

The Human Rights Situation in Ukraine

Report

by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

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Foreword

This report continues the Ministry's efforts to draw the attention of the international community to the grave human rights situation in Ukraine. Right from the outset it should be noted that the human rights situation in Ukraine has been steadily deteriorating over recent years.

It is quite clear by now that Ukraine is ruled by an openly Nazi regime committing countless gross and systematic violations of human rights in all spheres of public life.

As has been repeatedly noted, Ukraine has long been practicing neo-Nazism, including aggressive propaganda of this ideology, falsification of the history of the Great Patriotic War and World War II to glorify the Nazis and their accomplices, and propagation of nationalist sentiments in Ukrainian society.

The annual torchlight processions in honour of Nazi criminal Stepan Bandera have been legalized. The birthdays of this collaborator and another criminal, Roman Shukhevich, are marked as national holidays. Celebration of such anniversaries and other similar "memorial dates" related to other Ukrainian nationalists, who stained themselves with mass murder of civilians, is enshrined in Ukrainian law.

Ukraine holds the SS Galicia Division in high regard. Many things are produced under this "brand name": from stamps and thematic exhibitions to the decision by a number of city councils to use the flag of this Nazi association interchangeably with the national flag.

Ukraine also honours former SS members in every possible way, even grants them with Hero of Ukraine title. These "public figures" have monuments erected to them and are reburied with great solemnity. Laws have been adopted that not only equalize veterans of the Great Patriotic War and former members of Nazi and collaborationist units, but also provide the latter with significant benefits to the detriment of the former. Books glorifying the Nazis and their

memoirs are published. The Nazis are glorified in Ukrainian schools and in various forms of "patriotic education" for children and young people.

Kiev's Nazi approaches are being fully realized with regard to Ukraine's Russian-speaking population. Ukraine has banned everything Russian (language, culture, education, printed matter and media). In the sphere of education, the process of derussification has reached its climax. Teaching in and study of Russian at schools is prohibited. All literature pieces of Russian and Soviet (except for Ukrainian) authors have been removed from the school literature programme. Books in Russian are withdrawn from libraries. Schoolchildren and teachers are forbidden even to speak Russian not only in class, but also during personal communication at break. In addition, the government in Kiev not only supports but also authorizes attacks on churches of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

However, all these blatant human rights violations committed by Kiev are covered up by most Western NGOs and international human rights mechanisms. Moreover, due to the efforts of these organizations, Ukraine is getting out of international control in this area. Official Kiev has been granted this exclusive "right" by the collective West, which already influences the UN Secretariat and a number of departments of the Organization itself. All the above do serious damage to the reputation of the bodies of the UN system.

As we can see, it is precisely the servile willingness of the current Ukrainian leadership, to the detriment of the interests of its people, to destroy the history and memory of its country's true, not fictitious, past and to deny everything connected with Russia – that constitutes the reason why its overseas handlers turn a blind eye to the neo-Nazi nature of the Kiev regime. History knows many such examples of the West nurturing openly racist and Nazi regimes. Their fate is well-known. It is tempting to draw a parallel with the way Western countries treated Hitler's regime on the eve of World War II. The policy of appeasement led to the bloodiest war in the history of mankind.

Fortunately for the present generations, that war ended in the Victory of the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition. The idea that such events must not happen again has become a fundamental principle of the UN Charter.

As regards the situation in Ukraine, at this point we can say that by its actions Kiev only confirms a total lack of independence and shows itself to be a "puppet regime", carrying out the instructions of external handlers to create a Russophobic project entitled "Anti-Russia" out of its own country. It is also obvious that Ukraine is unable to even pretend it is making efforts to address the accumulated serious human rights challenges, and to bring to justice those responsible for many crimes, including one of the most heinous of them – the burning alive of people in the Trade Unions House in Odessa in 2014. Therefore, the "collective West" bears direct responsibility for the human rights violations committed by the Kiev regime.

General Situation

Since 2014, when nationalists seized power in Kiev as a result of an anti-constitutional armed coup d'état orchestrated by the West, violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms in Ukraine have become widespread and systemic. With active encouragement from their Western handlers, the government is working to mould the society on the basis of Nazi ideas. To that end, Kiev is consistently spreading aggressive neo-Nazi propaganda accompanied by the rewriting of the history of the Great Patriotic War and World War II. It has become a deliberate state policy in Ukraine to glorify Nazism, encourage its penetration into all spheres of public life, systemically suppress human rights, opposition and dissent in Ukraine, and fight against everything connected with Russia. At the same time, Ukraine is consistently pursuing a course of forced Ukrainianization of all spheres of public life and assimilation of national minorities.

It is implanting a distorted version of history which diminishes the USSR's role in and contribution to the victory over Nazism, in order to destroy the historical memory of the Ukrainian people about the events of that war. Ukraine's state policy and the government's active steps at all levels aimed at whitewashing and glorifying Nazism and Nazi collaborators of World War II, and dignifying various Ukrainian groups that collaborated with the Nazi invaders during the war, under the guise of members of the "national liberation movement" – all serve to cultivate nationalist sentiments among broad segments of Ukrainian society. Particular attention is paid to the adoption of a wide range of measures to provide state support for the movements glorifying Nazi criminals and collaborators.

The implantation of hateful ideology became so widespread after the bloody putsch of 2014, when extremists infiltrated all levels of Ukrainian government. In 2014, groups of national radicals seized administrative buildings, police stations and military armouries. The police suffered violence

on a massive scale. The leading forces in this process were extremist nationalist organizations, in particular Right Sector and Svoboda which are the ideological successors of Ukrainian nationalists, known for their collaboration with the Nazis and mass murder of Soviet civilians during the Great Patriotic War.

Instead of forming a coalition government of national unity, as envisaged by the 21 February 2014 agreement signed by President Yanukovich and leaders of the then opposition, the forces that seized power in Kiev announced the creation of a "government of the winners". One of its first steps was an attempt to revoke the status of the Russian language in Ukraine, which only served to increase tensions in the country. The new government branded as "separatists" and "terrorists" all those who did not accept the coup and were calling for autonomy and federalization, and started to use force against them, announcing the so-called anti-terrorist operation (ATO) in April 2014. They shelled the Russian-speaking east of Ukraine with heavy weapons and used combat aircraft against peaceful towns.

The horrible crimes of that time are still horrifying, one of the most brutal being the burning alive of 48 people on 2 May 2014 in the Trade Unions House in Odessa. No one in Ukraine is going to investigate them.¹ All the above only confirms the Nazi nature of the regime established in Kiev.

The fact that the ATO format envisaged the use, in addition to the regular armed forces of Ukraine, of irregular "volunteer battalions", whose atrocities could not but be mentioned even by the international organizations and entities patronizing Kiev, including the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), is also a convincing demonstration of the Kiev government's intentions with regard to the Donbass.

¹ A detailed description of the events of those years is given in the study by a team of authors "History of Ukraine" // Grigoriev M.S., Deinego V.N., Dyukov A.R., Zasorin S.A., Malkevich A.A., Manko S.A., Shapovalov V.L. History of Ukraine: a monograph. – M.: International Relations, 2022. – 648 p. The text of the monograph is publicly available on the website of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation https://files.oprf.ru/storage/image_store/docs2022/istoriya_Ukraini_MS_Grigoriev_dr.pdf

However, the accusations of "terrorism" levelled at the Donbass, used by Kiev as a pretext for launching the ATO, turned out to be falsified. This was confirmed by the UN International Court of Justice which, in its decision of 31 January 2024 on Ukraine's lawsuit against the Russian Federation, refused to recognize the Donbass Republics as "terrorist organizations" and Russia as a "sponsor of terrorism". Therefore, Kiev's actions towards the LPR and DPR were illegitimate from the outset. In the same decision, the Court dismissed the Kiev regime's speculations about the alleged "racial discrimination" in Crimea, which had been propagated not only by pro-Western NGOs but also by international organizations. In addition, the Court repeatedly questioned their conclusions, which were not supported by sufficient evidence.

Amid active glorification of Nazism and implantation of a sense of hostility towards Russia among the population, the human rights situation in Ukraine itself continued to seriously deteriorate. As rightly noted by some researchers, the Kiev regime underwent a political mutation in 2022. The conditions it created as a result of the imposition of martial law allowed it to build an authoritarian system of government in the country, characterized by an absolute monopoly on power, extrajudicial killings, strict censorship, de facto elimination of independent media and destruction of the political opposition, total state propaganda, and an active search for traitors, fictitious Russian spies and saboteurs. The current regime, having adopted the ideology and practices of Ukrainian radical nationalists, has essentially degenerated into a neo-Nazi dictatorship.

For such a regime, a state of war and the use of the widest range of repressive measures are necessary as the only and, at the same time, the safest way to maintain its dominance. It exists as long as the degree of escalation in society remains high, and armed confrontation with an external enemy continues. Bearing this in mind, the West is providing it with massive

assistance, primarily military. The end of the conflict for such a regime would be tantamount to the end of its existence.

The degradation of the human rights situation affects Ukraine in many ways. It witnesses regular violations of the right to freedom and personal integrity, and records numerous cases of illegal arrests and subsequent detention, torture, intimidation, inhuman and cruel treatment, aimed primarily at forcing detainees to confess guilt.

Persecution of political opponents, independent journalists and media outlets, and members of public organizations undesirable for the government, has taken on an unprecedented scale; and it is frequently backed by claims about the need to confront "the Russian aggression" and "separatism". In furtherance of these policies, the government in Kiev is making use of radical nationalist groups which frequently break the law but remain untouchable.

Nazi approaches of the Kiev regime are clearly reflected in their attitude towards the population of the Donbass. This is convincingly confirmed by the well-known statements of Ukrainian leaders. Former Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, in the summer of 2014, called the Donbass rebels "subhumans" (by analogy with Nazi term "untermenschen"), and current President Vladimir Zelenskiy, speaking about the citizens of the country against whom he had imposed sanctions, said that not all people are human beings, some are just "specimens".

Moreover, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens, including the elderly, women and children, have been dying and suffering in the 10-year-old internal armed conflict unleashed by Kiev in the south-east of the country.

Other Kiev's actions also added fuel to the fire. As a result of the severe restrictions imposed by the Ukrainian authorities, citizens living in the areas of hostilities were exposed to serious life-threatening risks. They had to daily overcome significant difficulties in obtaining basic services such as social benefits, water, heating and health care. Kiev's military actions resulted in

residential areas falling into disrepair, and there were no mechanisms for legal protection or compensation for the population of the Donbass.

The fact that the population of the Donbass does not enjoy the same scope of human rights as the population in Kiev-controlled Ukraine, was pointed out by the Human Rights Committee (HRCttee) in November 2021 (its concluding observations were published in February 2022). According to the Committee, there were differences, including in the form of the difficulties encountered by civilians in the Donbass when seeking the issuance of birth certificates, which required a prior court decision. At the same time, it pointed out the need to intensify efforts to protect civilians, especially children, under wartime conditions, including demining. HRCttee also noted with concern the severe restrictions imposed against civilians crossing checkpoints on the line of contact, under the pretext of spreading coronavirus infection.

The Committee also highlighted the limitation of the rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs), noting with concern that they face multiple forms of discrimination (in relation to the enjoyment of political rights, in particular the ability to vote). According to HRCttee, this hinders their integration into society. Therefore, the Kiev government was recommended to take measures to facilitate the procedure for the registration of the actual residence of IDPs and encourage them to exercise their right to vote.²

Ukraine witnesses restrictions on all possible rights of the Russian-speaking population and national minority members (there are many of them among IDPs). Everything Russian – language, culture, printed matter of any kind, the media – is prohibited in Ukraine. Education in Russian, its study in any form is also prohibited. Literature and teaching materials in Russian have been removed from the educational process. Even interpersonal communication

² Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (the observations were published in February 2022)
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=en

in Russian at school is banned. The renaming of topographical features in the country, that have anything to do with Russia, has taken on a huge scale. A massive campaign has been launched to destroy monuments to Russian and Soviet figures of science and culture, and to historic personalities. Kiev's campaign against the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), which has now taken the form of a total ban on it, has reached a completely new level of cynicism and hypocrisy.

The problem of corruption, which is deeply rooted in the Ukrainian government, persists. The measures declared by the authorities to combat it, including the establishment of relevant specialized mechanisms, have proven ineffective in practice. The situation in this area was pointed out with concern by Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, Independent Expert of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of human rights, following his mission to Ukraine in May 2018.³ The extent of corruption was also highlighted by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in April 2014⁴ and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in February 2017. According to CEDAW experts, corruption, as well as growth of unemployment, decline in standards of living of the population, and the ongoing crisis create favourable conditions for widespread human trafficking.⁵

³ Report by Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, following his visit to Ukraine in May 2018. December 2018. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/448/76/PDF/G1844876.pdf?OpenElement>

⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the sixth periodic report of Ukraine. April 2014. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fEST%2fC.O%2f6&Lang=en

⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine. February 2017. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fEST%2fC.O%2f8&Lang=en

International human rights monitoring mechanisms have been recording numerous cases of illegal detention, torture, intimidation, ill-treatment, sexual violence, including those aimed at forcing confession or cooperation. The UN Human Rights Committee expressed concern in November 2021 about reports that acts of torture and ill-treatment continued to be perpetrated by law enforcement authorities and about the limited number of convictions handed down for such offences.⁶

The rights of citizens to a fair trial continue to be violated, especially in criminal cases related to the armed conflict. Case handling in the absence of the accused is common, and right-wing radicals often openly intimidate and attack lawyers and exert pressure on members of the judiciary.

The use of torture and violence by law enforcement agencies and the Security Service of Ukraine against detainees seems to be structural and impunity widespread.⁷

The UN Human Rights Committee raised concerns in November 2021 about the difficulty of apprehending those accountable for crimes committed during Kiev's attempts to forcibly enslave the Donbass people. The Committee, while welcoming the Kiev leadership's assurance that it will investigate all crimes committed in the context of the armed conflict (these include summary executions, acts of sexual violence, abductions, enforced disappearances, unlawful or arbitrary detentions – in this context, reference was made to an unofficial detention facility in Kharkov that operated from 2014 to 2016), noted with concern the lack of progress made in this direction. It also noted that there were reports indicating that victims, particularly women, often did not report offences because of fear of reprisal, lack of trust in state institutions and lack of

⁶ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (the observations were published in February 2022) https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=en

⁷ Report of Nils Melzer, Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment on his visit to Ukraine, from 28 May to 8 June 2018. January 2019. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/010/58/PDF/G1901058.pdf?OpenElement>

knowledge about their rights. Besides, it noted that lawyers were being threatened for having defended individuals in cases related to the armed conflict. Therefore, HRCtee recommended that steps be taken to punish those responsible and to provide protection for complainants and attorneys. Additionally, it was recommended to ensure that individuals found guilty of grave human rights violations be expelled from office.⁸

Coerced confessions are a common practice. UN experts documented cases of individuals who complained that they had been forced by investigative bodies or SBU to confess to being affiliated or linked with the armed groups on camera. In several cases, such videos were published on the official websites of the national police or SBU.⁹

Since the launch by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation of the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect civilians of the Donbass, the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev has definitively ceased even false attempts to pretend it maintains law and order and respects human rights in the country.

The authorities uncontrollably hand out weapons to anyone interested, which is used primarily by criminal elements. Criminals, including those convicted of serious criminal offences, are being released from prisons. We are referring in particular to former military officers Sergei Torbin (convicted for the murder of Kherson activist Ekaterina Gandzyuk), Dmitriy Balaboukh (convicted for the murder of a civilian during the conflict in the Donbass), former deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and commander of the Donbass battalion Semyon Semchenko, and former commander of the Tornado battalion Ruslan Onishchenko (convicted for torture, rape and

⁸ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (the observations were published in February 2022)

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2F8%2F8&Lang=en

⁹ OHCHR report on Human Rights in the Administration of Justice in Conflict-Related Criminal Cases in Ukraine from April 2014 – April 2020 August 2020

<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/Ukraine-admin-justice-conflict-related-cases-en.pdf>

incitement to suicide). As a result, Kiev and other major Ukrainian cities have seen a surge in banditry, looting, armed attacks and murders, and the self-appointed territorial defence units are engaged in robbery instead of protecting fellow citizens.

Chaos and lawlessness have spread across the country. People who raise the slightest suspicion are detained, interrogated and searched by radicals. As a result, civilians face the risk of being killed on the flimsy pretext of belonging to allegedly numerous "subversive groups" and "collaborators". Numerous images of the Nazi's extrajudicial punishment and abuse of civilians are published on the Internet.

Male citizens are subjected to illegal forced mobilization. On 16 April 2024, Zelenskiy signed the law adopted by the Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine on 11 April 2024 on even tougher mobilization. For example, it defines new categories of citizens who are not any more eligible to military deferment, expands coercive measures against violators of military registration rules (forced delivery to the military registration office by the police, restriction of the right to drive a car, to travel abroad, to receive consular services abroad, including passport registration, etc.). All persons liable for military service, including those abroad, must update their data within 60 days of the law's entry into force at territorial recruitment centers, administrative service centers or on their online personal accounts. The law introduces the rule that all men from 18 to 60 years of age must carry a military ID card, regardless of whether or not they are fit for service or eligible for military deferment.¹⁰

In addition, on 10 April 2024, the Verkhovnaya Rada passed, in the first reading, yet another "mobilization" bill increasing fines for violation of military registration rules tenfold and introducing criminal liability for refusal to undergo a medical examination.

¹⁰ https://24tv.ua/ru/zakon-o-mobilizacii-2024-kakie-izmeneniya-budut-kto-ne-podlezhit_n2533812

Both these documents are at odds with international legal norms and Ukrainian legislation. Even Ukrainian Ombudsman, Dmitriy Lubinets, has pointed out that the draft laws contain provisions that contradict the Constitution of Ukraine.¹¹

Right-wing militant groups use civilians as "human shields" with the tacit permission of the authorities. This was noted even in the documents of Amnesty International. The organization's paper, "Ukraine: Military Endangers Civilians by Deploying Troops in Residential Areas – A New Study",¹² emphasizes that by turning civilian objects into military targets, the Armed Forces of Ukraine violate international humanitarian law. The Ukrainian military establish bases and operating weapons systems mainly in residential areas – including in schools and hospitals.

In addition, media reports emerged of a surge in trafficking in human beings and children in Ukraine in 2022, or, more precisely, in human organs for transplantation (the previous peak of such illegal activities was observed in 2014-2015). This was also pointed out by international organizations, including the OSCE, which noted in 2014 that bodies of people with removed internal organs, most likely victims of transplantologists, were found in mass graves in the area of military operations. This information was published, in particular, by the Tsargrad TV channel.¹³ Experts also note that, while the Kiev regime was preparing for an offensive against the Donbass Republics, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine began to urgently consider bills aimed at simplifying the activities of transplantologists in the country to the maximum, and in 2022 law-making in this area became even more active. At the end of 2021, deputies from the presidential party "Servant of the People" initiated and passed a law through

¹¹ https://24tv.ua/ru/est-normy-protivorechashhie-konstitucii-ombudsmen-otreagiroval-na-zakonoproekt-o-mobilizacii_n2461010

¹² <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/ukraine-military-endangering-civilians-locating-forces-residential-areas-new>

¹³ See, for example, https://amp.tsargrad.tv/articles/chjornaja-transplantologija-na-ukraine-izvestna-propiska-doktora-smert_604078, https://tsargrad.tv/investigations/konec-v-krematorij-ukraina-platit-za-oruzhie-vnutrennimi-organami-grazhdan_523850

the Verkhovnaya Rada according to which a Ukrainian could become a donor under a simplified procedure. The requirement to notarize the written consent of the donor or, in case of his/her death, his/her next of kin, for organ transplantation was cancelled. On 14 April 2022, the Verkhovnaya Rada adopted a new law on transplantation according to which this activity was exempt from VAT, which actually created prerequisites for the easiest possible export of human organs from Ukraine.¹⁴ In short, the Kosovo Liberation Army, whose members are known to have been stained for cooperating with "black transplantologists," has found "worthy" followers in Ukraine.

Russian servicemen taken hostage are being held in appalling conditions and subjected to torture and other forms of inhuman and cruel treatment. This has been confirmed by international monitoring mechanisms.

At a briefing on 15 November 2022, Matilda Bogner, head of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, acknowledged that, based on the results of interviews with 175 Russian prisoners of war, the Mission had received information about their ill-treatment and torture by SBU.¹⁵

On 24 January 2023, responding to a question from the Russian news agency RIA-Novosti, OHCHR spokesperson, Ravina Shamdasani, confirmed that the Office was aware of the video recording of the torture of Russian prisoners of war which was attached to the material for the preparation of relevant reports. In addition, she recalled that the OHCHR report on the first 6 months of the conflict documented 50 cases of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners of war by the Armed Forces of Ukraine.¹⁶

On 24 March 2023, Matilda Bogner, presenting HRMMU's report on treatment of prisoners of war in Ukraine, reported summary executions of some 25 Russian POWs by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. She said almost half of the

¹⁴ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221027-zelenskiy-prevratil-ukrainu-v-ray-dlya-chernykh-transplantologov/>

¹⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/ru/press-briefing-notes/2022/22/ukraine-russia-prisoners-war>

¹⁶ <https://ria.ru/20230124/video-1847213537.html>

229 interviewed Russian POWs spoke of being tortured or ill-treated by the Armed Forces and Security Service of Ukraine. They were beaten, shot in the legs, stabbed in their limbs, electrocuted, subjected to mock executions, threats of sexual violence or death.¹⁷

On 31 March 2023, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, confirmed this information during his speech at the 52nd session of the UN Human Rights Council. He said that the Ukrainian authorities had not initiated criminal proceedings against their military who had shot the prisoners. There was no response even when evidence of war crimes was documented.¹⁸

On 8 October 2023, Roremary DiCarlo, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, spoke about torture or ill-treatment of Russian prisoners of war in Ukraine at the UN Security Council meeting on Ukraine.¹⁹

There is no question of the Ukrainian authorities bringing those responsible for many of these offences to justice. The relevant international organizations, such as the Council of Europe, the OSCE, a number of United Nations bodies and others, which pretend that nothing of the sort is happening, although they are sometimes forced to acknowledge the human rights violations committed in Ukraine, are also silent on this matter. In fact, at the moment, international organizations by their actions contribute to the Kiev regime's avoidance of responsibility for its numerous human rights violations. All this gives the Zelenskiy regime a feeling of complete impunity.

The following example is very illustrative in this regard. Since 2008, the United Nations has had a global monitoring of the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which operates within the framework of the UN Human Rights Council. According to the rules, every member state of the World Organization without exception is subject to this review on a regular basis on a rotational basis. Until

¹⁷ <https://news.un.org/ru/story/2023/03/1439157>

¹⁸ <https://rg.ru/2023/03/31/oon-okolo-poloviny-plennyh-bojcov-vs-rf-podvergalis-pytkam-na-ukraine.html>

¹⁹ <https://www.pnp.ru/in-world/rossiyskie-plennye-na-ukraine-soobshili-oon-o-pytkakh.html>

recently, no country avoided going through the UPR procedure. Now, under pressure from Kiev's Western patrons, the HRCttee has taken the unprecedented decision to allow Ukraine not to undergo this procedure in 2023 and to postpone it to 2027, thus, in effect, giving the Kiev regime carte blanche to continue its mass crimes against human rights.

At the same time, Ukraine's gradual withdrawal from the UN human rights treaty bodies began in 2011, when Kiev reported for the last time to most of the convention committees. Already in February 2022, this process was legalised when, using Article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Ukrainian regime declared itself free from obligations under a wide range of articles of this document.

There are also examples of absolutely blatant cover-up of the Kiev regime by the special procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council. In particular, following her visit to Ukraine in the autumn of 2023, the HRC Special Rapporteur on Torture, Alice Gill Edwards, described the situation with torture in Ukraine as "not causing concern" and the efforts of the authorities to prevent it as "impressive".

At the same time, in 2022, due to the declaration of martial law in the country, Kiev officially announced the temporary suspension of Ukraine's obligations under a number of articles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Since then, Ukraine has regularly extended the martial law regime and notified international bodies, as well as confirmed or modified the parameters of its participation in international human rights treaties in this regard. With this in mind, Ukraine's official suspension of a number of provisions of international treaties remains in place to date, including articles 12 (on freedom of movement and choice of residence), 17 (on interference in private and family life), 19 (on freedom of expression), 21 (on the right to peaceful assembly) and 25 (on participation in public affairs and

elections) of the Covenant and articles 8 (right to respect for private and family life), 10 (freedom of expression), 11 (freedom of assembly and association) of the Convention, as well as articles 1 (protection of property), 2 (right to education), 3 (right to free elections) of the Additional Protocol to the Convention and article 2 (freedom of movement) of Protocol No. 4 to the Convention.

Nevertheless, a number of international human rights organizations and mechanisms still demonstrate commitment to the objective fulfilment of their mandate and point out facts of human rights violations in Ukraine. Such materials, which are few in number, are cited in this section of the report when describing the relevant episodes of human rights violations.

It should be noted that the numerous reports of crimes committed with unprecedented brutality by Ukrainian neo-Nazi groups and foreign mercenaries against Russian servicemen are not included in this document. An assessment of these criminal acts by contemporary neo-Nazis in Ukraine, who fully demonstrated their loyalty to the hateful ideas and tactics of the German fascists and local collaborators from the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)²⁰ during the Great Patriotic War, is being made by the Russian competent authorities as part of the investigation of numerous criminal cases concerning these heinous crimes. Significant efforts are also being made by Russian civil society organizations and all concerned individuals to uncover the truth about the true face of the Ukrainian authorities and the national radicals they are covering up. Information on the crimes will be included in separate analytical materials.

In Russia, crimes against civilians in the Donbass and in Ukraine committed by the Kiev military and political leadership, nationalists and representatives of the Ukrainian security forces since 2014 have been recorded and investigated by the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation (IC

²⁰ Both organizations are recognised as extremist and banned in Russia

of Russia). As of 5 March 2024, some 4,500 criminal cases have already been opened. Such crimes include genocide, terrorism, cruel treatment of civilians, use of prohibited means and methods in an armed conflict, murder, intentional destruction and damage to property (Articles 205, 356, 105 and 167 of the Russian Criminal Code) and others. The defendants include 980 individuals, including representatives of the UAF high command and commanders of military units who gave criminal orders to shell civilians and civilian infrastructure.

More than 200 of them are wanted. A total of 250 criminal cases have been completed and sentences have been handed down against more than 280 Ukrainian servicemen, who have been sentenced to 8 to 29 years' imprisonment and life imprisonment²¹. Other criminal cases are still under consideration. The Investigative Committee is establishing and providing a legal assessment of the actions of all persons involved in the offences committed.

In addition, work to collect, systematise and make public information on the crimes of the Kiev regime is being carried out through the creation in 2023 of a special post of Ambassador-at-Large on this issue in the system of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Rodion Miroshnik has been appointed to this post.

²¹ <https://sledcom.ru/news/item/1865695/>

Glorification of Nazism

A policy of falsifying history and whitewashing Nazi criminals and fascist henchmen is being pursued at the State level in Ukraine. The Kiev regime has created a legal framework for this purpose.

The Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada enacted a "decommunization package" comprising normative legal provisions in April 2015.

In particular, the law "On condemnation of communist and national-socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes in Ukraine and ban on propaganda of their symbols", "On access to archives of repressive bodies of communist totalitarian regime of 1917-1991", "On commemoration of victory over Nazism in World War II of 1939-1945" and "On the legal status and commemoration of fighters for independence of Ukraine in the 20th century".

In accordance with these documents, Soviet symbols were banned, the Communist regime was condemned, the archives of the Soviet secret services were opened, the fighters of the Ukrainian military nationalist formations of World War II – the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)²² and their leaders – the leader of the OUN Stepan Bandera, and Roman Shukhevich, commander-in-chief of the UPA, who served in the Third Reich's Nachtigall Battalion, the 201st battalion of the Ukrainian Legion Schutzmannschaft.

In addition, criminal responsibility was introduced for a negative assessment of the activities of these structures, as well as for the manufacture, distribution and public use of symbols of the "communist totalitarian regime."

Laws on "decommunization" affected such issues as the provision of benefits to former members of nationalist armed formations and the ban on the use of Soviet symbols, as well as symbols and insignia of the Red Army. In May 2017 the Ukrainian Code on Administrative Violations was amended to

²² Both organizations are recognised as extremist in the Russian Federation.

prohibit the public use, wearing or display of the ribbon of Saint George, (or Guards ribbon) or even pictures of it.

In line with the provisions of the law "On the legal status and commemoration of fighters for the independence of Ukraine in the 20th century," on 30 January 2018, Lvov Regional Council decided to use the flag of the OUN-UPA on an equal basis with the state flag of Ukraine. Similar decisions were taken by the Volyn Regional Council, city councils in Ternopol, Kiev, and a number of other cities.²³

In December 2018, a law was passed to amend the law "On the status of war veterans, guarantees of their social protection" (No. 2640-VIII), which essentially equated collaborators as "participants in the struggle for the independence of Ukraine in the 20th century" and veterans who fought on the side of the anti-Hitler coalition²⁴.

On 20 June 2023, Zelenskiy signed a law on the payment of pensions to "political prisoners of the Soviet Union", including former Bandera and UPA fighters. Funds for the new payments will be taken from the cancelled pensions for Soviet figures and holders of Soviet awards and titles.

In 2023, Victory Day celebrations on 9 May were finally replaced at the official level by a day of reconciliation similar to European countries. On 8 May 2023, Vladimir Zelenskiy signed a decree according to which in Ukraine from this year 9 May instead of the Day of Victory over Nazism in World War II is celebrated as Europe Day.

²³ Infringement of rights and freedoms in Ukraine. Manifestation of discrimination, incitement of ethnic hatred, hate crimes and extremism. Report for the OSCE human dimension implementation meeting 2019. The Institute of legal policy and social protection, the Antifascist human rights legal league. 2019.

²⁴ <https://strana.today/news/175167-bojtsy-upa-oun-i-unra-poluchili-v-ukraine-status-uchastnikov-boevykh-dejstvij.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/175244-vekhovnaya-rada-predostavila-status-uchastnikov-boevykh-dejstvij-bojtsam-upa-oun-uvo-polesskaja-sech-i-unra-sut-zakona.html>)

Commemorating Nazis at the legislative level

A major example of Kiev's state policy in the area of "preserving national memory" is the inclusion of Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine resolutions on the commemoration of significant dates and anniversaries of Ukrainian collaborators with the Nazis. In addition, back in 2018, The Verkhovnaya Rada approved the OUN nationalists' slogan "Glory to Ukraine! – Glory to Heroes!", which copies the well-known Nazi salute.

In 2019, among the significant dates that the Verkhovnaya Rada decided to be commemorated in 2020 were the anniversaries of the births of well-known Nazi collaborators, including Vladimir Kubiyovich who supported collaboration with the Nazis and was a founder of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division, Ivan Poltavets-Ostryanitsa, head of the statute of the Ukrainian National Cossack Movement (UNAKOR) which included auxiliary police divisions that took part in massacres of Jews in Volyn, Zhitomir, Vinnitsa, and Belaya Tserkov, Vasiliy Levkovich, member of the Ukrainian auxiliary police division in Dubno, and later the commander of the Bug Military District, controlled by UPA, who was convicted of treason by the Military Tribunal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kiev Oblast in 1947), Ulas Samchuk, activist from the OUN and the editor-in-chief of Volyn, a pro-Nazi newspaper published in Rovno, who published antisemitic articles calling for the extermination of Jews, Vasiliy Sidor (a member of the OUN and UPA who served as commander of a section of the Nachtigall battalion – which participated in punitive operations – and who continued to take part in underground activities and held the position of deputy chief commander of the UPA until suppression in 1949, Andrey Melnik, the head of the OUN board, openly collaborated with the Nazis, the head of the Ukrainian National Rada in Kiev during the war, the organizer of the Ukrainian auxiliary police units, and the organizer of mass murders of Jews), Kirill Osmak, member of the Stepan Bandera wing of the OUN, and one of the leaders of the Ukrainian National Rada in Kiev, headed by Andrey Melnik,

Alexander Vyshnivskiy, one of the organizers of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division, Yaroslav Starukh, member of the OUN board, and organizer of anti-Jewish pogroms, Vasiliy Galas, one of the leaders of the OUN, who led the OUN underground network in Western Ukraine, an organizer of anti-Jewish pogroms in Ternopol Oblast and massacres of Poles, as well as other nationalists, in particular Maxim Zhelezniak, leader of the Kolivschina uprising in the 18th century, who was involved in the massacre of Jews in Uman. In many of the above cases the persons being commemorated are simply described in neutral terms (thus Vladimir Kubiiovich was a "historian and geographer", Yaroslav Starukh was a "political and military figure" and Ulas Samchuk was "writer, publicist and journalist") with no reference to their links to Ukrainian nationalism. The memorial events honouring these "public figures" are all being financed by the state. The Ministry of Education and Sciences has been instructed to organize lessons and educational events. There were also plans to issue commemorative coins and postage stamps in honour of these individuals.

The Decree of the Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine of 16 December 2020 on the celebration of commemorative dates and anniversaries in 2021 provided for celebration at the state level of the anniversary birthdays of Sergei Timoshenko, Minister of UNR, who was engaged in building military facilities of Wehrmacht in Poland, Leonid Perfetskiy, veteran of SS division "Galicia"), Nikolai Kapustyanskiy, deputy head of a wing of the OUN of Andrey Melnik, engaged in the formation of auxiliary Ukrainian units for the Nazis, Vladimir Szczygelskiy, who was a member of the UPA for some time, shot in post-war Poland for aiding the Nazis, Dmitriy Klyachkovskiy (one of the organizers of the Volyn Massacre – the mass murder of tens of thousands of peaceful Poles, including women and children, by UPA units in 1943-1944), Ivan Litvinenko (Nazi collaborator, participant in the Holocaust), Osip Dyakiy (member of the OUN, liquidated by Soviet security forces) and Rostislav Voloshin (member of the OUN and UPA, Nazi collaborator, head of

the regional government in Rovno, who was complicit in the extermination of more than 20,000 Jews of that city).²⁵

On 17 December 2021, the Verkhovnaya Rada adopted a resolution on the celebration of memorable dates and anniversaries in 2022-2023. According to the document, the celebrations include the 80th anniversary of the creation of the UPA and the 110th anniversary of Stepan Bandera's associate Yaroslav Stetsko (who wrote to Hitler in July 1941 after the Nazi occupation of Lvov: "Your Excellency! Filled with sincere gratitude and admiration for your heroic army, which covered itself with unfading glory on the battlefields against the worst enemy of Europe – Moscow Bolshevism, we send you, the Great Führer, on behalf of the entire Ukrainian people and its government, which is established in the liberated Lemberg [Lvov], heartfelt congratulations and wishes to crown this struggle with complete victory..."); 130th anniversary of Porfiri Silenko-Kravets – member of the Nazi occupation of Lvov. Silenko-Kravets, a member of the SS division "Galicia", who received the "Iron Cross"²⁶ from the Nazis for his service in its ranks; 130th anniversary of "geologist and geographer" Yuriy Polianskiy, who was the mayor of Lvov under the Nazis and directly participated in the mass extermination of Lvov Jews, murder of Polish intelligentsia, pogroms and robberies; 100th anniversary of the birth of Fyodor Vorobets – a member of the OUN and one of the guides of the UPA, a Nazi collaborator who arrived on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR together with the Germans in 1941, etc.²⁷

On 21 December 2023, the Verkhovnaya Rada adopted another resolution on the celebration of memorial dates and anniversaries in 2024-2025²⁸. According to the document, it is planned to mark the anniversaries of many

²⁵ <https://strana.today/news/306764-pamjatnye-daty-2021-hoda-koho-vnesli-v-postanovlenie-verkhovnoj-rady.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/306764-pamjatnye-daty-2021-hoda-koho-vnesli-v-postanovlenie-verkhovnoj-rady.html>)

²⁶ <https://amp.ctvana.news/news/367541-pamjatnye-daty-ukrainy-2022-2023-hoda.html>

²⁷ <https://vp.donetsk.ua/ukraina-mir/100938-vr-prinyala-postanovlenie-o-prazdnovanii-pamyatnykh-dat-v-2022>

²⁸ <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3536-20>

OUN and UPA figures at the state level, including Darya Husyak (personal contact of Roman Shukhevich"), Evgeniy Shtender (UPA centurion), Stepan Frasulyak (UPA lieutenant colonel who led the training of the organization's fighters), Stepan Lenkavskiy (Stepan Bandera's successor as leader of the OUN, author of the "10 Commandments of the Ukrainian Nationalist", who lived in Germany after World War II), Mikhail Zelenchuk (UPA militant), etc.

The orders issued by the Verkhovnaya Rada are being implemented by the authorities in the regions, who are issuing regulations of their own for this purpose.

On 24 December 2019 the Lvov Regional Council issued an order allotting state funds in 2020 to commemorate Andrey Melnik, one of the leaders of the OUN and a Ukrainian nationalist, and Ivan Lipa and his son Yuriy Lipa, both nationalist ideologists.

On 27 February 2020, the Kiev city council issued a ruling proposed by Y. Sirotyuk, a deputy from the Svoboda party, on the celebration of significant dates in Kiev, including anniversaries related to collaborators. The persons honoured included Vladimir Kubyovych, Ivan Poltavets-Ostryanitsa, Vasiliy Levkovich, Ulas Samchuk, Vasiliy Sidor, Yuriy Lipa, Vasiliy Galas and Andrey Melnik²⁹.

Other draft laws aimed at glorifying Nazism have also been submitted to the Ukrainian parliament. Thus, on 21 September 2020, the representatives of the parliamentary factions Voice, Servant of the People, and Oksana Savchuk, member of the Svoboda party, came up with an initiative to submit a draft resolution to the parliament to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the proclamation in Lvov "Act of the restoration of the Ukrainian state", adopted on 30 June 1941 during the Nazi occupation of Western Ukraine.

²⁹ <https://strana.today/news/252473-kollaboranty-v-ukraine-khha-podderzhal-postanovlenie-o-pamjatykh-datakh-i-jubilejakh.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/252473-kollaboranty-v-ukraine-khha-podderzhal-postanovlenie-o-pamjatykh-datakh-i-jubilejakh.html>)

In particular, it stated that "the restored Ukrainian State will closely co-operate with National Socialist Great Germany, which, under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, is creating a new order in Europe and in the world".³⁰

³⁰ Ukrainian Institute of National Memory. <https://uinp.gov.ua/istorychnyy-kalendar/cherven/30/1941-progoloshennya-vidnovlennya-ukrayinskoyi-derzhavy>

Statements in support of Nazism and hate speech

Officials from Ukraine have regularly and openly declared their admiration for Nazi leaders. For example, former speaker of the Verkhovnaya Rada Andrey Paruby in September 2018 in a live broadcast of the ICTV called Hitler "the biggest man who practiced direct democracy".³¹

The activities of the Ukrainian Consul in Hamburg V.Marushchynets, who actively published xenophobic and racist posts in social networks, justifying Nazism and antisemitism, received a wide response in the media. Additionally, he made public pictures of himself holding a Bandera flag and a cake, designed as Mein Kampf by Hitler that his co-workers had given him for his 60th birthday. In May 2018, Marushchynets was dismissed from the service, but in early November 2019, the media reported that Ukrainian courts had ruled his dismissal illegal.³²

Aleksandr Nakonechniy, Mayor of Karlovka in the Poltava area, posted images wearing a Nazi uniform on the social media platform "Facebook" on 3 May 2019³³.

An incident received a notable response in October 2019, involving then-Ukrainian Prime Minister Aleksey Goncharuk's participation in the concert by the band Sekira Peruna, which chanted Hitler, Rudolf Hess, and SS troops, using Nazi symbols. This prompted a criminal case to be opened against it in 2018. Neo-Nazis from Ukraine made up the audience for this event, which was arranged by Andrey Medvedko. Medvedko was jailed on suspicion of killing writer and journalist Oles Buzina, but was later freed along with Denis Polishchuk and other suspects under pressure from the neo-Nazis. Alexey Goncharuk greeted the "veterans" of the ATO from the stage. Later, he

³¹ <https://korrespondent.net/ukraine/4007639-parubyi-vspomnil-o-priamoi-demokratyy-hytlera>

³² <https://lenta.ru/news/2019/11/12/zvilen/>, https://aif.ru/politics/world/fashistom_byt_pochetno_ukrainskiy-konsul-antisemit_vosstanovlen_na-rabote

³³ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

confirmed his participation in the neo-Nazi coven on Facebook, explaining that he wanted to "congratulate veterans and talk about sore."³⁴

The tone of the Nazi-like statements was set by the country's leadership – in an interview published on 5 August 2021, President Zelenskiy advised Russians to get out of Ukraine.

On 17 March 2022, the head of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, Sergei Deineko, posted a post on his Facebook page in which he called for the murder of Russian women and children. The post was later deleted.³⁵

Alexander Turchinov, the former acting president of Ukraine, chairman of the Verkhovna Rada, and secretary of the NSDC of Ukraine, urged people to "kill Russians wherever possible, not only in Ukraine but also outside of it – on the territory of Russia" on his VKontakte page on 8 March 2022.³⁶

On 1 July 2022, Andrey Melnik, then Ukraine's Ambassador to Germany, stated that Bandera was a "freedom fighter" and had nothing to do with the mass murder of Jews and Poles. His words caused outrage not only in Poland but also in Germany, and were criticized by Felix Klein, Federal Government Commissioner for Jewish Life in Germany and the Fight against Antisemitism, as well as by the Israeli Embassy in Berlin.

Petr Vrublevskiy, Ukraine's Ambassador to Kazakhstan, who had already returned to Kiev, made the following remarks to the media on 22 August 2022: "We try to kill them (Russians) as much as possible. The more we kill Russians now, the less our children will have to kill. That's it."

Earlier, Boris Filatov, Mayor of Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk), spoke in the same vein: "The time for cold rage has come. With an entirely clear conscience, we now have a full moral right to kill these subhumans anywhere in the world, indefinitely, and in the greatest number conceivable".

