

## CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA (ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL STATISTICS)

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Among the criteria for the assessment of criminality's public danger, except for the structure and level of criminality, an essential significance has also the population's victimization<sup>2</sup> level. It allows us to have an understanding about the real "value" of criminality, to assess the population's protection level, the status of the fulfillment of state's obligation concerning human rights and freedoms. Furthermore, the analysis of the population's victimization level, the changes taking place in it and factors which contribute to those changes gives the opportunity to obtain a deep understanding of the victimological factors of certain kinds of criminality and crimes and to process effective means for victimological prevention of criminality on that basis.

Population's victimization level can be analyzed by several indicators: the number of people who are victims of crimes, the rates of victimization, the number of people who are victims of certain crimes, and the rates of victimization, the relevant data<sup>3</sup> regarding the victims of crimes committed by different types of motivation of criminal behavior.

The analysis of the mentioned indicators can be carried out both

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<sup>2</sup> Victimization has two meanings: 1) the process of being victimized from the crime (criminality), 2) the level of population's suffering from crimes, which indicates the real state of the society's criminalization.

<sup>3</sup> Sitkovsky A.L. Analysis of Criminal Victimization in the Russian Federation and the opinion of citizens on personal security. State system of prevention of violations: current state and perspectives of development// Materials of interagency academic-practical conference. Moscow 2007, P. 413. [Ситковский А. Л., Анализ криминальной виктимизации в Российской Федерации и мнения граждан о личной безопасности. Государственная система профилактики правонарушений: современное состояние и перспективы развития //Материалы межведомственной научно-практической конференции. М., 2007, С. 413].

based on the study of the data and the criminal affairs recorded by official statistics and the researches aimed at the discovery of latent criminality.

Therefore, it should be mentioned that the data of official statistics never reflect the reality, because a considerable part of the criminality remains latent, hence the victims stay latent as well. The researches carried out by us allow making a conclusion that the 70%<sup>4</sup> of criminality in Armenia remains latent.

Thus, analyzing the data of the official statistics concerning the population's victimization level, it is possible to have only the approximate image of the population's victimization level. Nevertheless, it is possible to obtain an understanding of the intents of victimization by comparing the data of the official statistics with the development trends of criminality, with the socio-economic, political, legal, ideological, cultural processes taking place in the country.

The analysis of the data obtained from the official statistics of the RA population's victimization level allows us to conclude that there is an upsurge. Thus, if in 2004 the official statistics recorded 2672 people being victims of crimes, in 2005 there were 3119 people, and in 2010 there were 6746 people who became victims. Even though these data concern the cases when the victims are mentioned in official statistics, which can also be a more complete result of presenting data about the victims, nevertheless, considering the increase of criminality's level, it can be confirmed that the number of victims of the recent years is increasing. Moreover, in comparison with 2004, it has increased for 2.5 times<sup>5</sup> in 2010 (see figure 1).

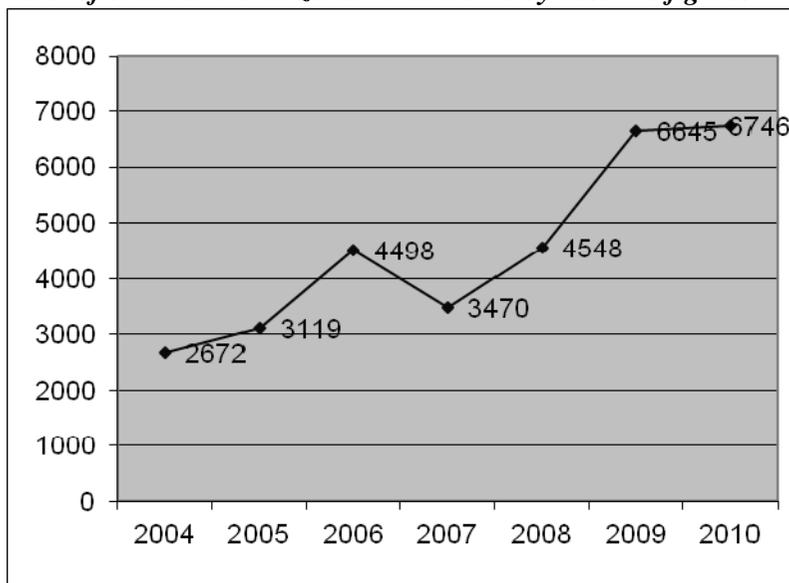
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<sup>4</sup> Gabuzyan A.A. Problems of Crime in the Republic of Armenia in the Transition Period. Yerevan, 2007, P. 14. [Габузян А. А., Проблемы преступности в Республике Армения в переходный период. Ереван, 2007, С. 14].

