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**CHRONICLES
OF THE BLACK DECADE.
RELIGIOUS PERSECUTIONS
IN UKRAINE
2014-2023**

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The monograph is devoted to the study of religious persecutions in Ukraine in the last decade. Discrimination against the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church, attacks on traditional spiritual and moral values, erosion of the cultural and historical roots of the people of Ukraine, and the scale of persecution by government authorities are unprecedented.

The book is addressed to governmental authorities in Russia and foreign countries, international and human rights organizations, researchers in the field of history and religious policy in Ukraine and everyone interested in the issues of observing the rights of believers in the modern world.

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INTRODUCTION

During the history of mankind, there have been sporadic periods of religious persecution, which were accompanied by legislative prohibitions of a particular religion, discrimination, judicial and extrajudicial reprisals, the closure and destruction of churches, violence against believers and mockery of faith. The situation in Ukraine in the last decade includes, in various forms, all of the listed massive violations of the right to freedom of conscience.

This monograph is a systematic analysis of the situation with violations of the rights of believers in Ukraine from 2014 to 2023, as reflected in statements by religious figures and politicians, documents of religious organizations, and also received media attention.

The materials of the monograph are grouped into three sections. Chapter 1 describes the situation of believers in Ukraine, the Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic in 2014-2022, talks about cases of persecution of dissident clergy, the destruction of churches of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox

Church, the establishment of the so-called Orthodox Church of Ukraine, features of interaction state and religious communities in Ukraine and the spread of false values in the country (LGBT ideology, neo-paganism and drug legalization).

Chapter 2 describes the religious policy of the Ukrainian authorities during 2022-2023, characterized by aggression and repressive actions against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the continuation of the policy of planting of false values.

Chapter 3 describes the situation of believers in the territories that were included in the Russian Federation as a result of referendums: it provides information about destroyed and restored religious buildings, describes the organization of humanitarian aid, and the activities of religious associations of the Russian Federation to normalize the situation in new regions of the country.

ON THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS IN UKRAINE

The current religious situation in Ukraine is the result of many years of internal contradictions in the country and its reaction to foreign policy circumstances and incentives, largely related to the Russophobic policies of some countries of the world. To better understand the main trends in Ukrainian religious life, especially the situation around Orthodox believers, it is necessary to briefly overview the history of the spread of religions in Ukraine, paying special attention to the largest (in terms of the number of believers and religious organizations) confession -Orthodoxy.

According to statistics presented in July 2022¹ by Kiev International Institute of Sociology, 72% of Ukrainians identified themselves as Orthodox Christians, 9% — Catholics, 2% — Protestants, 2% — representatives of other branches of Christianity, 3% — representatives of other religions, 10% — atheists, 2% found it difficult to answer. Orthodoxy is practiced by the majority of residents in all regions of the country.

¹ <https://archive.ph/Gdul6#selection-271.3-279.135>.

Historically, Ukraine is a Christian state. Christianity in the form of Greek Orthodoxy was proclaimed the official religion of the Slavic tribes of Ancient Rus in 988, although its presence in these lands was recorded by archaeologists and historians much earlier than this date². Despite the significant participation of the Greeks in the life of the early Russian Church, from the middle of the 11th century. Russian bishops became primates of the Kiev Metropolis. During the period of the Tatar-Mongol yoke in the second half of the 13th century, when the southern Russian lands were subjected to severe devastation and ravage, the residence of the Kiev metropolitans was moved to the northeastern principalities: in 1299 — to Vladimir-on-Klyazma of the Vladimir-Suzdal principality, in 1325 — to Moscow. In 1354, Patriarch Philotheus of Constantinople approved this transition, while the primates of the Russian Church continued to be called “Metropolitans of Kiev and All Rus”. In the middle of the 14th century. Kiev, as well as most of the territories of modern Ukraine, became part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The rulers of this state, willing the Orthodox

² For more details, see, e.g., Kartashev A.V. *Ocherki po istorii Russkoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi* [Essays on the history of the Russian Church]. In 2 vol. — Vol.1. Moscow, Ss Cyril and Methodius Institute of Post-Graduate Studies, Poznanie Publ, 2019 — pp.8-100 (In Russian),

believers of the principality not to submit to the metropolitan living on Moscow territory, using intrigues and gifts in the following decades called on the Patriarch of Constantinople to install a new independent first hierarch from the nominees of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania. This is an analogue and, in some way, a forerunner of the crisis in the religious sphere, which in the 21st century. unfolds in Ukraine. On August 14, 1385, the Lithuanian princes concluded the Union of Krevo with the Kingdom of Poland, according to which, in addition to political unity, they pledged to accept Catholicism and convert all their subjects to it. In the middle of the 15th century. Before that, the united Russian Church was finally divided into the Moscow and Western Russian (Kiev) metropolises; the process of fragmentation was not immediate, but stretched out for almost 10 years — from 1448 to 1458. Shortly before, in 1439, The Church of Constantinople, for political reasons, accepted the Ferraro-Florentine Union with the Roman Catholic Church, which was perceived by Orthodox believers as an act of apostasy, and therefore relations between the Moscow (at that time formally Kiev) Metropolis and Constantinople were severed. In 1448, the Russian Church proclaimed autocephaly (independence), but the Orthodox Western

Russian Metropolis of the Patriarchate of Constantinople continued to exist in the lands controlled by the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Late 15th — mid 17th centuries are the period of greatest strengthening of Catholicism in Ukrainian lands — Orthodox Christians were under pressure from the Polish aristocracy, which was one of the reasons for the growth of the people's liberation Cossack movement (seeking reunification with the Tsardom of Russia, at that time positioning itself as a defender of Orthodoxy) and the subsequent Russian-Polish war. After the final establishment of peace and delimitation of borders between Russia and Poland in 1686, the Kiev Metropolis, with the consent of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, became part of the Russian Church. In 1686-1795 Orthodox monasteries and parishes that remained on the Ukrainian lands controlled by Poland continued to submit to the Kiev Metropolitan, but even then seizures of churches by the Uniates took place. In 1795, after the third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth between the Austrian Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia and the Russian Empire, a significant part of the territory of modern Western Ukraine became part of Russia. In 1839 during the Synod of Polotsk Western Russian clergy declared the departure from the Unia and all

parishes and monasteries reunification with the Russian Orthodox Church.

At the end of the 17th century, many Orthodox clergy and laity did not accept the reforms of Patriarch Nikon of Moscow and retained the so-called “old faith” or “old rite.” During the 18th — early 20th centuries Old Believer communities were created in all territories of modern Ukraine. As of January 1, 2014³ in the country there were 51 registered religious organizations, 2 monasteries, 32 priests and 8 Belokrinitsky (Popovs-ky) Sunday schools and 12 registered religious organizations and 7 ministers of the Bespopovsky direction of the Old Believers.

The second most widespread Christian denomination in Ukraine is Catholicism. It first appeared on Ukrain territory in the Middle Ages, its active spread began at the end of the 14th century. After the Union of Brest in 1596, in modern Ukraine it is represented in two forms: Catholicism of the Western Rite and Catholicism of the Eastern Rite, or the so-called Greek Catholicism, Uniatism, represented today in the country by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC). In Ukraine, as of January 1, 2014, there was 926 registered

³ <https://web.archive.org/web/20190418193538/https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/resourses/statistics/ukr2014/55893/>

religious organizations, 108 monasteries, 612 clergy, 9 educational institutions, 483 Sunday schools and 9 media outlets of the Roman Catholic Church and 3,763 registered religious organizations, 120 monasteries, 2,625 clergy, 16 educational institutions, 1291 Sunday schools and 28 UGCC.

Protestant denominations are widespread in Ukraine. The first Protestant communities in Ukraine began to appear in the 1530-1540s. By the beginning of the 21st century in Ukraine appeared associations of all main directions of modern Protestantism: Lutherans, Calvinists, Baptists, Anglicans, Methodists, Adventists, Pentecostals and others. The largest Protestant organizations in Ukraine as of January 1, 2014 were the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists (2562 registered religious organizations, 92 missions, 3128 ministers, 41 educational institutions, 1464 Sunday schools, 13 media outlets), the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of the Evangelical Faith- Pentecostals (1533 registered religious organizations, 56 missions, 2313 ministers, 17 educational institutions, 1087 Sunday schools, 24 media outlets) and the Ukrainian Union conference of Seventh-Day Adventists (1027 registered religious organizations, 3 missions, 1199 ministers, 4 educa-

tional institutions, 771 Sunday schools and 11 media outlets).

Islam has been presented on the territory of Ukraine since approximately the end of the 8th century. The spread of Islam on the territory of modern Ukraine occurred in the Middle Ages during the period of the Tatar-Mongol yoke, when in 1320 Ozbeg Khan established Islam as the official religion of the Golden Horde. At the end of the 16th-18th centuries. Islam prevailed in the lands of the Crimean Khanate, now part of the Russian Federation. As of January 1, 2014, there were 5 centralized Muslim associations in Ukraine, of which the largest was the Spiritual Direction of the Muslims of Crimea (353 registered religious organizations, 360 ministers, 5 educational institutions, 75 children's schools, 3 media outlets); there were also 111 independent Muslim organizations in the country religious organizations.

Jewish communities in Ukraine appeared in the times of Ancient Rus. In the Middle Ages, Jewish schools operated for a short time in Kiev and Chernigov. An increase in the number of Jewish communities was noted in Western Ukrainian lands from the end of the 14th century. The greatest spread of Judaism occurred in the 17th — 19th centuries, when, implementing

the ethnic policies of first the Polish and then the Russian states, followers of Judaism were settled on the lands of the central and western parts of the future Ukraine. As of January 1, 2014, there were 4 centralized religious associations of Jews in Ukraine, of which the largest was the Chabad Lubavitch Hasidic Association of Jewish Religious Communities of Ukraine (108 registered religious organizations, 93 ministers, 4 educational institutions, 45 children's schools and 17 media outlets), also in the country had 42 independent Jewish religious organizations.

On the territory of Ukraine there are also communities of Buddhists (as of January 1, 2014 — 57 registered religious organizations, 1 monastery, 44 clergy, 2 children's schools and 1 media) and other Eastern beliefs (as of January 1, 2014 — 44 registered religious organizations and 44 priests).

During the Soviet period, religious associations in Ukraine, as well as in other parts of the USSR, experienced oppression from the state. Christians were subjected to the greatest persecution. In the wake of the growth of Ukrainian nationalism in 1917, a number of Orthodox priests in Ukraine advocated the creation of a Ukrainian church independent of the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as the Ukrainization of worship.

On January 1, 1919, the leadership of the Ukrainian state — the directory of the Ukrainian People’s Republic — passed the law “On the autocephaly of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and its supreme government.” The Ukrainian authorities unsuccessfully tried to achieve recognition of the self-proclaimed church by the Patriarchate of Constantinople through diplomacy. In subsequent years, already under the rule of the Bolsheviks, the first Ukrainian parishes were registered in the Ukrainian SSR. The Russian Orthodox Church, led by Patriarch Tikhon (Belavin), considered the actions of the autocephalists in Ukraine schismatic. On May 5, 1920, Ukrainian nationalists announced the creation of the “Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church” (UAOC). Not a single representative of the episcopate of the Russian Orthodox Church took part in the actions of the autocephalists: at the so-called All-Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council convened on October 14, 1921 by supporters of the UAOC, only 64 priests and 17 deacons were present. The exarch of Ukraine, Metropolitan Mikhail (Ermakov), appointed by the Moscow Patriarchate, refused to attend the council and ordain henchmen of Ukrainian nationalists as bishops. As a result, the Ukrainian “bishops” were ordained in violation of the canonical rules accepted in the Ortho-

dox tradition, according to which a person can be ordained as a bishop only by two or three bishops, but not by other clergy. The UAOC was not recognized by any of the canonical Orthodox churches. In the 1920s The Soviet authorities, adhering to the course of weakening by all possible means the canonical Russian Orthodox Church, led by Tikhon (Belavin) and his supporters, supported the development of the UAOC. However, in the late 1920s — early 1930s. The OGPU began arresting and sentencing priests and active laity of the UAOC to various punishments, which in 1930 led to the UAOC announcing its self-dissolution. By 1937, the clergy of the functioning part of the UAOC, which the authorities allowed to operate under the name “Ukrainian Orthodox Church”, was completely destroyed in Ukraine, only some clergymen survived outside the USSR.

Around the same time, through the efforts of the clergy and laity of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCOR) was formed among Russian emigrants in the countries of Europe, Africa and North America, which reunited with the Russian Orthodox Church only in 2007. Some parishes of the ROCOR refused to reunite with the Russian Orthodox Church and formed independent

associations, unrecognized by world Orthodoxy (as of January 1, 2014, such associations in Ukraine included 62 registered religious organizations, 2 monasteries, 58 clergy, 1 educational institution, 10 Sunday schools and 1 media outlet).

During a series of state anti-religious campaigns in the 1920s and 1930s hundreds of thousands of believers of all religions were shot, sent into exile, arrested, numerous places of worship and valuables were confiscated in favor of the state or destroyed.

In autumn 1939, the USSR included territories previously under Polish control (now the Rovno, Volyn, Ternopol, and Ivano-Frankovsk regions of Ukraine), in which there were numerous Christian and Jewish religious communities. Planned for the early 1940s anti-religious campaign did not take place due to the Great Patriotic War that began on June 22, 1941. In 1942, the Nazi German occupation authorities, as part of their policy to support local cults to separate peoples in the controlled territory, resumed the activities of the UAOC. After the retreat of German troops from Ukraine, the hierarchs and clergy of the UAOC emigrated, laying the foundation for the so-called UAOC in the diaspora, named so because until the end of the 1980s the activities of this church were

carried out in the Ukrainian communities of the USA and Canada.

After the liberation of Ukraine by Soviet troops, the former parishes of the UAOC, as well as the UGCC, were transferred to the Russian Orthodox Church. The further life of religious communities of the Ukrainian SSR in the 1950-1980s. took place under conditions of state control over the activities of religious organizations through the institution of commissioners for religious affairs. In 1958-1964 an anti-religious campaign was launched against the religious communities of Ukraine, as well as the entire country. In addition to the Orthodox, organizations of Protestant denominations, which were considered anti-Soviet due to the location of their governing bodies in Western countries, were liquidated. Since the 1980s the weakening of government interference in the life of religious organizations contributed to the resumption of their activities. In 1988, celebrations were held in Kiev in honor of the 1000th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus. The same year a part of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra was returned to the Church.

At the same time, the weakening of state control over the activities of religious communities in the Ukrainian SSR and after Ukraine gained independence

in 1991 contributed to the spread in the country of non-traditional new religious movements and sects that have a pronounced nationalistic (in particular, Russophobic and anti-Semitic) character, ideologically close to Nazism and fascism.

The religious situation in the period from the beginning of Ukraine's existence as an independent state until the coup d'état of 2014 is characterized by the growth of historically existing religious communities in the country, as well as the emergence and active participation in the life of the state and society of new religious movements. With the collapse of the USSR, neo-pagan associations arose in the country (as of January 1, 2014, the total number of registered neo-pagan religious organizations was 127, 110 ministers, 3 educational institutions, 12 children's schools, 7 media), the "Society for Krishna Consciousness" (as of January 1, 2014 city: 37 religious organizations, 46 ministers, 3 educational institutions, 12 children's schools, 2 media), "Jehovah's Witnesses"* (as of January 1, 2014 it consisted of 634 religious organizations, 2,626 ministers, 147 children's schools)⁴.

* Recognized as an extremist organization in the Russian Federation and banned.

⁴ <https://web.archive.org/web/20190418193538/https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/resourses/statistics/ukr2014/55893/>

On October 25-27, 1990, the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church restored the self-governing Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), giving it the rights of broad autonomy. According to the data of the UOC itself, the vast majority of Ukrainians consider themselves to be its parishioners. As of January 1, 2014, the UOC included 12,673 registered religious organizations (one third of the total number of registered religious organizations in the country, which were registered — 33,993), 214 monasteries, 10,456 clergy, 20 educational institutions, 4,232 Sunday schools, 109 media outlets .

In 1989, the restoration of the UAOC was officially proclaimed again in Lvov. In 1990, a local council of the UAOC was held in Kiev, at which its statute was adopted, and Simon Petliura's nephew, Metropolitan Mstislav (Skripnik), who returned from emigration to the United States, was proclaimed Patriarch of Kiev and All Ukraine. As of January 1, 2014, the UAOC included 1,185 registered religious organizations, 12 monasteries, 706 clerics, 7 educational institutions, 294 Sunday schools, 6 media outlets.

In November 1991, Metropolitan Filaret (Denisenko), who headed the UOC, convened a council of bishops, which sent an appeal to the Moscow Patriarchate with

a request to grant the UOC full canonical independence, i.e., autocephaly. But soon after the council, most of the hierarchs withdrew their signatures, saying that they signed the appeal because of threats from Filaret. Despite the sworn promise to the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow to resign and create conditions for the election of a new primate of the UOC, on April 7, 1992, Filaret, returning to Kiev, announced his disobedience to the Moscow Patriarchate. On May 27, 1992, the Council of the UOC in Kharkov removed Filaret from the post of Primate of the UOC and withdrew him from the state with a ban on ministry, On June 11 of the same year, the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church deposed Metropolitan Filaret (Denisenko) for numerous canonical offenses. Filaret himself did not recognize this decision; the Ukrainian authorities, including the President of Ukraine L.M. Kravchuk, took his side: the head of state and the presidium of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine declared illegal the decisions of the Bishops' Council of the UOC, helped Filaret retain for himself, even with the use of force, a number of churches and real estate, with their support the so-called All-Ukrainian Orthodox Council was held, at which it was announced the unification of Filaret's supporters with the UAOC as part

of the “Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchate” (UOC-KP). The leader of the UAOC, Mstislav Skripnik, who lived in the US, was declared Patriarch of Kiev, and Filaret was proclaimed his deputy. But already in 1993, after the death of Skripnik, representatives of the UAOC left the UOC-KP, and on October 20, 1995, Filaret (Denisenko) was elected its head. In 1992, Filaret tried to negotiate in Istanbul with the Patriarch of Constantinople on the recognition of the UOC-KP, but the Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I (Archondonis) in July 1993 officially stated that he recognizes only one canonical Metropolitan of Kiev — Vladimir (Sabodan). On February 21, 1997, the Bishops’ Council of the Russian Orthodox Church excommunicated Filaret (Denisenko) and anathematized him. As of January 1, 2014, the UOC-KP included 4,651 religious organizations, 60 monasteries, 3,132 clergy, 18 educational institutions, 1,461 Sunday schools, 35 media outlets.

Cases of the seizure of UOC churches by Ukrainian nationalists in the interests of the UGCC and UAOC have been known since 1989. The raiders were supported by local authorities and representatives of various Ukrainian nationalist organizations. It is known, for example, that as a result of the seizures in 1991 in Ivano-

Frankovsk and Ternopol, the UOC lost all its churches⁵. Since the mid-2000s, cases of aggression against churches and clergy of the UOC have become more frequent; from 2003 to 2011, at least 20 such cases are known⁶. Thus, in 2005, St. Michael's Church in the village of Kostintsy. Storozhinets district, Chernovtsy region, and Resurrection Church in the town of Tarashcha, Kiev region, were seized by force, an attempt was made to seize the chapel in honor of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God in the village of Dukhche, Rozhishchensky district, Volyn region and the Holy Trinity Church in the village of Lipovaya Dolina in the Sumy region, the dean of the Holy Trinity Church in the village of Rokhmaniv, Ternopol region, was beaten.

Even before the coup on Maidan in 2014, the activities of a number of religious associations in Ukraine were significantly politicized. Representatives of new religious movements, predominantly neo-Protestant, took an active part in political agitation, created their own political associations and used prayer meetings

⁵ Zajavlenie Svjashhennogo Sinoda Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Cerkvi v svjazi so skladyvajushhejsja situaciej v otnoshenijah s Katolicheskoj Cerkov'ju [oktjabr' 1990] [Statement of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church in connection with the emerging situation in relations with the Catholic Church (October 1990)]. Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarhii [Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate]. 1991. No. 1. pp. 6-7

⁶ <https://www.pravmir.ru/napadeniya-na-xramy-na-ukraine/>

to promote the ideas of candidates for government positions⁷.

Cases of aggression by Ukrainian nationalists against Muslims have been recorded (both against private individuals and acts of vandalism against mosques)⁸. Migrantophobic and Islamophobic slogans were heard in 2010 in the political campaign of the future leader of the 2014 coup, O.Ya. Tyagnibok⁹.

Since the 1990s, there have been cases of anti-Semitism in Ukraine. The peak of anti-Semitic protests in the country occurred in 2005-2006, then repeated in the 2010s. Jewish organizations in a number of countries have accused the Ukrainian political party Svoboda of anti-Semitism due to nationalist rhetoric. In May 2013, the Jewish World Congress added the Svoboda party to its list of neo-Nazi organizations¹⁰, although the party itself denied any involvement in anti-Semitism.

⁷ For more details see Rogatin V.N. Uchastie neohristianskih religioznyh dvizhenij v sovremennoj politicheskoj zhizni Ukrainy [Participation of neo-Christian religious movements in modern political life of Ukraine]. Uchenye zapiski Kazanskogo universiteta. [Scientific notes of Kazan University]. Serija Gumanitarnye nauki. [Series Humanities].2016. T. 158, book. 3. pp.894-902

⁸ <https://www.historians.in.ua/index.php/en/doslidzhennya/154-viacheslav-lykhachev-yslamofobyia-v-ukrayne-novyie-tendentsyy>.

⁹ <http://milli-firka.org/ukrainian-nationalists-hate-m/> (date of access: 03/09/2023).

¹⁰ https://web.archive.org/web/20180804014152/https://www.ukrinform.ru/rubric-other_news/1493096-vsemirnyj-evreyskiy_kongress_otnes_svobodu_k_neonatsistskim_partiyam_1518887

Chapter 1
**Violation of the rights
of believers in Ukraine
in 2014–2022**

1.1. Persecution of believers of the UOC in 2014–2018

On November 21, 2013, supporters of European integration gathered in the center of Kiev on Independence Square, outraged that President V.F. Yanukovich postponed the signing of an association agreement with the European Union. The protesters, whose number grew every day due to those arriving from the regions of Ukraine, remained in the square and central streets of the city throughout December, periodically staging provocations and clashing with law enforcement forces. On February 18, 2014, on the day of the Verkhovna Rada meeting, at which the opposition demanded the return of the parliamentary-presidential form of government and the restoration of the 2004 Constitution of Ukraine, violent clashes between protesters and the police began, which lasted several days. According to the General Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine, during the clashes on February 18-20, 2014, 78 Maidan participants were killed, 278 were injured, 13 law enforcement officers were killed, 650 of them were injured. On February 22, 2014, the Verkhovna

Rada of Ukraine adopted a resolution in which it announced the “self-removal by unconstitutional means” of the President of Ukraine V.F. Yanukovich from fulfilling constitutional powers and calling early presidential elections in Ukraine on May 25, 2014. If in the central, northern and western regions of Ukraine the new Kiev authorities, who announced the resumption of a political course towards European integration, found support from the population, then in the southeast this political course was met with sharp protest from opponents of Euromaidan, which led to the entry of Crimea into the Russian Federation and armed clashes in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions (now subjects of the Russian Federation).

Religious organizations in Ukraine reacted differently to the events of Euromaidan. A significant number of hierarchs and clergy of the UGCC and UOC-KP spoke out in support of Euromaidan, taking an active part in political actions in Kiev and other cities of Ukraine. Few clergy of the UOC spoke out in support of Euromaidan, the majority took a position in favor of ending the conflict and negotiations between the parties¹. On January 21-22, 2014, monks and priests

¹ https://nvo.ng.ru/events/2013-12-18/3_maidan.html.

of the UOC stood in a human chain at a prayer stand between the police and protesters². It was noted that pastors of neo-Protestant new religious movements, such as “New Generation” and “Embassy of God”, were on the side of the protesters on Independence Square.³

On February 23, 2014, immediately after the coup in Ukraine, dozens of members of the so-called Maidan self-defense blocked the entrances to the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra. The next morning the monastery was unlocked⁴.

On February 24, 2014, due to the impossibility of Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine Vladimir (Sabodan) to fulfill his duties, the Synod of the UOC decided on the need to elect a locum tenens of the Kiev Metropolitan See, who elected Metropolitan of Chernivtsi and Bukovina Onufriy (Berezovsky)⁵. At the Bishops’ Council of the UOC, held on August 13, 2014 in the Kiev Pechersk Lavra, he was elected Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Enthronement took

² https://www.ng.ru/ng_religii/2014-02-05/1_maidan.html

³ For more details see Rogatin V.N. Uchastie neohristianskih religioznykh dvizhenij v sovremennoj politicheskoy zhizni Ukrainy [Participation of neo-Christian religious movements in modern political life of Ukraine]. Uchenye zapiski Kazanskogo universiteta. [Scientific notes of Kazan University]. Serija Gumanitarnye nauki. [Series Humanities]. 2016. T. 158, book. 3. pp.894-902

⁴ <https://tass.ru/info/17394381>

⁵ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3579574.html>

place on August 17, 2014 in the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra⁶. He currently holds the position.

On March 18, 2014, as a result of a referendum, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea became part of the Russian Federation. Three Orthodox dioceses located in Crimea — diocese of Dzhankoy, Simferopol and Feodosia — remained part of the UOC until June 7, 2022, when, by the decision of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, they were included in the Russian Orthodox Church and united into the Crimean Metropolis⁷.

The escalation of the civil conflict that began after the victory of Euromaidan in Ukraine led to increased interfaith tension, cases of violation of human rights and freedoms of believers, mainly belonging to the UOC, murders of clergy, persecution of clergy and laity of the UOC in the media, and raider seizures of churches.

In the period from May to December 2014, at least three clergy of the UOC are known to have died as a result of shelling by the Ukrainian army of the cities of Donetsk and Lugansk regions. On the night of May 9, 2014, near Slavyansk, a UOC clergyman Archpriest Pavel Zhuchenko, who served in the

⁶ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/70984.html>

⁷ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5934527.html>

Church of St. Demetrius of Donskoy in the town of Druzhkovka, Donetsk region, was shot dead. Priest Georgy Nikishov, cleric of the St. Peter and Paul Church in Pervomaisk, Lugansk region, died on July 28, 2014 due to a shrapnel wound. On July 31, 2014, Archpriest Vladimir Kreslyansky was killed during shelling⁸. 6 priests of the UOC were arrested, interrogated and tortured by the armed forces of Ukraine, three came under fire and were injured, 12 priests received threats from nationalist formations and the security services of Ukraine, some of them were forced to leave the country⁹. On July 31, 2014, Metropolitan Onufriy of Kiev sent a letter to the President of Ukraine P.A. Poroshenko with a request to protect the clergy of the UOC from aggression from Ukrainian military personnel¹⁰.

According to the report of the chancellor of the UOC for 2014, as of December 23, 14 seizures of UOC churches were recorded and 6 temples are in a state of threat of seizure.

⁸ <https://www.pravmir.ru/hramyi-i-duhovenstvo-postradavshie-na-yugo-vostoke-ukrainyi/#i-3>

⁹ <http://orthodoxrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Special-report-Ukraine-2014.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://news.church.ua/2014/07/31/misceblyustitel-kijivs-koji-mitropolichoji-kafedri-zvernuvsya-do-prezidenta-ukrajini-2/#2023-03-14>

As a result of the so-called “referendums”, which were carried out in violation of the current legislation of Ukraine, were fraudulently confiscated churches in the villages of Solonov and Ostrov of Radivilovsky district, villages of Rachin and Sudobychi of the Dubensky district, as well as the village of Khodosy, Rovno district. There was a threat of forceful seizure of UOC churches in the villages of Minkovtsy and Pticha of Dubensky district, village of. Novoselki, Zdolbunovsky district and village of. Mnishin, Goshchansky district.

Numerous facts of violation of the rights of UOC believers to freedom of religion have also been recorded in the Volyn region. Churches in the villages of Pechihvosty, Strilche and Ugrinov of the Gorokhovskyy district were also illegally captured and transferred to representatives of the so-called UOC-KP.

In July 2014, the religious community of the UOC in the village of Novostav in Shumsky district, Ternopol region, was illegally transferred to the UOC-KP¹¹. In addition, the believers of the parish of St. Michael the Archangel of the UOC in the village. Butin of the Zbarazh deanery of the Ternopol region were unable to celebrate the Liturgy in their church, due to its forceful

¹¹ <https://www.pravmir.ru/v-ternopolskoy-oblasti-obmannym-putem-izmenili-yurisdiksiyu-hrama/>

seizure by representatives of the schismatic group of the UOC-KP and representatives of the “Right Sector”^{*12}.

There were attempts to forcefully seize UOC churches in the Kiev region, in particular, in the village of Krasnaya Motovilovka, Fastovskiy district and village of Pasechnaya, Baryshevsky district. Also took place an attempt to seize the Church of Saints Boris and Gleb in Pereyaslav-Khmelnitsky.

In the Kirovograd region, there were also violations of religious freedom, which is recorded in the published report of the Archbishop of Kirovograd and Novomirgorod Ioasaf (Guben), according to which a representative of the regional government put pressure on the clergy of the Kirovograd diocese and forced him to change his subordination — to move to the UOC-KP¹³. The report also records facts of information campaigns against the UOC and personally Metropolitan of Chernivtsi (later — of Kiev) Onufriy (Berezovsky). In 2014, as a result of hostilities in eastern Ukraine, 9 churches were completely destroyed, 77 churches and monasteries were damaged, the episcopal residence

* Terrorist organization banned in the Russian Federation.

¹² <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/1500461>

¹³ <https://news.church.ua/2014/12/31/zvit-keruyuchogo-spravami-upc-za-2014-rik/#2023-03-14>

of Metropolitan Hilarion of Donetsk and Mariupol (Shukalo), the Gorlovka diocesan administration, the clergy house and other parish buildings were also damaged.¹⁴ In other cities of Ukraine (Kiev, Nikolaev, Kherson, Izyum), acts of vandalism were committed against UOC churches: offensive inscriptions were written on the walls of churches, arson or attempted arson was committed¹⁵. In addition, in 2014, in the Kyev, Lvov, Ternopol, Volyn and Rovno regions, attempts were made to seize the parishes of the UOC in favor of the Kiev Patriarchate; 14 parishes were captured¹⁶.

In total, from February 2014 to November 2015, 26 UOC churches were subjected to an attempted takeover with the participation of militants from nationalist organizations. To the list of manifestations of religious intolerance can also be added a number of cases of desecration of churches of the UOC and attempts by nationalists to attack its priests and bishops, sometimes during worship, as was the case in the Sumy Cathedral on March 1, 2015. A number of clergy were subjected

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ <http://orthodoxrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Special-report-Ukraine-2014.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://sinod.church.ua/2014/12/23/zvernennya-svyashhennogo-sinodu-ukrajinskoji-pravoslavnoji-cerkvi-do-prezidenta-ukrajini-petra-oleksijovicha-poroshenka-u-zvyazku-z-krizovoyu-situacijeyu-v-ukrajinskomu-suspilstvi/>

to searches and abductions, as well as torture by armed SBU officers¹⁷. Separately, it is worth noting the publication of personal data of many priests and bishops of the UOC on the website “Mirotvorets”^{*18}, where personal information was published, including photographs and home addresses of people accused of separatism¹⁹. The site’s data was publicly available from 2014 to 2019, and during this period many people were killed by extremists who found the information about the victims’ whereabouts on the site²⁰.

In January 2015, representatives of the UOC-KP and Ukrainian nationalists seized the Intercession Church of the UOC in Malin, Zhitomir region²¹. In March 2015, the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the villages of Stenka and Kolosovo, Ternopol region, was subjected to repeated attacks by right-wing radicals. In June 2015, during an attempt to seize the Church of the Great Martyr St. George the Victorious of the UOC in the village of Katerinovka, Ternopol region,

¹⁷ <https://fordemocracy.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/zhertva-grazhdanskoy-voyny-presledovaniya-upts-2014-2015.pdf>

* the site is recognized as extremist in the Russian Federation

¹⁸ <https://myrotvorets.center/>

¹⁹ https://kpfu.ru/portal/docs/F_891867119/Presledovania_UPTs_5.pdf

²⁰ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/7309159>

²¹ <https://fordemocracy.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/zhertva-grazhdanskoy-voyny-presledovaniya-upts-2014-2015.pdf>

Right Sector* militants brutally beat parishioners and used special means against them²². In the same year, representatives of the Kiev Patriarchate used force to seize other churches of the UOC in the Rovno and Zhitomir regions²³.

In addition to the seizure of churches, in 2015 arsons of UOC facilities by representatives of the Kiev Patriarchate, the Right Sector* and other nationalist organizations of Ukraine were recorded. For example, in January 2015, churches in honor of the icon of the Mother of God “Joy of All Who Sorrow” on the territory of the Kiev National Historical and Cultural Reserve “Babi Yar” and the temple of the martyr Tryphon in Kiev were set on fire. In May 2015, the hospital church of the Saint Great Martyr Panteleimon was set on fire in Kovel. In total, 13 churches were damaged as a result of arson from 2014 to 2015²⁴.

In 2015, artillery attacks on religious sites by the Ukrainian armed forces continued, during which

* The organization is recognized as terrorist in the Russian Federation and is banned.

²² <http://pravlife.org/content/religioznyy-konflikt-v-katerinovke>

²³ <https://fordemocracy.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/zhertva-grazhdanskoy-voyny-presledovaniya-upts-2014-2015.pdf>

* The organization is recognized as terrorist in the Russian Federation and is banned.

²⁴ <https://fordemocracy.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/zhertva-grazhdanskoy-voyny-presledovaniya-upts-2014-2015.pdf>

a number of churches were damaged. In particular, as a result of the shelling, the following were damaged: St. Nicholas Church near the Donetsk railway station, Intercession Church in the village of Luganskoye, Donetsk region, Alexander Nevsky Church in Debaltsevo, Epiphany Cathedral in the center of Gorlovka, the Church of St. Ignatius in Donetsk, as well as the chapel in honor of the Saint Martyr Victor in the Square of Heroes of Gorlovka. In addition, as a result of the shelling, the diocesan administration of the Gorlovka and Slavic diocese of the UOC, located in Gorlovka, was damaged²⁵.

In 2014-2015 also occurred cases of killings, attacks and harassment of clerics, as well as the desecration of churches through the painting of offensive images.

In March 2015, the dean of the UOC community in the village of Ugrinov, Volyn region, Archpriest Rostislav Sapozhnik was beaten while trying to enter the church²⁶. In October 2015, Anatoly Borisenok, the head of security at the religious center, was severely beaten in the Sumy Cathedral²⁷. On December 18, 2015, representatives of the UOC-KP and nationalists attacked

²⁵ <https://fordemocracy.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/zhertva-grazhdanskoy-voyny-presledovaniya-upts-2014-2015.pdf>

²⁶ <https://pravoslavie.ru/78110.html>

²⁷ <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/zhestoko-izbit-rukovoditel-sluzhby-ohrany-sumskogo-eparhialnogo-upravleniya>

believers of the UOC who arrived to perform the service in the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the village of Pticha, Rovno region, that illegally was under the jurisdiction of the UOC-KP in 2014-2015. And the representatives of law enforcement forces did not interfere with the actions of the nationalists during the incident²⁸. The dean of this community, Archpriest Nikolai Sisonyuk, spoke about the persecution against him organized by radicals²⁹. A few years later the church was captured, and the UOC community, persecuted by schismatics, built a new church building³⁰. On December 16, 2015, an attack occurred on believers leaving an evening service Presentation of Mary UOC Church in Kiev³¹. In October 2015, on the walls of the Church in honor of the Transfiguration of the Lord in Kiev black color graffiti were painted and stickers were pasted with accusations against the UOC³².

In 2015, the dean of the Kiev UOC Church in honor of the Great Martyr Tatyana priest Roman Nikolaev,

²⁸ https://kpfu.ru/portal/docs/F_891867119/Presledovania_UPTs_5.pdf

²⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/26770-v-sele-ptichya-organizovali-zhestokuyu-travlyu-svyashchennika-upts>

³⁰ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5856501.html>

³¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/26807-v-kieve-neizvestnye-radikaly-napali-na-okhranu-khrama-upts>

³² <https://sedmitza.ru/text/5911628.html>

was shot in his home³³. The same year, the nun of the Ascension Florovsky Convent in Kiev, Alevtina (Kravchuk), was killed.³⁴ In total, during the period from 2014 to 2015, 13 attacks by radicals on priests of the UOC, 6 cases of persecution by the SBU and 8 attacks by militants of nationalist battalions were recorded³⁵.

In 2014-2015, there were numerous cases of infringement of the rights of UOC believers by local government authorities of Ukraine and forcing them to change jurisdiction. Such cases were recorded in Kiev, Sumy, Zhitomir, Volyn, Ternopol, Ivano-Frankovsk, Kirovograd and Zaporozhye regions³⁶. For example, in January 2015, deputies of the Kiev City Council made a decision in which they excluded the UOC from the list of organizations that will have benefits when paying land tax, starting from 2016³⁷. The Kiev Court of Appeal later overturned this decision, but the fact of oppression of the UOC by the authorities for ideological reasons did occur. In 2015, the Ternopol City Council

³³ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4180792.html>

³⁴ <https://www.pravmir.ru/mitropolit-onufriy-stradaniya-monahini-alevtinyi-uvenchali-put-ee-zemnogo-podviga/>

³⁵ <https://fordemocracy.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/zhertva-grazhdanskoy-voyny-presledovaniya-upts-2014-2015.pdf>

³⁶ <https://fordemocracy.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/zhertva-grazhdanskoy-voyny-presledovaniya-upts-2014-2015.pdf>

³⁷ <https://ria.ru/20150128/1044768378.html>

decided to exempt from taxes all religious organizations of Ukraine in this region, except for the Ternopol diocese of the UOC. In 2015, as a result of the reform of the Tax Code of Ukraine, all religious organizations were exempt from taxes, thereby ending discrimination against the UOC at the state level³⁸, which continued, however, at the regional level. The city council of Lutsk, Volyn region, demanded that parishioners of the UOC withdraw from subordination to the Russian Orthodox Church and take part in the creation of a single local Orthodox church in Ukraine³⁹. The Ternopol regional administration, in violation of a court decision, issued documents to change the jurisdiction of the Church of St. John the Evangelist in the village of Kolosovaya and formalized its transition from the UOC to the UOC KP in 2015⁴⁰. But the Lvov Administrative Court of Appeal condemned the actions of this administration and declared them illegal⁴¹. As a result, later representatives of the UOC-KP, with the support of militants from the “Right Sector”^{*} and “Stepan Bandera All-Ukrainian Organization

³⁸ <https://gnc.news/2015/05/14/314981>

³⁹ http://www.religare.ru/2_106549.html

⁴⁰ <https://www.pravmir.ru/v-ternopolskoy-oblasti-obmannym-putem-izmenili-yurisdiksiyu-hrama/>

^{*} terrorist organizations banned in the Russian Federation.

⁴¹ <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/sud-zashchitil-pravo-obshchiny-upc-na-hram-sela-kolosovaya>

Trizub”*, seized the Church of St. John the Evangelist in the village of Kolosovaya, and parishioners of the UOC community were forced to build a new church⁴².

Thus, 2014–2015 characterized by chaos in the socio-political life of Ukraine and the active work of nationalist formations. Seizures of churches by nationalists in different regions of the country numbered in the dozens, as well as arsons and other attacks on religious buildings and their clergymen, who were subjected to kidnapping, torture and even murder. The situation began to change due to the fact that by the beginning of 2016, most of these volunteer formations were fully incorporated into the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. The chaotic aggression against the canonical UOC was replaced by coordinated campaigns that united the forces of government officials and nationalists.

In 2015-2018 25 forceful seizures of UOC churches were recorded by representatives of the UOC-KP and nationalist formations. Captures were carried out mainly in western Ukraine, in Ternopol, Khmelnytsky,

* terrorist organizations banned in the Russian Federation.

⁴² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/38768-v-kolosovoy-veruyushchie-upts-nachali-stroit-novyy-khram-vmesto-zakhvachennogo-raskolnikami>

Rovno, Volyn, Ivano-Frankovsk and Transcarpathian regions⁴³.

In November 2015 in the village of Gribovitsa, Volyn region, another attempt was made to seize the Intercession Church of the UOC by representatives of the UOC-KP with the intervention of local officials. Law enforcement agencies were forced to close and seal the church. Representatives of the UOC-KP seized a chapel located in the rural cemetery in Gribovitsy and belonging to the Intercession Church. The seizure of the chapel was discovered in 2016, when believers of the UOC faced the change of locks on it. Archpriest Igor Margita, the dean of the community, contacted law enforcement agencies regarding the replacement of locks on a religious building and was refused to initiate a pre-trial investigation into the incident⁴⁴.

In 2015-2018 the UOC-KP community, affiliated with the nationalist party “Svoboda”, as well as with the organizations “Aidar”* and “Azov”*, tried to seize by force the Church of the St. Righteous Anna in the village of Kutly Ternopol region⁴⁵. The church was captured,

⁴³ https://kpfu.ru/portal/docs/F_891867119/Presledovania_UPTs_5.pdf

⁴⁴ <https://fordemocracy.ru/2020/05/20/presledovaniya-ukrainskoj-pravoslavnoj-cerkvi-v-hode-konflikta-na-ukraine-2016-2018/>

* terrorist organizations banned in the Russian Federation.

⁴⁵ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4615302.html>

and the UOC had to build a new church nearby in 2018⁴⁶.

In January 2016, representatives of the UOC-KP seized the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the UOC in the village of Krasnolesye, Rovno region⁴⁷. And in June of this year, representatives of the UOC-KP, with the support of Rovno self-defense militants, forcibly seized the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary in the village of Duliby, Rovno region. Conflicts around this temple occurred over the course of three years: four times schismatics tried to break into the church, but believers of the UOC fought back, so the temple remained the property of this religious community⁴⁸.

At the end of July 2016, an attempt was made to forcefully seize the church of the Saints Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince Vladimir and Princess Olga of the UOC in Uzhgorod, Transcarpathian region⁴⁹. In February 2017, supporters of the UOC-KP, with the support of Right Sector* militants, seized the Church of the First

⁴⁶ <https://prichod.ru/opyt-prihodov/34573/>

⁴⁷ https://spzh.news/ru/spots_info/13-hram-rozhdestva-presvyatoj-bogorodicy-s-krasnoselye

⁴⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/zashhita-very/55659-zahvaty-khramov-kak-eto-bylo-duliby>

⁴⁹ https://kpfu.ru/portal/docs/F_891867119/Presledovania_UPTs_5.pdf

* Recognized as terrorist organizations in the Russian Federation and banned

Martyr Stephen of the UOC in the village of Kotyuzhyny, Ternopol region⁵⁰. In May 2017, activists of the UOC-KP seized the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in the village of Kinakhovtsy, Zbarazhsky district of Ternopol region⁵¹. In the same month, representatives of the UOC-KP, the nationalist party “Svoboda” and the organization “Sokol” seized the Assumption Church of the UOC in the village of Zoryanoye, Khmelnytsky region⁵². In June 2017, representatives of the public organization “Golden Lions of the Black Hundred” and the UGCC tried to break into the Church of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the UOC in the city of Kolomyia, Ivano-Frankovsk region. As a result of the confrontation that arose, the local authorities decided to seal the church’s premises⁵³. In 2018, the Ivano-Frankovsk administration informed the ruling bishop of the Kolomyia diocese of the UOC Tikhon (Chizhevsky) that the Annunciation Church in Kolomyia belongs to the state. However, despite all these statements, the church was actually in the possession of the UGCC, and in 2019, a divine service according to the Greek Catholic rite was held here for the first

⁵⁰ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4802359.html>

⁵¹ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4894318.html>

⁵² https://kpfu.ru/portal/docs/F_891867119/Presledovania_UPTs_5.pdf

⁵³ https://kpfu.ru/portal/docs/F_891867119/Presledovania_UPTs_5.pdf

time⁵⁴. In November 2017, representatives of the UOC-KP, with the assistance of the police, seized the Holy Dormition Church of the UOC in the village. Stary Gvozdets, Ivano-Frankovsk region⁵⁵.

In addition to raider seizures of churches in 2016-2018, arson of religious buildings of the UOC and acts of vandalism continued, as well as persecution and terror of the clergy of this religious organization, and damage to their property.