³⁴ <https://rg.ru/2019/10/14/premer-ukrainy-otdozhnul-v-kompanii-neonacistov.html>

³⁵ <https://politnavigator.news/ukrainskij-general-pobeshhal-ubivat-russkikh-zhenshhin-i-detejj.html>

³⁶ https://vk.com/video-202555139_456240594

On 15 December 2022, Valery Zaluzhniy, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, said in an interview with *The Economist*: "The most important experience we had, and which we professed almost like a religion, was that "Russians and any other enemies must be killed, just killed, and, most important of all, we should not be afraid to do it."³⁷

In December 2022, Igor Klimenko, head of the national police, called Russian-speaking residents of the Donbass "people poisoned by Russian propaganda" and "the main problem of this region".³⁸

On 1 January 2023, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, in its official X account, made a post glorifying Stepan Bandera, which also contained his quotes. After condemnation by Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, who stated that there would be no leniency for those who refuse to admit that the terrible genocide was something unimaginable and make a full atonement, a full confession of guilt, the post was deleted.³⁹

On 18 May 2023, Mikhail Podolyak, advisor to the head of the President's Office, wrote on his X page: "Yes, Ukraine hates you [Russians]. We will persecute you. Always and everywhere. Ukraine will get each of you, and it doesn't matter how exactly – legally or physically".⁴⁰

On 15 June 2023, he also said on air at an all-Ukrainian telethon that "there is one plan – to push forward as hard as possible with maximum killing of Russians".

On 14 July 2023, commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces Valery Zaluzhniy noted in an interview with "The Washington Post" that "the problem is all ours, so it is up to us to decide how to kill our enemy. In a war,

³⁷ <https://www.economist.com/zaluzhny-profile>

³⁸ <https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/igor-klimenko-zaraz-ukrayini-bilshe-temryavi-1670509562.html>

³⁹ <https://strana.today/news/420555-v-polshe-osudili-publikatsiju-rady-ko-dnju-rozhdenija-bandery.html>

⁴⁰ https://twitter.com/Podolyak_M/status/1659095813916688386

you can and must kill them in their territory. If our partners are afraid to use their weapons, we will kill with our own. But only as many as necessary".⁴¹

It should be noted that such steps by Ukrainian representatives drew the attention of the international community, as was the case with the above-mentioned statement of Andrey Melnik. Back in 2016, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed its concern about the increasing frequency of racist hate speech and discriminatory statements in public discourse in Ukraine, including in speeches by public and political figures, in the media, particularly the Internet, and during rallies, mainly directed against minorities.⁴²

The spread of neo-Nazism and the activities of radical groups in Ukraine have been highlighted by both NGOs and foreign politicians. Earlier, in November 2020, the Center for Countering Digital Hate, NGO (CCDH) presented a report in which Ukraine was named as one of the centers of dissemination of neo-Nazi ideology.⁴³

A group of French senators, following a visit to Kiev in May 2021, issued a statement that the activity of neo-Nazi forces in Ukraine cannot but cause concern. As the senators explained, in the midst of a fair as part of the Kiev Day celebrations in the center of the capital, they unexpectedly came across a pavilion where members of the neo-Nazi Azov battalion were teaching children how to assemble and disassemble weapons. The pavilion was also used to sign up volunteers to fight in the Donbass and featured an improvised shooting range. As part of their so-called performance, Ukrainian radicals offered young people to shoot at a paper Kremlin. Nearby, stalls were selling identity cards of

⁴¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/07/14/ukraine-military-valery-zaluzhny-russia/>

⁴² The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's concluding observations on the twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Ukraine. August 2016
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=en

⁴³ Hatebook. Facebook's neo-Nazi shopfronts funding far-right extremism. Report by Center for Countering Digital Hate. https://252f2edd-1c8b-49f5-9bb2-cb57bb47e4ba.filesusr.com/ugd/f4d9b9_55b47be4de914daf866cfa1810cc56c5.pdf

Nazi soldiers from the Second World War, swastikas and other attributes. Senator N. Goulet, who personally witnessed all this, sent a parliamentary inquiry to the French Foreign Ministry. After that, SBU launched an investigation against this group of French senators.⁴⁴ The French Foreign Ministry, however, saw nothing alarming in this situation and in its reply to Goulet's enquiry noted that "there are neo-Nazi groups in Ukraine", but their popularity "does not exceed the European average".⁴⁵

Thus, with the tacit approval of the "collective West," Ukraine ignores the concerns of the international community and continues to actively promote neo-Nazi ideology.

⁴⁴ <https://remembrance.ru/2021/06/30/kyiv-vozvushhen-tem-chto-evropejcy-na-ukraine-nashli-nacistov/>

⁴⁵ <https://i-sng.ru/publikacii/zabyli-shkolnyy-urok-istorii-pochem/>

Holding events honouring Nazis and their collaborators

In Ukraine, it is not uncommon for officials at various levels to organize events and public activities glorifying Hitler's Germany, the German Nazis and their collaborators.

Thus, the Verkhovna Rada leadership organized a thematic exhibition in July 2018 to mark the "77th anniversary of the Act on the Restoration of the Ukrainian State," which was passed on 30 June 1941, and which established a protectorate dependent on the Nazis in Galicia, as well as laid the foundation for this entity's cooperation with Nazi Germany. The exhibition was dedicated to the activities of OUN leaders: Stepan Bandera, Yaroslav Stetsko, and Roman Shukhevich, commander of Nachtigall battalion and UPA during the initial period of the Great Patriotic War.⁴⁶

In February 2019, the nationalist forces were outraged by a police operation to disperse a nationalist rally in Kiev's Kontraktovaya Square, during which an officer shouted: "Lie down, Bandera!" In response, national police heads launched a flash mob, #IamABanderite, in the social media. The head of the national Police Sergei Knyazev and the head of the patrol police Department Evgeniy Zhukov posted this phrase on their Facebook pages.

In March 2019, the chief of the General staff of the AFU, Victor Muzhenko, approved the new stripes of the army brigades. The red-and-black chevron with the image of a skull and the inscription "Ukraine or Death" is approved for military personnel of the 72nd Mechanized Brigade named after the Black Zaporozhets of the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. These chevrons have a visual resemblance to the insignia of the SS Dead Head tank division.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ <https://rada.gov.ua/ru/news/Novosty/Soobshchenyya/160401/html>; <https://easaily.com/ru/news/2018/07/05/v-rade-ukrainy-otkryta-vystavka-vo-slavu-nahtigalya-i-evreyskih-pogromov>

⁴⁷ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/2587743.html>

In June 2020, Vladimir Mikolayenko, mayor of then Ukrainian Kherson,⁴⁸ congratulated the local residents on an anniversary of the "Act of Restoration of Ukrainian Statehood" promulgated by the OUN collaborationists in Lvov in 1941. The Act committed to "work closely with the National Socialist Greater Germany, under the leadership of its leader Adolf Hitler, which is forming a new order in Europe and the world and is helping the Ukrainian People to free itself from Moscovite occupation". Posters showing a reproduction of the issue of the OUN newspaper, Independent Ukraine, for 10 July 1941, and citing the text of the above law, were displayed around the city.⁴⁹

In 2022 it became known that Nazi ideas were widespread not only among the volunteer formations, of which neo-Nazis formed the backbone, but also among the Ukrainian military. Nazi symbols are commonly found in tattoos covering the bodies of Ukrainian army personnel, who also openly wear chevrons bearing Nazi symbols and slogans. Quite frequently these are exact copies of chevrons that Germans and their accomplices sported during the Great Patriotic War.

Specifically, there were media reports that militants from Azov⁵⁰, Aidar⁵¹, and other nationalist units, captured by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, wear swastikas, chevrons and symbols of the Nazi battalions of the Waffen-SS, have relevant tattoos and openly read and propagate Adolf Hitler's book "Mein Kampf".⁵²

Ukrainian government representatives have also been seen using Nazi insignia. President Zelenskiy, for one, illustrated his Victory Day greetings to the public on 9 May 2022 (posted in his Telegram account), with a photograph

⁴⁸ On 30 September 2022, the Russian Federation and the Kherson Oblast concluded an agreement on the admission of the Kherson Oblast to the Russian Federation.

⁴⁹ <https://easaily.com/ru/news/2020/06/26/mer-hersona-pozdravil-gorozhan-s-banderovskim-aktom-i-prisyagoy-gitleru>

⁵⁰ Designated as terrorist organization.

⁵¹ Designated as terrorist organization.

⁵² <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/997883-lavrov-nacifikaciya-ukraina>

showing a Ukrainian soldier with the SS Totenkopf emblem on his chest. After the scandal erupted, the picture was promptly removed from the post. However, the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence did not take down a comparable image of a soldier with the logo of the SS-Panzerdivision Totenkopf.

On 1 January of each year, torchlight processions are held in Kiev and other Ukrainian cities to mark the birthday of OUN leader Stepan Bandera. They are accompanied by the shouting of nationalist slogans and the display of Nazi salutes and symbols. Since 2019, the date has been given a national holiday status.

On 1 January 2021, the nationalists organized torchlight processions as usual in honour of Stepan Bandera in major Ukrainian cities. According to the Ukrainian media, the number of participants in these radical marches has been falling, which was seen as a decline in public support to nationalists. At the same time, these gatherings are also held unopposed during the presidency of Vladimir Zelenskiy, who is not hiding the fact that he follows the policy of his predecessor, P. Poroshenko.⁵³

Another torchlight procession was held in Kiev on 1 January 2022. The march was led by activists of the nationalist party All-Ukrainian Union "Svoboda" and other extreme right-wing radical organizations, as well as representatives of the schismatic "Orthodox Church of Ukraine" (OCU). The main poster of the march depicted the burning Kremlin with Bandera's portrait in the background. Other posters called for holding a "Nuremberg-2 trial against Moscow Judaic Communism", with their bearers shouting nationalist and xenophobic slogans.

The nationalist march was condemned by the Israeli and Belarusian embassies in Ukraine, as well as by German Foreign Ministry⁵⁴. On 3 January

⁵³ <https://strana.today/news/309866-marsh-bandery-v-kieve-1-janvarja-2021-onlajn-transljatsija-video.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/309866-marsh-bandery-v-kieve-1-janvarja-2021-onlajn-transljatsija-video.html>)

⁵⁴ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/13358107>

2022, Dmitriy Yarosh (former leader of the right-wing radical organization Right Sector) published a Facebook post in which he called Israeli Ambassador to Kiev Mikhail Brodskiy a "Kremlin agent" and called for the expulsion of "such so-called diplomats from Ukraine." Eduard Dolinskiy, Director of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee, described Yarosh's statement as "an antisemitic message", defining it as "a Judophobic division of Jews into good and bad: a good Jew must love his killers. But a Jew who dislikes Bandera and Shukhevich is an enemy, a Kremlin agent, and should be driven away".

On 1 January 2023, ceremonies commemorating the 114th anniversary of the birth of Bandera were held in the western regions of Ukraine. The traditional torchlight procession in Kiev was cancelled due to curfew and other restrictions on public events.⁵⁵

On 1 January 2024, a march honouring Bandera's birthday took place in Odessa, Ukraine.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ <https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/stepan-bandera-yak-v-ukrajini-vidznachatimut-den-narodzhennya-providnika-oun-v-umovah-viyni-50294650.html>

Activities of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory

The Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UINP) has a prominent role in the propagation of neo-Nazism. Under its previous director, Vladimir Viatrovych, known for his Russophobic and nationalist views, the UINP was active in a number of different areas, including lobbying for laws promoting the glorification of Fascist accomplices and honouring the memory of members of the Ukrainian "liberation movement", publishing "patriotic" literature and methodological recommendations for secondary and higher educational institutions, and organizing various events and festivals on the same subject with the participation of veterans from the UPA, fighters from the so-called anti-terrorist operation in South-East Ukraine (ATO), and Ukrainian "pro-banderite" historians, including the Bandershtat festival, dedicated to the Nazi collaborators. It was – and remains – very persistent in feeding the public with propaganda promoting such figures as Symon Petlyura, Evgeniy Konovalts, Stepan Bandera, Roman Shukhevich, Yaroslav Stetsko and Andrey Melnik as model citizens.

Thus, at the beginning of the year 2017, the Institute unveiled its propaganda project "UPA: Response of the Unconquered People," timed to coincide with the 75th anniversary of this criminal organization's establishment. Despite the fact that more than 70 per cent of UPA officers were former Nazi henchmen – fighters in collaborationist groups – and its commanders were members of the Schutzmannschaft, auxiliary police forces until 1943, the UINP leadership characterized it as an anti-Nazi entity. According to the UINP report for 2018, within the framework of the project "UPA: Response of the Unconquered People", events (photo exhibitions, lectures, seminars) were held in educational institutions, military units, and state institutions, the actions were aimed at popularization of the activities of UPA militants. The UINP also released a Board game that glorified members of the Bandera bandit groups for

propaganda purposes.⁵⁷ In July 2019, The Ministry of Education of Ukraine recommended this game for use in schools.⁵⁸

The Institute reconstructs "Rebel Awards", which are awarded to "participants of the "Ukrainian Liberation Movement", as well as to relatives of deceased "liberators". The UINP also organized an exhibition at the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine titled "The Ukrainian Army: 1917-1921," a set of events defined by official Ukrainian historiography as the people's battle for political self-determination and the foundation of statehood.

In December 2019, with the change of management team, there has been no real change in the organization's direction under the new leadership. In 2020, on the eve of 9 May, the new Director of the UINP A. Drobovich recorded a video dedicated to the Day of remembrance and reconciliation, celebrated on 8 May, and the 75th anniversary of the Victory over Nazism.⁵⁹ In this video, in addition to the attempts traditionally made by the current Ukrainian authorities to present Ukrainian collaborators as fighters against Nazism (although the facts of their cooperation are undeniably confirmed) the director of the UINP actually equalized the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation and the Victory Day over Nazism in World War II.⁶⁰

In May 2021, WINP draw attention once again when released the publication of another work containing distorted historical facts. The head of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee E. Dolinskiy published information about the distribution of a manual by the Institute, which tells how to celebrate Victory Day, on his page in social networks. In particular, the manual states that the

⁵⁷ See <https://ukrinform.ru/rubric-culture/2548034-y-ukraine-razrabotali-nastolnuu-igru-o-borbe-upa.html>

⁵⁸ <https://golospravdy.eu/eduard-dolinskij-ministerstvo-obrazovaniya-rekomendovalo-lozh-falsifikacii/>, <https://strana.ua/opinions/212015-sredi-detej-prodvihajut-nastolnuju-igru-s-heroicheskimi-banderoy-i-shukhevichem.html>

⁵⁹ The day of remembrance and reconciliation (8 May) became a public holiday in Ukraine in 2015. Former President Petr Poroshenko established it for the purpose of "honouring the feat of the Ukrainian people and its outstanding contribution to the victory of the Anti-Hitler Coalition in World War II, and expressing respect for all the fighters against Nazism", thus trying to unite the Red Army and Bandera supporters, many of whom served in the SS and other volunteer auxiliary units of the Nazis.

⁶⁰ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/08052020-ukraina-vstrechaet-den-pobedy-istoricheskoy-shizofreniy/>

"100,000-strong UPA" fought alongside the Allies against Nazism, despite the fact that, according to official data, in "the best of times", the number of participants of this formation amounted to 35 thousand people.⁶¹

In its similar information materials on celebrating the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation on 8 May (but not the Victory Day on 9 May), published in 2022 and 2023 and positioned, among other things, as guidelines for teachers, the UINP went even further and blamed the Soviet Union for starting World War II alongside with Nazi Germany,⁶² directly contradicting the decisions of the Nuremberg Tribunal.

In September 2021, D.Getmantsev, head of committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and people's deputy representing the governing party "Servant of the People", acknowledged in his interview to the Ukrainian Public TV that the UINP "took part in commemoration on Nazis", stating that he meant glorification of soldiers of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division.⁶³

In this context, a notable situation is a case of whether or not to recognize the emblems of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division as Nazi in Ukrainian court and the UINP's prohibition to propagate back.

In 2017, N.Myasnikova, a Kiev citizen, disputed in court the concept advocated by then-UINP Director V. Viatrovyh that the Waffen-SS Galicia Division and its emblems were not Nazi because the division belonged to SS troops rather than general SS divisions and was utilized largely as a combat unit. The claimant filed an appeal with the court asking it to recognize the UINP's and its leader's efforts to interpret paragraph 5 of part 1 of Article 1 of the Law of Ukraine, which is titled "On condemning the communist and national socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes in Ukraine and banning the

⁶¹ <https://strana.today/news/332149-ukrainskij-institut-natspamjati-sozda-metodichku-o-pravilnom-otmechanii-dnja-pobedy.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/332149-ukrainskij-institut-natspamjati-sozda-metodichku-o-pravilnom-otmechanii-dnja-pobedu.html>)

⁶² <https://uinp.gov.ua/informaciyni-materialy/vchytelyam/metodychni-rekomendaciyi/informaciyni-materialy-do-dnya-pamyati-ta-prymyrennya-8-travnja-20231>

⁶³ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/12472563>

promotion of their insignia" as illegal. It describes the Waffen-SS Galicia Division official insignia of the national-socialist (Nazi) totalitarian state and forbids the use of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (1st Galician) insignia in propaganda, taking into account any name changes that have occurred since. The claimant also requested the court to order the UNIM to retract its statements concerning the symbols of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division.⁶⁴

On 27 May 2020, the Kiev District Administrative Court concluded that the UNIM has no right to distribute the statement made by its leader, and ordered it "abstain from doing anything to disseminate" the insignia. However, the court only upheld the claimant's suit in part, rejecting other parts. Radical Ukrainian nationalists from Right Sector, the National Corps, Sokol (the Youth wing of the Svoboda party), and Tradition and Order organized a fire show in front of the court during the hearing, and the judge and N. Myasnikova's lawyer both received threats on the day before the court's decision was issued.⁶⁵

On 23 September 2020, in response to an application brought by the UNIM, the Sixth Administrative Appeals Court of Kiev overturned an earlier ruling of the District Administrative Court in which it had, in effect, classified the insignia of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division as Nazi symbols.

On 6 December 2022, on this issue, the Supreme Court of Ukraine ruled that the decision of the appellate court was lawful. Therefore, the symbols of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division are no longer considered Nazi in Ukraine.⁶⁶ This decision contradicts the verdict of the Nuremberg Tribunal, which recognized the SS troops, which included Waffen-SS Galicia Division, as a criminal

⁶⁴ <https://www.unn.com.ua/ru/news/1893299-sud-skasuvav-rishennya-oask-yakim-simvoliku-diviziyi-ss-galichina-viznavali-natsistskoyu>; <https://strana.today/news/291280-sud-priznal-nezakonnym-reshenie-o-priznanii-simvoliki-ss-halichina-natsistskoj.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/291280-sud-priznal-nezakonnym-reshenie-o-priznanii-simvoliki-ss-halichina-natsistskoj.html>)

⁶⁵ <https://strana.today/news/291414-kak-natsionalisty-zastavili-sud-otmenit-zapret-na-simvoliku-ss-halichiny.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/291414-kak-natsionalisty-zastavili-sud-otmenit-zapret-na-simvoliku-ss-halichiny.html>)

⁶⁶ <https://rg.ru/2022/12/06/verhovnyj-sud-ukrainy-ne-priznal-nacistskoj-simvoliku-divizii-ss-galichina.html>

organization. During the Great Patriotic War, its members participated in punitive actions, killed Soviet soldiers and civilians, put down uprisings in Warsaw and Slovakia, and fought against Yugoslav partisans.

Promotion on neo-Nazi ideology in education

Kiev implemented a "new" policy of patriotic education for young people based on militant Russophobia, instilling the ideology of nationalism and xenophobia in the younger generations, and praising Ukrainian Nazi accomplices posing as members of the national liberation movement after the nationalist forces took control of Ukraine as a result of an armed coup d'état in February 2014 and the outbreak of military conflict in the Donbass. It is based on the national-patriotic education strategy for 2020-2025 that the government is implementing and that President Poroshenko approved in May 2019.

According to this document, young Ukrainians' development of "value orientations and civic consciousness" should be based on "examples of the heroic struggle for the establishment of sovereignty and the ideals of freedom and unity," passed down from the Cossacks, the Sich Streltsy, the Ukrainian and Western Ukrainian People's Republics, participants in the anti-Bolshevik uprisings, the Karpatskaya Sich units, the UPA, and the dissident movement.

Distorted interpretations of historical events are aimed at cultivating nationalist sentiments among the general population, especially young people. The so-called new national idea of Ukraine, which is founded on propaganda of hatred against the Russian people and Russia, is practically the only lens through which information is presented in school textbooks. The Russian state is portrayed throughout history as the invader and brutal executioner, while Ukraine itself is shown as the sufferer. Books with such material are also published for the very young: soon following the events on the Maidan in 2014, Ukrainian historian Oleg Vitvitskiy published a new "patriotic" alphabet for children.

In accordance with the official interpretation of history, the educational literature was also "corrected". The facts proving the collaboration of Ukrainian nationalists were emasculated. For example, the Ministry of Education and Science demanded the recall of history textbooks for 10th and 11th grades,

which contain information about the cooperation of Roman Shukhevich and the "Roland" and "Nachtigall" battalions with the Nazi German army during World War II.⁶⁷

The policy of honouring the Nazis and their collaborators is becoming a negative influence on a significant part of Ukrainians, as indicated by sociological monitoring data, among other things. According to a sociological survey conducted by the "Democratic Initiatives" Foundation, the majority of Ukrainians (52 per cent) celebrate the Victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War on 9 May. At the same time, 56 per cent of respondents already agree that both Nazi Germany and the USSR are responsible for unleashing the bloodiest conflict in the history of mankind. It is worth noting that only 32.2 per cent of those surveyed chose the option that the war was World War II, not the Great Patriotic War, and was won by the anti-Hitler coalition. Almost 40 per cent of respondents support the status quo, where both Victory Day and Remembrance and Reconciliation Day are considered as public holidays.⁶⁸

Moreover, the Ukrainian authorities actually involve right-wing and ultra-nationalist groups and organizations in "patriotic work" with young people, providing state support to certain groups.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine (previously the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of Ukraine) allots a sizable amount of money each year to support "military-patriotic youth-educational" projects, such as festivals, contests, congresses, camps, military-field games, and other events that glorify Nazi collaborators Stepan Bandera, Roman Shukhevich, and others while instilling anti-Russian sentiment.

For example, during the annual all-Ukrainian children's and youth game "Jura" (Falcon), children aged 6 to 17, by analogy with the structure of the UPA, unite in "swarms" and "kurins", which are named after the "historical

⁶⁷ <https://yavoriv-info.com.ua/novini/novini-lvivshhini/zi-shkilnogo-pidruchnika-priberut-naklep-na-ukrainskix-nacionalistiv>

⁶⁸ <https://dif.org.ua/article/den-peremogi-i-yogo-mistse-v-istorichniy-pamyati-ukraintsiv>

struggle for independence" ("insurgents", "Azovtsy", "Aydarovtsy", "named after Roman Shukhevich", etc.).

Since 2007, the "All-Ukrainian Youth Movement National Alliance" has held an annual "Festival of the Ukrainian spirit "Bandershtat" in Lutsk, Volyn Oblast, with the cooperation of the Kiev authorities. The goal of the event, according to the organizers, is to "immortalize the image of Bandera as a national symbol."

For several years in seven regions of Ukraine there has been a network of children's camps of the organization "Youth Corps" (Yunkor), which educates children along openly neo-Nazi lines. Children and teenagers in these camps are taught military discipline, tactics, assembly/disassembly of combat weapons, and ideological lessons based on radical nationalism. The educators in these institutions are former members of the Azov regiment. In such camps, the morning begins with a drill and the "prayer of a Ukrainian nationalist". At the beginning of each shift, a wooden assault rifle is given to each child, while older children are given models of "real" weapons in the form of a laser-firing sniper rifle.⁶⁹

The state awarded subsidies totalling more than a million hryvnias to the All-Ukrainian Union "Freedom" (Svoboda), and C14 in 2018 for the execution of programmes aimed at "patriotic education of young people". A youth military camp named Khorunzhy after Nazi collaborator T. Borovets and numerous other like initiatives received state funding in 2019.

In the summer of 2019, three festivals – "Banderstadt" in Lutsk, a festival in honour of Ukrainian nationalist ideologue Dmytro Dontsov in Melitopol and "In Tracks of Taras Borovets" in Olevsk – were held.

In December 2019, the law on the state recognition and support of the Plast National Scout Organization of Ukraine was adopted by the Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine. In fact, this text provides the foundation for bringing a group

⁶⁹ <https://ukraina.ru/20201014/1029255082.html>

under the state's wing, something comparable to the infamous Hitler Youth (or Hitlerjugend), where children are deliberately ideologically brainwashed. To understand what such "brainwashing" might lead to; consider that practically all UPA commanders (Stepan Bandera, Roman Shukhevich, Vasily Kuk, and others) have been through the Plast at some point.⁷⁰

Also in December 2019, the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports of Ukraine allocated again funding for a number of "military patriotic youth educational" projects in 2020 to the amount of 20 million hryvnias, including 2 million hryvnias to the Plast scout organization, which openly declares the succession of the Banderite organization structure (including 770 thousand hryvnias for financial support of military patriotic camps of this structure, 450 thousand hryvnias for holding an all-Ukrainian game, and 500 thousand hryvnias to organize the cultural identity festival "Den Plastuna"); 440 thousand hryvnias for the Banderstadt festival of the Ukrainian spirit, which is allegedly of "ideological and patriotic nature"; 350 thousand hryvnias for the Youth Nationalist Congress to propagate the ideas of Ukrainian nationalism within the framework of the Camp Season 2020 action, the central event of which will be the military field games of Gurba-Antonovtsy, dedicated to the UPA battle against the NKVD troops in the Ternopol Oblast; 485 thousand hryvnias to organize a military-patriotic game "Jura"; over 250 thousand hryvnias to the Ukrainian Youth Union (supports the rehabilitation of Symon Petlyura, Stepan Bandera, and Roman Shukhevich) for holding a conference of the World Ukrainism, historical events (180 thousand hryvnias) and organizing Zagrada children's camps (95 thousand hryvnias), whose participants visit memorable places of the UPA; 300 thousand hryvnias to hold military and historical events "Under Cover of Trizub" (Trident) in Boryas (the Kiev Oblast); 560 thousand hryvnias to the Ukrainian Reserve Army for the Kuznya Unizh (Unizh

⁷⁰ <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/385-IX>; <https://news-front.info/2019/12/24/detyam-ukrainy-slugi-naroda-pod-yolochku-podlozhili-plast/>

Smithery) and Povstancheskoye Serdtse (Insurgent Heart) patriotic sport camps for the children of fighters in south-eastern Ukraine; 250 thousand hryvnias to the All-Ukrainian Association of Military History Organizations for holding competitions at a military unit.

In January 2020, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of Ukraine announced the results of a contest of children's and youth projects, which was to be financed by the state in 2020.⁷¹ A total of 8 million hryvnias (more than 20 million rubles) was allocated for such projects. This is almost half of all funds allocated by the ministry to children's and youth organizations.⁷² Thus, the Plast organization will receive 2.7 million hryvnias for arrangements of summer camps and thematic fora. Four hundred thousand hryvnias were allocated to the Youth Nationalist Congress for cycles of the training programme "The course of free people" and "The course of a young Banderite". Two hundred thousand hryvnias were allocated to the National Alliance for the all-Ukrainian Pobeda (Victory) field game, held since 2006. One hundred twenty thousand hryvnias were allocated to the Educational Assembly affiliated with the radical group S14 for the Proud of the Ukrainians action. Two hundred thousand hryvnias were allocated to the Falcon of Freedom structure, which is the youth wing of the Svoboda (Freedom) all-Ukrainian union, for holding the Games of Patriots in the Ternopol Oblast. In addition, funding was provided for the True History of Ukraine all-Ukrainian campaign and the festival of social advertising organized by Ukrainian people's youth. In addition, many of these organizations or affiliated structures received funding from the state budget for "national patriotic education", as well as direct funding for their activities from both the state and local government budgets.⁷³

⁷¹ http://www.dsmsu.gov.ua/media/2019/12/27/1/Rishennya_26.PDF

⁷² <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/713423-ukraina-natsionalisty-deti-vospitanie-granty>

⁷³ <https://strana.today/news/247099-natsionalisty-poluchili-ot-minkulta-pochti-polovinu-bjudzheta-na-molodezhnye-orhanizatsii.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/247099-natsionalisty-poluchili-ot-minkulta-pochti-polovinu-bjudzheta-na-molodezhnye-orhanizatsii.html>)

In March 2021, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine (reorganized in March 2020) allocated another 8 million hryvnias budget for "military patriotic youth educational" projects. In particular, 350 thousand hryvnias were allocated for holding the Zashkov all-Ukrainian festival in honour of the OUN leader Yevgeniy Konovalets in the Lvov Oblast; 185 thousand hryvnias – for the Khorunzhy all-Ukrainian camp in the Volyn Oblast, where children are brought up on the example of the OUN-UPA members; 1 million 200 thousand hryvnias – for activities "to honour the heroes of the struggle of the Ukrainian people for the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine"; 3 million hryvnias – for educational measures in general, with the funds from this article also going to nationalist organizations or their affiliated structures.⁷⁴

In January 2022, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine allocated budgetary funds of 9 million hryvnias for the implementation of "national patriotic education" projects. The Plast organization was allocated 1.7 million hryvnias to hold various "military patriotic camps in the field". The Youth Nationalist Congress received 715 thousand hryvnias for the same purpose. The Youth Corps public organization (a branch of the National Corps far-right party) was allocated 240 thousand hryvnias for the organization of all-Ukrainian competitions named after Igor Beloshitskiy (Azov fighter, killed in 2014 near Mariupol), and 100 thousand hryvnias for the school of national patriotic education named after Elena Stepaniv, who fought in the First World War in the ranks of the armed forces of Austria-Hungary. The Volyn Student Brotherhood received 270 thousand hryvnias for the By the Paths of the UPA event.⁷⁵

In 2023, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine allocated budgetary funds of 4.6 million hryvnias for the implementation of "national patriotic education" projects. The Plast organization received a quarter of all means –

⁷⁴ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

⁷⁵ https://mms.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/16/Patriotychne_vyhovannia/Konkursy/richenia/2022%20%D1%80%D1%96%D0%BA/rishennya-no-1-vid-17012022.pdf

1 million 145 thousand hryvnias for arrangements of national patriotic and military patriotic summer camps, including those "aimed at acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills in the field of security and defence of Ukraine". The Young People's Rukh all-Ukrainian public organization was allocated 515 thousand hryvnias for the same purpose, the Nationalist Youth Congress – 300 thousand hryvnias. Two hundred sixty thousand hryvnias were allocated to the Protection of the Rights of Youth and Religious Communities organization to hold a training tent camp "Army – Shield of Statehood". The Zov Yara organization received 75 thousand hryvnias to hold a winter hike named after Yuriy Gorlis-Gorskiy (Ukrainian nationalist, officer of the UNR army, during the Great Patriotic War he was engaged in active collaborationist activities in Kiev, led a secret Abwehr group that identified Soviet underground fighters).⁷⁶

In 2024, budget funding for such activities doubled and reached 9 million hryvnias. Traditionally, over 1.1 million hryvnias was received by the Plast organization, 916 thousand hryvnias – by the Young People's Rukh. The Right Youth organization was allocated 788 thousand hryvnias for the events named after one of the leaders of the volunteer Right Sector Ukrainian corps Taras Bobanich, who had participated in the Ukrainian punitive operation in the Donbass since 2014 and was liquidated by the Russian Armed Forces in 2022. Organizations in western regions of Ukraine received more than 410,000 hryvnias for the events glorifying the UPA.⁷⁷

Kiev's activities in organizing financial support for national-radicals at the state expense did not go unnoticed. In July 2019, the Ukrainian government was accused of secretly funding far-right extremist groups under the guise of educational programmes. According to the Bellingcat group, the government allocated funds within the programme of "national patriotic education" of young

people. The investigation pointed out that such grants were used to increase the influence of nationalists and attract new supporters.⁷⁸

In March 2020, acting Minister of Education and Science Lubomira Mandziy was at the center of a scandal. It was revealed that, in 2018, holding at that time the position of the head of the Department of Education of the Lvov Oblast administration, she became one of the organizers of the drawing competition among schoolchildren on the topic of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division and Ukrainian volunteers in its ranks. The competition task was to draw "an SS man or a meeting between Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler and the division's personnel". The award ceremony was set for 28 April 2020, along with a march commemorating the Waffen-SS Division's 75th anniversary. Along with the march and the drawing competition, there was a weapons exhibition. In her remarks to journalists following the uproar, Lubomira Mandziy tried to downplay the incident by claiming that the Department of Education "was just informing schools about the competition".⁷⁹

Children have been recruited in the UAF and nationalist groups for a very long time, and fighters from the neo-Nazi Azov battalion (registered as a terrorist organization in the Russian Federation) have been indoctrinating them with a hatred of everything that is Russian. They took over the Pilgrim orphanage in what was then Ukrainian Mariupol. Long-term military training of the orphanage residents, severe penalties for any misbehaviour, and exhausting physical training exercises made up the mentoring aspect of the Azov men. Particular attention was paid to hand-to-hand combat, girls were taught mostly sniper training. At the same time, the ideological conditioning of the pupils, based on Russophobia, antisemitism, and the glorification of Nazi Germany, was carried out.

⁷⁸ <https://ukraina.ru/news/20200130/1026509598.html>

⁷⁹ <https://strana.today/news/257560-io-ministra-obrazovaniya-mandziy-orhanizovyyala-vo-lvove-konkurs-v-chest-divizii-ss-halichina.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/257560-io-ministra-obrazovaniya-mandziy-orhanizovyyala-vo-lvove-konkurs-v-chest-divizii-ss-halichina.html>)

The Western press has published articles on this topic.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3195711/Now-CHILDREN-taking-arms-Shocking-pictures-inside-Ukraine-s-neo-Nazi-military-camp-recruits-young-six-learn-fire-weapons-s-ceasefire.html>
<https://apimagesblog.com/blog/2018/11/12/training-kids-to-kill-at-ukrainian-nationalist-camp>

Construction of monuments to the Nazis

The Ukrainian authorities also continue to erect monuments and memorial plaques in honour of the OUN-UPA fighters and pay tribute to former Nazis who have survived to this day. According to the study of "The Forward" US newspaper on monuments to fascists, Nazis and Nazi collaborators in different countries, Ukraine ranks first in the world on this subject.⁸¹ As of December 2022, 50 monuments were set up in different regions of the country only to Stepan Bandera, and more than 500 streets, lanes and avenues throughout Ukraine were named in his honour.

The biggest ultranationalist marches take place on the day the UPA was founded and on Stepan Bandera's birthday. The radicals taking part in such rallies use hateful speech, mostly directed against Russians, while also performing various provocative escapades.

On 29 January 2020, a formal ceremony, attended by local civil servants and representatives of the church, was organized to bury Mikhail Mulik, former vigilante and member of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division, in the Avenue of Glory in Ivano-Frankovsk. Many of those attending the ceremony were dressed in Nazi uniforms.⁸² According to the Ukrainian media, Mikhail Mulik was the chairman of the regional brotherhood of the Galicia Division members, and an honorary citizen of Ivano-Frankovsk.⁸³

On 22 March 2020, Lvov authorities officially marked the 95th anniversary of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division Unterscharführer Roman Matsuk and presented him with a portrait of himself in his youth in a Nazi uniform as a gift.⁸⁴

⁸¹ <https://forward.com/news/462916/nazi-collaborator-monuments-in-ukraine/?amp=1>

⁸² <https://galychyna.if.ua/2020/01/28/martsinkiv-poobitsyav-nazvati-vulitsyu-imenem-mihayla-mulika/>

⁸³ <https://strana.today/news/246875-foto-kak-v-ivano-frankovske-proshchalas-s-umershim-natsistom-iz-divizii-ss.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/246875-foto-kak-v-ivano-frankovske-proshchalas-s-umershim-natsistom-iz-divizii-ss.html>)

⁸⁴ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection 2022. M.

In April 2020, in Kalush, the Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast, the Brotherhood of the warriors from the Waffen-SS Galicia Division presented Vasiliy Nakonechniy, a veteran of the division, with an award in a solemn ceremony. These "merit badges" are being presented to all the surviving members of the SS. When the 95-year-old veteran of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division was awarded, he reflexively extended his arm in a Nazi salute. Previously, in May 2018, he had been awarded the status of Honourary Citizen of Kalush.⁸⁵

On 23 May 2020, to mark the Heroes Day⁸⁶, all UPA veterans and their widows living in the Lvov Oblast, were paid a lump sum allowance from the regional budget. A total of 989 people received payments.⁸⁷

On 21 June 2020, the Lvov City Council's press service reported that Lvov Mayor Andrey Sadovoy had congratulated Olga Ilkiv, former liaison officer for UPA leader Roman Shukhevich, on her 100th birthday. The notice added the city and regional governments had joined forces to buy a flat in Lvov for Olga Ilkiv in recognition of her services to the state and to mark the 78th anniversary of the UPA founding.⁸⁸

On 18 July 2020, a memorial cross to UPA's cornet general Ivan Treiko was installed in a forest between the village of Gorodnitsa in the Zhitomir Oblast and Storozhev village in the Rovno Oblast, with the support of Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UINP). The dedication ceremony was attended by representatives of the local government, public activists and a representative of the UINP.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ <https://strana.today/news/262422-v-kalushe-nahradili-veterana-divizii-ss-poluchaja-nahradu-tot-zihanul.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/262422-v-kalushe-nahradili-veterana-divizii-ss-poluchaja-nahradu-tot-zihanul.html>)

⁸⁶ This commemorative date was chosen by the OUN in 1941. Since 2014, Ukrainian nationalist organizations have held ceremonies on this date. These events are normally attended by a number of representatives from Ukrainian national and local government organizations.

⁸⁷ Manifestations of Nazism, neo-Nazism, and xenophobia in Ukraine. Overview and analysis. 2020

⁸⁸ <https://city-adm.lviv.ua/news/society/public-sector/279791-mer-lvova-pryvitav-zviazkovu-romana-shukhevycha-zi-100-littiam>

⁸⁹ <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/na-polissi-vstanovyly-pamyatnyy-hrest-general-horunzhomu-upa-ivanu-treyku>

In August 2020, Petlyura's Litter Pick Day was held in Kiev in "commemoration" of the fighters of the 1st Bogdan Khmelnytskyi Ukrainian Regiment, buried on Zamkovaya Mountain.

On 19 August 2020, a memorial plaque in honour of Yuriy Lipa was placed on the building of a district library in Yavorov village of the Lvov Oblast.⁹⁰

On 30 August 2020, a monument to Kuzma Brichka – Nazi collaborator, member of the Polesian Sich and the UPA, who had participated in mass murders of civilians of Polish and Jewish origin – was solemnly unveiled in Karpilovka village of the Chernigov Oblast.⁹¹

On 5 October 2020, UPA veteran, involved in mass murder of Jewish and Polish residents of the Rovno Oblast Alexander Derkach was buried with war honours and a guard of honour in the village of Dubrovka in the Zhitomir Oblast.⁹²

On 13 October 2020, the authorities in Lutsk organized the third All-Ukrainian festival and national song competition "For Ukraine! For its Freedom!", which was held on-line only, where they sang songs glorifying members of the UPA. On the same day an exhibition dedicated to Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevich was held in Vinnitsa.

On 14 October 2020, in Kiev, radicals from the Svoboda, the Right Sector and the National Corps held a traditional march on the occasion of 78th anniversary of UPA creation. The participants of the march carried glass cans containing photos of Anatoly Shariy, Viktor Medvedchuk and a number of other social and opposition activists, to imitate severed heads. They chanted slogans of organizing "legal" prosecution of Ukrainian citizens for "pro-Russian"

⁹⁰ <https://golossokal.com.ua/ru/novyny-kultury/y-misti-iavorovi-vidbylos-vidkrittia-memorialnoi-tablici-na-fasadi-raionnoi-centralnoi-biblioteki-imeni-uriia-lipi.html>, <https://eodaily.com/ru/news/2020/08/22/v-lvovskoy-oblasti-chestvuyut-vracha-evtanaziologa-iz-oun-upa>

⁹¹ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

⁹² The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

activities, revoking the licenses of 112-Ukraine, NewsOne, ZIK, NASH, Inter and Kiev Live and canceling the ceasefire in the Donbass for Ukrainian military.

In Lvov, on the same day, Maxim Kozitskiy, vice chairman of the Lvov Oblast council, took part in a ceremony in which flowers were laid on the tombs of the UPA fighters, funeral prayers were read and there were processions in Ukrainian nationalist insignia was displayed.⁹³ The Against Goliath historic exhibition dedicated to UPA members, including Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevich, organized by the Ukrainian Institute for National Memory was held in Vinnitsa.

On 12 November 2020, with the support of the city authorities, relatives of OUN-UPA fighters were awarded with the formation's medals "For combat merits" and "For special contribution to the development of the OUN armed underground" in the Lvov Historical Museum.

On 20 January 2021, in Poltava, a national competition to design a monument to Symon Petlyura was announced.⁹⁴

On 29 January 2021, in Kiev, at the behest of the city council, Bandera Readings were held once again.

In February 2021, Ivan Fialka, former member of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division, was buried with honours in Stryi (the Lvov Oblast). The event was attended by the mayor of the city, as well as members of nationalist structures.

On 16 February 2021, the Lvov Oblast council requested President Zelenskiy to return the title of Hero of Ukraine to Stepan Bandera. The deputies have also decided to declare 2021 the Year of Yevgeniy Konovalets (OUN leader).⁹⁵ Besides, the deputies of Ivano-Frankovsk city council came up with

⁹³ <https://lviv.depo.ua/rus/lviv/yak-u-lvovi-svyatkuyut-den-zakhisnika-ukraini-fotoreportazh-202010141229260>

⁹⁴ <https://zn.ua/UKRAINE/v-poltave-prokhodit-vseukrainskij-konkurs-na-luchshij-pamjatnik-simonu-petljure.html>

⁹⁵ <https://m.day.kyiv.ua/ru/news/160221-lvovskiy-oblsovet-trebuuet-vernut-bandere-zvanie-geroya-ukrainy-i-obyavil-2021-y-godom>

an initiative to bestow the title of Hero of Ukraine to former Galicia fighter Mikhail Mulik.