<sup>5</sup> Taking into consideration the fact that there are no concrete data about the RA population number, we have not counted the victimization level by coefficients. At the same time, as the negative rate of migration has been a subject of discussion of the recent years, therefore, it can be supposed that the level of victimization is actually higher.

Figure 1

*Level of criminal victimization in Armenia by absolute figures*



*An important regularity has to be mentioned: the pace of population's victimization level's increase surpasses the pace of criminality's increase.*

If in 2010 the level of victimization increased for 2.5 times, then the level of criminality of the same year increased for 1.5 times. This circumstance can be assessed as augmentation of the degree of public danger. This means that every year from each crime more people suffer. The main reason of such a situation is the change in the criminality structure.

During the discussed period the specific weight of the crimes against human (person) increased in the structure of criminality. So, in 2010 these crimes, in comparison with 2004, increased by 51.2%.

There has also been recorded an increase of certain types of crimes against public order and property. In particular, the crimes against public security, public order and population's health increased by 52.2%, thefts by approximately 30%, robberies by 47%, and frauds by 30%.

However, during the same period of time some crimes against state power, service and governance order have decreased. Thus, according to the official statistics, in 2009 in comparison with 2008 the cases of corruption decreased by 11,1%, the cases of official authorities' abuse decreased by 21.5%. Furthermore, in recent years a decrease has been noticed in such kind of appropriation, such as embezzlement or defalcation (in 2010 in comparison with 2009 this type of crimes decreased by 23.7%).

Thus, our research also proves the regularity discovered by other specialists, according to which the number of victims is more there, where there is a higher level of such crimes which include a direct contact between the criminal and the victim<sup>6</sup>.

The increase of the number of victims can be conditioned also by the fact that in case of certain types of crime, as a result of the criminal activity of a certain person, there is a big number of people who become victims, whereas due to the legal regulation's particularities of that type of criminal activity, in the official statistics it is reflected as one crime.

In particular, the act of a person, who committed two or more frauds during the discussed period of time, was qualified as a double fraud, which was included in the statistics as one crime, while more than one, even a dozen of persons become victims of a criminal activity.

It is obvious, that along with the increase of the level of fraud, the number of victims also increases; moreover, even a minor increase in the crimes can result in the augmentation of the number of victims for several times. This is proved also by the official statistics data. Thus, during the discussed period of time, the number of victims of frauds surpassed the number of recorded cases by 1.3-2 times. It is approximately the same image for the other crimes.

Very important factors related to the particularities of victimization are the socio-demographic features of the victims of

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<sup>6</sup> Kuri Kh. Development of Crime, Sanctions and positions of the Population./ in "Criminal Law and Crime. Development in Central and Eastern Europe". Bochum, 2004, P. 14. [Кури Х., Развитие преступности, санкции и позиция населения. / В кн.: "Уголовное право и преступность. Развитие в Средней и Восточной Европе". Бохум, 2004, С. 14].

crimes. The discovery of these features will allow carrying out measures aimed at targeted victimological prevention of criminality and its certain types, and augmenting their effectiveness.

The analysis of the mentioned features was carried out on the basis of the statistical data of certain crimes which compose the core of criminality (murder, damage to health, hooliganism, sexual crimes, racketeering, extortion, robbery, theft, fraud).

According to the official statistics, men become victims of crimes more often and their specific weight is 53-54% among the whole mass of victims. At the same time, this correlation among the mass of victims of certain types of crimes is changing.

In particular, according to the official statistics, women more often become victims of crimes such as robbery, sexual crimes, and during certain years also the infliction of willful light damage to health. Thus, women suffer from robberies from two to three times more often than men, from sexual crimes - from five to fifteen times, from infliction of light damage to health - approximately one and a half times.

This kind of situation is conditioned by this or that type of particularity. It is obvious, that, for example, the fact that women more often become victims of robberies is related to the circumstance that they more often wear obviously expensive jewelry, bag, which can be taken just by grabbing.

Furthermore, because of their physical possibilities, women are less able to resist these crimes and in such cases the less probability of possible resistance is one of the essential elements of the motivation of criminal behavior.