In January 2016, churches were set on fire in Kiev, namely the Church of the Icon of the Mother of God “Softening Evil Hearts” was damaged⁵⁶, Church in honor of St. Peter Mogila⁵⁷ and an attempt was made to set fire to the Church of the Apostles Peter and Paul in the city of Belopolye, Sumy region⁵⁸. In the same month, supporters of the UOC-KP beat up believers of the UOC during a religious procession in the village of Pticha of Rovno region⁵⁹, and there was also an attack on the house of Archpriest Ioann Savchuk, dean of the church

⁵⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/63753-uniaty-nachnut-bogoslužhenija-v-zahvachennom-khrame-upc-v-kolomyje>

⁵⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/48106-politsiya-pomogla-raskolnikam-zakhvatit-khram-upts-vs-staryy-gvozdets-video>

⁵⁶ <http://eparchia.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4777772.html>

⁵⁷ <http://eparchia.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4325778.html>

⁵⁸ <https://pravlife.org/uk/node/4588>

⁵⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/26901-posledovateli-kievskogo-patriarkhata-vnov-prolili-krov-veruyushchikh-upts>

in the village of Podluzhye, Rovno region⁶⁰. At the same time, an attack was carried out on Archpriest Georgy Shcherbatyuk, dean of the Transfiguration Cathedral in Chernigov⁶¹.

In February 2016, an act of vandalism was committed on the territory of the hospital church in the name of St. Luke of Crimea in the city of Nemirov, Vinnitsa region⁶². In the same month, the church in honor of the icon of the Mother of God “Assuage my sorrows” was set on fire in the city of Nikolaev, Lvov region⁶³.

In February 2016, in Odessa, unknown persons set fire to the car of the Chairman of the Department for Charity and Social Service of the Odessa Diocese of the UOC, Archpriest Pavel Polishchuk⁶⁴.

In 2016, Kiev churches in honor of St. Agapit of Pechersk⁶⁵ and in honor of the Transfiguration of the Lord were set on fire⁶⁶.

On May 9, 2016 in Melitopol, representatives of the “Maidan Self-Defense” at the rally dedicated to Victory

⁶⁰ <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/dom-svyashchennika-upc-zabrosali-kamnyami-na-rovenshchine>

⁶¹ <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/deputat-raysoveta-napal-na-nastoyatelya-spaskogo-sobora-v-chernigove>

⁶² <https://gs-news.ru/2016/02/16/sponsory-separov-v-vinnickoi/>

⁶³ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4384451.html>

⁶⁴ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4384451.html>

⁶⁵ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4442845.html>

⁶⁶ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4476158.html>

Day tore the cassock of the dean of the Holy Dormition Church of the UOC, Archpriest Andrei Pirogov, and tore off his St. George's ribbon⁶⁷.

In June 2016, at the entrance to Vinnitsa from the village of Strizhavka a wayside cross, which was erected in 2013 in honor of the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Kievan Rus, was cut off and thrown to the ground⁶⁸. In July of the same year, unknown persons broke a worship cross installed at the pedestal of the demolished monument to Lenin in the city of Mariupol, Donetsk region. There are facts indicating that this act of vandalism was committed by the radicals of the far-right Russophobic nationalist group Azov*⁶⁹.

In September 2016, representatives of the UOC-KP destroyed the unfinished UOC temple in the village of Borovaya, Kiev region⁷⁰. In the same month, unknown persons poured red paint on the sculpture of Grand Duke Vladimir on Vladimirskaya Gorka in Kiev. Six days later, neo-Nazi symbols were painted on the monument with white paint⁷¹.

⁶⁷ https://kpfu.ru/portal/docs/F_891867119/Presledovania_UPTs_5.pdf

⁶⁸ <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/vandaly-srezali-trehmetrovyy-krest-pri-vezde-v-vinnicu>

* terrorist organization banned in the Russian Federation

⁶⁹ https://kpfu.ru/portal/docs/F_891867119/Presledovania_UPTs_5.pdf

⁷⁰ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4614380.html>

⁷¹ https://kpfu.ru/portal/docs/F_891867119/Presledovania_UPTs_5.pdf

In October 2016, a worship cross was broken on the territory of the St. Sergius Church in Nikolaev, Nikolaev region⁷², and in November of the same year, the temple in honor of Saints Cyril and Methodius Equal-to-the-Apostles in the city of Pavlograd, Dnepropetrovsk region, was set on fire⁷³.

In January 2017, an attempt was made to set fire to the temple in honor of the icon of the Mother of God “Softening Evil Hearts” in Kiev⁷⁴.

On January 25, 2017, SBU officers searched the houses of priests of the Rovno diocese of the UOC and human rights activists involved in protecting churches from forceful seizures by nationalists. The searches were carried out with violations. The SBU also conducted numerous searches that day of members of the Union of Orthodox Journalists who were covering the seizure of churches in the regions⁷⁵.

In February 2017, in the city of Rovno, Rovno region, vandals attacked the diocesan administration of the Rovno diocese of the UOC, writing on the walls of the building insulting inscriptions against

⁷² <https://pravlife.org/bg/node/8253>

⁷³ <http://eparchia.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4663711.html>

⁷⁴ <http://eparchia.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4777772.html>

⁷⁵ https://kpfu.ru/portal/docs/F_891867119/Presledovania_UPTs_5.pdf

Metropolitan Varfolomey (Vashchuk) of Rovno and Ostrog⁷⁶.

In April 2017, an arson was committed at the parish buildings near the St. Nicholas Church in the city of Novomirgorod, Kirovograd region,⁷⁷ and in May of that year, in Kiev an attempt was made on the life of the head of the mission “Mercy Without Borders”, Archpriest Zachariy Kerstyuk⁷⁸.

In December 2017, by the decision of the Kiev court of Odessa, SBU officers in the Odessa region were found guilty of using threats to try to lure the abbot of the Holy Iveron Monastery, Bishop Diodor (Vasilchuk), from the amount of 70 thousand dollars⁷⁹.

In January 2018, a door was set on fire in the Church of the Desyatiny Monastery in the center of Kiev, and other acts of vandalism were committed. Law enforcement agencies detained the criminals, and the court chose a preventive measure for them⁸⁰.

In February 2018, the Church in the name of St. Prince Vladimir in Lvov was set on fire⁸¹. In the same

⁷⁶ Ibidem

⁷⁷ <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/sovershen-podzhog-prihodskih-zdaniy-v-novomirgorode>

⁷⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/41734-v-kieve-sovershili-pokushenie-na-svyashchennosluzhitelya-upts->

⁷⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/49705-v-odesse-posadili-ofitserov-sbu-shantazhirovavshikh-nastoyatelya-monastyrya-upts>

⁸⁰ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5138471.html>

⁸¹ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5142633.html>

month, Ukrainian nationalists dismantled a worship cross installed in one of the squares of Kiev on the site of an Orthodox church destroyed by the Bolsheviks in 1934⁸².

In February 2018, the SBU opened an administrative case against Hieromonk Ioann (Kurmoyarov), a non-staff cleric of the Tulchin diocese of the UOC in the Vinnitsa region. The reason was that he posted a greeting card with a picture of the St. George's ribbon on his social network page.⁸³

In March 2018, a building was set on fire on the territory of the UOC church complex in honor of the icon of the Mother of God "Joy of All Who Sorrow" in the National Historical and Memorial Reserve "Babi Yar" in Kiev⁸⁴. And in April of that year, the Church of the Jerusalem Icon of the Mother of God in the Goloseevsky district of Kiev was set on fire.⁸⁵

In August 2018, Ukrainian nationalists organized a series of graffiti attacks against UOC churches in Odessa⁸⁶.

⁸² <https://news.church.ua/2018/02/02/nacional-radikaly-unichtozhili-poklonnyj-krest-v-kieve-ustanovlennyj-na-meste-razrushennogo-kommunistami-xrama-video/?lang=ru>

⁸³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/51466-upts-politicheskie-vzglyady-i-georgievskaya-lenta-chastnoe-delo-svyashchennika>

⁸⁴ https://kpfu.ru/portal/docs/F_891867119/Presledovania_UPTs_5.pdf

⁸⁵ <http://eparchia.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5175132.html>

⁸⁶ <http://eparchia.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5248655.html>

In October 2018, in the village of Kokhanovka, Odessa region, an offensive inscription was painted in black paint on the door of the church in honor of the Apostle James, provoking interethnic hatred⁸⁷.

In November 2018, the SBU reported that it was conducting searches at the residence of the rector of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, Metropolitan Pavel (Lebed), as part of a case of inciting interfaith hatred⁸⁸. Earlier, the leader of the UOC-KP Filaret (Denisenko) stated in the media that the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra should be transferred to his structure⁸⁹. In December of the same year, a number of priests of the UOC of the Rovno region were summoned for questioning by the SBU. The clerics were charged with high treason and inciting religious hatred⁹⁰. In the same month, booklets dedicated to the “subversive activities” of the UOC were published on the SBU website⁹¹.

In 2016-2018 shelling of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions also continued, during which religious sites were damaged. In particular, the building of the Gorlovka diocesan administration and the Iversky Church

⁸⁷ https://kpfu.ru/portal/docs/F_891867119/Presledovania_UPTs_5.pdf

⁸⁸ <https://www.interfax.ru/world/640151>

⁸⁹ <https://tass.ru/info/17394381>

⁹⁰ <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/v-upravlenii-sbu-v-rovenskoy-oblasti-celyy-den-doprashivali-svyashchennikov-upc>

⁹¹ https://kpfu.ru/portal/docs/F_891867119/Presledovania_UPTs_5.pdf

under construction in the city of Gorlovka, Donetsk region, were damaged.⁹², the Ascension Church and its premises in the village of Novolugansk Donetsk region⁹³, Alexander Nevsky Church in Debaltsevo, Donetsk region⁹⁴ and the Church of the Intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the village of Staromikhailovka, Donetsk region came under fire⁹⁵.

Already at the beginning of 2018, there was information that the SBU was preparing a large-scale criminal prosecution against representatives of the UOC. This, in particular, was stated on March 27, 2018 at the round table “Russian Aggression against Ukraine: Historical Parallels and Modern Dimension” in Pokrovsk, Donetsk Region, SBU Colonels Valeriy Ustimenko and Yulia Laputina. According to them, the SBU is conducting an investigation into the activities of the UOC throughout Ukraine. The SBU moved to the immediate implementation of this project by the end of the year, at the height of the campaign to prepare for the creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU)⁹⁶.

⁹² <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/gorlovskoe-eparhialnoe-upravlenie-postradalo-ot-artobstrelya-0>

⁹³ <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/vo-vremya-bogoslužheniya-v-hram-sela-novoluganskoe-popal-snaryad>

⁹⁴ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4725820.html>

⁹⁵ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5259992.html>

⁹⁶ https://kpfu.ru/portal/docs/F_891867119/Presledovania_UPTs_5.pdf

In 2017, American human rights activists, when considering the issue of observance of human rights in Ukraine, for the first time drew attention to the violation of the rights of believers of the UOC⁹⁷. Harassment of the UOC was reported in the 2017 International Religious Freedom Report, published by the US Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor⁹⁸.

2018 was marked by a number of antics by Ukrainian nationalists, including an attempt to block the Dormition Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, as well as repeated acts of vandalism against Orthodox churches of the UOC.

The main attention in the Ukrainian media in 2018 was aimed at covering the persecution of the canonical Church (seizure, desecration of churches and the issue of granting the right of autocephaly to Ukrainian schismatics). The incitement of hatred, the waging of an information war and the spread of indiscriminate slander against the only canonical Orthodox Church in Ukraine continued. Cases of not only seizures, but also desecrations, arson and robberies of Orthodox churches have become more frequent. UOC communities were expelled from churches and new unknown people were

⁹⁷ http://www.religare.ru/2_114881_1_21.html

⁹⁸ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2017-report-on-international-religious-freedom/>

forcibly introduced there, after which the temple passed to schismatics⁹⁹.

On March 2, 2018, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus commented on the situation with the seizure of churches in Ukraine. According to him, at that time 50 churches were seized by force, churches were constantly attacked, priests were beaten¹⁰⁰.

In January 2018, radically minded young people from the Ukrainian public organization “Liga Skhodu” disrupted a service at the Trinity Cathedral of the UOC in the city of Dnepr, after which they posted a message on the Internet threatening to continue the persecution of believers of the canonical church¹⁰¹. In the same month, the Holy Intercession Church of the city of Chernomorsk, Odessa region, was robbed and desecrated — the altar doors were broken, the premises were covered with powder from fire extinguishers¹⁰². In addition, during the same period of time, unknown persons robbed and desecrated the UOC church in honor of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God in Kiev, stole the altar Gospel, valuables and rented heating equipment. The church’s

⁹⁹ <https://www.sedmitza.ru/text/7957357.html>

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5155533.html>

¹⁰¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/50168-radikaly-v-dnepre-sorvali-bogosluzhenie-v-svyato-troitskom-sobore-upts>

¹⁰² <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5098029.html>

construction process was about to be finished¹⁰³. On January 25, 2018, 30 members of the Ukrainian nationalist organization “C14”* broke into the editorial office of the “Union of Orthodox Journalists” website in the center of Kiev. They stated that there was extremist literature in the office. After the police arrived, the radicals left the premises, taking with them the hard drive of one of the computers¹⁰⁴. According to the Information and Educational Department of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, not a single crime related to the desecration and robbery of churches at the time of 2018 was solved, and the perpetrators were not punished. In particular, not a single one of the 19 robberies and desecrations of churches in the Odessa region was solved and the perpetrators were not punished¹⁰⁵.

On January 28, 2018, in the Sykhovsky district of Lvov, an action of nationalist organizations took place, which demanded the demolition of the UOC temple on Krasnaya Kalina Avenue due to alleged violations of urban planning legislation and lack of land allocation¹⁰⁶. On the night of February 3, 2018,

¹⁰³ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5099644.html>

* recognized as a terrorist organization in the Russian Federation and banned.

¹⁰⁴ <https://ria.ru/20180125/1513337249.html>

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5098029.html>

¹⁰⁶ <https://rian.com.ua/video/20180128/1031757067.html>

in the Sykhov residential area of Lvov, radical people set fire to the Orthodox Church of St. Prince Vladimir. As a result, roof cladding and wooden floors covering an area of 100 m² were destroyed, floor and wall cladding on an area of 30 m², church utensils were damaged or destroyed¹⁰⁷. The Church of the Intercession in the city of Chernomorsk, Odessa region, was robbed again on the night of February 7, 2018. The police arrived at the scene, but the attackers managed to escape¹⁰⁸. On March 7, 2018, representatives of the Ukrainian radical youth nationalist organization “Brotherhood”^{*} held a “prayer service” in the Assumption Cathedral of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, which was called the beginning of the seizure of the monastery¹⁰⁹. On March 11, 2018, under pressure from activists of the extremist organization “Right Sector”^{*}, who burst into a meeting of the city council of the city of Bar, Vinnitsa region, deputies decided to refuse the UOC to allocate a site for the construction of a church. They were forced to sign over the land to the unrecognized UOC-KP¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁷ <http://eparchia.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5142633.html>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5143451.html>

^{*} Extremist organizations banned in the Russian Federation.

¹⁰⁹ <https://sedmitza.ru/text/7932760.html>

^{*} Extremist organizations banned in the Russian Federation.

¹¹⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/51936-v-bare-pravyj-sektor-zastavil-deputatov-otdaty-zemlyu-pod-cerkovy-kp>

On April 2, 2018, militants from the “Aidar”* and “Azov”* battalions forced believers of the UOC to leave the Assumption Church at gunpoint. Ptichya in Rovno region. The police were inactive¹¹¹. In Kiev, on the night of April 6, 2018, the Church of the Jerusalem Icon of the Mother of God was set on fire. The outer wall of the temple was damaged¹¹². On the night of April 14, 2018 in Gorodnya, Chernigov region, unknown persons broke windows and tried to set fire to the St. Nicholas Church and the water-blessed chapel in the name of the Pochaev Icon of the Mother of God, belonging to the UOC¹¹³. On June 17, 2018, during a robbery, two unknown people beat to death a 66-year-old guard of the church in honor of the Great Martyr Panteleimon in Melitopol. Police detained suspects in his murder persons¹¹⁴.

* Extremist organizations banned in the Russian Federation.

¹¹¹ <https://ria.ru/20180403/1517833610.html>

¹¹² <http://eparchia.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5175132.html>

¹¹³ <http://eparchia.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5180274.html>

¹¹⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/54219-policejskije-zaderzhali-podozrevajemyh-v-ubijstve-cerkovnogo-storozha>

1.2. Creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Persecution of believers of the UOC in 2018-2022

On April 17, 2018, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko appealed to Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople with a request to grant the right of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine¹¹⁵. The heads of the Rada factions signed a draft appeal from the Ukrainian parliament to Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople on the creation of a single local Church in Ukraine¹¹⁶. Poroshenko's call for the creation of a new church gave Ukrainian radicals the "green light" to fight the UOC. Representatives of the extremist organization "Brotherhood"* published calls on social networks to "burn the beards of Moscow priests," and also distributed a video message to "conscious Ukrainians"ю Later they clarified that the point was that "it is necessary to seize the churches of the Moscow Patriarchate, and first of all the Lavra"¹¹⁷.

¹¹⁵ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/5134219>

¹¹⁶ <https://www.pravmir.ru/deputaty-verhovnoy-radyi-ukrainyi-napravili-alternativnoe-obrashhenie-patriarhu-varfolomeyu/>

* Extremist organization banned in the Russian Federation

¹¹⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/52897-radikalynyj-youtube-kanal-prizval-zahvatyvaty-khramy-upc>

The Patriarchate of Constantinople, in a statement following a meeting on April 19–20, 2018, announced that the issue of granting the right of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine will be resolved in coordination with all Orthodox churches¹¹⁸. Following this, the UOC in its official statement called Poroshenko's plan to recognize autocephaly interference in the internal affairs of the Church and a violation of the Constitution of Ukraine¹¹⁹.

In connection with the illegal actions of the authorities against the parishes of the canonical UOC, believers, clergy and representatives of public organizations tried to protect the interests of the persecuted Ukrainian Church. April 22, 2018 residents of the villages of Moshkov and Peremilovka of the Mlinovsky district of the Rovno region refused to transfer to the so-called "Kiev Patriarchate", despite the agitation of schismatics¹²⁰. Parishioners of the captured UOC churches went to Jerusalem for Holy Week with a special mission — to pray for peace in Ukraine. The pilgrims asked the

¹¹⁸ <https://foma.ru/konstantinopolskiy-patriarhat-budet-reshat-ukrainskiy-vopros-v-koordinatsii-vsemi-pravoslavnyimi-tserkvami.html>

¹¹⁹ <https://news.church.ua/2018/04/21/zayava-vzcz-ukrajinskoji-pravoslavnoji-cerkvi-z-privodu-zvernennya-prezidenta-ukrajini-dovselenskogo-patriarxa-varfolomiya-shhodo-nadannya-tomosu-pro-avtokefaliyu-pravoslavnij-cerkvi-v-ukrajini/#2023-03-27>

¹²⁰ <http://pravoslavie.ru/112448.html>

Lord to grant peace to the villages where people were separated due to the seizure of churches¹²¹. Community of Holy Righteous Anna of the UOC in the village of Kutu, Ternopol region, defended in court the right to use the temple, which was seized by supporters of the so-called UOC-KP¹²². In Kiev 12 thousand signatures were collected in three days under an appeal to the mayor of Kiev V. Klitschko against the demolition of the UOC chapel near the Tithe Church¹²³. 3,374 residents of Sumy in Ukraine signed an open appeal against the transfer of the Trinity Cathedral of the UOC to another religious community¹²⁴. Due to the threat of seizure of the church, Archbishop of Sumy and Akhtyrka Evlogy (Gutchenko) sent a letter to the President of Ukraine P.A. Poroshenko¹²⁵.

The majority of residents of Ukraine in those years did not share the opinion of the authorities on the need to grant the Church autocephaly and believed that their right to freedom of religion was being violated.

¹²¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/52562-prihozhane-zahvachennyh-khramov-upc-rasskazali-o-molitve-na-svyatoj-zemle>

¹²² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/53405-obshhina-upc-sela-kuty-vyigrala-sud-za-pravo-polyzovatysya-svoim-khramom>
¹²³ <https://ria.ru/20180208/1514270478.html>

¹²⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/52869-tysyachi-sumchan-prosyat-vlasti-ne-vozvrashhaty-troickij-sobor-raskolnykam>

¹²⁵ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5170182.html>

At the time of 2018, the UOC Information Center regularly conducted polls on Facebook* regarding the situation with the persecution of the UOC. In general, according to its results, Ukrainians were concerned and outraged by the defiant behavior of the radicals.

The NGO “Public Human Rights Defense” sent the Patriarchate of Constantinople and Patriarch Bartholomew a statement “On threats of clashes on religious grounds in Ukraine” with a request not to resolve the issue of autocephaly without taking into account the opinion of the canonical UOC¹²⁶. In May 2018, Patriarch Bartholomew received 60 thousand signatures from believers of the UOC, who asked to protect the Church and consider the issue of granting autocephaly only within the framework of canon law¹²⁷.

In 2018, a group of deputies of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine appealed to the National Security and Defense Council of the country, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Culture with a demand to take measures against the UOC, because the Church “publicly denies the fact of Russian aggression and supports the occupation

* Belongs to Meta (recognized as an extremist organization in the Russian Federation and banned).

¹²⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/53179-pravozashhitniki-prosyat-fanar-ne-reshaty-vopros-ob-avtokefalii-bez-upc>

¹²⁷ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5212621.html>

regimes in Crimea and Donbass”¹²⁸. In addition, they demanded an official change of its name from the UOC to the “Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine” and the definition of its status as a foreign Church. The result of the process was supposed to be “the return to Ukrainian churches of sanctuaries illegally appropriated by the Moscow church”¹²⁹.

On December 22, 2018, such a document was signed by President P.A. Poroshenko. Lawyers of the UOC noted that the legislative innovation allows the Ukrainian authorities to take away churches from the UOC, transferring them to the OCU. Despite lengthy legal proceedings, the country’s Constitutional Court recognized the law on renaming the church as consistent with the Constitution of Ukraine¹³⁰.

In 2018, even the US State Department was forced to acknowledge the infringement of the rights of believers in Ukraine due to the interference of the Ukrainian authorities in the affairs of the UOC, as well as increasing cases of discrimination against clergy and believers. The text of the report emphasizes that UOC believers constantly receive complaints about

¹²⁸ <https://regnum.ru/news/2370455>

¹²⁹ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/4891782>

¹³⁰ <https://tass.ru/info/17394971>

the inadequacy of the response of the authorities and high-ranking supporters of the UOC-KP and the UGCC in some local authorities to discrimination and intolerance against the UOC. The 2018 US State Department report also highlights the ongoing seizure of UOC churches by the UOC-KP, UGCC and radical nationalist groups, including the Right Sector* and the Svoboda party, which interfered with UOC services and subjected parishioners to physical violence. The document examined multiple cases of the use of physical force against believers of the UOC, including in Nikolaev and Kolomyia, by representatives of the UOC-KP and radical nationalist groups, as well as discrimination against believers by local authorities in the village of Stary Gvozdets and the ban on the UOC cross procession in Sumy. The report also emphasizes that acts of vandalism are systematically committed against churches of the UOC, and pressure is put on clergy due to the fact that they are allegedly representatives of the “aggressor” in Ukraine. These cases of persecution of clergy were recorded in the cities of Kiev, Malin, Ternopol, Kozatin and Odessa¹³¹.

* Terrorist organization banned in the Russian Federation

¹³¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/53680-gosdep-ssha-vyrazil-ozabochennosty-religioznoj-situacijej-v-ukraine>

During the 37th session of the UNHRC, the NGO Public Advocacy filed a statement on the inadmissibility of the adoption by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of bills №№ 4128, 4511 and 5309 because they do not comply with international practice in regulating church-state relations and constitute discrimination against religious organizations. In addition, the session reported on facts of violations of the rights of believers of the UOC¹³². The Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, at a meeting on September 25, 2018, called on parliamentarians to abandon these anti-constitutional and anti-church bills that were being considered in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine¹³³. The same position was previously taken by the World Council of Churches, which condemned these bills¹³⁴. But, nevertheless, in 2019, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted Law № 4128 on the subordination of religious organizations and the procedure for state registration of religious organizations with the status of a legal entity. Previously, the new version of this law was also criticized by human rights activists as contrary

¹³² <https://sedmitza.ru/text/7947272.html>

¹³³ <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/svyashchenny-sinod-upc-prizval-verhovnuyu-radu-otkazatsya-ot-anticerkovnyh-iniciativ>

¹³⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/47297-vsemirnyy-sovet-tserkvey-osudil-zakonoproekty-4128-4511-5309->

to the Constitution and international obligations of Ukraine¹³⁵. The Verkhovna Rada also adopted Law № 5309, which obligated religious organizations whose center of control is located in a country recognized by the Parliament of Ukraine as an aggressor country to indicate this in their official name¹³⁶. According to information from open sources, bill № 4511 was never adopted.

Nationalist attacks and discrimination against the UOC by local authorities were accompanied by a media campaign portraying representatives of this religious organization as enemies of Ukraine. This campaign was carried out both by the largest media in the country and by popular regional publications, which took the position of the ideology of the nationalist formations of Ukraine¹³⁷.

Until December 2018, two large non-canonical religious organizations operated in Ukraine: the self-proclaimed UOC-KP and UAOC¹³⁸. In December 2018, representatives of the Patriarchate of Constantinople

¹³⁵ <https://pravoslavie.ru/118710.html>

¹³⁶ <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/verhovnaya-rada-obyazala-ukrain-skuyu-pravoslavnuyu-cerkov-smenit-svoe-nazvanie>

¹³⁷ <https://fordemocracy.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/zhertva-grazhdanskoy-voyny-presledovaniya-upts-2014-2015.pdf>

¹³⁸ <https://tass.ru/info/16486349>

in Kiev, with the active participation of the Ukrainian authorities, held a “Unification Council”, at which these two organizations announced the creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU). The new structure also included two hierarchs of the UOC. At the beginning of 2019, Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople handed over to the head of the OCU, Metropolitan Epifaniy (Dumenko), a tomos of autocephaly, which the Russian Orthodox Church considers canonically insignificant. In this regard, the Russian Orthodox Church broke off prayer communication with the Patriarchate of Constantinople¹³⁹. In addition to the Constantinople only first hierarchs and individual bishops of the Alexandrian, Greek and Cypriot churches recognized OCU¹⁴⁰. Attempts by Constantinople to achieve recognition of the OCU by the rest of the Orthodox churches continue to this day¹⁴¹.

On January 17, 2019, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine approved amendments to some laws on the subordination of religious organizations, regulating the affiliation of persons with a religious community and the procedure for the transfer of parishes from

¹³⁹ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/6501530>

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.interfax.ru/world/738652>

¹⁴¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/zashhita-very/75049-kak-fanar-prodvihaet-priznanie-ptsu>

one jurisdiction to another. After protests from the Orthodox community, a final version was agreed upon, according to which the transfer of churches from one jurisdiction to another is possible by decision of at least two-thirds of the members of the parish¹⁴².

In December 2019, the head of the affairs of the UOC, Metropolitan of Borispol and Brovary Antonyi (Pakanich), stated that more than 250 criminal cases had been opened in Ukraine regarding attacks on parishes and parishioners of the UOC¹⁴³.

On December 24, 2020, the leader of the OCU, Metropolitan Epifaniy (Dumenko), assured that his structure will seek the transfer to its disposal of the Kiev-Pechersk and Pochaev Lavra¹⁴⁴.

Total in 2019 — 2021 about 500 parishes of the UOC were illegally re-registered in favor of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, and 144 churches were seized by schismatics¹⁴⁵. In April 2021, the ex-head of the State Committee for Religions of Ukraine Yuriy Reshetnikov said that the Ukrainian authorities are ignoring more than 1 million appeals from believers of the UOC¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴² <https://tass.ru/info/17394971>

¹⁴³ <https://tass.ru/info/16486349>

¹⁴⁴ <https://tass.ru/info/17394381>

¹⁴⁵ <https://ria.ru/20211006/zakhvaty-1753324149.html>

¹⁴⁶ <http://amin.su/content/news/5/6911/>

1.3. Violation of the rights of believers of other religions

In addition to the oppression of the UOC, a number of anti-Semitic incidents were recorded in Ukraine. On January 30, 2018, Ukrainian radicals tried to disrupt a lecture on the Holocaust in Lvov by throwing a smoke bomb into the hall where it was being held. The police did not comment on the actions of the radicals¹⁴⁷. In February 2018, in Ternopol, a monument to the victims of the Holocaust, erected at the site of the execution of 10 thousand Jews, was desecrated. Nazi symbols were applied to the monument¹⁴⁸. On the night of April 27-28, 2018, vandals desecrated the grave of Rabbi Magarsho in the town of Ostrog, Rovno region. All the windows in the sanctuary were broken, holy books were scattered¹⁴⁹. On May 2, 2018, in Odessa, at the “March of Ukrainian Order,” organized by nationalist movements, the head of the local “Right Sector”* T. Soykina shouted anti-Semitic slogans.

¹⁴⁷ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/4916235>

¹⁴⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/51504-vandaly-izrisovali-svastikami-pamyatnik-zhertvam-kholokosta-v-ternopole>

¹⁴⁹ <https://ria.ru/20180502/1519765071.html>

* terrorist organization banned in the Russian Federation

The police opened a criminal investigation into violation of racial national equality of citizens¹⁵⁰. Leaders of Jewish communities and organizations in Ukraine called on law enforcement agencies to punish those responsible for anti-Semitic crimes¹⁵¹. As noted in the report of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs “On manifestations of anti-Semitism in Ukraine”: “The most striking manifestations of anti-Semitism were the distribution of xenophobic leaflets by the Galician Youth organization in Lvov (May 2021), threats by nationalists to Hasidim visiting Uman to celebrate the Jewish New Year (September 2021), applying graffiti to an information stand near the Jewish cemetery in Boguslav in the Kiev region and swastikas on the gates of a synagogue in Nikolaev (October 2021), holding the annual music festival “Let’s Repeat Koliivshchyna” (uprising of the Haidamaks in the 17th century, during which about 10 thousand Jews were killed) in Kiev (in October). Wide public response received the statements of the deputy mayor of Shepetovka (Khmelnitsky region) Yu. Vakhotsky in September 2021, that the Babi Yar tragedy was “the God’s punishment for Jews for holodomor” and the statements of the head

¹⁵⁰ <https://ukraina.ru/20180506/1020303281.html>

¹⁵¹ <https://religsvoboda.ru/kratko/rukovoditeli-evreyskih-obshchin-i-organizaciy-na-ukraine-prizvali-pravoohranitelnye-organy>

of the “Batkivshchyna” party’s branch A. Sholovey, who said that the more he see the Hanukah celebrations “the better he understands Hitler”¹⁵².

In addition, during 2021, an act of vandalism was committed against a memorial sign installed on the site of the former ghetto in Khmelnytsky, and a memorial to Holocaust victims in the village of Noviy Pikov, Kalinovskyy district, Vinnytsia region was destroyed, about 10 tombstones were damaged at the Radvanki Jewish cemetery in Uzhgorod, a historical inscription in Yiddish on one of the residential buildings in Lvov was destroyed, hanukkahs were damaged in Kiev, Dnepr, Rovno, Krivoy Rog, Uzhgorod.

In January 2022, in Lisichansk (the territory of the Lugansk People’s Republic, which was under the control of the Kiev regime), a monument to Jews who died in the Great Patriotic War was destroyed.

As follows from the Unified Register of Judicial Decisions of Ukraine, since 2014, local courts have not issued a single sentence under Art. 161 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine “violation of the equality of citizens depending on their race, nationality or attitude to religion”. Cases related to discrimination, anti-Semitism and xenophobia are, as a rule, reclassified by investigative authorities as domestic hooliganism¹⁵³.

¹⁵² https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1812039/

¹⁵³ https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1812039/

The US State Department's 2021 World Religious Freedom Report reported evidence of discrimination against Catholics, UGCC believers and Muslims. Thus, since 2008, the UGCC could not obtain a land plot for the construction of a church in Belaya Tserkov; since 2017, Muslims could not obtain the allocation of a plot for a cemetery in Kiev, and the return of a land plot with the ruins of a historical mosque in Nikolaev¹⁵⁴. Since 2004, the Crimean authorities could not approve the construction of a cathedral mosque in Simferopol; it was started only after the accession of Crimea to Russia in 2014¹⁵⁵. The Ukrainian NGO "Razom iz Zakonom" in its report on cases of Islamophobia in Ukraine dated October 29, 2020, acknowledges the uniqueness of such incidents, mentioning the following: searches in 2017-2020 in the Islamic cultural centers of Kiev, Vinnitsa, Zhitomir and Sumy, illegal, according to the authors of the report, checks by the Ukrainian special services of documents of migrants from Muslim countries, daily checks of the activities of one mosque in Kiev against the backdrop of the pandemic lockdown in March-May 2020, installation in that same year security cameras by security services without explanation

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-report-on-international-religious-freedom/ukraine/>

¹⁵⁵ https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Симферопольская_соборная_мечеть

in a hospital located in the Islamic cultural center in Kiev¹⁵⁶. Basically, the authors accuse the Russian authorities of persecuting Muslims, in particular, supporters of the Hizb ut-Tahrir* organization banned in the Russian Federation, but allowed in Ukraine, in Crimea, but also admit that Muslim women who moved from Crimea to the regions of Ukraine face a lack of understanding from society and discrimination due to wearing the hijab. Muslim migrants from Afghanistan, Syria and African countries were reportedly required by migration services to bribe them for providing documents to legalize their migration status; representatives of Caucasian nationalities in 2020 were often canceled by migration services and expelled them, and immigrants people from Syria, Yemen and Sudan were not allowed into the country at all. Ukrainian nationalists demonstrated a negative attitude towards isolated manifestations of the authorities' respectful attitude towards Muslims, and after a terrorist attack in New Zealand in March 2019, Ukrainian neo-Nazi organizations in social media began to call for racial war against persons of non-Slavonic nationality, and for attacks on Jews and Muslims.

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Religion/Islamophobia-AntiMuslim/Civil%20Society%20or%20Individuals/Razomizzakonom.pdf>

* Terrorist organization banned in the Russian Federation

1.4. Promotion of false values in Ukraine in 2014–2022

Ukraine was the first of the countries of the former USSR to abolish criminal penalties for sodomy: on December 12, 1991, the Supreme Council of Ukraine adopted the Law on Amendments to the Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes of the Ukrainian SSR, according to which Art. 122 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine now provided for punishment for homosexual relations only in the event of the use of violence¹⁵⁷. The first organizations supporting LGBT people appeared in Ukraine in the 1990s. One of these NGOs, “Our World”, honestly states that “only thanks to the support campaign from international organizations (Amnesty International, ILGA-Europe, International Renaissance Foundation*, Council of Europe) the “Our World center was officially registered — almost a year after the first application was submitted”¹⁵⁸, i.e. in 2000. In 2011 in Donetsk and

¹⁵⁷ <https://gay.org.ua/publications/bluebook/hist.htm#life>

* Part of the international network of the Open Society Foundations of J. Soros, recognized as undesirable in Russia.

¹⁵⁸ Rayduzhna kniga [Rainbow book]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2018, p.35

in 2013 in Kiev, LGBT Christian associations were registered¹⁵⁹.

Before Euromaidan, only a few socio-political measures were implemented in Ukraine aimed at popularizing or legalizing false values: NGOs protecting LGBT rights and media covering events in the life of the LGBT community in Ukraine and in the world were created and registered, local gay pride parades were held (on average, several dozen activists took part in them under the protection of police officers; such actions were often accompanied by protests and statements from supporters of traditional values). In 2010, a bilateral agreement between Ukraine and Spain on the regulation of labor migration flows between the two states prohibited discrimination against migrant workers based on sexual orientation¹⁶⁰. In 2011, civil registration legislation was amended to allow persons who have changed their gender to change their name¹⁶¹. At the same time, the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (AUCCRO) in 2007, on behalf of all religious organizations in the country,

¹⁵⁹ Ibidem, p.38

¹⁶⁰ Rayduzhna kniga [Rainbow book]. Centr "Nash Svit" [Center "Our World"]. Kiev, Center "Nash Svit" Publisher, 2018, p.119

¹⁶¹ <http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0055-11?test=4/UMfPEGznhhYxf.Ziq529q1HI4mgs80msh8le6>

adopted a declaration “On a negative attitude towards the phenomenon of homosexuality and attempts to legalize so-called same-sex marriages (registration of same-sex partnerships”¹⁶². AUCCRO called for preventing the legalization of values alien to the Ukrainian people, toward these values tolerant or supportive attitude was being spread at that time under the guise of the struggle for human rights. In the modern history of Ukraine before Euromaidan, religious organizations in this country did not express support for LGBT ideology.

In 2013, the issue of LGBT rights became relevant in connection with Ukraine’s preparations for joining the European Union. Regarding LGBT rights, EU representatives only stated the need to legally prohibit discrimination against LGBT people in the labor sphere in Ukraine, but denied the mandatory legalization of same-sex marriage¹⁶³.

LGBT activists participated in Euromaidan, with “real” LGBT activists declaring the presence of “fake” ones who were given money by unknown persons to “play around” with rainbow and EU flags¹⁶⁴.

¹⁶² Rayduzhna kniga [Rainbow book]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2018, p.101

¹⁶³ https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/ukraine_in_russian/2013/12/131231_ru_s_eu_same_sex_marriages

¹⁶⁴ Rayduzhna kniga [Rainbow book]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2018, pp.42-43

After Euromaidan, the LGBT community of Ukraine saw positive changes for themselves, at least in the fact that “homophobic” rhetoric from some politicians and religious organizations significantly decreased¹⁶⁵. The head of the UOC, Metropolitan Onufriy of Kiev, and the leader of the UOC-KP, Patriarch of Kiev Filaret (Denisenko), openly declared their rejection of LGBT ideology in Ukraine; representatives of the UOC in the summer of 2014 appealed to the Kiev authorities with a request to cancel the gay parade in Kiev. The leader of the UGCC, Metropolitan Svyatoslav (Shevchuk), previously known for his harsh statements against sexual minorities, did not comment on the situation with LGBT rights in Ukraine in 2014¹⁶⁶. Since this year, LGBT-supporting NGOs in Ukraine have become more active in covering the situation with violations of LGBT rights and preparing reports for global platforms. Some sociological and analytical studies were carried out using grants provided by EU countries. In April 2014, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine withdrew the bill

¹⁶⁵ Vid rozpachu do nadii. Stanovishhe LGBT v Ukraïni u 2014 roci [From despair to hope. Status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2014]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. — Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2015, pp.2-3

¹⁶⁶ Vid rozpachu do nadii. Stanovishhe LGBT v Ukraïni u 2014 roci [From despair to hope. Status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2014]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2015 p.12-13

“On the prohibition of propaganda of same-sex sexual relations aimed at children”, which had been under discussion since December 2012¹⁶⁷.

On November 12, 2015, the Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to the Labor Code of Ukraine regarding the harmonization of legislation in the field of preventing and combating discrimination with the law of the European Union” was adopted, which states: “Any discrimination in the sphere of labor is prohibited, in particular violation of the principle of equality rights and opportunities, direct or indirect restriction of workers’ rights depending on [...] gender identity, sexual orientation [...]”¹⁶⁸. Earlier that year, deputies of the Verkhovna Rada refused to consider this bill¹⁶⁹. “Our World”, in its report on the status of LGBT rights in Ukraine in 2015, frankly admits that this amendment was introduced “with enormous efforts and thanks to constant pressure from Ukraine’s Western partners”¹⁷⁰.

¹⁶⁷ http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=45242. It is interesting to note that the American NGO GLAAD, which defends LGBT rights, called this bill “similar to the Russian one” (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180708133822/https://www.glaad.org/blog/ukraine-turns-down-russian-style-anti-gay-propaganda-bill>)

¹⁶⁸ <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/parlament-ukrainy-prinyal-popravku-o-nediskriminacii-seksmenshinstv>

¹⁶⁹ <http://www.pravlife.org/content/parlament-otkazal-seksmenshinstvam-v-specialnom-statuse>

¹⁷⁰ Kriga skresla. Stanovishhe LGBT v Ukraïni u 2015 roci [The ice was broken. Status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2015]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, P. 2016, p.3.

Religious organizations of Ukraine opposed these amendments, but their position was not taken into account¹⁷¹. On November 23, 2015, the Government of Ukraine approved the Action Plan for the implementation of the National Strategy in the field of human rights for the period until 2020. The document included many proposals sent by human rights organizations and LGBT societies to the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine. The action plan provided for the implementation of 21 measures, in particular: the development of legislation prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in all spheres of life regulated by law, the development of legislation on the registration of partnerships for same-sex couples, a new procedure for changing (correcting) the gender of transgender people, enshrining in The Criminal Code as an aggravating circumstance of the concept of motive of hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, lifting the ban on the adoption of children by transgender people¹⁷². However, in general, Ukrainian politicians in 2015 sought to distance themselves from issues related to LGBT ideology¹⁷³.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., pp.14-15.

¹⁷² Kriga skresla. Stanovishhe LGBT v Ukraïni u 2015 roci [The ice was broken. Status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2015]. Centr "Nash Svit" [Center "Our World"]. Kiev, Center "Nash Svit" Publisher, 2016, pp. 3-4

¹⁷³ Ibidem, p.9.

In 2016, several measures from the action plan related to reforming legislation in the field of preventing discrimination and changing the rules for gender reassignment for transgender people were fully implemented¹⁷⁴. Ukrainian politicians, as a rule, did not speak out in support of LGBT ideology; the most homophobic organizations, as in previous years, were considered the organizations “Right Sector”* and “Brotherhood”*¹⁷⁵. The most homophobic religious organization in Ukraine this year, as before, remained the UOC, which at the national and regional levels opposed attempts to hold gay pride parades, the UOC KP objected to LGBT events less actively than in previous years, and the hierarchs of the UGCC did not object to gay pride parades anywhere except in Lvov. Religious organizations of Ukraine held their marches in support of traditional family values¹⁷⁶. At the same time, the leader of the UOC-KP honored nationalist and LGBT activist I. Ryabchy with that Church’s award

¹⁷⁴ Novij pochatok. Stanovishhe LGBTI v Ukraïni u 2016 roci [The new beginning. Status of LGBTI people in Ukraine in 2016]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2017. p.4

* Recognized as extremist organizations in the Russian Federation and banned.

¹⁷⁵ Ibidem, pp. 16-21

¹⁷⁶ Novij pochatok. Stanovishhe LGBTI v Ukraïni u 2016 roci [The new beginning. Status of LGBTI people in Ukraine in 2016]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2017, p.22-24.

“for special deeds in the revival of spirituality in Ukraine”¹⁷⁷. On October 5, 2016, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine adopted Order No. 1041 “On establishing medical, biological and socio-psychological indications for changing (correcting) gender and approving the form of primary registration documentation and instructions for filling it out”¹⁷⁸, which removed requirements from transgender people wishing to officially change their gender such as the absence of minor children and not being married.

In 2017, the promotion of LGBT ideology did not undergo significant changes. Ukraine’s LGBT community was dissatisfied, in particular, with the country’s police “reluctant and ineffective in investigating “hate crimes” against LGBT people”¹⁷⁹. Churches of Ukraine, along with right-wing radical groups, are designated by “Our World” Center as the main opponents of LGBT people in Ukraine. Churches and religious organizations in Ukraine are blamed for Ukraine’s refusal to join the Istanbul Convention, which outlines issues of gender

¹⁷⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/67209-na-arkhijereskom-sobore-pcuprisutstvoval-lgbt-aktivist--smi>

¹⁷⁸ <https://legislation.com/moz-ukrajini/nakaz-vid-05102016-1041-provstanovlennya312236.html>

¹⁷⁹ Na pidnesenni. Stanovishhe LGBTI v Ukraïni u 2017 roci [On the rise. Status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2017]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2018. p.1

identity¹⁸⁰. Only the head of the UOC, Metropolitan Onufriy (Berezovsky), spoke out against holding a gay pride parade in Kiev; all other churches in the country “refrained from active discussion of LGBT issues, limiting themselves to calls for support for the “traditional family” and protests against the introduction of the terms “sexual orientation” and “gender””¹⁸¹.

In 2018, the situation with the legalization of LGBT ideology did not change significantly. Several minor changes were added in the Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes of Ukraine to implement the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention “On Prevention. violence against women and domestic violence and combating these phenomena.” Courts of Ukraine in 2017-2018 did not make decisions to ban public LGBT rallies¹⁸², and the police did not refuse to provide protection for such events¹⁸³. This year, for the first time, the LGBT community of Ukraine raised a discussion in the public space of the country about the problems

¹⁸⁰ Ibid — pp. 4-5

¹⁸¹ Novij pochatok. Stanovishhe LGBTI v Ukraïni u 2016 roci [The new beginning. Status of LGBTI people in Ukraine in 2016]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2017, p.20-22.