On 5 March 2021, the deputies of the Ternopol city council supported the initiative of city mayor Sergei Nadal to name the city's stadium after Roman Shukhevich, where the Ukrainian Cup Final was to be held. Joel Lion, Israeli ambassador to Ukraine, called on the authorities to reverse this decision. In turn, a Ukrainian MFA spokesperson supported the local authorities, saying that "preservation of national memory was among the priorities of state policy" and such news pegs should be commented on by historians, not diplomats.⁹⁶

This initiative was seized by the Lvov Oblast council which, on 16 March 2021, proposed the Ukrainian Government to rename Arena Lvov to Stepan Bandera Arena Lvov. This stadium was going to host the initial 2022 World Cup qualifying matches. The initiative came from the Petr Poroshenko's European Solidarity party.⁹⁷

On 28 April 2021, radicals marched in Kiev for the first time to commemorate the creation of Nazi SS Galicia Division. Nazi symbols were used during the march. Radicals were accompanied by police officers, who blocked the traffic on many of Kiev's central streets. According to Ruslan Bortnik, head of the Ukrainian Institute for Policy Analysis and Management, the march was financed in part by the Kiev city administration; although it claimed that it was made by mistake. Earlier such events in honour of SS Galicia had been mainly concentrated in Lvov and other cities in Western Ukraine. According to experts, in view of the fact that this had occurred shortly before 9 May, the march can be described as a provocation, and the inaction of

⁹⁶ <https://strana.today/news/321233-ternopolskij-stadion-poluchil-imja-romana-shukhevicha.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/321233-ternopolskij-stadion-poluchil-imja-romana-shukhevicha.html>)

⁹⁷ <https://strana.today/news/323062-arena-lvov-imeni-bandery-cto-hovorjat-o-pereimenovanii-stadiona-v-chest-vozhdja-oun.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/323062-arena-lvov-imeni-bandery-cto-hovorjat-o-pereimenovanii-stadiona-v-chest-vozhdja-oun.html>)

the Kiev authorities can be explained as the result of threats from right-wing groups, which had become more influential.⁹⁸

On 2 May 2021, members of the National Corps held rallies in Lvov and Ternopol to glorify the fighters of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division. Nazi symbols were also used during these events.

On 22 May 2021, a solemn ceremony of burying the remnants of the UPA fighters was held in Strelki village (the Lvov Oblast). The event was attended by the leader of the European Solidarity party's fraction in the Lvov Oblast council Oleg Duda.

In mid-June 2021, in Kiev, Orest Vaskul, chairman of the Kiev Regional Brotherhood of OUN-UPA veterans, former participant of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division and former head of the OUN, was buried following a solemn funeral ceremony in St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery, which belongs to the OCU. The ceremony was conducted according to the official funeral rites used by the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, and included a guard of honour from the Bogdan Khmelnytskyi Separate Presidential Regiment. It was attended by Sergei Kvit, former Minister of Education, Vladimir Vyatrovich, former head of the UINP, and others.⁹⁹

On 25 July 2021, the remains of the punishers from the Waffen-SS Galicia Division, liquidated by the Soviet troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front in 1944 in the battle for Brody, were reburied with honours in the village of Chervonoye (the Lvov Oblast).

In July 2021, in Novomirgorod (the Kirovograd Oblast), it became known that a children's team "Hitlerites" took part in street basketball competitions during the city day.¹⁰⁰

On 10 August 2021, the 100th birthday of UPA lieutenant and Ukrainian auxiliary police commissioner Vladimir Shigelskiy – who had actively

⁹⁸ https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2021/04/28_a_13576064.shtml

⁹⁹ https://aif.ru/politics/world/budni_ukrainy_veterana_ss_provodil_v_posledniy_put_prezidentskiy_polk

¹⁰⁰ https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2021/07/22/n_16278944.shtml

participated in killing Jewish and Polish civilians during World War II – was solemnly celebrated in Lvov. In 1949, he was executed in Poland for aiding the Nazis, war crimes, and mass murder of civilians.

On 18 August 2021, in Litin village (the Vinnitsa Oblast), solemn events in commemoration of the 110th birthday of former OUN and UPA member Yemelyan Grabets were held. He had served as Ukrainian auxiliary police commissioner in Rovno and had been directly involved in mass murder of around 30,000 Jews residing in the city. In addition to the memorial procession along the street named after him and the laying of flowers at the memorial plaque, a round table was held at the local history museum, which resulted in a recommendation to the local authorities to name the Litin sports complex after Yemelyan Grabets.¹⁰¹

Late August 2020, a monument to Kuzma Brichka – Nazi collaborator, member of the Polesian Sich¹⁰² and the UPA, who had participated in mass murders of Jewish civilians, Soviet soldiers and partisans – was solemnly unveiled in Karpilovka village in the Chernigov Oblast.¹⁰³

In September 2021, the plans were revealed to install a memorial sign dedicated to a high-ranking member of the OUN Vladimir Bagazyi, as part of One Stone, One Life¹⁰⁴ project. Bagazyi organized the Ukrainian auxiliary police, later he was appointed by the Nazis burgomaster of Kiev. This was reported by head of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee Eduard Dolinskiy who particularly noted that Vladimir Bagazyi had been directly involved in the extermination of the Jews of Kiev. According to media, the collaborator's photo and name appeared on the interactive map of the official site of the project

¹⁰¹ <https://vesti.ua/strana/v-vinnitse-otprazdnovali-110-letie-komandira-ukrainskogo-gestapo>

¹⁰² Polesian Sich is a military organization of Ukrainian nationalists created by Taras Borovets, which had operated on the territory of Volyn and Polesia occupied by Nazis from August 1941 till 1944.

¹⁰³ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/12257305>

¹⁰⁴ The One Stone, One Life project was implemented by the Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies with the support of the Kiev city administration and the Ukrainian branch of the Goethe Institute. The project was co-sponsored by the German Embassy in Ukraine. In turn, it is part of a large-scale decentralized memorial "Stumbling Blocks" by Cologne artist Gunther Demnig, dedicated to the memory of people persecuted during the Nazi years.

containing the addresses of all memorial stones and names of those honoured with those memorials. The biography of Vladimir Bagaziy published in the same place did not contain any information about his involvement in the executions of Jews during the occupation of Kiev.¹⁰⁵ In response to a query from the RT newspaper, the German Foreign Ministry said that "the controversy surrounding the figure of Vladimir Bagaziy" was taken into account, and at present there were no plans to install a memorial sign in his honour. The German MFA stressed that it took the statements of Vladimir Bagaziy's involvement in Holocaust seriously and thus, in cooperation with the Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies and other specialists, would "examine this person's biography".¹⁰⁶ As of 12 October 2021, Vladimir Bagaziy's biography has been removed from the project website. The inspection made in April 2024 did not find his name on the site either.

On 7 October 2021, a solemn reburial of UPA fighters took place near the village of Sokolovka (the Lvov Oblast).

On 19 October 2021, Kiev saw the unveiling of "memorial cross", created in 2009, dedicated to 100th birthday of Stepan Bandera. The monument's construction was not permitted at that time. This time, the city authorities did not oppose this initiative of nationalists.

On 11 January 2022, the *Ukrainian Junkerschafts* book, dedicated to the Waffen-SS Galicia Division was presented in one of the libraries in Nikolaev (the Lvov Oblast). The event was attended by a man in Nazi uniform, a cap with a Roman eagle and a skull with crossed bones, and a waist-belt.¹⁰⁷

On 4 February 2022, during the European Futsal Championship semi-final match between Russian and Ukrainian teams, Ukrainian fans chanted nationalist and Russophobic slogans, including "Ukraine above all", "Who

¹⁰⁵ <https://ria.ru/20210928/natsizm-1752215853.html>

¹⁰⁶ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/912962-babii-yar-ukraina-germaniya-pamyatnik>

¹⁰⁷ <http://pravua.info/v-biblioteke-pod-lvvovom-proveli-prezentacziyu-knigi-ob-ss-galichina-s-muzhchinoj-v-naczijskoj-forme/>

doesn't jump is a Muscovite" etc. They also sang *Beat the Muscovite* song, which called for killing of Russians.

On 5 February 2022, the ninth Bandera Readings devoted to the 80th anniversary of the UPA were held in Kiev, organized by the nationalist Svoboda all-Ukrainian union. The conference was led by one of the Svoboda leaders, former deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Yuriy Sirotyuk. According to organizers, the readings are an "intellectual forum" which is held under the aegis of Stepan Bandera's ideas. This year's event was dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the UPA. Leader of the S14 far-right group (recently referred to as Basis for the Future or Future Society). He remarked, among other things, that nationalists "had fun fighting and killing". Furthermore, he threatened that if radicals came to power, Ukraine might attack European countries, Hungary, in particular.

On the same day, a "unity march" was held in Kharkov, organized by the National Corps and other nationalist parties and movements. The participants brought flags of OUN-UPA and chanted nationalist slogans as they marched.

On 14 October 2022, the 99-year-old Miroslav Simchich, commander of a sotnia in the UPA and war criminal who organized the mass murder of Poles during World War II and took part therein, was given the title of Hero of Ukraine with the Order of the Golden Star by Vladimir Zelenskiy.¹⁰⁸

After the war, he was convicted by a Polish court for the extermination of the population of the predominantly Polish village of Pisten in the Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast. On 22 October 2021, deputies of the Lvov Regional Council appealed to the President of Ukraine to grant the former Nazi an honorary title.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/6992022-44385>

¹⁰⁹ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

On 8 November 2022, a renovated monument to Mikhail "Spartan" Moskaluk, a UPA commander of a sotnia, who took part in the punitive operations of Nachtigall Battalion and fought against the Soviet partisans in Ukrainian Schutzmannschaft Battalion 201, was unveiled in the village of Ivanovtsy, Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast.

On 30 November 2022, in the village of Ledykhov, Ternopol Oblast, the remains of ten UPA members were solemnly reburied, who had died in 1944 in battles against the Red Army and NKVD troops while the latter two were liberating the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR from the nationalist underground and its Nazi accomplices.

In December 2022, in the State Historical and Cultural Reserve Naguevichi in the Lvov Oblast, a nativity scene was installed, with a statue of Stepan Bandera, the leader of the OUN, placed among the traditional biblical characters.¹¹⁰

On 10 December 2022, Roman Shukhevich's son, Yuriy Shukhevich, who had headed the right-wing radical party UNA-UNSO¹¹¹ in 1990-1994, was buried with military honours in Lvov.

On 21 December 2022, in honour of the 80th anniversary of the UPA, the Ternopol Regional Council decided to erect a monument to Roman Shukhevich, who had been involved in the mass murder of Poles and Jews in western Ukraine.¹¹²

On 14 February 2023, President Zelenskiy issued a decree naming the 10th Separate Mountain Assault Brigade of the AFU "Edelweiss", the same name given to the 1st Mountain Infantry Division of Nazi Germany.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ <https://strana.today/news/419500-vo-lvovskoj-oblasti-v-rozhdestvenskij-vertep-ustanovili-fihury-bajdena-i-bandery-foto.html>

¹¹¹ Declared extremist by decision of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation of 17 November 2014, its activities are banned in Russia

¹¹² https://teren.in.ua/news/u-ternopoli-vstanovlyat-pam-yatnik-romanu-shuhevichu_394446.html

¹¹³ <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/802023-45805>

On 29 and 30 March 2023, state commemorations were held in honour of the 150th birthday of Nikolai Mikhnovskiy, the ideologist of Ukrainian nationalism, who formulated the slogan "Ukraine is for the Ukrainians" and called for the killing of Poles, Russians and Jews, whom he considered enemies of the Ukrainian people.¹¹⁴

On 8 May 2023, on the eve of the Day of Victory over Nazism (which is no longer celebrated in Ukraine), the UINP held an exhibition for the cadets of the Kharkov National Internal Affairs University, which is temporarily located in Vinnitsa, entitled "UPA: Response of the Unconquered People", dedicated to the organization, the majority of whose members served in the armed formations of the Third Reich.¹¹⁵

On 14 June 2023, a history lecture on Yevgeniy Konovalets, the leader of the OUN, was delivered at the Maidan Museum in Kiev.¹¹⁶

On 22 September 2023, Vladimir Zelenskiy, during his visit to Ottawa, together with Canadian MPs and the country's leadership, gave a standing ovation to Yaroslav Gunko (Hunka), a veteran of the Galician Division of the SS, who had been invited to the session of House of Commons. Following a public outrage, when Jewish organizations and representatives of Russia, Poland and Germany condemned the incident, the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, officially apologised and Canadian Parliament Speaker Anthony Rota resigned.¹¹⁷ At the same time, no apology followed from Kiev after the incident. What is more, in February 2024, the Ternopol Regional Council awarded Yaroslav Gunko the Yaroslav Stetsko insignia of honour "For Merits to the Land of Ternopol".

¹¹⁴ <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/31-bereznya-vypovnytsya-150-rokiv-ideologu-ukrayinskoyi-nezalezhnosti-mykoli-mihnovskomu-zahody>

¹¹⁵ <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/lokalna-pamyat-perepohovannya-uchasnykiv-drugoyi-svitovoyi-viyny-u-vinnyci-ta-inshi-novyny-z-regioniv>

¹¹⁶ <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/u-kyyyevi-vidbuvsya-lektoriy-prysvyachenyy-yevghenu-konovalcyu>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/09/27/poland-ukrainian-nazi-veteran-canada-extradition/>

On 1 October 2023, in accordance with Vladimir Zelenskiy's decree, one of Ukrainian Armed Forces' battalion was given the name of Yevgeniy Konovalets – OUN leader who actively collaborated with the Nazis.¹¹⁸

On 6 March 2024 it became known that a street in Nikopol was named after Petr Dyachenko, a military criminal, former chief of staff of the Polish Sich under the command of Ataman Taras Bulba-Borovets and the organizer of the Ukrainian Self-Defence Legion in Chelm Land (SD Battalion 31 in German documents, which was later incorporated into the SS Galicia Division). The mayor of the city, Alexander Sayuk, said that he was 'unaware' of the unfavourable facts in the life of the Nazi collaborator and commented on this decision as follows: "A commission approved the name of the street; first there was a public discussion about street names, and only then were they changed. As for the fact that the street was named after someone who had been awarded the Iron Cross by Hitler, I don't know, I don't have that information, you have to ask the commission, they were in charge of that. I'm a mayor, I'm not an expert on history. There is nothing I can say or comment as regards those historic references".¹¹⁹

In late March 2024, Ukraine's largest book chain "Knigarnya E" and some other bookstores began selling a two-volume memoir by Croatian fascist and ally of Hitler Ante Pavelić. The head of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee Eduard Dolinskiy noted this fact saying that Pavelić had headed the Croatian puppet government, which had collaborated with the Nazi Germany in 1941-1945 and perpetrated mass killings of Jews, Serbs and Roma. However, the book's description makes no mention of Pavelić's Nazi past, nor does the book itself. Eduard Dolinskiy believes that the actions of the book chain, effectively, amount to whitewashing Nazi crimes and Holocaust denial.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/18886607> и

¹¹⁹ https://www.rubaltic.ru/context/06032024_au-zapad-imenem-natsistskogo-prestupnika-petra-dyachenko-u-kotorogo-ruki-po-lokot-v-krovi-nazvana-ul/

¹²⁰ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/20402473>

Violence of Ukrainian radicals

Right-wing radicals in Ukraine, feeling the support of the official authorities and realizing their impunity, actively employ violence and methods of intimidation against political opponents, civil society activists, human rights defenders, journalists, and pressurise the authorities into making decisions that benefit them.

On 4 May 2020, also in Kharkov, radicals from the National Corps, National Vigilantes, and Democratic Axe groups protested against the appointment of Evgeniy Gritskov, deputy head of the Kharkov city council, as the head of the coordinating council for issues relating to national and patriotic education. The reason was a photograph from 2015, in which Evgeny Gritskov can be seen together with Mikhail Dobkin, former governor of the Kharkov Oblast, holding up a red banner. On 6 May, Evgeniy Gritskov resigned as the head of the coordinating council.

On 23 May 2020, radicals from the National Corps stormed the office of the Opposition Platform – For Life party, known for its stance against the glorification of Nazism and xenophobia. The nationalists tried to set fire to the office, threw flares and smoke bombs into the windows, doused the building with paint. Taking advantage of the authorities' tacit support for their activities they disabled the office's security system and attacked the personnel.¹²¹

In the mid-June 2020, in Kiev, Dnepropetrovsk, Lvov, Kharkov and Chernovtsy, mass protests were held by nationalists, who were against the bill on amendments to the law on the use of minority languages in the education system, which was discussed in Verkhovnaya Rada. Under the draft law, the entry into effect of the restrictions on the use of Russian for the purposes of teaching would be postponed, and the transition period would be extended. During these protests the radicals behaved aggressively and defiled symbols of the Russian state, there were multiple reports of them clashing with police. In

¹²¹ <https://112.ua/mnenie/nacional-radikaly-napali-na-ofis-oppozicionnoy-platformy--za-zhizn-537009/html>

certain regions the nationalists were supported by the local council members. In particular, the Lvov regional council, which has already repeatedly been noted for its nationalist position, stated in a petition to President Vladimir Zelenskiy that all those who voted for the bill proposed by Maxim Buzhanskiy, a Verkhovna Rada deputy from the Sluga Naroda party, would be treated as "collaborators" and "traitors to Ukraine".¹²²

On 4 February 2021, members of Ukrainian far-right groups attempted to break into the building of NASH TV in Kiev, demanding that it be shut down because of what they saw as pro-Russian politics. During the clashes with the right-wing radicals, the police used tear gas and several people were arrested.

On 22 February 2021, the far-right organization Tradition and Order attacked left-wing activists in Odessa for taking part in protests against rising utility prices. The attackers used tear gas and wielded cold steel weapons.¹²³

On 28 February 2021, members of the National Corps attacked entrepreneur and politician Sviatoslav Vikarchuk, who had run for the local elections in 2020 for the Khmelnytskyi City and Regional Council on behalf of The Opposition Platform – For Life, and poured brilliant green over him.¹²⁴

In April 2021, nationalists from Freikorps demanded the dismissal of N. Semeykina, a teacher at the Kharkov State Academy of Culture, for critical comments on social media about the authorities and the assessment of the conflict in the Donbass, accusing her of "Russian propaganda". The academy's leadership echoed the radicals' position. Vice Rector Yuriy Loshkov said that Natalia Semeykina's words had discredited the title of the teacher, and "if this was really her point of view, and these are her beliefs, then she cannot be a

¹²² <https://ukraina.ru/exclusive/20200718/1028290011.html>

¹²³ <https://violence-marker.org.ua/blog/2022/06/03/ultrapravi-konfrontacziyi-ta-nasylstvo-u-2021-roczni/>

¹²⁴ Ibid.

Ukrainian teacher". Natalia Semeykina was later added to the database of the extremist website "Myrotvorets".¹²⁵

On 7 May 2021 in Kharkov, the far right destroyed the campaign banners of the Opposition Platform – For Life party for 9 May, which read "Fascism will not pass".¹²⁶

On 9 May 2021, during Victory Day celebrations in Kiev, nationalists started a fight with representatives of the Antifascist Committee of Ukraine, tearing red ribbons from their hands and trampling flowers.

On 7 July 2021 in Kiev, right-wing radical Aleksey Svinarenko and members of his group National Resistance attacked people who had come to a rally under Belarusian flags. Tear gas was used. In his Telegram channel, Aleksey Svinarenko, apparently no longer afraid of the reaction of Ukrainian law enforcement officers, openly wrote that he had "attacked Belarusian anti-fascists".

On 23 July 2021, right-wing radicals in Kharkov tore the T-shirt off a member of the Party of Shariy and beat him up. This information was shared in posts by the far-right.¹²⁷

On 30 October 2021, right-wing radicals attacked the camera crew of NASH TV in Sumy. They beat the cameraman and the reporter in front of the police, and vandalised their equipment.¹²⁸

In November 2021, a wave of riots swept through the bars and clubs of the Podol district in Kiev. On 6 November, far-right activists from the Foundations for the Future, the Ukrainian Banner, and National Resistance attacked the famous Khvilovy bar in Podol, blocking the entrance to the inner yard of the bar. They chanted racist and homophobic slogans, painted NS-WP

¹²⁵ <https://strana.today/news/328307-v-kharkove-natsionalisty-trebujut-uvolit-prepodavatelja-akademii-nauk-za-post-v-seti.html> (<https://strana.ua/news/328307-v-kharkove-natsionalist-trebujut-uvolit-prepodavatelja-akademii-nauk-za-post-v-seti.html>)

¹²⁶ <https://violence-marker.org.ua/blog/2022/06/03/ultrapravi-konfrontacziyi-ta-nasylstvo-u-2021-roczni/>

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ <https://ria.ru/20211030/telekanal-1757027767.html>

(NS for National Socialism, WP for White Power) on the walls, threw firecrackers, smoke bombs, flour and eggs at the bar staff. On 10 November, extremists from Centuria wrote "YAKARTA VIENIE" on the walls of the same bar, apparently in reference to the mass killings of supporters of the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965-1966, when between half a million and a million people were killed. On 16 November, the SHOOM club was attacked and the inscription "Death to the leftists" was made on its doors. On 26 November, members of the right-wing Foundations for the Future, National Resistance and Centuria stormed the Khvilovy bar, smashing windows and furniture, spraying tear gas, beating customers and guards with truncheons and chanting "white power" and other racist and homophobic slogans.¹²⁹

On 27 November 2021, in Korosten (Zhitomir Oblast), radicals attacked the crew of NASH TV, who were interviewing Mayor Moskalenko. They punched the journalist in the face while he was reporting.¹³⁰

On 11 December 2021, "patriotic activists" in Nikolaev tried to prevent the journalists from "NASH" TV from filming a tour of a museum exhibition dedicated to the occupation and liberation of the city during the Great Patriotic War. Chasing the TV crew, one of the radicals said that if they were at the front, he would have "blown their heads off".¹³¹

On 18 December 2021, representatives of the National Corps disrupted a congress of the Opposition Platform – For Life Party in Poltava. A fight broke out between the right-wing radicals and the security guards at the entrance to the congress; tear gas was used.¹³²

On 1 February 2022 in Kiev, right-wing activists protested outside the NASH TV headquarters, burning flares, chanting "Russian, surrender!" and calling to "hang Nashists" (referring to the employees of NASH TV).

¹²⁹ <https://delo.ua/society/samoprovozglasennaya-policiya-nravov-kak-pravoradikaly-voyuyut-protiv-kieva-389685/>

¹³⁰ <http://pravua.info/v-korostene-radikaly-napali-na-zhurnalistov-telekanala-nash/>

¹³¹ <http://pravua.info/v-nikolaev-radikaly-napali-na-zhurnalistov-telekanala-nash/>

¹³² <https://violence-marker.org.ua/blog/2022/06/03/ultrapravi-konfrontacziyi-ta-nasylstvo-u-2021-roczni/>

In February 2022, radicals in Odessa threatened the owner of the Oblaka restaurant, where a concert of Russian rapper Basta (Vasiliy Vakulenko) was to take place. Right Sector member Demyan Ganul, one of the organizers and perpetrators of the assault of the House of Trade Unions in Odessa on 2 May 2014, wrote on his Facebook page: "The concert is planned at the Oblaka restaurant, owned by Andrey Zarichanskiy. If Andrey has a brain and a pro-Ukrainian position, he will cancel the occupier's concert. If not, his business will be in serious trouble – Oblaka is not Zarichanski's only establishment. Vakulenko has come and gone, and you are supposed to live in this city!" Demyan Ganul then posted a photo of himself with a submachine gun on social media, as well as a video of people in military uniform with submachine guns. The concert was cancelled.¹³³

There have also been cases of radicals organising actions against legislative initiatives they consider undesirable and against court rulings against their supporters. For example, the leader of the S14 far-right group, Evgeniy Karas, and members of Dmitriy Korchinskiy's Brotherhood party were present at the Pecherskiy District Court when it tried one of the two young people who poured antiseptic green paint on the monument to General Nikolai Vatutin in Mariinskiy Park (Kiev) on the night of 10 February. The prosecutor requested that the defendant be remanded in custody during the investigation. Judge Olesya Batrin, however, ruled that he could be released on bail by Verkhovnaya Rada deputy Mikhail Bondar.¹³⁴ According to human rights activists, the presence of the nationalists in the courtroom was intended to put pressure on the judge. There had already been a number of incidents in which radicals had behaved aggressively in courtrooms, demanding the release of their comrades.

¹³³ <http://pravua.info/radikaly-shantazhom-dobilis-otmeny-konczerta-basty-na-ukraine/>

¹³⁴ <https://strana.today/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html>)

Another similar incident occurred in mid-June 2020 in Kiev, outside the courthouse, where Sergei Sternenko, a member of a nationalist group, was being tried for a manslaughter he committed in May 2018 in Odessa. Radicals attacked journalists from Strana.UA and Sharij.net, as well as ZIK and NewsOne TV channels, who were covering the trial. The nationalists also stormed the courtroom, provoked a fight with the police, lit flares and set off firecrackers, all in an attempt to put pressure on the court. In all such cases the police required all the journalists to leave the courtroom without giving any explanation, which led to further attacks. After his attempt to interview the accused, journalist Bordan Aminov was threatened with a "visit from the Anti-Terrorist Forces, who will show you how to love Ukraine." None of the attackers were arrested. Moreover, according to Strana.ua, the police subsequently apologised for beating the 'activists' and promised to bring those responsible to justice.¹³⁵

On 20 July 2021 in Kiev, about 40 extremists from the Future Society, National Corps, National Resistance, Alternative, Tradition and Order, Right Youth and Unknown Patriot attempted to disrupt a hearing in the Court of Appeal of a complaint by Belarusian anti-fascist Alexei Bolenkov against the SBU decision to expel him from Ukraine. Right-wing radicals also attacked left-wing activists who had gathered to support Alexey Bolenkov outside the courthouse.¹³⁶

Since the beginning of the special military operation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to demilitarise and denationalise Ukraine on 24 February, many representatives of Ukrainian far-right organizations have taken part in combat operations in the east of the country.¹³⁷ Their crimes have taken on an entirely different scale, evolving from unlawful acts of violence to

¹³⁵ <https://strana.today/news/273216-sud-po-sternenko-kak-storonniki-radikala-izbivali-zhurnalistov-i-politsiju-foto-i-video.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news.273216-sud-po-sternenko-kak-storonniki-radikala-izbivali-zhurnalistov-i-politsiju-foto-i-video.html>)

¹³⁶ <https://violence-marker.org.ua/blog/2022/06/03/ultrapravi-konfrontacziyi-ta-nasylstvo-u-2021-roczyi/>

¹³⁷ 21 December 2022. <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/997883-moldaviya-telekanaly-zapret>

the murder of civilians in the territories occupied by the Kiev regime, as well as the torture, ill-treatment and murder of captured Russian military.

Accustomed to total impunity, members of Nazi battalions continue to commit crimes against their fellow citizens. On 29 September 2023, militants of the Kraken Unit (part of the Azov Regiment, designated as terrorist and outlawed in Russia) used weapons to seize a fixed security point in Kharkov because police and military officers on duty at the security point were attempting to screen the members of the Nazi Battalion.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ <https://strana.today/news/446715-zakhvativshie-blok-post-voennye-zajavili-chto-ikh-podrazdelenie-proverit-nelzja.html>

Desecration of the memory of Red Army soldiers

As Nazis and their collaborators are being increasingly exonerated, attempts are being made to smear the Red Army soldiers, including blaming them for crimes committed by the Nazis. For example, the tragedy that occurred in March 1943 in the village of Koryukovka, Chernigov Oblast, where the Nazis almost completely annihilated the local population in a punitive action, has been the subject of such fabrications. On the 75th anniversary of the massacre, the Ukrainian media portrayed the events as the fault of the partisans, who allegedly provoked the Nazis to commit atrocities.

In recent years, nationalists and right-wing radicals, with the tacit support of the Ukrainian authorities, have started to disrupt events commemorating Victory Day in the Great Patriotic War and other significant dates, as well as anti-fascist events. As a rule, no follow-up measures are being taken in relation to the threats against anti-fascist activists. The Ukrainian law enforcement authorities have never prevented the illegal actions of these criminals and brought them to justice, instead allowing the radicals to hide and gagging their victims. The actions of the nationalists are usually categorised as hooliganism, regardless of the motives and actual nature of their behaviour. At the same time, the authorities prosecute people for displaying Soviet symbols. Experts view such actions by the authorities as an attempt to intimidate activists, create an atmosphere in which they would be afraid to mention the fact that their relatives had fought in the Red Army.

In 2018-2019 on Victory Day in Kiev, nationalists wearing clothes with Nazi symbols attacked Elena Berezhnaya, director of the Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, who organized the commemorations. Instead of responding to the radicals' actions, the police arrested the victim.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Infringement of rights and freedoms in Ukraine. Manifestation of discrimination, incitement of ethnic hatred, hate crimes and extremism. Report for the OSCE human dimension implementation meeting 2019. The Institute of legal policy and social protection, the Antifascist human rights legal league. 2019. 2019.

In February 2020, the then Foreign Minister Vadim Pristayko declared that Ukraine would not celebrate Victory Day on 9 May.¹⁴⁰ Earlier, during his visit to Poland in January 2020, Vladimir Zelenskiy had blamed the Soviet Union for unleashing the Second World War.¹⁴¹

Nevertheless, on 9 May 2020, the 75th anniversary of the Victory over Nazi Germany, Ukrainians took to the streets to honour the memory of the Red Army soldiers. On that day, Ukrainian nationalists carried out a series of blasphemous actions. In Odessa they interrupted a motor rally, instigated fights and hindered celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the Victory. The radicals also organized marches where they carried portraits of Nazi accomplices from the OUN, UPA and other similar organizations, as well as symbols associated with the Galician Division of the SS.¹⁴² In Lvov, young neo-Nazis organized a rally on the Hill of Glory, displaying Nazi symbols and playing a recording stylised as a Nazi occupation announcement, while local people laid flowers at the graves of soldiers who had died in the war. The Ukrainian authorities failed to take action against any of these or similar incidents.¹⁴³ In Kharkov, activists from the Freikorps¹⁴⁴, the ATO Veterans Union, the Right Sector and the Veterans Association for the Defence of Ukraine hung banners from three bridges, each bearing the provocative slogan: "Дякую діду за те, що давив московську гниду" ("Thank you Grandad for squashing the Muscovite crum")¹⁴⁵.

The commemoration of the Victory Day in 2021 did not pass without scuffles and attacks by radicals either. Nationalists attacked a reporter from

¹⁴⁰ <https://strana.today/news/252459-pristajko-i-den-pobedy-pochemu-hlava-mid-ne-khochet-prazdnovat-9-maja.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/252459-pristajko-i-den-pobedy-pochemu-hlava-mid-ne-khochet-prazdnovat-9-maja.html>)

¹⁴¹ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/1563949212.html>

¹⁴² <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/1571213659.html>

¹⁴³ <http://ruskiymir.ru/news/8476375/>

¹⁴⁴ This was the name given to the right-wing volunteer units in Germany after World War I, many of whom later joined the Nazi party.

¹⁴⁵ https://www.sq.com.ua/rus/news/novosti/09.05.2020/den_pobedy_natsionalisty_razvesili_po_harkovu_banne_ry_foto/

video agency RT Ruptly after he had interviewed people in the street about their views on Victory Day in one of Ukraine's cities. In Odessa's Unknown Sailor Avenue, a Strana.ua cameraman accidentally filmed a fight that broke out after nationalists tried to wrest a portrait of Marshal Georgy Zhukov with a St George's ribbon from a woman's hands. Instead of arresting the the assailants, the police officers took the victim to the police station. Also in Odessa, police officers arrested a 63-year-old man who had come to Shevchenko Park wearing a St George's ribbon.¹⁴⁶ On 10 May 2021, the press service of the Odessa regional police announced the initiation of criminal proceedings against a resident of the city who wore a cap with Soviet symbols during the Victory Day celebrations.

On 9 May 2022, official Victory Day events in Kiev were cancelled due to martial law. However, people could come privately to the Park of Glory to lay flowers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Far fewer people attended the events in the Park of Glory than in previous years. A 24-hour curfew was imposed in Odessa and Kiev-controlled Zaporozhye on 9 May, from 22:00 on 8 May to 05:00 on 10 May.

On 8 May 2023, Vladimir Zelenskiy signed a decree that Ukraine would celebrate Europe Day on 9 May instead of the Day of the Victory over Nazism in World War II. This decision fully changes the meaning of the Day of the Victory over Nazism and hampers the observance of this holiday in the country.

¹⁴⁶ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/860361-moldaviya-telekanaly-zapret>

Desecration and demolition of monuments to fallen Red Army soldiers

Concurrently with honouring Nazi collaborators and vilifying the memory of Red Army soldiers, the Ukrainian authorities are making efforts to demolish monuments to Soviet liberator soldiers. Right-wing radicals join local authorities in their "war" waged on monuments to Red Army soldiers and victims of the WWII tragic events, including the Holocaust. Until 2022, such instances were put on record by Ukrainian law enforcement agencies and entered into the unified pre-trial investigation register. However, the perpetrators of these blasphemous actions were never brought to justice.

In February 2020, in Odessa, nationalists removed the memorial plaque with a Marshal Georgy Zhukov bas-relief from a wall of the Mechnikov Odessa National University's student dormitory, which, in the post-war years, housed the Odessa military district headquarters headed by Georgy Zhukov in 1946-1948. It was city's last bas-relief of that great Soviet warlord, the Victory Marshall. "Activists" did this with the consent of the university's administration¹⁴⁷.

In the same month, in Odessa, vandals desecrated the monument on April 10 Square, commemorating the liberation of the city¹⁴⁸, and in Kiev, two young people desecrated the Nikolai Vatutin monument in Mariinskiy Park by dousing it with brilliant green¹⁴⁹. The monument is right on the general's grave. Initially, the media reported that the police opened a criminal case under Criminal Code of Ukraine Article 297, Part 3 (desecration of a grave, other burial site or dead body).¹⁵⁰ However, later, when the police detained just one

¹⁴⁷ <https://ria.ru/20200204/1564239120.html>

¹⁴⁸ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/721345-vandaly-oskvernili-memorial-odessa>

¹⁴⁹ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/716870-kiev-zelyonka-pamyatnik-vatutin>

¹⁵⁰ <https://kyiv.npu.gov.ua/news/novini/u-stoliczi-speczpriznachenci-zatrimali-molodika-za-poshkodzhennya-pam-yatnika>

vandal, he was charged with an offence under Criminal Code of Ukraine Article 296, Part 2 (vandalism by a group of individuals).¹⁵¹

In March 2020 in the town of Nyrkov, Ternopol Oblast, unknown perpetrators vandalized a Soviet soldier monument by chipping off its head and part of an arm. Law enforcement agencies opened criminal proceedings under Criminal Code of Ukraine Article 297, Part 2.

In May 2020 in Slavyansk's Shelkovichniy Park, prior to the celebration of a Victory anniversary, nationalists desecrated a monument by daubing the OUN flag colours onto the figure of a Soviet soldier against the background of the Banner of Victory. The monument erected on the mass burial site of soldiers who perished liberating Ukraine from Nazi invaders, was damaged as well.¹⁵²

On 19-20 May 2020, the Georgy Zhukov monument in Kharkov was attacked again: for two consecutive nights, unknown perpetrators poured red paint over it.¹⁵³

On 12 January 2021, in the city of Kherson, unknown individuals desecrated a mass grave of liberator soldiers of the Great Patriotic War. Vandals smashed and knocked down 17 monuments at the city's memorial cemetery.

On 13 January 2021, in Yareski, Poltava Oblast, radicals desecrated a monument to Soviet soldiers who perished in the Great Patriotic War and damaged the pedestal of the monument with a combustible mixture.

On 23 March 2021, in Cherkasy's Shevchenko Boulevard, nationalists desecrated and damaged an internationalist soldier memorial complex.

On the night of 9 May 2021, in the towns of Novy Rozdol and Sudovaya Vishnya, Lvov Oblast, vandals damaged monuments to Red Army soldiers.

By July 2021, the USSR Armed Forces Military Glory Monument was demolished in Lvov. The Soviet warrior and the Motherland figures were the

¹⁵¹ <https://strana.today/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html>)

¹⁵² <https://ruskiymir.ru/news/272570/>

¹⁵³ <https://www.interfax.ru/world/709467>

last to be dismantled. According to media reports, all parts of the monument were shipped to the Territory of Terror museum. The authorities plan to build a small park to commemorate the heroes of Ukraine on the former monument site.¹⁵⁴ The Glory of the Soviet Armed Forces Monument was erected in the Lvov's Central Culture and Leisure Park in 1970. It was an ensemble of a 30-meter stele, a massive wall with figures of Soviet army soldiers and two central sculptures symbolizing a soldier and the Motherland.

On 18 August 2021, the authorities of Drohobych, Lvov Oblast, initiated the dismantling of the Eternal Flame memorial on the mass grave of Red Army soldiers who perished liberating Western Ukraine from Nazis.

On 30 September 2021, the local authorities of Kolomiya, Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast, demolished a monument on the mass grave of Red Army soldiers, whereby several tombstones with the names of the buried soldiers were broken.

On 19 October 2021, nationalists desecrated and damaged the monument on a mass grave of Soviet soldiers in the Lodomir Cemetery's central alley in the town of Vladimir, Volyn Oblast. Earlier, in the same alley, vandals desecrated the monument on a mass grave of soldiers who perished during World War I.¹⁵⁵

On 22 October 2021, in Poltava, vandals smashed a memorial plaque in honour of Filipp Kiva, the Hero of the Soviet Union.

On 25-27 October 2021, by decision of the Lvov City Council Executive Committee, the central element of the Marsovo Polye memorial burial site in the form of a massive copy of the Order of the Patriotic War was dismantled under the pretext of "renovation, renewal and redesign of the area around the Lychakov Military Cemetery."

¹⁵⁴ https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2021/07/24/n_16288910.shtml

¹⁵⁵ The online environment as a tool for violations of rights and freedoms in Ukraine. Irina Berezhnaya Institute of Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

On 2 November 2021, in the town of Dergachi, Kharkov Oblast, a monument to the soldiers fallen in the Great Patriotic War was desecrated and a granite monument to the NKVD 227th regiment soldiers who lost their lives during the defence of Kiev, was demolished.

On 5 November 2021, extremists from the *Future Society* (C14) group damaged a memorial at the Soviet soldiers' burial site in the village of Zubra, Lvov Oblast.

On the night of 15 March 2022, at Fontanka near Odessa, evil-doers destroyed a monument to NKVD soldiers who defended the city from Nazi invaders in 1941.

On 11 April 2022, a T-34 Soviet tank monument was dismantled in Mukachevo, Transcarpathian Oblast. On the same day, in the town of Stryi, Lvov Oblast, a stele to the Soviet soldier was destroyed with special equipment.

On 14 April 2022, a monument to Soviet pilots was dismantled in Ternopol. The monument was made in the form of a MIG-17 aircraft and located at the entrance to the National Renaissance Park in the Vostochniy residential area.

On 16 April 2022, a monument to Hero of the Soviet Union partisan Nikolai Prikhodko was demolished with a tractor in the town of Zdolbunov, Rovno Oblast.

On 17 April 2022, militants from the *Kraken* armed formation demolished a monument to Soviet military leader Georgy Zhukov in Kharkov.

On 19 April 2022, in the town of Mukachevo, Transcarpathian Oblast, an obelisk of glory in honour of the soldiers fallen in the Great Patriotic War was dismantled in pursuance of an executive committee decision "On dismantling historical monuments and monumental art". According to local authorities, the remains will be reburied.

On the same day, a Soviet Soldier monument was demolished in the town of Kremenets, Ternopol Oblast.

On 21 April 2022, Ukrainian vandals destroyed a monument to Hero of the Soviet Union Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya in Chernigov. On the same day, the Red Army Soldiers in Battle sculpture was demolished in Chernovtsy, and the Eternal Flame memorial was dismantled in the park of Drogobych, Lvov Oblast.

On 29 April 2022, the monument on the grave of division commander Mikhail Bogomolov, a Civil War hero, was demolished in Rovno. Plaques with the names of Great Patriotic War heroes were destroyed in that city as well.

In May 2022, a campaign was launched in the town of Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk) to destroy sites related to the Soviet past. The Zhukov Square stele on Victory Boulevard was among the first to be knocked down. A total of 13 monuments were demolished.

In the same month, a monument to Soviet pilots was demolished in Zaporozhye's Shevchenko Boulevard. It was a pedestal-mounted La-5 fighter that took part in the Great Patriotic War air battles.

On 4 May 2022, a monument to the legendary Soviet intelligence officer and Hero of the Soviet Union Nikolai Kuznetsov was demolished in Rovno. During the war years, Kuznetsov personally eliminated 11 generals and high-ranking officials of the Nazi occupation administration.

On 5 May 2022, Zhitomir authorities removed a T-34 tank from the pedestal monument in honour of the Red Army soldiers on Victory Square.¹⁵⁶

On 8 May 2022, a monument to the Soviet child hero, partisan and recon operative Valya Kotik was demounted in the village of Dolgoe, Transcarpathian Oblast. On the same day, Uzhgorod authorities decided to demolish the Liberator Soldier monument.

On 9 May 2022, it became known that the Red Army Soldiers in Battle sculpture was destroyed by local authorities' decision in the city of Chernivtsi. Moreover, the Chernivtsi City Council commented on this desecration of

¹⁵⁶ https://lenta.ru/articles/2023/01/19/pamyatniki_ua/

memory with the words: "Soviet trash does not belong to our beautiful city!" And in the city of Rovno, the monument on the grave of Red Army division commander Mikhail Bogomolov was demolished. Both cases of monument destruction were covered in the stories of Ukrainian TV channels. Later on, a monument to the legendary Soviet intelligence officer, Hero of the Soviet Union Nikolai Kuznetsov was demolished in the same city.¹⁵⁷

On 13 May 2022, a Soviet soldier monument was demounted from the Eternal Flame memorial complex in the town of Chervonograd, Lvov Oblast.

On 18 May 2022, a monument to the Red Army soldiers who liberated that town from the Nazis was demolished in Pustomyty, Lvov Oblast.

On 19 May 2022, the Verkhovina village council, Lvov Oblast, decided to demolish monuments to the Red Army soldiers in the villages of Verkhovina, Iltsy, Verkhniy Yasenev and Krasnik.

On 20 May 2022, the Lvov regional administration initiated the demolition on its territory of all monuments to the Red Army soldiers who liberated the region from Nazi invaders.

On 30 May 2022, works to dismantle three Soviet memorial sites began in Brovary's Victory Park, Kiev Oblast. The Soviet MiG-15 fighter, produced, among other places, in Ukraine, was one of these monuments.

In May 2022, a star was dismantled from the monument to Soviet soldiers in Svalyava, Transcarpathian Oblast. In Zaleshchiki, Ternopol Oblast, a monument to Soviet tank crewmen was destroyed. In the Zbarazh district, Ternopol Oblast, a monument to partisans led by the legendary Sidor Kovpak was demolished. In the village of Iltsy, Verkhovina district, Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast, a Soviet soldier monument was destroyed. The local authorities of Borislav, Lvov Oblast, decided to dismantle the Soviet soldier monument. In Rakhov, Transcarpathian Oblast, vandals doused red paint over a monument to Red Army soldiers. A few days later, the monument was demolished. In the city

¹⁵⁷ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/14579273>

of Rovno, a monument to the Budyonniy cavalrymen was destroyed. In the village of Yasenya, Transcarpathian Oblast, a Soviet soldier monument was also destroyed. In the village of Kapustiany, Khmel'nitskiy Oblast, Nikolai Vatutin's bust was dismantled.

