerable and 'unequipped' for modern security challenges. Furthermore, diplomatic activities of states without adequate strategic directions and coordination with relevant domestic security bodies may result in the 'legal' outflow of crucial data through ongoing bilateral or multilateral diplomatic cooperation. Similarly, an inadequately managed line of international cooperation between domestic security services and foreign, so-called partner agencies could lead to vulnerabilities in the state's counterintelligence mechanisms, failing to detect a strong foreign strategic presence, which, as previously emphasised, may also manifest through the actions of various environmental organisations. Considering this dimension and the potential of environmental movements, especially in times when destructive consequences may be significantly amplified by the use of sophisticated modern technological tools and software, including artificial intelligence, security services must develop new, effective responses in a delicate, highly professional, and thoughtful manner, always starting from the inherently positive nature of these movements and the need to uphold the highest degree of respect for human rights and freedoms.

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## БЕЗБЕДНОСНИ ИЗАЗОВИ ЕКОЛОШКИХ ПОКРЕТА: СОЦИЈАЛНО-ЕКОЛОШКИ ПОГЛЕД

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### Резиме

Еколошки покрети, као кључни актери у глобалној иницијативи за очување животне средине, суочавају се са изазовима инструментализације усмерене ка нарушавању безбедности и политичке стабилности. Иако је суштина деловања ових покрета везана за еколошки одржива решења, њихова радикализација може представљати безбедносни изазов за државне институције. Са циљем пружања научног доприноса социјалној екологији као грани социологије, овај рад анали-

зира динамичан однос између еколошког активизма и националне безбедности, акцентирајући важност коришћења адекватних техника за препознавање и превенцију безбедносних претњи. У раду се посвећује пажња генези развоја еколошких покрета, те њиховим циљевима и модалитетима деловања. Кроз призму савремених безбедносних изазова, обрађује се повезаност еколошких покрета са страним специјалним службама и екстремистичким групама. У актуелном друштвеном контексту, ови субјекти неретко користе легитимне платформе већих организација како би прикривено спровели своје деструктивне циљеве, што додатно компликује формирање адекватних одговора безбедносних служби. Са једне стране, глобална повезаност је омогућила размену знања и ресурса између организација, чинећи покрете ефикаснијим. Међутим, са друге стране омогућила је да се овим алатима индоктринирају и радикализују фракције покрета. Приказом примера из домаће и међународне праксе, у раду су истакнути сложени изазови са којим се сусрећу демократске владе широм света приликом решавања ситуација радикализације еколошких покрета. Ове активности су биле нарочито видљиве током последњих деценија и додатно су компликовале напоре власти да одрже унутрашњу стабилност и заштите уставни поредак. У том процесу деструктивног деловања укључују се и пропагандне кампање усмерене на подривање поверења у демократске институције под маском подршке еколошким циљевима. Један од кључних изазова у одговору држава на овакве процесе лежи у балансирању између легитимних права на еколошки активизам и потребе да се спрече активности које ескалирају у насиље, односно идентификацији границе између легитимног активизма и потенцијалне радикализације. У контексту ових изазова, контраобавештајна заштита представља кључну компоненту националне безбедности. Сходно томе, од тренутка када постану циљ страних обавештајних служби, еколошки покрети морају бити предмет интересовања служби задужених за заштиту националне безбедности, чије ангажовање у том контексту захтева мултидисциплинарни приступ. Узимајући у обзир комплексност и потенцијал еколошких покрета, нарочито у временима када деструктивне последице могу бити далеко веће услед употребе софистицираних модерних техничких средстава и софтвера, укључујући и вештачку интелигенцију, службе безбедности су дужне да и саме развијају нове делотворне одговоре на високо професионалан и промишљен начин, увек полазећи од изворно позитивног предзнака тих покрета и потребе очувања највишег степена поштовања људских права и слобода.