¹⁸² Dolajuchi pereshkodi. Stanovishhe LGBTI v Ukraïni u 2018 roci [Overcoming the obstacles. The status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2018]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2019. pp.3-9

¹⁸³ Ibidem, p.14.

of LGBT military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the zone of the so-called anti-terrorist operation in Donbass. Representatives of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine took part in the opening of the photo exhibition “We Were Here” on August 30, 2018¹⁸⁴. They discussed their legal and psychological problems with LGBT servicemen and assured that the command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine understands these people and is ready to work to eliminate their problems. This year, several bills aimed at protecting traditional values were introduced to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine¹⁸⁵, however, they did not receive support in parliament and were not adopted. In 2018, again only the Primate of the UOC, Metropolitan Onufriy (Berezovsky) openly declared the need to cancel gay parades in Kiev; the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church of Ukraine adhered to a similar position; the hierarchs of the UGCC, as before, did not condemn LGBT ideology. In 2018, the UOC-KP, as in previous years, officially stated that it does not support either gay pride parades or violent actions against their

¹⁸⁴ <https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/mi-buli-tut-hej-uchasnik-ato-i-vidomij-fotohraf-rozpovidajut-pro-uchast-lhbt-u-vijni-na-skhodi-i-povjazanikh-z-tsim-stereotipakh-2491418.html>

¹⁸⁵ <https://ips.ligazakon.net/document/jh6ii00i>, <https://ips.ligazakon.net/document/JH73300I>, <https://ips.ligazakon.net/document/OH6JT00A>

participants¹⁸⁶. Unexpected changes occurred with the position of the leader of the UOC-KP Filaret (Denisenko), previously known for his homophobic rhetoric: in his interviews with the media in 2018, he stated that gay parades do not threaten Ukrainian spirituality, that he himself is ready if necessary to conduct a funeral service for gays, that male-male relationships are “permissible, but not correct”¹⁸⁷, and sinners should be treated with tolerance. The leader of the OCU, established in 2018, Metropolitan Epifaniy (Dumenko), unofficially announced his readiness to work to ensure the Ukrainian society accept LGBT people¹⁸⁸, however, the official position of the OCU at that time was based on the biblical understanding of same-sex unions as a sin¹⁸⁹. “Our World” released the collection called “Rainbow Book” in 2018¹⁹⁰, which describes the history

¹⁸⁶ https://galinfo.com.ua/news/upts_kp_ne_shvalyuie_propagandu_gomoseksualizmu_ale_i_nasylstva_takozh_zayava_289483.html

¹⁸⁷ Dolajuchi pereshkodi. Stanovishhe LGBTI v Ukraïni u 2018 roci [Overcoming the obstacles. The status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2018]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2019. p.27

¹⁸⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/58614-jepifanij-o-vozmozhnoj-podderzhke-lgbt-eto-dolgij-puty>

¹⁸⁹ Dolajuchi pereshkodi. Stanovishhe LGBTI v Ukraïni u 2018 roci [Overcoming the obstacles. The status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2018]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2019, pp.26-29

¹⁹⁰ Rayduzhna kniga [Rainbow book]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2018, p.252

of the Ukrainian LGBT community from ancient times to the present day, the book heavily criticizes the activities of Christian churches, especially the UOC. Thus, according to the authors of the collection, two faithful servants of the holy princes Boris and Gleb, revered in Orthodoxy, were their lovers¹⁹¹, Venerable Dosifei of Kiev was a transgender person¹⁹², and in the UOC in the 2010s. there were many more gays than in the UOC KP¹⁹³. In January 2018, Ukrainian believers launched petitions on the websites of the President of Ukraine and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine demanding an end to the propaganda of false values¹⁹⁴. In March, the petition was removed from the website of the President of Ukraine due to its allegedly discriminatory nature, although before that it almost gained the number of signatures required for consideration of the document by the head of the state¹⁹⁵, shortly after this, on April 4, 2018, a march of supporters of traditional values took place in Kiev¹⁹⁶.

¹⁹¹ Ibidem, p.4.

¹⁹² Ibidem, p.7

¹⁹³ Ibidem, pp.103-104

¹⁹⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/51671-6-tysyach-golosov-nabrала-peticija-za-prekrashhenije-propagandy-gomoseksualizma>

¹⁹⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/52324-peticiju-o-zashhite-semyi-snyali-sajta-poroshenko-iz-za-narushenija-prav-lgbt>

¹⁹⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/52510-v-kijeve-sostojalsya-miting-v-zashhitu-tradicionnyh-semejnyh-cennostej>

AUCCRO in its address to P.A. Poroshenko expressed outrage at the current situation¹⁹⁷. When the petition was nevertheless considered by the head of state, he agreed on the need to popularize traditional family values, but considered proposals to ban LGBT people unconstitutional¹⁹⁸. In 2018, the Verkhovna Rada backed up supporters of traditional values and declared the impossibility of legalizing same-sex marriage¹⁹⁹, at the same time, the country's Ministry of Justice supported the legalization²⁰⁰. All the topics raised remained at the level of discussion in the public space and did not lead to legislative changes. Since 2018, school textbooks have been published under the stamp of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, in which the concept of "family" is described as "serial monogamy" and "commune"; the word "parents" is proposed to be replaced with the word "relatives"²⁰¹.

In 2019, no serious steps were taken to legalize LGBT ideas in the Ukrainian legal field. For the first

¹⁹⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/52671-peticija-o-zashhite-semyi-napravlena-na-oficialnoje-rassmotrenije-pravitelystva>

¹⁹⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/53596-poroshenko-otkazalsya-zapreshhaty-gej-parady-iz-soobrazhenij-tolerantnosti>

¹⁹⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/53096-v-komitete-vr-zajavili-o-nevozmozhnosti-legalizacii-partnerstva-odnopolyh-par>

²⁰⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/54030-minyust-podderzhal-ideju-legalizacii-odnopolyh-partnerstv-v-ukraine>

²⁰¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/chelovek-i-cerkovy/74723-propaganda-jazychestva-pcu-i-lgbt-chemu-uchat-v-shkolah-nashih-detej>

time in the history of Ukraine, employees of the country's Ministry of Health took part in the gay pride parade in Kiev, and its head U.-N. Suprun posted congratulations on the occasion of the event on her Facebook page^{*202}. Some pages of Ukrainian departments on this social network also either posted congratulations or temporarily put LGBT symbols on their avatars. Also for the first time, the Education Ombudsman of Ukraine S.I. Gorbachev took part in an international conference on combating violence against LGBT children²⁰³. In the summer of 2019, the organizers of the gay pride parade in Kiev invited the new President of the country V.A. Zelensky²⁰⁴, Ukrainian LGBT activists also took part in a major gay pride parade in New York for the first time in history²⁰⁵. In the fall of the same year, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine temporarily suspended the teaching of the elective module "Fundamentals of the Family", developed by traditionalist A. Bukovinsky,

* belongs to Meta (recognized as an extremist organization in the Russian Federation and banned).

²⁰² Stari problemi, novi perspektivi. Stanovishhe LGBTI v Ukraïni u 2019 roci [Old problems, new perspectives. Status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2019]. Centr "Nash Svit" [Center "Our World"]. Kiev, Center "Nash Svit" Publisher, 2020. pp.1, 6-7

²⁰³ Ibidem, p.8

²⁰⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/62970-predstaviteli-lgbt-priglasili-prezidenta-zelenskogo-na-marsh-ravenstva>

²⁰⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/63325-ukrainskaja-kolonna-vpervyje-prinyala-uchastije-v-nyju-jorjskom-gej-parade>

in grades 10-11 of secondary schools, due to complaints from some parents about discriminatory statements allegedly contained in the textbooks for this course, after that the books were sent for anti-discrimination examination²⁰⁶. Only the UOC in 2019 again openly opposed the holding of gay pride parades, expressing, in the opinion of the Chairman of the Synodal Department for Church's Relations with Society and Mass Media V.R. Legoyda, "the interests of the majority of the Ukrainian people"²⁰⁷. Unlike previous years, when all religious organizations unanimously opposed the gay pride parade in Odessa, in 2019 only representatives of the UOC, UGCC and the non-staff bishop of the RCC spoke out against it. Journalists reported that the Vatican strongly discouraged Catholic organizations in Ukraine from participating in events directed against LGBT people if they were initiated by the UOC²⁰⁸. In the same year, there were cases of local struggle against LGBT communities by activists of Protestant churches

²⁰⁶ Stari problemi, novi perspektivi. Stanovishhe LGBTI v Ukraïni u 2019 roci [Old problems, new perspectives. Status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2019]. Centr "Nash Svit" [Center "Our World"]. Kiev, Center "Nash Svit" Publisher, 2020. pp.8-9.

²⁰⁷ <https://t.me/vladimirlegoyda/2057>

²⁰⁸ Stari problemi, novi perspektivi. Stanovishhe LGBTI v Ukraïni u 2019 roci [Old problems, new perspectives. Status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2019]. Centr "Nash Svit" [Center "Our World"]. Kiev, Center "Nash Svit" Publisher, 2020. p.24

and the OCU, about the homophobia of which Bellingcat* published an investigation²⁰⁹, although LGBT activist I. Ryabchiy worked as a translator at the OCU cathedral in the winter of 2019²¹⁰. V.A. Zelensky in September 2019, in response to a new petition for the protection of Christian values, replied that “any legislative initiatives aimed at limiting constitutional rights are unconstitutional. [...] The Ukrainian state deliberately chose European standards which are based on three fundamental values: democracy, the rule of law and human rights, as a model”²¹¹. In October 2019, when asked by journalists about his attitude towards people of non-traditional sexual orientation, the President stated that he did not want to “say anything bad” about them, since in modern society people choose their orientation themselves, and suggested “leave these people alone”²¹². Thanks to the months-long resistance

* The media in the Russian Federation is included in the list of undesirable organizations.

²⁰⁹ <https://ru.bellingcat.com/novosti/ukraine/2019/06/22/ocu-anti-lgbt-activists/>

²¹⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/67209-na-arkhijereskom-sobore-pcu-prisutstvoval-lgbt-aktivist--smi>

²¹¹ Stari problemi, novi perspektivi. Stanovishhe LGBTI v Ukraïni u 2019 roci [Old problems, new perspectives. Status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2019]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2020. Pp. 12-13

²¹² <https://ukranews.com/ua/news/659114-zelenskyj-zaklykav-nedyskryminuvaty-lgbt>

of the civil community of Ukraine, including with the active participation of the AUCCRO, in December 2019, the Verkhovna Rada sent for revision draft law No. 0931 “On amendments to certain legislative acts of Ukraine (regarding the harmonization of legislation in the field of preventing and combating discrimination with European law Union)”, although in November it rejected almost all the amendments proposed by the AUCCRO²¹³. This bill was supposed to strengthen anti-discrimination laws, which, in particular, would allow the LGBT community to hold their opponents accountable for discrimination. In 2019, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the purchase of 666 thousand hryvnia and distribution to the country’s libraries of 1,240 copies of a children’s book by the American writer K. O’Neill about lesbian princesses, but this fact was revealed only in 2021²¹⁴.

In 2020, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine considered a number of bills, some of which were aimed at supporting traditional values, some — LGBT ideologies²¹⁵.

²¹³ <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/komitet-vr-otklonil-popravki-religioznogo-soobshchestva-k-zakonoproektu-0931>, <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/komitet-verhovnoy-rady-peresmotrit-zakonoproekt-0931>

²¹⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/77259-pravitelystvo-ukrainy-tratilo-byudzhetnyje-sredstva-dlya-propagandy-lgbt-detyam>

²¹⁵ Spilnota online. Stanovishhe LGBT v Ukraïni u 2020 roci [The online community. Status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2020]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2021, p.3.

At the beginning of the year, the largest inter-factional association in the history of the Ukrainian parliament, “Values. Dignity. Family”, was formed, which included about 300 parliamentarians, declared one of its goals to be “protection of eternal values”, but actually it did not achieve any positive changes. 5 parliamentarians from this bloc initiated a bill aimed at supporting LGBT people²¹⁶. In 2020, three bills at once (№№ 3316, 3316-2 and 3316-3) provided for criminal liability for pro-family actions and criticism of LGBT people, punishing offenders with fines and imprisonment. AUCCRO²¹⁷, UOC²¹⁸ and other members of the public²¹⁹ in the spring of 2020 called on the country’s authorities to reject these bills as unconstitutional. In June 2020 they were sent for revision²²⁰. In February 2020, the Verkhovna Rada sent for revision (including due to criticism from the UOC²²¹) bill No. 2684 “On amendments to the implementation of the rights

²¹⁶ Ibidem, p.14

²¹⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/71791-sovet-cerkvej-ukrainy-prizval-vlasti-ne-prinimaty-gendernyje-zakony>

²¹⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/71158-v-upc-vystupili-protiv-ugolovnoj-otvetstvennosti-za-prosemejnyje-akcii>

²¹⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/71457-25-000-chelovek-podpisali-peticiju-protiv-zakona-o-nakazanii-za-kritiku-lgbt>

²²⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72278-v-verkhovnoj-rade-otklonili-zakonoprojekty-o-nakazanii-za-kritiku-lgbt>

²²¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/69026-v-upc-prizvali-deputatov-ne-prinimaty-zakonoprojekt-narushajushhij-prava-detej>

of adolescents in the field of health care”, which allowed children from the age of 14 to change gender without parental consent²²² (not considered by parliament since 2020). In January 2020, the Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine A.I. Novosad said she will work to ensure that the country’s schools become “gender neutral”²²³. In May 2020, Verkhovna Rada Human Rights Ombudsman L.L. Denisova sent a submission to the Presidential Ombudsman in Children Rights N.M. Kuleba to publicly apologize for his post on Facebook*, in which he allegedly equated homosexual couples with rapists, to which Kuleba replied that he did not mean discrimination²²⁴. In the same month, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the country’s accession to the international project “Biarritz Partnership”, one of the goals of which is to promote gender equality²²⁵, this action was

²²² http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=67795

²²³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/67984-ministr-obrazovanija-ukrainskaja-shkola-dolzhna-staty-genderno-nejtralnoj>

* Belongs to Meta (recognized as an extremist organization in the Russian Federation and banned).

²²⁴ Spilnota online. Stanovishhe LGBT v Ukraïni u 2020 roci [The online community. Status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2020]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2021, pp. 8-9.

²²⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74540-ukraina-prisojediniłasy-k-projektu-po-prodvizheniju-gendernogo-ravenstva>

criticized in the UOC²²⁶. On July 1, 2020, the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Information Policy voted to introduce to parliament a revised version of the bill “On Media” No. 2693-d, the provisions of which allow for a fine of up to 350 thousand hryvnia for criticism of gay pride and LGBT parades²²⁷. In November 2020, “a lesbian couple notarized a partnership agreement that extends the right of joint ownership to all acquired property. LGBT supporters call this event the first same-sex marriage in Ukraine.”²²⁸. In 2020, the Action Plan for the implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy for the period until 2020 was completed. By the LGBT community’s own admission, out of 21 measures planned in the plan in the interests of LGBT people over the course of 5 years only 9 were fully implemented and two were partially implemented²²⁹. Mostly these measures concerned changes in anti-discrimination legislation. The Ministry of Justice of Ukraine developed

²²⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74601-jepiskop-viktor-ukraincy-dolzny-kontrolirovaty-rabotu-partnerstva-biarric>, <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74601-jepiskop-viktor-ukraincy-dolzny-kontrolirovaty-rabotu-partnerstva-biarric>

²²⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72725-v-ukraine-utverdili-zakonoprojekt-o-shtrafah-za-kritiku-lgbt>

²²⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/zashhita-very/77793-kuda-vedut-nash-narod>

²²⁹ Spilnota online. Stanovishhe LGBT v Ukraïni u 2020 roci [The online community. Status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2020]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2021, p.4

a new Action Plan for the period 2021-2023, but the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved it only in June 2021²³⁰. The new plan provided for only 5 measures aimed at supporting LGBT ideology, mainly the further development of anti-discrimination legislation and bringing certain acts of Ukraine into line with EU laws. Religious organizations in Ukraine in 2020 openly supported bills aimed at protecting traditional values, in connection with which LGBT advocates stated that the fight against LGBT and gender ideology has become perhaps the main task of these organizations²³¹. The greatest hostility of LGBT supporters was caused by the statements of the leader of the UOC-KP Filaret (Denisenko), who stated that one of the causes of the pandemic were same-sex marriages²³², and Metropolitan of Zaporozhye Luka (Kovalenko), who called on the authorities of Zaporozhye “not to participate and not to contribute to the spread and popularization of sin”²³³

²³⁰ Obiednani proti nasil'stva. Stanovishhe LGBT v Ukraïni u 2021 roci [United against violence.Stanovishhe LGBT+ v Ukraïni u 2021 roci] Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2022, p.3

²³¹ Spilnota online. Stanovishhe LGBT v Ukraïni u 2020 roci [The online community. Status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2020]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2021, p.22

²³² That same year, the LGBT support NGO Insight filed a lawsuit against Filaret. See: <https://spzh.news/ru/news/69787-lgbt-organizacija-podajet-v-sud-na-filareta>

²³³ <https://t.me/Lekarzp/500>.

in the city. Verkhovna Rada Human Rights Ombudsman L.L. Denisova sent them representations demanding that they refrain from making discriminatory statements²³⁴. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the summer gay pride parade in Kiev was held online, and representatives of the country's Ministry of Health again took part in it²³⁵, in general, in 2020, due to quarantine measures, fewer LGBT events took place in the country than in previous years. In 2020, the Ukrainian media "Novoey Vremya" published a series of interviews with Ukrainian clergy representing Christian denominations (except for the UOC), Sunni Islam, reformed Judaism and Krishnaism, of which only the rabbi of reformed Judaism A. Dukhovny supported LGBT ideology²³⁶. Christian denominations in Ukraine have generally opposed LGBT people: Ukrainian Catholics condemned the 2019 statement by German Cardinal H. Koch that homosexuality is a "normal form of human

²³⁴ Spilnota online. Stanovishhe LGBT v Ukraïni u 2020 roci [The online community. Status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2020]. Centr "Nash Svit" [Center "Our World"]. Kiev, Center "Nash Svit" Publisher, 2021, pp 22-23. Let us note that on p. 23 of the cited publication, Metropolitan Luka is called the hierarch of the "Russian Orthodox Church", which, in our opinion, is another attack against the UOC.

²³⁵ Ibidem, P.10

²³⁶ <https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/lgbt-gender-i-seksualna-osvita-ochima-progresivnogo-rabina-interv-yu-50124564.html>

predisposition”²³⁷, The UGCC criticized²³⁸ statement by ex-Minister of Health U.-N. Suprun in support of LGBT²³⁹. The positions of the OCU in 2020 were ambiguous: Bishop of the OCU Adrian (Kulik) accused Zelensky of promoting perversions²⁴⁰, Metropolitan Alexander (Drabinko) in an interview with the media was unable to clearly express his position on the LGBT issue²⁴¹, and the manager of the Nikolaev diocese of the OCU expressed gratitude to the organizers of the gay pride parade²⁴². It is worth noting the increased external interference in internal Ukraine in 2020: in May, the UN called on the Parliament of Ukraine to take the measures necessary to create a society free of gender-based violence²⁴³, On September 1, the US Embassy called for the punishment of those who attacked the gay pride parade in Odessa²⁴⁴, in October, the Norwegian Embassy

²³⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/68701-katoliki-ukrainy-kritikujut-jepiskopov-frg-priznavshih-gomoseksualizm-normoj>

²³⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72567-v-ugkc-prokommentirovali-prizyv-suprun-o-podderzhke-gomoseksualistov>

²³⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72535-suprun-rasskazala-pro-gejev-v-cerkvi-ssha-i-prizvala-podderzhaty-lgbt>

²⁴⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74168-v-pcu-obvinili-prezidenta-v-propagande-seksualnyh-izvrashhenij>

²⁴¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75519-k-teme-lgbt-brakov-nuzhno-podkhodity-individualynodrabinko>

²⁴² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/76485-gej-prajd-v-nikolajeve-proveli-s-odobrenija-pcu--smi>

²⁴³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/71715-onn-prizvala-ukrainu-k-sozdaniyu-obshhestva-svobodnogo-ot-gendernogo-nasilija>

²⁴⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74251-posolystvo-ssha-prizvalo-nakazaty-napavshih-na-lgbt-marsh-v-odesse>

together with the International Charitable Foundation “AIDS Foundation East West (AFEW-Ukraine)” signed an agreement on the promotion of gender ideology among adolescents in several regions of the country²⁴⁵.

In February 2021, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine lifted the ban on the donation of blood and (or) its components by homosexuals²⁴⁶, and a subordinate institution announced a study among homosexual men at the expense of the state budget²⁴⁷. In 2021, in the Verkhovna Rada again were registered bills aimed at both banning “propaganda of pedophilia, homosexuality and transgenderism” (№ 6325, 6326 and 6327) and “countering intolerance and discrimination, in particular, on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity” (№ 5488, 6325-1, 6326-1, 6327-1 and 5266). Bill No. 5266, which prohibits discrimination on these grounds and proposes corresponding changes to the Labor Code of Ukraine and the laws “On Employment” and “On Advertising,” was adopted in the first reading by the Verkhovna Rada on September 21, 2021²⁴⁸.

²⁴⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/75357-pochemu-jevropejcy-svobodno-propagandirujut-gender-sredi-nashih-detej>

²⁴⁶ <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0404-21>

²⁴⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/77404-minzdrav-ukrainy-potratit-10-mln-grn-na-socopros-sredi-gejev>

²⁴⁸ Obiednani proti nasil'stva. Stanovishhe LGBT v Ukraïni u 2021 roci [United against violence.Stanovishhe LGBT+ v Ukraïni u 2021 roci] Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2022, pp.3-6

AUCCRO called on parliament to reject and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to withdraw Bill No. 5488, which toughens penalties for criticizing LGBT ideology²⁴⁹ (the bill could be considered at the end of 2023)²⁵⁰. During the year, the Parliament of Ukraine intended to ratify the Istanbul Convention, but this did not happen, including due to the resistance of the AUCCRO²⁵¹ and activists of the UOC²⁵², although the President of the country V.A. Zelensky expressed support for this idea²⁵³. December 10, 2021 V.A. Zelensky at the virtual summit for democracy, organized at the initiative of US President John Biden, said that Ukraine will continue its gender policy²⁵⁴. Due to the easing of quarantine measures, gay pride parades have resumed in cities across the country in 2021. Two deputies of the Verkhovna Rada, the wife of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the press secretary of the President of Ukraine S. Nikiforov expressed their support for the gay pride parade that took place in Kiev

²⁴⁹ <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/vsciro-zakonoproekt-no5488-neset-ugrozu-pravam-veruyushchih>

²⁵⁰ http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=71891

²⁵¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/77379-vr-khochet-prinyaty-stambulyskiju-konvenciju-nesmotrya-na-protest-soveta-cerkvej>

²⁵² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/83368-miryane-prizvali-vlasti-nenavyazyvaty-ukraincam-gendernuju-ideologiju>

²⁵³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/84458-u-zelenskogo-gotovyat-v-raduzakonoprojekt-o-podderzhke-stambulyskoj-konvencii>

²⁵⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/84798-zelenskij-poobeshhal-prodolzhaty-v-ukraine-gendernuju-politiku>

in September 2021; some deputies of the Verkhovna Rada opposed such events²⁵⁵, earlier in May a parade of transgender people was also held in Kiev for the first time²⁵⁶. In the fall-winter of 2021, it became known that the Ukrainian State Film Agency was financing from the budget funds the filming of the film about gays “My Young Prince”, where inappropriately Christian symbols were used²⁵⁷; AUCCRO²⁵⁸ and activists of the UOC called for the film not to be financed from public funds, but the State Film Agency ignored these requests²⁵⁹. In 2021, in the case of the LGBT organization “Insight” vs. the leader of the UOC-KP Filaret (Denisenko) for homophobic statements made in 2020, the court ruled in favor of the hierarch²⁶⁰. Official statements on the inadmissibility of the spread

²⁵⁵ Obiednani proti nasil'stva. Stanovishhe LGBT v Ukraïni u 2021 roci [United against violence.Stanovishhe LGBT+ v Ukraïni u 2021 roci] Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2022, pp. 16-17

²⁵⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/80095-v-kijeve-proshel-parad-transgenderov>

²⁵⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/83416-goskino-ukrainy-oplatit-filym-o-gejah-ispolyzujushhij-khristianskuju-simvoliku>

²⁵⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/83882-vseukrainskij-sovet-cerkvej-vystupilprotiv-gosfinansirovanija-lgbt-filyma>

²⁵⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/84213-goskino-o-finansirovanii-lgbt-filyma-u-nas-zapreshhena-diskriminacija>

²⁶⁰ Obiednani proti nasil'stva. Stanovishhe LGBT v Ukraïni u 2021 roci [United against violence.Stanovishhe LGBT+ v Ukraïni u 2021 roci] Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2022, p..7

of false values in 2021 were issued by the leaders and hierarchs of the UOC, UGCC, OCU and the Ukrainian Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith²⁶¹.

In 2015-2019 and 2021, on an ongoing basis in the summer (in 2021 — in September), the gay pride parade “March of Equality” was held in Kiev, in which several thousand people took part (about 8 thousand participants in 2019). Since 2019, KharkivPride has been held annually in Kharkov. In different years during the period described, gay pride parades were held or there were attempts to hold in large cities of Ukraine — Krivoy Rog, Nikolaev, Odessa, Lvov and others. To avoid opposition from homophobes (civil activists from among right-wing radical nationalist structures and religious figures), such marches were accompanied by law enforcement officers, and their number, as a rule, was many times greater than the number of LGBT participants themselves.²⁶² Many representatives of the Ukrainian show business and politics expressed their support for LGBT ideology. While state authorities and politicians often expressed their support for LGBT ideology, regional authorities and politicians often

²⁶¹ Ibidem, pp. 23-24.

²⁶² <https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/KyivPride>, <https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/KharkivPride>, [https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_Rivnost_\(Kyiv\)](https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_Rivnost_(Kyiv))

opposed LGBT events and asked the President of Ukraine to prevent the spread of non-traditional values in the country²⁶³.

The population of Ukraine, as sociological data show, does not support LGBT ideology. Thus, according to the Western research organization Pew Research Center, in 2010 only 28% of the country's citizens surveyed supported the life choices of gays and lesbians²⁶⁴ (for comparison, in the same year in the Netherlands — 92%, in the Czech Republic — 65%, in Russia — 25% of respondents), in 2017, only 9% of Ukrainians surveyed supported same-sex marriage (85% did not support it)²⁶⁵, in 2019, only 14% of Ukrainians surveyed believed that society should accept homosexuality (69% had the opposite opinion)²⁶⁶.

According to the Ukrainian human rights organization “Our World”, in 2016, only 3.3% of Ukrainians surveyed had a positive attitude towards LGBT people,

²⁶³ See, for example, <https://spzh.news/ru/news/57207-luckije-deputaty-gotovyat-obrashhenije-k-prezidentu-o-zashhite-instituta-semyi>, <https://spzh.news/ru/news/64826-deputaty-v-cherkassah-ne-podderzhali-lgbt-programmu>

²⁶⁴ <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2013/12/12/eastern-and-western-europe-divided-over-gay-marriage-homosexuality/>

²⁶⁵ <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2018/10/29/eastern-and-western-europeans-differ-on-importance-of-religion-views-of-minorities-and-key-social-issues/>

²⁶⁶ <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/06/25/global-divide-on-homosexuality-persists/>

60.4% had a negative attitude (in 2022 — 12.8% and 38.2%, respectively), 33% of respondents were in favor of equal rights for LGBT and heterosexuals (in 2022 — 63.7%), only 4.8% supported same-sex marriage (in 2022 — 23.6%)²⁶⁷. At the same time, in the report of the Verkhovna Rada Human Rights Ombudsman L.L. Denisova for 2019 noted “an increase in the level of loyalty to the LGBT community in society”²⁶⁸.

During this period, there was also a tendency in Ukraine to liberalize legislation on the circulation of narcotic substances.

Before Euromaidan, the topic of drug legalization was heard extremely rarely in the Ukrainian media. According to a poll by the Gorshenin Institute, in 2006, 7.5% of respondents supported the legalization of marijuana²⁶⁹. In 2009, legal drug use was recorded in Yalta²⁷⁰. According to some estimates, in 2011, the eastern and central regions of Ukraine had the most drug addicts²⁷¹. In 2012, the number of deaths from drug

²⁶⁷ <https://life.pravda.com.ua/society/2022/06/1/248914/>.

²⁶⁸ Spilnota online. Stanovishhe LGBT v Ukraïni u 2020 roci [The online community. Status of LGBT people in Ukraine in 2020]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2021, p.7

²⁶⁹ <https://tema.in.ua/article/3300.html>

²⁷⁰ <http://avialine.com/news/18/4/5168.html>

²⁷¹ <http://www.mukachevo.net/ru/news/view/38792>

use in Ukraine reached 43.3 per 1 million citizens²⁷². In 2013, the decriminalization of some provisions of Art. 309 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, in particular, the replacement of imprisonment with fines, but there was no talk about the legalization of drugs. At the same time, the head of the Department for Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, O. Shkolny, noted: “[...] by allowing the storage of drugs, the state will automatically allow their use. I am strongly against this, because I believe that concern for the health of the nation should come first”²⁷³.

The first attempt to legalize the use of cannabis-based drugs in Ukraine, according to various sources, dates back to 2014²⁷⁴ or 2016²⁷⁵ and is associated with the name O.S. Musiy (in 2014 — Minister of Health of Ukraine, in 2014-2019 — deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine). In 2015-2018 Almost 30 petitions were registered on the website of the President of Ukraine asking to legalize the use of marijuana, but none of them received the 25 thousand signatures needed

²⁷² <https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:XyuWL1F0l3UJ:https://news.tochka.net/122587-oon-opublikovala-tseny-narkotiki-v-ukraine-infografika/&cd=57&hl=ru&ct=clnk&gl=us>

²⁷³ <https://cripo.com.ua/events/?p=158919/>

²⁷⁴ According to the Union of Orthodox Journalists, <https://spzh.news/ru/chelovek-i-cerkovy/75109-kannabis>

²⁷⁵ <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-russian-47095396>

for subsequent consideration by the President of the country²⁷⁶.

In 2016, a group of deputies led by Musiy registered bill № 4533, which proposed to add cannabis to the list of drugs and substances whose circulation is limited, but acceptable for scientific and medical purposes²⁷⁷. The project was reviewed only in September 2018 and was sent for revision²⁷⁸, but was withdrawn in 2019²⁷⁹.

In 2018, according to media reports, only 11% of Ukrainians supported the full legalization of cannabis. In the same year, the head of the Kiev police A. Kishchenko proposed to decriminalize the possession and transportation of small amounts of cannabis, since law enforcement officers often caught people who were found to have doses of the drug up to 5 g, which did not fall under the article of the Criminal Code of Ukraine and did not require punishment, and after long bureaucratic procedures they had to close the case and release the detainees. Liberalization of legislation on According to Ukrainian experts, it would help reduce the corruption component in police work²⁸⁰.

²⁷⁶ <https://daily.rbc.ua/ukr/show/korrupciya-predubezhdeniya-meshaet-ukraine-1533621191.html>

²⁷⁷ Ibidem.

²⁷⁸ <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-russian-47095396>

²⁷⁹ https://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=58893

²⁸⁰ <https://daily.rbc.ua/ukr/show/korrupciya-predubezhdeniya-meshaet-ukraine-1533621191.html>

Early 2019 the Acting Minister of Health of Ukraine U.-N. Suprun advocated the legalization of the use of cannabis for medical and scientific purposes, saying that medical cannabis helps alleviate suffering from a number of serious diseases, so its use in medicine is a normal world practice²⁸¹. The statement was made in response to another petition that appeared earlier, calling on the country's authorities to legalize medical cannabis. On May 15, 2019, the Verkhovna Rada agreed on the version of the bill developed on the basis of the petition "To legislatively regulate cannabis for science and medicine — to protect the constitutional rights of citizens". Draft Law of Ukraine No. 10313 "On amendments to certain legislative acts of Ukraine regarding ensuring the fundamental human right to life" was registered in the Verkhovna Rada on May 20, 2019 and submitted for consideration to parliamentary committees²⁸². On August 28, 2019, the bill was withdrawn²⁸³. According to U.-N. Suprun, the bill was approved by the SBU, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry

²⁸¹ <https://news.liga.net/society/news/suprun-vystupila-za-legalizatsiyu-kannabisa-v-meditsine-i-nauke>

²⁸² https://jurliga.ligazakon.net/analitycs/187459_legalzatsya-kanabsu-v-ukran-shcho-proponutsya

²⁸³ <https://suspilne.media/72801-mi-rozumiemo-tonku-gran-sumskalikarka-pro-osoblivosti-legalizacii-medicnogo-kanabisu/>

of Finance of Ukraine, but the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine opposed it²⁸⁴. Candidate for the election of head of state V.A. Zelensky in one of his interviews with the media said that he supports the legalization of cannabis, but in October 2019 he refused to return to this issue²⁸⁵.

In October 2020, the issue of cannabis legalization was raised by President V.A. Zelensky, including the question of the legalization of medical cannabis in a survey that took place during the local elections. The decision to legalize was supported by 65% of respondents²⁸⁶. Shortly before the survey, V.A. Zelensky announced his readiness to submit a bill on legalization if he has sufficient popular support²⁸⁷. However, despite the high level of support for this idea based on the results of an all-Ukrainian survey, V.A. Zelensky did not submit anything. The leader of the OCU, Metropolitan Epifaniy (Dumenko)²⁸⁸, and the head of the National Police of Ukraine I.V. Klimenko²⁸⁹ spoke in favor of the legalization

²⁸⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-64455089>

²⁸⁵ <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-64455089>

²⁸⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-64455089>

²⁸⁷ <https://novorossiiia.ru/zelenskij-boitsya-bez-podderzhki-naroda-podat-zakonoproekt-o-legalizacii-kannabisa.html>

²⁸⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/76579-dolzhen-li-glava-pomestnoj-cerkvi-reklamirovaty-legalizaciju-narkotika>

²⁸⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74926-glava-nacpolicii-ukrainy-podderzhivajet-legalizaciju-prostitutcii>, the same material indicates that I.V. Klimenko supports the legalization of prostitution.

of cannabis in 2020, Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada D.A. Razumkov spoke out sharply against it.²⁹⁰, and Deputy Head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine A.Yu. Gerashchenko recommended submitting the issue to a national referendum²⁹¹. Bill № 4553 “On amendments to certain legislative acts of Ukraine on the regulation of cannabis for medical purposes, scientific and technical activities and industry” was submitted to the Verkhovna Rada on December 29, 2020²⁹² (it is worth noting that the bill was initiated after the words of Metropolitan Epifaniy (Dumenko) in support of legalization)²⁹³, but in July 2021 parliament rejected it²⁹⁴.

Disputes about the legalization of medical cannabis in Ukrainian socio-political discourse continued throughout 2021²⁹⁵. On April 7, 2021 The Government of Ukraine decided to exclude some cannabis-based drugs from the list of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances

²⁹⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74368-razumkov-raskritikoval-ideju-legalizacii-marihuanny-i-prostitucii>

²⁹¹ <https://vesti.ua/strana/komu-nuzhen-legalajz-na-ukrainskuyu-konoplyu-pretenduyut-investory-kanady-i-rf>

²⁹² <https://vsirazom.ua/news/znovu-konoplyanyj-zakonoproekt-deputaty-trychi-provaly-teper-sprobuye-uryad>

²⁹³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/76663-posle-slov-dumenko-o-kannabise-partija-golosiniciirujet-jego-legalizaciju>

²⁹⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-64455089>

²⁹⁵ <https://glavpost.com/politika/2021/07/16/morfii-vmesto-konopli-i-dva-gorshka-s-marihyanoi-chto-govoriat-politiki-o-legalizacii-kannabisa/>

and precursors²⁹⁶. From this day on, the country allows the circulation of psychotropic substances “Dronabinol”, “Nabinol”, “Nabiximols” in the form of medicines or in the form of substances intended for the production and manufacture of such medicines²⁹⁷. On June 2, 2021, Bill № 5596 “On amendments to certain legislative acts of Ukraine on regulating the circulation of cannabis for medical purposes, scientific and scientific-technical activities” was submitted to the Verkhovna Rada for consideration²⁹⁸. On July 13, 2021, it did not receive the required number of votes in the Verkhovna Rada and was failed (only 184 parliamentarians voted for it instead of the 226 required for adoption)²⁹⁹. After the failures of bills No. 4553, 10313 and 5596, submitted by deputies of the Verkhovna Rada from various parties, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine in November 2021³⁰⁰ presented its bill “On amendments to certain legislative acts of Ukraine on the regulation of the circulation of plants of the hemp genus (*Cannabis*) for medical,

²⁹⁶ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/npas/pro-vnesennya-zmin-do-pereliku-narkotichnih-zasobiv-psihotropnih-rechovin-i-prekursoriv-i070421-324>

²⁹⁷ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/11108727>

²⁹⁸ <https://vsirazom.ua/news/znovu-konoplyanyj-zakonoproekt-deputaty-trychi-provaly-teper-sprobuye-uryad>

²⁹⁹ <https://vsirazom.ua/news/deputaty-vidmovylsya-legalizuvaty-kanabis-v-ukrayini>

³⁰⁰ <https://vsirazom.ua/news/znovu-konoplyanyj-zakonoproekt-deputaty-trychi-provaly-teper-sprobuye-uryad>

commercial purposes, scientific and scientific-technical activities”³⁰¹. In the new version of the bill, published in February 2022³⁰², according to the Head of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on National Health, Medical Care and Medical Insurance, deputy from the “Servant of the People” faction M. Radutsky, all issues were worked out to the maximum extent possible, and opponents of legalization should not have had any counterarguments.

In addition, in Ukraine in 2014-2022, the popularization of neo-paganism continued. This pseudo-religious movement that has almost nothing in common with the historical beliefs of the ancient Slavs³⁰³, began to emerge in Ukraine in the 1930s; during the Great Patriotic War, the main ideologists of this movement were closely associated with the Nazis³⁰⁴.

³⁰¹ <https://moz.gov.ua/article/public-discussions/proekt-zakonu-ukraini-pro-vnesennja-zmin-do-dejakih-zakonodavchih-aktiv-ukraini-schod-reguljuvannja-obigu-roslin-rodu-konopli-cannabis-v-medicnih-promislovih-ciljah-naukovij-ta-naukovo-tehnicnij-dijalnosti>

³⁰² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86517-rada-prodolzhajet-dobivatysya-legalizacii-medicinskogo-kannabisa-v-ukraine>

³⁰³ In the modern academic scientific community, theologians, religious scholars, historians, ethnographers and Slavists have proven that sources on original Slavic paganism have practically not been preserved, and modern neo-pagan cults are, therefore, free reconstructions. Many texts of modern Slavic neo-paganism are anti-Christian or anti-Semitic in nature. See more details:[https://iriney.ru/okkultnyie/neoazyichniki/neoazyichestvo-i-dvizhenie-new-age-\(popyitka-sistematizaczii\)-a.-l.-dvorkin,-professor-pstgu.html](https://iriney.ru/okkultnyie/neoazyichniki/neoazyichestvo-i-dvizhenie-new-age-(popyitka-sistematizaczii)-a.-l.-dvorkin,-professor-pstgu.html) <https://iriney.ru/okkultnyie/neoazyichniki/slavyanskoe-neoazyichestvo.html>

³⁰⁴ See, for example,<https://russiafaiths.blogspot.com/p/slavic-indigenous-religion.html>,<https://www.uvm.edu/~aivakhiv/Insearch.pdf>

In his study, American professor Ivakhiv noted that the average age of Ukrainian neo-pagans is older than the average age of neo-pagans in the West. He wrote that the main base of their religion are nationally oriented ethnic Ukrainians. At the same time, neopagan communities overlap with other groups, such as folk and traditional music revival groups, Cossack associations, traditional martial arts groups, and nationalist and ultranationalist organizations. Neopaganism remains a relatively small niche in Ukrainian religious culture and faces mixed reactions in the country. Established Ukrainian Orthodox and Roman Catholic groups view him with alarm and hostility, while Ukrainian well-educated classes and intellectuals tend to view it as a marginal part of the ultraconservative movement, that includes anti-Semitism and xenophobia³⁰⁵.

After the Euromaidan of 2014, neo-paganism began to gain increasing popularity in Ukraine. In the official media, reports began to appear about the bloody victims of neo-pagans, about massacres and violence against Russian-speaking residents of Ukraine, in particular those living in the eastern part of the country.

³⁰⁵ https://alphapedia.ru/w/Slavic_Native_Faith_in_Ukraine

Various neo-Nazi paramilitary groups with a neo-pagan worldview began to actively carry out activities to exterminate the Russian-speaking population³⁰⁶.

When creating the Aidar battalion*, a separate platoon was formed in June 2014 by representatives of the Kiev neo-Nazi group White Hammer. On the official page of the group it was stated that its goal is “the establishment of Ukrainian Ukraine on the principles of National Socialism”³⁰⁷. There are known photographs of the group’s fighters on the Maidan, on whose homemade shields the name of the group was adjacent to large SS runes, as well as other neo-pagan symbols. Its shields were decorated with runes and a “black sun” with the inscription “Vikings”³⁰⁸. Immediately after the victory of the Maidan, White Hammer split from the Right Sector*, another Ukrainian nationalist organization. Later, the names of the leaders of this neo-pagan and neo-Nazi movement became known — Vladislav Goranin and Anton Bondarenko³⁰⁹. In February 2016, Goranin and Bondarenko, together with the volunteer movement

³⁰⁶ <https://veteransrussian.ru/upload/iblock/ce2/a4uu5dt4h7ikv6abqrvyxigrvz6b9xd2.pdf>

* The organization is recognized as extremist and banned in Russia.

³⁰⁷ <https://ukraina.ru/20180831/1020980659.html>

³⁰⁸ Ibidem.

³⁰⁹ <https://ukraina.ru/20180831/1020980659.html>

of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists* (OUN), became part of the Revolutionary Right Forces (RPS) coalition, which twice — in February 2016 and October–November 2017 — tried to organize in the capital of Ukraine third Maidan. Previously, Bondarenko was present in collective photographs from the rituals of neo-pagan meetings³¹⁰. It is also known that the leader of the neo-pagan movement “Great Fire” was present at the Euromaidan and the third Maidan, which Bondarenko tried to organize in 2017.

Another nationalist battalion, Azov*, also received great support from the neo-pagans. Directly its leaders shared neo-pagan views. Namely, the Azov* battalion commander Andrei Biletsky positioned himself as an adherent of the cult of the god Mithras, which competed with Christianity in the 3rd — 4th centuries AD. In 2014, he admonished the Azov fighters* with the words: “And if one of us dies, then our ancestors are waiting for us in Valhalla.”³¹¹.

Another prominent creator of the battalion, who later became deputy head of the headquarters of the Azov Corps*, Yaroslav Babich, was an ardent neo-pagan.

* Extremist organizations banned in the Russian Federation.

³¹⁰ Ibidem.

³¹¹ <https://ukraina.ru/20180831/1020980659.html>

“At the call of his soul, Yaroslav became the head of the Rodnoverie community “Perun’s Army”, was reported on July 31, 2015 in the obituary dedicated to him in the official public pages of “Azov”* on social networks. As a representative of the community, he has been mentioned on neopagan forums since 2006.

The solemn farewell to Babich on September 9, 2015 at the Baikovo cemetery took place according to neopagan canons. “The honor guard of the Azov regiment* accompanied their brother to the place of rest,” reported on the Ukrainian website “Vestnik Rodnovera” — the solemn ceremony was performed by the spiritual leaders of the neo-pagans Svyatovit Pashnik, Velemir Pihota, Dobroslav Girak, Slavomir Glushchenko”³¹².

Svyatovit Pashnik is the head of the neo-pagan association “Rus’koye pravoslavnoye kolo”, the main community of which operates in Zaporozhye.

Azov* fighters were also present at the mass ceremonies conducted by Pashnik on the island of Khortitsa in the summer of 2014. At the same time, the sorcerer organized an online campaign to raise money for “Azov”*, calling this battalion “Perun’s Army”³¹³.

* The organization is recognized as extremist and banned in Russia.

³¹² <https://ukraina.ru/20180831/1020980659.html>

³¹³ <https://ukraina.ru/20180831/1020980659.html>

In 2016, it became known that soldiers of the Azov* regiment had built a temple for the god Perun at the base of a military unit in the village of Urzuf near Mariupol³¹⁴. And from time to time, sorcerers arrived in this part to care for the fighters, including the head of the neo-pagan community “Beliy Hort”, priest Vesen³¹⁵. In 2017, near Donetsk, “Azov”* opened a sanctuary of the god Perun³¹⁶. In the same year, a video of Azov members* worshipping Perun was published on the Internet³¹⁷. Neo-pagans of “Azov”* until 2022 worshiped the idol, held torchlight processions, and made sacrifices³¹⁸.

According to the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, as of January 1, 2018, out of 32,506 existing registered religious organizations in Ukraine, 136 (0.42%) belonged to new religious organizations of the pagan direction, including 74 to the RUN-faith, 22 to the “Patrimonial fire of the Native Orthodox Faith”, 6 — to the Church of Ukrainian Pagans, 5 — to ORU, 33 — to others³¹⁹.

* The organization is recognized as extremist and banned in Russia.