These processes are monitored in the Russian Federation. In May 2022, based on historical materials from the Central Archive of the Russian Ministry of Defence and its Directorate for Perpetuating the Memory of Those Who Perished in Defence of the Fatherland, a new historical section "Possessed by criminal unconsciousness" appeared on the Ministry's website.¹⁵⁸ It tells about the battles fought for the cities of western Ukraine by the Red Army, and its soldiers who accomplished feats in these battles. The section also provides evidence of how the followers of Bandera and Nazi invaders, supported by authorities, have been barbarically destroying the historical memory of our peoples.¹⁵⁹

On 2 June 2022, a monument to the Soviet 52-K anti-aircraft gun that defended Odessa from Nazis during World War II and was installed in front of school No. 56 in Tenistaya Street, was demolished. Besides, in early June, a Vasiliy Chapayev monument was demolished and a Soviet order maquette was dismantled in the village of Mazurovo, Krivoye Ozero community, Nikolaev Oblast. In Naroditskaya community, Zhitomir Oblast, Soviet symbols were removed from plaques featuring the names of Red Army soldiers. In Karlovka, Poltava Oblast, a mosaic featuring a hammer and sickle was knocked down. In Rovno, a bust of Soviet actress Gulya Korolyova, who served as combat medic during the Great Patriotic War, was dismantled. In Korsun, Cherkasy Oblast, commemorative plaques with the names of Heroes of the Soviet Union were dismantled.

¹⁵⁸ <https://ukrainememory.mil.ru/>

¹⁵⁹ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/14579273>

On 3 June 2022, in the city of Krivoy Rog, Dnepropetrovsk Oblast, vandals glued a flyer glorifying Roman Shukhevich on top of a Nikolai Vatutin memorial plaque. Also, the street sign on Nikolai Vatutin Street was covered with a piece of paper saying "Roman Shukhevich Street".

On the same day, a monument to Red Army soldiers was dismantled in the city of Rovno.

In June 2022, a Soviet soldier monument was demolished in the town of Buzhsk, Lvov Oblast. In Chernovtsy, vandals doused red paint over the monument to the liberators of Bukovina from Nazi invaders calling this an "art installation." In the town of Glukhov, Sumy Oblast, Soviet symbols were removed from the Red Army memorial. In June, monuments to the Red Army soldiers who lost their lives liberating Ukraine from Nazis were also demolished in: Rava-Russkaya, Lvov Oblast; Berezhany, Ternopol Oblast; Torgovitsa, Transcarpathian Oblast, Zhdeneyevskaya community, Transcarpathian Oblast; Shumsk, Ternopol Oblast; Borislav, Lvov Oblast; Urezh, Lvov Oblast; Gukalevtsy, Ternopol Oblast; Rozhnyatov, Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast. Memorial plaques to Nikolai Gastello, Sidor Kovpak, Feodora Pushina, Pavel Rybalka and Ivan Sergiyenko were demounted in Kiev.

Near the Lvov Medical University, a plaque from the monument to military doctors who worked during the Great Patriotic War was demounted.

In the town of Kamenets-Podolskiy, Khmelnytskyi Oblast, a Soviet T-34 tank was removed from a pedestal.

In Uzhgorod, the second memorial plaque to the Great Patriotic War participant and Hero of the Soviet Union Ivan Ankudinov was demounted.

In Kropivnytskyi (former Kirovograd) a Semyon Budyonniy commemorative plaque was removed.

In Privolnenskaya community, Volyn Oblast, a monument to NKVD officers was dismantled.

In the village of Podobna, Cherkasy Oblast, Nikolai Shchors' bust was demolished.

In the city of Rovno, the monument to Oleko Dundic, a First World War and the Russian Civil War participant (Croat by origin), was dismantled. Earlier, vandals damaged the monument by tearing off the sculpture's head. Later on, the remains of Oleko Dundic were removed from city center and reburied at the local cemetery.

On 10 August 2022, the Chernovtsy city council's executive committee decided to demount some of the Soviet monuments in city center, including the mass grave of Red Army generals and officers, the Warrior with a Machine Gun monument and the Guards Lieutenant Nikitin's T-34 tank, and to transfer them to Odesskaya Street.¹⁶⁰

On 19 August 2022, the Lvov city council decided to dig up and transfer the remains of Soviet soldiers who perished during the Great Patriotic War and were buried at the Marsovo Polye war memorial.

On 19 October 2022, after a failed demolition attempt, a monument to the Nikolaev Oblast police officers who lost their lives in the Great Patriotic War battles and in line of duty was blown up in Nikolaev.

On 3 November 2022, in Nikolaev, unidentified individuals blew up the Motherland obelisk in the Grieving Mother Park which is part of a mass grave memorial complex.

On 9 November 2022, the Ukraine to the Libersators monument was demolished in Uzhgorod. The monument was on the country's cultural heritage list. The monument in the form of a bronze figure of a soldier with a machine gun and a banner was erected in 1970 in honour of the 25th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ <https://ria.ru/20220810/pamyatniki-1808630229.html>

¹⁶¹ <https://www.mk.ru/social/2022/12/02/ot-pushkina-do-suvorova-skolko-pamyatnikov-uzhe-snesli-na-ukraine.html>

On 26 November 2022, it came to light that the T-34 tank monument, installed at the intersection of Svoboda and Proskurovskaya streets in Khmelnytskyi in 1967 to honour the military units that liberated the city from Nazi invaders, was dismantled. Mayor Aleksander Simchishin wrote in his social media account that this tank "is a unique historical exhibit and there are no similar artifacts in the world", so "it will be a museum exhibit that will remind everyone of the occupation past."¹⁶²

On 16 December 2022, a monument to young pioneer Volodya Dubinin, member of a partisan unit near Kerch during the Great Patriotic War, was demolished in Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk).

On 25 December 2022, the monuments to Soviet generals of the Great Patriotic War Nikolai Vatutin and Alexey Zygin were daubed with red paint in Poltava. They were both killed in action on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR. In July 2023, the monument to Nikolai Vatutin was demolished. On 27 July 2023, Verkhovna Rada deputy (European Solidarity party) Irina Gerashchenko published images in her telegram channel of the General Vatutin monument already laid down on a truck platform together with the poet Alexander Pushkin demolished monument.¹⁶³

In January 2023, in the city of Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk), the monument to Hero of the Soviet Union Alexander Matrosov was dismantled and the Soviet T-34 tank installed in honour of General Yefim Pushkin, defender of the city, was removed from the pedestal.¹⁶⁴ Also demolished were a memorial sign to students and teachers who died during the Great Patriotic War in the city of Uman, Cherkasy Oblast, a monument to Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya in the city of Novovolynsk, Volyn Oblast, memorial plaques to Soviet soldier Vladimir Pachulia and Heroes of the Soviet Union Stepan Artamonov, Serafim

¹⁶² <https://ria.ru/20221126/pamyatnik-1834477083.html?in=t>

¹⁶³ <https://easaily.com/ru/news/2023/07/27/derusifikaciya-na-ukraine-v-poltave-snesli-pamyatniki-pushkinu-i-vatutinu>

¹⁶⁴ <https://www.svoboda.org/a/v-dnepre-snesli-pamyatnik-aleksandru-matrosovu-raboty-vucheticha/32207478.html>

Zemlyanov in Kolomyia, Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast, Marshal Georgy Zhukov memorial plaque in Izyum, Kharkov Oblast, bust of Hero of the Soviet Union Nikolai Gastello in the village of Trapovka, Odessa Oblast. At the Hill of Glory memorial in Uzhgorod, the image of a Soviet soldier was dismantled, and all the Soviet stars on concrete graves were plastered over. In the town of Mostiska, Lvov Oblast, it was decided to move the Soviet soldier cemetery from city center to the outskirts.¹⁶⁵

In February 2023, knocked down were: the bust of Hero of the Soviet Union General Nikolai Vatutin in the village of Getmanivka, Kharkov Oblast, monuments to Heroes of the Soviet Union Valery Chkalov and Nikolai F. Vatutin in Kiev, the Soviet star on the eternal flame in the center of Beregovo, Transcarpathian Oblast.

In March 2023, disposed of were: Soviet soldier bas-reliefs and monuments in Turka, Medenici, Strelki, Sulyatichi, Popovka and Opory (Lvov Oblast), Stanishovka (Kiev Oblast), Dolina (Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast), Turya Paseka, Turyi Remety and Turitsa (Transcarpathian Oblast), a stained glass window depicting Soviet soldiers in Uzhgorod, as well as the bust of Hero of the Soviet Union Vasiliy Sidorov in the city of Kostopol, Rovno Oblast.

In April 2023, dismantled or damaged were monuments to Soviet soldiers and officers who died during the Great Patriotic War in: Velyatino (Transcarpathian Oblast), Vladimir (Volyn Oblast), Voloscha, Malnov, Beregovoe, Krasnoe (Lvov Oblast), Nadvornaya (Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast). In the town of Podgaitsy, Ternopol Oblast, it was decided to exhume the bodies of Soviet soldiers in order to move the monuments to Hero of the Soviet Union Major Yakov N. Toporkov and Captain M.V. Zubkov.¹⁶⁶ At the end of the same month, it became known about the demolition of two more monuments in

¹⁶⁵ <https://zahid.espreso.tv/u-mostiskakh-na-lvivshchini-kladovishche-radyanskikh-soldativ-perenesut-z-tsentr-mista>

¹⁶⁶ <https://zahid.espreso.tv/na-ternopilshchini-eksgumuyut-tila-radyanskikh-soldativ-shchob-perenesti-pamyatnik>

honour of Soviet soldiers in the Mostiska community (Lvov Oblast) – a Soviet soldier monument, part of the memorial complex, in the village of Malnov and a grieving woman figure at the Soviet soldiers cemetery in Mostiska.¹⁶⁷

In May 2023, monuments and memorial plaques that immortalized the feat of Soviet soldiers and people in the Great Patriotic War were demolished in Kharkov, Putivl (Sumy Oblast), Velikiy Khodachkov (Ternopol Oblast), in more than ten villages and cities of the Transcarpathian Oblast, as well as in two dozen settlements of the Lvov Oblast. In Svalyava, Yasinya and Dolgoeye (Transcarpathian Oblast), it was decided to do away with memorial graves, exhume the remains of Red Army soldiers and transfer them to the cemetery.¹⁶⁸

On 8 May 2023, the Eternal Flame, once a symbol of eternal memory of the soldiers who lost their lives in the Great Patriotic War, was extinguished in Poltava.¹⁶⁹

On 14 June 2023, it became known about the demolition of monuments to heroes of the Great Patriotic War in the villages of Shchirets, Bolotnya and Velikoye Kolodno, Lvov Oblast. Two monuments were demounted in the villages of Selets and Tysmenichany, Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast. In two more villages of the region – Maidan and Pavlovka – references to the Great Patriotic War were completely erased from monuments. In each settlement of Velikiye Gai, Ternopil Oblast, and Velyatino, Transcarpathian Oblast, a monument was destroyed. Moreover, plans to demolish another monument with the reburial of Soviet soldiers killed in the Great Patriotic War were announced in the city of Rakhov, Transcarpathian Oblast.¹⁷⁰

On 21 June 2023, on the eve of the day of mourning the Nazi Germany attack on the Soviet Union, it became known about the destruction of

¹⁶⁷ <https://sputnik.by/20230426/pamyatnik-sovetskomu-soldatu-snesli-na-zapade-ukrainy-1074853318.html>

¹⁶⁸ http://www.mukachevo.net/ua/news/view/5054113?fbclid=IwAR22xvNpaAgxkqk058hno22om8YS_wG5FKMoqgP_uInGU1Fh0ewdAS_4v6s

¹⁶⁹ <https://zmist.pl.ua/news/vichnyj-vogon-u-poltavi-zagasyly>

¹⁷⁰ <https://iz.ru/1528472/2023-06-14/neskolko-pamiatnikov-geroiam-vov-snesli-na-zapadnoi-ukraine-za-sutki>

monuments to Red Army soldiers in the villages of Zhukov, Remezovtsy and Polyany, Zolochiv district, Lvov Oblast.¹⁷¹

On 23 June 2023, the Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya monument was demolished in Kiev; along with this, a message began to circulate on Ukrainian social networks that the time was ripe to demolish the monuments to writers Alexander Pushkin and Mikhail Bulgakov, Red Army division chief during the Civil War Nikolai A. Shchors, and Hero of the Soviet Union General Mikhail P. Kirponos.¹⁷²

Also, after an anniversary of the start of the Great Patriotic War, monuments in honour of Red Army soldiers were destroyed in Varyazh, Staroye Selo, Stenyatin, Peretoki and Chishki (Lvov Oblast), as well as in Ushomir (Zhitomir Oblast).¹⁷³

On 29 June 2023, two monuments to Red Army soldiers were destroyed in the villages of Kavskoye and Lisyatichi (Lvov Oblast). On this occasion, regional military administration chief Maxim Kozitskiy announced his intention to "make the Lvov Oblast completely free from the markers of Soviet propaganda".¹⁷⁴

In July 2023, about 30 monuments to Red Army soldiers were demolished in the Lvov Oblast alone. On 15 July, mayor of Lvov Andrey Sadovy announced the demolition of the Soviet liberator soldier monument in Vinniki.¹⁷⁵ On 16 July, the monument to Red Army soldiers was demolished in the village of Podorozhny (Stryi district)¹⁷⁶. On 17 July, monuments were destroyed in the settlements of Buyanov, Lipovtsy, Lopushanka, Pomoryany,¹⁷⁷

¹⁷¹ <https://iz.ru/1532770/2023-06-22/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-za-sutki-demontirovali-tri-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam>

¹⁷² <https://iz.ru/1533611/2023-06-23/v-kieve-snesli-pamiatnik-zoe-kosmodemyanskoi>

¹⁷³ <https://iz.ru/1533362/2023-06-23/na-zapade-ukrainy-snesli-shest-pamiatnikov-sovetskim-soldatam-za-sutki>

¹⁷⁴ <https://iz.ru/1536745/2023-06-29/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-eshche-dva-sovetskich-pamiatnika>

¹⁷⁵ <https://iz.ru/1544699/2023-07-15/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-pamiatnik-sovetskomu-voinu-osvoboditeliu>

¹⁷⁶ <https://iz.ru/1544850/2023-07-16/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-snesli-eshche-odin-sovetskii-pamiatnik>

¹⁷⁷ <https://iz.ru/1546230/2023-07-19/chetyre-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam-snesli-za-sutki-vo-lvovskoi-oblasti>

as well as in Zavodskkoye and Podgaichiki.¹⁷⁸ On 19 July, memorials to Red Army soldiers were destroyed in the settlements of Velikiy Lyuben, Gliniany, Kutische, Mikhailevichi and Palikorovy.¹⁷⁹ On 20 July, monuments to Red Army soldiers in the settlements of Krinita, Solonskoe and Fusov were destroyed.¹⁸⁰ On 21 July, news appeared on the Internet about the demolition of monuments to Soviet soldiers in 9 more settlements in the region (Brody, Orekhovchik, Podkamen, Ponikovitsa, Rudniki, Semiginov, Skelevka, Sukhovolya and Yazlovchik).¹⁸¹ On 25 July, two monuments to Red Army soldiers in the settlements of Pogortsy and Susolov (Lvov Oblast) were destroyed and taken away piece by piece.¹⁸²

The process of destroying monuments in honour of Soviet soldiers who liberated Ukraine from Nazism is very active in the Lvov Oblast. In July 2023, Deputy Head of the Lvov regional administration Andrey Godik reported that about 100 Soviet-era monuments had been dismantled in the region within six months as part of "decommunization".¹⁸³

In August 2023, the USSR coat of arms was removed from the shield of Motherland monument installed in 1981 on the territory of the Kiev's National Museum of History of the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War. A Ukrainian trident was installed in its place.¹⁸⁴

Moreover, there is information about monuments to Red Army soldiers destroyed in the same month in the settlements of Zaborye, Oglyadov, Pavlov, Rechki, Staroye Selo, Mezhirechye and town of Chervonograd,¹⁸⁵ Grushatichi and Mizhenets, Baluchin, Nizy, Domashev and Spas,¹⁸⁶ Dolinyany and Ugry

¹⁷⁸ <https://iz.ru/1545688/2023-07-18/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-za-sutki-snesli-dva-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam>

¹⁷⁹ <https://iz.ru/1546803/2023-07-20/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-za-sutki-demontirovali-piat-pamiatnikov-sovetskim-soldatam>

¹⁸⁰ <https://iz.ru/1547327/2023-07-21/tri-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam-demontirovali-za-sutki-vo-lvovskoi-oblasti>

¹⁸¹ <https://iz.ru/1547881/2023-07-22/deviat-pamiatnikov-demontirovali-za-sutki-vo-lvovskoi-oblasti>

¹⁸² <https://iz.ru/1549481/2023-07-25/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-dva-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam>

¹⁸³ <https://www.ntv.ru/novosti/2777954/>

¹⁸⁴ <https://ria.ru/20230806/ukraina-1888424397.html>

¹⁸⁵ <https://iz.ru/1564574/2023-08-25/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-snesli-piat-pamiatnikov-sovetskim-soldatam>

¹⁸⁶ <https://iz.ru/1560197/2023-08-17/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-dva-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam>

(Lvov Oblast only), as well as the Motherland monument in the settlement of Vorokhta (Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast).¹⁸⁷

On 29 August 2023, it became known that a monument erected in the Chernovtsi's Taras Shevchenko park to honour Heroes of the Soviet Union Major General Fyodor Bobrov and Colonel Lavrenty Voloshin, as well as other Red Army officers, was demolished by decision of the city authorities. The burials were removed. The decision to rebury the remains of Soviet military personnel and demolish the monument was made back in April 2023. According to mayor Roman Klichuk, this was the regional center's last Soviet monument.¹⁸⁸

On 6 September 2023, information appeared about the destruction of monuments to Soviet soldiers in the settlements of Dobrosin, Velikiy Lyuben, Magerov and Koropuzh, Lvov Oblast.¹⁸⁹

On 26 October 2023, a monument to Soviet general, Hero of the Soviet Union Mikhail P. Kirponos who commanded the defence of Kiev from Nazi invaders in 1941, was dismounted in that city.¹⁹⁰

In early November 2023, the bodies of Soviet soldiers, partisans and underground fighters were exhumed in the village of Svalyava, Transcarpathian Oblast, as part of the destruction of the Monument to the Fallen Liberator Soldiers memorial complex.¹⁹¹

On 9 and 14 November 2023, Right Sector of the Carpathian Oblast members demolished Soviet soldier monuments in the villages of Sredniy Berezov and Tekucha, Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁷ <https://iz.ru/1554032/2023-08-03/na-zapade-ukrainy-demontirovali-eshche-tri-sovetskih-pamiatnika>

¹⁸⁸ <https://ria.ru/20230829/pamyatnik-1893014729.html>

¹⁸⁹ <https://life.ru/p/1605695>

¹⁹⁰ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/19126061>

¹⁹¹ <https://suspilne.media/uzhhorod/608543-u-svalavi-na-zakarpatti-eksgumuvali-restki-9-ti-radanskih-soldativ-ak-vidbuvaetsa-cej-proces/>

¹⁹² <https://suspilne.media/ivano-frankivsk/617459-ne-stalo-radanskogo-soldata-u-tekucij-na-frankivsini-demontuvali-pamatnik-radanskoi-dobi/>

On 9 December 2023, a monument to Nikolai A. Shchors, commander of the Ukrainian Red Guard rebel formations, Red Army division chief during the Civil War, was demolished in Kiev.¹⁹³

On 14 December 2023, a 7-meter monument to Soviet soldiers who fought in the Great Patriotic War was dismantled in the village of Pererosl, Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast. It also contained the names of people who died in the fight against UPA nationalists.¹⁹⁴

On 16 December 2023, information was made public about the destruction of the monument in honour of the crew of Soviet armoured train "Tarashchanets" in the Darnitskiy district of Kiev. This monument was located at the burial site of the crew who defended Darnitsa railway junction from White Army soldiers during the Civil War. The first monument was erected back in 1939, but the Nazis destroyed it during the 1941-1943 occupation of Kiev. The new monument was erected in 1974.¹⁹⁵

On 29 December, 2023, it became known about the destruction of two monuments to Soviet soldiers in the villages of Zarechovo and Simerki, Perechyn city community, Uzhgorod district, Transcarpathian Oblast.¹⁹⁶

On 30 January 2024, Lvov regional military administration chief Maxim Kozitskiy reported on his Telegram account that local authorities destroyed all monuments to soldiers who fought against Nazism in that region, where 312 such structures were demolished in 2023 alone.

On 19 February 2024, information appeared about the planned dismantling of the monument to the Soviet soldier in the village of Golgocha, Ternopol Oblast.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ <https://ria.ru/amp/20231209/schors-1914802631.html>

¹⁹⁴ <https://suspilne.media/ivano-frankivsk/640144-u-seli-pererisl-na-frankivsini-demontuvali-7-metrovij-pamatnik-radanskim-soldatam/>

¹⁹⁵ <https://vz.ru/news/2023/12/16/1244642.html>

¹⁹⁶ <https://vz.ru/news/2023/12/29/1246726.html>

¹⁹⁷ <https://suspilne.media/ternopil/688178-u-gromadi-na-ternopilsini-demontuut-radanskij-pamatnik/>

At the same time, there are certain examples when residents of Ukrainian settlements refuse to demolish Soviet monuments. This happens most often in rural areas. Monuments are often erected there on mass graves where soldiers who died for this particular village are buried. Often among them are local conscripts mobilized in 1943-1944 and partisans. Their relatives still live in the same village. For example, a similar incident occurred in the village of Smykov on 12 December 2023, when equipment was brought into the village to demolish the monument to Red Army soldiers. But the village headman, whose father is buried there, did not allow this to be done, protecting the monument to Soviet soldiers with his body.¹⁹⁸

On 22 April 2023, residents of the village of Lisichevo, Transcarpathian Oblast, refused to demolish the monument to Soviet soldiers who perished during the Great Patriotic War. They declared that the monument was dedicated to their fallen fellow villagers, and not "an abstract Soviet soldier," therefore demolition of the monument devalued their feat during the war years and their very lives.¹⁹⁹

There are also cases where, a monument was demolished long ago according to documents, but in fact it still stands. Among such examples are three monuments in the Chervonograd district of the Lvov Oblast.²⁰⁰

Thus, on 1 December 2023, the media reported that residents of the villages of Kinashev and Zagorye-Kukolnitskoye, Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast, refused to dismantle monuments to Soviet soldiers. At a meeting villagers spoke out against demolition of the monuments. It was noted that the names of OUN and UPA victims were indicated on the monuments, but the inscription "Died at the hands of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists" was daubed over.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ <https://vz.ru/world/2023/12/14/1244233.html>

¹⁹⁹ <https://iz.ru/1502674/2023-04-22/v-zakarpatskoi-oblasti-ukrainy-otkazalis-snosit-pamiatnik-sovetskim-soldatam>

²⁰⁰ <https://vz.ru/world/2023/12/14/1244233.html>

²⁰¹ <https://vz.ru/news/2023/12/1/1242248.html>

Decommunisation and derussification

The memorials to Red Army soldiers who fought Nazi and Ukrainian nationalists as well as the monuments to the representatives of the Russian culture and other outstanding figures of the Russian Empire were exposed to a blow of the Ukrainian radicals.

It should be noted that they did not start to fight against monuments in Ukraine after the coup of 2014 when the most acute, apart from the current one, and the most active stage of this "fight" began. As far as in 1990s, they got down to dismantling monuments to Vladimir Lenin. Within the first decade after the dissolution of the USSR, over 2,000 of such monuments were destroyed in Ukraine, and primarily in Western Ukraine. Later, at the cusp of 1990-2000s, over 600 monuments to Lenin were dismantled in its Western and Central regions and over 600 monuments between 2005 and 2008, in central regions of the country. The next wave of dismantlement between 2013 and 2014 started from the so-called Euromaidan activists' attack on the monument to Lenin in the Bessarabian square. A total of 552 monuments were destroyed.²⁰²

A new wave of monument dismantlement followed the start, on 15 May 2015, by then-President Poroshenko of decommunisation, which provided for dismantling all communist-era monuments with the exception of monuments dedicated to the Great Patriotic War. In less than two years, on 16 January 2017, the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance (UINR) announced the dismantlement of 1,320 monuments to Lenin.

Apart from the monument dismantlement, the Kiev-conducted decommunisation implied from the very beginning the renaming of settlements and streets as well as removal of memorial plaques and images connected with the Soviet past.

²⁰² https://riafan.ru/23789952-hronika_voini_s_pamyatnikami_na_ukraine

According to official data, within six years (between 2015 and 2021), 52,000 geographic names and 987 settlements were changed or renamed and over 2,500 Soviet-era monuments were dismantled.

Two regional centers received, *inter alia*, new names. Dnepropetrovsk turned into Dnepr, although surveys testified that 90 per cent of the city residents stood against renaming. Another "communist" regional center, Kirovograd, was named after play writer Mark Kropivnitskiy who "distinguished himself" by refusing to translate his works into Russian. In this case, the majority of the city residents, i.e. 70 per cent, stood against its renaming. The deputies of the opposition parties tried to dispute this decision but on 25 January 2021 the court refused to consider this complaint.²⁰³

The geographic names more often change their titles to be called after Nazi collaborators and Holocaust participants as well as terrorists. Thus, in November 2019, The Kiev City Council renamed two streets to call them after Nazi accomplices, i.e. Ivan Pavlenko, commander of the 109th battalion of the SS auxiliary police, and Nil Khasevich, active OUN participant, organizer and participant of the mass murders of Jews, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, including women and children, in the cities of Belaya Tserkov, Vinnitsa, Zhitomir as well as on the territory of Belarus. Eduard Dolinskiy, head of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee, expressed his disdain over these blasphemous actions.²⁰⁴ At the end of October 2019, Kiev City Council also decided to rename a street to call it after Amina Okuyeva, sniper and spokeswoman of the "Dzhokhar Dudayev Battalion", an armed formation that fought in the Donbass on the side of Ukrainian security forces.²⁰⁵

In February 2021, it was reported that the Kiev City Council filed an appeal against the ruling of the District Administrative Court of Kiev to revert the Kiev city government's decision to rename Moskovskiy Prospect into Stepan

²⁰³ <https://iz.ru/1118073/igor-karmazin/proshchai-lenin-kak-na-ukraine-zakonchilas-dekommunizatsiia>

²⁰⁴ <https://ukraina.ru/20230421/1045528163.html?ysclid=lmgnybcvmz65187943>

²⁰⁵ <https://vz.ru/news/2019/11/13/1008211.html>

Bandera Prospect and General Vatutin Prospect into Roman Shukhevich Prospect.²⁰⁶ In April 2021, the Sixth Administrative Court of Appeal upheld the renaming.²⁰⁷

Therefore, as far as in 2021, the Kiev Municipal authorities put efforts to rename some streets in the city to call them after Nazi accomplices. As it was mentioned above, the General Vatutin Prospect was renamed to Roman Shukhevich Prospect, Moskovskiy Prospect to Stepan Bandera Prospect, Druzhby Narodov Boulevard in Kiev to Boulevard of Nikolai Mikhnovskiy (one of the major Ukrainian nationalism ideologists, author of the chauvinistic slogan "Ukraine for Ukrainians!") and the street named after Marshall Malinovskiy received the name of the modern Ukrainian neo-Nazi militarized unit, i.e. the Heroes of the Azov Regiment.

In late May 2021, the UINR compiled a list of 26 sites in Kiev that had not been decommunised. It included the coat of arms of the USSR on the shield of the Mother Russia Monument, the equestrian monument to Nikolai Shchors on Shevchenko Boulevard, the sculptures of workers under the People's Friendship Arch and the bust of Lenin in the Teatralnaya metro station.²⁰⁸ As of December 2023, the sculpture of the workers had been dismantled; the USSR coat of arms on the shield of the Mother Russia Monument was replaced by the Ukrainian trident and the monument to Nikolai Shchors was removed.

By early 2022, more than 2,500 monuments were destroyed in Ukraine while over 900 settlements and about 50,000 streets changed their names.²⁰⁹

A new wave of renaming was launched by the Verkhovna Rada in 2022, when it began hearings of a draft law prohibiting all geographic names in Ukraine that were associated with Russia, its history and its outstanding citizens. On 29 December 2022, the UINR and the Culture Ministry reported

²⁰⁶ <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/722799.html>

²⁰⁷ <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/739447.html>

²⁰⁸ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/11504093>

²⁰⁹ <https://iz.ru/1502674/2023-04-22/v-zakarpatskoi-oblasti-ukrainy-otkazalis-snosit-pamiatnik-sovetskim-soldatam>

that 7,652 names throughout Ukraine had been renamed over the past year within the framework of the derussification (decolonisation) campaign.²¹⁰

In Kiev only, the names of 237 streets, squares, prospects and boulevards were changed during 2022.²¹¹

In early January 2023, the Ukrainian authorities continued their derussification campaign and introduced a corresponding draft law to Verkhovnaya Rada to legalize combatting with "hundreds of streets named after Pushkin" and to "minimize the influence of Russian narratives". It was announced on 4 January by Minister of Culture Aleksander Tkachenko. According to the document, the Ukrainian authorities will be allowed to promptly rename the streets bearing Russian names as well as remove monuments to Russian celebrities.²¹²

On 27 July 2023, this law, as adopted by the Verkhovnaya Rada on 21 March 2023 under the title "On Condemnation and Prohibition of Propaganda of Russian Imperial Policy in Ukraine and Decolonization of Toponymy", entered into force.

Within six months since that date, before 27 January 2024, public authorities and military administrations were to clean the public space from the "symbols of the Russian world", i.e. to dismantle monuments and memorial signs, rename streets and other sites. Failure to do this will lead to the transfer of their powers to the regional military administrations by 27 July 2024.

On 3 August 2023, the UINR published its first list consisting of 183 settlements to be renamed pursuant to the adopted legislation.

According to the interim results of the "decolonization" published by certain Ukrainian regions in late January 2024, in the Poltava Oblast,

²¹⁰ <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/mkip-ta-uinp-pidbyly-pidsumky-za-rik-shchodo-podolannya-naslidkiv-rusyfikaciyi-y-totalitaryzmu>

²¹¹ <https://www.wsws.org/ru/articles/2023/03/14/monu-m14.html>

²¹² <https://iz.ru/1450760/2023-01-05/na-ukraine-reshili-uzakonit-derusifikaciiu-radi-borby-s-pushkinym>

2,028 geographic sites had changed their names since 2022, and 772 more were waiting for renaming.²¹³

Activists note that the full-scale war conducted by the Ukrainian authorities against public symbols, memorials and names associated with Russia, October revolution, Soviet history and left ideology requires huge amounts of money. For example, Maxim Goldarb, head of the Union of Left Forces – For a New Socialism Ukrainian party, told that one plaque with a new street name for one building cost 1,000 hryvnias (equals to approximately 25 euro). Multiplied by tens (or sometimes hundreds) of houses on one street, the outcome price for only one street appears to be quite significant. Correspondingly, the price goes up taking into account tens of thousands of streets renamed throughout the country plus more than 1,000 renamed cities and villages. Besides, there are other components of the costs. For example, the need to replace documents, seals and stamps as well as entry plaques in all institutions and enterprises. New name plaques and signs on the roads, at the entry points to settlements and on the highways all over Ukraine are needed. In addition, many institutions located in a renamed settlement and everywhere beyond in the country are to be provided with new maps and atlases. The overall current name-changing and monument dismantlement campaign in the country as a whole has been worth of over 1 billion euro at a conservative estimate.²¹⁴

There are well known cases when residents and authorities in certain settlements stood against dismantling monuments and renaming streets associated with Russia or USSR. For example, in late February 2023, the authorities of the city of Kamenskiy, Dnepropetrovsk Oblast, the place of birth of General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Leonid Brezhnev, said that they refused to remove the monument installed in

²¹³ <https://poltava.to/project/8222/>

²¹⁴ <https://www.wsws.org/ru/articles/2023/03/14/monu-m14.html>

his honour. Referring to the lack of funds and complicated situation in the country, the authorities said that the issue of dismantling of the bust of Brezhnev would be considered after the normalization of the situation.²¹⁵ However, later, on 27 July 2023, the monument was dismantled.²¹⁶

According to deputy head of the agricultural cooperative society (the village of Letava, Khmelnytskyi Oblast) Cherniy, when Maidan started in Kiev, some strangers arrived to the village. They demanded to get rid of the Lenin Monument that was in the village center. Local residents used the crane to carefully dismantle the monument and bring it to the grain storage facility, and by 1 May, when everything settled down, they brought it back.²¹⁷

The sculptural images of political figures and religious symbols were not the only objects of Kiev's attacks. The monument to Vladimir the Great who converted Kievan Rus to Christianity was desecrated and damaged in Kiev, not far from Pochtovaya square, on 25 May 2014. The perpetrators were not found. In March 2017, the oldest sculptural monument to this personality erected in 1853 was also exposed to attacks in Kiev. Some strangers spilled red paint over the figure of Prince Vladimir.²¹⁸

A new trend in the battle against "the Russian past" in 2022 was a personal war against great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, because Russian literature allegedly promoted imperial ideas and Pushkin himself in his poem *Poltava* gave a negative picture of hetman Ivan Mazepa, who betrayed Peter the Great and defected to the Swedes. By late 2022, about 30 monuments to the Russian poet were dismantled across Ukraine for 11 preceding months only.²¹⁹ In certain cases, the situation got totally absurd. In the village of Pushkino,

²¹⁵ <https://iz.ru/1476101/2023-02-27/na-ukraine-otkazalis-snesti-pamiatnik-brezhnevu>

²¹⁶ <https://life.ru/p/1596481>

²¹⁷ <https://vz.ru/world/2023/12/14/1244233.html>

²¹⁸ <https://ria.ru/20220627/vandaly-1797851444.html>

²¹⁹ https://riafan.ru/23789952-hronika_voini_s_pamyatnikami_na_ukraine

Trancarpathian Oblast, having destroyed the monument to the great poet, the local authorities got down to considering the renaming of the settlement.²²⁰

On 3 February 2022, a monument to Russian military leader Alexander Suvorov was removed in Poltava. The alleged reason was the monument being "not a historical, artistic, cultural, architectural, urban, scientific or technological landmark" and bearing "elements of Soviet propaganda".

Initially, the monument was erected in the Kiev Suvorov Military School (renamed as the Ivan Bogun Military High School in 1992). In January 2019, the monument was dismantled at the initiative of the school's director supported by Deputy Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kirilenko and Director of the UINR Vladimir Vyatrovich. The monument was later moved to the Poltava Museum of Long-Range and Strategic Aviation, a branch of the National Museum of Military History of Ukraine.

On 7 April 2022, a bust of Alexander Pushkin was dismantled in Mukachevo, Trancarpathian Oblast, and a memorial plaque was removed from the school named after the poet. The decision to do this was taken by the local authorities.

On 9 April 2022, a monument to Pushkin was dismantled in Ternopol. City mayor Sergei Nadal explained the decision by saying that "everything that is Russian must be dismantled, including this monument to the Russian poet".

On 10 April 2022, a monument to the Russian poet was dismantled in Uzhgorod by decision of the city authorities.

On 29 April 2022, a monument to writer Maxim Gorkiy was dismantled in the Central Park named after Nikolai Leontovich in Vinnitsa.

²²⁰ <https://www.mk.ru/social/2022/12/02/ot-pushkina-do-suvorova-skolko-pamyatnikov-uzhe-snesli-na-ukraine.html>

On 30 April 2022, the government of Cherkassy decided to burn the inscription on the reunification of Ukraine and Russia, which stayed for years on the monument to Bogdan Khmelnytsky.

The same day, the 119th Territorial Defence Brigade destroyed a monument to Pushkin in Chernigov that had been standing there in one of the city parks for 121 years.

On 1 May 2022, it was reported that the monument to the Sumy hussars who did not please the Ukrainian radicals was destroyed in Sumy only because the hussars served in the Russian Imperial Army.

The same day, a Glory to Russian Weapons plaque was removed from a monument in Odessa that was unveiled in 1904. The plaque was on the gun that had been captured from a British warship during the Crimean War of 1853-1856.

On 7 May 2022, vandals overturned a Soviet-era monument to Komsomol members in Korosten, Zhitomir Oblast, which had been renamed as Monument to the 20th Century Young People of Korosten.

On 10 May 2022, a monument to Komsomol members (a young man and a young woman planting a tree) was dismantled in the Cathedral Square in Dnepr (former Dnepropetrovsk). The inscription on the monument said, "Legends will tell what we were like".

On 11 May 2022, in the Chernigov Oblast, it was decided to dismantle the Three Sisters monument that was unveiled at the junction of the Chernigov, Gomel and Bryansk Oblasts in August 1975 to commemorate friendship between Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The monument was taken off the state register by order of the Ministry of Culture and Informational Policy of Ukraine as of 30 June 2023 to be released from any obstacles on the way to its dismantlement.

On 16 May 2022, a bust of Maxim Gorkiy was dismantled in the village of Leventsovka, Poltava Oblast. It was moved to the Soviet-era Park in Putivl. The Maxim Gorkiy Museum in Manuilovka was temporarily closed by decision

of the executive committee of the Kozelshchina Town Council, Kremenchug District.

In mid-May 2022, it was reported that a monument to Maxim Gorkiy was also dismantled in Kegichevka, Kharkov Oblast. Besides, a monument to Russian Prince Alexander Nevskiy, which stood near an Orthodox Church named after this saint, revered in the Orthodox world, was removed in Kharkov.

On 19 May 2022, the authorities of Pereyaslavl, Kiev Oblast, decided to dismantle the monument to Ukraine's reunification with Russia.

On 21 May 2022, the monument to Pushkin was removed from its base in a garden park at the junction of Pushkinskaya and Naberezhnaya streets in Nikolaev.

In late May 2022, the school named after Gorkiy and Dnepropetrovskoye Highway were renamed in Aleksandriya, Kirovograd Oblast. The issue of dismantling the bust of Gorkiy was also raised. A monument to the writer was also removed in the village of Golozubentsy, Khmel'nitskiy Oblast. A bust of Soviet statesman Nikolai Podgorniy, who was born in the Poltava area, was dismantled in Karlovka, Poltava Oblast. A monument and memorial plaques to famous Soviet physician Nikolai Semashko were removed in Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk).

In the same period, a number of memorial sites were vandalised. The vandals sprayed paint on a bust of Yevdokim Shcherbinin, head of the Sloboda Ukraine Governorate, in Kharkov. On 29 May, red paint was splashed on a monument to Alexander Suvorov in Izmail, Odessa Oblast.

The remaining monuments to the world communist leaders fell also prey to the war on the Russian and Soviet legacy in Ukraine. For example, in late May 2022, a bust of Karl Marx, whose classic works are still included in the curricula of many universities around the world, was dismantled in Khotin, Chernovtsy Oblast.

On 2 May 2022, members of the territorial defence unit demolished a monument to Pushkin in Chernigov.

On 18 May 2022, the main local tourist attraction, i.e. the monument to Maxim Gorkiy, was demolished in the village of Kegiuchevka, in the south of Kharkov Oblast.²²¹

On 3 June 2022, a memorial plaque to Leo Tolstoy was dismantled in Kiev.

In June 2022, the Khmelnytskyi Oblast Council decided to remove a monument to writer Nikolai Ostrovskiy in the village of Shepetovka.

On 29 June 2022, a monument to Nikolai Ostrovskiy was dismantled in the village of Boyarka, Kiev Oblast.

On 13 August 2022, an excavator was used to destroy and remove a monument to Maxim Gorkiy in Aleksandriya, Kirovograd Oblast.

On 15 August 2022, a memorial plaque to Russian writer Mikhail Bulgakov, who was born in Kiev, was removed from the front side of the building of Taras Shevchenko University in Kiev.

On 11 October 2022, the oldest monument to Pushkin, which was unveiled in front of the building of the National Transport University in 1899, was dismantled.

On 30 October 2022, offensive inscriptions and calls to the city mayor Gennady Trukhanov for dismantling a monument to Empress Catherine II were made in Odessa. On 2 November 2022, offenders placed a red sack over the monument, a rope with a noose was woven around the sculpture's arm, and the pedestal was sprayed with red paint.

On 7 November 2022, unidentified vandals put a noose on a monument to Alexander Suvorov in Odessa. On 8 November 2022, the word "Next" in Ukrainian was put on the monument.

²²¹ https://lenta.ru/articles/2023/01/19/pamyatniki_ua/

On 10 November 2022, sacks with sand were placed around the monument to Nikolai Gogol in Kharkov. The bust of Alexander Pushkin was dismantled in the Poetry Square in the city some time before that. It was also surrounded with sacks with sand first and then removed.²²²

On 10 November 2022, some strangers put inscriptions all over sculpture of Alexander Pushkin standing on the similarly-named street in Odessa. The word "Out" in Ukrainian was put on all sides of the monument.²²³

On 11 November 2022, a monument to Alexander Pushkin, which was unveiled in the late 19th century, was dismantled in the center of Zhitomir. Head of the city administration Sergei Sukhomlin said the monument could be moved to a museum or proposed to Russia in exchange for Ukrainian prisoners of war.²²⁴

It was reported the same day that the busts of writer Maxim Gorkiy, scientist Dmitriy Mendeleev, poet Alexander Pushkin and scientist Mikhail Lomonosov were boarded up in Universitet metro station in Kiev (there were a total of eight busts of outstanding scientists and cultural figures installed on the pylons of the central hall of the station opened in 1960). The Kiev National University named after Taras Shevchenko is located nearby.²²⁵

On 13 November 2022, a bust of Maxim Gorkiy was dismantled in the Gorkiy Spa Resort in Odessa. The corresponding decision was taken by the Resort's administration.²²⁶

On 17 November 2022, a monument to Alexander Pushkin was dismantled in Chernovtsy. The city administration posted this "novelty" in a tone of ridicule in its social media account as follows, "[d]id you know that there used to be two monuments to 'great Russian poet Pushkin' in Chernovtsy?