What concerns the cases of infliction of light damage to health, then here, in our opinion, it is of essential significance the fact that in recent years due to the activation of feministic movements, women more often inform the law enforcement bodies about cases of domestic violence. However, it should be mentioned, that these official statistics cannot be considered as totally reliable.

The point is that in a lot of cases the victimization of women remains latent, because women are less prone to refer to law enforcement bodies. This regularity was discovered by some

researchers<sup>7</sup>.

One of the criteria of the moral and psychological atmosphere of a society is the attitude towards children, disabled and old people. The official statistics data of the victims of crimes are worrying in this regard. So, in 2010, as compared to 2004, the cases in which the victims are children have increased for one and a half times; moreover, at the same period of time, the number of underage victims who died from crimes rose by 65 %.

According to the official statistics, during the recent years there has been an increase in the number of sexual crimes committed against the underage. In our opinion, this is the result of the increase in strengthening the control over a lot more schools and child institutions and the revelation of the mentioned crimes on its basis.

It is not excluded, however, that because of the ongoing negative moral and psychological phenomena in society, the number of these crimes has indeed augmented. It can be contributed both by the shortcomings taking place in sexual education and the negative influence of the media, as well as the phenomena happening in the microenvironment of the person.

What concerns the disabled, the jobless and the pensioner, then in recent years a decrease of their specific weight among the mass of the victims is noticed. This can be conditioned, in particular, by the decrease of the number of pensioners, the emigration of a considerable part of jobless people as well as by the incomplete official statistics regarding the victims of crimes of the recent years. The point is that the data concerning the victims of crimes are largely absent in the official statistics.

Such situation does not contribute in any way to the real image of criminality, to the revelation of its public danger and, finally, to the development of effective measures aimed to the prevention of criminality. We think that it would be right to impose through administrative methods the law enforcement bodies to reflect in full the possible information concerning victims of crimes in the relevant statistical cards. However, even if the data of the official statistics

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<sup>7</sup> Vishnevskiy K.V. Criminological Victimization of Social Groups in the Contemporary Society. M., 2010, P. 86. [Вишневецкий К. В., Криминогенная виктимизация социальных групп в современном обществе. М., 2010, С. 86].

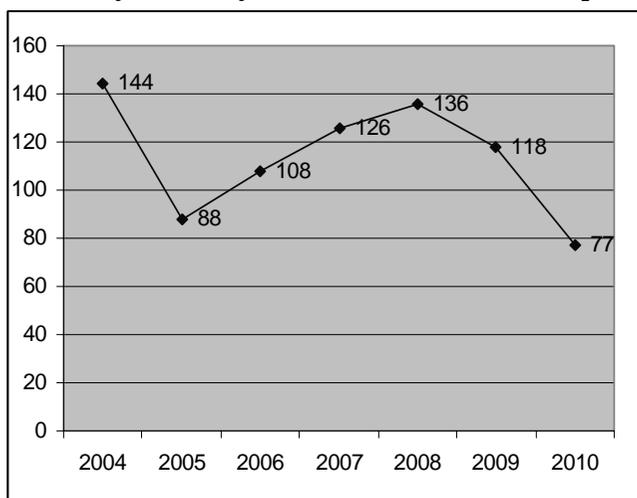
reflect the reality, nevertheless, it should be taken into account that pensioners and old people are an even more vulnerable group just for the reason that they easily become victims of crimes and suffer more harms due to their physical, health state and often because of their social isolation; hence, a special attention should be drawn to this social stratum.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of foreigners within the victims of crimes. Thus, if in 2004, there were 57 cases recorded where the victims were foreigners, in 2010 the number has already reached to 136 cases. It is obvious that along with extending the interstate relations and the globalization, it can be expected to note an increase of crimes against foreigners. In our opinion, these tendencies should become the basis of the development of a new direction of realizing victimological prevention measures.

Let us refer to the tendencies of victimization of certain types of crimes. The official statistics shows that in recent years there is a decline in the number of victims of murders and murder attempts (see figure 2).