³¹⁴ <https://newizv.ru/news/2017-08-02/s-perunom-v-serdtse-kakim-bogam-veryat-ukrainskie-natsionalisty-258411>

³¹⁵ <https://ukraina.ru/20180831/1020980659.html>

³¹⁶ <https://lenta.ru/news/2017/07/04/paganism/>

³¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcYMOaw9MLc>

³¹⁸ <https://ria.ru/20220416/baza-1783917228.html>

³¹⁹ <https://news.rambler.ru/ukraine/40894453-turchinovu-kesarevo-krovavyy-pastor-vozglavil-protestantov-ukrainy/>

On January 22, 2018, in the Ukrinform agency r the “Appeal of ATO participants regarding the activities of the churches of the Moscow Patriarchate” was read. According to its content, it was proposed to stop the activities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate on the territory of Ukraine, which allegedly “has an extremist nature and carries out activities aimed at undermining the state sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.” Instead of the Church, it was proposed to plant neo-paganism everywhere in Ukraine, pure or covered with some external attributes of Christianity³²⁰.

Over time, aggressive pseudo-religious neo-pagan movements, Satanism and Russophobia became increasingly widespread in many Ukrainian law enforcement agencies, the Ukrainian army and Ukrainian society.

³²⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/zashhita-very/51035-perun-vmesto-khristachem-ukraine-grozit-zaigryvanie-s-yazychestvom>

1.5. International reaction to the situation with the rights of believers in Ukraine

Office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) periodically reported violations of the rights of Ukrainian believers in its reports. Thus, in 2016, the UN stated: “In line with its international human rights obligations⁹², the Government of Ukraine should not only ensure the right, either individually or in community with others, to manifest one’s religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching, but must also take effective measures to ensure that no one shall be subject to discrimination by any State, institution, group of persons, or person on grounds of religion or belief”³²¹. In 2019, the UN recommended that Ukrainian authorities “systematically and publicly condemn acts of violence,” including those committed on the basis of religion³²². This same recommendation was reiterated

³²¹ Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine November 16, 2015 — February 15, 2016, UN OHCHR, 2016, pp.38-39

³²² Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine August 16 — November 15, 2019 UN OHCHR, 2019, p.26

in the 2020 report³²³. However, a significant volume of UN OHCHR reports on human rights violations in terms of recording violations of the rights of believers is devoted to criticism of the activities of the Russian authorities in Crimea and the authorities of the DPR and LPR.

During this period, the OSCE did not release specialized materials on the situation with the rights of believers in Ukraine and, in fact, did not cover this aspect of Ukrainian politics. At the same time, it is known, for example, that the hierarch of the UOC, Bishop Viktor (Kotsaba) of Baryshev, drew the attention of the OSCE to facts of violations of the rights of believers in Ukraine in 2017³²⁴ and in 2019³²⁵. In 2018, the OSCE published information that the organization was aware of cases of crimes against Muslims in Ukraine, but details of the incidents and their number were not provided³²⁶.

US State Department in 2014 -2022 recorded cases of violations of the rights of believers in Ukraine,

³²³ Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 February–31 July 2020 UN OHCHR, p.28

³²⁴ https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:MuZFch_n5tAJ:https://golos.eu/v-obse-rasskazali-o-narushenii-prav-veruyushhix-upc/&cd=12&hl=ru&ct=clnk&gl=us

³²⁵ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2019/02/18/7206964/>

³²⁶ Understanding Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes Addressing the Security Needs of Muslim Communities A Practical Guide. OSCE/ODIHR. Warsaw. 2018. p.55

annually reporting dozens of violations of the rights of Christians of all faiths, Jews and Muslims, and multiple acts of vandalism³²⁷, but mainly criticizing the policies of the Russian authorities in Crimea, the authorities of the DPR and LPR, and also paying special attention to crimes committed in Ukraine motivated by anti-Semitism or against Jehovah's Witnesses*.

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom did not identify violations of the rights of believers in Ukraine in its reports for 2014-2022.

The American NGO International Christian Concern, which monitors violations of the rights of Christians around the world, on its website in 2014-2022³²⁸ published information almost exclusively about violations of the rights of Christians (mainly Protestants and Catholics) in Crimea, DPR and LPR, extremely rarely reporting incidents against the UOC.

Another non-denominational Christian NGO, Open Doors, that helps persecuted Christians and analyzes the situation of oppression of Christians in the world, in reports 2014-2022. did not indicate that Christians

³²⁷ See, for example, the 2015 report: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper>

* Recognized in Russia as an extremist organization and banned.

³²⁸ <https://www.persecution.org/>

are oppressed in Ukraine (at the same time, in particular, in 2019, the organization ranked Russia 41 out of 50 among countries that oppress Christians³²⁹).

In the sections of the reports of the Catholic Foundation “Aid to the Church in need” dedicated to Ukraine in 2016³³⁰ and 2018³³¹ the unfavorable state of the rights of believers was noted; the main negative factor was the “authoritarian regime.” In 2021³³² the situation, according to the authors, has improved slightly. The main emphasis in the reports was on violations of the rights of believers in Crimea, DPR and LPR, as well as discrimination against religious minorities, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses*.

The absence of an adequate reaction of international human rights organizations indicates, that the institute of the protection of human rights in is undergoing a profound crisis the West.

Thus, Amnesty International did not report violations of religious freedom in any of its annual reports from

³²⁹ The Open Doors World Watch List Report 2019, p.28

³³⁰ <https://acninternational.org/religiousfreedomreport/reports/country/2016/ukraine>

³³¹ <https://acninternational.org/religiousfreedomreport/reports/country/2018/ukraine>

³³² <https://acninternational.org/religiousfreedomreport/reports/country/2021/ukraine>

* recognized in Russia as an extremist organization and banned.

2014 to 2022, although it recorded similar violations in other countries.

Human Rights Watch noted violations of the rights of believers in Ukraine only in 2019, reporting aggression against priests of the UOC and searches by the SBU³³³.

“Freedom House” in its analytical materials also did not note violations of the rights of believers in this country during the indicated period.

At the same time, in Russia in 2014, the Russian Association for the Protection of Religious Freedom (RARS) was created. Every year, RARS releases a review report on violations of the rights of believers in the world, paying special attention to the situation in Ukraine and openly reporting on the political actions of the Ukrainian authorities that violate the rights and freedoms of believers of different religions.

³³³ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/ukraine>

Chapter 2

**Violation of the rights
of believers in Ukraine
after February 24, 2022**

With the start of the Special Military Operation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, many religious organizations of Ukraine under pressure from the authorities took an anti-Russian position, published appeals to their coreligionists in the country and abroad calling for humanitarian assistance to the civilian population of Ukraine, to join the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and to counteract in any way possible Russia.

Although the hierarchs, the media and public opinion leaders of the UOC also over time began to make similar statements and appeals, organizing aid collections for Ukrainian civilians and military personnel, the country's authorities are consistently pursuing a policy aimed at destroying the UOC.

2.1. Persecution of UOC believers by security forces and radical extremist groups

Despite the pro-Ukrainian position of the UOC, already on February 24, 2022, the Ukrainian police detained the UOC cleric Archpriest Mikhail Pavlushenko, mistaking him for a Russian saboteur. The priest lived in the city of Gostomel, Kiev region, he went out to inspect the place near his house where a military helicopter felt. The priest was called a Russian saboteur and arrested. Law enforcement officers sorted out the situation, and on the morning of February 25, the clergyman was released home¹.

In the Ukrainian-language segment of Facebook*, slander began to spread against the priests of the UOC with a call to “push out the Moscow priests,” who “leak all the information to the enemy, can hide the enemy, and give clothes of the Armed Forces of Ukraine for camouflage”².

¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86682-pod-kijevom-policija-zaderzhala-svyashhennika-upc-prinyav-jego-za-diversanta-rf>

* belongs to Meta (recognized as an extremist organization in the Russian Federation and banned)

² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86709-v-seti-rasprostranyajut-fejki-s-klevetnoj-na-svyashhennikov-upc>

The hierarchs and clergy of the UOC shared with their flock the hardships of the first stages of the conflict and did not leave their entrusted parishes and dioceses. On the contrary, as reported on social networks, the head of the OCU, Metropolitan Epifaniy (Dumenko), fled to Greece at the end of February and spent some time abroad³.

On February 24 and 25, 2022, the Ukrainian police searched on false charges the UOC church in honor of the Icon of the Mother of God “Unexpected Joy” in the village of Ugrinov, Volyn region and the dean’s house, where, as reported, was a cache of weapons. Law enforcement officers found nothing⁴.

February 27, 2022 in the village of Tsenyava, Kolyomyia district, Ivano-Frankovsk region, chaplains of the UGCC and OCU, as well as a group of ATO veterans, demanded that the dean and community of the UOC Icon of the Mother of God “Vsetsaritsa” vacate the church within 24 hours. Otherwise, the activists promised reprisals. About 50 people came to the temple in the morning. Among them were a UGCC priest and two local deputies. At this time, believers were collecting

³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86730-v-socsetyah-obsuzhdajut-begstvo-dumenko-iz-ukrainy>

⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86710-supruga-nastojatelya-khrama-v-ugrinove-rasskazala-ob-obyskah-po-lozhnomu-donosu>

money to help the Ukrainian army. But the chaplains of the OCU and UGCC, and people in military uniform, began to insult the priest and parishioners, search believers and their cars, and also assured that the priest would not serve in the church. They gave 24 hours for the priest and the community to leave the temple. Representatives of law enforcement agencies tried to intervene in the situation; one of the deputies spoke in the church, calling on those present for peace. However, no one listened to their calls for calm. The day before, the church's dean was accused of storing ammunition and harboring saboteurs. On February 25, SBU officers conducted an inspection, but found nothing. Fake information about the church and parishioners is constantly being spread on social networks, and believers are receiving death threats⁵. The next day, February 28, 2022, the church was nevertheless captured by the UGCC⁶. Despite this, further persecution of the church's dean began⁷.

⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86726-pod-ivano-frankovskom-radikaly-vygonyajut-obshhinu-upc-iz-khrama>

⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86734-uniaty-zahvatili-khram-upcpod-ivano-frankovskom>

⁷ <https://ivano-frankivsk.church.ua/2022/03/05/zvernennya-doduxovenstva-ivano-frankivskoji-jeparxiji-prot-georgiya-malishanastoyatelya-zaxoplenogo-xramu-na-chest-ikoni-bozhoji-materivsecaricya-s-cenyava/#jp-carousel-26450>

On February 27, 2022, clergy of the OCU desecrated the throne of the Holy Protection Church of the UOC in the village of Ryasniki in Rovno region. The church's dean allowed the priests of the OCU to conduct a funeral service for the deceased serviceman of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the temple on the condition that they would not enter the altar. However, they violated the agreement, beat up dissenting parishioners and slandered the priest of the UOC⁸.

Despite the existing contradictions between the UOC and the OCU, on February 28, the Odessa diocese of the UOC appealed to Patriarch Kirill with a request for "assistance in ensuring the safety and release of Vasily Virozub, who is the priest and rector of the Trinity Church of the OCU in Odessa, who was on the rescue ship "Sapphire" that went to humanitarian mission to evacuate defenders of Ukraine from the Zmeiny island". The ship was detained by the Russian Navy on February 26, 2022⁹. Virozub returned to Odessa on May 6, 2022¹⁰.

At the end of February 2022, SBU officers conducted a series of searches in churches and monasteries of the Vinnitsa diocese. At the same time, unknown persons

⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86763-v-ryasnikah-kiliriki-pcu-oskvernili-svyato-pokrovskij-khram-upc>

⁹ <https://t.me/odeparh/15857>

¹⁰ <https://t.me/odeparh/16730>

in Vinnitsa spread false information that refugees were refused to get assistance in the Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The dean denied this information and said that the church is open and ready to receive people in case of appeal¹¹. At the same time, slanderous information was spread through the media and social networks about weapons caches allegedly discovered in the churches of the Lvov diocese of the UOC,¹² and cooperation with Russian troops of individual clergy of the UOC¹³. The SBU, following a denunciation, blocked the website of the Pochaev Lavra of the UOC, explaining that the host of the site was not in Ukraine and that the monastery's collection of donations seemed suspicious¹⁴. Due to the increase in the number of slanderous denunciations against clergy and laity of the Zaporozhye diocese of the UOC, the administrator of the dioceses turned to the police with a request to take action¹⁵. Subsequently, deliberately false information

¹¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86752-sbu-po-lozhnym-donosam-provela-obyski-v-obshhinah-vinnickoj-jeparkhii-upc>

¹² <https://t.me/MykolayDanylevych/1027>

¹³ <http://orthodox.cn.ua/2022/03/01/stop-fake-sprostovano-naklepena-svyashhenika-yakij-dostavlyav-produkti-dlya-bijciv-teritorialnoji-oboroni-onovleno/?fbclid=IwAR31Is-d2s48gw1L8Yz6G-SiC4uw00tmm e75sCMmXeJncUYXhHPbeUgnZ8M>

¹⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86804-sbu-zablokirovala-sajt-pochajevskoj-lavry-po-lozhnomu-donosu>

¹⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86833-mitropolit-luka-proshu-organizovaty-kruglosutochnuju-ohranu-khramov-zaporozhyja>

about the activities of clergy and laity of the UOC was repeatedly disseminated on social networks in different regions of the country. A particular case of slanderous information were reports about the alleged refusals of UOC clergy to perform funeral services for fallen military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine¹⁶ or cooperation with the Russian military¹⁷.

Since March 2022, military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine at the front began to speak out in defense of the UOC, calling to stop the oppression of Orthodox believers and raider seizures of churches¹⁸.

On March 2, 2022, supporters of the OCU and UGCC attacked several parishes of the UOC in the Ivano-Frankovsk region of Ukraine: some churches were forcibly closed, the inhabitants of one monastery were expelled¹⁹.

On March 3, 2022, a new article 111-1 was created in the Criminal Code of Ukraine by Law of Ukraine № 2108-IX, providing for punishment for collaboration.

¹⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87531-v-upc-oprovergli-fejk-ob-otkaze-pominaty-pogibshogo-voyna-v-sumah>

¹⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87680-v-novokahovskoj-jeparkhii-upc-oprovergli-fejk-o-sotrudnichestve-s-vojennymi-rf>

¹⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87005-soldat-vsu-tot-kto-v-tylu-vojujet-s-verujushhimi-upc-sam-javlyajetsya-okkupantom>

¹⁹ <https://ivano-frankivsk.church.ua/2022/03/02/v-ivano-frankivskij-jeparxiji-zaxopleno-nizku-xramiv/#2023-03-20>

The provisions of the article make it possible to bring to criminal liability any citizen of Ukraine who cooperates with the Russian authorities in any form, including a clergyman. Collaborationism of a clergyman may become grounds for termination of the activities of the entire religious organization of the UOC²⁰.

March 7, 2022 in the village of Verkhovina of the Ivano-Frankovsk region, local radicals, armed with firearms, accompanied by local residents, approached the Church of the Conception of St. Anna of the UOC, read out the decision of the local village council and kicked out the parishioners who were there from the premises, took away the documents for the temple and replaced the locks on the doors. The day before, the village council demanded that he move from the UOC to the OCU or UGCC²¹.

March 9, 2022 The Holy Trinity Dukonsky Monastery of the UOC in the Ivano-Frankovsk region was captured by armed radicals, the monks were expelled from the monastery²². The elderly abbot of the monastery,

²⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87090-miryane-predosteregajut-svya-shhennikov-ot-provokacij-stavyashhih-upc-pod-ugrozu>

²¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86868-v-verkhovine-vooruzhennyje-lyudi-zahvatili-khram-upc>

²² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86916-dukonskij-monastyry-zakryvajut-jego-naselynikov-vyzhivajut-iz-oblastiupc>

Archimandrite Tit (Drachuk), was beaten, was imprisoned for some time in an unknown place, was taken to the forest in a neighboring region and was released on the condition that he would never return to the Ivano-Frankovsk region, otherwise he would be killed²³. On the same day, it became known that local residents were dismantling the wooden buildings of the abandoned monastery for firewood²⁴.

On March 10, 2022, the SBU detained journalist and active supporter of the UOC Yan Taksyur without charges²⁵. He was later charged with treason. The arrest of the journalist caused an extremely negative reaction in the country's Orthodox media. Taxur was released on bail on August 13 of the same year²⁶. On May 24, 2023, the Shevchenkovsky court of Kiev recognized Y.I. Taksyur was guilty of high treason and sentenced to 12 years in prison with confiscation of half of his property. On May 25, 2023 Y.I. Taksyur was released as part of an exchange of prisoners of war, after which

²³ https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/humanitarian_cooperation/1898457/

²⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88094-dukonskij-monastyry-v-karpatah-zakrytyj-vlastyami-razvorovyvajut-marodery>

²⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86945-sbu-zaderzhala-pravoslavnogo-zhurnalista-jana-taksyura>

²⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/90097-jana-taksyura-otputili-iz-sizo-pod-zalog>

he left for Russia and on 26th of June, 2023 he met with Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus Kirill²⁷.

On March 11, 2022, members of the country's largest Orthodox public organization "Miryane" addressed the President of Ukraine. Those who applied called for an immediate stop to the seizure of churches and monasteries of the UOC, taking into account the church's broad support for refugees, civilians and the military of Ukraine²⁸. Despite the patriotic position of the UOC, church volunteers in different regions of the country were constantly attacked by nationalists, radicals and supporters of the OCU and the UGCC²⁹.

On March 12, 2022, it became known about attempts by local radicals and an OCU cleric, with the assistance of the SBU, to close the UOC community in the village of Golovy, priselok of Markova Gora, Ivano-Frankovsk region. Representatives of the special services took away all parish documents from the rector and forced the community to "self-liquidate"³⁰.

²⁷ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6038443.html>

²⁸ <https://t.me/miryany/617>

²⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87920-v-chernovickoj-jeparkhii-pozhalovalisy-na-ugrozy-verujushhim-iz-za-pomoshhi-bezhencam>

³⁰ <https://news.church.ua/2022/03/12/ivano-frankivska-sbu-vimagaje-vid-svyashhenika-upc-samolikviduvati-svoyu-parafiyu/#2023-03-20>

On March 13, 2022 in the village of Penkovka, Litinsky district, Vinnytsia region, supporters of the OCU seized the St. Nicholas Church of the UOC. It is reported that for three years the courts refused to transfer this temple to the OCU³¹.

On March 15, 2022 in the village of Dvoretz, Izyaslav district of the Khmelnytsky region, a meeting of village residents was held, where they decided to “transfer” the community of the Holy Cross Church of the UOC to the OCU. Supporters of the OCU subsequently hung a lock on the door of the church³².

On March 16, 2022, unknown armed people kidnapped Archpriest Gennady Batenko, a cleric of the UOC³³. The next day the clergyman returned home³⁴.

The same day in the village of Ivanovka, Zhitomir region, unidentified persons took Archimandrite Lavr (Berezovsky), rector of the Church of the Icon of the Mother of God “Life-Giving Spring” to an unknown direction³⁵. As of the summer of 2023, his whereabouts

³¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87027-storonniki-pcu-zahvatili-khram-upc-v-sele-penykovka-vinnickoj-jeparkhii>

³² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87062-storonniki-pcu-zahvatili-khram-upc-v-sele-dvorec-khmelynickoj-oblasti>

³³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87100-v-kijevskoj-oblasti-vooruzhennyje-lyudi-pohitili-svyashhennika-upc>

³⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87109-pohishhennogo-v-kijevskoj-oblasti-svyashhennika-upc-osvobodili>

³⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87123-v-zhitomirskoj-jeparkhii-izbili-i-pohitili-nastojatelya-khrama-upc>

are still unknown, with a high probability he was killed³⁶.

On March 17, 2022, the head of the OCU, Metropolitan Epifaniy (Dumenko), stated that the OCU does not consider the murder of Russian soldiers a sin³⁷.

From March 6 to March 19, 2022, six UOC churches were captured by supporters of the OCU in the Vinnytsia region. The clergy and members of several other communities began to receive threats from the OCU more often³⁸.

On March 22, 2022, priest Sergiy Tarasov was killed by SBU officers³⁹. He was previously charged with treason.

On March 30, 2022, supporters of the OCU did not allow UOC believers into the church of St. Alexy, the man of God, in the city of Smela, Cherkasy region, for a festive service. Earlier, supporters of the OCU staged an armed provocation here⁴⁰.

³⁶ https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/humanitarian_cooperation/1898457/

³⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87086-glava-pcu-zajavil-chto-ubivaty-okkupantovne-greh>

³⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87202-storonniki-pcu-zahvatili-shesty-khramov-upc-v-vinnickoj-jeparkhii>

³⁹ https://ruskline.ru/politnews/2022/08/04/sbu_ubila_svyawennika_sergiya_tarasova

⁴⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87416-storonniki-pcu-sorvali-bogoslu-zhenije-i-zablokirovali-khram-v-smele>

On April 3, 2022, in the city of Dolina, Ivano-Frankovsk region, local activists achieved the closure of the UOC temple in honor of St. John the Baptist, which had been in operation for 20 years⁴¹.

On April 4, 2022, with the support of local deputies, the UOC temple in honor of the Icon of the Mother of God “Znamenye” in Kiev was transferred to the OCU⁴².

On April 7, 2022, armed people, with the support of the OCU, seized the Ascension Church in the village of Selichevka, Baryshevsky district, Kiev region⁴³. Appeals from the dean and the community to the authorities did not lead to results.

On April 10, 2022, OCU raiders captured the Holy Dormition Church of the UOC in the village of Mikhalche, Ivano-Frankovsk region. Ukrainian police did not interfere with the invaders⁴⁴. Militants from the “Stepan Bandera All-Ukrainian Organization Trizub”* took part in the raid⁴⁵. On the same day, supporters of the OCU

⁴¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87469-v-doline-pod-ivano-frankovskom-aktivisty-zakryli-khram-upc>

⁴² <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/87518-tepery-dumenko-otbirajet-upc-khramy-jeshhe-is-oruzhijem>

⁴³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88027-v-selichevke-borispolyskoj-jeparkhii-vooruzhennyje-lyudi-zahvatili-khram-upc>

⁴⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87611-v-mihalyche-rejdery-iz-pcu-zahvatili-svyato-uspenskij-khram-upc>

* Recognized as an extremist organization in the Russian Federation and banned.

⁴⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87736-v-seti-rasskazali-ob-uchastii-radikalov-v-zahvate-khrama-upc-v-mihalyche>

and UGCC disrupted a service in the Church of the Pochaev Icon of the Mother of God in the village of Verkhnyaya Yablonka, Lvov region, and the dean of the church was then interrogated by the SBU all night. On the night of April 10-11, 2022, the church burned down⁴⁶.

On April 11, 2022 church in honor of the Archangel Michael in the village of Shandrovets, Lvov region, was sealed by government officials⁴⁷.

On April 14, 2022, a group of armed people under the leadership of the OCU hierarch Alexander (Drabinko) forcibly seized the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the village of Kruglik, Kiev region. A group of armed people led by Drabinko knocked down the doors of the church in the village of Kruglik and announced the “voluntary” transfer of the community to the OCU⁴⁸. On the same day, radicals broke into the territory of the Intercession Cathedral in Borispol, tried not to let anyone into the temple, but left after the police arrived⁴⁹.

⁴⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87655-vo-lyvovskoj-jeparkhii-rasskazali-kak-uniaty-i-storonniki-pcu-zahvatili-khram>, <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87635-na-lyvovshhine-sgorel-khram-upc-prihozhane-kotorogo-otkazalisy-perejti-v-pcu>

⁴⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87664-vo-lyvovskoj-jeparkhii-vlasti-opechatali-khram-arkhistratiga-mihaila>

⁴⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87745-vooruzhenyje-radikaly-pod-rukovodstvom-drabinko-zahvatili-khram-v-kruglike>

⁴⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87730-v-borispole-rejdery-pokinuli-territoriju-kafedralnogo-sobora>

At the end of April in the Zhitomir region, local authorities tried to transfer the UOC community to another jurisdiction, but they themselves did not understand which one: to the OCU or to the UOC-KP⁵⁰.

On April 20, 2022, the head of the Kiev regional military administration A. Pavlyuk, by his order, transferred three communities of the UOC to the OCU⁵¹.

April 21, 2022 Supporters of the OCU under the leadership of Metropolitan Alexander (Drabinko) expelled the community of the Church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker of the UOC in the city of Boyarka, Kiev region. The decision to transfer the church to another jurisdiction was signed by people who had never visited that church⁵².

On April 28, 2022 Trinity Church of the UOC in the village of Perenyatyn in the Rovno region was sealed, radicals threatened to kill the priest⁵³. On May 10 of the same year, local authorities transferred the church to the OCU⁵⁴.

⁵⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87983-na-zhitomirshhine-chinovniki-zaputalisy-v-kakuju-jurisdikciju-pereveli-obshhinu-upc>

⁵¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87874-v-kijevskoj-oblasti-perevodity-khramy-v-pcu-nachali-po-rasporyazheniju-vlastej>

⁵² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87877-vooruzhennyje-lyudi-pod-rukovodstvom-drabinko-zahvatili-khram-upc-v-bojarke>

⁵³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88062-v-perenyatine-rovenskoj-jeparkhii-opechatali-khram-upc>

⁵⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88310-hram-upc-v-sele-perenyatin-rovenskoj-jeparkhii-zahvatili-storonniki-pcu>

On April 29, 2022 residents of the village of Krasnoselka, Khmelnytsky region, contrary to the will of the dean and parishioners, declared the St. John the Theologian Church of the UOC to belong to the OCU⁵⁵.

On April 30, 2022 in the village of Yasinya, Transcarpathian region, a friend of an OCU clergyman imitated being hit by a car of the dean of a UOC church, who refused to go over to the schismatics, despite threats⁵⁶. On the same day, supporters of the OCU tried to seize the temple, but failed⁵⁷.

On May 1, 2022, in the morning in Lvov near the Vladimir Church, a group of radicals tried to disrupt the liturgy, shouting insults and committing other provocative actions. The police dispersed them⁵⁸. On the same day, the majority of residents of the village of Dubische of the Volyn region expressed a desire to move to the OCU, while the priest and parishioners remained faithful to the UOC⁵⁹. Subsequently, on the night of May 7–8, 2022, unknown persons filled the entrance

⁵⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88122-v-tulychinskoj-jeparkhii-khram-upc-pereveli-v-pcu-nesmotrya-na-protesty-obshhiny>

⁵⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88168-provokacija-aktivista-pcu-protiv-svyashhennika-upc-v-jasine-popala-na-video>

⁵⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88068-v-jasine-zakarpatskoj-oblasti-rejdery-pcu-nachali-zahvat-khrama-upc>

⁵⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88080-vo-lyvove-nacionalisty-pytalisy-sorvaty-liturgiju-v-khrame-upc>

⁵⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88091-hram-v-dubishhe-na-volyni-otdali-pcu-nesmotrya-na-protest-obshhiny-i-nastojatelya>

doors of the Vladimir Church with foam and desecrated its walls with obscene inscriptions. In the morning, believers were unable to get in and perform worship there.⁶⁰ The same temple was again attacked by vandals on May 14⁶¹ and May 25, 2022⁶²

On May 7, 2022, in the city of Shepetovka, Khmel-nitsky region, local militia blocked the diocesan administration and St. Michael's Cathedral⁶³.

May 8, 2022 in the village of Palche, Volyn region, supporters of the OCU held a vote among village residents to transfer the Church of the Intercession to the UOC. They invited the dean of the church and parishioners to join them, but received a categorical refusal. Supporters of the OCU held a meeting and unanimously voted for the transfer of the temple community to the OCU, but since the dean and administrator were not present, the radicals cut down the castle of the temple. After this, the priests of the OCU held their first service here⁶⁴.

⁶⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88233-vo-lyvove-oskvernili-i-zablokirovali-vladimirskij-khram-upc>

⁶¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88407-vo-lyvove-vandaly-pytalisy-podzhechy-khram-upc>

⁶² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88637-vo-lyvove-vandaly-snova-oskvernili-khram-v-chesty-svyatogo-knyazya-vladimira>

⁶³ <https://news.church.ua/2022/05/07/na-xmelnichchini-u-shepetivci-namagayutsya-zaxopiti-mixajlivskij-kafedralnij-sobor/#2023-03-24>

⁶⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88299-v-palyche-srezali-zamki-v-pokrovskom-khrame-i-pereveli-jego-v-pcu>

On the same day in the village of Milyatin, Ostrog district, Rovno region, supporters of the OCU sealed the UOC church after the authorities failed to transfer it to the OCU at a community meeting⁶⁵. On the same day, OCU activists held a meeting of residents of the village of Pavlovka of the Volyn diocese, where they decided to transfer the Church of the Archangel Michael from the UOC to the OCU, in the presence of the police they changed the lock on the doors of the church and did not allow the believers of the UOC to take away the liturgical utensils⁶⁶.

On May 8-9, 2022, in the Rovno region, vandals painted offensive inscriptions on two UOC churches⁶⁷.

On May 11, 2022 in the village of Ozero, Volyn region, believers were transferred to the OCU by deception. While believers of the UOC prayed at the service together with their dean, the “priests” of the OCU, men in military uniform from the surrounding villages and other activists organized a vote on the shore of the reservoir⁶⁸.

⁶⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88261-v-milyatine-opechatali-khram-posle-togo-kak-jego-ne-udalosy-perevesti-v-pcu>

⁶⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88425-v-pavlovke-na-volyni-radikaly-srezali-zamki-na-khrame-i-peredali-jego-pcu>

⁶⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88259-v-rovenskoj-jeparkhii-oskvernili-dva-khrama-upc>

⁶⁸ <https://12kanal.com/v-ozeri-progolosuvaly-za-perehid-do-ptsu-ta-poky-svyashhennyk-ne-viddaye-klyuchi-vid-hramu-video/>

May 13, 2022 in the village of Chernyakhov, Kiev region, representatives of local authorities, together with the military and armed police officers, tried to seal the temple of the Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessaloniki⁶⁹.

On May 14, 2022, the community of the Assumption Church of the UOC in the Ruzhichna microdistrict in Khmelnytsky was transferred by residents of the area to the OCU with the support of the local city council without the consent of the community itself. The transition was accompanied by a break-in of the temple⁷⁰.

On May 14-15, 2022 in the village of Khodorovtsi of the Kamenets-Podolsk district of the Khmelnytsky region, the UOC community refused to transfer to the OCU, but local deputies organized a vote on the transfer of the community⁷¹.

May 15, 2022 in the village of Stadniki of the Rovno diocese, a group of local residents who declared themselves supporters of the OCU, came to the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the morning

⁶⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88371-s-oruzhijem-i-ugrozami-v-chernyahove-kagarlykskogo-rajona-zakryvajut-khram-upc>

⁷⁰ <https://vsim.ua/Podii/tserkva-u-ruzhichniy-pereyshla-do-ptsu-yak-tse-vidbuvalosya-foto-11605518.html>

⁷¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88417-v-khodorovcah-obshhina-zajavila-o-vernosti-upc-svoboda-o-perehode-v-pcu>

and did not allow UOC believers to attend the service. According to parishioners, among the invaders were people from other villages. Supporters of the OCU demanded that the UOC believers join their structure, and then the parishioners would be allowed into the church. Believers of the UOC refused. The radicals tried to use force and a fight broke out. Several UOC believers, mostly women, were injured⁷².

In mid-May, it became known that in a number of settlements in the Khmelnytsky region, the seizure of churches was carried out with the support of local authorities⁷³. The authorities of the city of Rozhyshche in the Volyn region also initiated mass transitions of UOC communities to the OCU⁷⁴. At the same time, thanks to the efforts of the legal community in the Khmelnytsky region, 6 criminal cases were opened regarding the seizure of UOC churches⁷⁵.

On May 19, 2022, the monument to Alexander Nevsky, erected in 2004 at the expense of the UOC community on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of the city, was

⁷² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88419-storonniki-pcu-ustroili-drakupytajasy-zahvatity-khram-upc-v-stadnikah>

⁷³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88452-v-khmelynckoj-oblasti-mestnyje-vlasti-iniciirujut-zahvat-khramov-upc>

⁷⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88447-vlasti-rozhishha-iniciirujut-massovyje-perehody-cerkovnyh-obshhin-v-pcu>

⁷⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88454-v-khmelynckoj-oblasti-vozbudili-shesty-ugolovnyh-del-po-zahvatam-khramov-upc>

demolished in Kharkov⁷⁶. On the same day, residents of the Leznevo microdistrict in the city of Khmelnytsky gathered at the stadium of the kindergarten, where they decided to transfer the Church of the Intercession to the OCU. This meeting was organized with the support of local deputies⁷⁷.

On May 21, 2022, supporters of the OCU carried out a forceful seizure of the Holy Trinity Church of the UOC in the village of Belashov, Rovno region⁷⁸. They re-registered the church based on meetings of the village residents and took away the keys to the church, thereby provoking a fight⁷⁹. On the same day, OCU raiders captured the UOC church in honor of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the village of Ivankov, Vyshgorod district, Kiev region, while the police refused to investigate the incident⁸⁰.

On May 22, 2022, supporters of the OCU made an unsuccessful attempt to seize the UOC temple in

⁷⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88507-srabortali-bystro-v-khrame-kharykova-rasskazali-kak-snosili-pamyatnik-svyatomu>

⁷⁷ <https://podillyanews.com/2022/05/20/prystrasti-na-stadioni-uhmelnytskomu-shhe-odna-gromada-pryjnyala-rishennya-perejty-dopstu-video/>

⁷⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88548-v-belashove-rovenskoj-oblasti-rejdery-pcu-pytajutsya-zahvatity-khram-upc>

⁷⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88566-v-sele-belashov-rovenskoj-oblasti-storonniki-pcu-zahvatili-khram-upc>

⁸⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88598-policija-otkazalasy-rassledovaty-zahvat-khrama-upc-v-ivankove--prihozhanka>

the town of Rozhyshe, Volyn region⁸¹, however, on May 24, OCU activists cut down the locks in the temple⁸².

On May 22, 2022, supporters of the OCU disrupted a service in the church in honor of the first martyr Archdeacon Stephen in the village of Chernyatyn, Zhmerinsky district, Vinnytsia region. Shouting patriotic slogans, obscene chants and threats against the priest and parishioners, the activists drove the believers out into the street, and held a so-called community meeting in the church, at which they voted to move to the OCU. The police present did not interfere with what was happening. After the vote, having declared the temple theirs, supporters of the OCU arbitrarily changed the locks on the doors⁸³. On the same day, “Right Sector”* militants did not let more than 100 believers to get into the UOC Church of the Ascension of the Lord in the village of Sulimov, Lvov region, additional locks were installed on the temple. Previously, activists of the OCU, with the support of local authorities, re-registered

⁸¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88583-verujshhim-goroda-rozhishhe-udaloso-spasti-khram-upc-ot-zahvata>

⁸² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88615-v-rozhishhe-storonniki-pcu-srezalizamki-na-mihailo-arkhangelyskom-khrame>

⁸³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88590-zahvat-khrama-v-chernyatine-radikaly-pcu-vygnali-prihozhnan-vo-vremya-liturgii>

* Terrorist organization, banned in the Russian Federation.

the UOC community in their names⁸⁴. On the same day, OCU raiders in the village of Fursy of the Kiev region, having started a fight and breaking open the doors, seized the UOC church in honor of St. John the Theologian⁸⁵.

On May 25, 2022, representatives of the community of the Church of St. John the Theologian of the UOC in the village of Demidovka, Rovno region, an oak cross wast installed at the entrance to the village, but within an hour it was cut down and taken away in an unknown direction by OCU radicals⁸⁶.

Despite the Council held by the UOC, that resulted in a declaration, that UOC is independent from Russian Orthodox Church, the oppression by radicals and government agencies did not end.

In October — December 2022, the SBU conducted mass searches in monasteries, churches and administrative buildings of the dioceses of the UOC in the Kiev, Rovno, Zhitomir, Ivano-Frankovsk, Chernovtsi, Dnepropetrovsk, Khmelnytsky, Cherkassy, Volyn,

⁸⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88577-v-sulimove-lyvovskoj-oblasti-pcu-i-pravyj-sektor-zahvatili-khram-upc>

⁸⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88607-bili-svyashhennika-lomali-dveri-v-sele-fursy-rejdery-pcu-zahvatili-khram-upc>

⁸⁶ <https://rivne.church.ua/2022/05/25/prixilniki-pcu-znishhili-poklinnij-xrest-u-demidivci/?fbclid=IwAR0hCBf8tbgY0PKlv58muzNKnnWiwX11BPT10gj4gS9wEH3YqYBuy80TuHQ>

Ternopol, Poltava, Transcarpathian regions and in the Kiev-controlled regions territory of the Kherson region⁸⁷. In total, about 100 UOC organizations were searched. As a motivation for their actions, representatives of the special service declared the involvement of church ministers “in the dissemination of ideas encroaching on the territorial integrity of Ukraine and inciting religious hatred.” The SBU often passed off liturgical literature and periodicals printed in Russia in the 1990s and early 2000s as “pro-Russian materials.”

Since the fall of 2022, the Ukrainian special services have arrested bishops and clergy of the UOC and imposed personal sanctions against them. Thus, the sanctions fell on the abbot of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, Metropolitan Pavel (Lebed) of Vyshgorod, the retired Metropolitan Iosif (Maslennikov), the chancellor of the UOC, Metropolitan of Borispol and Brovary Anoniy (Pakanich), the chairman of the department of external church relations of the UOC, Metropolitan of Chernivtsi and Bukovina Meletiy (Egorenko) and other hierarchs and clergy of the UOC. According to the SBU, in 2022 the special service opened 52 criminal cases involving

⁸⁷ OHCHR. Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, 1 August 2022 to 31 January 2023. P.32

55 clergymen of the UOC, including 14 bishops. On April 21, 2023, the head of the SBU V.V. Malyuk reported that since 2022, criminal cases have been initiated against 61 clergymen and bishops of the UOC (among them more than 10 bishops), and 7 sentences have been handed down⁸⁸. Several of the arrested and sentenced clergymen were exchanged for Ukrainian prisoners of war and were sent to Russia⁸⁹. Metropolitans Ioasaf (Guben), of Vasilky, Ionafan (Yeletskih) of Tulchin, Pavel (Lebed) of Vyshgorod), Feodosiy (Snegirev) of Cherkassy and others were subjected to criminal prosecution on charges of “inciting religious hatred”. In February 2023, a Ukrainian court sentenced to 7 years in prison on charges of collaboration with Russia, a priest of the UOC, captured by Ukrainian security forces in the territory under their control in the Krasnolimansky district of the DPR. 19 bishops and clergy of the UOC were deprived of Ukrainian citizenship. Among them are Metropolitan Iriney (Seredniy) of Dnepropetrovsk and Pavlograd, Metropolitan Arseniy (Yakovenko) of Svyatogorsj, the abbot of the Holy Dormition Svyatogorsk Lavra, Metropolitan Mark (Petrotsev) of Khust, Archbishops Panteleimon

⁸⁸ <https://tass.ru/info/17940345>

⁸⁹ <https://tass.ru/info/17940345>

(Bashchuk) of Buchany and Viktor (Bykov) of Artsyz and others⁹⁰.

Since November 13, 2022, the special services and government agencies of Ukraine have been taking measures to transfer the Kiev Pechersk Lavra in Kiev to the OCU. The impetus was the previously conducted searches in the monastery and a video recording of a chant “praising Russia.”⁹¹ On November 22, SBU officers conducted large-scale searches in the monastery, calling them “counterintelligence activities” designed to prevent “the use of the monastery as a cell of the Russian world”⁹². The monastery’s hierarchy, under pressure from the SBU, expelled from the Lavra monks who supported the unity of the Russian Church and continued to commemorate during services the Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus. On December 2, 2022, the legal entity “Kiev-Pechersk Lavra” of the OCU was entered into the Unified State Register of Ukraine, which provides formal grounds to re-register the property and premises of the monastery as the OCU⁹³.

⁹⁰ <https://tass.ru/info/17394971>

⁹¹ It is worth noting that in April 2023, a court in Kiev refused to consider the case initiated by the SBU against a monk of the Lavra who did not prevent the performance of a song in the church (<https://spzh.news/ru/news/73283-sud-otkazalsja-rassmatrivat-delo-monakha-lavry-o-pesnezvon-nad-rossiej>).

⁹² <https://tass.ru/info/17394381>

⁹³ *Ibidem*.

In 2022, according to the report of the chancellor of the UOC, 129 raider takeovers were recorded, as well as 74 decisions to ban the activities of religious organizations of the UOC by local government bodies, 93 cases of preparation for a forced change in the subordination of UOC parishes, 84 cases of re-registration of UOC parishes by order of regional administrations. 31 transitions of parishes with deans and 13 cases of transitions without deans were recorded, as well as 10 acts of vandalism⁹⁴. It is interesting to note that, according to the testimony of individual UOC priests, some Ukrainian special services promised let them and their parishes alone if the priests made statements against other special services⁹⁵. It is also noted that the massive emergence of new parishes in the OCU led to a serious shortage of personnel in this structure⁹⁶, and its churches were not filled with parishioners⁹⁷.

According to the head of the legal service of the UOC, in 2022 and in January — February 2023, there

⁹⁴ <https://news.church.ua/2022/12/24/zvit-keruyuchogo-spravami-ukrajinskoji-pravoslavnoji-cerkvi-za-2022-rik/#2023-03-21>

⁹⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88095-siloviki-pytajutsya-ispolyzovaty-upc-dlya-vnutrennih-razborok>

⁹⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88491-u-dumenko-zhalujutsya-na-kadrovyj-golod-i-zazyvajut-v-pcu-studentov>

⁹⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88787-zahvachennyje-pcu-khramy-upc-stojat-pustyje--pravozashhitnica>

were about 300 raider takeovers of UOC communities. In addition, 10 cases of vandalism against Orthodox churches were recorded⁹⁸. According to TASS, from January 1 to April 10, 2023, 63 churches of the UOC were transferred to the jurisdiction of the OCU; on May 29, 2023, the head of the State Service for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience under the Government of Ukraine V.E. Elensky announced the transfer to the OCU only in April 2023 of more than 80 parishes of the UOC⁹⁹. According to the constantly updated page “List of communities that changed church jurisdiction from the UOC (MP) to the OCU (2023)” in Ukrainian Wikipedia, the number of communities that transferred from January 2 to June 27, 2023 is more than 280¹⁰⁰. The method of transition (voluntary or forceful) is not noted in the article.

From January 1, 2023, on the initiative of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, the directorate of the Kiev-Pechersk Historical and Cultural Reserve unilaterally terminated the lease agreements for the Assumption Cathedral and the Refectory Church with the UOC (both churches are located on the territory of the Upper Lavra).

⁹⁸ <https://tass.ru/info/17394971>

⁹⁹ <https://tass.ru/info/17940345>

¹⁰⁰ [https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perelik_communities,_scho_changed_church_jurisdiction_from_UOC_\(MP\)_to_OCU_\(2023\)#cite_ref-83](https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perelik_communities,_scho_changed_church_jurisdiction_from_UOC_(MP)_to_OCU_(2023)#cite_ref-83)

As a result, the monks of the Lavra were denied access to these churches, where previously they constantly held services. The legal service of the UOC stated that it would challenge this decision in court, since the lease agreements were terminated in violation of the law. The OCU declared its decisive intention to take over the rest of the monastery. On March 10, 2023 on the website of the Kiev-Pechersk Nature Reserve a document signed by acting general director of the reserve was published demanding that the monks of the UOC leave the monastery before March 29 of this year “due to the termination of the lease agreement”¹⁰¹. From March 10 to the present, leaders of world religions, public opinion, scientists and diplomats from Australia, Belarus, the Vatican, Greece, Cyprus, Poland, Russia, Serbia, the USA, France, Croatia, Montenegro, the Czech Republic and other countries, as well as representatives of the UN and The OSCE expressed concern about the situation and called on the Ukrainian authorities not to expel the UOC from the Kiev-Pechersk Monastery. On March 15, 2023 Minister of Culture of Ukraine A.V. Tkachenko said that the monks can remain in the monastery if they transfer to the OCU¹⁰².