²²² <https://ria.ru/20221110/pamyatnik-1830499944.html?in=t>

²²³ <https://ria.ru/20221110/pamyatnik-1830551444.html?in=t>

²²⁴ <https://radiosputnik.ria.ru/20221111/zhitomir-1830770172.html>

²²⁵ <https://ria.ru/20221111/kiev-1830880339.html>

²²⁶ <https://ria.ru/20221114/odessa-1831333092.html?in=t>

There exactly used to be as far as one has been already dismantled. As for the second one, this is the matter of time".²²⁷

On 18 November 2022, a monument to Pushkin was desecrated again in Odessa. A yellow sack was put on the head of the bronze statue and swathed in tape, the inscriptions were painted on the body, and the word "occupier" was put at the pedestal of the monument.²²⁸

On 21 November 2022, a bust of Alexander Pushkin was demolished in Kremenchug. The local newspaper Kremenchugskaya Gazeta reported that the monument would be moved to a museum.²²⁹

On 25 November 2022, inscriptions in black and white were made on the monument to Pushkin in the Berezovaya Garden Square in Poltava. Head of the Poltava City Council Alexander Mamai announced after a Council's meeting that the inscriptions would be washed off.²³⁰

On 29 November 2022 in Nikolaev, a memorial plaque in honour of Alexander Pushkin was removed, as Yuriy Lyubarov, head of the Department for Culture and Cultural Heritage Protection of Nikolaev City Council, reported on his social network profile.²³¹

On 30 November 2022, the Odessa City Council decided to dismantle monuments to Empress Catherine II and Russian military commander Alexander Suvorov.²³²

It is notable that a call for saving the monument to the Russian Empress Catherine II was made by proactive citizens of Italy. A petition for saving the monument was posted on change.org by its author, journalist Marco Baratto, who believed that the monument was to be saved. The journalist called Catherine II one of the most important women of the Age of Enlightenment and

²²⁷ <https://ria.ru/20221117/pushkin-1832349833.html>

²²⁸ <https://radiosputnik.ria.ru/20221118/odessa-1832493489.html>

²²⁹ <https://ria.ru/20221121/kremenchug-1833034746.html>

²³⁰ <https://ria.ru/20221125/vandaly-1834261086.html>

²³¹ <https://ria.ru/20221129/nikolaev-1834964507.html?in=t>

²³² <https://ria.ru/20221130/pamyatnik-1835241748.html>

proposed moving this monument to Milan or Naples instead of dismantling it, as far as these cities harboured many followers of the culture of the Age of Enlightenment.²³³

On 30 November 2022, a monument to Pushkin was dismantled in Ananyev, Odessa Oblast.²³⁴

On 1 December 2022, a monument to Alexander Suvorov, which was designed in the beginning of 20th century to commemorate the 120th anniversary of the conquest of the fortress of Izmail by the Russian forces under the command of this great military chief, was dismantled in Izmail, Odessa Oblast, and moved from the central avenue to the Suvorov Museum.

The same day, a monument to Soviet writer Nikolai Ostrovskiy was dismantled in Shepetovka, Khmelnytskyi Oblast.

On 6 December 2022, when the Supreme Court of Ukraine ruled that the symbols of Waffen-SS Galicia Division were not Nazi symbols, Mayor of Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk) Boris Filatov (famous for his "we'll hang them later" formula) announced the decision to dismantle monuments to Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lomonosov and Maxim Gorkiy.²³⁵

On 10 December 2022, monuments to Alexander Pushkin and Alexander Suvorov were dismantled in Tulchin, Vinnitsa Oblast. They were planned to be sold as scrap metal for the proceeds to be sent to the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

In December 2022, there were regular cases of "fights" against monuments to Pushkin all over the country. On 23 December in Chernovtsy, the last monument to the poet was demolished in the city. The first one was destroyed as far as in November 2022.²³⁶ On 27 December in that city, the bust of Pushkin was removed from the front side of the building of Chernovtsy

²³³ https://aif.ru/society/history/v_italii_prizvali_spasti_pamyatnik_ekaterine_ii_v_odesse

²³⁴ <https://ria.ru/20221130/pushkin-1835220510.html?in=t>

²³⁵ <https://russian.rt.com/opinion/1083328-sokolov-sud-simvolika-ss-galichina>

²³⁶ <https://iz.ru/1445590/2022-12-23/v-ukrainskikh-chernovtcakh-snesli-poslednii-v-gorode-pamiatnik-pushkinu>

Music and Drama Theatre.²³⁷ On 30 December in Kramatorsk, the Monument to Pushkin located in the city park was dismantled. Nothing but the stand was left.²³⁸ On 31 December in Kiev, vandals sprayed paint over the Ukraine's biggest monument to the great poet in Pushkin Park in Shulyavka District. The sculptures were covered with inscriptions as follows, "dismantle it", "monument to cultural expansion" and "executioner".²³⁹

On 29 December 2022, the monument to Suvorov and the Monument to the Founders of Odessa, also known as monument to Empress Catherine II of Russia and her companions was dismantled in Odessa.

In the night of 5 January 2023 in Nikolaev, the monument to Alexander Suvorov, installed in 2010 near the faculty of military training of Nikolaev National University named after Vasiliy Sukhomlinskiy on the occasion of the 280th birthday anniversary of the outstanding military commander, was demolished. The monument was decorated with a gilded cannon and cannonballs.²⁴⁰

On 3 January 2023, busts of Alexander Suvorov in the village of Podvornoye, Chernovtsy Oblast, and in the village of Grushka, Khmelnytskyi Oblast, were demolished.

On 4 January 2023 in Kharkov, the monument to Nikolai Ostrovskiy was dismantled. Vandals put the word "executioner" in Ukrainian not long before its dismantlement.²⁴¹

On 5 January 2023 in Nikolaev, the monument to Alexander Suvorov was dismantled.²⁴² Another five monuments to this great Russian military commander were demolished in January 2023 in Odessa Oblast.

²³⁷ <https://iz.ru/1447322/2022-12-27/v-ukrainskikh-chernovtcakh-demontirovali-biust-pushkina-s-fasada-teatra>

²³⁸ <https://iz.ru/1449038/2022-12-30/biust-pushkina-demontirovali-v-kramatorske>

²³⁹ <https://iz.ru/1449426/2022-12-31/v-kieve-oskvernili-pamiatnik-pushkinu>

²⁴⁰ https://lenta.ru/articles/2023/01/19/pamyatniki_ua/

²⁴¹ <https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/63b70ae99a79473217bfb961>

²⁴² <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/16746419>

On 6 January 2023 in the city of Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk), the monument to great Russian scientist Mikhail Lomonosov on the prospect of Dmitriy Yavornitskiy was dismantled.²⁴³

On 11 January 2023, the monument to Alexander Suvorov in the village of Davydov, Kherson Oblast, was dismantled.

On 13 January 2023, the monument to Alexander Suvorov was dismantled in the village of Suvorovo, Odessa Oblast. The village itself was also renamed "based on the results of an electronic survey of residents".

On 16 January 2023, the bust of Alexander Pushkin near School No. 76 in Zaporozhye was demolished.²⁴⁴

On 20 January 2023, the monument to Alexander Suvorov was dismantled in the village of Trapovka, Odessa Oblast.

On 24 January 2023, the monument to Alexander Suvorov was dismantled in the village of Oksamitnoe, Odessa Oblast.

On 25 January 2023, the monument to Alexander Suvorov was dismantled in the village of Lyubopol, Odessa Oblast.

On 14 February 2023, the last monument to Alexander Suvorov in Odessa Oblast was dismantled in the village of Petrovka, Belgorod-Dnestrovsky district.²⁴⁵ Another three monuments to the great military commander were demolished in February 2023 in Vinnitsa Oblast, and one in each of Chernovtsy, Khmelnytskyi, Kirovograd and Dnepropetrovsk Oblasts.

On 8 February 2023 in Kiev, the monument to pilot Valery Chkalov was dismantled.²⁴⁶

On 17 February 2023, the monument to Alexander Pushkin was demolished in the village of Belenchenovka, Poltava Oblast.²⁴⁷

²⁴³ https://lenta.ru/articles/2023/01/19/pamyatniki_ua/

²⁴⁴ <https://www.061.ua/news/3531409/v-zaporizzi-demontuvali-bust-puskinu-so-znahodivsa-na-teritorii-skoli>

²⁴⁵ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/17047603>

²⁴⁶ <https://focus.ua/ukraine/549039-v-kieve-snesli-pamyatnik-sovetskomu-letchiku-chkalovu-foto-video>

²⁴⁷ <https://kolo.news/category/suspilstvo/34139>

On 24 February 2023 in Kiev, the memorial plaque in honour of Mikhail Lomonosov was removed from the wall of Kiev-Mogilyansk Academy.²⁴⁸

On 1 March 2023 in the village of Vesely Podol, Poltava Oblast, the monument to outstanding Russian biologist and plant breeder Ivan Michurin was demolished.²⁴⁹

In March 2023 in Kiev, the monument to cosmonaut Yuriy Gagarin was dismantled.²⁵⁰

On 17 March 2023 in the village of Serednyaki, Poltava Oblast, the monument to Maxim Gorkiy was demolished upon the initiative of the local UINR office.²⁵¹

On 27 March 2023, a memorial plaque in honour of Alexander Suvorov was destroyed in Odessa.²⁵²

On 29 March 2023, in the city of Kalush, Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast, the bust to Russian encyclopaedist scientist, who discovered the periodic law of chemical elements, Dmitriy Mendeleev was demolished.²⁵³

In May 2023, the monument to Alexander Pushkin was dismantled in the village of Olgopol, Vinnitsa Oblast.

On 8 May 2023 in Nikolaev, the monument to the city founder Prince Grigory Potemkin was dismantled.²⁵⁴

On 16 May 2023 in Poltava Oblast, two busts of Maxim Gorkiy were dismantled.

On 25 May, 2023, a monument to the fighters for Soviet power was demolished in the village of Svyatylivka, Poltava Oblast. The demolition was initiated by the Poltava branch of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁸ <https://censor.net/ru/p3402147>

²⁴⁹ <https://kolo.news/category/suspilstvo/34229>

²⁵⁰ https://tvoemisto.tv/news/u_kyievi_demontuvaly_pamyatnyk_yuriyu_gagarinu_150691.html

²⁵¹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20230331164131/https://irt.pl.ua/news/29112/>

²⁵² <https://dumskaya.net/news/v-odesse-demontirovali-memorialnuyu-dosku-suvoro-174206/ua/>

²⁵³ <https://kl.informator.ua/2023/03/30/u-kalushi-demontuvaly-pamyatnyk-mendelyeyevu/>

²⁵⁴ <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3706328-u-mikolaevi-demontuvali-pamatnik-potomkinu.html>

²⁵⁵ <https://iz.ru/1518156/2023-05-25/v-poltavskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-pamiatnik-bortcam-za-sovetskuiu-vlast>

On 6 June 2023 the monument to Alexander Pushkin in the town of Zheltye Vody, Dnepropetrovsk Oblast, was demolished.²⁵⁶

On 8 June 2023 the monument to Alexander Pushkin in the town of Glukhov, Sumy Oblast, was demolished.²⁵⁷

On 17 June 2023, in Vynogradov, Transcarpathian Oblast, a bust of the outstanding Soviet educator and writer Anton Makarenko, the author of the "Pedagogical Poem", who dealt with the problems of education in a collective, was demolished. He carried out the first experience in pedagogical practice of mass re-education of delinquent children.²⁵⁸

On 19 June, 2023, a bust of the first Soviet cosmonaut Yuriy Gagarin was demolished in Kiev. The granite bust was installed in the courtyard of the Center for Technical Creativity and Vocational Guidance of School Youth of Darnitsa district in the late 1960s after Yuriy Gagarin's arrival in Kiev in April 1966.²⁵⁹

On 26 June 2023 in the village of Verkhnyaya Manuylovka, Poltava Oblast, the monument to Maxim Gorkiy was dismantled. The Gorkiy Museum, which previously existed in the village, was repurposed. It was the last monument to the writer in the region. Earlier his monuments were dismantled in the town of Reshetilovka and the villages of Leventsovka, Kryachkovka, Zagrebelie and Serednyaki.²⁶⁰

On 5 July, 2023, the image of the world-famous Russian composer Pyotr Tchaikovskiy was dismantled from the facade of the music school in Uzhgorod.²⁶¹

²⁵⁶ <https://dnipro.tv/news-dnipro/u-zhovtykh-vodakh-pryvitaly-pushkina-z-dnem-narodzhennia-ta-znesly-ioho-pam-iatnyk>

²⁵⁷ <https://kourier.in.ua/8210-u-gluhov-demontovano-pamyatnik-ospushknu.html>

²⁵⁸ <https://iz.ru/1530513/2023-06-17/v-zakarpatskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-biust-sovetskogo-pedagoga-makarenko>

²⁵⁹ <https://iz.ru/1531503/2023-06-20/v-kieve-demontirovali-biust-iuriia-gagarina>

²⁶⁰ <https://vesti.ua/poltava/v-poltavskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-poslednij-pamyatnik-maksimu-gorkomu>

²⁶¹ <https://suspilne.media/522075-v-uzgorodi-demontuut-zobrazenna-rosijskogo-kompozitora-p-cajkovskogo-z-fasadu-uzgorodskoi-muzicnoi-skoli/>

On 27 July 2023, in Poltava the monument to Alexander Pushkin was dismantled.²⁶²

On 17 August, 2023, the last monument to Alexander Pushkin in Poltava Oblast was demolished in Lubny.²⁶³

On 20 August, 2023, a bust of Russian and Soviet biologist Iva Michurin was destroyed in Mikhnovtsy village, Lubenskiy district, Poltava Oblast.²⁶⁴

On 11 September, 2023, in Cherkasy, a monument erected in Soborniy Park on the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution in honour of the workers of state security and law and order structures who had fallen on duty was demolished.²⁶⁵

On 11 September 2023, the Poltava City Council announced its intention to destroy the monument established in memory of the exploits of the city residents under the leadership of the commandant of the Poltava fortress Colonel Alexei Kelin during the Battle of Poltava in 1709. This monument has been a visiting card of the city for many years.²⁶⁶

On 14 September 2023, a memorial plaque to Alexander Pushkin on Hrushevskiy Street was dismantled in Kiev.

On 15 November 2023, the largest monument to the Russian poet in Ukraine was dismantled in Kiev near Ivan Bagryaniy Park (formerly Pushkin Park). The monument was established in 1962 and had the status of a monument of monumental art of national importance.²⁶⁷

On 12 January 2024, the bas-relief to Alexander Pushkin, which was the last image of the poet in the city, was dismantled from the metro station "Pushkinskaya" in Kharkov.²⁶⁸

²⁶² <https://iz.ru/1550202/2023-07-27/v-poltave-demontirovali-pamiatniki-pushkinu-i-generalu-vatutinu>

²⁶³ <https://suspilne.media/554221-u-misti-na-poltavsini-demontuvali-ostannij-pamatnik-pushkinu/>

²⁶⁴ <https://life.ru/p/1601746>

²⁶⁵ <https://ukraina.ru/20230911/1049316031.html>

²⁶⁶ <https://easaily.com/ru/news/2023/09/11/derusifikaciya-na-ukraine-v-poltave-snesut-pamyatnik-yavlyayushchiysya-simvolom-goroda>

²⁶⁷ <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-pushkin-kyiv-pamyatnyk-znesennia/32685719.html>

²⁶⁸ <https://iz.ru/1634015/2024-01-14/so-stancii-metro-v-kharkove-ubrali-eshche-odin-barelef-s-izobrazheniem-pushkina>

Not all local authorities and residents agree with such actions. For example, in April 2022 Kharkov administration refused to support the public appeal to demolish the bust of Alexander Pushkin and move it to the city museum. The Kharkov Department of Culture reported that the monument was included in the State Register of Immovable Monuments of Ukraine as a monument of monumental art of national importance. At the same time, the director of the department Eduard Pavlenko emphasized that the issue of demolishing or simply moving the bust is not in his competence.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ <https://iz.ru/1417509/2022-10-28/v-kharkove-otkazalis-demontirovat-biust-pushkina>

The West's whitewashing of Ukrainian neo-Nazism

In the light of the special military operation carried out by the Russian Federation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine, there is an increasing tendency in the Western media and NGOs to whitewash the Ukrainian neo-Nazis, who are presented as fighters for the freedom and independence of a "democratic" country, fighting the "aggression of a dictatorial regime".

American IT companies are providing noticeable assistance to Kiev. Simultaneously with these restrictions, the administration and moderators of YouTube do not object to dissemination of information by extremist organizations, first of all by the "Right Sector" and by the "Azov" nationalistic formation, banned in Russia (recognized as terrorist organizations). In fact, YouTube has become one of the key platforms to spread fakes about the special military operation in Ukraine and discredit the Russian Armed Forces.

Censorship is actively applied by Meta (recognized as extremist and banned in Russia), which owns the social networks Facebook and Twitter/X. At the same time, in the beginning of February – March 2022 the calls "to kill Russians", instructions on the ways of killings and making explosives, as well as other similar content, were actively distributed on these platforms. The moderators ignored user complaints about such explicit dissemination of hate ideology. At the same time, content from Russian media, public figures, as well as ordinary citizens, comprising the Russian position or simply objective viewpoints on the events in Ukraine, is deliberately blocked.

After the practice of applying double standards to Russian citizens was revealed through the publication of the company's internal correspondence, Meta tried to correct the situation. However, its statement only further reaffirmed its racist approach towards publications. In particular, it was announced that users would be allowed to call for the "death of the Russian occupiers."

After the change of ownership of the social network "Twitter" information began to appear in the public domain, indicating the active use of censorship by the former leadership to manipulate public opinion. New owner Elon Musk has taken a number of steps to increase the popularity of the platform and return credibility to it. Among other things, internal Twitter documents are regularly published, which confirm that the social network not only blocked the accounts of individuals, but also for a long time carried out shadow blocking, when publications of unwanted users were simply not visible to anyone, up to the fact that they were not shown in search queries. Users themselves also did not receive information about the blocking – they saw that their accounts were not blocked, but the number of views of publications was minimal.

Nevertheless, many international Internet resources help to conceal from public attention materials testifying to the crimes of the Kiev regime. In December 2022, it became known that the English-language online encyclopedia site Wikipedia removed the English-language article about the Angel Alley memorial erected in Donetsk in memory of children killed by Ukrainian Armed Forces' shelling. There are still materials about the Angel Alley in Russian, Ukrainian and six other languages. However, the media noticed false information therein.²⁷⁰ In addition, the Ukrainian version of this article shifts the emphasis to the fact that these children died "during the invasion and occupation of Donetsk and Donetsk Oblast by Russia," and does not say a word about shelling by the AFU. Similar "inaccuracies" exist in other language versions.

Efforts to whitewash Ukrainian neo-Nazis are also recorded. In February 2023, Meta management removed the Ukrainian nationalist formation Azov from its list of dangerous organizations, thus giving this extremist structure the

²⁷⁰ https://riafan.ru/23779823-angloyazichnuyu_versiyu_stat_i_ob_allee_angelov_v_donetske_udalili_s_vikipedii

ability to openly run social media, including to promote violence and its criminal methods of warfare. Azov militants have never concealed and, even on the contrary, publicly emphasized their adherence to the ideas of neo-Nazism and hatred on national and ethnic grounds. Such actions of Meta are yet another confirmation of the fact that the "collective West" (and Meta, despite the global nature of its activities, strictly adheres to its policies, mainly in the face of the United States), contrary to the democratic values previously proclaimed by itself, uses misanthropic ideas in an attempt to ensure its dominance.

It should also be noted that the Ukrainian authorities have previously been noticed in attempts to edit information publications on the Internet in order to conceal the true picture of what is happening in Ukraine, as well as in the Russian Crimea and later incorporated into Russia Kherson and Zaporozhye Oblasts, DNR and LNR. Thus, in April 2020 the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry announced the launch of a campaign to correct Wikipedia articles, in particular, about "Russian aggression", as well as about Crimea, the Donbass, integration with the European Union and NATO. Although the stated goal of Ukrainian diplomats was to fill the online encyclopedia with supposedly unbiased information about the country, in reality it has turned into a blatant attempt to make changes in the free information resource with the help of state agencies and distort the facts to suit the current political goals of Kiev and its Western handlers, justifying such actions with references to the "opinions of the people".²⁷¹

At the same time, there are publications even in the Western media that directly point to the Nazi essence of the right-wing radical structures in Ukraine²⁷², to which the image of "fighters for independence" is artificially

²⁷¹ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/740011-kiev-wikipediya-perepisat>, https://news.rambler.ru/world/44072204/?utm_content=news_media&utm_medium=read_more&utm_source=copylink

²⁷² Examples include the following. A.Ripp. Ukraine's Nazi problem is real, even if Putin's "denazification" claim isn't. NBC News. 5 March 2022. www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/ukraine-has-nazi-problem-vladimir-putin-s-claim-war-ncna1290946; B.Marcetic. Whitewashing Nazis doesn't help Ukraine. Jacobin. 4 July 2022 <https://jacobin.com/2022/04/ukraine-russia-putin-azov-neo-nazis-western-media>; J. McCann. Protecting the

created. Particular attention is drawn to the fact that prior to the special military operation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, many Western media pointed out the Nazi component of radical Ukrainian formations and their glorification of Nazi collaborators Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevich. After February 2022, however, such a view is carefully withdrawn from Western public space. At the same time, the aforementioned articles rightly point out that the Russian leadership's explanation of the reasons for the special military operation largely coincides with what was previously published in objective articles by Western journalists, who acknowledged the presence of neo-Nazism in Ukraine.

Another vivid illustration of the collective efforts of the West to whitewash the crimes of the Kiev authorities is the report prepared by the NGO Amnesty International, which acknowledged the facts of war crimes by the AFU against civilians, in particular the use of civilians as "human shields." In fact, the international organization has shown the true nature of Kiev's use of terrorist tactics. To minimize the damage, Western countries organized a campaign to divert attention from this unseemly fact by presenting an almost united front. In response to the accusations made by the Kiev authorities, human rights activists apologized and organized a retest of the research, but they did not completely retract their words.

In addition, it should be noted that Ukrainian neo-Nazi groups are closely linked to right-wing radical and extremist groups in Europe and the United States (see the relevant sections of the report). There are connections between these structures. Nationalists from abroad regularly came to Ukraine, where they received training in Ukrainian nationalist formations and at Ukrainian military combat positions in the Donbass. The case of former American serviceman Craig Lang, who shot and killed a married couple after returning to

the US, has been widely known since 2015 for his involvement in combat operations in Ukraine on the side of nationalist battalions.²⁷³

Other information about the participation of Americans and Europeans in the military actions in the Donbass also appeared in the public space. For example, the news media company Buzz Feed News reported on more than 40 American citizens, and a September 2019 report published by the NGO Soufan Center, "White Supremacy Extremism: the transnational rise of the violent white supremacist movement" noted that at that time 3,879 foreigners had been trained during the hostilities in the Donbass. The participation of foreign fighters from European countries and the United States in the ranks of the Azov nationalist battalion (recognized as a terrorist organization in the Russian Federation) is described in a detailed article about the neo-Nazi activities of the newspaper "Die Zeit."²⁷⁴

²⁷³ Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy in the Military – How to Stop It? U.S. U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Military Personnel (Committee on Armed Services) Hearing. 11 February 2020. Dr. Mark Pitcavage. Witness Statement. <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS02/20200211/110495/HHRG-116-AS02-Wstate-PitcavageM-20200211.pdf>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-49803732>, <https://strana.ua/news/230444-azov-i-neonatsisty-ssha-pochemu-v-konhresse-khotjat-priznat-polk-terroristami.html>

²⁷⁴ The Brown Internationale. Die Zeit. 10 February 2021 <https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2021-02/facism-international-right-wing-extremism-neo-nazis-english>

Persecution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church

The canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), that the Kiev government has been trying to uproot from the country's confessional environment for many years, got under the blow of the Russophobic manifestations.²⁷⁵ A large-scale information campaign has been launched against the clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church aimed at discrediting its priests in the eyes of the flock and creating an image of them as "collaborators of the enemy". Slanderous rumours are spread about archpriests of parishes, numerous fake news are posted on social network (their negative role has already been mentioned before) saying the church hierarchs allegedly assist the Russian Armed Forces. On a daily basis, the Ukrainian police and the SBU accuse people of storing weapons, ammunition, and provisions for the "aggressor" in UOC churches. On the basis of such "arguments," Ukrainian politicians and officials call for the prohibition of the UOC and the deprivation of its property. Many cases of violent seizures of churches belonging to the canonical Church and their subsequent "transfer" to the schismatic structure created by the Kiev regime have been recorded. Thus, the monograph prepared with the assistance of the Russian Association for the Defence of Religious Freedom "Chronicle of the "Black Decade". Religious Persecution in Ukraine 2014-2023"²⁷⁶ with references to media publications noted that in the period from 2019 to 2021 about 500 parishes of the UOC were illegally re-registered in favour of the schismatic so-called Orthodox Church of Ukraine, and 144 churches were seized by its supporters. In April 2021, the former head of the State Committee for Nationalities and Religions of Ukraine, Yuriy

²⁷⁵ A separate report by the Russian Foreign Ministry on this topic, "On the Illegal Actions of the Kiev Regime against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, its clergy and parishioners," was published in July 2023.

²⁷⁶ Melnikov S.A., P.V.Lebedev, V.A.Begdash. Chronicle of the "Black Decade". Religious Persecution in Ukraine 2014-2023. M., 2023. The monograph is available on the website of the Russian Association for the Defence of Religious Freedom: <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/doklad-rars-hronika-chernogo-desyatiletiya-religioznye-goneniya-na-ukraine-2014-2023-g>

Reshetnikov, said that the Ukrainian authorities ignore more than 1 million appeals of UOC believers.

Some legislative steps have already been taken in this respect by the Kiev regime. Five bills directed against the UOC have been registered in the Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine. Bill No. 7204 of 22 March 2022, proposed by Oksana Savchuk, a representative of the nationalist Svoboda party, provides, in particular, for a direct ban on the activities of church structures affiliated with the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine and the nationalization of all their property. Those religious communities who wish to avoid restrictions will be provided 14 days for "changing their jurisdiction". Draft Law No. 7213 was put forward on 26 March 2022 by an inter-faction group of parliamentarians who are supporters of the schismatic OCU. It proposes the introduction of "a ban on the activities of religious organizations that are part of the structure (is part of) a religious organization (association) whose governing center (department) is 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".

On 23 November 2022, the European Solidarity Party introduced draft law No. 8221 "On ensuring the strengthening of national security in the sphere of freedom of conscience and activity of religious organizations." The text of the document states that any organization or community that positions itself as Orthodox must structure its activities in canonical and organizational matters "taking into account the Tomos" and be subordinate to the OCU. In other words, the schismatic structure is supposed to have the exclusive right to be called "Orthodox" and a de facto monopoly on Orthodox worship in the country.

On 5 December 2022, the Ukrainian parliament registered draft law No. 8262 "On Improving the Legal Regulation of Religious Organizations", which is paired with draft law No. 8221 and also directed against the UOC. It was co-sponsored by 24 deputies from the pro-presidential party Servant of the

People and the European Solidarity Party. This document provides a significant simplification of the procedure for not only communities, but also dioceses and monasteries of the UOC to join the OCU and change their jurisdiction. It will now also be possible to register OCU congregations at the address of existing UOC congregations, in their churches, monasteries, or other premises. In essence, there will be a legalization of raiding of canonical parishes by schismatics, which they have been seeking since 2019. In addition, the bill provides a basis for future decisions by the authorities to break lease agreements with religious organizations "linked to Russia", which will create (or rather, is already creating) conditions for the eviction of all monastic and ordinary UOC communities from premises that are in state and communal ownership.

On 19 January 2023, the Ukrainian government submitted to the Verkhovna Rada a bill No. 8371 "On Amendments to the Laws of Ukraine on the Activities of Religious Organizations in Ukraine", which prohibits in the country "the activities of religious organizations whose governing center (administration) is located in a state that is carrying out armed aggression against Ukraine". The document envisages a significant simplification of the procedure for legally banning the functioning of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.²⁷⁷ On 19 October 2023 it was adopted by the deputies of the Verkhovna Rada in the first reading. Consideration of the bill in the second reading is expected to take place in the near future.

At the same time, in a number of cities and regions (Lvov, Chernovtsi, Konotop in Sumy region, Kiev, Zhitomir, Rovno, Khmelnytskyi, etc.) local authorities have already banned the activities of the UOC without waiting for the adoption of the law by the country's parliament.

At the same time, the State Service for Ethno-politics and Freedom of Conscience of Ukraine on 1 February 2023 published the results of the religious expert examination of the charter of the UOC. The document expectedly stated

²⁷⁷ <https://ria.ru/20221123/rpts-1833602560.html>

that there is an ecclesiastical and canonical connection between the UOC and the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). According to the conclusion of this body, the current activity or inactivity of the highest bodies of church power and administration of the UOC indicates that the UOC continues to be in a relationship of subordination to the ROC. The UOC called these findings "gross manipulation and an attempt to violate the right to freedom of religion,"²⁷⁸ and on 27 July 2023, representatives of the UOC filed a lawsuit to challenge the findings of the examination.

On 15 May 2023, the Kiev District Administrative Court ruled that the UOC has not severed its ties with the Russian Orthodox Church and is part of it, which could be grounds for banning the UOC if such a decision is upheld by higher courts. On 26 June 2023, the State Service for Ethno-Politics and Freedom of Conscience of Ukraine posted on its website a list of explanations that the UOC must provide to prove its separateness from the Russian Orthodox Church. However, experts note that any such explanations by the UOC will not lead to the fact that Ukrainian state structures will be ready to lift the restrictions imposed on the canonical church.²⁷⁹

Another reason for persecution of the UOC was the issue of the use of the church calendar. In 2022-2023 in Ukraine, the issue of celebrating Orthodox holidays according to the New Julian or Gregorian calendar (New Style) was increasingly raised in the public space. Back in 2020-2021, the leader of the OCU, Metropolitan Epiphanius (Dumenko), advocated celebrating Christmas on 25 December with Europe, rather than 7 January, "with the Russian world." At that time, according to sociologists, the majority of Ukrainians did not support such a transition. So, in 2019, the Ukrainian sociological group "Rating" published information that only one in four (25 per cent) Ukrainians

²⁷⁸ <https://tass.ru/info/17394971>

²⁷⁹ Melnikov S.A., P.V. Lebedev, V.A. Begdash. Chronicle of the "Black Decade". Religious Persecution in Ukraine 2014-2023. M., 2023. P. 199. The monograph is available on the website of the Russian Association for the Defence of Religious Freedom: <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/doklad-rars-hronika-chernogo-desyatiletija-religioznye-goneniya-na-ukraine-2014-2023-g>

support the idea of moving the celebration of Christmas from 7 January to 25 December, while 64 per cent of citizens spoke out against.

Since 2022, the topic of the transition to the new style has become more and more often presented in the Ukrainian media space under the pretext of fighting the Russian world and distancing from the Russian Orthodox Church and has become another tool of information and ideological warfare. Representatives of the OCU called the old style, in particular, an instrument of subjugation of the Russian Orthodox Church, the style by which "Musicals" live, and the transition to the new style – "a blow to the Russian world".

The issue of the transition of churches to the new style began to be actively promoted by the authorities of the country, thus interfering in church affairs. In December 2022, a survey on when Ukrainians want to celebrate Christmas was carried out through the official application for public services "Diya".²⁸⁰

On 28 June 2023, Zelenskiy introduced a bill to the Verkhovna Rada that would abolish the country's celebration of Christmas on 7 January, calling the Julian calendar a "Russian ideology." It finally came into force on 28 July 2023 after being signed by Zelenskiy, which legalized the "calendar reform". Chairman of the Synodal Information and Education Department of the UOC Metropolitan Kliment (Vecherya) said in connection with this innovation that the UOC will continue to celebrate Christmas on 7 January,²⁸¹ and the decision to change the calendar is due to political, not ecclesiastical reasons.²⁸²

Public statements by Ukrainian politicians confirm Kiev's Russophobic course and its deliberate actions that put canonical Orthodoxy in a discriminatory position. Thus, Mikhail Podolyak, advisor to the head of the Ukrainian president's office, said on 30 March 2023, that only the OCU should remain in Ukraine, and the UOC "will gradually leave for Russian cities." The

²⁸⁰ <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/70310-vlast-vkljuchilas-v-propahandu-novostilnoho-rozhdestva>

²⁸¹ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75145-upts-budet-i-dalshe-prazdnovat-rozhdestvo-7-janvaja>

²⁸² <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75238-upravdelami-objasnil-pochemu-upts-ne-perekhodit-na-novyj-kalendar>

secretary of the National Security and Defence Council, A. Danilov, made harsh statements against the UOC, calling the existence of the UOC in the country a "special operation of the Russian Federation", calling the actions of its priests irrelevant to the Lord God and welcoming the demolition of churches of this confession.²⁸³

A notable role in the offensive against the UOC is assigned to organized groups of national radicals who raid churches and property of the canonical church. All this is accompanied by physical violence against its clergy and parishioners, desecration of holy places and other illegal actions that go unpunished. The UOC parishes become targets of numerous marauders who justify their plundering by struggle against "occupants" and their "spiritual lackeys". Video footage of these actions is being circulated in Ukraine's social networks with a call to follow these examples.

On 3 February 2022, the management of the public historical and architectural conservancy site "Khotyn Fortress" refused to renew the agreement with the UOC community on the use of the local church which Orthodox believers had restored from ruins on their own, and closed it. These actions were the result of brutal pressure from Right Sector militants demanding that the temple be handed over to the OCU.

Multiple fakes about "priests-saboteurs" were spread on social networks. As a result, the UOC Kiev Metropolis was forced to refute the disinformation that law enforcement officers allegedly detained a priest in Kiev along with a certain 38-year-old man suspected of espionage. Disinformation was also spread that a group of saboteurs was allegedly discovered in the monastery of St. Mary Magdalene in Belaya Tserkov, two of whom were killed during detention.

²⁸³ Melnikov S.A., P.V. Lebedev, V.A. Begdash. Chronicle of the "Black Decade". Religious Persecution in Ukraine 2014-2023. M., 2023. P. 199. The monograph is available on the website of the Russian Association for the Defence of Religious Freedom: <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/doklad-rars-hronika-chernogo-desyatiletiya-religioznye-goneniya-na-ukraine-2014-2023-g>

Only in March 2022, several cases became known of kidnapping canonical church priests. On 9 March, Archimandrite Titus (Drachuk), rector of the Holy Trinity Monastery in the Ivano-Frankovsk diocese, and a novice monk disappeared. A few days later they were found in the Chernovtsy Oblast. It turned out that they were kidnapped, interrogated with violence, and then forbidden not only to perform services in the Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast, but also to live there under threat of death. On 16 March, the abbot of the church in the village of Ivanovka in Zhitomir Oblast, Archimandrite Lavr (Berezovskiy), was attacked. As of April 2024 his whereabouts are still unknown, it is highly likely that he was murdered. On the same day, a local priest, Father Gennady, was kidnapped in the village of Tomashovka, Fastovski district, Kiev Oblast. On 22 March, priest Sergei Tarasov was killed by SBU officers.²⁸⁴ He was previously charged with treason. On 28 March, during a service in the Holy Protection Church in the city of Smela, Cherkassy Oblast, Hieromonk Vasiliy was abducted by armed men.

In March 2022, at least six cases of attacks on churches and clergy of the UOC were recorded in the Vinnitsa Oblast alone. On 6 March in Malye Krushlintsi, radicals broke into the church during a divine service, desecrated the altar, beat the priest and dragged him outside. On 12 March, in Lavrovka (Vinnytsa Oblast), OCU supporters tried to throw the priest and parishioners outside during a divine service, threatening with physical violence.

The police who arrived at the site closed and sealed the church. However, a few days later it was reopened, but for OCU supporters. On 13 March, in the village of Sosnovka, the schismatics forced the chairman of the parish council to open the church, allegedly to check for weapons. Then the village headman forcibly took away the keys to the church and handed them over to the OCU supporters. On the same day in Penkivka village radicals sawed off the locks and seized the premises of the local church. Church utensils and liturgical books

²⁸⁴ https://ruskline.ru/politnews/2022/08/04/sbu_ubila_svyawennika_sergiya_tarasova

belonging to the community were thrown through the window into the street. On 19 March, in Mizyakovskie Khutora village representatives of the so-called territorial defence blocked the passage to the church, did not let the priest and parishioners in, threatening them with death. On 20 March, the same persons seized the church in the neighbouring village of Pereorki. While in the village of Bolshiye Krushlintsy, local supporters tried to take away the keys to the church from the Orthodox priest, threatened to disrupt the church service and demanded to transfer to a schismatic organization.

On 3 April 2022, in Dolyna (Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast), the UOC church in honour of John the Baptist was closed after a search by law enforcement officers.

On 8 April 2022, the clergy and the faithful of the Ivano-Frankovsk diocese of the OCU published an appeal to the President of Ukraine in connection with the pressure and threats to which clergy and parishioners were subjected by the authorities and supporters of the UOC. The believers pointed out that on 4 April 2022 the mayor of Ivano-Frankovsk Ruslan Martsinkiv addressed the citizens with a statement about the allegedly "voluntary" change of church affiliation by the religious community of the Cathedral of the Nativity of Christ and called on the citizens to "help the community to move to another church jurisdiction". The parishioners perceived this call for "help" as a crude pressure to force the religious community to change its subordination and a threat to seize the church by force if this was not done.

On 10 April 2022, representatives of the UOC together with armed men seized the Dormition Church of the OCU in the village of Mykhalcha, Chernovtsi Oblast.

On 14 April 2022, a group of armed men led by the "hierarch of the UOC" Alexander Drabinko forcibly seized the Church of the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the village of Kruglik, Kiev Oblast. The attackers broke

down the door and announced the "voluntary" transition of the OCU religious community to the jurisdiction of the UOC.

On 28 April 2022, the Trinity Church of the OCU in the village of Perenyatin in Rovno Oblast was seized. The building itself was sealed, radicals threatened to kill the priest. On 10 May, the local authorities handed over the church to the UOC.

At the beginning of May 2022, in the village of Perenyatin the head of Dubna military administration Vsevolod Pekarskiy gave the keys from the sealed OCU church to the supporters of the UOC. In the village of Palchy in the Volyn Oblast, "activists" cut the locks of the Church of the Intercession and handed it over to schismatics, and in the village of Ozero in the same region, parishioners of the OCU were "transferred" to the UOC while they were praying in the church.

On 21 May 2022, schismatics from the UOC with the support of the police and territorial defence forces seized the church in honour of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the village of Ivankov, Kiev Oblast, and the church in the village of Belashov, Rovno Oblast. The seizure was accompanied by clashes, which were provoked by supporters of the UOC.

On 26 May 2022, it became known about the forceful seizure of the church of the Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian in the village of Fursy (Kiev Oblast). The supporters of the UOC committed physical violence against the rector of the church Archpriest Andrey Mukha and parishioners of the OCU. The abbot of the church said that after it became known about the forthcoming provocations, the religious community of the church on behalf of the parish assembly officially appealed to the chairman of the territorial community, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Security Service of Ukraine with a demand to prevent illegal actions, seizure of property and interference in the affairs of the church community. However, the representatives of the authorities did not take any measures.

On 30 May 2022, supporters of the UOC, led by people in priestly vestments, attempted to seize the church in the name of the Holy Prince Alexander Nevskiy in the village of Tsarevka, Zhitomir Oblast. The clergy and parishioners were able to defend their church.

In addition to the use of violence and intimidation, radicals together with adherents of the UOC actively organize acts of vandalism and provocations against temples and priests of the canonical Church.

On 9 May 2022 in the village of Dorogostai, Rovno Oblast, unknown persons poured animal blood on the yard, fence, crosses and the church of Spyridon of Trimiphun.

On 22 May 2022, the rector of the Resurrection Church in Stryi, Lvov Oblast, Archpriest Vladimir Mandzyuk, was splashed with greenery in his face during the service.

On 23 May 2022, it became known that a crowd of aggressive supporters of the UOC, threatening parishioners and a priest of the OCU, arbitrarily changed the locks in the church in honour of St. Stephen the Archdeacon in the village of Chernyatin (Vinnitsa Oblast). The seizure began during a Sunday worship, which was performed by the community of the canonical church. First the schismatics interfered with the service, then began to manifest aggression, shouting slogans and threats. Then supporters of the UOC held a "vote" in favour of the transition to the new structure and arbitrarily closed the temple on their locks. None of the real parishioners of the temple took part in the voting.

On 29 May 2022, supporters of the UOC showed up in an organized manner at Sunday services at OCU parishes in Volyn, Lvov, Rovno, Zhitomir and Kiev oblasts to disrupt the prayer of Orthodox believers. During a service at the Vladimir church of the OCU in Lvov, several "activists" disrupted the service, humiliated and insulted the laity. Supporters of the UOC broke into St. Michael's Church in Ozhyshche, Volyn Oblast, also during the service and

demanded to hand the church over to them. They acted aggressively and assaulted the believers.

The Church of St. Prince Vladimir in Lvov, which belongs to the OCU, was attacked by vandals several times in May 2022 alone. On 1 May, radicals tried to disrupt a church service; on 8 May, unknown persons poured foam on the door to the temple and painted the walls with offensive inscriptions. On 14 May, vandals tried to set the church on fire and desecrated its walls with inscriptions again. On 25 May, unidentified persons again covered the church with insulting inscriptions once more. On 28 May vandals again desecrated this church with offensive inscriptions and scribbling over the crosses.

In late May 2022, Metropolitan Onuphrius of Kiev, the Primate of the OCU, said that from February to May 2022 there were more than 40 cases of seizures of OCU churches in Ukraine. According to the head of the church, both Ukrainian officials and local government bodies were involved in the seizure of church property. About 50 religious communities of the OCU were forcibly transferred to the UOC²⁸⁵.

On 14 June 2022, a group of unknown people attacked the house of Father Petr Monastyrskiy, rector of the Pokrovskiy Church of the OCU in the village of Novozhyvotov in Vinnitsa Oblast. The vandals threw stones at the priest's house, breaking the windows.

On the night of 19-20 June 2022, a fire broke out as a result of arson in the Lvov church of St. Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince Vladimir in the Lvov-Sikhov microdistrict.

Since November 2022, the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) has tightened the repression against the OCU to the maximum. It started "counterintelligence activities" in churches and monasteries belonging to it, while intimidating the believers. The media reported that the SBU conducted searches at 19 sites of the OCU in Zakarpatye, Chernovtsi, Rovno, Volyn,

²⁸⁵ <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/05/27/upc/?ysclid=lmgpwakjrq743121602>

Nikolaev, Sumy, Lvov, Zhitomir Oblasts and the Kiev-controlled part of Kherson Oblast. In total, more than 100 organizations of the UOC were searched. In particular, searches took place in the Holy Protection Church and Holy Exaltation Cathedral in Uzhgorod, Holy Trinity Church in Lvov, Holy Basil Cathedral in the city of Ovruch in Zhitomir Oblast, Holy Dormition Monastery in Rovno district.²⁸⁶ Ukrainian security forces have repeatedly searched the territory of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra.

