

# **The Human Rights Situation in Ukraine**

Report

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## **General Situation**

This report continues the Ministry's efforts to draw the attention of the international community to the grave human rights situation in Ukraine. The numerous facts of human rights violations confirm that the situation in this area in Ukraine has seriously deteriorated by now.

It is quite clear by now that Ukraine is ruled by an openly Nazi regime following in all respects its ideological Nazi German inspirators and on this path committing countless gross and systematic human rights violations in all spheres of public life.

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 sped-up assimilation of national minorities.

A distorted version of history is implanted which diminishes USSR role in and contribution to the victory over Nazism, in order to destroy the Ukrainian people's historical memory about that war. Ukraine's state policy and active steps at all levels of government aimed at whitewashing and glorifying Nazism and Nazi collaborators and dignifying various Ukrainian groups that collaborated with the Nazi invaders during the war under the guise of "national liberation movement" members – all serve to cultivate nationalist sentiments

among the broad segments of Ukrainian society. Particular attention is paid to adopting a wide range of measures of state support for the movements glorifying Nazi criminals and collaborators.

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 made and done under this "brand name": from stamps and thematic exhibitions to decisions 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 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 Great Patriotic War veterans and former Nazi and collaborationist unit members, 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.

The implantation of hateful ideology became so widespread after the bloody putsch of 2014, when extremists infiltrated all levels of Ukrainian government. Extremist nationalist organizations, in particular Right Sector and Svoboda, the ideological successors of Ukrainian nationalists known for their collaboration with the Nazis and mass murder of Soviet civilians during the Great Patriotic War, became the leading forces in this process.

Instead of forming a coalition government of national unity, as envisaged by the 21 February 2014 agreement signed by President Yanukovych 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 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.<sup>1</sup> All the above is only proof of the Nazi nature of the regime established in Kiev.

The fact that the ATO format envisaged the deployment, 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 Donbas.

However, the accusations of Donbas residents of "terrorism" used by Kiev as a pretext for launching the ATO, turned out to be falsified. The UN International Court of Justice confirmed that by refusing to recognize the Donbas Republics as "terrorist organizations" and Russia as a "sponsor of terrorism" in its decision of 31 January 2024 on Ukraine's lawsuit against the Russian Federation. Therefore, Kiev's actions towards the LPR and DPR were illegitimate from the outset, including the so-called ATO itself. In the same decision, the Court dismissed Kiev regime's speculations about the alleged

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<sup>1</sup> A detailed description of the events of that time is given in the study by a team of authors "History of Ukraine" // Grigoriev M.S., Deinego V.N., Dyukov A.R., Zazorin 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 Public Chamber of the Russian Federation website [https://files.oprf.ru/storage/image\\_store/docs2022/istoriya\\_Ukraini\\_MS\\_Grigoriev\\_dr.pdf](https://files.oprf.ru/storage/image_store/docs2022/istoriya_Ukraini_MS_Grigoriev_dr.pdf)

"racial discrimination" in Crimea, which had been propagated both by pro-Western NGOs and international organizations. In addition, the Court repeatedly questioned their conclusions, which were not supported by sufficient evidence.

As for the large-scale human rights violations in Ukraine, they have been provoked by the rapid degradation of the entire political system of that country. As a result, as a number of researchers rightly note, the Kiev regime underwent a political mutation in 2022. The environment it created under the pretext of martial law allowed for a severe authoritarian system of government to be built in the country, featured by an absolute power monopoly, extrajudicial executions, strict censorship and government propaganda, de facto elimination of independent media and political opposition, and an active search for traitors, fictitious Russian spies and saboteurs. Moreover, traitors are already being sought in Western countries that support Zelenskiy criminal regime and whose population and partly political circles are gradually tending to revise their approaches to the situation in Ukraine.

The current regime, having adopted the ideology and practices of Ukrainian radical nationalists, has essentially degenerated into a neo-Nazi dictatorship. It needs a state of war and widest range of repressive measures as the only and, at the same time, safest way to maintain its dominance. It exists as long as the escalation degree remains high in society, and armed confrontation with an external enemy continues. For these purposes, the West is providing it with massive, primarily military, assistance. The end of conflict would be tantamount to the end of existence of such a regime.