¹⁰¹ <https://tass.ru/info/17394381>

¹⁰² <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/15/03/2023/6410f7d59a7947befe24bc31>

From March 29, 2023 to the final version of this material in September 2023 the “Standing for Lavra” has been going on: believers of the UOC are trying to prevent the confiscation of the monastery by all legal means. On March 30, the government of Ukraine canceled its order of July 11, 2013 on the transfer of Lavra objects to the UOC for use¹⁰³. Supporters of the confiscation of the monastery, among whom were seen not only representatives of the OCU, but also non-believers and pagans¹⁰⁴ and Satanists¹⁰⁵, for several weeks held mass actions near the walls of the monastery, at which they shouted insults at the clergy and laity of the UOC, accusations of “working for Russia,” and provoked fights and clashes with UOC believers and monks. The radicals even announced a hunt for one of the Lavra clergymen¹⁰⁶. The leader of the OCU, Metropolitan Epifaniy (Dumenko), accused the defenders of the Lavra of anti-Ukrainian sentiments and “defense of the Russian world”¹⁰⁷. Inspections from the Ministry

¹⁰³ <https://tass.ru/info/17940345>

¹⁰⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72908-aktivisty-ustroili-jazycheskij-ritual-pod-molitvy-verujushchikh>

¹⁰⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72869-k-lavre-prishel-aktivist-v-tolstovkes-nadpisju-satana>

¹⁰⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72954-radikaly-objavili-safari-na-ustavshchika-lavry>

¹⁰⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72947-dumenko-lavru-zashchishchajut-russkomirovtsy-s-antiukrainskimi-nastroenijami>

of Culture of Ukraine periodically came to the monastery to inventory the property of the monastery, but the believers did not let them in. On April 1, 2023, the abbot of the Lavra, Metropolitan Pavel (Lebed), was sentenced by the Shevchenko Court of Kiev to round-the-clock house arrest for two months in a village near Kiev, wearing an electronic bracelet. The bishop was accused of “justifying Russian aggression” through personal communication with parishioners¹⁰⁸. On July 13, 2023, Metropolitan Pavel was charged with “inciting ethnic and religious hatred”¹⁰⁹, and the Prosecutor General’s Office demanded to transfer him to a pre-trial detention center¹¹⁰. With the support of the police, the Ukrainian authorities managed to seal several buildings of the Lavra and detained UOC activists. The Ministry of Culture of Ukraine was found disseminating false information that the monks of the Lavra allegedly brought some of the monastery’s buildings to a state of disrepair¹¹¹. On April 21, 2023, the police introduced a special access regime for

¹⁰⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72918-sud-naznachil-namestniku-2-mesjatsa-domashneho-aresta-bez-obshchenija-s-verujushchimi>

¹⁰⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74831-sbu-zajavila-o-predjavlenii-novykh-obvinenij-mitropolitu-pavlu>

¹¹⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74832-prokuratura-trebuje-perevesti-namestnika-lavry-v-sizo>

¹¹¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73247-monakh-lavry-zastavil-5-kanal-proilljustrirovat-lozh-minkulta>

entering the monastery: they began checking visitors' passports and taking photographs of them, prohibiting them from taking photos and videos¹¹². From April 25¹¹³ until May 26¹¹⁴, and then again from July 5, 2023¹¹⁵ entrance to the Lower Lavra is limited in time. As analysts from the Institute of Mass Information of Ukraine noted, based on monitoring 548 news stories of Ukrainian media released from April 1 to April 5, 2023 when covering the situation around the Kiev Pechersk Lavra, 82% of these publications had signs of hate speech and violations of journalistic standards¹¹⁶. At the same time, in April 2023, the US State Department reported that they were not aware of attacks on facilities and parishioners of the canonical UOC¹¹⁷. By May 2, 2023, the commission of the Ministry of Culture transferred 16 buildings to the use of the secular reserve "Kievo-Pechersk Lavra"¹¹⁸, and acting

¹¹² <https://tass.ru/info/17940345>

¹¹³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73464-minkyult-ohranichil-vkhod-na-territoriju-nizhnej-lavry>

¹¹⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74007-minkult-oslabil-dlja-posetitelej-nizhnej-lavry-chasovye-ohranichenija>

¹¹⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74654-minkult-uzhestochil-hrafik-prebyvanija-prikhozhan-v-nizhnej-lavre>

¹¹⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73301-v-82-publikatsijakh-ob-upts-ispolzuetsja-jazyk-vrazhdy-issledovanie>

¹¹⁷ <https://ria.ru/20230410/upts-1864358150.html>

¹¹⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73599-komissija-peredala-v-polzovanie-zapovednika-16-obektov-kievskoj-lavry>

general director of the reserve M. Ostapenko noted that the UOC still must pay for housing and communal services¹¹⁹. Exhibitions and social events began to be held in the confiscated Lavra premises¹²⁰, one of the exhibitions was dedicated to the pagan Trypolye culture¹²¹. In May-June 2023, more than 25 thousand people signed a petition on the website of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine demanding the resignation of Minister of Culture A.V. Tkachenko, because he “performed his duties as Minister of Culture inappropriately, and his work led to “stagnation in the cultural sphere” of Ukraine”¹²², however, on June 19, 2023, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine refused to dismiss the minister¹²³. In response, a new petition with a similar demand was launched on June 21, 2023, gaining more than 10 thousand signatures within the first week¹²⁴. On June 6, 2023 A.V. Tkachenko demanded the Lavra monks to leave the monastery within three

¹¹⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73696-ostapenko-khot-dohovor-i-razorvan-upts-dolzna-platit-v-lavre-kommunalku>

¹²⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74526-hlava-minkulta-v-lavre-dolzny-pojavitsja-ochahi-kulturnoj-i-svetskoj-zhizni>

¹²¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73981-zapovednik-anonsiroval-jazycheskuju-vystavku-v-uspenskom-khrame-lavry>

¹²² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74071-petitsija-ob-uvolnenii-tkachenko-nabrala-bolee-22-tysjach-holosov>

¹²³ <https://ru.interfax.com.ua/news/political/917606.html>

¹²⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74458-pojavilas-novaja-petitsija-s-trebovaniem-uvolit-hlavu-minkulta>, <https://petition.kmu.gov.ua/petitions/5096>

days, and also said that 79 buildings should be returned to state ownership¹²⁵. The legal department of the UOC considered this requirement illegal¹²⁶, Verkhovna Rada deputy A.G. Dmitruk also criticized the decision¹²⁷. On June 12, 2023, Tkachenko stated that “the commission for the acceptance and transfer of state property of the National Reserve “Kievo-Pechersk Lavra” completed its work”¹²⁸ on June 5, 2023. However, the UOC did not want to hand over the keys to all 79 objects to the Ministry of Culture commission within three days in the Lower Lavra and leave the monastery,” while the commission found multiple violations¹²⁹. On June 14, 2023, the Kiev Economic Court in the lawsuit of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra Monastery against the Nature Reserve, invalidated the unilateral termination of the contract with the UOC and ordered the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine to provide evidence of the bad faith of the UOC¹³⁰. On June 15, 2023, Tkachenko said that he does not rule out the forceful eviction of inhabitants

¹²⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74165-tkachenko-potreboval-ot-upts-v-techenie-3-dnej-osvobodit-lavru>

¹²⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74186-trebovanie-mkip-srochno-vyselit-upts-iz-lavry-bezosnovatelnoe-jurotdel>

¹²⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74260-nardep-dejstvija-tkachenko-popolavre-eto-nekompetentnost-i-varvarstvo>

¹²⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74280-tkachenko-konstatiroval-chtomonakhi-ne-ushli-iz-lavry-v-techenie-3-dnej>

¹²⁹ Ibidem.

¹³⁰ https://t.me/nikita_chekman/80

from the territory of the Lavra¹³¹. On June 26, 2023, the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service reported that “an agreement was reached between the Kiev authorities and representatives of UNESCO on the removal of Christian valuables, including holy relics, from the territory of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra, and their subsequent transfer to museums in Italy, France, Germany and the Vatican under the pretext of “saving from Russian missile attacks””¹³². The next day, Minister of Culture of Ukraine A.V. Tkachenko admitted that “the authorities began to return the “Ukrainian identity” to the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, without waiting for a court decision or the adoption of a law that would allow such actions.”¹³³. Earlier in June, 16 Byzantine icons from the collection of the Khanenko Museum in Kiev were taken to France and exhibited at the Louvre, which gives reason to believe that the Ukrainian authorities may take other church values abroad¹³⁴.

Greek media in early July in connection with the meeting of V.A. Zelensky and Patriarch Bartholomew

¹³¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74329-tkachenko-ne-iskljuchil-prinuditelnoho-vyselenija-upts-iz-kievo-pecherskoj-lavry>

¹³² <http://svr.gov.ru/smi/2023/06/razgrablenie-ukrainy-vykhodit-nanovyy-uroven.htm>

¹³³ <https://iz.ru/1535592/2023-06-27/v-sf-sravnili-ukrainu-s-fashistskoi-germaniei-za-popytku-vyvezti-tcennosti-iz-lavry>

¹³⁴ <https://www.dw.com/en/louvre-museum-exhibits-icons-from-ukraine/a-65897559>

of Constantinople disseminated information that the Ukrainian authorities are preparing to transfer the Kiev Pechersk Lavra under direct subordination (stavropegia) of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople¹³⁵.

On July 1, 2023, the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine demanded that the monks vacate several Lavra buildings before July 4, threatening to seal these buildings¹³⁶. UOC lawyers called this arbitrariness and called for compliance with the law¹³⁷. On July 4, a commission from the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine came to the monastery, but was unable to seal the buildings due to resistance from citizens¹³⁸. Despite the opposition of the laity and clergy, on July 6, 2023, the reserve commission, with the forceful support of the police, seized and sealed three buildings of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra (and children were in one of them)¹³⁹, including the residence of the Primate of the UOC. On the same day, the reserve management demanded the release of two more buildings by July 10¹⁴⁰, and already

¹³⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74709-zelenskij-obsudit-s-varfolomeemperedachu-fanaru-kievskoj-lavry-smi>

¹³⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74592->

¹³⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74594->

¹³⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74642-komissija-minkulta-pokinula-lavru-ne-opechatav-ni-odin-iz-korpusov>

¹³⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/74715-politsija-vse-zhe-blokirovala-detej-v-odnom-iz-korpusov-lavry>

¹⁴⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74703-minkult-potreboval-osvobodit-eshche-dva-korpusa-lavry>

on July 11, 2023, these two buildings were sealed¹⁴¹. The UOC called these actions arbitrariness¹⁴², and they promised to file reports with the police regarding the beatings of believers that took place¹⁴³. On July 14, 2023, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia sent an appeal to the primates of the Local Orthodox Churches, to which he attached “an information certificate about the renewed attempts to seize the Lavra and other largest monasteries of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, as well as about discriminatory laws directed against it, about illegal actions Ukrainian special services, law enforcement agencies and local authorities, about the ongoing seizures of churches, about cases of aggression and violence against believers of the canonical Church and about the reaction of international human rights organizations to this”¹⁴⁴. On the same day he made a statement in connection with attempts to expel believers from the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, in which he remarked, that everyone who did these lawless acts made themselves the heirs of the atheists

¹⁴¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74788-tkachenko-nazval-zakhvaty-korpusov-68-i-115-derusifikatsiej-lavry>

¹⁴² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74693-samoupravstvo-v-upts-prokommentirovali-dejstvija-zapovednika-v-lavre>

¹⁴³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74694-po-faktu-izbienija-verujushchikh-budut-podany-zajavlenija-v-politsiju-jurotdel-upts>

¹⁴⁴ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6042363.html>

of the 20th century, no matter what how they justified their crimes. The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church emphasized: “as the reaction of the world community shows, the right of Ukrainian citizens to freely practice their faith is of no interest to many of those who publicly declare their commitment to human rights. Before our eyes, terror is being carried out against believers with impunity and shamelessness. The Church, uniting several tens of millions of believers, has been declared an enemy of the state”¹⁴⁵. The court, which made decision on the eviction of monks from the Lavra, occurred on 10th of August 2023¹⁴⁶. Monks were not allowed to attend the previous court hearings¹⁴⁷, and were not invited to the appointed meeting as third parties to consider the case¹⁴⁸. UOC lawyer Archpriest Nikita Chekman said that the SBU is exerting psychological pressure on the court¹⁴⁹. The administration of the reserve recognized the registration of monks in the monastery as a violation¹⁵⁰.

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6042386.html>

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/10/08/2023/64d50a209a79477ac02ac263>

¹⁴⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74953-politsija-ne-puskaet-bratiju-lavry-na-zasedanie-suda-advokat>

¹⁴⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74966-advokat-lavry-monakhov-lishili-prava-uchastvovat-v-sude-o-sudbe-monastyrja>

¹⁴⁹ https://t.me/nikita_chekman/125

¹⁵⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74975-zapovednik-rehistratsija-monakhov-v-lavre-by-la-proizvedena-s-narusheniem>

On July 14, 2023, by the decision of the Solomensky District Court in Kiev, the vicar of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, Metropolitan Pavel (Lebed) of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl, who was previously under round-the-clock house arrest, was taken into custody and placed in prison. The bishop was offered the opportunity to remain free subject to the payment of a bail of 33 million 330 thousand hryvnia¹⁵¹. The verdict caused a wide public outcry around the world: the Serbian Orthodox Church was called to pray for the prisoner¹⁵², the arrest was condemned in the Greek media¹⁵³, the actions of the Ukrainian authorities in the situation with the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra were condemned by the famous American television journalist T. Carlson¹⁵⁴. Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus Kirill addressed the Primate of the Local Orthodox Churches, Pope Francis, Patriarch of the Coptic Church Tawadros II, Head of the Anglican Communion Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, Secretary General of the World Council of Churches

¹⁵¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74853-sud-otpravil-namestnika-lavry-za-reshetku>

¹⁵² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74874--v-chernohorskoj-mitropolii-prizvali-k-molitve-o-zakljuchennom-namestnike-lavry>

¹⁵³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74897-v-hretsii-arest-mitropolita-pavla-nazvali-pytkami-so-storony-vlastej>

¹⁵⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74883-karlson-to-chto-zelenskij-arestovyvaet-ierarkhov-popranie-svobody-very>

Dr. Jerry Pillay, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid, Secretary General of the Council of Europe Maria Pejčinović-Burich, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Matteo Mecacci with a call to “pay attention to the persecution of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church taking place in Ukraine and accept all possible measures to protect against lawless persecution of Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl”¹⁵⁵. The bishops of the UOC unanimously expressed outrage at the unfair court verdict. Metropolitan Pavel himself, in a video message from the Lukyanovsky pre-trial detention center in Kiev, stated that all the accusations against him were lies, and said that he was “under special supervision” and that the keys to the three locks of his cell were in the hands of three different people¹⁵⁶. On July 18, 2023, it became known that the Ukrainian special services were taking measures to prevent the collection of funds to pay bail for Metropolitan Paul (Lebed)¹⁵⁷. The Metropolitan himself

¹⁵⁵ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6042462.html>

¹⁵⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74922-mitropolit-pavel-obratilsja-k-bratii-lavry-iz-lukjanovskoj-tjurmy>

¹⁵⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74925-spetssluzhby-zapretili-sbor-sredstv-dlja-namestnika-lavry-spiker-henshtaba>

told the media that the SBU is threatening him with a criminal case if he does not recognize the OCU¹⁵⁸. On July 19, 2023, it became known that the Kiev prosecutor's office would file an appeal against the court's decision on the accused hierarch with the goal of presumably toughening the sentence¹⁵⁹. Appeals to the President of Ukraine with a request to release the Metropolitan were sent by Rovno¹⁶⁰ and Kremenchug¹⁶¹ dioceses of the UOC. On August 7, 2023 Metropolitan Pavel (Lebed) was released on bail in the amount of 33,3 million hryvnia (\$900 thousand)¹⁶².

July 20, 2023, Minister of Culture of Ukraine A.V. Tkachenko resigned¹⁶³, July 27, 2023 The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine approved his dismissal from office¹⁶⁴. Shortly before and after his resignation, he gave an interview to the BBC, in which he said that he,

¹⁵⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74958-ne-budet-priznaniya-ptsu-znachit-budet-delo-namestnik-lavry-o-slovakh-sbu>

¹⁵⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74970-prokuror-podal-apelljatsiju-na-reshenie-suda-po-mitropolitu-pavlu>

¹⁶⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74892-rovenskaja-eparkhija-obratilas-k-prezidentu-iz-za-aresta-mitropolita-pavla>

¹⁶¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75072-kremenchuhs-kaja-eparkhija-prizvala-vlast-ne-presledovat-mitropolita-pavla>

¹⁶² <https://www.vedomosti.ru/society/news/2023/08/07/988950-namestnika-kievo-pecherskoi-lavri-osvobodili-pod-zalog>

¹⁶³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74969-hlava-minkulta-tkachenko-podal-v-otstavku>

¹⁶⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75103-rada-uvolila-tkachenko-s-dolz-nosti-ministra-kultury>

in his opinion, began the “de-occupation” of the Kievo-Pechersk Lavra and launched several new projects in it, including perpetuating the memory of such heroes of Ukrainian history as Hetman Mazepa, called on Metropolitan Onufriy (Berezovsky) to recognize the OCU and expressed confidence that the state would take away from the UOC, in addition to the Kiev-Pechersk, Pochaev and Svyatogorsk Lavras¹⁶⁵. At the same time, some media outlets disseminated information about the initiation a criminal case in relation to the ex-Minister in connection with the theft of budget funds¹⁶⁶. Since the summer of 2023, funeral services for Mazepa began to be held in the churches of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra taken away from the UOC¹⁶⁷, and in deprived premises — give lectures about him¹⁶⁸.

On July 23, 2023, as a result of a rocket fall, the Spaso-Preobrazhensky Cathedral of the UOC in Odessa was seriously damaged¹⁶⁹. This incident was widely circulated by Ukrainian propaganda as an example of another “terrorist attack” by the Russian Armed Forces.

¹⁶⁵ <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/articles/cllg2jq9j8o>

¹⁶⁶ t.me/kyiv_novyny_24/32454

¹⁶⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74253-v-kievo-pecherskoj-lavre-proshla-panikhida-pl-mazepa>

¹⁶⁸ <https://www.kplavra.kyiv.ua/ua/node/3497>

¹⁶⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75016-v-odesse-raketnym-udarom-razrushen-kafedralnyj-sobor-upts>

President V.A. Zelensky said that the cathedral was hit by an X-22 anti-ship missile¹⁷⁰. Press Secretary of the President of the Russian Federation D.S. Peskov rejected accusations against Russia, noting that Russia never attacks civilian infrastructure, in particular churches.¹⁷¹, and member of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation V.V. Rogov said that the cathedral was hit by a Ukrainian air defense missile¹⁷². The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry promised to raise the topic of “destruction” of UOC churches by Russia in the UN Security Council¹⁷³. Internet users noticed that in the Ukrainian Wikipedia, information about its destruction was included in the article about the cathedral shortly before the missile hit it¹⁷⁴. Italian authorities offered their assistance in restoring the cathedral¹⁷⁵.

On August 1, 2023, the leader of the OCU, Metropolitan Epifaniy (Dumenko), met with the head of the National Police of Ukraine I.M. Vygovsky and asked for his support

¹⁷⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75037-zelenskij-preobrazhenskij-sobor-odessy-razrushila-rossijskaja-raketa-kh-22>

¹⁷¹ <https://iz.ru/1548665/2023-07-24/peskov-otverg-obvineniia-kieva-v-razrushenii-sobora-v-odesse>

¹⁷² <https://ria.ru/20230723/raketa-1885800406.html>

¹⁷³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75046-vlasti-ukrainy-zajavili-budto-edinstvennaja-uhroza-pravoslaviju-v-strane-eto-rf>

¹⁷⁴ <https://interaffairs.ru/news/show/41472>

¹⁷⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75033-vlasti-italii-zajavili-cto-hotovy-prisoedinitja-k-vozstanovleniju-sobora-v-odesse>

“during the exercise by citizens of their legal right to change jurisdiction”¹⁷⁶. Simultaneously with the “battle for the Lavra”, filled with flagrant cases of violation of the rights of believers, in the spring-summer of 2023, the widespread seizure of UOC churches continues. It is also known that the Ukrainian police in the previous months did not prevent the OCU raiders from seizing, for example, the Church of the Apostles Peter and Paul in the village of Chorov, Rovno region on June 6, 2023¹⁷⁷, Church of the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the village of Uladovka, Vinnytsia region on June 20, 2023.¹⁷⁸, Church of Archangel Michael in the village of Belogorodka, Kiev region on June 25, 2023¹⁷⁹, Church of the icon of the Mother of God “Burning Bush” on July 9, 2023¹⁸⁰ and Church of the Saint Paraskeva in the city of Netishin in the Khmelnytsky region on July 27, 2023¹⁸¹.

In the city of Horodenka, Ivano-Frankovsk region, on August 1, 2023, for the first time, the police dispersed UOC believers gathered for prayer in a private house, since previously all UOC churches in the region were

¹⁷⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75220--dumenko-poprosil-u-hlavy-natspolitsii-zashchity-pri-zakhvatakh-khramov>

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6034132.html>

¹⁷⁸ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6036971.html>

¹⁷⁹ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6038415.html>

¹⁸⁰ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6041348.html>

¹⁸¹ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6046874.html>

transferred to the OCU or closed by the authorities¹⁸². The legal department of the UOC appealed to the relevant government agencies with a demand to stop illegal actions on the part of officials¹⁸³.

In connection with the actions taken by the Ukrainian authorities against the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra and its inhabitants, on June 15, 2023, the Advisory Council of the Heads of Protestant Churches in Russia sent the Russian Association for the Protection of Religious Freedom (RARS) its position regarding the persecution of the UOC. According to members of the organization: "It is bitter to realize that brothers and enemies mixed up during the confrontation in Ukraine. Contrary to the commandment of love commanded by Christ, people and Christian believers are conducting military operations against each other. In the Kiev Pechersk Lavra, other monasteries and churches, consecrated by centuries of prayers and spiritual deeds of the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, there is a struggle for buildings and sacred relics"¹⁸⁴. Expressing concern about the situation, the advisory council asked RARS to speak out in defense of religious freedom for

¹⁸² <https://hth.gov.ua/news/1690971016/>

¹⁸³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75265-v-jurotdele-upts-dali-otsenku-razhonu-politsiej-lituhii-v-horodenke>

¹⁸⁴ Letter dated June 15, 2023. The text of the letter is at the disposal of RARS.

Orthodox brothers and sisters of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Synodal Department for Church's Relations with Society and Mass Media, in a statement on July 6, 2023¹⁸⁵, called the actions of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine for purely political reasons another act of persecution against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is comparable to anti-religious repressions in the 1920s — 1930s with the aim of rewriting the history of the country. The Department called on the international community to pay attention to the persecution against the UOC, which must be stopped immediately, and conduct an independent international investigation into the ongoing destruction of the Church.

Since April 2023, there has been a “renaming” of Orthodox churches that have transferred to the OCU, consecrated in honor of sacred things and Moscow saints located on the territory of Russia¹⁸⁶. In June 2023, speakers of the OCU called for “decommunizing” the churches of the UOC and freeing them from

¹⁸⁵ <https://sinfo-mp.ru/zayavlenie-sinodalnogo-otdela-po-vzaimo-otnosheniyam-czerkvi-s-obshhestvom-i-smi-moskovskogo-patriarhata-v-svyazi-s-goneniyami-na-naselnikov-kievo-pecherskoj-lavry.html>

¹⁸⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/73512-pereimenovanie-rossijskikh-khramov-nachalo>

“Russian imperial symbols”¹⁸⁷. In July 2023, the temple, consecrated in honor of the holy royal passion-bearers (Russian Emperor Nicholas II and members of his family killed in 1918 and glorified in Orthodoxy as saints) in the city of Storozhynets, Chernovtsi region, was renamed the Church of the Transfiguration of the Lord¹⁸⁸. On July 29, 2023, the head of the Kiev Regional State Administration R.A. Kravchenko announced his intention to remove from the regional coat of arms the image of St. George the Victorious, which is similar to the coats of arms of Moscow and the Moscow region¹⁸⁹.

On April 19, 2023, the arrest of the Lavra defender V.S. Kokhanovskaya caused a great public outcry: she was kidnapped by unknown people using brute force, after which it turned out that they were police. The woman was charged with hooliganism¹⁹⁰, since April 21, 2023 she has been under 24-hour house arrest¹⁹¹. On June 15, 2023, the arrest period was

¹⁸⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74288-v-ptsu-zakhoteli-dekommu-nizirovat-khramy-upts>

¹⁸⁸ https://t.me/chrisma_center/5855?single

¹⁸⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75166-herb-kievskoj-oblasti-pomenjajut-iz-za-promoskovskoho-heorhija-pobedonostsa>

¹⁹⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73340-pokhititeljami-kokhanovskoj-okazalis-politsejskie>

¹⁹¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73392-viktoriju-kokhanovskuju-otpravili-pod-kruhlosutochnyj-domashnij-arest>

extended for another two months¹⁹², then withdrawn on June 29, 2023¹⁹³, but after going out on the same day she was attacked by an unknown person, after which she was again sentenced to round-the-clock arrest¹⁹⁴.

In June 2023, Metropolitan Feodosiy of Cherkassy stated that Ukrainian media receive Western grants to write materials directed against the UOC¹⁹⁵. In the same month, the results of a sociological survey by the Rozumkov Center, carried out for the media “Mirror of the Week”, appeared: only 8.2% of Ukrainians support the UOC (34% — OCU), 43% support the expulsion of the UOC from the Lavra and their transfer to the OCU, 40% support the decisions of local authorities to deprive the UOC of churches and land, 45% support the idea of a complete ban on the UOC. At the same time, 43% believe that the UOC preaches the “Russian world”, 39% are sure that the UOC is connected with the special services of the Russian Federation, 36% — that the leadership center of the UOC is in Moscow¹⁹⁶.

¹⁹² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74327-sud-prodlil-domashnij-arest-viktorii-kokhanovskoj-na-dva-mesjatsa>

¹⁹³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74562-s-kokhanovskoj-snjali-kruhlo-sutochnyj-domashnij-arest>

¹⁹⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74609-posle-napadenija-na-kokhanovskuju-sud-snova-otpravil-ee-pod-kruhlosutochnyj-arest>

¹⁹⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74130-antitserkovnye-smi-poluchajut-hranty-zapadnykh-posolstv-cherkasskij-arkhierej>

¹⁹⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/74194-pochemu-narod-za-zapret-upts-mp>

2.2. Promotion of the Ukrainian political course towards the destruction of the UOC

Since February 28, 2022, attempts have been made by the regional and federal authorities of Ukraine to ban the activities of the UOC due to “ties with Russia.” For the first time such an attempt was noted in Gorodok, Lvov region¹⁹⁷. On March 11, in the city of Drohobych, Lvov region, the authorities banned the activities of the UOC at the request of the local UGCC community¹⁹⁸. At the same time, on March 12, 2022, President V.A. Zelensky thanked the UOC for its assistance in organizing a humanitarian corridor to Mariupol and delivering 90 tons of aid and medicine to the city¹⁹⁹. March 22, 2022 authorities of the village of Yasinya in the Transcarpathian region decided to appeal to the President of Ukraine, the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada and the Prime Minister about an urgent decision to ban the activities of the UOC on the territory of Ukraine

¹⁹⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86789-v-gorodke-lyvovskoj-oblasti-zapretili-dejatelnosty-upc>

¹⁹⁸ <https://drohobych-rada.gov.ua/>

¹⁹⁹ https://t.me/V_Zelenskiy_official/809

and cancel its state registration²⁰⁰. On the same day, the first bill to ban the UOC was registered in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (bill № 7204 “On the ban of the Moscow Patriarchate on the territory of Ukraine”), authored by deputy from the Svoboda party O.V. Savchuk²⁰¹, which proposed to ban any structures of the Moscow Patriarchate in the country; in case of refusal, it was proposed to confiscate the monasteries of the UOC into state ownership²⁰². On March 26 of the same year, the Verkhovna Rada registered bill № 7213 on amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations,” authored by deputies of Voice and Servant of the People parties. This bill provided for a ban on the activities of religious organizations (association) that are part of the structure of a religious organization (association), the leadership center of which is located outside of Ukraine in a state that is recognized by law as having committed aggression against Ukraine²⁰³. Some politicians, however, warned that the ban on the UOC could cause a split in society²⁰⁴,

²⁰⁰ <https://yasinya-gromada.gov.ua/>

²⁰¹ <https://itd.rada.gov.ua/billInfo/Bills/Card/39276>

²⁰² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87383-rada-opublikovala-tekst-zakonoprojekta-o-zaprete-upc>

²⁰³ <https://itd.rada.gov.ua/billInfo/Bills/Card/39269>

²⁰⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87408-mihail-podolyak-nuzhno-ne-spekulirovaty-na-voprosah-very-a-obedinitysya>

and the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada R.A. Stefanchuk said that bills to ban the UOC are not on the agenda²⁰⁵.

On April 7, 2022, deputies of the city of Novograd-Volynskiy (now Zvyagel) in the Zhitomir region demanded that the UOC vacate all churches within 24 hours²⁰⁶. The UOC rightly noted that deputies have no right to give such orders²⁰⁷. On April 13, 2022, at an extraordinary session of the Ivano-Frankovsk City Council, deputies approved the text of an appeal to the President of Ukraine, in which they demand a ban on the activities of the UOC in the country. This statement by the deputies is a reaction to the appeal of the Ivano-Frankovsk Diocese of the UOC to the President regarding the oppression by regional authorities²⁰⁸ (at the beginning of April, believers of the Ivano-Frankovsk Diocese of the UOC appealed to the President of Ukraine with a request to stop the persecution of the Church, since at that time there was only one UOC church left in the region — the cathedral in Ivano-

²⁰⁵ <https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/ruslan-stefanchuk-shansov-lyuboy-prorossiyskoy-1650837541.html>

²⁰⁶ <https://info.nvrada.gov.ua/7-kvitnya-vidbulosya-plenarne-zasidannya-pozachergovoyi-devyatnadczyatoyi-sesiyi-miskoyi-rady-vosmogosklykannya>

²⁰⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87601-v-upc-prokomentirovali-ulytimatum-deputatov-novograd-volynskogo-gorsoveta>

²⁰⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87711-vlasti-ivano-frankovska-trebujut-ot-prezidenta-zapretityupc-v-ukraine>

Frankovskij)²⁰⁹. On April 13, 2022, deputies of the city of Malin, Zhitomir region, made a decision obliging clergy of UOC churches in the Malin district to leave churches within 24 hours²¹⁰. On April 21, 2022, the head of the Sumy regional military administration promised to “do everything to remove the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from the region”²¹¹. On April 22, 2022, the mayor of Chortkov, Ternopol region, called for a ban on the UOC²¹². On April 27, 2022, at an extraordinary session of the village authorities of Lokaci of the Volyn region appealed to the local communities of the UOC with a call for a “voluntary transition” to the OCU²¹³. On April 29, 2022, draft resolution № 7332 was submitted to the Verkhovna Rada, proposed for consideration by 20 deputies, aimed at introducing sanctions against Patriarch Kirill and the hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church.²¹⁴

²⁰⁹ <https://ivano-frankivsk.church.ua/2022/04/08/zvernennya-duxovenstva-ta-virnix-chad-ivano-frankivskoji-jeparxiji-ukrajinskoji-pravoslavnoji-cerkvi-do-prezidenta-ukrajini/>

²¹⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87718-vlasty-malina-potrebovala-ot-klirikov-upc-osvobodity-khramy-v-techenije-sutok>

²¹¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87910-glava-sumskoj-vojennoj-administracii-upc-v-oblasti-byty-ne-dolzno>

²¹² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87905-vlasti-chortkova-zajavili-chto-v-gorode-neobkhodimo-zapretity-upc>

²¹³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88037-v-lokachah-na-volyni-vlasty-prizvala-obshhiny-upc-dobrovolyno-perejti-v-pcu>

²¹⁴ <https://itd.rada.gov.ua/billInfo/Bills/Card/39516>

May 2, 2022 the authorities of the Kivertsy City Council of the Volyn region held a meeting at which they discussed the unity of the OCU and the UOC²¹⁵. On May 3, 2022, the mayor of Konotop, Sumy region, A. Semenikhin, a member of the nationalist party “Svoboda”, issued an order to ban the UOC in the city, which, in his opinion, “threatens national security”²¹⁶. Later, on his orders, security forces sealed all 10 UOC churches in the city²¹⁷. On May 5, 2022, deputies of the Lanovtsy city council of the Ternopol region ordered “the UOC as part of the Russian Orthodox Church on the territory of Ukraine (the city of Lanovtsy and the village of Orishkovtsi) to carry out organizational measures regarding the transition to the OCU”²¹⁸. On May 6, 2022, in the city of Brovary, Kiev region, the authorities banned the UOC “due to martial law”²¹⁹. On the same day, the authorities of the city of Chervonograd, Lvov region, demanded that the UOC parishes transfer to the OCU within two weeks²²⁰.

²¹⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88123-v-kivercah-na-volyni-siloviki-i-chinovniki-obsudili-jedinenije-upc-i-pcu>

²¹⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88162-mer-konotopa-zapretit-upc-v-gorode-iz-za-ugrozy-nachezopasnosti>

²¹⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88207-mer-konotopa-prikazal-silovikam-opechataty-vse-khramy-upc-v-gorode>

²¹⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88248-v-lanovcah-vlasty-prinuzhdajet-verujushhih-upc-perehodity-v-pcu>

²¹⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88205-v-brovarah-vlasti-zapretit-upc-v-svyazi-s-vojennym-polozhenijem>

²²⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88280-vlasti-chervonograda-dali-obshhine-upc-dve-nedeli-na-perehod-v-pcu>

On May 7, 2022, the authorities of the city of Kazatin, Volyn region, called on all communities of the UOC to move to the jurisdiction of any other Christian denomination²²¹. On the same day, near the St. Michael's Cathedral of the UOC in the city of Shepetovka, Khmelnytsky region, a group of unknown citizens voted for the “transfer” of the temple to the OCU. The initiator of the meeting was the city mayor Vitaliy Buzyl²²². On May 10, 2022, a draft decision on an appeal to ban the activities of the UOC and cancel the charters and state registration of religious communities of the UOC in the Volyn region was registered in the office of the Volyn Regional Council²²³. On May 11, 2022, a petition was registered in Lutsk calling for the exclusion of the ruling bishop of the Volyn diocese of the UOC, Archbishop Nafanail (Krikota) of Volyn and Lutsk from the local Council of Churches²²⁴. In the city of Olevsk, Zhitomyr region, on May 10, 2022, deputies decided to ban the activities of the UOC and “other religious communities that support Russian aggression in Ukraine” (which ones are not

²²¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88221-mer-kazatina-prizyvajet-obshhiny-upc-perejti-v-pcu-rkc-ugkc-ili-protestantam>

²²² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88232-v-shepetovke-mer-organizoval-fejkovoje-golosovanije-za-perehod-v-pcu-sobora>

²²³ <https://konkurent.ua/publication/95919/u-volinradi-initsiuut-zaboronu-upts-mp/>

²²⁴ <https://konkurent.ua/publication/96017/iz-lutskoi-radi-tserkov-hochut-vignati-ochilnika-upts-mp-na-volini/>

specified)²²⁵. On May 12, 2022, deputies of the city of Kagarlyk, Kiev region, decided to suspend the activities of the UOC on the territory of the community until the end of the war²²⁶. On May 13, 2022, at a session of the Dubensky City Council, deputies made an appeal to the priests and believers of the UOC of the Dubno district of the Rovno region with an appeal to move to the OCU and gave the parishes of the UOC one month²²⁷. On May 16, 2022, in the city of Monastyriska in the Ternopol region, deputies adopted a resolution in which they accused believers of the UOC of trying to eradicate “everything Ukrainian”, of sabotage activities and even insulting the feelings of believers²²⁸. On May 20, 2022, at the regular session of the Rovno Regional Council, deputies did not support the draft decision to ban the UOC, but the chairman of the council in an interview with the media said that this ban is “the most important thing in his life”²²⁹. On the same day, the authorities of the city

²²⁵ <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3480433-v-olevsku-na-zitomirsinideputatipidtrimalizaboronumoskovskogopatriarhatu.html>

²²⁶ <https://kagarlyk.city/articles/211896/deputatikagarlickoimiskradi-progolosovali-za-prizupinennya-diyalnosti-upc-na-teritorii-gromadi>

²²⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88393-vlasti-dubna-rovnenskoj-oblastidali-prihodam-upc-mesyac-na-perehod-v-pcu>

²²⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88473-vlasti-monastyriski-upc--rossijane-unizhajushhije-chuvstva-verujushhih-ukraincev>

²²⁹ <https://rivnepost.rv.ua/news/holova-rivnenskoj-oblradi-vistupit-pered-vr-pro-zaboronu-moskovskoho-patriarkhatu>

of Pereyaslav in the Kiev region banned the activities of the UOC²³⁰.

May 23, 2022 deputies of the territorial community of the village of Bogorodchany of the Ivano-Frankovsk region decided to ban the activities of the UOC in the Bogorodchany district.²³¹

In May 2022, the political party of P.A. Poroshenko European Solidarity demanded sanctions against the UOC and confiscation of funds and property of all its communities and units²³². In the same month, Verkhovna Rada deputy N.R. Pipa began to spread false information that in Zaporozhye the priests of the UOC refused to perform the funeral service for the deceased girl, since she was baptized in the UOC-KP. The information was officially denied by the Zaporozhye diocese²³³.

On June 30, 2022, the decision to ban the UOC was made by the Lvov City Council²³⁴. In November of the same year, the Council of the Lvov Region called on the Verkhovna Rada to ban the UOC throughout

²³⁰ <https://proslav.info/sesiya-pereyaslavskoyi-miskoyi-rady-odnogolosno-pryjnyala-rishennya-shhodo-zaborony-diyalnosti-upcz-mp-na-terytoriyi-gromady/>

²³¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88618-deputyaty-bogorodchanskogo-possoveta-ivano-frankovskoj-oblasti-zapretili-upc>

²³² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88390-partija-poroshenko-prizvala-konfiskovaty-imushchestvo-obshhin-upc>

²³³ <https://hramzp.ua/newsitem/otkrytoe-obrashhenie-k-prezidentu-ukra>

²³⁴ <https://ria.ru/20220630/lvov-1799279707.html>

the country²³⁵. On this occasion, Verkhovna Rada deputy A. Goncharenko sent a parliamentary appeal addressed to the Prime Minister of Ukraine D. Shmygal with a proposal to deprive the UOC of the rights to rent the Kiev Pechersk and Holy Dormition Pochaev Lavra and transfer them to the OCU²³⁶.

From March 2022 to February 2023, 81 decisions of local authorities were recorded to ban the activities of religious organizations of the UOC. In April — May 2023, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was banned on its territory by the authorities of Vinnitsa, Volyn, Zhitomir, Rovno, Khmelnytskyi, and Chernovtsi regions. The councils of Lvov, Kirovograd, Chernovtsi and Rovno regions called on the Verkhovna Rada to ban the UOC in the country²³⁷.

The legal department of the UOC in its official statement dated May 6, 2022 noted that forcing a ban on the activities of the UOC or a transition to the OCU is absolutely illegal²³⁸. The Law of Ukraine “On Local Self-Government” indicates that no local authorities

²³⁵ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/16453883>

²³⁶ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/16326345>

²³⁷ <https://tass.ru/info/17940345>

²³⁸ <https://news.church.ua/2022/05/06/rishennya-pro-zaboronu-diyalnosti-religijnix-gromad-upc-ne-mayut-niyakoji-yuridichnoji-silizayava-yuridichnogo-viddilul/#2023-03-23>

have the right not only to prohibit, but also to limit the activities of religious organizations. Article 16 of the Law of Ukraine “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” prescribes the termination of the activities of a religious community only by a court decision in strictly specified cases and by decision of the community itself²³⁹. It was noted that the most unfriendly actions towards the communities of the UOC were taken by deputies from the Svoboda party²⁴⁰. Defenders of the UOC have repeatedly emphasized that the actions of the authorities “to suspend (terminate) the activities of a religious organization constitute criminal offenses under Part 3 of Art. 161 (Violation of the equality of citizens depending on their race, nationality, regional affiliation, religious beliefs, disability and other grounds), Part 1 of Art. 180 (Obstruction of religious rites), Art. 356 (Arbitrariness), Part 2, Art. 364 (Abuse of power or official position) of the Criminal Code of Ukraine”²⁴¹.

December 1, 2022 President of Ukraine V.A. Zelensky, by his decree, put into effect a decision of the National

²³⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/zashhita-very/88255-tri-napravlenija-boryby-s-upc>

²⁴⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88561-jurist-zajavila-chto-konflikty-vokrug-khramov-upc-organizovyvajet-vo-svoboda>

²⁴¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88268-zapreshhaja-upc-mestnyje-chinovniki-popirajut-zakony--pravoslavnyje-advokaty>

Security and Defense Council (NSDC), essentially aimed at banning the UOC. The document instructed the government to submit for consideration to the Verkhovna Rada “a bill on the impossibility of religious organizations affiliated with centers of influence in the Russian Federation from operating in Ukraine.” The State Service for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience was commissioned to conduct a religious examination of the charter of the UOC for the presence of a church-canonical connection with the Russian Orthodox Church. In addition, the document ordered to check the existence of legal grounds and compliance with the conditions for the use of state property by the UOC, which is located on the territory of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra. Security services were instructed to intensify activities to identify and counter subversive activity of Russian special forces in Ukrainian religious sphere.

On December 9, 2022, the relevant committees approved and recommended that the Verkhovna Rada consider four bills introduced by deputies of the Servant of the People, European Solidarity and others factions concerning the restriction of rights, deprivation of property and the ban on religious organizations belonging to the UOC. The first document is aimed

at depriving tax benefits of “religious organizations associated with the Russian Orthodox Church”. The second bill proposes to accept the Verkhovna Rada’s appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the transfer of the Pochaev and Kiev Pechersk Lavra to the OCU for free use. The bill “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine to Improve the Legal Regulation of the Activities of Religious Organizations” simplifies the procedure for the transfer of communities (parishes), dioceses, monasteries and other structures of the UOC to the jurisdiction of the OCU. The document, among other things, provides for the possibility of changing the subordination of dioceses, monasteries, brotherhoods, missions, which requires a simple majority of votes of their “general meeting” (at the same time, the composition of participants in this meeting is not regulated in any way in the bill, which leaves a wide field for abuse). The draft law also establishes a ban on transferring state or municipal property for rent, free use or loan to a religious organization associated with the Russian Orthodox Church. The bill “On ensuring the strengthening of national security in the field of freedom of conscience and the activities of religious organizations” de facto prohibits the activities of the UOC and deprives the church of the right to own

and use property. A ban is introduced on the use of the word “Orthodox” in the name of any organizations with the exception of those who received permission or were subordinate to the schismatic OCU. The document also establishes a ban on the activities of religious organizations associated with the Russian Orthodox Church (in fact, UOC communities) on the territory of Ukraine. Their contracts with legal entities of Ukraine related to the use of property must be terminated early.

On January 19, 2023, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine submitted to the Verkhovna Rada a bill “On amendments to certain laws of Ukraine on the activities of religious organizations in Ukraine.” The document introduces a ban on the activities of religious organizations whose leadership center is located in Russia. The bill allows in court — at the request of the prosecutor or the State Service for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience — to terminate the activities of religious organizations in the event of any violations of the law²⁴².

On March 30, 2023, Advisor to the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine M. Podolyak stated that only the OCU should remain in Ukraine, and the UOC “will

²⁴² <https://tass.ru/info/17394971>

gradually leave for Russian cities”²⁴³. The Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council A.M. Danilov made harsh statements against the UOC, calling the existence of the UOC in Ukraine “a special operation of the Russian Federation”²⁴⁴, the actions of its priests have nothing to do with the Lord God²⁴⁵ and welcoming the demolition of churches of this denomination²⁴⁶. Danilov was critical of the Vatican’s proposals to become a mediator for Russian-Ukrainian peace negotiations²⁴⁷.