In the course of such "measures", the special services interrogated clergymen and monks and searched for allegedly "subversive pro-Russian literature", including Easter messages from the Moscow Patriarch, which are sent to all dioceses of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Kiev's unleashed persecution of the OCU reached its pinnacle in early December 2022, when Vladimir Zelenskiy enacted the National Council of Security and Defence decision on restrictive measures and sanctions against the church, essentially formalizing its complete ban.

In mid-December 2022, official documents of the SBU Department of the Kherson Oblast published by the media confirmed that Ukrainian security forces had been intimidating OCU priests for several years after the 2014 coup. They threatened them with criminal articles and tried to instil their understanding of "patriotism". In particular, it is known about such "preventive measures" in St. Dukhov Cathedral and St. Catherine's Cathedral in Kherson in January and April 2016. Under the pretext of checking the vigilance of church staff, an SBU officer visited the temples and intimidated clergy, threatening to use articles of the Ukrainian Criminal Code that punish crimes against national security. He called his actions to intimidate the clergy "formation of responsibility for their actions". Along with this, he cited examples of "heroism" of a number of Kherson residents who participated in punitive operations in the Donbass in order to "instil a sense of patriotism" in the priests. To intimidate the

²⁸⁶ <https://rg.ru/2022/12/14/sbu-prishla-s-obyskom-v-pravoslavnye-hramy-v-deviati-oblastiah-ukrainy.html>

clergy, the SBU officer told the clerics of the OCU about "the successes of the SBU in the Kherson Oblast in combating separatism and other anti-constitutional activities of certain groups and individuals". In addition, "for the purpose of reasonable assimilation of the material" he left packages mimicking explosive devices in St. Catherine's Cathedral and St. Dukhov Cathedral.²⁸⁷

The number of forceful seizures of OCU churches increased for almost 20 times in 2022. In the report of the manager of the OCU Metropolitan Antonyi it is noted that in 2022 in Ukraine the number of raider seizures of OCU churches and illegal re-registration of its parishes increased many times. In particular, 129 such seizures of OCU churches were recorded, as well as 93 cases of preparation for forced change of subordination of OCU parishes, 74 decisions of local authorities to ban the activities of OCU religious organizations, 84 cases of re-registration of parishes by regional administrations, 31 transitions of parishes with rectors and 13 cases of transition without a rector, 10 acts of vandalism²⁸⁸.

In 2023, the actions of schismatics to seize churches by force and destroy them continued. Including the seizure of the Church of the Apostles Peter and Paul in the village of Horov, Rovno Oblast, on 6 June 2023, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the village of Uladovka, Vinnitsa Oblast, on 20 June 2023, the Archangel Michael in the village of Belogorodka, Kiev Oblast, on 25 June 2023, the icon of the Mother of God "Neopalimaya Kupina" on 9 July 2023, and St. Paraskeva in the town of Neteshyn, Khmelnytskyi Oblast, on 27 July 2023.

²⁸⁷ <https://rg.ru/2022/12/13/sbu-neskolko-let-vela-rabotu-protiv-ukrainskoj-pravoslavnoj-cerkvi-obnaruzheny-sekretnye-dokumenty.html>

²⁸⁸ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/16691353?ysclid=lmgpw2342o357713255>

On 21 August 2023, in the village of Khalyavyn in Chernigov Oblast due to arson almost completely burned down the Holy Trinity Church of the UOC. A canister with remains of gasoline was found at the scene.²⁸⁹

22 August 2023, Khmelnytskiy diocese of the UOC reported that activists of the OCU seized two temples of the canonical church in Khmelnytskiy Oblast – St. Nicholas Church in the village of Mytintsy and St. John the Theologian Church in the village of Volitsa. Even the will of the rectors and active parishioners – members of religious communities of the UOC to remain under the aegis the UOC failed to prevent the seizure of the church.²⁹⁰

On 4 September 2023, police broke into the Holy Epiphaniy Nunnery in Ternopol Oblast. The reason behind this was the end of the term of the lease agreement. The regional authorities expectedly did not renew it and decided to close the monastery and evict the nuns.²⁹¹

In early January 2024, there was a forceful seizure of the Kazan Church of the UOC in the town of Ladyzhyn in Vinnitsa Oblast. During the seizure, raiders from among the followers of the OCU beat the priest and parishioners.²⁹²

On the night of 10 January 2024, in the village of Lesniki in Kiev Oblast, perpetrators cut the locks and seized the Church of the Transfiguration of the Lord.

On 10 January 2024, supporters of the OCU seized the UOC Church in Honour of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God in the village of Pishcha in Volyn Oblast. During the seizure, the raiders broke down the door of the ancient church, that had been built in 1801 – a monument of national importance.²⁹³

²⁸⁹ <https://iz.ru/1562132/2023-08-21/khram-kanonicheskoi-uptyc-pochti-polnostiu-sgorel-pod-chernigovom-posle-podzhoga>

²⁹⁰ <https://iz.ru/1562558/2023-08-22/storonniki-ptcu-zakhvatili-dva-khrama-uptyc-v-khmelnitckoi-oblasti?ysclid=lmgpw5jtit524131723>

²⁹¹ https://www.1tv.ru/news/2023-09-04/460551-na_ukraine_politsiya_vorvalas_v_svyato_bogoyavlenskiy_zhenskiy_monastyr

²⁹² <https://t.me/stranaua/139396>

²⁹³ <https://spzh.media/ru/news/77932-v-sele-pishcha-na-volyni-storonniki-ptsu-zakhvatili-kazanskij-khram-uptyc>

On 14 January 2024, representatives of the OCU, with the assistance of the authorities, seized the Holy Protection Church of the UOC in the village of Chepelevka in Khmelnytskiy Oblast. Besides "athletic" men, the deputy of Khmelnytskiy district council A. Chernievich and deputies of Krasilov city council took part in this seizure.

On 22-23 January 2024, attempts to seize the church in honour of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the city of Kamne-Kashirskiy in Volyn Oblast were recorded. The UOC believers managed to defend it.²⁹⁴

On 27 January 2024, after a church service in the UOC church in the village of Pecheskoye in Khmelnytskiy Oblast, local supporters of the OCU took possession of the church premises in the absence of police officers. They pushed the rector Archpriest Mykhailo Furman and Archpriest Vitaly Duntz, dean of Krasilov district, out of the church.

According to Ukrainian sources, between the time former Ukrainian President Poroshenko received the tomos of autocephaly from Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and the end of 2023, more than 1.5 thousand congregations "moved" (i.e. were forcibly transferred) under the aegis OCU.²⁹⁵ At the same time, the mass appearance of new parishes in the PCU has led to a serious staff shortage in this structure, and its churches were not filled with parishioners.²⁹⁶

Zelenskiy's regime does not stop its efforts to gain control over the country's main sanctuary, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Kiev-Pechersk Lavra. In early 2023, the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine broke the lease agreement with the UOC for part of the Lavra's facilities. After that, the clergy of the canonical church were not allowed to enter these premises for the

²⁹⁴ <https://spzh.media/ru/news/78517-v-kamne-kashirskom-prikhozhane-upts-otstojali-svoj-khram-ot-zakhvata-rejderami>

²⁹⁵ <https://espreso.tv/skilki-gromad-uzhe-pokinulo-moskovskiy-patriarkhat-v-ukraini-karta-po-regionakh>

²⁹⁶ S. Melnikov, P. Lebedev, V. Begdash. The Black Decade Chronicle: Religious Persecutions in Ukraine 2014-2023. page 199, Moscow 2023. You can familiarize with this book on the website of Russian Religious Freedom Association: <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/doklad-rars-hronika-chernogo-desyatiletija-religioznye-goneniya-na-ukraine-2014-2023-g>

Christmas service. Instead of them, representatives of the OCU were demonstratively brought there.

Since March 2023, the monks have been under regular pressure from Ukrainian security forces. In early July 2023, the Ministry of Culture demanded that the monks vacate five buildings of the Lower Lavra, the territory of which is under the jurisdiction of the canonical UOC. In case of refusal, representatives of the Ministry threatened to replace the locks and seal the buildings. The following facts testify to the coordinated nature of such steps of the authorities.

On 10 August 2023, the Economic Court of Kiev satisfied the claim of the National Kiev-Pechersk Historical and Cultural Reserve "to remove obstacles to the use of property", thus legalizing the eviction of the monks from their permanent residence.²⁹⁷

On 11 August, the Lavra was surrounded by Ukrainian security forces, blocking the entrance for believers and pilgrims, and a commission of the Ministry of Culture sealed several buildings. Two days earlier, on 9 August, the representatives of the Lavra were denied a counterclaim against the reserve to recognize the unilateral termination of the agreement on the use of the monastery as illegal.²⁹⁸

On 12 September 2023, the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine announced that it had transferred to the control of the authorities 13 objects out of about 40 full-fledged structures on the territory of the monastery.²⁹⁹

The Kiev regime is also capturing another major monastery of the UOC – the Holy Dormition Pochaev Lavra.

In May 2023, the Ternopol Oblast's Prosecutor's Office opened a criminal case on the mismanagement of the lands of the Holy Dormition Pochaev Lavra,

²⁹⁷ <https://ria.ru/amp/20230810/lavra-1889366070.html>

²⁹⁸ <https://360tv.ru/news/obschestvo/vlasti-ukrainy-lishat-monahov-dostupa-k-korpusam-kievo-pecherskoj-lavry/>, <https://iz.ru/1557646/elena-vasileva/opechatnoe-slovo-v-kieve-nachalsia-silovoi-zakhvat-lavry>

²⁹⁹ <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-kyiv/3760404-u-niznij-lavri-pid-kontrol-zapovidnika-povernuli-vze-13-obektiv.html>

and the Ministry of Culture sent a departmental commission there. The pretext was that the monks allegedly used a plot of land of more than one thousand square meters without permission, and removed the top layer of the agricultural land. The Ukrainian authorities did not hide their invasive intentions. In March 2023, head of the Ternopol Regional Council Mikhail Golovko said he intended to demand the termination of the agreement with the UOC on the use of the land by the monastery. The 50-year lease agreement was concluded in 2003. A far-fetched accusation that the canonical church had violated its contractual obligations could be used as a pretext for this. The actions of the representatives of the Ukrainian authorities confirm this attitude. In addition to the state, the schismatic OCU and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) also claimed to the Pochaev Lavra.³⁰⁰

On 19 August 2023, the authorities of the Ternopol Oblast allegedly "for security reasons" banned the procession to Pochaev Lavra in honour of the Feast of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary. The procession was blocked in three oblasts: Ternopol, Khmelnytskyi and Rivne. At the place of gathering of believers in the cathedral in Kamenets-Podolskyi in Khmelnytskyi Oblast, parishioners and clergy were faced with police. The law enforcers also tried to serve summonses to men of conscription age.³⁰¹

The Kiev regime has unleashed criminal persecution of UOC priests, while cynically claiming that there is allegedly no religious persecution in the country, and all that the state requires from the canonical UOC is to cut ties with Russia.

On 21 December 2022, the head of the SBU, Vasiliy Malyuk, said in an interview published on the Ukrainian TV channel 1+1's YouTube channel that the service had opened 50 criminal cases against UOC priests. He particularly emphasized the need to "weed out all this hostile environment of moles in

³⁰⁰ <https://360tv.ru/news/obschestvo/vlasti-ukrainy-natselilis-na-zahvat-pochaevskoj-lavry-smi/>

³⁰¹ https://www.1tv.ru/news/2023-08-19/459560-vlasti_ternopolskoy_hmelnitskoy_i_rovnskoy_oblastey_zapretili_krestnyy_hod_k_pochaevskoy_lavre

cassocks".³⁰² The defendants in these criminal cases are 55 clergymen of the UOC, including 14 bishops³⁰³.

Amid efforts to seize the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, its vicar, Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl, was charged with "denial of aggression by Russia. In mid-July 2023, he was placed in a detention center and released on 7 August 2023, after posting bail (almost \$1 million, which was raised with the involvement of more than a thousand people).³⁰⁴ The criminal case against the Metropolitan is still open.

Repressions against other hierarchs and clerics of the UOC also began. Metropolitan Theodosius (Snegirev) of Cherkasy, Metropolitan Ioasaph (Guben), former Metropolitan of Kirovograd and Novomirgorod and now Metropolitan of Vasylkov, Metropolitan Jonathan (Eletskikh) of Tulchyn and Bratslav, Pavel (Lebed) of Vyshgorod, and others were subjected to criminal prosecution on charges of "inciting religious hatred" starting from 2022.

The first sentence was handed down in May 2023. The Leninskiy District Court of Kirovohrad sentenced Metropolitan Ioasaph (Gubanya) and the secretary of the diocese Roman Kondratyuk to three years. The priests were found guilty of "inciting religious discord".³⁰⁵

On 7 July 2023, the SBU detained Archpriest Viktor Talko, a cleric of the UOC, rector of the Church of St. Michael the Archangel in Borodyanka, Kiev Oblast, on suspicion of helping to evacuate residents of the region to Belarus. Criminal proceedings have been launched against him on suspicion of "collaborationist activity". The priest faces up to 5 years in prison.³⁰⁶

On 7 August 2023, the head of the Tulchyn diocese of the UOC, Metropolitan Ionafan (Yeletskikh), was sentenced to five years in prison "for publicly justifying the armed aggression against Ukraine". On 11 August, the

³⁰² <https://iz.ru/1444393/2022-12-21/na-ukraine-zavedeno-50-ugolovnykh-del-protiv-sviashchennikov-upty>

³⁰³ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/18462289?ysclid=lmgs853axa989219718>

³⁰⁴ https://risu.us/ru/vosstanavlivaetsya-posle-operacii-advokat-o-sostoyanii-mitropolita-pavla-lebedya_n141809

³⁰⁵ <https://360tv.ru/news/mir/mitropolitu-upty-dali-tri-goda-tjurny-na-ukraine/>

³⁰⁶ <https://rusk.ru/newsdata.php?idar=116887>

Vinnitsia prosecutor's office said that it would appeal against the court ruling in his case. Ukrainian prosecutors were displeased with the fact that instead of six years, the hierarch was sentenced to five years in prison.³⁰⁷

In September 2023, a case was brought to court against Metropolitan Longin, the rector of the Ascension Banchen Monastery (UOC), in connection with the initiation of a criminal case against him under Article 161 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (incitement of interreligious hatred)³⁰⁸ because of his "disparaging" statements against the schismatic OCU. Metropolitan Longin is the founder and head of the orphanage at the monastery in the village of Molnitsa in Chernovtsi Oblast, where more than 400 orphans are under his care. For his many years of charitable work the clergyman was awarded the title of Hero of Ukraine in 2008. On 22 January 2024, he was beaten in his own home.³⁰⁹

On 12 January 2024, the SBU charged Metropolitan Vasiliy (Povoroznyuk) of Lugansk and Alchevsk of the UOC in absentia with the charge that the hierarch "was present in the Kremlin at the ceremony of signing agreements on the admission of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, Zaporozhye and Kherson oblasts to Russia".³¹⁰

On 13 February 2024, a court in Dnepropetrovsk Oblast sentenced the rector of the church of the local diocese of the UOC to five years in prison in a case of justification of Russian aggression.³¹¹

In February 2024, the Archdeacon of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra Pavlo (Muzychuk) was persecuted, accused of justifying "the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine" and imprisoned in a pre-trial detention

³⁰⁷ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/18462289?ysclid=lmgs853axa989219718>, <https://iz.ru/1557646/elena-vasileva/opechatnoe-slovo-v-kieve-nachalsia-silovoi-zakhvat-lavry>

³⁰⁸ <https://news.church.ua/2023/05/22/proti-mitropolita-banchenskogo-longina-yakij-usinoviv-ponad-400-ditej-ta-je-gerojem-ukrajini-policiya-vidkrila-spravu-ta-viklikaje-na-dopit-video/#2023-10-04>

³⁰⁹ <https://radonezh.ru/2024/02/06/na-ukraine-neizvestnye-izbili-mitropolita-banchenskogo-longina>

³¹⁰ <https://informer.ua/uk/sbu-ogolosila-pro-pidozru-mitropolitu-upc-mp-yakij-blagosloviv-priyednannya-luganska-do-rf>

³¹¹ <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/prigovor-svyashenniku-upz-mp/32817825.html>

center. The Solomenskiy District Court of Kiev released him on bail in the amount of 121,000 hryvnias, with the mandatory wearing of an electronic bracelet. Archdeacon Pavel is known as an active defender of canonical Orthodox faith in Ukraine, opposing the illegal deprivation of the rights of believers to use the temples of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra and the eviction of monks from the monastery.³¹²

On 12 April 2024, the SBU conducted searches and reported the deputy chairman of the Synodal Department for External Church Relations of the UOC Archpriest Nikolai Danilevich as a suspect, accusing him of "justifying Russia's armed aggression" because he allegedly called to pray for Russians.³¹³

On 24 April 2024, the SBU reported suspicion and arrested Metropolitan Arseniy (Yakovenko), the rector of the Sviatogorsk Lavra of the UOC, for two months without bail, who allegedly gave the addresses of Ukrainian troops' roadblocks to the parishioners during the liturgy.³¹⁴

On 1 May 2024, the SBU searched Metropolitan of the UOC of Zaporozhye and Melitopol Luka (Kovalenko). The issue of selecting a preventive measure is being decided. He is suspected of "inciting religious hatred. Allegedly in his phone found messages with prayers for Moscow."³¹⁵

In total, according to the SBU, from February 2022 to December 2023, more than 70 criminal cases against clergymen of the UOC, 16 of whom are metropolitans, 26 hierarchs and clerics were charged, 19 of them were convicted.³¹⁶

In April 2024, the mass media quoted the head of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), Vasiliy Malyuk, as saying that 23 priests of the Ukrainian

³¹² Report of the Humanitarian and Economic Cooperation Fund "On Persecution of Dissidents and Political Repressions in Ukraine (December 2023 – February 2024)

³¹³ https://risu.ua/ru/sbu-soobshchila-o-podozrenii-protiureyu-upc-mp-nikolayu-danilevichu_n147559

³¹⁴ https://risu.ua/ru/sbu-soobshchila-o-podozrenii-mitropolitu-svyatogorskoj-lavry-vydal-vragu-pozicii-vsu_n147798

³¹⁵ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2024/05/1/7453725/index.amp>

³¹⁶ <https://sinfo-mp.ru/v-v-kipshidze-pirrova-pobeda-ukrainskich-vlastej-borba-protiv-ukrainskoj-pravoslavnoj-czerkvi.html>

Orthodox Church were convicted, 37 clergymen were suspected, and criminal proceedings were launched against more than 80 ministers of the canonical church. According to Malyuk, the religious figures are mainly accused of such crimes as inciting inter-religious discord and treason.³¹⁷

Citizenship of Ukraine was stripped from 19 hierarchs of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is prohibited by the country's constitution. Among them are Metropolitans Ionafan of Tulchyn and Bratslav (Yeletsikh), Meletii of Chernovtsi and Bukovyna (Egorenko), Irinei of Dnepropetrovsk and Pavlograd (Seredniy), Metropolitan Arseniy (Yakovenko), Metropolitan of Svyatogorsk, Metropolitan Mark (Petrovtsev), Metropolitan of Khust and Vinogradov, Archbishops Panteleimon (Bashchuk) of Buchansk and Viktor (Bykov) of Artsyzsk, and others. On 11 April 2023, the website of Vladimir Zelenskiy's office published a petition demanding that Metropolitan Onufry, the Primate of the UOC, be stripped of his Ukrainian citizenship.

On 21 January 2023, the National Security and Defence Council imposed sanctions against two dozen Russian religious figures.

In 2023, a new tactic of Ukrainian law enforcement agencies against believers of the canonical church was recorded. On 1 August, in the town of Horodenka, Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast, for the first time police dispersed UOC believers who had gathered for prayer in a private house, since previously all UOC churches in the region had been transferred to the OCU or closed by the authorities. The legal department of the UOC appealed to the specialized state structures of Ukraine with a demand to stop unlawful actions on the part of officials.³¹⁸

³¹⁷ <https://antifashist.com/item/kapellan-mer-pensionerka-i-pevica-na-ukraine-kollaborantom-i-agentom-fsb-mozhet-stat-kazhdj.html>

³¹⁸ S.Melnikov, P.Lebedev, V.Begdash. The Black Decade Chronicle: Religious Persecutions in Ukraine 2014-2023, Moscow 2023. You can familiarize with this book on the website of Russian Religious Freedom Association: <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/doklad-rars-hronika-chernogo-desyatiletija-religioznye-goneniya-na-ukraine-2014-2023-g>

Kiev's persecution of the canonical church has come to the attention of international human rights monitoring mechanisms. In November 2021, the UN Human Rights Committee expressed its concern. In particular, the Committee mentioned incidents of aggression, intimidation and vandalism in churches related to the process of reorganization of churches and religious communities from under the aegis of the UOC to under that of the OCU. The Human Rights Committee also referred to the inaction of the Ukrainian police in such incidents and the lack of information on the investigation of offenses.³¹⁹

In the OHCHR report on the human rights situation in Ukraine for the period from 1 August 2022, to 31 January 2023, in connection with the above described draft laws restricting the activities of the UOC, it is noted that "due to vague legal terminology and lack of sufficient justification" the norms of these draft laws cannot be considered as legally prescribed and necessary within the meaning of Article 18(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. With regard to the searches conducted by the SBU in the structures of the UOC in late 2022, it is noted that the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine is concerned that overall influence of "the actions of the state directed against the UOC may be discriminatory".³²⁰

In addition, the report notes that in April 2023, the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine documented a spike in hate speech and several incidents of violence against the UOC and its clergy. This included reports that discriminatory rhetoric and open calls for violence against UOC clergy and supporters were used by Ukrainian government officials, bloggers and opinion leaders.

In addition, law enforcement failed to effectively address incidents of hate speech against the UOC.

³¹⁹ Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine of the Human Rights Committee. November 2021 (published in February 2022).

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2F8%2F8&Lang=en

³²⁰ <https://ukraine.un.org/en/224748-report-human-rights-situation-ukraine-1-august-2022---31-january-2023>

In early 2024, the human rights organization Public Advocacy at the international level recognized the violation of the rights of the UOC and that the Ukrainian authorities pursue a systematic policy of discrimination against this religious denomination and restrict the rights of its hierarchs and believers.³²¹ This statement was made after the publication of the joint request of the Special Rapporteurs of the United Nations Human Rights Council on freedom of religion or belief, on the rights of minorities and on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association regarding violations of the rights of believers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church recorded in Ukraine³²² and the response of the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva to this request on 29 January 2024. In their request, the special procedures of the HRC expressed concern about the persecution of the UOC and its believers, which, according to the Special Rapporteurs, is related to the lawful and peaceful exercise of the rights of the UOC believers to freedom of religion or belief, freedom of expression and freedom of association, enshrined in articles 18, 19 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Among other things, the request pointed to the fact that one of the hierarchs of the UOC had been served with suspicion of incitement to religious hatred and that his home had been searched, as well as to the fact that another hierarch of the Church had been sentenced to a real prison term. The Special Rapporteurs also drew attention to the decisions of Ukrainian courts encouraging the authorities to confiscate the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra used by the UOC, and to the numerous searches conducted by Ukrainian security forces in monasteries, offices, educational institutions and other premises of the UOC in November 2022. They also noted with concern the increasing number of manifestations of hatred and incitement to violence

³²¹ <https://www.protiktor.com/rus/srua-un-communication/>

³²² <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=28562>

The request was sent by the Special Procedures to the Ukrainian authorities on 8 November 2023, but was made public two months later, along with the response, in accordance with the practice of the Special Procedures of the UN Human Rights Council.

against believers and clergy of the UOC in some areas of Ukraine, especially in the western regions.

Public Defence human rights organization said that despite the the fact that violations committed against the believers of the UOC in 2022-2023 and earlier periods are obvious and that international human rights organizations have already articulated their position that the Ukrainian government is largely responsible for such actions, the response of the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the UN Office and other international organizations to the Special Rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council was incomplete and in a number of points contained unreliable information.³²³

The World Council of Churches also stated that the current version of the draft law No. 8371 aimed at banning the activity of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church violates international norms of freedom of religion and may divide Ukrainian society.³²⁴ The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, while presenting the report on Ukraine to the UN Human Rights Council on 19 December 2023, also pointed out that such actions of the Ukrainian authorities threaten freedom of religion and do not comply with the norms of international law.³²⁵

In addition, lawyer Robert Amsterdam from Amsterdam & Partners appealed to US President Joe Biden, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to persuade Zelenskiy not to ban the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. In his letter to the mentioned politicians, the lawyer assessed the proposed ban of the UOC as "an overly punitive attack that will cause serious harm to Orthodox Ukrainians."³²⁶

³²³ <https://www.protiktor.com/rus/srua-un-communication/>

³²⁴ <https://strana.today/news/447901-zapret-dejatelnosti-ukrainskoj-pravoslavnoj-tserkvi-vsts-vystupili-protiv-zakonoproekta.html>

³²⁵ <https://www.pnp.ru/politics/kiiev-sobiraetsya-zapretit-ukrainskuyu-pravoslavnyuyu-cerkov-vopreki-svoey-zhe-konstitucii.html>

³²⁶ <https://spzh.news/ru/news/77895-juristy-prizvali-liderov-ssha-britanii-i-es-vmeshatsja-v-situatsiju-vokruhu>

At the same time, Romanian MEP Maria Grapini sent a written request to the European Commission about the violation of the religious rights of the Romanian minority in Ukraine.³²⁷

Moreover, experts point out that many major pro-Western NGOs, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Freedom House, have not reported on violations of religious freedom in Ukraine, although they have documented similar violations in other countries (with some exception of Human Rights Watch, which reported on the aggression against UOC priests and SBU searches only in 2019).³²⁸

³²⁷ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2023-003695_EN.html

³²⁸ S.A. Melnikov, P.V. Lebedev, V.A. Begdash. *Chronicles of The Black Decade. Religious Persecutions in Ukraine 2014–2023*. Moscow, 2023. The monograph is available on the website of the Russian Association for the Protection of Religious Freedom: <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/doklad-rars-hronika-chernogo-desyatiletiya-religioznye-goneniya-na-ukraine-2014-2023-g>

Banning of the Russian language and Ukrainization of public life

Since Ukraine gained its independence, the authorities have pursued a policy of forced Ukrainization of all spheres of public life and the assimilation of all ethnic groups living in the country in order to create a mono-ethnic state. These processes accelerated significantly after the 2014 coup d'état. At the same time, Kiev's policy toward different national communities has taken on a differential character, which contradicts the Constitution of Ukraine, which guarantees equal rights and freedoms to all citizens.

Legally, Crimean Tatars, Krymchaks and Karaites are in a privileged position in Ukraine, now constituting no more than 0.1 per cent of the population, according to the most optimistic estimates in Kiev. However, these privileges were legalized quite recently: The Law on the Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine³²⁹ was adopted in July 2021 in the interests of these groups. It stipulates their right to study in their native language, to establish their own educational institutions and mass media, and also guarantees them protection from assimilation (other national minorities were not granted this privilege).

As for other nationalities, the Kiev regime has pursued a consistent policy of adopting laws aimed at ensuring the dominant role of the Ukrainian language and restricting, with varying degrees of severity, the opportunities for the use of other languages in the public sphere. The Russian language, which is the mother tongue of millions of Ukrainians – not only ethnic Russians, but also Belarusians, Ukrainians, Armenians, Jews, Greeks and representatives of other nationalities – is subjected to the greatest repression. Therefore, the rights of the Russian and Russian-speaking population have been most restricted, as the Kiev regime's efforts have led to a step-by-step legislative restriction of the linguistic rights of ethnic Russians and numerous Russian-speaking representatives of other nationalities.

³²⁹ https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=36748189

For example, in 2017, the Law on Education³³⁰ was adopted, which obliges the Ukrainian educational institutions to provide education only in the state language from 2020. Only preschools and elementary schools were allowed to teach in minority languages.

According to the opinion of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission,³³¹ many provisions of this Law are discriminatory. The PACE resolution on the Protection and Promotion of Regional and Minority Languages in Europe also criticizes it.³³² In particular, the author of the report on the subject of the resolution, Hungarian MP Rózsa Hoffman, said: "I firmly believe that in adopting the new legislation, the country has failed to comply with its international obligations and the standards of the Council of Europe." In December 2018, the then OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Lamberto Zannier, stressed that Ukraine "must remain a space for all nationalities with different languages, which they should have the right to use."³³³

In April 2019, the Law on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language³³⁴ was adopted, which enshrined the use of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of public life, except for private communication and religious ceremonies. According to the Law, any attempt to introduce official multilingualism in Ukraine is recognized as actions aimed at forcibly changing or overthrowing the constitutional order.

The decision of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine in February 2018 preceded this Law. This decision declared unconstitutional the Law on the Principles of State Language Policy,³³⁵ according to which Russian was a regional language in certain regions of the country (in 13 out of 24 regions).

³³⁰ https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=37708387

³³¹ [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2017\)030-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2017)030-e)

³³² <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/23532#trace-1>

³³³ <https://ria.ru/20181206/1547556068.html>

³³⁴ https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=33624660

³³⁵ <https://ria.ru/20180228/1515481546.html>

Later, at the instigation of some "language activists," Ukrainian courts stripped Russian of its regional status in these areas.

In accordance with the Law on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language, two bodies, the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of the Official Language and the National Commission on Ukrainian Language Standards, were established in 2019 to monitor the implementation of legal acts on language. In reality, the Office of the Commissioner performs the functions of a repressive mechanism, since its responsibilities include monitoring compliance with the requirements set forth in the language laws, including conducting official investigations and proposing the imposition of disciplinary or administrative sanctions on individuals or organizations that violate the language laws. In 2022 a legal provision imposing liability for debasing or disparaging the Ukrainian language came into effect thus enlarging the powers of the Commissioner. The system of fines introduced is impressive, ranging from 200 to 400 minimum wages.

On 21 June 2019, a group of 51 MPs of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine filed a submission to the Constitutional Court of Ukraine (CCU) raising the issue of the constitutionality of the Law on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language with regard to the restrictions it imposes on the right of citizens to use and protect their native language and the right to develop the linguistic identity of indigenous peoples and national minorities of Ukraine.³³⁶ One of the initiators of the appeal to the court, Novynskiy, noted that instead of regulating public relations in the field of language policy in a multinational state, this law pits Ukrainian- and Russian-

³³⁶ <https://www.ukrinform.ru/rubric-polytics/3057613-konstitucionnyj-sud-vo-vtornik-vozmetsa-za-azykovej-zakon.html>

speaking citizens against each other.³³⁷ On 14 July 2021, the CCU issued a ruling recognizing this Law as constitutional.³³⁸

In addition to the Russian language, the languages of other national minorities, especially Hungarian, were also subject to restrictions. In December 2020, after the Commissioner for the Protection of Official Languages Taras Kremen requested the Ukrainian Prosecutor General, all decisions of the Beregovskiy and Vinogradovskiy district councils in Transcarpathia on the functioning of regional languages were declared illegal and revoked.³³⁹

Since the adoption of the Law on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as a State Language, its provisions have gradually come into force.

Article 32 of the Law, which defines the state language as the language of advertising in Ukraine, entered into force on 16 January 2020. The exceptions are the same as in other areas: Print media and advertisements may be published in any EU language. The corresponding amendments have been introduced into the Law on Advertising.

On 16 July 2020, additional provisions of the Law came into force, introducing the Ukrainian language into the scientific sphere. The new regulations allow the use of official EU languages in addition to Ukrainian for the publication of scientific works; however, such publications should necessarily include an abstract in Ukrainian. Since then, dissertations, monographs, and abstracts should be written in Ukrainian or English. Their defence and public scholarly events should also be carried out in the same languages.

³³⁷ <https://vesti.ua/strana/obrashhenie-v-ksu-po-yazykovomu-zakonu-yavlyaetsya-zashhitoj-prav-russkoyazychnyh> <https://strana.today/articles/analysis/277345-pochemu-predstavitel-prezidenta-v-ks-zajavil-chto-ne-nuzhno-otmenjat-zakon-o-totalnoj-ukrainizatsii-.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/articles/analysus/277345-pochemu-predstavitel-prezidenta-v-ks-zajavil-chto-ne-nuzhno-otmenjat-zakon-o-totalnoj-ukrainizatsii-.html>)

³³⁸ <https://tass-ru.turbopages.org/turbo/tass.ru/s/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/11902213>

³³⁹ <https://strana.today/news/312768-na-zakarpate-utratali-dejstvie-mestnye-reshenija-o-rehionalnykh-jazykakh.html> (formerly <https://strana.ua/news/312768-na-zakarpate-utratali-dejstvie-mestnye-reshenija-o-rehionalnykh-jazykakh.html>)

Article 30 of the Law introducing the Ukrainian language in the service sector entered into force on 16 January 2021.

Since 16 July 2021, a new stage of Ukrainization of all spheres of public life has been launched in the country. It involves the entry into force of Articles 23 and 26 of the Law on Language, according to which all cultural and mass events should be held in the Ukrainian language, including theatrical performances, concerts, and show programmes. The production of banners and posters in foreign languages is not allowed, except for the names of authors, performers, or performing groups. Information stands, audio-video guides, brochures and labels on exhibits in museums, galleries and exhibition halls should be in the state language. Films in other languages shown on television or in cinemas are subject to mandatory dubbing into Ukrainian. As for publishing houses, they are required to publish at least 50 per cent of the total annual printed books in Ukrainian. Tourism and guided tours have also fallen under Ukrainization. At the same time, mandatory Ukrainian language certification was introduced for candidates applying for civil service positions.

On 16 January 2022, a new provision of the Law on Language concerning the media came into force in Ukraine. Beginning in January 2022, national print media are required to publish a mandatory Ukrainian copy of editions published in a non-state language (for regional media, the same regulation will come into effect in July 2024). Russian language content is available as an additional option only. In July 2024, the quota for TV and radio programmes and films in Ukrainian will be increased to 90 per cent for national TV channels and 80 per cent for regional channels (currently 75 and 60 per cent, respectively).

The law prohibits press advertising in languages other than Ukrainian. Exceptions are made for English, official EU languages, and indigenous languages. In this regard, the Opposition Platform – For Life political party (banned in March 2022, along with the other 17 (as of January 2023) political

parties in Ukraine) issued a statement where it called the destruction of Russian language print media as discrimination and humiliation of millions of Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine. The party noted that the introduced norm will make it unprofitable to publish media in Russian and impossible for Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine to receive information in their native language.

From 16 July 2022, in accordance with the latest provisions of the Law on Language, which came into force, all websites and social media pages of state authorities, local self-government bodies, enterprises, institutions and organizations registered in Ukraine should load the Ukrainian language version by default. All items with installed computer programs should have a Ukrainian language interface. Also from this day on, individuals may be fined for using the Russian language if its use is deemed to violate the provisions of the aforementioned law.

It is worth noting that due to a strong backlash from several European countries, first of all Hungary, against the discriminatory provisions of the Law on Education, a provision was included in the Law on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language, according to which members of national minorities whose languages are official in the European Union have the right to continue their general secondary education in their mother tongue until 1 September 2023, if they started their general secondary education before 1 September 2018. In June 2023, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine approved a bill to extend this period for another year, i.e. until 1 September 2024.³⁴⁰ However, the new norms did not apply to other national minorities. Thus, the Russian language is doubly discriminated against (in relation to both the state language and the official languages of the EU), which was again pointed out by the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe,³⁴¹ which reacted to the contradiction between the Law on Language and Ukraine's international

³⁴⁰ <https://delo.ua/ru/politics/v-ukraine-prodlyat-na-god-perexod-skol-nacmensinstv-na-ukrainskii-yazyk-obuceniya-419048/>

³⁴¹ [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2019\)032-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2019)032-e)

obligations, and also expressed fears that the Law could create inter-ethnic tensions in society. OHCHR supported the Commission's assessments and recommendations.³⁴²

Nevertheless, Kiev ignored the recommendations of the Venice Commission. The next step towards the establishment of a mono-ethnic language regime in the multi-ethnic state was the adoption of the Law on Complete Secondary Education on 16 January 2020.³⁴³ The document introduced three teaching models that depend on the language spoken by the students. Provision was made for teaching Ukraine's indigenous peoples (which in Ukrainian law refers to the Crimean Tatars, Krymchaks, and Karaites) in their native languages throughout their studies. Representatives of national minorities whose languages are official languages of the European Union have the opportunity to receive education in these languages for the first four years, after which the number of subjects taught in Ukrainian will gradually increase from 20 to 60 per cent by the ninth grade. For all other students, the proportion of instruction in the state language should reach 80-100 per cent by the fifth grade.

As the result of a number of the laws adopted, including the Laws on Education, on General Secondary Education and On Ensuring Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language, the Russian language was subjected to triple discrimination in the Ukrainian state: in respect of the state language, official languages of the EU and indigenous people's languages.

As a result of the Kiev authorities' policy of squeezing out the Russian language, beginning from 2020, Russian-language schools in Ukraine have virtually ceased to exist. From September 2022, Ukrainian school curricula no longer provide for the teaching of subjects in Russian and the study of Russian either as a subject or as an elective.

³⁴² 16 February – 31 July 2020 https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/30thReportUkraine_RU.pdf

³⁴³ <https://iz.ru/986778/2020-03-13/prezident-ukrainy-podpisal-zakon-ob-obrazovanii>

A report published on 30 April 2024 by Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language Taras Kremen, indicated that there are only three schools left in Ukraine where Russian is taught as a subject. Over the past two years, the number of schoolchildren studying Russian has decreased from 454,800 to 768 children.³⁴⁴

In addition, the oppressed status of the Russian language (defined as "the language of a national minority that is the state (official) language of the state recognized by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine as an aggressor state or an occupying state") is clearly spelled out in the 2022 Law on National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine (as amended on 21 September and 8 December 2023, in response to criticism voiced by the Venice Commission). Previously, it was planned to restore some rights related to the use of the Russian language five years after the lifting of martial law, but the amendments adopted in December 2023 (the Law "On Amending Certain Laws of Ukraine Concerning the Consideration of the Expert Assessment of the Council of Europe and its Bodies On the Rights of National Minorities (Communities) in Specific Spheres") made the restrictions indefinite. In this way, the total discrimination of the Russian language in Ukraine has now been enshrined in law.

It is indicative that the Ukrainian authorities were not ready to implement these restrictive innovations. Before this comprehensive transition to the Ukrainian language in education, the second half of June 2022 was marked by a centralized evaluation of school library stocks to provide all educational institutions with student books. However, the resources found were not sufficient to implement the requirements of the law. Students' parents said that the schools were not able to provide the children with books, and they were advised to buy them at their own expense.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁴ <https://kommersant-ru.turbopages..org/turbo/kommersant.ru/s/doc/6679806>

³⁴⁵ <https://strana.today/news/272272-zakrytie-russkikh-shkol-v-ukraine-hde-brat-uchebniki-na-move.html>
(formerly <https://strana.ua/news/272272-zakrytie-russkikh-shkol-v-ukraine-hde-brat-uchebniki-na-move.html>)

The school year 2020/2021 has shown that the implementation of the Law on Education was carried out following the most rigid scenario, with the situation being aggravated in certain regions by the local authorities. In Lvov, for example, the Ukrainization of the Russian Lyceum No. 45, one of the city's most prestigious educational institutions, where about 1,000 children of different ethnicities studied, was presented as a special "achievement." The headmaster, who actively promoted the teaching of the Russian language, was forced to resign in order to give his position to a person who advocated the abandonment of the Russian language and who had no previous connection with the lyceum.

In order to "squeeze out" the Russian language, the forces of "civil society" (often radical organizations) were also involved, who, with the indulgence of the authorities, organized various aggressive actions against teachers who continued to use the Russian language. In March 2020 the nationalists started to harass the teachers of the Lyceum in Lvov. The teachers were accused of the "propaganda of the Russian world" and "Russification of the Ukrainian children".³⁴⁶ The same happened to the honoured teacher of Ukraine Pavel Viktor. In April 2020, nationalists launched an aggressive campaign because of the video class in physics which he filmed in Russian.³⁴⁷

In November 2020, Valery Gromov, a professor at the National Technical University "Dneprovskaya Politehnika" (Dnepr/Dnepropetrovsk), was forced to resign under pressure exercised by the university administration after a student formally complained about him lecturing in Russian.³⁴⁸

In general, the Ukrainian government's education policy has led to a decrease in the number of Russian-language schools in the country since 2013, from 1,275 to 25 in the 2021/2022 school year.

³⁴⁶ <https://strana.today/news/253594-kak-vo-lvove-natsionalisty-atakujut-shkolu-s-russkim-jazykom-obuchenija-.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/253594-kak-vo-lvove-natsionalisty-atakujut-shkolu-s-russkim-jazykom-obuchenija-.html>)

³⁴⁷ <https://vesti.ua/odessa/rabotaet-na-kreml-v-odesse-zatravili-izvestnogo-professora-iz-za-yazyka>

³⁴⁸ <https://strana.today/news/299846-jazykovej-skandal-v-dnepre-za-chto-uvolili-professora-hromova-iz-dpi.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/299846-jazykovej-skandal-v-dnepre-za-chto-uvolili-professora-hromova-iz-dpi.html>)

As already mentioned, in 2022 Ukraine finished the process of "squeezing out" the Russian language from the educational sphere: in 2022/2023, secondary school curricula did not include subjects in Russian. There were also no compulsory or optional courses where the Russian language would be taught. All works of Russian and Soviet (except for Ukrainian) authors have been removed from the literary programmes of Ukrainian schools.³⁴⁹ The Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Information Policy developed recommendations to exclude Russian literature considered propagandistic from libraries. These works, according to representatives of the Ministry, "will be sent to waste paper for the printing of Ukrainian books". In 2022, about 11,000,000 Russian-language books were written off and destroyed in public libraries as part of the "derussification" programme.³⁵⁰ This continued in 2023. On 5 October 2023, more than 400,000 books in Russian and publications of Russian authors were removed from the libraries in the Kiev Oblast.³⁵¹

At the same time, repressions were launched against Russian-speaking teachers. On 7 February 2022, Kiev schools (Lyceum No. 303 and School No. 152) fired two teachers for using the Russian language in class. They were fired leave after the auditing conducted in the two educational institutions by the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language. Teachers were reprimanded before being dismissed.