Within this paradigm, Kiev pursues a totally discriminatory policy towards the Russian-speaking population and national minorities. Everything Russian is banned in the country – language, culture, printed matter of any kind, mass media. Education in the Russian language, its study in any form is also banned. Literature, educational and scientific materials in Russian have been

excluded from the educational process. Even interpersonal communication at school is banned in Russian. The renaming of country's topographic objects that are somehow connected with Russia, the Soviet Union and now even with the Russian Empire, has been enormous. A mass campaign has been launched to destroy monuments to Russian and Soviet figures of science and culture, historical figures.

Kiev's campaign against the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) has reached a completely new level of cynicism and hypocrisy. On 20 August 2024, the Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine adopted a law (in force since 23 September 2024) creating a legal mechanism for a complete UOC ban, which gave impetus to a new round of persecution of its clergy and flock, efforts to seize churches, monasteries, and other church property, including Orthodox shrines. These actions only confirm the Zelenskiy clique's determination to retain power at any cost; in this case, an intention is obvious to turn the civil war into a religious one. Experts pointed out to this danger already back in 2023. Thus, Ukrainian political scientist K. Bondarenko noted that the religious conflict flaring up in the country was a very dangerous phenomenon that would be difficult to extinguish. "Religious and interfaith wars are the most brutal wars; and God forbid it should get to the point where we start to sort things out between the supporters of different Orthodox sects, for it will be quite difficult to stop this and achieve any kind of interfaith peace," he explained. According to him, such a confrontation can last for decades and centuries.<sup>2</sup>

A number of important points is worth emphasizing. After the start of a special military operation (SMO) of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine, eliminate the threat emanating from its territory to Russia's security, and protect the civilian population of Donbas, the Zelenskiy regime began to shape a legal framework for

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<sup>2</sup> <https://raskolam.net/ru/67430-vlada-grave-z-duzhe-skladnym-vavysshem-politolog-pro-religijnyj-konflikt/>, <https://antifashist.online/item/dikoe-pole-2024-zelenskij-gotovit-ukrainu-k-religioznoj-vojne.html>

concentrating absolute power in its hands, essentially legislatively allowing itself to violate law. On 24 February 2022, President V. Zelenskiy signed Decree No. 64/2022 "On the introduction of martial law in Ukraine." It explicitly states that for the duration of martial law, a number of constitutional provisions, namely Articles 30-34, 38, 39, 41-44 and 53 of the fundamental law of Ukraine, shall lose effect. This conceals a virtually complete deprivation of citizens of their rights and freedoms. Thus, Zelenskiy's martial law decree limits the inviolability of dwelling place (Article 30), confidentiality of written correspondence, telephone conversations, telegraph and other correspondence (Article 31), non-interference into private and family life (Article 32), freedom of movement and choice of place of residence, to leave the territory of Ukraine (Article 33), the right to freedom of thought and speech, to freely express one's views and beliefs (Article 34), the right to elect and be elected to positions in bodies of state and local self-government (Article 38), the right to organize peaceful assemblies, rallies, demonstrations (Article 39), the opportunity to use and dispose of one's property and results of one's intellectual and creative activity (Article 41), the entrepreneurial activity (Article 42), the right to work, to include making a living from an activity chosen by citizens themselves or to which they voluntarily agree (Article 43), the right to strike to protect one's economic and social interests (Article 44), the right to education (Article 53).

It is obvious that today citizens of Ukraine are indeed legally deprived of the overwhelming majority of rights and freedoms that exist in all countries of the world. Persecution of political opponents, independent journalists and media outlets, and civil society activists undesirable for authorities, has taken on an unprecedented scale; as a rule, it is accompanied by references to the need to combat "the Russian aggression" and "separatism". Russian-speaking residents of Ukraine are subject to a greater degree of persecution.

For executions, the government in Kiev is making use of radical nationalist groups who frequently break the law but remain untouchable. Often,



right-wing radicals freely intimidate and attack people on trial, their lawyers, and put pressure on members of the judiciary.