Figure 2

*Number of victims of murders and murder attempts by years*



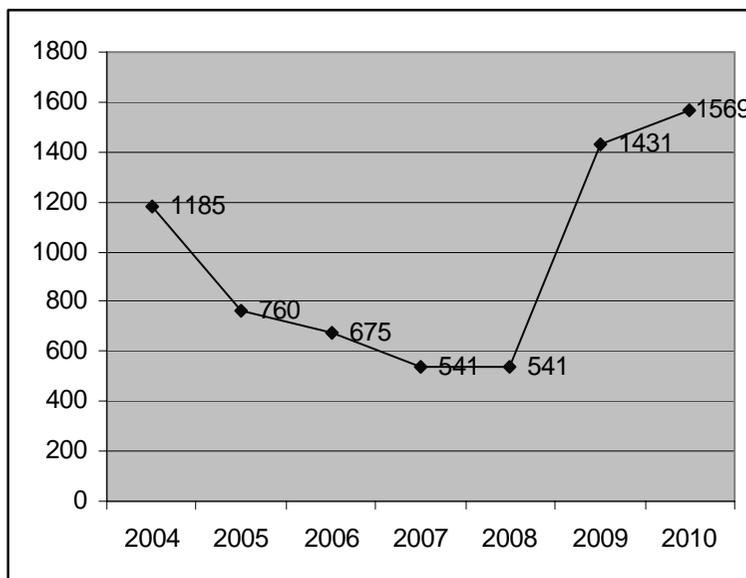
As it can be seen from the figure, as compared to 2004, in 2010 the number of victims of murders and murder attempts is two times less. Hence, it is highly important to reveal the intents of the victimization of crimes which are being committed by violent-aggressive motivation. That is why, besides murder we have chosen the most spread crimes which are being committed by violent-aggressive motivation: inflicting willful severe, medium or light damage to health, rape, violent sexual actions, hooliganism.

What concerns the sexual crimes, it must be mentioned that the number of their victims is small: 22-33 victims. Of course, we should take into account also the latency of these crimes.

Unlike sexual crimes, the victimization of inflicting damage to health displays a tendency of upsurge, which can be seen in the following figure.

Figure 3

***Number of victims of cases of inflicting damage to health***



However, it should be mentioned that the intent of this increase has happened mainly to the expense of the cases of inflicting light damage to health. It can be supposed that either the cases of inflicting willful severe and medium damage to health have actually decreased, or the problem is in recording the crimes.

Against the background of the diminution of murders, the decrease of the cases of inflicting willful severe and medium damage to health seems to be real. At the same time, there are some grounds to suppose that the official statistics does not totally give the objective image.

In particular, one of the indicators of the latency of murders is the number of the missing. It should be mentioned that in 2008 and 2009 their number augmented in some extent, and in 2010 it decreased. But the problem is that each year the number of the found missing people composes almost the half of the missing.<sup>8</sup> That is to say, the fate of 50% of the missing remains unknown.

The studies show that the victims of murders account for a certain percentage of the missing. Thus, in 1999 in two of criminal cases filed in connection with missing it was revealed that the missing person became a victim of murder, and in the other cases, the circumstances of people's missing were not revealed because of the absence of a complete and thorough examination<sup>9</sup>.

What concerns inflicting severe damage to health, the augmentation of the level of its latency can indirectly prove the official statistics about the dead from crimes, accidents, poisonings and injuries.

So, in 2010, in comparison with 2004, the number of the dead from crimes has increased by 7.1%, and the number of the dead from accidents, poisonings and injuries by 20.5%. While at the same

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<sup>8</sup> "Information materials of the Police of the Republic of Armenia" Yerevan, 2010. [«ՀՀ ոստիկանության ինֆորմացիոն-տեղեկատվական նյութեր», Երևան, 2010թ].

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of the Sitting No 4 of 25 May 1999 of the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Armenia.

period of time, the cases of inflicting willful severe damage to health were decreased by 20%. Of course, it must not be stated that these tendencies prove the augmentation of the level of latency in the cases of inflicting severe damage to health. But such hypothesis has the right to existence, even more if we take into account the fact that in the recent years, according to the official statistics, there is also a diminution of the number of the traffic accidents with lethal outcome, which allows to suppose that the recorded upsurge of the dead from accidents, poisonings and injuries, according to official statistics, indirectly proves the increase in the level of latency in inflicting severe damage to health.

The decrease of this type of crime and the increase of the level of latency can be conditioned also by the errors in the qualification of the acts, when infliction of severe damage to health is qualified as infliction of severe damage by negligence. Furthermore, in recent years an unprecedented growth of suicides is noticed in the Republic of Armenia. This means that the level of violence and aggression has not decreased in the republic. The indirect proofs of this can be the rates of hooliganism and assaults. Though the latter is considered as a crime with violent-mercenary motives, nevertheless, it is also a particular display of violent-aggressive motives.

What concerns hooliganism, it must be said that according to the official statistics, its dynamics is saw-shaped: the upsurge of some years is followed by a decline, then again by a further upsurge.