The Ukrainian authorities have also actively banned any public use of the Russian language. On 9 February 2022, Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language, Taras Kremen, addressed the mayors of a number of Ukrainian cities with a demand to dismantle the outdoor advertising, billboards and signs installed in violation of the Law on Language. The message informing about this demand was published on the Facebook page of Taras Kremen. In

³⁴⁹ https://ru.osvita.ua/doc/files/news/866/86629/1_Rishennya.pdf

³⁵⁰ <https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/63e1f2a79a79470c4ae86e5b>

³⁵¹ <https://iz.ru/1584681/2023-10-05/v-bibliotekakh-kiievskoi-oblasti-iziato-bolee-400-tys-knig-na-russkom-iazyke>

particular, it mentioned the letters being sent to the heads of Kiev, Kharkov, Odessa, Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk), Zaporozhye, Nikolaev, Kherson, Sumy, Poltava, Chernigov, Cherkassy, Chernovtsy, Kropivnitskiy (formerly Kirovograd), Uzhgorod, Kremenchug, Beregovo, Mariupol, Kramatorsk, Bakhmut (formerly Artemovsk) and Krivoy Rog, as well as to the heads of military and civil administrations of Volnovakha, Slavyansk, Severodonetsk, and Lisichansk cities.

In April 2022, Taras Kremen publicly called for the abolition of teaching in the Russian language in all educational institutions of the country since 1 September 2023.³⁵² His proposal was to replace Russian with other subjects, such as Ukrainian history or English, and until then, he suggested that teachers should explain to Russian-speaking children before each Russian lesson that their mother tongue was by definition the language of the aggressor, which it was shameful to speak. Taras Kremen also said that the programme of foreign literature should be revised, since it places a significant emphasis on the study of the works of Russian writers. On 11 April 2022, he called for the elimination of the Russian names of settlements, supporting the idea with the slogan "Ukraine for Ukrainians".³⁵³ Moreover, on 31 October 2023 he said that students and teachers should also speak only in Ukrainian during breaks between classes.³⁵⁴

The Kiev authorities do not stop at the exclusion of the Russian language from education and scientific life. In mid-December 2022, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine passed in the first reading draft law No. 7633 on banning the use of "Russian sources of information" in education, which provides for a ban on the use of Russian-language literature in science and education. The document envisages amendments to the Law on Education, which will stipulate

³⁵² <https://strana.today/news/386692-v-shkolakh-mohut-perestat-obuchat-russkomu.html>

³⁵³ <https://ria.ru/20220411/yazyk-1782979284.html>

³⁵⁴ <https://informator.ua/uk/ce-tezh-osvitniy-proces-kremin-povidomiv-yakoyu-movoyu-mayut-splilkuvatisya-vchiteli-ta-diti-na-perervah>

that Ukrainian educational programmes cannot contain references to literature and information sources published in Ukraine in the state language by citizens or legal entities of the Russian Federation. Similar changes are envisaged in the Law on Scientific and Scientific-Technical Activity. All this is being introduced for the sake of "protecting Ukraine's educational and information space from the influence of the Russian imperialism".³⁵⁵ In fact, this means a complete ban on scientific literature published in Russian, on the territory of Russia or by Russian citizens. Russian-language sources may no longer be used in schools, universities, or for scientific work.

Previous obstacles introduced by the Ukrainian authorities to the import of Russian books (in the form of refusal to issue licenses) have already had negative consequences. According to Strana.UA (a Ukrainian online newspaper), between November 2019 and 8 July 2020, not a single Russian publication was imported to Ukraine and not a single license was issued.

Not only fiction, but also specialized literature fell under the restrictions, which led to its shortage. The shortage of up-to-date scientific works on virology became particularly acute during the pandemic.³⁵⁶

On 14 March 2022, the Television and Radio Broadcasting Committee of Ukraine announced a ban on the import and distribution of all publishing products from Russia, including to "prevent Russia's cultural and informational influence on Ukrainians".³⁵⁷

In addition, in June 2022, laws were passed prohibiting the import and distribution of books and other publishing products from Russia and Belarus, and the publication and sale of books authored by Russian citizens.

³⁵⁵ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/amp/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221219-v-pogone-za-movoy-ukraina-polnostyu-khoronit-ostatki-svoey-nauki-i-kultury/>

³⁵⁶ <https://strana.today/news/277505-zapret-na-vvoz-knih-iz-rossii-sprovotsiroval-defitsit-na-rynke-nauchnoj-literatury-v-ukraine.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/277505-zapret-na-vvoz-knih-iz-rossii-sprovotsiroval-defitsit-na-rynke-nauchnoj-literatury-v-ukraine.html>)

³⁵⁷ <https://iz.ru/1304904/2022-03-14/na-ukraine-vveli-zapret-na-vvoz-i-rasprostranenie-vsekh-knig-iz-rossii>

Since 2017, there has been a ban on access to 468 Russian websites and social media platforms on Ukrainian territory, including Yandex, Mail.ru, VKontakte, and Odnoklassniki, as well as software products from 1C, Kaspersky Lab, and Doctor Web. In September 2020, the secretary of the National Security and Defence Council, O. Danilov, said that the Ukrainian security services intended to track and register users of the above-mentioned social networks.³⁵⁸

Despite the imposed legal restrictions, programmes in Russian were still in demand (now Russian-language programmes are almost non-existent), although the Ukrainian authorities were trying to combat this. It is indicative that on 13 January 2022, the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council of Ukraine announced during an online meeting that it would conduct checks on Ukrainian channels due to the abundance of Russian-language content on New Year's Eve.

Simultaneously, the provisions of the law "On Television and Radio Broadcasting"³⁵⁹ (this law was repealed due to the adoption of the law "On Media") prohibited the broadcasting of films and programmes with the participation of "banned" actors. In accordance with the law "On Cinematography"³⁶⁰, Ukraine is not allowed to show films and TV series about Russian security forces, as well as Russian TV and film productions created after 2014.

In June 2022, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine passed laws banning the public performance of Russian songs and their use on radio and television. Import and distribution of books and other publishing products from the Russian Federation and Belarus, publication and sale of books authored by Russian citizens were also banned (the laws came into force in June 2023).

³⁵⁸ <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/25/09/2020/5f6db5599a794765448c5e81>

³⁵⁹ https://urst.com.ua/ru/act/o_televidenii_i_radioveschanii

³⁶⁰ https://kodeksy.com.ua/ka/o_kinematografii.htm

On 7 October 2022, the law "On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine on Support of National Musical Productions and Restriction of Public Usage of Music by an Aggressor State"³⁶¹ came into force. In accordance with this law the broadcasting of Russian music on television, radio and in public places, as well as tours of performers from Russia is prohibited.

The Law "On Media", which came into force in March 2023, tightens language quotas – from January 2024 the share of Ukrainian language on national and regional television should increase from 75 per cent to 90 per cent, on local TV channels – from 60 per cent to 80 per cent. In accordance with the amendments introduced by the Law of 8 December 2023 "On Amending Certain Laws of Ukraine Regarding the Consideration of the Expert Assessment of the Council of Europe and its Bodies on the Rights of National Minorities (Communities) in Certain Spheres", for TV and radio broadcasters who, in addition to the state language, broadcast in indigenous or minority languages, which are official languages of the European Union or to which the provisions of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages apply, this threshold is reduced to 30 per

cent. At the same time, the Law explicitly states that these provisions do not apply to the Russian language.

It should be noted that even before the adoption of this law, nationalists were actively involved in the fight against the public singing of Russian songs and, in general, against the use of the Russian language in everyday life. Thus, since the beginning of 2021, unofficial unions radicalized against the Russian language – "language activists"³⁶², consisting mainly of young people, have become active in Lvov.³⁶³ In the city, they are remembered for a number of actions of the relevant direction. For example, "language activists" demanded that the administration of "Puzata Khata" stop broadcasting Russian music in

³⁶¹ <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/go/2310-20>

³⁶² Self-designation – "movny patrol", that is – "language patrol".

³⁶³ <https://is.gd/TmiDr3> (page of one of the associations of the " movny patrol" in the social network Facebook).

the establishment and sent a complaint to the head office of the chain of establishments. Such "figures" provoked a conflict in the city center with an animator who worked to Russian music. Another clash took place in the "AzArt" hookah café between the "activist blogger", Andreyev, and one of the café owners. V. Andreyev as an ultimatum demanded from the owner to turn off the Russian music that was playing in the place, to which he refused and was expelled. Unable to continue the confrontation in person, the blogger published a critical post on social media and appealed to the city administration to check the establishment.

The pressure on citizens who use the Russian language in everyday life was not limited to formal measures. For example, on 5 March 2021, in Lvov, nationalists assaulted two street musicians who were performing songs in Russian. The local police did not respond to this illegal attack as they should have done.³⁶⁴

There have also been cases of discrimination against Russian-speaking customers in a number of catering establishments, especially in Western Ukraine. For example, the administration of the New York Street Pizza cafe in Chernovtsi displayed a crossed-out image of a pig painted in Russian flag colours on its entrance. In response to the journalists' appeals, the administrator of the establishment said: "Such visitors refuse to communicate in English and in Ukrainian. And we, on principle, do not communicate in Russian. It's our language policy."³⁶⁵

On 30 May 2022, a video from Lvov appeared on the Internet showing a volunteer refusing to provide the UN humanitarian aid to refugees from the eastern part of Ukraine because they spoke Russian. When asked, the volunteer

³⁶⁴ <https://lvov.strana.today/366447-zakon-o-jazyke-vo-lvove-izbili-ulichnykh-muzykantov-za-pesni-na-russkom.html> (previously at <https://lvov.strana.ua/321171-zakon-o-jazyke-dobraljsja-do-muzykantov-vo-lvove-izbili-ljudej-za-russkij-jazyk.html>), <https://iz.ru/1262808/2021-12-10/vo-lvove-izbili-ispolniaвшikh-pesni-na-russkom-muzykantov>

³⁶⁵ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

told the women that he did not understand them and demanded that they address him in Ukrainian. A nearby police officer pointed out to the refugees that it was forbidden to film the volunteer and, in response to their indignation, threatened to take the outraged women to the police station.

On 2 June 2023, a minor from Odessa singing Viktor Tsoi songs in Russian was detained in Lvov on the application of Natalia Pipa (she was one of the initiators of the notorious Bill No. 7213 against the UOC), an MP from the "Golos" party, who called the police. After the detention, he was sent from the police station to a shelter for minors in Lvov, where he spent a week because his disabled mother could not come and pick him up in person.³⁶⁶

According to statements made by Ukrainian officials, the authorities are purposefully pursuing a policy of elimination of the Russian-speaking space in Ukraine. In particular, the Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine Aleksey Danilov openly stated that "the Russian language should disappear from the territory of Ukraine".³⁶⁷

Moreover, Ukrainian officials deny the Russian population the very right to exist on Ukrainian territory. In November 2023, Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Olga Stefanishina stated that there is "no Russian minority in the country, it does not exist".³⁶⁸ Subsequently, this view was supported by the speaker of the Verkhovna Rada, Ruslan Stefanchuk.

Some Ukrainian officials have also been harassed for using the Russian language. On 13 January 2023, Kharkov Mayor Igor Terekhov sued the language ombudsman Taras Kremen for repeatedly fining him for using the Russian language. Previously, in November 2022, he had been fined for using a non-state language while speaking on the Ukrainian national telethon. At the

³⁶⁶ <https://focus.ua/ukraine/571602-skandal-s-pesney-coya-vo-lvove-paren-vyshel-iz-priyuta-i-rasskazal-o-planah-video>

³⁶⁷ <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/21/10/2022/6352a7b49a7947f3b9632b73>, <https://iz.ru/1414045/2022-10-21/sekretar-snbo-prizval-iskorenit-russkii-iazyk-na-ukraine>

³⁶⁸ www.eurointegration.com.ua/rus/news/2023/11/9/7173188/

same time, he was given a warning for the fact that the social pages of the mayor of Kharkov are in Russian. In response, Igor Terekhov said that he would continue to use Russian in his communication with Kharkov citizens, as it is spoken by 80 per cent of the citizens.

Meanwhile, the data from a sociological survey conducted by the Kiev International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) in February 2020 showed that 33 per cent of respondents believe that the state should provide all Russian-speaking citizens throughout Ukraine with the right to receive their school education in Russian. 40 per cent of the respondents consider that the Russian-speaking population should have that right in those regions where the majority of the population so wishes, but not throughout all Ukraine. Another 24 per cent of respondents consider the state should not support such a right. In addition, 37 per cent of respondents believe that the state should provide Russian-speaking citizens throughout Ukraine with the right to communicate with government officials in Russian, while another 31 per cent believe this should be applied in those regions where the majority of the population wants this, but not throughout all of Ukraine, and 28 per cent of respondents believe that the state should not support such a right.³⁶⁹

Furthermore, according to the results of another KIIS survey conducted in April 2020, 48.8 per cent of respondents believe that the Russian language is part of Ukraine's historical heritage, and should be developed.³⁷⁰

Against this background, it is obvious that all the above-mentioned laws adopted by the Kiev regime are directed against the Russian language and their purpose is to narrow its use. The following examples may be provided. In October 2020, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Concept of the State Target Social Programme of National-Patriotic Education until 2025³⁷¹,

³⁶⁹ <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=rus&cat=reports&id=920&page=7>

³⁷⁰ https://www.kiis.com.ua/materials/pr/20200406_pressconf/politics_april%202020.pdf

³⁷¹ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/prijnyato-koncepciyu-derzhavnoyi-cilovoyi-socialnoyi-programi-nacionalno-patriotichnogo-vihovannya-na-period-do-2025-r>

which published the data of a sociological survey showing that less than half of the country's population – only 46 per cent – uses the Ukrainian language in family and household communication. It is noted that this indicator corresponds to zero in the Donbass. This situation is qualified by the Ukrainian authorities as "threatening".³⁷²

This demonstrates that, contrary to what the Kiev authorities claim, the underlying goal of legal management of the language field in Ukraine is not at all the popularization and development of the Ukrainian language, but a forced change in the linguistic identity of non-Ukrainian-speaking citizens living in the country.

This set of legislative measures, aimed at the gradual squeezing of the Russian language out of public life, contradicts both national legislation and Ukraine's international obligations. In particular, the policy of Ukrainianization conflicts with Article 10 of the Constitution of Ukraine, which guarantees free development, use and protection of Russian and other languages of national minorities of Ukraine; with Article 22, which states that the content and scope of existing rights and freedoms may not be restricted when new laws are adopted or when existing documents are amended; and with Article 53, which states the right of national minorities to study in their native language.

The provisions of the above acts contradict Ukraine's obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and a number of soft law acts: The UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious

³⁷² <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1233-2020-%D1%80#Text>, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1233-2020-p#Text>.

and Linguistic Minorities, the Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the OSCE, the Concluding Document of the Vienna OSCE Meeting, and The Hague Declaration on the Rights of National Minorities to Education.

It should be noted that all measures aimed at squeezing the Russian language out of public life of Ukraine were adopted, as indicated above, despite critics from the international human rights structures. The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the OHCHR have expressed their comments about the discriminatory legislative measures taken by the Ukrainian authorities. It is also worth highlighting the opinion delivered by the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe regarding the law "On Education" (December 2017)³⁷³, which confirmed the existence of discriminatory provisions in the document, and regarding the Law "On the functioning of the Ukrainian language as the official language" (December 2019)³⁷⁴, which pointed out the inconsistencies between its provisions and Ukraine's international obligations. The Commission's assessments and recommendations were supported by OHCHR.³⁷⁵

³⁷³ Opinion No. 902 / 2017 of the Venice Commission (December 8 – 9, 2017)

[https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2017\)030-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2017)030-e)

³⁷⁴ Conclusion No. 960/2019 of the Venice Commission (December 6-7, 2019)

[https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2019\)032-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2019)032-e)

³⁷⁵ OHCHR Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine. 16 february – 31 July 2020.

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/30thReportUkraine_RU.pdf

Sowing hatred towards Russians and discriminating against them

In addition to the elimination of the Russian language from all facets of Ukrainian society, there have been ongoing initiatives to spread hostility toward Russian citizens and the Russian culture as a whole. Such activities were not only not condemned or responded to by the authorities, but were also undertaken by the Ukrainian leadership itself. For example, President Zelenskiy, in an interview³⁷⁶ published on August 5, 2021, advised Russians to get out of Ukraine.

Hatred of Russians was openly propagandized on national and regional television channels. Russophobic statements and calls for the murder of Russians were regularly heard on air. For example, the official advertisement for the programme of Ukrainian journalist Yanina Sokolova on Channel 5 sounded like this: "Turn on the 5th! This infuriates Muscovites!" In August 2022, she said on the NTA TV channel that Russians could not be taken prisoner, they should be killed, adding that she wanted "all of them to be destroyed as quickly as possible."

Journalist and TV presenter, former media director of the ZIK TV channel Ostap Drozdov has repeatedly publicly insulted Russian-speaking citizens arguing that the Russian language is not only foreign, but also "aggressively occupying and threatening" to Ukraine. He also called those who live in the country and speak Russian "the guarantors of war" arguing that such people should "disappear as a species." In November 2022, Olga Lakunova, a UAF member who returned from captivity as an exchange, stated that "the entire Russian population should be destroyed." Tellingly, she urged not to spare even children.

In these and other cases, the issue is not even about the mental adequacy of the above-mentioned and similar characters, but about the policy of the

³⁷⁶ <https://kanal-dom.tv/esli-ty-schitaesh-chto-my-russkie-bolshaya-oshibka-ostavatsya-zhit-na-donbasse-zelenskij-video/>

authorities, who allow such hate speech in public space and, moreover, do not condemn it. Similar statements by official Ukrainian figures themselves are also quoted in the text of the report.

Russophobia spreads unhindered on the Internet and social networks. By now, many different publications, pictures, collages have been published that contain not just derogatory attitudes toward Russians, but that directly dehumanize them. Well-known are such abusive nicknames as "Colorado beetles", "vatniks", "orcs". Materials justifying the murders of Russians and calling for such are being actively circulated.

Non-governmental organizations defending the interests of the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine have repeatedly sent appeals to European regional and international structures, including the Council of Europe and the OSCE, to ensure the rights of the Russian-speaking community. However, there was no adequate reaction from these structures. According to non-governmental groups, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Kairat Abdrakhmanov did not meet with members of Russian communities or heads of Russian-language human rights organizations during his official visit to Ukraine in September 2021. Similarly, the meeting of Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, with Russian-speaking human rights activists was not organized.³⁷⁷ The specialized structures of the European Union, to which the current Ukraine is so keen to be admitted, blatantly ignore the dismal human rights situation in that country.

The position of our compatriots in Ukraine has recently substantially deteriorated due to the unprecedented Russophobic hysteria generated by the Kiev-controlled media. Ukrainian officials make serious efforts in this area. So, in response to the fraudulent staged-up action in Bucha, Culture Minister Aleksandr Tkachenko stated in an interview with 1+1 TV channel that "there is

³⁷⁷ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

no mention of good Russians, as there are no good Russians" and urged people to fight them all over the world. The advisor to the President of Ukraine Anton Geraschenko called on in the social media "to find and punish" all civilians who cooperated with the Russian military servicemen in the Kiev Oblast. Boris Filatov, the mayor of Dnepropetrovsk (Dnepr) known for his hate of all things Russian, called on Facebook to "kill Russians all over the world and in large numbers." The secretary of the National Security and Defence Council, Alexei Danilov, called the Russians "rats" and "swine dogs" ("schweinehund"), and called for "poisoning them" and "destroying them by all means".

On 17 June 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted Decree No. 692³⁷⁸ on withdrawal from the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of Ukraine on visa-free travels of citizens of the Russian Federation and Ukraine of 16 January 1997, which expired on 1 January 2023, and on 10 April 2023, the Cabinet adopted a law on termination of the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the procedure of crossing the Russian-Ukrainian border by the residents of border regions of the Russian Federation and Ukraine of 18 October 2011.

Russian journalists were de facto deprived of their rights to pursue activities in Ukraine by 2021. They were not allowed to events designated for the media, conducted by the state governmental institutions. Their accreditation requests were not taken into consideration. In 2021, the Kiev office of TASS was closed due to sanctions restrictions introduced against it.

Russian compatriots continue to face a challenging scenario as their rights and liberties are frequently abused. In recent years, the rights of Russian-speaking activists to inviolability of person, home, and property have been

³⁷⁸ https://base.spinform.ru/show_doc.fwx?rgn=141570

constantly violated. They are subjected to intimidation and pressure from law enforcement agencies, intelligence services and nationalist groups.

In December 2018, NCA officers searched the premises of members of the Russian-speaking community in Poltava. The coordinator of the All-Ukrainian Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriot Organizations, Sergei Provatorov (who also heads the Ukraine's Russkoye Sodruzhestvo (Russian Commonwealth) association), had his Pushkin medal confiscated.

Investigative activities were conducted in respect of the historian Yuriy Pogoda (a well-known researcher of the Great Northern War period), poet and publicist Victor Shestakov (head of the Poltava Oblast Russian Community). Criminal proceedings were brought against them under Article 110 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine ("attempts on territorial integrity").

In May 2019, the SBU conducted a search at the premises of Vladimir Saltykov, head of the Rus Transcarpathia Regional Association. They seized mobile communications devices and his personal computers.

The arrest (in August 2020) on suspicion of treason (which is subject to a punishment in the form of imprisonment for a period of 12 to 15 years with confiscation of property) by the SBU officers of a Russian language and literature teacher, head of the non-government organization Russian National Community "Rusich", a distinguished teacher with long-term experience, Tatiana Kuzmich, who is widely known for her active work to promote the Russian language in Ukraine, has caused great public outcry. The Ukrainian security services accused her of the fact that during her stay in Crimea she allegedly "was involved by the FSB of Russia in espionage activities, transferred materials for conducting subversion activities in the Kherson Oblast and all over Ukraine" and that she was also involved in "creation of a spy network". It is worth noting that Tariana Kuzmich has paid regular visits to the peninsula since 2008 within the framework of her professional duties for taking part in the Great Russian Word Festival. The measure of restraint chosen for her

was remand in custody, however in the beginning of October 2020 she was released on bail.

Since the start of the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect civilians in the Donbass, the Russian Foreign Ministry has received appeals from more than 5,000 Russian citizens staying in Ukraine. In most of the cases, these letters contained requests to inform about safe ways of evacuation from Ukraine to Russia and other countries. Many of our fellow citizens point to the violence unleashed in Ukrainian cities by members of the so-called Territory Defence Forces and others who obtained firearms through uncontrolled distribution, and also complain about the violation of their rights by the authorities in Kiev.

Among those kept prisoner by Ukrainian authorities were over a hundred Russian sailors in the ports of Odessa and Izmail, as well as students from other countries attending Ukrainian colleges and crew members of maritime vessels. They were treated inappropriately and were subjected to physical abuse. The Russian sailors were released in several exchanges, the last of which did not take place until mid-October 2022. One of the sailors, unfortunately, did not live to see the release. Also truck drivers caught by the special military operation at the Ukrainian border were detained by the Kiev authorities.

The Kiev regime governmental authorities take measures for restrictions on our citizens' rights. The National Bank of Ukraine became one of the first among such bodies that prohibited to the credit institutions in the country to perform any currency operations using the Russian ruble. This step made by the regulator left thousands of persons in the country without means of subsistence.

On 1 March 2022 all mobile operators in Ukraine banned communication for phones with Russian numbers.³⁷⁹

The private property rights of Russians are also violated. The Ukrainian law titled "On the Main Principles of Compulsory Seizure of Property in

³⁷⁹ <https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2022/03/03/17376829.shtml>

Ukraine of the Russian Federation and its Residents"³⁸⁰ came into force on 7 March 2022. The law allows for the extrajudicial seizure of movable and immovable property, money, bank deposits, and other items by the decision of the National Security and Defence Council, which was implemented by presidential decree, without providing any sort of compensation.

On November 2, 2022 the decision to halt processing of Russian citizen applications for immigration and residency permits during the duration of martial law was made by the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers.³⁸¹

On 30 December 2022 Vladimir Zelenskiy signed Law No. 8224 "On National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine", adopted by the Parliament on 13 December 2022, according to which ethnic Russians, or as they are veiled in the text – "who identify their affiliation by ethnic origin with the state recognized in Ukraine and/or international organizations as the state-terrorist (aggressor-state)", for the duration of martial law in Ukraine and for six months after its lifting, are limited in virtually all rights and freedoms, including the right to peaceful assembly, to receive funding, to establish consultative bodies under local administrations, and the right to participate in international activities.

The provisions of this law were criticized in the report of the Venice Commission of 12 June 2023, therefore, in order to remove obstacles to European integration, on 21 September 2023, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine voted to amend the law on national minorities. At the same time, these amendments do not imply any real expansion of the rights and freedoms of Ukraine's national minorities, and even impose additional restrictions on Russian-speaking citizens.³⁸²

³⁸⁰ https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=33474326&pos=10;-32#pos=10;-32

³⁸¹ <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/02/11/2022/6361c4e79a79478937e28120>

³⁸² <https://ukraina.ru/20230922/1049615530.html>

Manifestations of antisemitism

Modern Ukraine has the full spectrum of manifestations of xenophobia. Large-scale efforts to glorify Ukrainian Nazi collaborators, who also organized and participated in the extermination of the Jewish population in the country during World War II, have led to a significant increase in manifestations of antisemitism.

It went so far as to directly borrow the methods used by the Nazis (which the Ukrainian authorities began to demonstrate widely in 2022). The first and very revealing incident in this respect was the case involving the Jewish community of Kolomyia. On 11 February 2020, Yakov Zalitsker, head of the Jewish community of the city, received a letter on behalf of the National Police Department in the Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast demanding to provide the department with a comprehensive list of all residents of this nationality, including students, their addresses and contacts. This request was explained as being part of the fight against organized crime.³⁸³

According to a survey conducted by the Anti-Defamation League, Ukraine is the second most antisemitic country in Europe. In 2016, 32 per cent of Ukrainians admitted to being intolerant of Jews, and by 2019 the proportion was 46 per cent.³⁸⁴ At the same time, the position of this US-based non-governmental organization towards Ukraine has recently softened. According to the 2023 monitoring data, the level of antisemitism was 29 per cent.³⁸⁵ Furthermore, in March 2022, the organization began to justify the neo-Nazi Kiev regime having published an interview with David Fishman, professor of Jewish history at the Jewish Theological Seminary, where he said that

³⁸³ https://lenta.ru/news/2020/05/13/perepis_jude/

³⁸⁴ <https://apnews.com/fl8e9fa70b794974b214b6e9f1552cfd>

³⁸⁵ <https://global100.adl.org/country/ukraine/2023>

neo-Nazis in Ukraine were a small and very marginal group with no political influence and who didn't attack Jews.³⁸⁶

According to the Kantor Center Antisemitism Worldwide Report, the number of recorded incidents of antisemitism in Ukraine in 2020 has increased compared to past levels.³⁸⁷

The 2020 Antisemitism in Ukraine Report³⁸⁸ by the United Jewish Community of Ukraine mentions, among other things, attacks on synagogues in Vinnytsia and Mariupol, and an attempted arson attack on a synagogue in Kherson on 20 April 2020. The investigation into the latter incident revealed that the perpetrators supported Nazi ideology and tried to set fire to the synagogue building to celebrate the anniversary of Hitler's birth in this way.

On 19 January 2020, a memorial sign commemorating 15,000 Jews exterminated in the Holocaust was desecrated in Krivoy Rog, Dnepropetrovsk Oblast.

On 20 February 2020, an unidentified man in camouflage burst into the synagogue in Vinnitsa and attacked a member of the congregation, shouting "beat the Jews!"

On 15 June 2020, an announcement was circulated on the Internet, including Facebook, about the 1st all-Ukrainian competition-festival of contemporary music "Gonta-fest," named after the organizer of the Uman massacre, Ivan Gonta.³⁸⁹

On 11 September 2020, a sign in Ukrainian/Hebrew appeared in the Kozerog cafe in Uman, Cherkasy Oblast, stating that "Hasidim are not served/Hasidim are not allowed in."

³⁸⁶ See, for example, <https://www.informationliberation.com/?id=62981>, <https://www.sott.net/article/465995-ADL-defends-Ukraines-neo-Nazis-They-dont-attack-Jews-or-Jewish-institutions?ysclid=lmgpcgkh6q921807334>

³⁸⁷ <https://lenta.ru/news/2021/04/07/antisemitism/>

³⁸⁸ Antisemitism in Ukraine, Report for 2020. <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/otchyot-po-antisemitizmu-v-ukraine-za-2020-god>

³⁸⁹ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

On the night of 24-25 October 2020, in Melitopol, Zaporozhye Oblast, unknown persons desecrated the monument "Crying for the Unborn," set up in memory of Holocaust victims.

In December 2020, employees of the Southeast Interregional Department of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory used images with antisemitic content in their presentation materials.

In 2021, the total number of antisemitic incidents was slightly higher than in 2020. At the same time, there was an increase in the number of antisemitic vandalism cases, which peaked during Hanukkah celebrations in late November and early December 2021. At that time, six Hanukkiahs and the Holocaust memorial in Lysychansk were damaged as a result of antisemitic vandalism.³⁹⁰

The manifestations of antisemitism in Ukraine in 2021 include: vandalism of a memorial sign erected on the site of a former ghetto in Khmelnytskyi, destruction of a memorial to Holocaust victims in the village of Novy Pikov, Kalynivskiy district, Vinnytsia Oblast, and distribution of xenophobic flyers in Lvov by the Galician Youth organization (May); desecration and destruction of 10 tombstones at the Radvanka Jewish cemetery in Uzhgorod (June); threats by nationalists against Hasidim visiting Uman to celebrate the Jewish New Year (September); insulting inscriptions and swastikas on an information stand near the Jewish cemetery in Boguslav in the Kiev Oblast and on the gates of a synagogue in Nikolaev, removal of a historical Yiddish inscription on a residential building in Lvov (October); and another music festival "Let's Repeat Koliivshchyna"³⁹¹ in Kiev (also in October). In late 2021, there were also antisemitic incidents, which the perpetrators timed to coincide with the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah in Rovno. According to reports from the United Jewish Community of Ukraine, vandals damaged a Hanukkiah lamp in Dnepr

³⁹⁰ Antisemitism in Ukraine – 2021. <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/antisemitism2021>

³⁹¹ The Haidamak uprising in the 17th century, in which about 10,000 Jews were killed.

(Dnepropetrovsk) on 29 November and in Kiev on 30 November. On 4 December, a Hanukkah in Rovno was damaged.³⁹²

A wide public response was caused by the statements made by deputy mayor of Shepetovka (Khmelnyskiy Oblast) Yuriy Vakhotskiy in September 2021, saying that the tragedy of Babiy Yar is "God's punishment to the Jews for the Holodomor", and the statements by head of the Khmelnytskyi branch of the All-Ukrainian Union "Fatherland" A. Sholovey, who said that the more he watches the Hanukkah celebration, "the better he understands Hitler."

On 7 February 2021, the Center of Educational Literature published the book "Jews or Zhids" by the Nazi collaborator and OUN activist Zinoviy Knysh. Zinoviy Knysh was directly involved in organizing the Jewish pogroms and led the antisemitic Ukrainian Central Committee.³⁹³

In 2022, antisemitic acts and attacks continued.

On 18 January 2022, in Lisichansk, another antisemitic act of vandalism was recorded. Unknown persons destroyed a memorial to Jewish victims of World War II in Lysychansk located at the city cemetery "Green Grove". This is the second destruction of the monument. After the first, which occurred in December 2021, the monument was rebuilt with donations from concerned citizens.

On 28 January 2022, a similar attack occurred in Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk): unknown persons desecrated lamps at the monument to the Holocaust victims in the Gagarin Park, and the memorial was doused with paint. Igor Romanov, director of the Dnepropetrovsk Oblast association of Jewish communities, noted that this was not the first act of vandalism, and due to the lack of video surveillance cameras, previous desecrations of memorials had also gone unpunished. According to him, such criminal acts are timed either to

³⁹² <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/13112933?ysclid=lmgp74s2g1129419910>

³⁹³ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

coincide with Jewish holidays or Holocaust-related mourning dates, including the International Holocaust Remembrance Day.³⁹⁴

At the beginning of February 2022, the Center for Contemporary Art of Ivano-Frankovsk hosted an exhibition of antisemitic paintings by the Ukrainian artist Roman Bonchuk as part of the Precursor exhibition. One of them was titled "A Jew with a Pig". Another depicted a monster in a black hat, while a Torah scroll was presented in place of meat in a shawarma machine. After complaints from the United Jewish Community of Ukraine, they were removed on 6 February.

On 31 March 2022, in Ivano-Frankovsk, the director of the Ivano-Frankovsk Jewish Community Igor Perelman was attacked while handing out lunches to the needy and was stabbed three times. Physical violence was accompanied by antisemitic remarks in front of numerous witnesses.³⁹⁵

On 16 May 2022, vandals in Khmelnytskyi drew a swastika on the Jewish community center "Tkhia".³⁹⁶

On 26 July 2022, Mikhail Kovalchuk, a former deputy of the Kiev City Council and head of the National-Patriotic Movement of Ukraine, published an antisemitic post on his Facebook page in which, among other things, he claimed that "orthodox Jews practice ritual murder of people".³⁹⁷

On 29 September 2022 (on Babi Yar Memorial Day), the "OKKO" gas station near Yavorov, Lvov Oblast, refused to serve Hasidim on the basis of their nationality and religion.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁴ <https://ria.ru/20220627/vandaly-1797851444.html>

³⁹⁵ <https://www.unian.net/incidents/direktor-evreyskoy-obshchiny-ivano-frankovska-poluchil-tri-nozhevyh-raneniya-novosti-ukraina-amp-11767225.html>

³⁹⁶ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/vandalyi-narisovali-svastiku-na-evrejskom-obshhinnom-centre-v-xmelniczkom>

³⁹⁷ <https://amp.strana.today/news/401075-eks-deputat-kiev rady-mikhail-kovalchuk-zajavil-chto-evrei-ubivajut-detej.html>

³⁹⁸ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/na-okko-v%D1%96dmovlyayut-v-obslugovuvann%D1%96-xasidam-zanacz%D1%96onalnoyu-ta-rel%D1%96g%>

On 4 October 2022, in Ivano-Frankovsk, a group of young people destroyed part of the fence at the oldest cemetery in the city, tearing down the Star of David.

On 26 December 2022, a graffiti appeared in Uzhgorod with antisemitic writings and a call to kill Jews.³⁹⁹

On 14 February 2023, unknown people threw paint on the recently restored monument to Jewish poet Paul Celan.⁴⁰⁰

On 11 April 2023, the United Jewish Community of Ukraine reported that antisemitic inscriptions were systematically appearing in Mirgorod, Poltava Oblast.⁴⁰¹

On 23 June 2023, an old Jewish cemetery was desecrated in Khorol, Poltava Oblast.⁴⁰²

On 28 July 2023, in Ovruch, Zhitomir Oblast, heavy machinery destroyed the territory of the old Jewish cemetery.⁴⁰³

In August 2023, a 15-year-old teenager from Radomyshl, Zhitomir Oblast, committed several acts of vandalism and antisemitism with encouragement from a National Socialist-inspired Telegram community, which also consisted of users from Vinnitsa, Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk), Ivano-Frankovsk, and Lvov. The perpetrator desecrated a memorial complex commemorating Jewish children killed during World War II and the home of a local Jewish resident, drawing swastikas and insulting inscriptions on them. He also painted Nazi symbols on steles honouring those who fought against Nazism.⁴⁰⁴

³⁹⁹ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/vipadok-antisem%D1%96tskogo-vandal%D1%96zmu-v-uzhgorod%D1%96>

⁴⁰⁰ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/u-chern%D1%96vczyax-oblili-farboyu-pamyatnik-poeta-evrejskogo-poxodzhennya>

⁴⁰¹ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/antisem%D1%96tsk%D1%96-napisi-pom%D1%96tili-v-mirgorod%D1%96>

⁴⁰² <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/u-xorol%D1%96-oskvernayut-stare-kladovishhe>

⁴⁰³ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/v-ovruch%D1%96-oskvernayut-stare-evrejske-kladovishhe-foto>

⁴⁰⁴ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/sbu-ta-gunp-vikrili-sp%D1%96lnotu-p%D1%96dl%D1%96tk%D1%96v-neonaciz%D1%96v>

On 26 October 2023, synagogues in Nikolaev and two other Ukrainian cities were doused with red paint.⁴⁰⁵

On 15 December 2023, in Kremenchug, Poltava Oblast, unknown persons toppled a Hanukkah set up by representatives of the city's Jewish community to celebrate Hanukkah.⁴⁰⁶

On 19 December 2023, in Kiev, an unknown person desecrated Europe's largest Hanukkah installed on Independence Square, and posted a video of his offense in social networks.⁴⁰⁷

On 26 January 2024, on the eve of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, vandals destroyed a memorial to Holocaust victims in the village of Sosnovoye (former Ludvipol) Rovno Oblast, where the Nazis shot more than a thousand prisoners of the local ghetto in 1942.⁴⁰⁸

On 25 February 2024 in Lvov, a memorial sign dedicated to the Holocaust victims killed by the Nazis in the Stalag 23 camp in Lvov was painted with the inscription "death to the Jews".⁴⁰⁹

On 12 April 2024, in Uman, Cherkassy Oblast, a man drew a swastika on the building of a Jewish canteen near the pilgrimage quarter of Bratslav Hasidic Jews.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁵ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/sinagogu-v-mikolaev%D1%96-oblilichervonoyu-farboyu>

⁴⁰⁶ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/u-kremenchucz%D1%96-vandal-perekinuv-xanuk%D1%96yu-pol%D1%96cz%D1%96ya-%D1%96nkrim%D1%96nue-lishe-dr%D1%96bne-xul%D1%96ganstvo>

⁴⁰⁷ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/u-kiev%D1%96-oskvernili-najb%D1%96lshu-xanuk%D1%96yu-evropi>

⁴⁰⁸ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/vandali-zrujnuvali-memor%D1%96al-zhertvam-golokostu-nar%D1%96vnenshh%D1%96n%D1%96>

⁴⁰⁹ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/akt-antisem%D1%96tskogo-vandal%D1%96zmu-zd%D1%96jsneno-u-lvov%D1%96>

⁴¹⁰ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/v-uman%D1%96-namalyuvali-svastiku-na-evrejsk%D1%96j-bud%D1%96vl%D1%96>

Discrimination against national minorities and manifestations of racism

The sharp increase in pressure on Russians and Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine in 2022 did not mean that all the problems of other national minorities in the country had been addressed. Budapest and Bucharest still have serious concerns about the continuing infringement of the rights of compatriots in Ukraine. They note that Kiev has not abandoned its attempts to assimilate the Hungarian and Romanian communities and continues its policy of depriving them of the opportunity to use their native language "outside the home" and receive education in it. It is not by chance that back in January 2023 the Hungarian and Romanian Ombudsmen for Human Rights announced their plans to visit Ukraine in the near future in order to find out on the spot to what extent Law No. 8224 "On National Minorities (Communities)" adopted by the Verkhovna Rada on 13 December 2022 actually meets the task of protecting their rights.

A blatant violation by the Ukrainian authorities of the Hungarian community's right to preserve its cultural identity, as stated in this law, was the dismantling of the Turul sculpture in Mukachevo Palanok Castle (Transcarpathian Oblast) on 13 October 2022, which was replaced by a Ukrainian trident.

The Kiev regime exerted brutal pressure on the Hungarian community living in Transcarpathian Oblast. At the end of 2020, armed Ukrainian special forces searched Laszio Brenzovich's residence and the headquarters of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Society for signs of separatist activity. The pretext for the raids was the fact that the Hungarian national anthem had been performed in a meeting of the organization. According to the representatives of the organization, this had been done during previous formal meetings in which no resolutions were adopted, but nobody had attached any importance to it. The organization believes that the actions of the Ukrainian special forces, which are founded on baseless political accusations, are aimed at preventing Hungarian

organizations from carrying out their activities and intimidating the Transcarpathian Hungarians and their leaders.⁴¹¹

The administrative changes taking place in the country also pose a threat to the interests of ethnic minorities. Thus, on 17 July 2020, the Verkhovna Rada decided to enlarge Beregov district where Hungarians accounted for 76 per cent of the population. According to Josip Borto, deputy head of the Transcarpathian Regional Council, MP of the Party of Hungarians of Ukraine, after the expansion of its territory by adding Vinogradov district, the percentage of the Hungarian minority decreased to 43 per cent. A similar situation can be observed in all the areas across Transcarpathia, which were densely populated by this nationality. Thus, after the enlargement of Uzhgorod district, Hungarians accounted for only 13 per cent of the total population instead of 33 per cent, and in Mukachevo district – for 4 per cent instead of 12 per cent.⁴¹²

On 8 December 2023, Kiev adopted the law "On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine Concerning the Consideration of the Expert Assessment of the Council of Europe and its Bodies on the Rights of National Minorities (Communities) in Certain Spheres"; the law, issued under pressure from European institutions, secured a number of rights for minorities whose languages are official languages of the EU. In particular, this includes the right to basic and specialized secondary education in mother tongue, except for subjects related to the study of the Ukrainian language, Ukrainian literature and history of Ukraine, as well as the defence of Ukraine, which are taught in the state language; to higher education in mother tongue in private educational institutions provided that the state language is studied as a separate academic discipline; waiving the requirement to publish at least 50 per cent of book titles in the state language for publishing products in minority languages, which are

⁴¹¹ <https://strana.today/news/304131-venhry-zakarpatja-nazvali-okhotoj-na-vedm-obyski-v-venherskom-fonde-i-proverku-sbu.html>

⁴¹² <https://ukraina.ru/exclusive/20200613/1027978005.html>; <https://gordonua.com/amp/newspolitics/rada-vmesto-490-sozdala-v-ukraine-136-rajonov-polnyj-spisok-1509766.html>

official languages of the EU; the reduction of quotas of up to 30 per cent of the total length of programmes and broadcasts in the state language for TV and radio broadcasters working in the languages of national minorities; the dissemination of election campaign materials, as well as indoor and outdoor advertising (for areas where national minorities traditionally reside or constitute a significant part of the population), made in the respective languages of national minorities with mandatory duplication in the state language, etc.

However, the measures taken have not been satisfactory to Budapest, who believes that they are not adequate and "do not bring the restoration of the rights of Transcarpathian Hungarians any closer to the pre-2015 status quo". The Hungarian side continues to demand legislative safeguards of the rights of the Hungarian national minority to use their mother tongue outside of special lessons, secondary school final exams to be permanently organized in Hungarian, the organization of Hungarian grammar and literature examinations, the celebration of national holidays or the use of symbols associated with them, the establishment of cultural and educational institutions for national minorities, and representation of national minorities in Parliament.

Budapest's ongoing dialog with Kiev on this issue has not yet resulted in a solution acceptable to both sides.