Kiev regime's Nazi approaches are obvious in their attitude towards the population of Donbas. Dozens of thousands of Ukrainian citizens, including the elderly, women and children, were dying and suffering in the 10-year-old internal armed conflict unleashed by Kiev in the south-east of the country. As a result of the severe restrictions imposed by the Ukrainian authorities, citizens living in the hostility areas 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 legal protection or compensation mechanisms in place for the population of Donbas.

The well-known utterances by Ukrainian leaders can serve as a convincing evidence of this Nazi approach: for example, in the summer of 2014, the former Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk called the Donbas militias "subhumans" (similar to the Nazi "untermenschen") and Vladimir Zelenskiy said alluding to the citizens of his country against whom he imposed sanctions that not all people are people, some are just "species".

The fact that the Donbas population did not enjoy the same scope of human rights as the population in Kiev-controlled Ukraine, was pointed out by the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) in November 2021 (its concluding observations were published in February 2022).<sup>3</sup> According to the Committee, there were differences, including in the form of the difficulties encountered by civilians in the Donbas 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

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<sup>3</sup> UN HRC Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine, November 2021 (published February 2022)  
[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru)

conditions, including demining. The HRC 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 limited rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs), mentioning with concern the multiple forms of discrimination they faced (in relation to the enjoyment of political rights, in particular the ability to vote). According to the HRC, this circumstance hindered their integration into society. Therefore, Kiev was recommended to take measures to facilitate registration of the actual residence of IDPs and encourage them to exercise their right to vote.

The problem of corruption deeply rooted in the Ukrainian government, persists. The authorities-declared measures to combat it, including relevant specialized structures, have proven ineffective in practice. 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, underscored with concern the state of affairs in this area following his mission to Ukraine in May 2018.<sup>4</sup> The extent of corruption was also in focus of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in April 2014<sup>5</sup> and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in February 2017. According to CEDAW experts, corruption, as well as unemployment growth, declining standards of living, and the ongoing crisis create favourable conditions for widespread human trafficking.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> 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>

<sup>5</sup> 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.0%2f6&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fEST%2fC.0%2f6&Lang=en)

<sup>6</sup> 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.0%2f8&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fEST%2fC.0%2f8&Lang=en)

The growing corruption challenge is facilitated by the Kiev regime's efforts to increase the forced mobilization of citizens, caused by high losses in the AFU. First of all, the male population of draft age, that is, from 18 to 60 years old, was prohibited from traveling abroad, with the exception of certain categories of individuals. Then a series of tightening measures followed. Conditions were created under which it became almost impossible for Ukrainian men to get a job or study without the approval of territorial recruitment centres (TRC). On 16 April 2024, Vladimir Zelenskiy signed the bill on further tightening the mobilization rules adopted by the Verkhovnaya Rada on 11 April 2024.<sup>7</sup>

In particular, it defines new categories of citizens who lose their deferment from mobilization, expands coercive measures against violators of military registration (forced delivery to the military enlistment office by police, restricted rights to drive a car, travel abroad, receive consular services abroad, including the issue of a passport, etc.). All conscripts, including those abroad, must update their data in territorial recruitment centres, administrative service centres or electronic personal accounts within 60 days from the moment the law comes into force. The law introduces a 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.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, on 10 April 2024, the Verkhovnaya Rada adopted in the first reading another "mobilization" bill increasing fines by 10 times for the violation of military registration rules and introducing criminal liability for refusing to undergo a medical examination. At the same time, according to Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine Igor Klimentko, over 11.3 thousand criminal cases have already been initiated for evading conscription for military service as of

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<sup>7</sup> [https://24tv.ua/ru/zakon-o-mobilizacii-2024-kakie-izmeneniya-budut-kto-ne-podlezhit\\_n2533812](https://24tv.ua/ru/zakon-o-mobilizacii-2024-kakie-izmeneniya-budut-kto-ne-podlezhit_n2533812)

<sup>8</sup> [https://24tv.ua/ru/zakon-o-mobilizacii-2024-kakie-izmeneniya-budut-kto-ne-podlezhit\\_n2533812](https://24tv.ua/ru/zakon-o-mobilizacii-2024-kakie-izmeneniya-budut-kto-ne-podlezhit_n2533812)

the end of April 2024. According to the land forces command of Ukraine, over 500 thousand people were wanted for evading mobilization as of January 2025.<sup>9</sup>