Thus, as compared with 2006, in 2007 the number of victims of hooliganism decreased by 83; as compared with 2007, it increased by 24 in 2008; as compared with 2008, it decreased by 21 in 2009; and as compared with 2009, it increased by 38 in 2010. Almost the same image belongs to the cases of assaults. Moreover, in 2007, in comparison with 2008 and 2009, an increase of two more times was recorded, and in 2010 there was a certain decrease.

Taking into consideration some negative socio-psychological factors (in particular, economic crisis, some political processes related to polls) taking place in the republic, it is possible to foresee that the dynamics of the crimes committed by violent-aggressive

motives and their victimization will be unfavorable also in the future, with the tendencies of decreasing in some years.

The analysis of some particularities reflected in the official statistics of the victims of crimes accompanied by violence allowed us to reveal the following regularities.

As it was expected, the victims of racketeering and hooliganism, in particular, more often become men. With the exception of certain years, we have the same image also for the victims of murders, inflicting damage to health and extortions. There is also a big number of unemployed and pensioners who are among the victims of inflicting damage to health. This can be explained by the mentioned people's social state and by the tension of interpersonal and interfamily relations which arise from their social state.

The biggest specific weight within the structure of criminality belongs to the crimes which are being committed by mercenary motives. In all the countries of the world, including in the Republic of Armenia, the crimes committed by mercenary motives account for 70-90%.

And though the mercenary criminality, not accompanied by violation, has a relatively less dangerous nature, nevertheless, the material and moral damage caused by it is quite considerable. Mercenary criminality (especially the corruption criminality) can disorganize the activity of state bodies, contribute to the formation of organized crime and shady economy, break the development of economy, lead to a decline in the population's standard of living, to deformation of the moral and psychological atmosphere and, finally, threaten the national security. Hence, the revelation of particularities of victimization of these crimes is crucial.

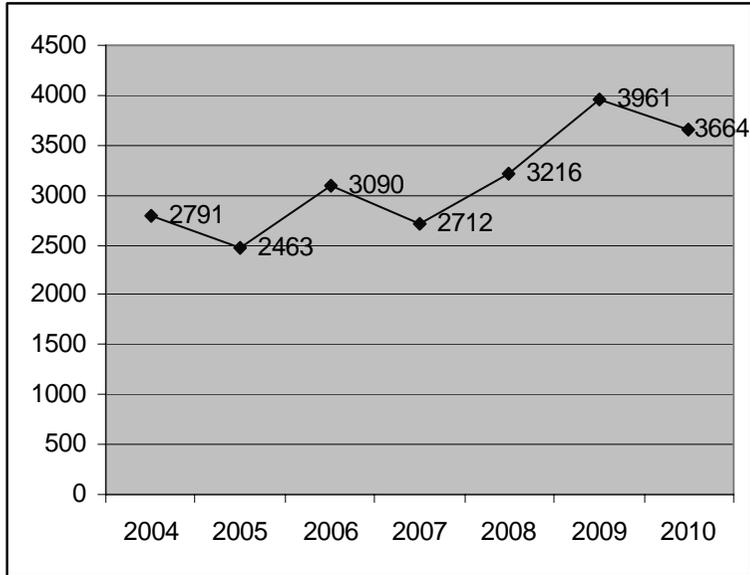
In order to reveal the victimization tendencies of the crimes which are being committed for mercenary purposes, let us analyze the most widespread crimes: theft, robbery, fraud.

As there are a lot of cases when the victims of the above mentioned crimes are not indicated in the official statistics, we have carried out the analysis of the tendencies of crimes' victimization on the basis of the dynamics reflected in the official statistics.

You can see the dynamics of thefts committed during the discussed period of time in the figure below.

Figure 4

*Dynamics of thefts by absolute figures*



The tendency of the upsurge of thefts during the discussed period of time is obvious. Naturally, the level of victimization also rises. Moreover, the slight decrease recorded in the last year cannot be considered essential and cannot affect the general mark of the dynamics of thefts and the crimes committed by mercenary motives, because the slight decrease of thefts in 2010 is accompanied with the increase of frauds, which can be seen in the figure.