Representatives of the Romanian community also claim that their rights have been violated as a result of the language and administrative reforms carried out by the Ukrainian authorities. The redrawing of the borders of the districts densely populated by members of this minority resulted in the creation of new administrative-territorial units in which the Romanians account for about 10 per cent of the total population. For them, this means loss of representation in the

country's parliament and its decrease in local councils, as well as forced assimilation in violation of Ukraine's international obligations.⁴¹³

The fact that the majority of persons belonging to ethnic or national minorities in Ukraine are at risk of discrimination and stigmatization was noted by international human rights monitoring mechanisms. Among others, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted that radical right-wing organizations operating in the country, such as the Right Sector, the Azov Civilian Corps and the Social National Assembly, promote activities that amount to incitement to racial hatred and racist propaganda.⁴¹⁴ There have been numerous instances of propaganda of intolerance on the Internet. Racist and antisemitic content is posted on specific web sites promoting a nationalist agenda.⁴¹⁵ Ukraine's human rights organizations noted an increase in cases of xenophobia and aggression against foreigners in law-enforcement agencies. Detention, arrests and document checks based on a person's race and ethnicity are still widespread.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed its concern at reports of a rise in racist hate speech and discriminatory statements in the public discourse, at rallies, including by public and political figures, in the media and on the Internet.⁴¹⁶

In November 2021, the Human Rights Committee indicated that hate speech was widespread in the country and hate crimes against minorities were

⁴¹³ <https://strana.today/news/278990-ukrainskie-rumyny-pozhalovalis-bukharestu-na-prinuditelnuju-ukrainizatsiju-i-adminreformu.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/278990-ukrainskie-rumyny-pozhalovalis-bukharestu-na-prinuditelnuju-ukrainizatsiju-i-adminreformu.html>)

⁴¹⁴ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding observations on the twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Ukraine. August 2016
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=en

⁴¹⁵ <https://strana.ua/opinions/161506-ukrainskie-natsionalisty-nachali-raspolzatsja-po-seti.html>

⁴¹⁶ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding observations on the twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Ukraine. August 2016
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=en

frequently committed by members of right-wing organizations. These minority groups included Roma, Hungarians, Crimean Tatars, etc.⁴¹⁷

Human rights advocates have recorded dozens of instances of intolerant or aggressive conduct towards members of minorities or persons with alternative political views. Of particular concern are illegal actions by the members of radical nationalist organizations (C14, Right Sector, Tradition and Order, National Corps, National Vigilantes, OUN, etc.). Their violent attacks are almost entirely ignored by Ukraine's law enforcement bodies. The right-wing radicals make no attempt to hide the fact that their activities are closely coordinated with the SBU and Interior Ministry.

Roma are still being stereotyped and discriminated against. There are frequent instances of members of this community being subjected to aggression, physically attacked and even murdered. Right-wing radicals regularly harass Roma on the Internet, publishing offensive texts, caricatures, and collages. For instance, in November 2020, several news outlets in Ivano-Frankovsk (whose authorities are already known for their particularly – even against the background of Ukraine – high level of tolerance for acts of Russophobia and antisemitism) published articles in which Roma were described using negative ethnic stereotypes, which sparked a wave of hate speech against the Roma community and resulted in calls for violence on social media.⁴¹⁸

International human rights organizations and bodies have noted that the Ukrainian justice system barely responds to attacks on the Roma community by nationalists.⁴¹⁹ Moreover, Ukrainian civil servants actually take part in the

⁴¹⁷ Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021. (the observations were published in February 2022). https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=en

⁴¹⁸ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

⁴¹⁹ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding observations on the twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Ukraine. August 2016 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=en

persecution of this national minority. In March 2020, the then Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine, Vladislav Krykly, together with members of the radical structures S14 and Municipal Guard, took part in a "raid to combat" Roma at the railway station in Kiev.

Ivano-Frankovsk Mayor Ruslan Martsinkiv issued a formal order on 22 April 2020, directing all members of the Roma community to relocate to the Transcarpathian Oblast.⁴²⁰

Attacks against the Roma community are recorded regularly in Ukraine. On 10 January 2021 in Lvov, unknown persons attacked a member of this nationality, accusing him of theft, doused him with the dilute alcoholic solution of brilliant green and beat him up.⁴²¹

On 5 October 2021, a similar attack took place in Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk), during which an unknown right-wing radical beat a Roma man and sprayed a gas canister in his face.⁴²²

On 17 October 2021, members of the neo-Nazi organization S14 and the "Municipal Guard" attacked a tabor of Roma in the town of Irpen with flares and smoke bombs. One of the organizers of the attack was Andrey Mevedko, who was charged with the murder of the writer Oles Buzina.

On 23 October 2021, a member of the Azov battalion, M. Yarosh, openly and cynically beat a Roma woman in the center of Kiev. The attack was videotaped and subsequently circulated on the Internet.⁴²³

On 17 November 2021, Ukrainian neo-Nazis again attacked Roma girls in the center of Kiev. During the abuse, the radicals damaged the victims' faces and clothes. They filmed their actions and disseminated them on the Internet.⁴²⁴

⁴²⁰ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

⁴²¹ <https://violence-marker.org.ua/blog/2022/06/03/ultrapravi-konfrontacziyi-ta-nasylstvo-u-2021-roczni/>

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

On 14 January 2022, in Lutsk, a man with a gun attacked a Roma family, threatened to kill everyone, and hit a child with a brick.⁴²⁵

Even deputies have been subjected to attacks by nationalists. On 13 August 2021, a Verkhovna Rada deputy from the "Servant of the People" party, Jean Beleniuk (his father is Rwandan, his mother is Ukrainian), was insulted in Kiev by two radicals who called him a "black monkey" and suggested that he "go back to Africa".

The international community was shocked by the manifestations of racism towards Asian and African nationals in Ukraine reported in February-March 2022. These included the beating of students from India for their country's refusal to vote against Russia in the UN General Assembly; rude treatment of Africans wishing to leave Ukraine; negative attitude towards Chinese citizens, etc.

Many testimonies of victims who had been subjected to racial discrimination while trying to leave the country with Ukrainians were published in the media. In particular, there is a clear pattern of people of African and Asian descent being prevented from boarding trains or buses, being kicked out of vehicles, and being held in separate queues at border checkpoints.

Concern about the situation of African citizens in Ukraine was expressed by the African Union in its statement of 28 February 2022, noting that the "singling out" of Africans and unacceptable unequal (dissimilar) treatment of them were shockingly racist.

⁴²⁵ <https://youtu.be/ru71taHU3yU> (Lutsk and Volyn news)

Restrictions on the Work of the Media

Ukrainian authorities have openly exerted pressure on the media, interfering in the work of those media outlets whose editorial policy and opinions contradict the position of official Kiev. Obstacles are put in the way of journalists' independent work, and attempts are made to tighten censorship. Security services often interfere in the work of the media and public organizations that hold views that diverge from the official position.⁴²⁶ In this connection, the level of aggression against media workers remains high. Thus, there have been repeated cases of blocking by right-wing radical "activists" of television channels that Kiev deems undesirable.

Despite calls by many human rights organizations and mechanisms, no appreciable progress has yet been made in the high-profile criminal cases related to the killings of Oles Buzina and Pavel Sheremet.

International observers have also pointed to numerous problems in the media field. Specifically, they have noted the trend towards limited editorial independence of the media owing to political bias of their owners. Journalists also face difficulties accessing public information due to administrative barriers created by the authorities. In addition, it has been noted that the actions of the state regulator – the National Council on Television and Radio Broadcasting – in relation to the media may also be biased by virtue of its affiliation with a number of politically biased media resources.

The Kiev regime has clamped down on the attempts to present an alternative view of the situation in the country or relations with Russia, and this started long before 2022. On 2 February 2021, President Zelenskiy issued a decree blocking the broadcasting of a number of nationwide news TV channels, including 112-Ukraine, NewsOne, and ZIK TV channel, owned by Taras Kozak, an MP from the Opposition Platform – For Life. Taras Kozak himself

⁴²⁶ Monitoring of the human rights situation in Ukraine, January 2018 – April 2019.
<https://forbiddentoforbid.org.ua/ru/monitoring-prav-cheloveka-konets-2018-nachalo-2019/>

was placed on a sanctions list for a period of 5 years. He believes that the reason for all these actions was that the position adopted by the TV channels was not in line with the main policy pursued by the authorities.⁴²⁷ The Strana.UA media outlet has also been subjected to sanctions. Sergei Tomilenko, president of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine, characterized these sanctions as politically motivated.

Previously, the ZIK and 112-Ukraine TV channels, as well as the NASH TV channel, had already been persecuted by Ukrainian law enforcers. They were accused of broadcasting programmes whose participants allegedly made statements amounting to manifestations of national and racial hatred, called for undermining the constitutional order of the state, violating its territorial integrity and sovereignty, and made comments popularising the authorities of the "aggressor country" and justifying the "occupation of Ukrainian territories." However, it did not go as far as to close the channels.

Following the decision of the Ukrainian president to close the channels, journalists who had worked for them created a new TV channel – Pershiy Nezalezhniy ("First Independent"). As soon as the channel went on air for the first time, it was almost immediately disconnected from broadcasting. Against the backdrop of these events, several dozen well-known Ukrainian journalists from various media outlets formed an association to defend their rights and demanded that the country's authorities stop attacking the press.⁴²⁸

Criminal prosecution remains a common means of exerting pressure on dissenting journalists by the Kiev regime. The editorial offices of news agencies have been repeatedly searched. Since 2015, numerous charges have been brought against I. Guzhva, editor-in-chief of Strana.UA, Ukraine's largest independent Internet media outlet, as a result of which he was forced to leave

⁴²⁷ <https://strana.today/articles/analysis/315598-kakimi-budut-posledstvija-blokirovki-kanalov-dlja-zelenskoho-.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/articles/analysis/315598-kakimi-budut-posledstvija-blokirovki-kanalov-dlja-zelenskoho-.html>)

⁴²⁸ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/11581293>

the country and seek political asylum in Austria. In August 2021, by a relevant decision of the National Security and Defence Council (NSDC) he was subjected to sanctions, which also applied to legal entities associated with him. This included the blocking of the Strana.UA website. Owner of the Open Ukraine news agency and former military man A. Medinskiy,⁴²⁹ head of RIA Novosti Ukraine Kirill Vyshinskiy, and independent journalists Y. Lukashin and V. Skachko have also faced persecution. A number of journalists were placed in pre-trial detention facilities, usually without the right to bail, including D. Vasilets⁴³⁰ (released under house arrest in 2018, as the Court of Appeal reversed the verdict, but the case was not closed), V. Muravitskiy⁴³¹ (since 2018 was under 24/7 house arrest, since November 2019 – under overnight house arrest), P. Volkov⁴³² (fully acquitted in March 2019).

Moreover, in addition to the direct pressure exerted on media outlets that take an independent position on most sensitive issues, offices of such media agencies have suffered attacks by nationalists, with the de facto connivance of the authorities. Thus, the buildings and premises of such TV channels as Inter, NASH, 112-Ukraine, and NewsOne have been repeatedly threatened and attacked by radicals. As a rule, such incidents occurred in connection with events involving participants from Russia or the demonstration of materials criticizing the Kiev authorities (including the well-known documentary by American director Oliver Stone "Revealing Ukraine").

On 11 June 2020, supporters of Sergei Sternenko, a radical activist accused of committing a murder in Odessa in May 2018, chased away journalists working for Anatoly Shariy's media outlets from the SBU building, where the investigative actions were taking place. A video published on Twitter shows how, in response to a journalist's question about the reasons for

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ <https://riafan.ru/1212680-otsidevshii-bolee-dvukh-let-ukrainskii-zhurnalist-rasskazal-o-terrore-rezhima-poroshenko>

⁴³¹ <https://uspishna-varta.com/ru/pravozashhitnye-kejsy/delo-vasiliya-muravitskogo>

⁴³² <https://ukraina.ru/news/20190327/1023114167.html>

inappropriate behaviour with her colleagues, nationalists turn on a siren and, standing very close to the journalist, start speaking through a loudspeaker using foul language.⁴³³

On 28 November 2020, Violetta Toveks, a correspondent from the NewsOne television channel, was assaulted while reporting from Kiev's Park of Glory. During the live broadcast, an unknown person wearing a mask and a hood approached the journalist, took away and smashed her microphone on the pavement while shouting "This is a Russist channel!", and then he pushed her, shouted several insults and fled. Although the police opened a criminal case into the incident, no information on any suspect being identified and arrested has followed so far.

On 12 February 2021, in Kiev, radicals from the S14 group attacked V. Shevchuk, a journalist from the Pravovoy Kontrol media project, who was covering a rally organized by nationalists near the premises of the NASH TV channel. Law enforcers did not arrest the attacker, although Shevchuk detained him, and deliberately delayed the process of obtaining surveillance footage. The lawyer of the attacked journalist stated that the investigators had interest in covering up the crime.⁴³⁴

Human rights organizations have pointed out that the impunity of perpetrators of previous attacks worsens the situation with media freedom. The brutal beating in Cherkasy of investigative journalist V. Komarov, who died on 20 June 2019 after spending six weeks in a coma, was cited as an example.⁴³⁵ In 2019, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine also noted that

⁴³³ <https://strana.today/news/272646-storonniki-sternenko-prohnali-ot-zdanija-sbu-storonnikov-sharija.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/272646-storonniki-sternenko-prohnali-ot-zdanija-sbu-storonnikov-sharija.html>); <https://strana.today/news/272487-pod-zdaniem-sbu-hruppa-podderzhki-sternenko-prizyvaet-plevat-v-litso-zhurnalistam.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/272487-pod-zdaniem-sbu-hruppa-podderzhki-sternenko-prizyvaet-plevat-v-litso-zhurnalistam.html>)

⁴³⁴ <https://strana.today/news/317443-ljudi-karasja-sovershili-na-menja-otkrovennoe-napadenie-a-politsii-zatjahivaet-s-rassledovaniem-zhurnalist-serhej-shevchuk-o-podrobnostjakh-napadenija-.html>

⁴³⁵ Amnesty International Report: Human Rights in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Review of 2019. <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/EUR0113552020ENGLISH.PDF>
<https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/EUR0113552020ENGLISH.PDF>

radical right-wing nationalist groups had continually been putting pressure on the proceedings concerning the killing of Oles Buzina, which had lasted by then for more than three years. Eventually, the case, which had been considered by several different judges, was in effect been put on hold and the proceedings had to be restarted from scratch after the presiding judge recused himself in May 2019.⁴³⁶ At the same time, on 12 December 2019, law enforcement agencies detained three suspects in the 2016 murder of prominent journalist Pavel Sheremet.⁴³⁷

In November 2021, the UN Human Rights Committee expressed concern about the attacks and acts of intimidation against journalists and human rights defenders committed by right-wing radicals (among the victims, anti-corruption activists and LGBT defenders were specially noted). It also mentioned delays in the investigations into the murders of journalists Oles Buzina, Pavel Sheremet and V. Komarov, as a result of which the perpetrators still have not been found. It was recommended that Kiev prohibit officials from interfering in the lawful activities of journalists and human rights defenders, guarantee their protection from any kind of threats, pressure and attacks, and ensure the confidentiality of journalists' sources.⁴³⁸

As noted above, the Kiev authorities actively used the 2022 developments for making the state the only source of information. This is not to say that Kiev officials had not made such attempts before. On 11 March 2021, Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelenskiy approved a decision by the NSDC on creation of a Center for Countering Disinformation to be established as a working body of the NSDC.⁴³⁹ The Center has now become known for spreading fake news and information on a mass scale.

⁴³⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/AttacksAgainstJournalists.aspx>

⁴³⁷ https://ria.ru/20191224/1562805139.html?rcmd_alg=svd

⁴³⁸ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 8th periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (the observations were published in February 2022). https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=en

⁴³⁹ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/10952263>

Legislative steps are taken to combat dissenting viewpoints in the country. On 19 March 2022, the president of Ukraine enacted the decision of the NSDC "On the implementation of a unified information policy under martial law," providing that all national TV channels are to be united on a single information platform of strategic communication – the 24/7 information marathon "United News." According to a survey among journalists conducted by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation in January 2023, 62 per cent of them believe that this United Marathon amounts to censorship.⁴⁴⁰

On 31 March 2023, the controversial Law No. 2849-IX "On the media" of 13 December 2022, which is designed to be used by the authorities as a tool for fighting against dissenting media, entered into force. It imposes a ban on the publication of "materials containing popularisation or propaganda of bodies of the aggressor state" and "unreliable materials" (the criteria for defining such materials are very vague), which in practice implies a total control over the media⁴⁴¹ and an opportunity for extrajudicial blocking of any periodicals, as well as a de facto ban on the publication of any information about Russia, even if neutral. Besides, the law tightens the language quotas: starting from January 2023, the share of Ukrainian language on national television should increase from 75 per cent to 90 per cent.

The legislation was adopted without regard to the opinion of the journalistic community. In the summer of 2022, the document (still a draft law at the time) was criticized by, among others, the European Federation of Journalists, which described it as "worthy of the worst authoritarian regimes." Back during the preparation of the bill, it was severely criticized by the scientific and expert department of the parliament itself, which noted in its conclusion that "the provisions of the bill contradict the constitution of Ukraine,

⁴⁴⁰ <https://zmina.info/news/zhurnalisty-nazvaly-osnovni-porushennya-svobody-slova-pid-chas-rosiys%ca%b9koyi-navaly-opytuvannya-onovleno/>

⁴⁴¹ The law vests the National Council on Television and Radio Broadcasting of Ukraine with unlimited powers to put pressure on any mass media outlets, up to heavy fines and extrajudicial closure.

do not take into account the legal positions of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine, the international legal obligations of Ukraine and the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights." It was also stated that "the general regulation mechanism is implemented through typical means of state coercion characteristic of heavy regulation of the activities by state bodies".⁴⁴²

General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists Anthony Bellanger, in his statement of 12 January 2023, criticized the new Law on the Media as a threat to the freedom of the press and diversity of opinions and called on the Kiev authorities to revise it in consultation with journalist associations.⁴⁴³

Any attempts by journalists to publicize information that differs from the official point of view trigger accusations by Kiev officials of "distorting reality" and violating Ukrainian law. One of the most recent examples involves a report about the restoration of Mariupol by the Russian authorities released by Germany's ZDF TV channel in January 2024.⁴⁴⁴

Sometimes such activism costs journalists their freedom or even their lives. In January 2024, Chilean and American citizen Gonzalo Lira, an independent journalist and blogger who criticized Zelenskiy, died in a Ukrainian prison after having been kidnapped by the SBU in April 2022, then released and detained again while trying to leave Ukraine (he intended to seek political asylum in Hungary), and held in detention ever since up until his death.⁴⁴⁵

Similarly, in March 2022, the SBU kidnapped political observer and journalist Dmitriy Dzhangirov. His current whereabouts are unknown. In February 2023, Dmitriy Skvortsov, a journalist and blogger who defended the

⁴⁴² <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221216-dostoinnyy-khudshikh-avtoritarnykh-rezhimov-na-ukraine-prinyali-shokiruyushchiy-zakon-o-smi/>

⁴⁴³ <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/ukraine-ifj-calls-on-the-government-to-revise-new-media-law.html>

⁴⁴⁴ <https://www.ukr.net/ru/news/details/society/102520854.html>

⁴⁴⁵ <https://ria.ru/amp/20240115/blogger-1921310087.html>

canonical tradition of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, was detained for "justifying Russian aggression."⁴⁴⁶

Since 2022, the West and relevant international organizations have preferred to turn a blind eye to all these violations by the Kiev authorities. In 2023, the Institute of Mass Information recorded 83 cases of violations of freedom of speech "the responsibility for which lies with the Ukrainian side", but no unlawful detentions of journalists were mentioned among them. The list only included the obstruction of legitimate journalistic activities (29 cases), restriction of access to public information (20 cases), threats (11), cybercrime (11), beatings (4), indirect pressure (3), legal pressure (2), censorship (2), damage to property (1).⁴⁴⁷

While the Ukrainian authorities are trying to gain full control over the law-abiding media offering an alternative view of the situation in the country, the notorious "Myrotvorets" website, which blatantly violates citizens' right to privacy, continues to operate without any hindrance. The site publishes illegally collected personal data of both Ukrainian citizens and foreigners whom it considers to be "separatists" or "enemies of Ukraine", including reporters, politicians, cultural figures and even Russian diplomats.

Ukrainian special services and radical nationalist structures actively use the said web resource to exert psychological pressure on those whomever they may accuse of "separatism and high treason." Moreover, those who are listed in the "Myrotvorets" database automatically become potential targets for repression by local security services and violent acts by nationalist radicals.

The most outrageous case involved the publication in 2015 of personal data, including residential address, of writer Oles Buzina and journalist Pavel Sheremet shortly after this information was published on the website, they were killed.

⁴⁴⁶ <https://hromadske.ua/ru/amp/posts/sbu-zaderzhala-v-kieve-prorossijskogo-blogera-dmitriya-skvorcova-on-skryvalsya-v-monastyre-upc-mp>

⁴⁴⁷ <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/960116-amp.html>

The list of those killed further includes Italian journalist Andrea Rocchelli, former MP from the Party of Regions Oleg Kalashnikov, militiaman Roman Dzhumayev, and Russian journalist Daria Dugina, to name a few. The Ukrainian public figures considered undesirable have also been subjected to illegal persecution. Many of them, like, for example, Alexei Selivanov, chief ataman of the Faithful Cossacks organization, were forced to leave the territory of Ukraine, fearing for their lives. When a blacklisted person dies, their profile is labelled as "eliminated." This was also the case with Italian businessman and politician Silvio Berlusconi.

In many cases, the inclusion of persons, such as media workers, into the extremist website's database has been followed by the blocking of their bank accounts in connection with their being listed as the "enemies of Ukraine." It is also known that, in May 2016, head of the National Bank of Ukraine Valeria Gontareva signed a letter addressed to Ukrainian organizations and enterprises recommending using the "Myrotvorets" website to obtain data necessary to "combat abuses in the financial sector and terrorist financing." "Myrotvorets" is also used as a source of evidence by the Ukrainian courts at all stages of the judicial procedure, as has been clearly demonstrated by the Uspishna Varta NGO, which identified more than 100 court decisions in criminal cases that refer to materials from the "Myrotvorets" website in their statement of reasons.⁴⁴⁸

"Myrotvoret" editor-in-chief Roman Zaitsev, in an interview with Ukrainian periodical Fakti on 14 March 2021, made it clear that this web resource was supported by Ukrainian authorities (ministries of foreign affairs, internal affairs and defence; the SBU; border services), as well as by foreign (Western) intelligence agencies.

⁴⁴⁸ Use of materials from the "Myrotvorets" site in court practice. Uspishna Varta Human Rights Platform. 22 January 2019. <https://uspishna-varta.com/ru/news/ispolzovaniye-materialov-sayta-mirotvorets-v-sudebnoy-praktike>

To date, more than 240 thousand people are listed in the "Myrotvorets" database, of which about 75 thousand are Russians. This includes the disclosure of personal information of over 300 minors. In October 2021, Faina Savenkova, a 12-year-old girl from Lugansk who allegedly "poses a threat to the national security of Ukraine," was included in the "Myrotvorets" database. The reason was her open appeal to the members of the UN Security Council on Children's Day where she drew attention to the situation of children in the Donbass.

In January 2022, "Myrotvorets" announced the opening of a new area of activity to combat unscrupulous law enforcement officers who allegedly fabricate criminal cases. However, the site administrators referred to this category only those investigators and prosecutors who conducted criminal proceedings against veterans of the ATO and members of nationalist battalions, as well as against MP Sofia Fedina, who is known for making extremist statements.

International human rights organizations have brought attention to the problems caused by the operation of this vile Internet resource in Ukraine. In 2019, the OHCHR Monitoring Mission in Ukraine called on deputies of the Verkhovna Rada to initiate the closure of the nationalist resource; similar calls were voiced by the EU office in Kiev and the Journalists without Borders NGO, which, however, has had no effect.

In November 2021, the UN Human Rights Committee pointed out the lack of information on the outcome of criminal investigations carried out in relation to this notorious website. In particular, this refers to the publication of personal data of thousands of Ukrainians and other individuals allegedly linked to armed groups or labelled by the resource as "terrorists."⁴⁴⁹ The HRCttee attached great importance to this issue. This is indicated, in particular, by the

⁴⁴⁹ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 8th periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (observations were published in 2022).
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=en

fact that the recommendation to ensure the right to privacy, including in the context of the Myrotvorets website, along with comments on ensuring the independence of the judiciary and the administration of justice, as well as freedom of expression in the context of journalists' activities, was included by the Committee in the list of issues that are to be reported on within a year.

Suppression of opposition and political rights restriction

In the spirit of the best Nazi examples, the Kiev authorities are conducting a campaign to purge political circles of undesirable figures and forces that oppose the biased domestic and foreign policy and represent competition to the ruling elite. To this end, the special services and the country's judicial system are actively involved.

Back in November 2021, the UN Human Rights Committee highlighted a number of issues related to the operation of political parties in Ukraine. It was particularly concerned about reports indicating that there was corruption, misuse of State resources and a lack of transparency in campaign financing. The Committee was also concerned about broad and vague legal provisions which allowed for the denial or revocation of party registration on the pretext of threats to national security. In addition to the need to ensure transparency, effective monitoring of campaign financing and the investigation of corruption allegations, the recommendations to Kiev include the promotion of the culture of political pluralism. At the same time, the Committee's experts pointed out that the realization of civil and political rights in the country had been affected by the authorities' efforts to combat the coronavirus. As a result, the Ukrainian Government had introduced restrictive measures under the pretext of combating the disease. They mostly impacted conflict-affected populations, women, Roma, and older persons.

The Human Rights Committee also expressed concern regarding the judiciary system. In particular, it noted the lack of measures to fully ensure the independence of judges and prosecutors, the lack of transparency in the procedure for the appointment and dismissal of judges; the challenges faced during the qualification assessment of judges; and the investigation of possible cases of corruption. As a result, these factors, together with the insufficient number of judges in the country, lead to delays and lack of access to justice for a significant number Ukrainian citizens. The authorities were advised to refrain

from interfering in the judiciary and safeguard the full independence of judges. The fact that the investigations into the Maidan tragedies (the investigation has been completed and charges have been brought against Viktor Yanukovich and security forces in absentia) and the Odessa tragedy have been slowed down was cited as a manifestation of the understaffing and underfunding of the courts.⁴⁵⁰

Moreover, the Kiev regime keeps compiling more "enemies of Ukraine" lists, one of which is the recently launched The Germs of "Russian World" Internet resource. It features European citizens and organizations that allegedly support the Russian Federation and its policy in various forms. It also includes Russian compatriots and their organizations.

To be featured on this proscription list, one only needs not to condemn Russia or to speak positively about anything related to it. The page is owned by Texty (texty.org.ua) and contains the names of about 1,300 individuals and some 900 organizations from 19 European countries. It is sponsored by the Soros Foundation.

Evidently, the new "Myrotvorets" (Peacekeeper), just like its prototype, will be used to harass those featured in it, target people for any dissent, and purposefully spread hatred between nations.

The state of martial law imposed in 2022 has been used by Vladimir Zelenskiy not only to limit freedom of speech and purge the country's media space, but also to eliminate any possible political concurrents. One of the first political parties to be targeted by Zelenskiy's regime was the Opposition Platform – For Life – including its leaders. Following the closure of three national news channels owned by party member Taras Kozak in early February 2021, the National Security and Defence Council, on 19 February, imposed sanctions on the leader of this party, Viktor Medvedchuk, and his wife, TV

⁴⁵⁰ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 8th periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (the observations themselves were published in February 2022)
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=en

presenter Oksana Marchenko, freezing all of their assets and property in Ukraine. The grounds for that were an investigation conducted by the SBU into the financing of terrorism.⁴⁵¹ As of May 2021, a criminal case was opened against Viktor Medvedchuk and Taras Kozak for high treason and attempted theft of national resources in Crimea.

In 2022, measures to eliminate opposition parties became even more active. On 14 May 2022, Vladimir Zelenskiy signed a law banning pro-Russian parties in the country. As a follow-up to this decision, by the end of 2023, Ukrainian courts had banned 18 opposition parties representing the interests of millions of Russian-speaking residents of Ukraine and advocating for a dialog with Russia. Their property, finances, and other assets were seized and turned over to the state. The leadership of these parties was subject to criminal prosecution.

On 23 April 2022, amendments to the Criminal Code (CC) regarding "ensuring the accountability of individuals who carry out collaborationist activities" came into force. Complicity with the "aggressor state" is punishable by imprisonment for up to 12 years. The Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) was also amended to allow prosecutors to order pre-trial custody of suspects and to pass rulings on other matters of criminal proceedings, which previously used to require the judge's authorization. In addition, the CPC was also amended to establish imprisonment as the only punitive measure applicable to crimes associated with a "military conflict" while martial law is in effect. Furthermore, Ukrainian law enforcement officers were allowed to conduct night searches without witnesses.

The above-mentioned legislative amendments were also criticized in the OHCHR report on the human rights situation in Ukraine for the period from February 2022 to May 2023, which, among other things, mentions that these

⁴⁵¹ <https://strana.today/news/318673-sanktsii-snbo-protiv-medvedchuka-19-fevralja-hlavnoe.html> (previously at <https://strana.ua/news/318673-sanktsii-snbo-protiv-medvedchuka-19-fevralja-hlavnoe.html>)

amendments, "combined with practices employed by Ukrainian security forces, have also resulted in an environment conducive to arbitrary detention". According to the information disclosed in this report, during the reporting period alone, OHCHR documented 75 confirmed cases of arbitrary detention by Ukrainian security forces. Fifty-seven per cent of the detainees interviewed described subjection to torture or ill-treatment; 17 per cent reported improper conditions of detention.⁴⁵²

The Ukrainian authorities also open politically motivated cases against undesirable individuals under articles 109 – 114-2, 258 – 258-6, 260, 261, 437 – 442 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, for crimes against national security of Ukraine – articles 109 – 114-2, for crimes against public security – articles 258 – 258-6, 260, 261 (generally used to convict militias and residents of the DPR and the LPR), for criminal offenses against peace, security of mankind and international legal order – articles 437 – 442 (cases directly related to warfare). Besides, cases are opened for criminal offenses related to the protection of state secrets, inviolability of state borders and mobilization – articles 328, 330, 332, 335-337 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine; criminal offenses against the established procedure of military service (military offenses) (disobedience, absence without leave from a military unit or place of service, desertion) – articles 402-403, 407 – 409, 422, 427, 429 – 431 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine; dissemination of communist or Nazi symbols or propaganda; justification, validation or denial of the "military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine"; and "glorification" of its participants – article 436 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine.⁴⁵³

In reality, all of the criminal law regulations in the country are used by Ukrainian authorities to persecute the dissidents. As of 15 February 2024, the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine reported opening 16,345 criminal cases

⁴⁵² <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/2023-06-27-Ukraine-thematic-report-detention-ENG.pdf>

⁴⁵³ Report of the Foundation for Humanitarian Economic Cooperation entitled "Persecution of Dissidents and Political Repressions in Ukraine" (December 2023 – February 2024)

on suspicion of committing crimes against national security, including: trespass against territorial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine (article 110 of the Criminal Code) – 3,473, high treason (article 111 of the Criminal Code) – 3,081, collaborationism (article 111-1 of the Criminal Code) – 7,286, aiding and abetting the aggressor state (article 111-2 of the Criminal Code) – 1,081, sabotage (article 113 of the Criminal Code) – 97.

Concerning the further development of such cases, the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine reports that in 2022-2023, 195,776 criminal cases were opened in relation to the military conflict. 74,302 cases were opened for political dissidence. In 16,571 cases, suspicion notices were given, and 12,793 cases with an indictment were forwarded to court.⁴⁵⁴

Over the past two years, more than 3,000 cases under article 111 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine ("high treason") have been opened (mostly in the Kharkov Oblast and areas of the Donetsk Oblast, the Zaporozhye Oblast, the Kherson Oblast, and the Kiev Oblast under Kiev control). Besides, residents of these territories, some of which have temporarily got back under the UAF control, fall under the articles "collaborationism" (111-1) and "aiding and abetting the aggressor state" (111-2).⁴⁵⁵ Human rights activists note that the given statistics don't cover those who have gone missing, as well as victims of forced disappearances. At the same time, some political and public figures in Ukraine recognize the existence of such victims, but the Kiev authorities refrain from covering this unpopular topic in the mass media.

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, in 2023, the country's law enforcement agencies put 7,422 people on the wanted list, a record for the past five years (including a 40 per cent increase over 2021). These individuals were wanted on the following charges: 21.7 per cent for collaborationism, 18.2 per cent for theft, 5.3 per cent for high treason, and

⁴⁵⁴ <https://ukraina.ru/20240119/1052773811.html>

⁴⁵⁵ Report of the Foundation for Humanitarian Economic Cooperation entitled "Persecution of Dissidents and Political Repressions in Ukraine" (December 2023 – February 2024)

4.8 per cent for fraud. As of the end of January 2024, according to the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs, there were 55,992 people wanted in Ukraine.⁴⁵⁶

It has gotten to the point where Ukrainian senior citizens who have "liked" posts on the social media platforms Odnoklassniki, V Kontakte and other sites have been sentenced to real terms on criminal charges. For supporting pro-Russian post, they risk imprisonment up to five years, which is equal to the convictions for theft, murder or rape. Ninety-nine such convictions have been handed down from March to September 2022, 176 from October 2022 to September 2023.⁴⁵⁷

Public figures and human rights activists, mainly those who advocate for the rights of Russians in Ukraine and those who speak out in favour of establishing cooperative relations with Russia, are also being persecuted on false charges. An illustrative example is the case of Elena Berezhnaya, well-known Ukrainian public activist, who is actively defending the rights of the Russian-speaking population and national minorities of Ukraine. Her regular appearances at the UN, the OSCE, and other international organizations most likely became one of the main reasons for the persecution of this activist by the Ukrainian security services. On 16 March 2022, Elena Berezhnaya was detained by the SBU under the pretext that she was suspected of high treason; since then she has been kept in a pre-trial detention facility. Several human rights activists have drawn attention to her fate. She also addressed letters herself to the Council of Europe and the OSCE. However, there is still no progress in her case, and the activist has been already held in detention for more than two years.

In the spring of 2022, in Ukraine, there were numerous cases of persecution against the public figures that expressed their personal views on the situation in the country and disagreed with the official policy. In March 2022, writer, satirist, publicist and TV host Yan Taksir was detained. The reason was

⁴⁵⁶ <https://opendatabot.ua/ru/analytics/person-wanted-2023>

⁴⁵⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/russian/articles/c4nmxm1ev7o>

the satirist's literary works, which allegedly "undermined the sovereignty of the state." Yan Taksyur was held in a pre-trial detention facility despite having serious health issues. A few months later he was released on bail.

In June 2022, Mikhail Pogrebinskiy, well-known Ukrainian political scientist, was charged in absentia with high treason. He was accused of acting as an "expert" and "repeatedly participating in TV programmes and talk shows, disseminating well-written Russian messages aimed at destabilizing the socio-political situation in the country". Earlier, in March 2022, Pogrebinskiy's apartment was searched.

The media also reported on the detention of activist Aleksander Gorbenko, political scientist and journalist Dmitriy Dzhangirov; political scientist Yuriy Dudkin, who had taken part in live broadcasts of such channels as 112-Ukraine, NewsOne, and ZIK, which had been closed by the Kiev regime; anti-fascist politicians Mikhail and Aleksander Kononovichi; political scientist and blogger Gleb Lyashenko; anti-fascist activist Aleksander Mayevskiy (he managed to escape during the burning of the Trade Union House in Odessa on 2 May 2014); communist and anti-fascist Aleksander Matyushenko; journalist of the NewsOne and NASH TV channels Maks Nazarov, head of the Slavic Movement "Russia Revived" public organization Aleksander Tarnashinskiy, lawyer Dmitriy Tikhononkov, who had defended anti-Maidan activists, journalist Yuriy Tkachev, professor of the Nikolaev Institute of Law Sergei Shubin, and many others.⁴⁵⁸

Other political prisoners whose future is of particular concern are: Energy expert and commentator Dmitriy Marunych (detained by the SBU in April 2022, his current whereabouts are unknown), Kiev historian and publicist, author of books on the common history of East Slavic peoples Aleksander Karevin (captured by the SBU on 9 March 2022 in his own apartment, his further fate is unknown), former deputy of the district council, person with

⁴⁵⁸ <https://ukraina.ru/20220715/1036459856.html>

disabilities, anti-Maidan activist Oleg Novikov (detained by the SBU in April 2022, his current whereabouts are unknown), the head of the Russian community in the Poltava Oblast, writer, journalist Viktor Shestakov (detained by the SBU in July 2023, currently in a pre-trial detention center).

Sentences have been handed down in the cases of some public figures. Thus, in May 2022, Aleksander Matyushenko was sentenced to three years in prison on charges of "trespass against territorial integrity of Ukraine".⁴⁵⁹ In November 2023, head of the Department of Humanities of the Nikolaev Institute of Law Sergei Shubin was sentenced to 15 years in prison (arrested by the SBU in June 2022)).

Actual prison sentences are imposed even on elderly people, and given their age, this is equivalent to a death sentence. For example, in January 2024, an 82-year-old Afghan War veteran, holder of the Order of the Red Star, writer and journalist, Yuriy Chernyshev was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Following the start of the special military operation, the SBU, using the tactics of criminals and terrorists, began to harass and intimidate Ukrainian deputies and officials who accepted humanitarian cargoes from Russia or negotiated with the Russian military on the establishment of civilian evacuation corridors. On 1 March 2022, Vladimir Struk, mayor of Kremennaya, was kidnapped by men in military uniform. Two days later his body was discovered with signs of torture. On 7 March 2022, Yuriy Prilipko, mayor of Gostomel, was found murdered. He negotiated with the Russian military to establish a humanitarian corridor for civilians. On 24 March 2022, Gennady Matsegora, mayor of Kupyansk, published a video calling on Zelenskiy and his administration to release his daughter, who had been kidnapped by SBU agents to put pressure on the official. The media also reported on the detention of Aleksander Bryukhanov, mayor of Yuzhnoye; Cherkasy City Council deputy from the "Opposition Platform – For Life" Aleksander Zamiraylo; Kherson City

⁴⁵⁹ <https://ukraina.ru/20220715/1036459856.html>

Council deputy Ilya Karamalikov; Mariupol City Council deputy Vladimir Klimenko; politician I. Kolesnikov; mayor of Stary Saltov Eduard Konovalov; mayor of Burya Viktor Ladukha; and Andrey Lazurenko, deputy of Solonitsevskiy village council of the Kharkov Oblast.

In 2023, the Kiev regime continued to cleanse the political space of alternative opinions. On 25 July 2023, the SBU accused of high treason former deputy of the Verkhovna Rada, leader of the now-banned party "Nashi" Evgheniy Muraev. Earlier, in November 2022, Ukrainian security services searched his house.⁴⁶⁰ In the same month, a criminal case for high treason was opened against another former deputy Vadim Rabinovich. He was arrested in absentia.⁴⁶¹

Ukrainian security forces began to regularly prosecute civil population, primarily, Russian-speaking. A significant number of criminal prosecutions are being conducted in connection with the alleged work of the accused persons for the Russian intelligence services. However, there are also known cases when citizens are prosecuted for publicly drawing attention to inappropriate behaviour of the Ukrainian military. Thus, in early April 2024, the SBU detained in Kharkov a 54-year-old director of School No. 38 who publicly complained about drug use by UAF militants on the territory of the educational institution. The woman published photos on social networks showing janitors collecting used syringes and empty packages of drugs for drug addicts scattered by the militants on the territory of the school, criticizing the "defenders". A few days later, the teacher was detained, a "preventive conversation" was held with her and a criminal case was opened.⁴⁶²

At the same time, it became known about the arrest in Kharkov of six former employees of Ukrainian design institutes (traditionally, they are often

⁴⁶⁰ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/18353577?ysclid=lmgo78j2vv396866235>

⁴⁶¹ <https://ren.tv/news/v-mire/1128632-ukrainskogo-deputata-rabinovicha-zaочно-arestovali-za-gosizmenu?ysclid=lmgoejpg3r636374100>

⁴⁶² <https://antifashist.com/item/inzheneriy-atomshhiki-pedagogi-i-informatory-s-trikolorom-sbu-prodolzhaet-shtampovat-absurdnye-ugolovnye-dela-protiv-ukraincev.html>

suspected of working for Russia). According to the version of the so-called investigation, they were commissioned by the Russian state corporation Rosatom to develop research and design documentation for the modernization of Russian nuclear power plants in Kursk, Rostov, Novovoronezh and Balakovo. The detainees were also allegedly supposed to help connect the Zaporozhye NPP to the Russian energy system.⁴⁶³

Often representatives of the Ukrainian security services directly inform the detainees that the reason for their arrest is the intention to use them to exchange them for Ukrainian soldiers who have surrendered to the Russian Federation Armed Forces.

About 700 citizens' complaints of illegal criminal prosecution in Ukraine for their pro-Russian position are under consideration in the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation Tatyana Moskalkova.

Despite the connivance of a number of international organizations with the Kiev regime, information about the methods used by Kiev to persecute potential political opponents and simply people with different views still appears in the information space. The fact that such actions are not in accordance with the international law was pointed out by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet in her report at the 50th session of the UN Human Rights Council in July 2022.

In October 2023, during the discussion at the UN Human Rights Council meeting of the OHCHR regular report on Ukraine, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Nada Al-Nashif noted that about 6,000 criminal cases related to charges of "collaboration activities" had been opened on the territory under Kiev control and their number was still growing. The OHCHR expressed concern regarding this issue.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ <https://news.un.org/ru/story/2023/10/1445597>

Numerous cases of detention of dissidents in Ukraine came to the attention of Western media. For example, the Guardian published an article on this issue on 3 February 2024.⁴⁶⁵ Among others, it reported that in recent years Ukraine's SBU security service had opened more than 8,100 criminal proceedings related to collaboration of Ukrainian citizens with Russia. It was also noted that Ukrainians convicted on these counts were only held in certain prisons, where they were kept away from other inmates. Many of the correspondents' interlocutors claimed that they admitted guilt under pressure. At the same time, it should be noted that although this publication has recognized the fact of persecution of opposition and dissenting citizens in Ukraine, nevertheless, the entire material is written as a description of the cases of "traitors and collaborators", with the use of appropriate negative language, and does not contain the slightest sympathy for people (even for their professional colleagues) who have become victims of the crimes of the Kiev regime.

⁴⁶⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/02/jailed-as-collaborators-the-stories-of-ukrainians-who-ended-up-in-prison>