On April 3, 2023, 35 deputies of the Verkhovna Rada proposed a draft resolution “On the appeal of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to the Cabinet of Ministers on the termination of the lease agreement with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate for complexes of buildings of the Pochaev Dormition Lavra”²⁴⁸. Among other things, the monastery is called “the source of the Russian world”²⁴⁹. The Verkhovna

²⁴³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72843-spiker-op-v-ukraine-budet-ptsu-tolko-ptsu>

²⁴⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73064-danilov-v-1991-hodu-rf-nachala-spetsoperatsiju-po-vnedreniju-v-ukrainu-upts>

²⁴⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73100-hlava-snbo-svjashchenniki-upts-dejstvujut-bez-poruchenija-hospoda-boha>

²⁴⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73075-v-snbo-privetstvujut-snos-khrama-upts-vo-llove>

²⁴⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73619-my-eto-ne-prohlotim-danilov-o-mirotvorcheskikh-initsiativakh-papy>

²⁴⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72964-v-radu-vnesli-zakonoproekt-o-razryve-dohovora-s-pochaevskoj-lavroj>

²⁴⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73071>

Rada Committee on Humanitarian and Information Policy supported this bill²⁵⁰. Just a few days before, on March 28, 2023, the OCU announced the creation of its own religious organization in the monastery²⁵¹, while the OCU and the UGCC are arguing over the right to own the monastery²⁵². On April 22, 2023, the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine announced the creation of a commission to inspect the monastery²⁵³. On June 16, 2023, a meeting of the Ivano-Frankovsk City Council was held, at which deputies voted to appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers and the Ministry of Culture with a call to take away the Pochaev Lavra from the UOC and give it to the “Ukrainian Church”²⁵⁴. On April 6, 2023, the Legal Department of the UOC published a statement about illegal decisions of local governments to terminate the right to permanent use of land plots and accused the regional authorities of Ukraine of violating the country’s Land Code²⁵⁵. On April 13,

²⁵⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73156-humanitarnyj-komitet-rady-podderzhal-prekrashchenie-arendy-pochaevskoj-lavry>

²⁵¹ <https://ria.ru/20230328/raskolniki-1861320493.html>

²⁵² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73591-v-ptsu-i-uhkts-sporjat-komu-dolzha-dostatsja-pochaevskaja-lavra>

²⁵³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73430-komissija-minkulta-sobiraetsja-proverit-obekty-pochaevskoj-lavry>

²⁵⁴ <https://pik.net.ua/2023/06/15/frankivska-miskrada-zaklykala-vidibraty-v-upts-mp-pochayivsku-lavru/>

²⁵⁵ <https://news.church.ua/2023/04/06/yuridichnij-viddil-upc-opriyludniv-zayavu-shhodo-nezakonnix-rishen-organiv-miscevogo->

2023 Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada R.A. Stefanchuk said that the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations supports legislative measures to ban the UOC²⁵⁶, At the end of April 2023, several bills aimed at banning the UOC were being considered by the Verkhovna Rada²⁵⁷. Deputy N.L. Knyazhytsky at the same time, expressed fear in the media that due to the seizure of UOC churches, Ukraine would be accused of violating the Human Rights Convention, and the Church would win in court²⁵⁸, and deputy N.R. Poturaev refused to consider the ban on the UOC as a fight against religion²⁵⁹, promising to ban all religions “associated with the Russian Federation”²⁶⁰. At the same time, according to the BBC, a third of the deputies of the ruling Servant of the People party do not agree with the legislative ban on the UOC.²⁶¹ On May 29, 2023,

samovryaduvannya-pro-pripinennya-prava-postijnogo-koristuvannya-zemelnimi-dilyankami/#2023-06-27

²⁵⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73203-vlast-i-vstsiro-dohovorilis-ob-unichtozhenii-upts>

²⁵⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73504-nardep-zakonoproekty-ob-upts-ne-vynosjat-v-vr-iz-za-bojazni-ne-nabrat-holosa>

²⁵⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73445-nardep-ohromnyj-risk-cto-upts-potom-budet-vyihryvat-sudy>

²⁵⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73320-nardep-zapreshchaja-upts-my-ne-vedem-borbu-s-relihiem>

²⁶⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73334-nardep-poobeshchal-zapret-vsekh-relihiij-svjazannykh-s-rf>

²⁶¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73649-bolee-treti-nardepov-ot-sluhi-naroda-vystupajut-protiv-zapreta-upts-bbc>

deputies of the Verkhovna Rada supported an appeal to the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Orthodoxy and the parliaments of its member states, in which they called for the exclusion of the Russian Federation from the organization²⁶². June 13, 2023, Deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine O.A. Dunda said that by the end of the summer of 2023 there will be no UOC in Ukraine, calling the church a “sectarian religion”²⁶³. On July 1, 2023, a deputy from the “Voice” party in the Verkhovna Rada, I. Sovsun, called to take away churches from the UOC, and to explain to European colleagues that the UOC is in fact not a religious organization, but a “branch of the KGB,” therefore, repressive measures against her are justified²⁶⁴. On July 12, 2023, Deputy Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Humanitarian and Information Policy E. Kravchuk, in an interview with the media, stated the need for the state to intervene in religious affairs and expressed hope for a speedy ban on the UOC during the summer of 2023²⁶⁵.

²⁶² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74064-nardepy-prizvali-iskljuchit-rf-iz-mezhparlamentskoj-assamblei-pravoslavija>

²⁶³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74295-nardep-ot-sluhi-naroda-poobeshchal-chto-k-kontsu-leta-upts-v-ukraine-ne-budet>

²⁶⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74585-nardep-rasskazyvaju-v-evrope-chto-upts-ne-tserkov-a-filial-khb>

²⁶⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74809-nardep-hosudarstvo-dolzno-vmeshivatsja-v-relihoznye-voprosy>

On June 22, 2023 President of Ukraine V.A. Zelensky announced new steps to achieve the “spiritual independence” of Ukraine. In particular, he said, that he held a meeting regarding the spiritual independence of Ukraine and promised to continue the relevant work in this direction. According to him, there cannot be spiritual ties with a terrorist state, how he called Russia, and those who justify the murder of Ukrainians and cover up evil. The President did not report on specific measures and actions²⁶⁶. On July 18, 2023 V.A. Zelensky again stated that measures would be taken to improve “spiritual independence” in the very near future, also without reporting specific steps²⁶⁷. Metropolitan Feodosiy (Snigiryov) of Cherkassy expressed confidence that the national authorities of Ukraine are putting pressure on regional authorities to make decisions to ban the UOC²⁶⁸. The Metropolitan himself has been in residence since April 12, 2023²⁶⁹ under house arrest on charges of “justifying the armed aggression

²⁶⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74449-zelenskij-anonsiroval-novye-shahi-po-dukhovnoj-nezavisimosti-ukrainy>

²⁶⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74923-zelenskij-anonsiroval-novosti-v-sfere-religioznoj-nezavisimosti-ukrainy>

²⁶⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75199-zaprety-upts-mestnymi-vlastjami-initsiirovany-iz-kieva-ierarkh-upts>

²⁶⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73193-mitropolita-cherkasskoho-feodossija-zakljuchili-pod-domashnij-arest>

of the Russian Federation” and “violating the rights of believers”; on July 24, 2023, the arrest was extended for two months²⁷⁰, and on August 1, 2023, the court hearing in his case was postponed to August 21, 2023.²⁷¹

On July 28, 2023, on the day of the 1035th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus, it was expected that the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine would adopt bill № 8371, providing for a ban on the activities of the UOC, but this did not happen²⁷², since according to the calculations of the initiators the bill did not gain a majority²⁷³. In particular, deputies A.G. Dmitruk²⁷⁴ A.P. Burmich²⁷⁵ opposed the adoption of the bill: the first called this bill a violation of the rights of believers, and the second called to refrain from taking measures similar to those taken by the persecutors of the Church in the past. Head of the Servant of the People faction in the Verkhovna Rada D.G. Arakhamia assured that there is no pressure on deputies when voting

²⁷⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75055-sud-prodlil-kruhlosutochnyj-domashnij-arest-cherkasskoho-mitropolita-feodosija>

²⁷¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75229-sud-otlozhil-rassmotrenie-dela-mitropolita-cherkasskoho-feodosija>

²⁷² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75100-vopros-o-zaprete-upts-snjali-s-povestki-dnja-verkhovnoj-rady-istochnik>

²⁷³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75131-nardep-rasskazal-pochemu-zakon-o-zaprete-upts-snjali-s-povestki-dnja-sessii>

²⁷⁴ t.me/artemdytruk/5298

²⁷⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75142-zapret-upts-ne-otvernet-ot-nee-verujushchikh-nardep>

on the bill²⁷⁶. According to deputy O.A. Dunda, the UOC will still be banned in the next months by some legal act²⁷⁷.

On February 28, 2022, the leader of the UOC-KP Filaret (Denisenko) appealed to Metropolitan Onufriy (Berezovsky) of Kiev and all believers of the UOC with an open letter, in which he called on the two churches to unite into a single local church, which, in his opinion, “will unite all Ukrainians, will bring peace to Ukraine, preserve its integrity and independence”²⁷⁸.

On March 5, 2022, a similar proposal was made by the head of the OCU, Metropolitan Epifaniy (Dumenko). of Kiev²⁷⁹. At the end of April 2022, in an interview with the “Pryamoy” TV channel, it was him, who called on the monks of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra to move to the OCU, and the authorities to ban the UOC²⁸⁰. On April 18, 2022, Dumenko secured the support

²⁷⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75244-arakhmija-po-voprosam-relihii-v-sluhe-naroda-vsehda-svobodnoe-holosovanie>

²⁷⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75257-nardep-upts-zapretjat-ili-cherez-zakonoproekt-ili-ukazom-prezidenta>

²⁷⁸ <https://www.cerkva.info/news/zvernennia-do-predstoiatelia-ukrainskoi-pravoslavnoi-tserkvy-moskovskoho-patriarkhatu-mytropolitya-kyivskoho-i-vsiiei-ukrainy-onufriia-iepyskopatu-dukhovenstva-tamyrian/>

²⁷⁹ <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/zvernennya-mytropolitya-epifaniya-5-bereznya-2022-r/>

²⁸⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/87984-dumenko-prigrozil-lavram-perehodite-sejchas-potom-pridetsya-kajatysya>

of Verkhovna Rada deputy I.V. Guz, who promised to help with the transition from the UOC to the OCU of new communities²⁸¹ and calling for the transition to be carried out “without noise and shouting”²⁸², but a few days later a case was opened against the deputy on charges of fraud²⁸³.

In the dioceses of the UOC, commemoration of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus during divine services has been stopped since the spring of 2022. By March 3, 2022, 15 dioceses had issued corresponding official orders²⁸⁴. Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' Kirill called the cessation of commemoration of the Primate of the Church not because of doctrinal or canonical errors or misconceptions, but because of inconsistency with certain political views and preferences a schism²⁸⁵.

On May 12, 2022, the Synod of the UOC officially appealed to the President of the country “with a request to intervene in this difficult situation, stop religious

²⁸¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87827-deputat-vr-soglasoval-dejstvija-s-dumenko-po-perevodu-obshhin-upc-v-pcu>

²⁸² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88394-obshhiny-upc-dolzny-perehodity-v-pcu-bez-shuma-i-krikov--nardep>

²⁸³ <https://lutsk.rayon.in.ua/news/510291-u-prokuraturu-nadiyshla-zayava-pro-mozhlivi-nezakonni-dii-nardepa-igorya-guzya>

²⁸⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86823-ryad-jeparkhij-upc-prekrashhajut-pominovenije-patriarkha-kirilla>

²⁸⁵ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5905352.html>

hostility in Ukrainian society and take the necessary measures against lawless actions against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church”²⁸⁶. However, on May 13, 2022, in its official statement, the State Service for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience of Ukraine saw in the materials of the Synod statements that could be regarded by the state as inciting religious hatred or insulting the feelings of believers²⁸⁷.

On May 16, 2022, a meeting of the Synod of the OCU took place, at which the leadership of this structure called on the Ukrainian authorities to liquidate the UOC. The statement, in particular, notes that the authorities must take into account the “special importance of church issues for the security of Ukraine”, the UOC is called in the text “an instrument of hybrid aggression”, and, in addition, it is “correctly” called the “Metropolis of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine”²⁸⁸.

The head of the OCU Epifaniy (Dumenko) also lied to the Catholic bishops that no one is persecuting

²⁸⁶ <https://news.church.ua/2022/05/12/sinod-zvernuvsya-prezidenta-ukrajini-v-zelenskogo-z-proxannyam-vzhiti-neobxidnix-zaxodiv-shhodo-bezzakon-na-religijnomu-grunti/#2023-03-27>

²⁸⁷ <https://dessa.gov.ua/nepryyniatnist-obrazy-pochuttiv-virian-i-vypravdanna-zlochynnoho-vtorhennia-rf/>

²⁸⁸ <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/zayava-svyashhennogo-synodu-ukrayinskoyi-pravoslavnoyi-tserkvy-pravoslavnoyi-tserkvy-ukrayiny-3/>

the UOC in Ukraine²⁸⁹. On May 23, 2022, the Synod of the OCU announced the creation of a religious organization with the name “Holy Dormition Kiev-Pechersk Lavra (monastery) of the UOC (OCU).” This marked the beginning of the process of confiscation of the monastery from the UOC, which we can still observe today²⁹⁰.

On May 27, 2022, the Council of the UOC (later received the unofficial name “Feofanievskiy” or “Feofaniya” at the place of its holding in the St. Panteleimon Convent, located in the Feofaniya tract in Kiev) amended the charter, declaring complete independence and independence from the Russian Orthodox Church, and also expressed disagreement with the position of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus and called for an end to the seizure of churches and forced transfers of UOC communities to the OCU²⁹¹. The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, while treating the situation in which the UOC found itself with sympathy and understanding, did not recognize its new status²⁹².

²⁸⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/88519-ob-ocherednoj-lzhi-sergejadumenko>

²⁹⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88600-v-pcu-sozdali-strukturu-kijevo-pecherskaja-lavra-i-khotyat-poluchity-odin-khram>

²⁹¹ <https://news.church.ua/2022/05/27/postanova-soboru-ukrajinskoji-pravoslavnoji-cerkvi-vid-27-travnja-2022-roku/#2023-03-29>

²⁹² <https://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5931468.html>

The author of one of the bills banning the UOC is Verkhovna Rada deputy O.V. Savchuk considered the decision of the Council insincere²⁹³ and called for speeding up the legislative ban on the UOC²⁹⁴. The decision of the Council was not accepted by the dioceses that were then part of the UOC in Crimea, Donetsk and Mariupol, Gorlovka and Slavyansk, Lugansk and Alchevsk, Zaporozhye and Melitopol dioceses, declaring that they would continue to be guided by the previously existing Charter of the UOC. The head of the Rovenkovo diocese stopped commemorating Metropolitan Onuphry (Berezovsky) of Kiev during the service²⁹⁵. In August 2023, Chairman of the Synodal Department for Church's Relations with Society and Mass Media V.R. Legoida stated that the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church can give more definite assessments of the Theophany Cathedral only after the end of active hostilities²⁹⁶.

On February 1, 2023, the State Service for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience of Ukraine published

²⁹³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88743-nardep-avtor-zakonoprojekta-o-zaprete-upc-prokomentirovala-reshenija-sobora>

²⁹⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88786-avtor-zakonoprojekta-o-zaprete-upc-u-nas-net-vremeni-prinimaty-nado-bystro>

²⁹⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/88865-o-jeparkhijah-ne-podderzhavshih-reshenija-sobora>

²⁹⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75243-v-rpts-rasskazali-kohda-dadut-bole-opredelennye-otsenki-soboru-upts>

the results of a religious examination of the charter of the UOC. The state structure announced the existence of a church-canonical connection between the UOC and the Russian Orthodox Church. According to the decision of the service, the current activity or inaction of the highest bodies of church power and administration of the UOC indicates that the UOC continues to be in a relationship of subordination relative to the Russian Orthodox Church. The UOC called these findings “gross manipulation and an attempt to violate the right to freedom of religion”²⁹⁷, and in June 2023 the Church announced that they would be preparing a lawsuit with the intention of challenging the conclusions of the examination²⁹⁸, which was filed on July 27, 2023²⁹⁹.

On April 15, 2023, the head of the State Service for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience V.E. Yelensky said that the emergence of a single local church in Ukraine is inevitable³⁰⁰. At the end of May 2023, responding to a petition from an initiative group of

²⁹⁷ <https://tass.ru/info/17394971>

²⁹⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74223-upts-obzhaluet-v-sude-relihiovedcheskuju-ekspertizu-hess-advokat>

²⁹⁹ https://t.me/nikita_chekman/130

³⁰⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73255-vozniknovenie-v-ukraine-edinoj-pomestnoj-tserkvi-neizbezno-elenskij>

citizens asking not to ban the UOC, Yelensky called the UOC an integral part of the Russian Orthodox Church³⁰¹.

On May 15, 2023, the Kiev District Administrative Court ruled that the UOC has not severed ties with the Russian Orthodox Church and is part of it, which may become the basis for a ban on the UOC if such a decision is supported by higher courts³⁰². On June 26, 2023, the State Service for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience of Ukraine posted on its website a list of explanations that the UOC must provide in order to prove its isolation from the Russian Orthodox Church³⁰³. The head of the Information and Educational Department, Metropolitan Kliment (Vecherya), commenting on this decision of the state structure, stated that “with any responses from the UOC to the request of the State Service, this ministerial service itself has never testified to its readiness to guarantee the removal of the restrictions that UOC believers are now experiencing in matters realization of their constitutional right to freedom of religious beliefs, including regarding

³⁰¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74004-avtoru-petitsii-ne-zapreshchat-upts-elenskij-otvetil-cto-upts-eto-chast-rpts>

³⁰² <https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/110887867>

³⁰³ <https://dcss.gov.ua/povidomlennia-shchodo-zustrichi-dess-ta-predstavnykiv-upts-mp/>

the threat of turning the Kiev-Pechersk Monastery into a total museum”³⁰⁴. The editors of the Union of Orthodox Journalists of Ukraine noted: “The demands [...] very much look like an attempt at demonstrative humiliation. Like, bend over to us, and we may still think about what to do with you. And most importantly, why should the UOC humiliate itself and fulfill all these whims? What, will the authorities apologize, return the Lavra, all the seized churches, say that they were wrong in all these absurd statements about the “FSB church”, “Moscow priests” and so on? Maybe the cases against the bishops of the UOC will be closed? Of course not. All these demands of the State Service for Ethnopolitics carry absolutely no consequences. If the UOC fulfills these, new ones will appear.”³⁰⁵.

On July 21, 2023, reacting to Patriarch Kirill’s statement that for failure to remember the Patriarch of the UOC in accordance with church canonical norms, the UOC could fall into schism, the head of the Synodal Information and Educational Department of the UOC, Metropolitan Kliment (Vecherya), responded that the UOC continues to stand in truth, while the blessings

³⁰⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74514-v-upts-prokomentirovali-trebovanija-hess-po-razryvu-s-rpts>

³⁰⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/74513-o-trebovanijakh-hosetno-politiki-k-upts>

of the patriarch to pray for the defenders of “Holy Russia” only provoke a scandal³⁰⁶.

On July 23, 2023, after the Transfiguration Cathedral in Odessa received serious damage from a rocket fall, the vicar of the Odessa diocese of the UOC, Archbishop Victor (Bykov) of Artsyz, issued an open appeal to Patriarch Kirill and all members of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, in which he accused the patriarch in support of “Russian aggression”, and, in particular, in the fact that a rocket supposedly “blessed” by him fell on the cathedral³⁰⁷. In a response letter to Archbishop Viktor (Bykov) on August 1, 2023, Patriarch Kirill noted that he shared with him the grief of the destroyed cathedral, but recognized that “a selective approach to facts in such situations” was inappropriate, since “the destruction of churches, the death and suffering of the civilian population began nine years ago in Donbass. [...] the entirety of the Russian Church prays for everyone who died, for those who lost relatives and friends during the conflict, and for those left homeless. [...] mourns for every destroyed or trampled shrine. [...] we do everything possible to help those in need and

³⁰⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74974-v-upts-prokomentirovali-zajavlenie-hlavy-rpts-o-spolzanii-v-raskol>

³⁰⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75027-ierarkh-upts-posle-obstrela-odesskoho-sobora-obratilsja-k-patriarkhu-kirillu>

those affected, regardless of their faith, nationality and political beliefs”³⁰⁸.

On July 23, 2023, a group of clergy of the UOC published an open letter to Metropolitan Onufriy (Berezovsky) calling “for the immediate convening of a Council of the UOC, where a final break with the Russian Orthodox Church should take place while simultaneously condemning the position of Patriarch Kirill and the clergy subordinate to him both in relation to Putin’s war of conquest, and in connection with the annexation of Ukrainian dioceses”³⁰⁹. Letter (as of August 5, 2023) was signed by 388 clergy of the UOC, including Metropolitan Evlogiy (Gutchenko) of Sumy and Metropolitan Alexiy (Shpakov) of Voznesensk. On July 25, 2023, a meeting was held with the head of the State Ethnic Policy V.E. Elensky with Metropolitan Onufriy (Berezovsky) of Kiev and whole Ukraine³¹⁰. V.E. Elensky convinced Metropolitan of the need to break with the Russian Orthodox Church³¹¹, and Metropolitan Onufriy, in turn, declared the complete independence

³⁰⁸ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6047576.html>

³⁰⁹ <https://irp.news/porvat-s-rpc-obrashhenie-klirikov-upc-k-ee-predstojatelju/>

³¹⁰ <https://irp.news/porvat-s-rpc-obrashhenie-klirikov-upc-k-ee-predstojatelju/>

³¹¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75071-predstojatel-upts-obsudil-relihioznuju-situatsiju-s-hlavoj-hess>

of the UOC and the absence of any external influence³¹². On July 27, 2023 V.E. Yelensky, in a press approach to foreign media, spoke about the subversive “anti-Ukrainian” role of religious organizations “planted” by Russia, but noted that the Ukrainian people are ready to “exclude the abuse of religion in the interests of the aggressor state”³¹³.

In 2022-2023 In Ukraine, the issue of celebrating Orthodox holidays according to the New Julian or Gregorian calendars (new style) was more often raised in the public space. Back in 2020-2021 the leader of the OCU, Metropolitan Epifaniy of Kiev (Dumenko), advocated celebrating Christmas on December 25 together with Europe, and not on January 7, “with the Russian world”³¹⁴. At that time, the majority of Ukrainians, according to sociological data, did not support such a transition³¹⁵. Since the beginning of the special military operation, the topic of transition to a new style began to be increasingly presented

³¹² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75079-v-upts-soobshchili-o-chem-razhovarival-predstojatel-s-hlavoj-hosetnopolitiki>

³¹³ <https://dessa.gov.ua/zustrich-holovy-derzhavnoi-sluzhby-ukrainy-z-etnopolityky-ta-svobody-sovisti-z-dyplomatomamy-inozemnykh-derzhav-akredytovanykh-v-ukraini/>

³¹⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/zashhita-very/85141-rozhdestvo-25-dekabrya-pochemu-v-pcu-zagovorili-o-perehode-na-novyj-stily>

³¹⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/85132-bolyshinstvo-ukraincev-protiv-perenosa-daty-rozhdestvaopros>

in the media space precisely under the pretext of the fight “with the Russian world” and “distancing from the Russian Orthodox Church” and became another weapon in the information-ideological war. The OCU hierarchs called the old style, in particular, an instrument of subordination to the Russian Orthodox Church³¹⁶, the style by which “Muscovites” live³¹⁷, and the transition to a new one is “a blow to the Russian world”³¹⁸. Not only the Orthodox began to switch to the new style: on June 23, 2022, the Council of the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Baptist Christians decided to switch its Ukrainian communities to the Gregorian calendar from December 2022³¹⁹, the issue of transition was discussed in the UGCC³²⁰. On October 18, 2022 The Synod of the OCU allowed to celebrate Christmas on December 25³²¹, allowing parishes to choose their own celebration date. In November

³¹⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/91729-ijerarkh-pcu-sluzhim-po-staromukalendaryu-iz-za-300-letnego-podchinenija-rpc>

³¹⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/70334-ierarkh-ptsu-po-novomu-stilju-zhivet-ves-pravoslavnyj-mir-krome-moskalej>

³¹⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/69804-v-ptsu-zajavili-chto-perekhod-na-novyj-stil-udar-po-russkomu-miru>

³¹⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/89414-s-dekabrya-2022-godu-baptisty-ukrainy-perejdu-na-grigorijskij-kalendarj>

³²⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/69566-uniaty-prizvali-hlavu-uhkts-perejti-na-novyj-stil-kalendarja>

³²¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/91295-v-pcu-razreshili-prazdnovaty-rozhdestvo-25-dekabrya>

2022, the first communities of the OCU announced the transition to a new style³²². December 24, 2022 Epifaniy (Dumenko) and the leader of the UGCC, Metropolitan Svyatoslav (Shevchuk), agreed on the transition to a new church calendar³²³. Metropolitan of the OCU Alexander (Drabinko) stated that celebrating Christmas twice a year — on December 25 and January 7 — would not be considered a sin³²⁴. On January 9, 2023, Metropolitan Epifaniy (Dumenko) stated that in the coming year the OCU will switch to a new style³²⁵, February 2, 2023 The Synod of the OCU announced the transition to a new style in May 2023³²⁶. The transition was carried out on May 24, 2023, commenting on the event, OCU Metropolitan Simeon (Shostatsky) noted: “Previously they said Polish (Catholic) and Ukrainian (Orthodox) holidays, but today they say Ukrainian and Moscow holidays. The new calendar will be Ukrainian, and those who remain on the old one will be a little bit

³²² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/69514-obshchiny-ptsu-nachali-perekhodit-na-novojulianskij-kalendar>

³²³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/70311-hlava-ptsu-i-uhkts-obsudili-tserkovnyj-kalendar>

³²⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/69988-drabinko-dvazhdy-prazdnovat-rozhdestvo-ne-hrekh>

³²⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/70612-v-ptsu-objavili-o-perekhode-na-novyj-kalendar>

³²⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/71682-v-ptsu-anonsirovali-kalendarnuju-reformu>

Moscow”³²⁷. On February 6, 2023, the UGCC announced the transition to a new style from September 1, 2023.³²⁸

It should be recalled that back in December 2019, the Ukrainian sociological group “Rating” published information that only every fourth (25%) Ukrainian supports the idea of postponing the Christmas celebration from January 7 to December 25, while 64% of citizens — against.

The issue of transition of churches to a new style is being promoted by the country’s authorities, thereby interfering in internal church affairs. Thus, on July 5, 2022, deputies of the council of the village of Rozvadov in the Lvov region, at a regular meeting, adopted an appeal to the leadership of the UGCC and the OCU regarding the transition to the Gregorian calendar³²⁹. In December 2022, a survey on when Ukrainians want to celebrate Christmas was carried out through the official application for receiving government services “Diya”³³⁰. January 8, 2023 The Ambassador of Ukraine to the Vatican to the Order of Malta A. Yurash said

³²⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-65691768>

³²⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/71743-v-sentjabre-uhkts-perejdet-na-novyj-kalendar-shevchuk>

³²⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/89538-deputaty-rozvadova-prizvali-pcu-i-ugkc-perejti-na-grigorijskij-kalendar>

³³⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/70310-vlast-vkljuchilas-v-propahandu-novostilnoho-rozhdestva>

that the transition to a new style is a sign of gratitude to the countries of the Western world, calling the issue of transition not theological, but “cultural and ideological”³³¹. On February 7, 2023, the Minister of Culture of Ukraine A.V. Tkachenko spoke in favor of the transition of the liturgical calendar to a new style³³², having previously stated that “nobody wants to celebrate Christmas with Moscow”³³³. In March 2023, G. Tretyakova, a deputy from the Servant of the People party, introduced bill № 9009-3 “On amendments to Article 73 of the Labor Code of Ukraine on the establishment of non-working holidays”, proposing to make Christmas Day January 7 as a working day, Monday after Trinity Day and Victory Day³³⁴. After the transition of the OCU to a new style at the end of May 2023, A.V. Tkachenko³³⁵ and the head of the State Ethnic Policy of Ukraine V.E. Elensky³³⁶ declared the need to celebrate public holidays tied to certain church dates

³³¹ <https://suspilne.media/378932-ce-potuznij-impuls-religieznavec-andrij-uras-pro-perehid-na-novij-cerkovnij-kalendar/>

³³² <https://t.me/otkachenkoyiv/2949>

³³³ https://24tv.ua/reforma-tserkovnogo-kalendarya-tkachenko-pro-reaktsiyu-suspilstva_n2231970

³³⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72416-v-radu-vnesli-zakonoproekt-ob-otmene-prazdnovanija-rozhdestva-7-janvarja>

³³⁵ <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/912349.html>

³³⁶ <https://mediacenter.org.ua/uk/svyata-priv-yazani-do-tserkovnogo-kalendarya-mayut-vidznachatisya-zgidno-z-novim-kalendarem-viktor-yelenskij/>

in a new style. On June 28, 2023 President of Ukraine V.A. Zelensky proposed bill № 9431, which provides for the abolition of the celebration in the country of Christmas on January 7, as well as the postponement of the dates of the Statehood Day from July 28 to 15 and the Defenders Day from September 14 to September 1, coinciding with the Orthodox holidays of the Day of the Baptism of Rus' and the Intercession of the Virgin Mary³³⁷, calling the Julian calendar "Russian ideology"³³⁸. The Verkhovna Rada Committee on Social Policy July 7, 2023 recommended that parliament vote for the presidential bill³³⁹. On July 14, 2023, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine by a majority of votes (241 for, 2 against, 65 deputies did not vote) adopted a bill amending the Labor Code, which comes into force on September 1, 2023, in accordance to which the Nativity of Christ will be celebrated on December 25 (the same day will be a day off), and the dates of two more public holidays linked to the church calendar have been changed: the Statehood Day was moved from July 28

³³⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74537-zelenskij-vnes-zakonoproekt-ob-otmene-prazdnovanija-rozhdestva-7-janvarja>

³³⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/74540-hotovimsja-teper-vse-kto-prazdujut-7-janvarja-stanut-ahentami-kremlja>

³³⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74711-v-rade-rekomendovali-nardepam-otmenit-prazdnovanie-rozhdestva-7-janvarja>

to July 15, the Defenders Day — from 14 on October 1³⁴⁰. July 27, 2023 Local Council of the OCU (to which President of Ukraine V.A. Zelensky sent greetings³⁴¹) approved the transition to the New Julian calendar from September 1, 2023.³⁴² This decision was criticized on the same day at a meeting of the Synod of the UOC-KP³⁴³. At the meeting of the Verkhovna Rada that took place on the same day, the ex-president of the country, deputy P.A. Poroshenko called on the OCU to celebrate Easter “according to the European calendar,” without explaining in any way what he meant³⁴⁴.

On July 28, 2023, the President of Ukraine signed Law № 9431 “On Amendments to Article 73 of the Labor Code of Ukraine”, as well as Decree № 455 “On Amendments to Certain Decrees of the President of Ukraine”, thereby finally legalizing the “calendar reform”, the first step of which was the decision of the Rada of July 14, 2023.³⁴⁵ The Chairman of the Synodal

³⁴⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74844-verkhovnaja-rada-otmenila-rozhdestvo-khristovo-7-janvarja>

³⁴¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75159-zelenskij-soboru-ptsu-vrazheskie-rakety-ne-sobjut-nas-s-puti>

³⁴² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75101-sobor-ptsu-utverdil-perekhod-na-novyj-kalendar>

³⁴³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75114-u-filareta-raskritikovali-perekhod-ptsu-na-novyj-kalendar>

³⁴⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75214-poroshenko-zhdet-ot-ptsu-prazdnovanija-paskhi-po-evropejskomu-kalendarju>

³⁴⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75158>

Information and Educational Department of the UOC, Metropolitan Kliment (Vecherya), responded that the UOC will continue to celebrate Christmas on January 7³⁴⁶, and the decision to change the calendar itself was due to political, not church reasons³⁴⁷.

2.3. Violation of the rights of believers of other religions in Ukraine

During the special military operation, cases of violation of religious freedoms in Ukraine were mainly recorded in relation to Christians, Jews and representatives of new religious movements.

From February 24, 2022 to June 24, 2023, six suspended sentences were handed down by Ukrainian courts to persons who refused to join the army for religious reasons. All of them are charged with

Article 336 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine “Evasion of conscription for military service upon mobilization,

³⁴⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75145-upts-budet-i-dalshe-prazdnovat-rozhdestvo-7-janvarja>

³⁴⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75238-upravdelami-objasnili-pochemu-upts-ne-perekhodit-na-novyj-kalendar>

for a special period, for military service upon conscription of persons from among the reservists during a special period”. On May 18, 2022, A. Kucher from Mukachevo was sentenced to four years in prison, on June 21, 2022 — D. Kucherov, a Pentecostal from the city of Alexandria in the Kirovograd region, was sentenced to three years in prison, on August 17, 2022 — A. Korobko from Mukachevo — to three years in prison, August 22, 2022. M. Kapats from the same city — to three years in prison, December 2, 2022. A. Martynyuk from Sniatyn, Ivano-Frankovsk region — to three years in prison³⁴⁸.

On February 3, 2023, G. Tomnyuk from Ivano-Frankovsk was sentenced to a three-year suspended sentence. On April 27, 2023, the court refused his appeal against this sentence, and the prosecution refused to turn the suspended sentence into a real one.

To the Christian from Odessa A.A. Vishnevetsky, mobilized in September 2022, was refused a transfer to alternative civilian service; in the army he first served as a driver, then as a cook. According to Vishnevetsky, army commanders, when asked to transfer to alternative service, laughed at him and threatened him with prison. In the spring of 2023, he filed a lawsuit with

³⁴⁸ https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2830

the Supreme Court of Ukraine against the President of the country V.A. Zelensky, accused of violating articles of the Constitution of Ukraine and international legal acts in the field of human rights guaranteeing freedom of conscience³⁴⁹.

May 15, 2023 40-year-old Christian M.I. Yavorskiy, who refused for religious reasons to join the ranks of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, was sentenced to one year in prison. The convicted person filed an appeal, which was considered on June 12, 2023³⁵⁰, the prosecution also filed an appeal with the intention of increasing the term of imprisonment to three years³⁵¹.

As of the end of March 2023, the prosecutor's office of Ukraine opened criminal cases against 67 people belonging to Jehovah's Witnesses* who refused to join the army because of their religious beliefs, of which 44 cases were closed³⁵². In June 2023, it became known about two more acquittals and three court hearings against representatives of this religious organization³⁵³.

³⁴⁹ https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2830

³⁵⁰ <https://religionunplugged.com/news/2023/5/10/second-christian-conscientious-objector-given-jail-sentence-in-ukraine>; https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2836

³⁵¹ https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2830

* Extremist organization banned in the Russian Federation.

³⁵² <https://religionunplugged.com/news/2023/2/17/conscientious-objector-in-ukraine-told-to-be-ready-to-be-taken-to-prison>

³⁵³ https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2830

Harassment of followers and 6 cases of vandalism against the prayer premises of this new religious movement are also reported in the US State Department report on religious freedom in Ukraine³⁵⁴.

V.V. Alekseenko, an evangelical Christian (Pentecostal), in May 2022 moved from the Donetsk region to Ivano-Frankovsk, where in June 2022 he received a summons. For religious reasons, he refused to take up arms and asked to be sent to alternative service, but his request was rejected. On September 15, 2022, the Ivano-Frankovsk City Court found Alekseenko guilty under Article 336 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (“Evasion of conscription for military service during mobilization, during a special period, for military service upon conscription from among reservists during a special period”), and on January 16, 2023 the appeal court upheld Alekseenko’s punishment³⁵⁵, on February 23 he was taken into custody³⁵⁶. On May 25, 2023, after a second appeal, the Supreme Court of Ukraine ordered the trial court to review Alekseenko’s case³⁵⁷.

³⁵⁴ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/ukraine/>

³⁵⁵ <https://hrwf.eu/ukraine-first-known-prison-for/>

³⁵⁶ https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2830

³⁵⁷ https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2836

On May 3, 2023, the media reported the failure of the head of the State Service for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience of Ukraine V.E. Elensky to obtain from the relevant government agencies of the country permission for citizens to choose an alternative service for religious reasons. "All my efforts were rejected. It's really not easy to achieve this goal when we have such heavy losses on the battlefield," the politician said³⁵⁸.

On March 17, 2023, a video was circulated in which Ukrainian Armed Forces soldiers used pages of the Quran to kindle a fire.³⁵⁹ The video caused an extremely negative reaction among Muslims in many countries around the world. The Russian Foreign Ministry also expressed condemnation³⁶⁰. In the media and social networks in November 2022.³⁶¹ and in June 2023 became widespread two videos showing people in the uniform of the Ukrainian Armed Forces burning the Bible³⁶². They motivated this by the fact that Scripture was published in Russian.

³⁵⁸ https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2830

³⁵⁹ <https://lenta.ru/news/2023/03/19/koran/>

³⁶⁰ https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1859394/

³⁶¹ https://aif.ru/politics/world/politolog_prokomentiroval_sozhzhenie_biblii_polskimi_naemnikami

³⁶² <https://ukraina.ru/20230621/1047451435.html>

According to the interfaith group “Christians Against War”, in the period from February 24, 2022 to March 24, 2023, 37 clergymen and churchmen died from various causes, of which 18 were representatives of the UOC, 9 — OCU, 8 — Evangelicals, three Baptist ministers and one Seventh-day Adventist pastor³⁶³. The group clearly names Russian military personnel as the culprits in the deaths of these individuals. However, a thorough and impartial investigative examination is required to establish the exact causes. It is important to note that some of the killed clergy and clergy (in particular, from the OCU) took part in the hostilities as military personnel. On May 3, 2023, a video was released on the Youtube channel “Military Clergy of the UOC”, which stated that 25 clergymen and churchmen of the UOC died from February 24, 2022 to April 2, 2023³⁶⁴.

The US State Department report on the state of human rights in Ukraine notes 5 cases of anti-Semitism in February-September 2022, including the stabbing on March 31 of the director of the Jewish community of Ivano-Frankovsk I. Perelman. Facts of depicting swastikas in Dnepr, Lisichansk and other cities have

³⁶³ <https://shaltnotkill.info/spisok-pogibshih-svyashhennosluzhitelej-i-czerkovnosluzhitelej-hristianskih-czerkvej-ukrainy/#Kobernik>

³⁶⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nd7ZuYl5ras>

been recorded. On May 16, 2022, unknown persons painted a swastika on a synagogue in Khmelnytsky. Its authors also report illegal construction in Uman and Lvov on territories historically significant for Jews³⁶⁵. According to an Anti-Defamation League (ADL) study published in May 2023, the proportion of Ukrainians who hold anti-Semitic views is 29%, the lowest level on record for the ADL in that country.³⁶⁶ At the same time, of the 10 European countries where the study was conducted, Ukraine ranked 3rd in terms of the level of anti-Semitism after Hungary and Poland³⁶⁷. Freedom House in its annual report on hate crimes in Ukraine in 2022³⁶⁸ reports that in 2022, for the first time in 20 years, there was not a single case where there were victims as a result of a crime motivated by anti-Semitism, and the minimum number of acts of vandalism in recent years was recorded (5 in total: in addition to the cases noted above in the Dnepr, Lisichansk and Khmelnytsky mentioned acts of vandalism at the Jewish cemetery in Ivano-Frankovsk in October and

³⁶⁵ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/ukraine/>

³⁶⁶ <https://global100.adl.org/country/ukraine/2023>

³⁶⁷ The authors of the study placed the Russian Federation, together with Spain, in 4th place with a level of anti-Semitism of 26%. See: <https://global100.adl.org/about/2023>

³⁶⁸ Freedom House report on hate crimes in Ukraine. Annual Report 2022. RR 12-13.

against the synagogue in Kropivnitskiy in December 2022).

The US State Department reports in its report on violations of religious freedom in Ukraine that Ukrainian authorities are blocking the return of St. Nicholas' Cathedral in Kiev, since 2008 the UGCC has not been provided with a site for the construction of a temple in Belaya Tserkov', and since 2017 Muslims have not been allocated a place for a cemetery in Kiev and have not returned the territory with the ruins of a historical mosque in Nikolaev³⁶⁹.

On April 30, 2023, the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense published a cartoon on its Twitter account depicting the Hindu goddess Kali against the backdrop of a fire in Sevastopol. Indian authorities condemned the cartoon, calling it "an attack on Hindu views around the world."³⁷⁰

In connection with the support of the Special Military Operation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Ukraine by the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Old Believer Church, Metropolitan Korniliy (Titov), the Kiev Old Believer Archdiocese announced

³⁶⁹ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/ukraine/>

³⁷⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73571-v-pravitelstve-indii-osudili-karikaturu-minoborony-ukrainy-na-bohinju-kali>

autocephaly on April 3, 2022³⁷¹. On November 2, 2022, the Ukrainian authorities granted state registration to the centralized religious organization “Ancient Orthodox Church of Ukraine”³⁷², as this religious association now became known.

2.4. Continuation of the spread of false values in Ukraine after the start of a special military operation by the Russian Armed Forces

In 2022, the promotion of LGBT values in Ukraine continued. In January 2022, it became known about the release of a new textbook on ethics for Ukrainian schools, which mentions same-sex families among the types of families common in Ukraine³⁷³. That same month, the Ukrainian delegation to PACE voted in

³⁷¹ https://risu.ua/zvernennya-duhovenstva-kiyivskoyi-i-vsiya-ukrayini-arhiyepiskopiyi-rosijskoyi-pravoslavnoyi-starobryadnickoyi-cerkvi-rosijskoyu_n128159

³⁷² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/91572-v-ukraine-zaregistrovali-drevlepravoslavnuju-cerkovy-ukrainy-dcu>

³⁷³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/85446-v-ukraine-podgotovili-uchebnik-dlya-5-klassa-rasskazyvajushhij-ob-lgbt-semyjah>

support of Resolution 2417, calling for the “protection of LGBT rights”³⁷⁴. On February 10, 2022, activists of the UOC “Miriyane” movement called for peaceful protests against the adoption by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of laws establishing liability for criticism of LGBT people³⁷⁵.

With the start of a special military operation of the Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine, issues of promoting LGBT ideology in the Ukrainian political and legal space were not raised for several months. For refugees and migrants — representatives of sexual and racial minorities, in the spring of 2022, with the support of Western funds, special shelters began to open³⁷⁶, and transgender people were not allowed to leave the country due to martial law³⁷⁷. The traditional summer gay pride parade in Kiev became impossible, so Ukrainian LGBT refugees “moved” it to other countries³⁷⁸. On June 18, 2022 President of Ukraine V.A. Zelensky registered a bill on ratification of the Istanbul Convention in parliament;

³⁷⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/86054-za-lgbt-ukrainskije-deputaty-podderzhali-gendernuju-rezolyuciju-pase>

³⁷⁵ <https://t.me/miryany/568>

³⁷⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87440-v-ukraine-otkryli-priiuty-dlya-predstavitelej-lgbt-i-rasovyh-menyshinstv>

³⁷⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/87266-trans-zhenshin-razvorachivajut-na-granice-pri-popytke-pokinuty-ukrainu>

³⁷⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88237-kyivpride-i-warsawpride-provedut-obshhij-marsh-za-mir-i-svobodu-ukrainy>

on June 20, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine supported ratification³⁷⁹, after which on June 21 Zelensky signed a bill ratifying the convention³⁸⁰, but on the same day the leader of the Batkivshchyna faction Y.V. Tymoshenko announced her intention to appeal to the Constitutional Court of the country with a submission on the conformity of the convention with the Basic Law of Ukraine³⁸¹. AUCCRO also called on parliament not to ratify the Istanbul Convention because of the ideas of gender ideology contained in it, but the structure's opinion was not taken into account³⁸². In July-August 2022, more than 28 thousand people signed a petition addressed to the President of Ukraine with a request to legalize same-sex marriage in the country, so that same-sex couples would have "the opportunity to start a family and have a supporting official document"³⁸³. V.A. Zelensky considered the petition, but in his response noted that the provision on marriage, as a union of a man and a woman, is enshrined in the country's Constitution,

³⁷⁹ <https://www.unian.net/politics/verhovnaya-rada-podderzhala-ratifikaciyu-stambulskoy-konvencii-novosti-ukraina-11872623.html>

³⁸⁰ <https://www.unian.net/politics/stambulskaya-konvenciya-v-ukraine-zelenskiy-podpisal-zakon-o-ratifikacii-novosti-ukraina-11874438.html>

³⁸¹ <https://interfax.com.ua/news/political/840614.html>

³⁸² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/89049-vsicro-prizval-radu-ne-ratificirovat-stambulyskuju-konvenciju-vo-vremya-vojny>

³⁸³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/89461-zelenskiy-rassmotrit-vopros-o-legalizacii-odnopolyh-brakov-v-ukraine>

and it cannot be changed during a “war,” so he will instruct the country’s government to work out “options for decisions regarding the legalization of registered civil partnership within the framework of work to affirm and ensure human rights and freedoms”³⁸⁴. On July 1, 2022, the Advisory Council under the Commissioner of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for Human Rights included representatives of organizations defending the interests of LGBT people³⁸⁵. In the fall of 2022, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine withdrew from consideration bill No. 6326 “On amendments to the Budget Code of Ukraine on preventing the expenditure of budget funds on the propaganda of pedophilia, homosexuality and transgenderism”³⁸⁶. At the same time, the Ukrainian State Film Agency announced the start of filming the film “Lessons in Tolerance,” dedicated to the fight against homophobia³⁸⁷. December 29, 2022 President of Ukraine V.A. Zelensky signed the Law “On Media”, giving the National Council of Ukraine on Television and Radio Broadcasting the right

³⁸⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/89897-zelenskij-otreagiroval-na-peticiju-o-legalizacii-odnopolyh-brakov>

³⁸⁵ Bitva za volyu. Stanovishhe LGBTQ v Ukraïni u 2022 roci. [Battle for freedom. Status of LGBTQ people in Ukraine in 2022]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2022, p.6.

³⁸⁶ Ibidem, p.3

³⁸⁷ Ibidem, p.9

to close media outlets for condemning “discrimination” based on sexual orientation and gender identity³⁸⁸. Religious organizations in Ukraine continued to make statements against the spread of non-traditional values, but there were significantly fewer such statements than in previous years, since, thanks to the skillful manipulation of journalists and politicians, homophobic rhetoric began to be considered part of the propaganda of the Russian world³⁸⁹. In December 2022, it became known about the appointment of a homosexual clergyman as rector of one of the OCU churches in the Kiev region³⁹⁰. At the same time, false information about the homosexual inclinations of individual clergy and laity of the UOC and Russian Orthodox Church began to be widely disseminated in Ukrainian telegram channels.