The same situation is recorded in the Russian Federation<sup>10</sup>. This

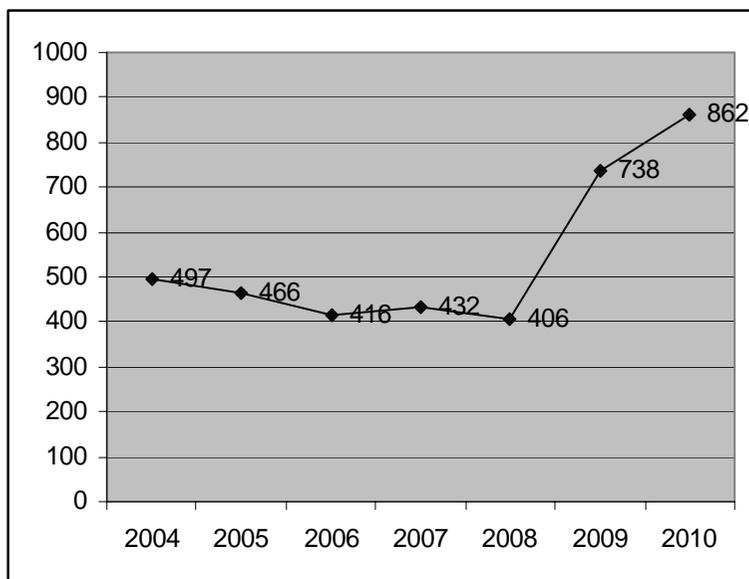
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<sup>10</sup> Sitkovsky A.L. Analysis of Criminal Victimization in the Russian Federation and the opinion of citizens on personal security. State system of prevention of violations: current state and perspectives of development// Materials of interagency academic-practical conference. Moscow 2007, pp. 417-418. [Ситковский А. Л. Анализ криминальной виктимизации в Российской Федерации и мнения граждан о личной безопасности.

is conditioned by a number of circumstances: growth of competition between the number of commercial organizations and economic entities, increase in the number of financial-economic bargains, increase of the probability of bankruptcy, economic crisis, etc. Taking into account the probability of deepening of the mentioned phenomena, it can be supposed that growth of frauds must also be expected in future.

Figure 5.

*Dynamics of frauds by absolute figures*



If we add to the above mentioned also the fact that in recent years the official statistics records also an upsurge<sup>11</sup> of corruption crimes, it will be clear that in the republic there is an increase in the

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<sup>11</sup> See the socio-economic state of the RA in 2009 and 2010, January-December [www.armstat.am](http://www.armstat.am)

level of victimization of such crimes which are taking place with mercenary motives.

The particularities of victims of the discussed crimes are also of big interest. According to the official statistics, both the victims of the thefts and frauds are more often the jobless and the pensioners. Moreover, the specific weight of the jobless is bigger in the cases of frauds. This can be explained by the psychological state of the jobless, who quite often have the feeling of impasse and try to do everything possible to get out of that state and do such bargains which fraudsters use in their favor.

The above mentioned allows concluding that the level of criminal victimization in the Republic of Armenia displays a tendency of a stable growth. This is contributed not only by some traditional factors stimulating the increase of criminality such as the socio-economic polarization, the unemployment, the poorness, the deformation of the moral and psychological atmosphere, the cultural and legal factors, but also some shortcomings of preventing the criminality and its certain types, including the sphere of victimological prevention.

It should be mentioned that in the republic proper attention is not being drawn to this problem: the level of victimological knowledge of the population is low, and though the state bodies which carry out the problem of the prevention of criminality have already started taking some measures towards it, however the latter does not have a systematized nature.

Furthermore, the researches aimed at the revelation of the victimological problems of criminality are few (in the recent years just one comprehensive research was carried out)<sup>12</sup> which could contribute to the effectiveness of the victimological prevention.

In our opinion, special attention should be drawn to the victimological prevention of criminality and its certain types, which

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<sup>12</sup> Margaryan A.R. The Fear Against Crime and Victimization in Armenia, "Bulletin of Yerevan University, Jurisprudence", #135.3, 2011, pp.19-41. [Մարգարյան Ա. Ռ., Հանցավորության նկատմամբ վախը և վիկտիմիզացիան Հայաստանի Հանրապետությունում, «Բանբեր Երևանի Համալսարանի, Իրավագիտություն», թիվ 135.3, 2011, էջ 19-41]

should represent a system of state and social measures aimed at the decrease of the risk of population and its certain persons of becoming victims of crimes. And, in order to achieve this result, it is necessary to carry out deep scientific researches in view of identifying the victimological problems of criminality and, on this basis, developing and realizing certain measures aimed at the victimological prevention and raising the level of the population's victimological knowledge.