Both these documents are contrary to international law and national legislation. Even Ukrainian ombudsman Dmitry Lubinets pointed out that the bills contain provisions that contradict the Constitution of Ukraine.<sup>10</sup>

The Ukrainian authorities do not hesitate to use the most illegal and inhumane methods in carrying out mobilization. A scheme is common when citizens who refuse to take a summon or present an ID are detained by the police, but taken to a military registration and enlistment office rather than a police station. Ukrainian citizens seeking to avoid mobilization, try to leave the country or otherwise avoid joining the AFU through various corruption schemes. As practice shows, even after paying a lot of money, Ukrainians often end up in the hands of military commissars, not at liberty. In particular, it is known that border guards hand out summons to draft age men, whom they manage to detain at attempting to cross the border through a popular though dangerous migration route – the Tysa River. Videos with the violent detention of Ukrainian citizens by military and police officers are spawning on social networks. Meanwhile, Ukrainians are obviously growing sharply antagonistic to military commissars (the charactonym "man-catchers" has become widespread in the media). Cases of lynch of military registration and enlistment officers have become more frequent, numerous arson attacks on their vehicles and damage to other property occur. Many videos of protests against forced mobilization are also available on the Internet. In many cases people succeed in freeing their detainees.

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

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ukr.net/ru/news/details/criminal/108932767.html>

<sup>10</sup> [https://24tv.ua/ru/est-normy-protivorechashhie-konstitucii-ombudsmen-otreagiroval-na-zakonoproekt-o-mobilizacii\\_n2461010](https://24tv.ua/ru/est-normy-protivorechashhie-konstitucii-ombudsmen-otreagiroval-na-zakonoproekt-o-mobilizacii_n2461010)

UN Human Rights Committee expressed concern in November 2021 over reports of continued acts of torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement authorities and the limited number of convictions handed down for such offences.<sup>11</sup>

Since the launch 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 formal attempts to pretend it maintains law and order and respects human rights.

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 extrajudicial punishment and abuse of civilians by neo-Nazis are posted on the web.

Nationalist militant groups use civilians as "human shields" with the authorities' tacit permission. This was noted even in the *Amnesty International* materials. The NGO's "Ukraine: Military Endangers Civilians by Deploying Troops in Residential Areas – A New Study",<sup>12</sup> emphasizes that by turning civilian objects into military targets, the Armed Forces of Ukraine violate international humanitarian law. The Ukrainian military tend to deploy bases and weapons systems mainly in residential areas, as well as in important civilian infrastructure facilities – schools and hospitals. Meanwhile, most international human rights structures, including those of the UN and OSCE, deliberately remain silent about these facts. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights is a striking example of hyperactivity on this track; contrary

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<sup>11</sup> Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (published February 2022)

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2F8%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2F8%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru)

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

to its mandate, the ODIHR has set up a "conveyor" release of the so-called reports on IHL violations in the SMO context; over and above making unfounded accusations against the Russian military, such reports, in fact, attempt to whitewash the criminal Kiev regime, whose armed forces commit mass crimes constituting violations of international law in the field of human rights and IHL.

The scale of these crimes appeared such that the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination could not but pay attention to it. In particular, it noted the reports it received about human rights violations and abuses committed by the AFU against prisoners of war – both ethnic Russians and persons with Russian citizenship. CERD in particular cited allegations of extrajudicial killings, torture and other ill-treatment and violations of fair trial and due process safeguards. It also noted the lack of detailed information on the situation of prisoners of war from other national origin. At the same time, the Committee noted the lack of information on investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sanctions for alleged human rights violations and abuses perpetuated by the military forces of Ukraine.<sup>13</sup>

Trafficking in human beings and children in Ukraine, or, more precisely, in human organs for transplantation is worth separate mentioning. After the SMO had started, the media shared information about a 2022 surge in this trade which is a high-yielding business (the previous peak of such illegal activities was observed in 2014-2015). This issue was also pointed out to 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 hostilities area. This information was published, in