The promotion of LGBT ideology and the idea of registering same-sex marriages continues in Ukraine at present. In January 2023, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine withdrew from consideration bills № 3916 on the ban on propaganda of homosexuality and

³⁸⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/70427-shtraf-za-kritiku-lhbt-v-smi-zelenskij-podpisal-skanadalnyj-zakon>

³⁸⁹ Bitva za volyu. Stanovishhe LGBTQ v Ukraïni u 2022 roci. [Battle for freedom. Status of LGBTQ people in Ukraine in 2022]. Centr “Nash Svit” [Center “Our World”]. Kiev, Center “Nash Svit” Publisher, 2022, pp.18-22

³⁹⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/70337-drabinko-ustroil-v-perevedennyj-khram-klirika-zameshannoho-v-homoskandale>

transgenderism and № 6473 on the termination of state funding of the film “My Young Prince” about a gay couple³⁹¹. As of March 2023, out of 1,100 applications for marriage submitted through the public service application “Diya”, 19 came from same-sex couples, which was covered by the Ukrainian media³⁹². In the same month, Time magazine included Ukrainian LGBT activist E. Shevchenko in its “Women of the Year” rating³⁹³. On March 7, 2023, deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine from the “Voice” party I.R. Sovsun, also known for her criticism of the UOC, submitted for registration in parliament a bill on “registered partnerships”, the goal of which is to equalize the rights of same-sex couples and traditional families³⁹⁴, under № 9103 it was registered on March 13, 2023³⁹⁵. On March 27, 2023, the AUCCRO opposed the adoption of the bill³⁹⁶. In support of the speedy adoption of this

³⁹¹ <https://gay.org.ua/blog/2023/07/08/stanovyshche-lhbt-k-v-ukraini-uchischni-cheretni-2023-roku/>

³⁹² https://golosinfo.com/news/za_nedelju_cherez_diju_podali_1100_zajavlenij_o_brake_19_ot_odnopolykh_par/2023-03-08-46256

³⁹³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72183-ukrainskaja-lhbt-aktivistka-stalazhenshchinoj-hoda-po-versii-zhurnala-time>

³⁹⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72260-v-radu-vnesli-zakonoproekt-orehistratsii-odnopolykh-partnerstv>

³⁹⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72283-nardep-diavol-v-detaljakh-ukraine-nuzhny-hej-braki-radi-zapadnoj-demokratii>

³⁹⁶ <https://gay.org.ua/blog/2023/07/08/stanovyshche-lhbt-k-v-ukraini-uchischni-cheretni-2023-roku/>

bill, a petition was launched on the president's website, in response to which in May 2023, President V.A. Zelensky responded that the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine is working on preparing a law on civil partnership³⁹⁷. On April 14, 2023, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the American NGO The Arcus Foundation, which promotes LGBT ideology, signed a memorandum "on the introduction of gender-sensitive teaching methods in the educational process of preschool, school and higher education institutions". The goal of the project is to create a learning space without gender stereotypes and discrimination in 500 preschool educational institutions and 500 secondary schools in Ukraine in 2023-2025, providing them with literature promoting gender ideology and training coordinators³⁹⁸. On April 18, 2023, a meeting of the National Council of Ukraine on Television and Radio Broadcasting was held in Kiev, which was dedicated to the fight against discrimination against LGBT people, held with the aim of "preventing discrimination and hate speech in the media on the grounds of nationality, race, sexual and gender identity, religious identity and other

³⁹⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74016-po-zadaniyu-zelenskoho-minjust-hotovit-zakonoproekt-ob-odnopolykh-partnerstvakh>

³⁹⁸ <https://t.me/MediaKiller2021/7689>

signs that are sensitive to people”³⁹⁹, but the main focus was on the protection of LGBT people⁴⁰⁰. In May 2023, the Verkhovna Rada amended the Law “On Advertising”, prohibiting job advertisements from making demands on a number of grounds, including sexual orientation. That same month, the Parliamentary Committee on Law Enforcement recommended the adoption of Bill № 5488, which criminalizes hate crimes and hate speech, and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity⁴⁰¹. On June 13, 2023, for the first time in the history of Ukraine, the ECHR ordered this country to pay compensation to a gay couple “for moral harm,” legal expenses and compensation for material damage. The court recognized that in Ukraine LGBT couples do not have the opportunity to obtain any alternative form of legal recognition; the lack of legislative regulation of same-sex relationships is a violation of Articles 8 and 14 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The case has been considered by the ECHR

³⁹⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73446-v-natssovete-obsuzhdali-kak-borotsja-s-diskriminatsiej-lhbt>

⁴⁰⁰ Ibidem.

⁴⁰¹ <https://gay.org.ua/blog/2023/07/08/stanovyshche-lhbt-k-v-ukraini-u-sichni-chervni-2023-roku/>

since 2014⁴⁰². The next day, the AUCCRO spoke out against the equal rights of the traditional family and gay marriage⁴⁰³. In June, which is considered “pride month” in LGBT ideology, many Ukrainian government agencies⁴⁰⁴ and companies⁴⁰⁵ painted their avatars on social networks or logos on websites in the colors of the LGBT flag. Lectures for officials on tolerance towards LGBT people took place in the regions⁴⁰⁶. The head of the National Council on Television and Radio Broadcasting O. Gerasimyuk promised that the country would create a dictionary of undesirable (including homophobic) vocabulary and criteria for information that is unacceptable for dissemination in the media⁴⁰⁷.

Due to the ongoing hostilities, the Kiev gay pride parade was held in Liverpool in the UK⁴⁰⁸, the country

⁴⁰² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74116-vpervye-hej-para-zasudila-ukrainu-na-10-tysjach-evro-za-diskriminatsiju>

⁴⁰³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74305-vstsiro-vystupil-protiv-uravnenija-v-pravakh-traditsionnoj-semi-i-hej-brakov>

⁴⁰⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74341-mid-smenil-na-lohotipe-ukrainskij-flah-na-lhbt-raduhu>, <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74349-minkult-okrasil-svoj-lohotip-v-tsveta-lhbt>

⁴⁰⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/74330-esli-ty-za-traditsionnuju-semju-to-uzhe-avtomaticheski-propahandist-moskvy>

⁴⁰⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74534-chinovnikam-lvovskoj-ova-proveli-lektsiju-v-dukhe-predannosti-lhbt-ideolohii>

⁴⁰⁷ <https://ru.interfax.com.ua/news/telecom/926242.html>

⁴⁰⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75177-v-liverpule-ukrainskie-aktivisty-proveli-lhbt-parad>

that has been funding Ukrainian projects in support of LGBT people for several years. On July 22, 2023, The Ambassador of Ukraine to Germany A. Makeev took part in the gay pride parade in Berlin⁴⁰⁹.

Despite the high level of anti-LGBT sentiment in Ukraine, Western and Ukrainian media continue to publish materials about the presence of LGBT people in the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine⁴¹⁰. The LGBT community of Ukraine raises funds to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine⁴¹¹. Thus, it is implicitly understood that if a person defends Ukraine, he is a hero, therefore his views must be respectfully accepted and the issues that concern him must be resolved (however, this does not concern the interests of the soldiers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine — parishioners of the UOC, whose interests the Ukrainian authorities are ignoring during 2022–2023, as shown in the chapters of this section). This is why the adoption of a law on the legalization of

⁴⁰⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75006-posol-v-hermanii-vozhlavil-ukrainskiju-kolonnu-berlinskoho-lhbt-parada>

⁴¹⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74631-britanskije-smi-zajavili-chto-v-rjadakh-vsuz-sluzhat-okolo-50-tysjach-lhbt-soldat>, <https://gay.org.ua/blog/2022/07/11/lgbt-ta-viina/>, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/ukraines-lgbtq-soldiers-fight-front-line-acceptance-grows-conservative-rcna79581>

⁴¹¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75076-v-kharkove-provedut-lhbt-prajd-v-podderzhku-ukrainskikh-voennykh>

same-sex marriage is so important for the Ukrainian authorities, since partners of Ukrainian LGBT military personnel, in the event of the death of the second partner at the front, do not have any legal rights that opposite-sex unions have in the event of the death of one of the spouses at the front. In the words of deputy I.R. Sovsun, LGBT soldiers in combat “give visibility and legitimacy to the community’s own demands for equal treatment”⁴¹². In August 2023, American transgender journalist S. Ashton-Cirillo became the new speaker of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the leader of a project to inform citizens of the United States and Europe about events at the front⁴¹³. Deputy Minister of Defense of Ukraine A.V. Malyar criticized opponents of this appointment, because, in Malyar’s opinion, only “enemy social networks” can be aroused by hate from this.⁴¹⁴

The American media “NBC News” notes that it is the homophobia of the UOC that is the reason why the church is oppressed in Ukraine⁴¹⁵.

⁴¹² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/72283-nardep-diavol-v-detaljakh-ukraine-nuzhny-hej-braki-radi-zapadnoj-demokratii>

⁴¹³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75232-transhender-iz-ssha-stal-litsom-mediaproekta-vsu-dlja-stran-zapada>

⁴¹⁴ <https://t.me/annamaliar/983>

⁴¹⁵ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/ukraines-lgbtq-soldiers-fight-front-line-acceptance-grows-conservative-rcna79581>

Christian religious organizations of Ukraine (UOC, OCU, UOC KP, UGCC, Pentecostal and Baptist churches) oppose the promotion of LGBT ideology⁴¹⁶.

As can be seen from the materials of the Chapter I and this chapter, the majority of the population of Ukraine, being followers of Abrahamic religions that prohibit homosexual relations, adhere to traditional values. The level of spread of non-traditional LGBT values remains low, although Ukrainian youth are more tolerant of LGBT people than older people. The promotion of false values is carried out primarily by the country's authorities, often at the direction of Western curators. Thanks to public resistance, many legislative initiatives in support of LGBT people remain unrealized (under consideration in Verkhovna Rada committees, being finalized, etc.) as of August 1, 2023. At the same time, people who oppose LGBT ideas are often accused in “propaganda of the Russian world”, since the Russian Federation, taking actions against the Armed Forces of Ukraine, is the bearer of traditional values⁴¹⁷.

During this period, drug legalization trends further developed. As already mentioned in the chapter 1,

⁴¹⁶ <https://gay.org.ua/blog/2023/07/08/stanovyshche-lhbt-k-v-ukraini-u-sichni-cheretni-2023-roku/>

⁴¹⁷ <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/74330-esli-ty-za-traditsionnuju-semju-to-uzhe-avtomaticheski-propahandist-moskvy>

on the eve of the start of a special military operation, another bill on legalizing the use of cannabis for medical, scientific and technical purposes and industry was submitted to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for consideration. With the start of a special military operation, the discussion of this document was suspended for several months, and only on June 7, 2023, the Minister of Health of Ukraine V.K. Lyashko said that the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine supported the bill⁴¹⁸. According to the minister, a large number of people will need treatment using this plant. “We understand the negative consequences of military operations on mental health. We understand the number of people who will need drug treatment as a result of this impact. And we understand that there is no time to wait. Therefore, we have already prepared a legislative framework to ensure a full cycle of drug production in basis of cannabis in Ukraine: from cultivation and processing to full production,” he emphasized. Lyashko added that marijuana-based medicinal products do not contain a substance that would make them “interesting for recreational use”. In addition, the Cabinet of Ministers proposed introducing strict control over the culti-

⁴¹⁸ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/14847533>

vation, production and sale of relevant drugs. “Do not import, but make ours, Ukrainian,” the minister urged⁴¹⁹. After support, the bill was submitted to the Verkhovna Rada on June 10, 2022⁴²⁰ under № 7457⁴²¹. The Ministry of Health of Ukraine stated that thanks to the legalization of marijuana, the Ukrainian healthcare system will be able to get closer to European standards⁴²².

Until July 2023, the above-mentioned bill was being considered by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. AUCCRO called on deputies to reject the bill, and instead of legalizing drugs, qualitatively improve the medical system⁴²³. The Verkhovna Rada did not listen to the opinion of the advisory body, and as a result, on July 13, 2023, in the first reading, the parliament voted in support of the bill on the legalization of medical cannabis⁴²⁴. The law will come into force after the second reading (date unknown) and is signed by the President of the country.

⁴¹⁹ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/14847533>

⁴²⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74799-sovet-tserkvej-prizval-radu-ne-prinimat-zakon-o-meditinskom-kannabise>

⁴²¹ https://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=74360

⁴²² <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-64455089>

⁴²³ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74799-sovet-tserkvej-prizval-radu-ne-prinimat-zakon-o-meditinskom-kannabise>

⁴²⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74817-verkhovnaja-rada-lehalizirovala-kannabis>

During the special military operation, new facts were discovered about the spread of neo-pagan ideology in the armed forces and paramilitary formations.

After the outbreak of hostilities in some territories of Ukraine, in particular near Mariupol and Volkhovanka, as well as in the Lugansk direction, Russian fighters discovered pagan temples, symbols of neo-pagan movements, occult, satanic and Nazi literature. In particular, at the base of Azov militants* in Mariupol, located in close proximity to city school № 61, the militants built a pagan temple. Several wooden idols, ranging from one and a half to three meters in height, were surrounded by stones in a circle. In addition to the idols, inside the religious building there was a semblance of an altar. The temple was located between two barracks in which Azov recruits lived*⁴²⁵.

In one of the barracks, an award certificate was found for the Third Annual Boxing Tournament held in the national battalion in honor of the memory of the Azov* men who died during the punitive operation in Shirokino. The certificate for first place was issued in the name of the ancient Slavic deity Yarilo⁴²⁶.

* The organization is recognized as extremist and banned in Russia.

⁴²⁵ <https://ria.ru/20220519/satana-1789372252.html>

⁴²⁶ <https://ria.ru/20220519/satana-1789372252.html>

In addition, a stand with pagan and satanic graphic symbols was discovered in the location of the piece, among which Fenrir was identified, a huge wolf from Old Norse mythology, and many images of Satan placed on an inverted pentagram, that is, a five-pointed star. Previously, this image was found on positions recaptured from Ukrainian troops in Volnovakha⁴²⁷.

At the beginning of May 2022, secret signs were discovered on the walls of the headquarters of the Ukrainian military unit A4472 in the village of Trekhizbenka, in which magical symbolism can be recognized. On one of the walls, culturologist Ekaterina Dice recognized a satanic seal⁴²⁸.

In the same month of 2022, following the surrender of a large Azov group* near Mariupol in the area of the Azovstal plant, tattoos depicting neo-Nazi symbols, Scandinavian runes, portraits of political leaders and military commanders of the Third Reich (for example, Adolf Hitler and Joseph Goebbels) were found on the bodies of Ukrainian surrendered soldiers. In addition, images of figures of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, such as Stepan

⁴²⁷ Ibidem.

⁴²⁸ <https://iz.ru/1329739/2022-05-04/v-shtabe-minometchikov-vsu-obnaruzhili-sledy-obriadov-chnoi-magii>

* The organization is recognized as extremist and banned in Russia.

Bandera and Yevgeny Konovalets, were found on their bodies⁴²⁹.

As the abbot of the monastery of St. Sabbas the Sanctified in Melitopol, Archimandrite John (Prokopenko), told RIA Novosti in 2022, the propaganda of neo-paganism by “Azov”^{*} was carried out among those who were attracted to the security forces, who went to serve under a contract, or were associated with the Ministry of Internal Affairs⁴³⁰. At the same time, according to him, all schismatic religious movements, including neo-pagan ones, were spread through Western funding⁴³¹.

According to the head of the human rights center of the World Russian People’s Council and professor of the Moscow State Linguistic University R.A. Silantiev, “the Ukrainian authorities do not see Christianity as such as an ideology or the basis for Ukrainian ideology. They have their own religion of Ukrainianism, most likely, that’s what it will be called in our textbooks, or Ukronazism, which is basically neo-paganism. And quite of a satanic character.”⁴³².

⁴²⁹ <https://lenta.ru/news/2023/03/29/partaki/>

^{*} The organization is recognized as extremist and banned in Russia.

⁴³⁰ <https://ria.ru/20221123/neoyazychestvo-1833695340.html>

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² <https://radiokp.ru/podcast/dialogi/668703>

Thus, radical neo-paganism in Ukraine is closely intertwined with neo-Nazism, nationalism, Russophobia and Satanism, posing a great danger to modern society.

2.5. International reaction to the situation with the rights of believers in Ukraine

The religious situation in Ukraine is the focus of attention of relatively few large international organizations that monitor religious freedom in the world.

The most complete picture is presented in UN reports. Describing the situation with the ban on the activities of the UOC in a number of regions of Ukraine and the forced transfer, the UN OHCHR report on the situation with human rights and freedoms in Ukraine in the period from February 1 to July 31, 2022 noted: “The authorities did not explain the grounds on which the such measures, or so far as they are considered necessary and proportionate, for the protection of public health, order, health, morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others”⁴³³. Since the state

⁴³³ Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, 1 February — 31 July 2022. P. 31–32.

terminated the activities of only UOC communities, and not other regional communities or organizations, such actions “may constitute a discriminatory measure against a particular religious group”⁴³⁴.

The UN OHCHR report on the human rights situation in Ukraine in the period from August 1, 2022 to January 31, 2023 mentions a number of the above-mentioned bills that restrict the activities of the UOC and notes that “due to vague legal terminology and lack of sufficient justification”⁴³⁵, the provisions of the draft laws cannot be regarded as prescribed by law” and “necessary within the meaning of Article 18(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Speaking about searches undertaken by the SBU in the structures of the UOC at the end of 2022, OHCHR emphasizes that “state actions directed against the UOC may be discriminatory. OHCHR also recalls the need to ensure that... all persons facing criminal charges enjoyed all applicable fair trial rights”⁴³⁶.

In its final recommendations addressed to the Parliament and Government of Ukraine, OHCHR calls on “to ensure that Bills №№. 8221, 8262 and 8371 fully

⁴³⁴ Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, 1 February -31 July 2022. PP. 31-32

⁴³⁵ Ibidem.

⁴³⁶ Ibidem, p.25

comply with the requirements of Articles 18 (“freedom to manifest one’s religion or belief”) and 22 (“freedom of association”) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights”⁴³⁷.

Individual UOC communities personally met with representatives of the UN Monitoring Mission and reported cases of harassment by the Ukrainian authorities. Thus, on May 2-3, 2023, priests and laity of the UOC from the Khmelnytsky region told the mission about more than 30 cases of violation of their rights⁴³⁸.

On 16 June 2023, OHCHR published an addendum to the latest report entitled “Update On The Human Rights Situation In Ukraine. 1 February — 30 April 2023”. The summary of the document directly states that “Incidents of violence [by the Ukrainian authorities — add. RARS] against members and supporters of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (“UOC”) increased during the reporting period. Moreover, several regional councils banned the activities of the UOC”⁴³⁹. The situation around the UOC is included in a separate section

⁴³⁷ Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, 1 February-31 July 2022, p.40

⁴³⁸ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/73621-verujushchie-khmelnytskoj-eparkhii-rasskazali-oon-o-30-sluchajakh-narusheniya-ikh-prav>

⁴³⁹ Update On The Human Rights Situation In Ukraine. 1 February — 30 April 2023, 2023, p.1

in the document⁴⁴⁰. The authors mention the searches that took place during the reporting period in the premises of the UOC, notifications of suspicion to clergy and their arrest, and the situation with the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra. It is reported that the country's authorities, in connection with the position of the UN, refused to forcibly evict the monks of the Lavra and take other actions. Mention is made of the ban in a number of areas of activity of the UOC. The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) is "concerned that the cumulative impact of Government actions targeting the UOC could be discriminatory"⁴⁴¹. In April 2023, the HRMMU recorded a "surge in 'hate speech' and several incidents of violence against UOC members. Public officials, bloggers, and opinion leaders used discriminatory and inflammatory rhetoric and openly called for violence against clergy and supporters of the UOC"⁴⁴².

It is important to note the fact that the UN published a document that openly talks about the interference of the Ukrainian authorities in the affairs of religious organizations and the facts of violation of religious freedom in relation to Orthodox believers.

⁴⁴⁰ Update On The Human Rights Situation In Ukraine. 1 February — 30 April 2023, 2023, p.5

⁴⁴¹ Ibidem.

⁴⁴² Ibidem.

According to the “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine. August 1, 2022 — January 31, 2023,” published on March 24, 2023, OHCHR recorded “three cases of enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, torture or other ill treatment, and unlawful deportations perpetrated by Russian armed forces against clergy and members of Ukrainian Greek Catholic and Christian Evangelical communities in Zaporizhzhia, Kherson and Kharkiv regions”⁴⁴³. The report also states that Russian authorities “raided, ransacked and closed three places of worship belonging to the Baptist community in Melitopol”⁴⁴⁴, one of which had been converted into a youth center. Russian military personnel are accused of kidnapping and beating a Baptist pastor in May 2022⁴⁴⁵.

In its final recommendations to Russia, OHCHR calls for “Respect and ensure that the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly, association, thought, conscience and religion can be exercised without discrimination by all individuals and groups in territory under its occupation, and take measures

⁴⁴³ Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, 1 August 2022 to 31 January 2023. pp. 23-24

⁴⁴⁴ Ibidem, p.24

⁴⁴⁵ Ibidem.

to create an environment conducive to the free exchange of information and ideas”⁴⁴⁶.

In the “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine. February 1, 2023 — April 30, 2023,” published June 13, 2023⁴⁴⁷, OHCHR does not provide information about any violations of the rights of believers in new regions of Russia.

On May 12, 2023, at the initiative of Russia, an informal meeting of the UN Security Council was held on the topic of persecution of the UOC. During the event, Russia’s permanent representative to the UN V.A. Nebenzya noted that the Kiev authorities and their supporters carried out about 300 raider seizures of UOC communities from the beginning of 2022 to February 2023, while the transition of churches to the OCU was accompanied by “mass clashes, beatings of parishioners and clergy”⁴⁴⁸. On July 26, 2023, at the initiative of Russia, a meeting of the UN Security Council was held on the topic of the persecution of the UOC. According to the Russian Foreign Ministry⁴⁴⁹, “the attention of the

⁴⁴⁶ Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, 1 August 2022 to 31 January 2023. p.39

⁴⁴⁷ Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, 1 February — 30 April 2023.

⁴⁴⁸ <https://tass.ru/politika/17736035>

⁴⁴⁹ https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/un/organs/1898908/

UN Security Council members was drawn to certain particularly egregious examples of religious persecution in Ukraine”, such as the arrest of Metropolitan Pavel (Lebed) and the bill of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine providing for a ban on the activities of the UOC and the confiscation of churches from it. It was noted that the UK presiding over the UN Security Council made a unilateral decision to limit the number of speakers announced by the Russian side, excluding, under the pretext of lack of time the retired Archbishop of the UOC Gedeon (Kharon) (from May 25, 2018 to March 20, 2023 — Vicar of the Kiev diocese, abbot (since 2009) of the Desyatynny Monastery in Kiev). As a result, the writer Y.I. Taxyur, who was released from Ukrainian captivity in May 2023, provided information about the plight of the UOC⁴⁵⁰. As further stated in the press release of the Russian Foreign Ministry, “London, at the beginning of its “watch” in the Council, declared its commitment to promoting the participation of civil society. [...] Russia previously sent a letter to the UN Secretary General and the President of the UN Security Council outlining the problems, including a ban on entry into the EU, that the Orthodox clergyman (retired

⁴⁵⁰ <https://t.me/spastv/20724>

Archbishop of the UOC Gedeon (Kharon)) faced due to his previous speech in the Council. Such “double standards” cannot but cause indignation”⁴⁵¹. As part of the event, the Russian Foreign Ministry presented a report “On the unlawful actions of the Kiev regime against the UOC, its clergy and parishioners”, which provided statistical data and examples of the most flagrant violations of the rights of the country’s Orthodox believers, as well as steps taken by the Russian Foreign Ministry and the Russian Orthodox Church to resolve the situation and informing the world community about the atrocities of the Ukrainian authorities⁴⁵².

Since the start of the special military operation, the OSCE has not published any documents calling for protection from oppression of believers in Ukraine. The only statement on a religious topic in the context of Russian-Ukrainian relations was published on the organization’s website on April 13, 2022: in it, the OSCE calls on Russian troops not to attack “places of worship”⁴⁵³.

The US State Department, in its report on religious freedom in Ukraine, selectively lists a number of

⁴⁵¹ https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/un/organs/1898908/

⁴⁵² https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/humanitarian_cooperation/1898457/

⁴⁵³ <https://www.osce.org/chairpersonship/515943>

individual incidents of violations of the rights of UOC believers, without, however, considering that full-scale persecution is underway against the UOC. It is noted, in particular, that it is incorrect to call the OCU “schismatics”, since Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople granted this structure a tomos of autocephaly⁴⁵⁴.

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom in its annual report of April 2022 does not mention Ukraine among the countries violating religious freedom⁴⁵⁵. But instead of it, Russia has been mentioned in the report for several years now⁴⁵⁶, which the authors propose “for numerous cases of violation of religious freedom”⁴⁵⁷ to be included in the list of “countries of particular concern”⁴⁵⁸. In the April 2023 report⁴⁵⁹ Russia is also accused of a number of “religious freedom violations”⁴⁶⁰, and the US authorities are invited to include it in the above list. However, the actions of the Ukrainian authorities in relation

⁴⁵⁴ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/ukraine/>

⁴⁵⁵ Annual report of the US Commission on international religious freedom. April 2022. Washington, 2022, p. 94

⁴⁵⁶ Ibidem, pp.30-31

⁴⁵⁷ Ibidem

⁴⁵⁸ Ibidem, p72

⁴⁵⁹ Annual report of the US Commission on international religious freedom. April 2023. Washington, 2023 — 92 P.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibidem, pp. 36-37

to the UOC are also mentioned, namely, conducting searches and initiating bills to ban this religious organization, and the possibility of adopting such a ban raises concerns among the Commission⁴⁶¹. In July 2023, Commissioner of the Commission D. Curry stated that Russia had launched religious persecution in the “occupied Ukrainian territories”, and the Russian Orthodox Church backed the country’s authorities⁴⁶².

The American NGO International Christian Concern, which monitors violations of the rights of Christians around the world, for the period from February 2022 to July 2023 on its website⁴⁶³ has never been reported the persecution of believers in Ukraine. Only on July 24, 2023, an article appeared on the website containing, in fact, a brief retelling of the addition to the UN OHCHR report published on June 13, 2023 and the speech of the head of the DECR, Metropolitan Anthony (Sevryuk) of Volokolamsk.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶¹ Ibidem, p. 73

⁴⁶² <https://www.christianpost.com/news/russia-persecution-in-ukraine-david-curry-warns.html>, Russian translation — <https://religsvoboda.ru/kratko/amerikanskiy-ekspert-obvinil-rpc-v-podderzhke-goneniy-na-ukraine>

⁴⁶³ <https://www.persecution.org>

⁴⁶⁴ <https://www.persecution.org/2023/07/24/persecution-of-orthodox-church-in-ukraine/>, Russian translation — <https://religsvoboda.ru/kratko/oon-i-moskovskaya-patriarhiya-obespokoeny-situaciyevokrug-upc>

Another non-denominational Christian NGO “Open Doors”, which helps persecuted Christians and analyzes the situation with oppression of Christians in the world, in its materials for 2022-2023 did not mention the problems of believers in Ukraine and did not include the country in its list of violators of religious freedom. However, Russia is included in this list (in 2022 — in 62nd place out of 100, in 2023 — in 61st position)⁴⁶⁵.

In the section of the report of the Catholic Foundation “Aid to the Church in need” dedicated to Ukraine, speaking about the situation in the country in 2021-2023, it reports such facts of violation of religious freedom as the lack of transparency of the restitution of former property of religious organizations by their successors and several cases of vandalism against Christian and Jewish sanctuaries. There is virtually no mention of oppression of the UOC, with the exception of one case of arson of the Church of St. Vladimir in Lvov⁴⁶⁶.

The largest international human rights organizations — Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, International Federation for Human Rights — do not report anything on their websites

⁴⁶⁵ <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/wwl-documentation/>

⁴⁶⁶ <https://acninternational.org/religiousfreedomreport/reports/country/2023/ukraine>

about the situation with the oppression of believers in Ukraine. International human rights organization Freedom House, speaking about respect for human rights in Ukraine, without providing details, reports that “smaller religious groups continue to report some discrimination” and further: “In 2022, Ukrainian officials arrested several dozen clergy members of the Ukrainian branch of the Russian Orthodox Church, one of the country’s two major Orthodox churches, alleging that they had aided the Russian military”⁴⁶⁷.

Famous American journalist T. Carlson calls on the English-speaking audience to pay attention to the violation of the rights and freedoms of UOC believers⁴⁶⁸.

We have to admit that reports by international organizations do not reflect the actual picture. The reports of human rights organizations and international monitoring structures do not mention or only superficially mention violations of the religious freedom of believers of the UOC (which, it is worth noting, can be easily found in open sources of information) and other religions in Ukraine and those territories that the international community continues to consider

⁴⁶⁷ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/ukraine/freedom-world/2023>

⁴⁶⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHeAg6MSPV8&t=912s>

Ukrainian (Crimea and new subjects of the Russian Federation).

Since the start of the special military operation, RARS has been monitoring changes in the situation in Ukraine, issuing statements and expert assessments on the most egregious incidents. On March 31, 2022, the RARS Council issued a statement regarding bills introduced to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine that discriminate against Orthodox believers, strongly condemned “attempts by deputies of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to deprive the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of legal status,”⁴⁶⁹ called on “the country’s authorities to prevent violations of the rights of believers”⁴⁷⁰, and also called on “all people of good will, political and religious leaders of Ukraine to show patience and respect for the feelings of both believers and non-believers. In the name of achieving peace in the country, it is necessary to abandon provocative actions, offensive statements and actions, and escalation of hostility and intolerance.”⁴⁷¹ General Secretary of RARS O.Y. Goncharov, commenting on the statement, noted: “It is unacceptable to ban any confession just because

⁴⁶⁹ <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/zayavlenie-soveta-rars-v-svyazi-s-vneseniem-v-verhovnyu-radu-ukrainy-zakonoproektov>

⁴⁷⁰ Ibidem

⁴⁷¹ Ibidem

its coreligionists are in another country with which there is political or military confrontation. Things like this set a precedent for other countries in the world and could lead to global problems with religious freedom”⁴⁷². On November 22, 2022 Chairman of RARS S.A. Melnikov, commenting on the searches in the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra and monasteries of the Rovno region by the Ukrainian authorities, noted that these actions were in line with Kiev’s policy towards the UOC, and the actions of the SBU contradicted “all international obligations of Ukraine”⁴⁷³. Member of the RARS Council V.Y. Zorin, speaking on November 24, 2022 about the Verkhovna Rada bill banning the activities of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine as a flagrant violation of the rights of believers, noted: “Seeing the obvious failure of the project to create the so-called OCU, the Ukrainian authorities are trying to aggressively impose their political beliefs and rhetoric on the largest religious organization countries”⁴⁷⁴. Member of the RARS Council A.S. Brod called the bill “a new shameful round of reprisals

⁴⁷² <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/oyu-goncharov-rars-prizyvaet-k-zashchite-prav-veruyushchih-k-kakoy-konfessii-oni-ne>

⁴⁷³ <https://religsvoboda.ru/kratko/kommentariy-predsdatelya-rars-sa-melnikova-gazete-vzglyad>

⁴⁷⁴ <https://t.me/lomovkaa/11287>

and defamation of believers”⁴⁷⁵. Throughout 2022, not a single major Western human rights organization came out in defense of the oppressed believers of the UOC — Chairman of RARS S.A. Melnikov called this a politically motivated circumstance and a crisis in Western human rights activities⁴⁷⁶. In January 2023, speaking about the confiscation of several churches of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra from the UOC and transferring them to the jurisdiction of the OCU, S.A. Melnikov is the next step “in the work carried out by the Ukrainian authorities for decades to erase the historical identity of the Ukrainian people”⁴⁷⁷. When in March 2023 it became known about the impending eviction of the UOC monks from the Kiev Pechersk Lavra, S.A. Melnikov, in a commentary for the media, called this a repetition of “the worst political acts of the USSR of the 1920-1930s”⁴⁷⁸, and also suggested that “possible attempts by believers to protect the shrines will be quickly suppressed by the Kiev security forces, even despite the fact that the confiscation of the Lavra could shake

⁴⁷⁵ https://rapsinews.ru/human_rights_protection_news/20221124/308503972.html

⁴⁷⁶ <https://religsvoboda.ru/kratko/kommentariy-predsedatelya-rars-gazete-vzglyad-o-molchanii-zapadnogo-pravozashchitnogo>

⁴⁷⁷ <https://t.me/lomovkaa/15202>

⁴⁷⁸ <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/kommentariy-predsedatelya-rars-onamereniyah-vlastey-ukrainy-vyselit-monahov-iz-kievo>

the morale of many military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine”⁴⁷⁹. Member of the RARS Council A.S. Brod called the actions of the Ukrainian authorities against believers of the UOC “an absolutely shameful act that should be considered by the International Public Tribunal for the investigation of crimes of the Ukrainian regime”⁴⁸⁰. In June 2023, commenting on the news about the possible removal of the relics of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra to Western countries, S.A. Melnikov emphasized that Western countries can pay for this transfer with money that Ukraine will spend on new weapons, and the depreciation of historical heritage and national shrines is another point in a long-term strategy to “erode the cultural foundations of the Ukrainian people.”⁴⁸¹. Member of the RARS Council V.V. Kipshidze called the actions of the Kiev authorities “a mockery of the rights of believers and their spiritual identity”⁴⁸² recalling that the shrines of the Lavra belong not to the Ukrainian state, but to all Orthodox Christians⁴⁸³. He noted with regret in a media commentary on July 7, 2023 that the international community does

⁴⁷⁹ <https://t.me/lomovkaa/21546>

⁴⁸⁰ https://rapsinews.ru/human_rights_protection_news/20230329/308786350.html

⁴⁸¹ <https://vz.ru/news/2023/6/26/1218357.html>

⁴⁸² <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/18124325>

⁴⁸³ *Ibidem*

not respond to the appeals of the Russian Orthodox Church expressing concern and calling for action⁴⁸⁴.

On June 21, 2023, the SBU included RARS, 5 Russian political parties and 7 more all-Russian public organizations in the list of organizations that “threaten” the state system of Ukraine.

On July 19, 2023, a Bishops’ meeting of the Russian Orthodox Church was held at the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius, during which His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus and the meeting participants who arrived from different regions of Russia and countries of the world expressed their solidarity with regard to what is happening in Ukraine. In particular, the final document of the meeting states: “In the Ukrainian land today, the state authority has proved to be a direct heir of the Bolshevik-theomachists as it is building up the persecution of the Orthodox Church. The faithful are driven out of churches; the hierarchy, clergy and laity are subjected to unrighteous arrests and dishonest trials; shrines are desecrated and plundered. Special bitterness is caused by the reports that attempts are made to compel the clergy and laity of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to reject God’s truth and to goad them

⁴⁸⁴ <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/chlen-soveta-rars-vv-kipshidze-rasskazal-chto-kiev-hochet-otrinut-pravoslavnoe-nasledie-rusi>

into a schism. The participants in the Bishops Conference calls to a fervent prayer for Orthodox brothers and sisters in Ukraine, for those who, contrary to the threats, slander and persecutions, seek to preserve the church unity, especially for those who have performed a deed of true confessors by raising their voices in defence of this unity. Many years of life be to Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl who is in prison now and to all hierarchs-confessors enduring penal sanctions for the faith and the Church!"⁴⁸⁵. A separate point in the final document of the meeting recorded the statement that "among the instruments of the political forces hostile to Orthodoxy is the leaders of the Patriarchate of Constantinople blinded by the thirst for satisfying private interests and ambitions"⁴⁸⁶.

⁴⁸⁵ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6043699.html>

⁴⁸⁶ Ibidem

Chapter 3

The situation of religious organizations in the combat zone and in new regions of the Russian Federation

On February 21, 2022 President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin made an appeal to the citizens of Russia, in which, in particular, he noted the existing oppression of the UOC in Ukraine: “In Kiev they continue to prepare reprisals against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. And this is not an emotional assessment; specific decisions and documents speak about this. The Ukrainian authorities cynically turned the tragedy of the church schism into an instrument of state policy. The current leadership of the country does not respond to requests from Ukrainian citizens to repeal laws that infringe on the rights of believers. Moreover, new bills directed against the clergy and millions of parishioners of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate have been registered in the Rada”¹.

On the same day, the President of the Russian Federation signed the decrees “On the recognition of the Donetsk People’s Republic” and “On the recognition of the Lugansk People’s Republic”. The President of Russia and heads of state signed Treaties of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance².

¹ <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/speeches/67828>

² <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67829>

On February 24, 2022 President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin announced the start of a special military operation to protect people “who have been subjected to abuse and genocide by the Kiev regime for eight years. And for this we will strive for the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine, as well as bringing to justice those who committed numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including citizens of the Russian Federation”³.

The overwhelming majority of religious leaders of the Russian Federation supported the decision of the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin on conducting a special military operation. At a round table in the State Duma of the Russian Federation “World religions against the revival of fascism and the spread of the ideology of neo-Nazism in the 21st century,” held on March 29, 2022, representatives of Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism who participated in the event adopted a final address, where they expressed support for the fight against neo-Nazism in Donbass and Ukraine⁴. On September 23-27, 2022, referendums were held in the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s

³ <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843>

⁴ <https://77islam.ru/novosti/predstaviteli-konfessij-prinyali-obrashchenie-osuzhdayushchee-vo-zrozhdenie-fashizma-i-rasprostarenie-neonatsizma.html>

Republics, in the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions on the entry of these territories into the Russian Federation. In connection with the choice of the people living in these territories, new regions of the Russian Federation were formed: on September 30, 2022, the heads of these regions signed agreements with the President of the Russian Federation on the inclusion of the regions into the Russian Federation, and on October 5, 2022, the President of the Russian Federation ratified these contracts.

3.1. Shelling of churches by Ukrainian formations and their use of religious sites for military purposes

The aggressive actions of the Ukrainian authorities and radical forces against churches, clergy and laity of the UOC in the territories that later became part of the Russian Federation did not stop with the outbreak of active hostilities after February 24, 2022.

By the own admission of the head of the UGCC Svyatoslav (Shevchuk), the UGCC communities in Kherson did not experience any oppression from the Russian authorities before its temporary occupation by Ukraine in October 2022⁵.

On February 25, 2022, an armed attack was carried out on the St. Nicholas Cathedral in Mariupol by a group of people in military uniform and balaclavas. While the clergyman was performing the Sacrament of Baptism, armed people burst into the church, beat up an employee, a security guard and the priest, took money from the church safe, food, household supplies, and also stole two clergy cars⁶.

⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/88026-o-sluzhbah-na-okkupirovanoj-i-svobodnoj-ukraine>

⁶ <https://donetsk.church.ua/2022/02/25/v-mariupole-sovershenorejiderskoe-napadenie/>

Often religious buildings come under fire from the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Thus, on the night of February 26, 2022, the Holy Trinity Church of the village was damaged by shelling. Troitskoe Svatovsky district of the Lugansk People's Republic⁷.

On February 26, 2022, as a result of shelling, the Second St. Mitrofan Church in Lisichansk was damaged, as well as the Sunday school building⁸.

On February 27, 2022, the St. Alexander Nevsky Church in the village came under artillery fire. Aleksandrovka city of Donetsk. The bell tower, baptistery, fence, glazing of the church and utility rooms were damaged. The church building itself suffered only from shell fragments.⁹ On the same day, as a result of hostilities, the Church of St. Nicholas in the village of Novoignatievka, Volnovakha district, was severely damaged¹⁰.

From March 2022 to the present, the Holy Dormition Nikolo-Vasilievsky Monastery in the village of Nikolskoye, Volnovakha district, DPR has been subjected to periodic shelling by the Ukrainian Armed Forces¹¹.

⁷ https://t.me/sed_eparhia/6232

⁸ https://t.me/sed_eparhia/6215

⁹ <https://donetsk.church.ua/2022/02/27/khram-v-posjolke-aleksandrovka-podvergsya-obstrelu/>

¹⁰ <https://donetsk.church.ua/2022/03/04/v-sele-novoignatevka-raz-rushen-khram/>

¹¹ <https://donetsk.church.ua/2022/03/08/obstrelu-podvergsya-svyatospenskij-nikolo-vasilevskij-monastyr-sela-nikolskoe/>

On March 11 and 12, 2022, during services, the territory of the church in honor of the holy righteous Ioann of Kronstadt, located in the Trudovskie micro-district of Donetsk, was shelled.¹²

On March 12, 2022, the Akhat-Jami mosque in Donetsk was shelled. The facade and the boiler house building were damaged. The mosque was shelled again on October 29 of the same year¹³.

Since May 2022, the Holy Dormition Svyatogorsk Lavra in the city of Svyatogorsk in the DPR has been subjected to regular shelling by the Ukrainian Armed Forces. On May 4, 2022, in the morning, during a councilar prayer service to the Mother of God at the entrance to the Lavra, one rocket exploded off the shore next to the church, the second explosion occurred in the air about a hundred meters above the Lavra, dotting the Lavra courtyard with small fragments. Two refugees were injured and subsequently hospitalized; windows and doors were repeatedly broken in churches and buildings. At that time, in addition to the brethren, 300 refugees lived in the monastery, of which 50 were children¹⁴.

¹² <https://donetsk.church.ua/2022/03/12/khram-pravednogo-ioanna-kronshtadtskogo-v-donecke-podvergsya-obstrelu/>

¹³ <https://ria.ru/20221029/donetsk-1827732421.html>

¹⁴ <https://donetsk.church.ua/2022/05/04/svyatogorskaya-lavra-vnov-podverglas-obstrelu/>

On May 23, 2022, servicemen of the Azov battalion* took dozens of icons from the St. George Church of the UOC in the village of Velika Novoselka in the Donetsk People's Republic and transferred them to the OCU church in Dnepr¹⁵.

On July 30, 2022, the facade and windows of the Transfiguration Cathedral in Donetsk were damaged by shelling¹⁶, on December 6 of the same year, Ukrainian shells damaged the altar wall of the left side chapel¹⁷, December 15 — domes of the same cathedral¹⁸.

On November 3, 2022, the church in honor of St. Nina, Equal-to-the-Apostles, the enlightener of Georgia, in Donetsk was damaged by shelling. There were no casualties. The facade, roof, icons and other utensils in the temple were damaged by shrapnel¹⁹.

In December 2022, searches organized by the SBU took place in UOC churches in Kherson region. In the premises of the diocese SBU officers found “a gun

* Extremist organization banned in Russian Federation.

¹⁵ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/88586-azocy-vyvezli-ikony-iz-khrama-upc-v-velikoj-novoselke-i-otdali-ih-pcu>

¹⁶ <https://donetsk.church.ua/2022/07/31/glavnyjj-khram-donecka-postradal-ot-obstrela/>

¹⁷ <https://donetsk.church.ua/2022/12/06/v-ocherednojj-raz-ot-obstrela-postradal-spaso-preobrazhenskij-kafedralnyjj-sobor-goroda-donecka/>

¹⁸ <https://donetsk.church.ua/2022/12/15/snaryad-povredil-glavnyjj-kupol-spaso-preobrazhenskogo-kafedralnogo-sobora/>

¹⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/91606-ot-obstrel-ov-postradal-khram-ravnoapostolnojj-niny-v-donecke>

without the appropriate permits, a flag and the golden coat of arms of Russia”²⁰, and also took “for processing information about several clergy who are likely in contact with citizens of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus. In addition, law enforcement officers discovered propaganda materials glorifying Russia.”²¹.

On the morning of December 5, 2022, during another shelling of the center of Donetsk, the building of the Sunday school of the Church of the Nativity was damaged. The façade and roof were partially destroyed by a direct hit. No injuries²².

On December 15, 2022, due to hostilities, the St. George’s Church in Stakhanov, Lugansk People’s Republic was damaged. Windows on the church and also on the parish house were damaged²³.

In mid-December 2022, the media reported the arrest of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Wolf in the temporarily occupied city of Kherson by the SBU. He was charged with treason for allowing Russian Jewish soldiers to pray in the synagogue. Rabbi faces life imprisonment²⁴.

²⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/70046-sbu-otchitalas-o-rezultatakh-obyskov-v-khramakh-upts-v-kievskoj-i-khersonskoj-oblastjakh>

²¹ Там же

²² <https://donetsk.church.ua/2022/12/05/posledstviya-obstrelya-khramarozhdestva-khristova-v-donecke/>

²³ https://t.me/sed_eparhia/7016

²⁴ <https://www.mk.ru/politics/2022/12/19/sbu-v-khersonne-vzvalas-za-evreev-ravvinu-predyavili-obvinenie-v-gosizmene.html>

On January 31, 2023, the Ukrainian Armed Forces shelled the Holy Dormition Nikolo-Vasilievsky Monastery in the village of Nikolskoye, Donetsk Republic. As a result, the buildings received serious damage and the inhabitants of the monastery, Hieromonk Boniface and Schema-nun Savva, died²⁵.

On April 25, 2023, the St. Ignatievsky Orthodox Church in the Kiev region of Donetsk was damaged during shelling from Ukrainian troops²⁶.

On May 13, 2023, during shelling from the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the Epiphany Cathedral in the center of Gorlovka in the DPR was damaged²⁷. There, on June 3, 2023, the St. Nicholas Cathedral and an evening school were damaged as a result of shelling from the Ukrainian Armed Forces.²⁸

On June 10, 2023, in the Kuibyshevsky district of Donetsk, the temple of Prince Vladimir was damaged by shelling²⁹.

On June 26, 2023, the Ahat Jami mosque in Donetsk was again damaged by shelling by the Ukrainian Armed Forces: the facades of the building were damaged,

²⁵ <https://lenta.ru/news/2023/02/01/monastery/>

²⁶ <https://vz.ru/news/2023/4/25/1209134.html>

²⁷ <https://vz.ru/news/2023/5/13/1211740.html>

²⁸ <https://vz.ru/news/2023/6/3/1214999.html>

²⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74246-v-donetske-iz-za-obstrela-postradal-khram-svjatoho-knjazja-vladimira>

windows were broken, and a wall was shot through. It is important to note that the shelling occurred on the eve of the Muslim holiday Eid al-Fitr, the first day of which in 2023 fell on June 27³⁰.

In his speech, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' noted that the Ukrainian Armed Forces are purposefully shelling churches and monasteries in new territories³¹.

Ukrainian armed forces often use religious buildings to store ammunition, and the believers themselves as cover. Thus, Ukrainian troops used a synagogue in the city of Uman (Cherkasy region), which was damaged by artillery fire in March 2022, as a collection point and transportation of weapons and soldiers to participate in hostilities³².

On March 13, 2022, the Russian military released 300 hostages who were being held by Ukrainian nationalists in a monastery near the village of Nikolskoye near Mariupol³³. Among them were both monks and civilians who sought salvation within the walls of the monastery.

³⁰ <https://life-ru.turbopages.org/life.ru/s/p/1589428>

³¹ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6022525.html>

³² <https://www.vesti.ru/article/2696355>

³³ <https://naspravdi.info/novosti/russkiy-soldat-spasaet-pravoslavie-na-ukraine>

On March 21, 2022, the media reported that in Volnovakha the Ukrainian Armed Forces used a temple to house military equipment and ammunition³⁴.

On April 12, 2022, servicemen of the Ukrainian Armed Forces used a mosque in Mariupol, in which there were people at that moment, for cover. The situation is being studied by the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation³⁵.

On April 19, 2022, when deciphering data seized from a Ukrainian drone with a mine attached that was shot down by Donbass defenders, it was established that the target of the Ukrainian Armed Forces was the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in Yasinovataya³⁶.

In May 2022, according to journalists working in the city of Popasnaya in the LPR, Ukrainian security forces used the St. Nicholas Church as an observation post, and on the bell tower, from where most of the city was visible, there were positions of snipers and machine gunners³⁷.

In July 2022, with references to eyewitnesses, the media reported that during the withdrawal, Ukrainian

³⁴ <https://novostivl.ru/post/346061/>

³⁵ <https://ria.ru/20220427/mariupol-1785795535.html>

³⁶ <https://www.politnavigator.net/ukrainskaya-armiya-popytalas-unichtozhit-pravoslavnyj-khram.html>

³⁷ https://ruskline.ru/politnews/2022/05/16/sk_rassleduet_fakt_ispol-zovaniya_hrama_v_lnr_v_boevyh_celyah_vsu

units set fire to the building of St. Mitrofan's Church in Lisichansk.³⁸

In November 2022, Russian intelligence services uncovered a cache of ammunition and explosives in the Greek Catholic Church in Berdyansk, Zaporozhye region³⁹.

On January 8, 2023, Russian troops destroyed a Ukrainian armed detachment that used an Orthodox church in Marinka as cover.⁴⁰

At the international level, in its statement in August 2022, the fact of the deployment of units and equipment of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the civilian sector (but without mention of religious buildings) was recognized by the human rights organization Amnesty International.⁴¹ The statement by human rights activists caused many negative comments from Ukrainian and Western politicians.

³⁸ https://rostov.tsargrad.tv/news/pravoslavnye-cerkvi-szhigali-vsu-projavili-izbiratelnost-v-unichtozhenii-hramov-v-lisichanske_579572

³⁹ <https://yakutsk.ru/news/20221124/99747/>

⁴⁰ https://nation-news.ru/23884854-boitsi-vikinga-unichtozhili-prikrivavshihsy_a_hramom_soldat_vsu_pri_pomoschi_snaryada_krasnopol

⁴¹ <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/ukraine-military-endangering-civilians-locating-forces-residential-areas-new>

3.2. Humanitarian activities of Russian religious associations in new regions of Russia

From the first days of the special military operation, religious organizations of the Russian Federation provided comprehensive assistance and support to military personnel of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, refugees, civilians and victims in the conflict zone.

On August 25, 2022, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church (Journal № 63) established an Interdepartmental Working Group to coordinate assistance provided to the dioceses of Donbass and adjacent territories located in the conflict zone. According to the report of this working group at the meeting of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church on December 29, 2022 (Journal № 125), from February 2022, with the coordination of the church-wide assistance headquarters at the Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Service, as well as on the basis of diocesan assistance headquarters assistance was organized for refugees from

Donbass, Kherson and Zaporozhye regions, from Ukraine, as well as injured civilians remaining in the conflict zone.

By December 11, 2022, over 463 million rubles had been collected into the accounts of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Synodal Department for Charity and Social Service to help refugees and people affected in the conflict zone. Humanitarian aid worth over 232.3 million rubles was purchased and sent (of which more than 6.8 million rubles were provided during the reporting period). In dioceses in Russia, by December 11, 2022, over 2,570 tons of humanitarian aid had been collected, purchased and distributed to refugees and affected civilians, including over 1,540 tons sent to Berdyansk, Gorlovka, Donetsk, Izyum, Zaporozhye, Lugansk, Severodonetsk, Kharkov, Kherson dioceses. 99 dioceses sent humanitarian aid on their own. In total, Russian dioceses provided assistance to about 390 thousand refugees and thousands of civilians in the conflict zone. Since March 2022, the Belgorod church headquarters for helping refugees has received more than 28,600 requests, the Rostov Humanitarian Center has received more than 14,500 requests, and the humanitarian centers of the Voronezh diocese have received more than 22,500 requests. From March

to December 2022, over 29,200 refugees turned to the church headquarters for targeted assistance in Moscow. In November 2022, another church headquarters for helping refugees was opened in Yekaterinburg, where more than 70 refugees received assistance by the end of 2022. Many monasteries and churches in Russia, Ukraine and Donbass, as well as some monasteries and parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in Germany and Great Britain accepted refugees for residence — in total, refugees were accommodated in 58 church institutions. Central Clinical Hospital of the Moscow Patriarchate named after St. Alexiy, Metropolitan of Moscow, provides comprehensive assistance to refugees and injured civilians in the conflict zone: provides treatment in hospitals and outpatient clinics of the hospital in Moscow and its branch in the city of Zhukovskiy, Moscow region. In total, since March 5, 2022, 878 people turned to St. Alexius Hospital for help. Hospital doctors removed 106 patients from April to December 2022. Visits of volunteer medical and nursing teams have been organized to provide medical care on site, including assistance in performing surgical operations and caring for the wounded. Volunteer doctors provided medical care in Balakleya, Gorlovka, Izyum, Lugansk, Mariupol, Melitopol, Novoazovsk,

Severodonetsk and Rostov-on-Don. The hospital's training center, with the support of the Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Service, organized courses on caring for the wounded, which 533 people completed in 2022. Hospital volunteers trained as part of the courses were sent on shifts to care for the sick and wounded in hospitals in Rostov-on-Don, Mariupol, and Gorlovka. The training center of the Hospital of St. Alexiy organized on-site training courses in nursing in Gorlovka, Donetsk, Makeevka, Mariupol, Rostov-on-Don, where 84 people were trained. By December 2022, the Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Service transferred 142 tons of humanitarian aid to the Severodonetsk diocese. In Lisichansk, with the assistance of the Department, field kitchens continue to operate⁴². From June to October 2022, applications were collected from the dioceses of the territories annexed to Russia to carry out restoration and restoration work at the affected sites. Most of them are located on the territory of the Severodonetsk, Donetsk and Gorlovka dioceses. The infrastructure of these areas received the greatest damage from shelling. In total, applications were

⁴² <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5989206.html>

received from 152 churches in Donbass⁴³. In total, in 2022, the Russian Orthodox Church, according to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus, managed to transfer more than 2,850 tons of humanitarian aid to refugees and injured civilians, of which more than 1,770 tons were sent to Berdyansk, Gorlovka, Donetsk, Zaporozhye, Lugansk, Severodoneck, Kharkov and Kherson dioceses⁴⁴. According to the press service of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of the LPR in January 2023, the Russian Orthodox Church restored 12 churches in 2022, and plans to restore 14 more in 2023⁴⁵ (in July 2023, a representative of the head of the LPR confirmed that the planned work in this direction is being successfully carried out)⁴⁶. By May 9, 2023, servicemen of the 228th Motorized Rifle Regiment built a temple in honor of St. George the Victorious for the residents of one of the villages near the city of Kremennaya in the LPR⁴⁷. With the mediation of the Russian Orthodox Church, on June 8, 2023, within the framework of inter-church cooperation,

⁴³ <https://religsvoboda.ru/kratko/rpc-zavershila-vosstanovlenie-pervykh-vozmi-iz-polutora-soten-postradavshih-hramov-donbassa>

⁴⁴ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6022525.html>

⁴⁵ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/16770187>

⁴⁶ <https://rg.ru/2023/07/29/v-lnr-vosstanavlivaiut-razrushennye-pravoslavnye-hramy.html>

⁴⁷ <https://t.me/rusvesnasu/26193>

at the request of the Hungarian side, a group of Ukrainian prisoners of war of Transcarpathian origin who participated in the hostilities was transferred to Hungary⁴⁸. The Hungarian side confirmed the negotiations and the fact of the transfer of 11 Ukrainian Armed Forces soldiers⁴⁹.

The Russian Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals) sent humanitarian aid worth more than 3 million rubles (food, basic necessities, medicines) to residents of the DPR and LPR in January-March 2023. Through the efforts of volunteers of this religious organization, Christmas performances were organized, at which children's gifts and toys were distributed, assistance was provided in repairing damaged houses, and in restoring the social and everyday needs of citizens. In Mariupol and Lugansk, a variety of assistance is provided to local homes for the disabled. The LPR provides assistance to military personnel who come to the contact line. Local ministers provide houses, and the life of the military is provided.

The Russian and New Nakhichevan Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church has repeatedly organized the collection and dispatch of humanitarian aid

⁴⁸ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6034594.html>

⁴⁹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/74221->

to the DPR and LPR from April to September 2022, with a total weight of about 50 tons worth 30 million rubles. There were food, clothing, shoes, hygiene items, medicines, and pastels. More than 2,500 people in need were targeted in Donetsk, Mariupol, Yenakievo, Amvrosievka, Dokuchaevsk, Gorlovka and Zugres. On June 30, 2023, at the Cathedral of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Moscow, a blessing ceremony was held for the soldiers of the Armenian “ArBat” battalion heading to the special military operation zone⁵⁰.

From March 2022 to February 2023, the Church of Seventh-day Christian Adventists collected over 49 million rubles, purchased over 89 tons of humanitarian supplies, and provided assistance to more than 35 thousand people both in temporary accommodation centers in the border regions of Russia and on the territory of the DPR, LPR and Zaporozhye region.

The Russian Orthodox Old Believer Church purchased about 35 tons of humanitarian aid worth more than 3 million rubles. A special area of activity of the communities is assistance to mobilized, volunteers and career military personnel.

⁵⁰ <https://irp.news/armjanskaja-cerkov-moskvy-blagoslovila-batalon-na-donbass/>

Muslim communities of various Muslim religious organizations in Russia organized the collection of food and basic necessities for refugees and affected residents of new regions and Ukraine, as well as everything necessary for the armed forces of the Russian Federation. In all regional spiritual administrations of Muslims, in communities and parishes that are part of the Central Muslim Spiritual Directorate of Russia, an action was organized to collect humanitarian aid for soldiers participating in the special operation and refugees from the DPR and LPR. Through the efforts of the clergy and parishioners, a large number of essential items are collected and sent to forced migrants and soldiers, which is reflected monthly in the media of the Central Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Russia. The clergy of all regional spiritual directorates of the Central Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Russia constantly visit forced migrants at their points of temporary stay, deployed in a number of large cities in our country. They are provided with material, spiritual and psychological support on a regular basis.

Since 2014, the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia (FEOR) has been sending humanitarian kits to Donbass for all those in need, containing food with

a long shelf life and basic necessities. In 2022-2023 In the communities of Rostov-on-Don, Taganrog and Simferopol, several tens of tons of food were collected, and various assistance was provided to refugees. Humanitarian aid is sent to various settlements of the DPR and LPR, as well as to the Kherson region. FEOR continued to organize the transfer of humanitarian aid together with the structures of the International Red Cross⁵¹.

Buddhist religious organizations, together with the governments of the regions of Russia, work to collect and send humanitarian aid, as well as to produce and ship equipment for the military.

Religious organizations of Russian traditional religions have repeatedly carried out joint humanitarian actions, ensuring the delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid to refugees and affected citizens in new territories. A significant contribution to the development of humanitarian interreligious cooperation was made by the Interreligious Working Group for Providing Humanitarian Assistance to the Population of Syria, formed in the spring of 2017, on the basis of which humanitarian actions were launched in

⁵¹ <https://feor.ru/press-center/feor-peredal-bolee-6-tonn-gumanitarnoj-pomoshhi-dlya-bezhenczev/>

new regions of the Russian Federation. A remarkable example of interreligious cooperation in the restoration of new territories is the statement of the head of Chechnya R.A. Kadyrov in September 2022 that, with funds from the regional public fund named after Akhmat-Khadzhi Kadyrov, in addition to the mosque in the city of Mariupol, an Orthodox church, which the Ukrainian Armed Forces used to store ammunition, would be restored, as well as the house of the clergy⁵². According to data as of October 2022, presented at a meeting of the Council for Interaction with Religious Organizations under the President of the Russian Federation, Russian religious organizations collected and sent more than 4,484 tons of humanitarian aid to residents of the Lugansk and Donetsk People's Republics, Kherson and Zaporozhye regions. More than 614 thousand people received support. The affected people were provided with constant hot meals and medical care. Water filtration systems, electricity generators were purchased and transferred to new regions of Russia, water wells were drilled, solid fuel, heating, gas boilers, gasoline generators, and gas convectors were installed. The Administration

⁵² <https://mariupol-news.ru/society/2022/09/09/14627.html>

of the President of the Russian Federation highly appreciated the work of the religious organizations included in the Council in implementing social and charitable projects during the special military operation⁵³.

On March 15, 2023, a regular meeting of the Council for Interaction with Religious Associations under the President of the Russian Federation was held. During the discussion, issues of participation of religious organizations in humanitarian projects in the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, Kherson and Zaporozhye regions were considered⁵⁴.

On May 20, 2023, Chief Rabbi of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia Berel Lazar announced the restoration of synagogues in new regions⁵⁵.

On May 29, 2023, the head of the Spiritual Assembly of Muslims of Russia, member of the RARS Council, Mufti of Moscow Albir Krganov took part in a meeting of the Interreligious Working Group on the Protection of the Rights of Believers from Discrimination and Xenophobia of the Commission on International Cooperation of the Council for Interaction with Religious Associations

⁵³ <https://rg.ru/2022/10/28/religioznye-organizacii-otpravili-bolee-4484-tonn-gumanitarnoj-pomoshchi-v-novye-regiony-rossii.html>

⁵⁴ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6011380.html>

⁵⁵ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/17801921>

under the President of the Russian Federation, which was held in Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation. The main attention was paid to the violation of the rights of believers in Ukraine and in a number of other countries, as well as the humanitarian work of religious organizations of the Russian Federation in new regions of the country⁵⁶.

RARS also takes part in the life of religious communities in new territories. On September 22, 2022, at the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation, with the support of the Presidential Grants Fund, the RARS round table “Russia-Donbass: the image of the future and the religious community” was held, organized by RARS and the Commission of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation on the harmonization of interethnic and interreligious relations. The event was attended by representatives of government bodies and religious organizations of the Russian Federation and regions that at that time were preparing to hold referendums on joining Russia. The outcome of the meeting was a general statement by the participants, which expressed

⁵⁶ <https://dsmr.ru/4247-zashchita-prav-veruyushchikh-ot-diskriminatsii-ksenofobii-2.html>

condemnation of the armed aggression of the Ukrainian armed forces against civilians and civilian infrastructure, the campaign undertaken by the Ukrainian authorities to discredit the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and confiscate its property. Round table participants spoke out against violent actions against clergy and parishioners⁵⁷. On November 3, 2022, in Moscow, as part of the final forum “Community” held by the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation, a discussion of public and religious figures took place on the topic “Russia with new territories: the image of the future and the religious community.” The discussion was moderated by members of RARS. The event was also attended by representatives of the public and traditional religions of the Russian Federation⁵⁸. With the assistance of RARS, on February 9-10, 2023, round tables were held in Moscow with the participation of representatives of government agencies from new regions of Russia, where issues of law enforcement and rule-making in the context of the special military operation and the entry of new regions into the country were discussed.

⁵⁷ <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/v-obshchestvennoy-palate-rf-sostoyalas-diskussiya-o-situacii-na-ukraine-iv-donbasse>

⁵⁸ <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/na-forume-soobshchestvo-obsudilibudushchee-donbassa>

Throughout the special military operation, clergymen of traditional religions of Russia are close to military personnel of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, injured civilians, refugees, and participate in the delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid. Since the beginning of the special military operation, six military chaplains of the Russian Orthodox Church have died: Archpriest Oleg Artemov (March 24, 2022), Priest Anatoliy Grigoriev (September 9, 2022), Archpriest Evfimiy Kozlovtssev (September 25, 2022), Archpriest Mikhail Vasiliev (November 6, 2022), Priest Alexander Tsyganov (November 21, 2022)⁵⁹, Hieromonk Damaskin (Volin) (January 23, 2023)⁶⁰.

On October 13, 2022, the chief imam of the Tevriz district of the Omsk region, R. Vakhitov, who went to the special military operation zone as a volunteer, died, and on January 1, 2023, as a result of the shelling of Makeyevka, Imam I. Nasyrov, mobilized into the armed forces of the Russian Federation from the Samara region, was killed⁶¹.

On February 28, 2023, mobilized former Lama H.B. Tsybikov died after being seriously wounded⁶².

⁵⁹ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5982085.html>

⁶⁰ <https://pravoslavie.ru/150641.html>

⁶¹ <https://63.ru/text/world/2023/01/17/71982650/>

⁶² <https://ria.ru/20230314/buryatiya-1857749684.html>

The activities of military chaplains from among the Muslim, Buddhist, and Jewish clergy received widespread coverage in the media and social networks. Their exploits and merits were recognized with state and departmental awards.

3.3. Integration of religious organizations of new regions of Russia into the all-Russian legal and sociocultural space

On September 30, 2022, documents were signed in Moscow on the inclusion of the territories of the Donetsk People's Republic, Lugansk People's Republic, as well as the Kherson and Zaporozhye regions into the Russian Federation. Currently, the following dioceses of the UOC are located in whole or in part in the Russian Federation: Donetsk and Mariupol, Lugansk, Gorlovka and Slavyansk, Berdyansk and Primorsk, Kherson and Tauride, Zaporozhye, Novokakhovsk, Severodonetsk. In a commentary for the media, Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, Deputy Chairman of the Department for

External Church Relations (Moscow Patriarchate), noted that the Office for Near Abroad Affairs, created on March 24, 2022 within the structure of the Moscow Patriarchate, will organize the life of these dioceses in the new territories⁶³. By the decision of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church of October 13, 2022, (Journal № 95) “in response to the appeal of His Grace Archbishop Arkadiy (Taranov) of Rovenky and Sverdlovsk, based on the need to maintain effective canonical and administrative connections with the central church authority for the prosperous flow of church life”⁶⁴, the Rovenky diocese was accepted into direct canonical and administrative subordination to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church⁶⁵. January 25, 2023 President of Ukraine V.A. Zelensky, by his decree, approved the decision of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine on personal sanctions against 10 representatives of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church, including sanctions imposed against Metropolitan of Simferopol and Crimea Lazar (Shvets), Bishop of Bakhchisarai,

⁶³ <https://ria.ru/20220930/rpts-1820633139.html>

⁶⁴ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5966901.html>

⁶⁵ Ibidem

Vicar of the Simferopol Diocese Kalinnik (Chernyshev), Bishop of Dzhankoy and Razdolnoye, head of the Dzhankoy diocese Alexiy (Ovsyannikov), Archbishop of Rovenky and Sverdlovsk Arkadiy (Taranov), Bishop of Koktebel, vicar of the Feodosia diocese Agathon (Opanasenko), head of the Feodosian diocese Metropolitan Platon (Udoenko)⁶⁶. On May 1, 2023, 76 of the 86 clergy member of a council of the Berdyansk diocese of the UOC addressed His Holiness Patriarch Kirill with a letter, in which they reported the departure from the diocese of the diocesan bishop, Metropolitan Ephrem of Berdyansk and Primorye (thus de facto refusing to further fulfill his archpastoral duties), asked His Holiness the Patriarch to “accept them under his primal paternal omophorion”⁶⁷ in order to “establish a full-fledged life for the diocese”⁶⁸. Guided by paragraph 7 of decree of Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus Tikhon (Belavin) №. 362 of November 7/20, 1920 the Holy Synod and the Supreme Church Council, when in the event that the diocesan council or the clergy and laity of a diocese deprived of a bishop due to

⁶⁶ <https://ria.ru/20230125/sanktsii-1847269545.html>

⁶⁷ https://web.archive.org/web/20230701193939/https://www.ng.ru/faith/2023-05-17/1_8725_kiev.html

⁶⁸ https://web.archive.org/web/20230701193939/https://www.ng.ru/faith/2023-05-17/1_8725_kiev.html

military actions or changes in the state border, they turn to the nearest or most accessible diocesan bishop, and he takes over the management of this diocese himself or sends his vicar to manage this diocese, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church at a meeting on May 16, 2023 (journal № 30) in response to the appeal clergy of the Berdyansk diocese decided to “accept the Berdyansk diocese into direct canonical and administrative subordination to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church [...] To state that the Berdyansk diocese [...] was deprived of a diocesan bishop”⁶⁹. The Synod appointed Bishop of Iskitim Luka (Volchkov)⁷⁰ to be the head of the diocese with the title of Bishop of Bronnitsy. On July 14, 2023, the head of the DPR D.V. Pushilin⁷¹ and LPR L.I. Pasechnik⁷² in their telegram channels announced the transfer of dioceses located within the borders of these regions from the UOC to the Russian Orthodox Church. On the same day, information about the transfer of the Donetsk, Lugansk and Gorlovka dioceses of the UOC and their legal re-registration according to the norms of Russian law was confirmed by the Deputy Administrator

⁶⁹ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6027150.html>

⁷⁰ <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/323570.html>

⁷¹ t.me/pushilindenis/3604

⁷² t.me/glava_lnr_info/1356

of the Moscow Patriarchate, Bishop Savva (Tutunov) of Zelenograd⁷³. The media are disseminating information based on assumptions that the bishops of the UOC in new regions are forced to reunite with the Russian Orthodox Church under threats from the Russian special services⁷⁴, which is not confirmed.

On April 12, 2022, during the Semi-Annual Meeting, the Executive Committee of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church decided to temporarily join the Ukrainian Union Conference (UUC), covering the territory of Ukraine, directly to the spiritual and administrative center of the General Conference of the world Church. Previously, the UUC was part of the Euro-Asian Division of the General Conference with its center in Moscow⁷⁵.

Before the start of the special military operation, the Muslim communities of the DPR and LPR formally fell under the jurisdiction of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Ukraine “Ummah” (DUMU), but in fact they were completely autonomous from it. On March 22, 2022 E.I. Gambarov, on behalf of the Council of Imams of

⁷³ <https://tass.ru/obshchestvo/18277935>

⁷⁴ <https://spzh.news/ru/zashhita-very/74926-pererehistratsija-vostochnykh-eparkhij-upts-zhelanie-spetssluzhb-ili-verujushchikh>

⁷⁵ <https://irp.news/adventistov-ukrainy-perepodchinili-ot-moskvy-genkonferencii/>

the LPR, officially announced the severance of relations with the DUMU. On March 29, 2022, in Moscow, at the congress of the Spiritual Assembly of Muslims of Russia, he signed an agreement on cooperation and canonical unity with the Council of Imams of the LPR. On April 21, 2022, E. Gambarov was unanimously elected Mufti of the LPR⁷⁶. There are 10 mosques on the territory of the LPR⁷⁷, it is planned to create a religious educational institution for Muslims⁷⁸. On April 22, 2022, Muslims of Donbass established the Spiritual Administration of Muslims (SAM) of the Donetsk People's Republic — Mukhtasibat of Donbass at the Congress of Representatives of Muslim Communities of the DPR. Rashid Bragin was elected Chairman of the DPR Muslim Spiritual Board, the DPR Muslim Spiritual Directorate is in canonical communication with the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Russian Federation. There are 7 mosques in the DPR⁷⁹. On May 27, 2022, it was announced that the Russian authorities will help restore mosques and temples

⁷⁶ https://nvo.ng.ru/ng_religii/2022-05-17/9_529_muslims.html

⁷⁷ <https://naspravdi.info/novosti/v-luganskoy-narodnoy-respublike-izbrali-muftiya>

⁷⁸ https://tass.ru/obschestvo/14765653?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fyandex.ru%2Fnews%2Fsearch%3Ftext%3D

⁷⁹ <https://muslim.ru/articles/287/33185/>

in the DPR⁸⁰. In October 2022, the Muslim communities of Zaporozhye and Kherson regions, with the active assistance of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Republic of Crimea, formed the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Malorossiia, of which M. Dursunov was elected chairman. The Muslim Spiritual Directorate of Malorossiia includes 60 communities⁸¹. On November 1, 2022, speaking at a meeting of the organizing committee for the preparation and holding of the celebration of the 1100th anniversary of the adoption of Islam by Volga Bulgaria, Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation M.S. Khusnullin emphasized the need to provide multilateral assistance to Muslims of the DPR, LPR, Kherson and Zaporozhye regions. “We are actively engaged in the restoration of destroyed places of worship, but we need to develop a separate program for the integration of Muslims — citizens of the annexed territories into the Russian Muslim community, as well as provide spiritual support to Muslim brothers located in the area of the special military operation,” he noted⁸². Currently, representatives of Muslim communities in

⁸⁰ <https://ria.ru/20220527/mecheti-1791257293.html>

⁸¹ <https://irp.news/v-rf-govorjat-o-sozdanii-dum-malorossii-na-zanjatyh-zemljah/>

⁸² <http://government.ru/news/46946/>

new territories are actively building interaction with their coreligionists in most regions of the Russian Federation. In turn, Russian Muslims assist in the collection and delivery of humanitarian aid for Muslim communities in new territories. The implementation of the program for the restoration of LPR mosques is planned for the spring of 2023⁸³. On March 22, 2023, the Muslim Spiritual Board of the Russian Federation announced its readiness to help the Muslim Spiritual Board of the DPR with the organization of the Hajj⁸⁴, and also sent its imam to Mariupol⁸⁵.

⁸³ <https://islamnews.ru/2022/11/4/muftiy-gambarov-soobshchil-o-planakh-po-vosstanovleniyu-mechetey-lnr>

⁸⁴ <https://ria.ru/20230322/khadzh-1859661653.html>

⁸⁵ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/17343809>

CONCLUSION

The many facts presented in the monograph testify to the Russophobic policy being pursued in Ukraine, within the framework of which fundamental human rights in the field of freedom of conscience and religion are violated.

The Ukrainian authorities systematically oppress believers and create obstacles to the implementation of the principle of freedom of conscience. To achieve unseemly political goals, the country's authorities use a wide range of illegal tools, including raider seizures of buildings of religious communities, organizing provocations against the clergy and ordinary believers, harassment on social networks, dissemination of deliberately false information in the media, and the adoption of obviously discriminatory laws.

It is a well-known fact that this situation dates back to the 1990s. since Ukraine declared independence, however, a significant strengthening and constant increase in the confrontational anti-Russian course occurred after the coup in 2014. This was one of the reasons for the Special Military Operation of the

Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, aimed, among other things, at protecting the rights of the Russian-speaking population of the country and those people who advocate good neighborly relations with Russia, strive to remain faithful to the centuries-old culture and their faith, reflecting the mentality and historical identity of many peoples living in the post-Soviet space.

Despite the fact that the UOC has repeatedly demonstrated its patriotic position and solidarity with the people, expressed, among other things, in the form of large volumes of humanitarian aid provided to those in need, the Ukrainian authorities still perceive it, according to Advisor to the President of Ukraine M.M. Podolyak as “an abscess that needs to be cleaned”¹, and are pursuing a policy of systematic destruction of the country’s largest religious organization through the forcible transfer of its communities to jurisdictions not recognized by the world religious community.

Along with many facts of infringement of the rights of believers, decisions taken in recent years by the President of Ukraine and the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine indicate a direct violation

¹ <https://lenta.ru/news/2023/03/31/podoliakgnoinik/>

by Ukraine of the norms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and other documents recognized by the international community , protecting human rights in the field of freedom of conscience, religion and culture.

The factual silence by many world-famous human rights organizations of flagrant cases of violation of the rights and freedoms of believers in Ukraine is indicative. This allows us to conclude that there is a crisis in the institution of human rights protection in Western countries, affecting not only government bodies, but also non-governmental human rights organizations, which base their reports primarily on the existing political situation in the West. The lack of an objective and independent view of what is happening in Ukraine deprives these organizations of the reputation and trust they have earned over many years throughout the world.

Widespread coverage in the media and social networks of the life of religious communities in new regions of Russia, where believers are not subject to restrictions and oppression, can and should play a big role. Numerous facts of the participation of believers

of various religions in the normalization of life in new regions of Russia testify to the consistently high level of dialogue and cooperation supported by believers and secular authorities.

It should be emphasized that the short period of operation of the Russian model of relations between religious organizations and the state in the new constituent entities of the Russian Federation demonstrates its focus on creating favorable conditions for their activities. This in turn represents a stark contrast to the unprecedented persecution that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church faced during this “dark decade.”

RARS will continue to monitor and report on the situation in Ukraine so that the starting point for the conclusions of the international community is an objective picture of events.

APPLICATION

**Some draft laws and regulations
Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine,
mentioned in the monograph**
(versions at the time of submission for consideration)

Bill No. 4128 dated February 23, 2016

Project
introduced by people's deputies of Ukraine
Elensky V.E.
Voitsekhovskaya S.M.
Kishkarem P.M.
Taruta S.A.
Lozovoy A.S.
Gerasimov A.V.
Podolyak I.I.

**THE LAW OF UKRAINE
On amendments to the Law of Ukraine
“On freedom of conscience and religious organizations”**

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine decides:

I. Make the following changes to Article 8 of the Law of Ukraine
“On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations”
(Vedomosti of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR, 1991,
No. 25, Art. 283):

1) Part one should be supplemented with a new sentence
with the following content:

**“A person’s belonging to a religious community is
determined by his self-identification with this religious**

community, which is confirmed by participation in the religious life of a particular community”;

2) Part two after the words “free change of this subordination” should be supplemented with the words:

“by registering a new version of the charter (regulations) or changes and additions to it, adopted with the consent of a simple majority of persons present at a meeting of citizens belonging to a religious community to such a change.”

II. Final provisions

1. This Law comes into force on the day following the day of its publication.

2. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, within one month from the date of entry into force of this Law, shall bring its regulatory legal acts and ensure that the regulatory legal acts of ministries and other central executive authorities of Ukraine are brought into compliance with this Law.

Bill No. 4511 dated February 23, 2016

The project is introduced by people's deputies of Ukraine

O.M. Petrenko

A.M. Leus

O.V. Medunitsa

O.M. Briginets

I.A. Artyushenko

S.V. Vysotsky

D.B. Timchuk

B.M. Matkivsky

Yu.V. Bublik

O.V. Opanasenko

O.A. Skripnik

O.S. Masorino

Yu.V. Tymoshenko

THE LAW OF UKRAINE

“On the special status of religious organizations whose leadership centers are located in a state recognized by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine as an aggressor state”

Article 1

The objectives of this law are:

- establishing a special status for religious organizations whose leadership centers are located in the aggressor state, recognized as such by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine;
- timely identification of possible manifestations of external influence and interference on the part of the aggressor state, recognized as such by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, through the religious factor in the state-confessional, interfaith sphere of relations in Ukraine and on the course of socio-political processes in the state;

- preventing manifestations of destabilization of the religious environment and incitement of interreligious hatred in Ukraine;
- protection of national interests, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.

Article 2

This law applies to religious organizations that conduct their activities in Ukraine and at the same time are subordinate in canonical and organizational matters to religious centers located in a state that is recognized by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine as an aggressor state.

In this law, religious organizations should be understood as religious organizations, the list of which is determined by part two of article seven of the Law of Ukraine “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations”.

In this law, the aggressor state should be understood as a state that has officially acquired this status through recognition by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

Article 3

With religious organizations, defined by article two of this law, the state concludes appropriate treaties (agreements) on the special status of these organizations.

The specified religious organizations, which, at the time of entry into force of this law, conduct their activities in Ukraine and whose charters (regulations) are registered in accordance with the current legislation, within three months must submit the necessary documents to the central executive body to conclude the specified agreement (agreement) .

The above-mentioned religious organizations that register their charters (regulations) after the entry into force of this law, enter into appropriate agreements (agreements) with the state when registering their charters (regulations).

The treaty (agreement), concluded by religious organizations operating in Ukraine and at the same time subordinate in

canonical and organizational matters to religious centers in the aggressor state, contains: the obligations of the religious organization to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and laws of Ukraine, as well as to respect other religious organizations operating on the territory of Ukraine; The state's obligation is to guarantee the rights and unhindered activities of religious organizations within the current legislation.

The specified contract (agreement) is concluded in two copies. It must be signed by the leadership of the central executive body implementing state policy in the field of religion and the leadership of the relevant religious organization.

Article 4

Registration/re-registration of the charters (regulations) of religious organizations, which are defined in Article Two of this law, is carried out in a manner determined by current legislation, after an appropriate expert assessment of registration documents by independent specialists and upon their provision of a positive expert opinion to the state body carrying out this registration.

The state body that carries out registration/re-registration of the charters (regulations) of religious organizations, defined in Article Two of this law, considers an application for registration of the charter (regulations) of a religious organization within three months.

Article 5

The appointment of the central and regional leadership of religious organizations, defined by article two of this law, occurs after the approval of the corresponding candidates from the religious organization with the central executive body implementing state policy in the field of religion.

Article 6

Religious organizations, defined by article two of this law, must necessarily coordinate with the state body that registered the charter (regulations) the invitation of foreign religious figures to carry out preaching and other canonical activities.

Article 7

In case of systematic violation of the current legislation of Ukraine, the establishment of the fact of cooperation with representatives of military-terrorist groups, as well as failure to comply with the legal norms provided for by the articles of this law, on the part of representatives of religious organizations that conduct their activities in Ukraine and at the same time are subordinate to canonical and organizational issues of religious centers in the aggressor state, the state body authorized to register the charter (regulations) of these religious organizations initiates, in the manner prescribed by current legislation, the termination of the activities of the religious organization on the territory of Ukraine.

Final provisions:

1. Law comes into force after its publication.
2. Cabinet of the Ministers of Ukraine within a week from the date of entry into force of this Law:
 - bring your regulatory legal acts into compliance with this Law;
 - ensure that ministries and other central executive authorities bring their regulatory legal acts into compliance with this Law.

Bill No. 5309 of October 26, 2016

Project is entered folk deputies Ukraine

Brichenko I.V.
Briginets O.M.
Krulko I.I.
Markevich I.V.
Gorbunov O.V.
Vysotsky S.V.
Lapin I.O.

LAW UKRAINE

On amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” regarding the name of religious organizations (associations) included in the structure (being part of) a religious organization (association), the leadership center (management) of which is located outside of Ukraine in a state that is legally recognized as having committed military aggression against Ukraine and/or temporarily occupied part of the territory of Ukraine

I. Introduce the following winter rules into the Law of Ukraine “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” (Vedomosti of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 1991, No. 25, Art. 283):

1. In Section II, add Article 12
part 7:

“A religious organization (association), which directly or as an integral part of another religious organization (association)

is included in the structure (is part of) a religious organization (association), the leadership center (management) of which is located outside of Ukraine in the state, which is recognized by law as having carried out military aggression against Ukraine and temporarily occupied the territory of Ukraine, is obliged in its full name, indicated in its charter (regulations), to reflect its affiliation with a religious organization (association) outside of Ukraine, to which it belongs (of which it is a part), by mandatory reproduction in its name, the full statutory name of such a religious organization (association), with the possible addition of the words “in Ukraine” and/or designation of its place in the structure of a foreign religious organization.”

part 8:

“The entry of a religious organization (association) into the religious organization (association) specified in Part 7 of this article is determined if one of the following signs is present:

1) the charter (regulations) of a religious organization operating in Ukraine contains instructions for joining the structure of a religious organization (association), the leadership center (management) of which is located outside of Ukraine;

2) the charter (regulations) of a foreign religious organization (association), the leadership center (management) of which is located outside of Ukraine in a state that is recognized by law as having committed military aggression against Ukraine and temporarily occupied the territory of Ukraine, contains instructions for the inclusion of a religious organization in its structure (association), the current territory of Ukraine, as well as the right to make decisions by the statutory governing bodies of the specified foreign religious organization (association) on canonical and organizational issues that are binding for the religious organization (effective on the territory of Ukraine);

3) the charter (regulations) of a religious organization (association), the leadership center (management) of which is located outside of Ukraine in a state that is recognized by law as having committed military aggression against Ukraine and/or temporarily occupying part of the territory of Ukraine, which provides for mandatory linguistic entry of leaders (authorized representatives) of a religious organization (association) operating on the territory of Ukraine to the statutory governing bodies of the specified foreign religious organization (association) with the right of casting vote.”

II. Transitional and final provisions

1. By the Law, which recognizes a foreign state as having committed military aggression against Ukraine and/or temporarily occupying the territory of Ukraine, we mean the Law of Ukraine “On ensuring the rights and freedoms of citizens and the legal regime in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine” (Vedomosti of the Verkhovna Rada, 2014, No. 26, Art. 892) and/or another Law of Ukraine, which recognizes a foreign state as having committed armed aggression against Ukraine and temporarily occupied the territory of Ukraine.

2. Within one month from the date of entry into force of this Law or the entry into force of a Law by which a foreign state is recognized as having committed military aggression against Ukraine and/or temporarily occupying part of the territory of Ukraine (if such Law came into force later than this Law), the central authority The executive branch of the government implementing state policy in the field of religion conducts a religious studies examination of the registered charters of religious organizations (associations) to establish the circumstances provided for in parts 7 and 8 of Article 12 of the Law of Ukraine “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious

Organizations” (Gazette of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 1991, N 25, art. 283).

3. If the circumstances provided for in parts 7 and 8 of Article 12 of the Law of Ukraine “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” are established (Gazette of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 1991, No. 25, Art. 283), the central executive body implementing state policy in sphere of religion, publicly through the official publication “Government Courier” and in writing informs religious organizations (associations) falling under Part 7 of Article 12 of the Law of Ukraine “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” (Collected Legislation of the Russian Federation 1991, No. 25, Art. 283), on the need, no later than three months, to make changes provided for by law to its charter (regulations) and submit them for registration in the prescribed manner.

4. If, within four months (for religious communities — nine months) from the date of entry into force of this Law and/or the entry into force of the Law, which recognizes a foreign state as having carried out military aggression against Ukraine and temporarily occupied the territory of Ukraine, a religious organization (association) has not made the changes required by law to its official name and has not submitted the corresponding changes to its charter (regulations) for registration, its charter (regulations) loses force in the part that determines the full official name of the religious organization (association).

5. It is not allowed to provide benefits or impose restrictions on the activities of a religious organization (association) that is part of the structure (being part of) a religious organization (association), the leadership center (management) of which is located outside of Ukraine in a state that is recognized by

law as having carried out military aggression against Ukraine and temporarily occupied the territory of Ukraine, except for restricting the access of clergy, religious preachers, mentors of such a religious organization to parts, formations of the Armed Forces and other military formations of Ukraine in the places of their deployment or other restrictions provided by law.

6. This law comes into force upon its publication.

Bill No. 7204 of March 22, 2022

The project is introduced by the People's Deputy of Ukraine Savchuk O.V.

The Law of Ukraine “On the ban on the Moscow Patriarchate on the territory of Ukraine”

In order to protect national security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, prevent collaborationism, stop the incitement of interreligious hostility and destabilize the religious environment in Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada adopts this Law.

Article 1

On the territory of Ukraine, the activities of the Moscow Patriarchate — the Russian Orthodox Church and religious organizations that are part of the Russian Orthodox Church, including the Ukrainian Orthodox Church — are prohibited.

The highest bodies of church power and administration of the Russian Orthodox Church and religious organizations that are part of the Russian Orthodox Church, including the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, cease their activities from the date of adoption of this law.

All church accessories that are part of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine, including the Kiev Metropolis, are inventoried and nationalized by law within 48 hours from the date of entry into force of this law in the manner established by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

Article 2

Religious communities, monasteries and religious educational institutions of the Moscow Patriarchate can change

their subordination within 14 days from the date of entry into force of this law in accordance with the Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations”.

After a change of subordination, the property that was owned or used by these communities, monasteries and religious educational institutions remains in the ownership or use of these communities, monasteries and religious educational institutions.

Article 3

Activities of religious communities, monasteries and religious educational institutions of the Moscow Patriarchate that have not changed their

subordination shall cease within 14 days from the date of entry into force of this law.

The property of these communities, monasteries and religious educational institutions is confiscated for the benefit of the local society, and agreements on the use of property and land held by the state, municipal or private owner are terminated.

Article 4

The Holy Dormition Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, the Holy Dormition Pochaev Lavra, the Holy Dormition Svyatogorsk Lavra and other architectural landmarks of national significance, owned or used by the Moscow Patriarchate, become the property of the state, and agreements (decisions) on use are cancelled.

Architectural monuments of local significance, owned or used by the Moscow Patriarchate, become the property or use of local communities.

Unauthorized plots and premises built without proper permits are confiscated for the benefit of the country and transferred to state church institutions.

Article 5

When the subordination of religious communities, monasteries and religious educational institutions of the Moscow Patriarchate changes, the Security Service of Ukraine checks information on anti-Ukrainian or any anti-state activities or collaboration with the Russian aggressor and, if this information is confirmed, brings the perpetrators to justice under the current legislation.

Final provisions

1. This law comes into force on the day following its publication.
2. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, for a five-day period from the date of entry into force of this Law, shall ensure the adoption of regulatory legal acts provided for by this Law.

Bill No. 7213 of March 26, 2022

Project contributed by the people deputy of Ukraine
Sovsun I.R.

THE LAW OF UKRAINE

On amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On freedom of conscience and religious organization” regarding the prohibition of the activities of religious organizations (associations) that are part of the structure (is part of) a religious organization (association), the leadership center (management) of which is located outside of Ukraine in a state that is recognized by law as having carried out military aggression against Ukraine and/or temporarily occupied part of the territory of Ukraine

I. Amend the Law of Ukraine “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” (Vedomosti of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR (VVR), 1991, No. 25, Art. 283):

1) Article 3 shall be supplemented with paragraph five as follows:

“To protect public safety and order, the activities of religious organizations (associations) are prohibited, directly or as components of another religious organization (association) are part of the structure (being parts) of a religious organization (association), the leadership center (management) of which is located outside of Ukraine in a state that is recognized by law as having committed military aggression against Ukraine and/or has temporarily occupied part of the territory of Ukraine.”

In this regard, paragraph five of Article 3 shall be considered paragraph six.

II. Final provisions

1. This Law comes into force on the day following the day of its publication.

2. With the entry into force of this Law, the Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to Article 12 of the Law of Ukraine “On Freedom” becomes invalid.

S.A. Melnikov, P.V. Lebedev, V.A. Begdash

**CHRONICLES OF THE BLACK DECADE.
RELIGIOUS PERSECUTIONS IN UKRAINE
2014-2023**

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