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<sup>13</sup> Concluding observation of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination s on the combined twenty-fourth to twenty-sixth periodic reports of Ukraine, May 2025.  
[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F24-26&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F24-26&Lang=en)

particular, by the *Tsargrad* TV channel.<sup>14</sup> Recently, Ukrainian resources have increasingly voiced the opinion that hostilities are being used for "black transplantology" purposes covered up by the Ukrainian state. Experts also note that, as far back as Kiev regime's preparations for an offensive against the Donbas Republics, the Verkhovnaya Rada began to urgently consider bills aimed at simplifying the work of transplantologists in Ukraine to the maximum, and in 2022 law-making became even more active in this area. At the end of 2021, deputies from the presidential *Servant of the People* party initiated and passed a bill through the Verkhovnaya Rada providing for a simplified procedure for a Ukrainian to become a donor. The requirement to notarize the written organ transplantation consent of a donor or, in case of his/her death, his/her next of kin, was cancelled. On 14 April 2022, a new law on transplantation was adopted according to which this activity was exempt from VAT, which actually created prerequisites for the easiest possible export of human organs from Ukraine.<sup>15</sup> In July 2024, a group of "black" transplantologists was uncovered in Ukraine, with high-ranking officials from Zelenskiy's entourage directly involved. The organizers of the criminal scheme are suspected of illegally extracting human organs and cells. According to media reports, at least ten doctors from the Heart Institute, Volyn Regional Clinical Hospital, and Kiev Central City Clinical Hospital were detained in the case. M. Zagriychuk, Deputy Minister of Health of Ukraine in 2019-2020, and then head abdominal organ transplantation and surgery at the Heart Institute, is a defendant in the case. He and his wife are believed people close to Vladimir Zelenskiy. The criminal case was reportedly opened due to inter-clan showdowns in the Ukrainian political establishment. Otherwise, Ukraine would have continued to pretend that "black" transplantology is allegedly "Russian

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<sup>14</sup> See, for example, [https://amp.tsargrad.tv/articles/chjornaja-transplantologija-na-ukraine-izvestna-propiska-doktora-smert\\_604078](https://amp.tsargrad.tv/articles/chjornaja-transplantologija-na-ukraine-izvestna-propiska-doktora-smert_604078), [https://tsargrad.tv/investigations/koncy-v-krematorij-ukraina-platit-za-oruzhie-vnutrennimi-organami-grazhdan\\_523850](https://tsargrad.tv/investigations/koncy-v-krematorij-ukraina-platit-za-oruzhie-vnutrennimi-organami-grazhdan_523850)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221027-zelenskiy-prevratil-ukrainu-v-ray-dlya-chernykh-transplantologov/>

propaganda." What is interesting, the facts that have come to light are clearly just the tip of the criminal iceberg. As is rightly noted, the materials that have been published in recent years about entire cemeteries of civilians with removed organs in Donbas and the practice of "disassembling" wounded Ukrainian servicemen for the sake of organs ordered by Western clients have taken on new colours. Kiev law enforcement officers are supposed in this case to have only touched on an insignificant part of a huge scheme for the forced organ removal and sale abroad. The West, experts say, uncovered only an insignificant part of such crimes in the Balkans also "to calm the public". And they want to do something similar now in Ukraine.<sup>16</sup> Anyway, this case confirms that the Kosovo Liberation Army, whose members are known to have been stained for cooperating with "black transplantologists," has found "worthy" followers in Ukraine.

It is possible that the same illegal trade may also affect the Russian servicemen taken hostage and who are already being held in appalling conditions and subjected to torture and other forms of inhuman and cruel treatment. Such inhuman treatment of Russian servicemen has been confirmed by international monitoring mechanisms.<sup>17</sup>

There is no question of authorities bringing those responsible for many of these offences to justice. Except a few cases noted above, the relevant international organizations, such as the Council of Europe, OSCE, a number of United Nations bodies and others, turn a blind eye to these issues. Moreover, thanks to their efforts, Ukraine is sidetracking international control in this area. The collective West, under whose influence the UN Secretariat and a number of other UN bodies already are, has granted the official Kiev such an exclusive

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20240703-chernye-transplantologi-kiev-nachinaet-priznavat-pravdivost-rossiyskov-propagandy/>

<sup>17</sup> More detailed information on such confirmations is contained in the joint report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on the human rights situation in individual countries.



"right". All this gives the Zelenskiy regime a feeling of complete impunity while seriously damaging the reputation of UN family.

Again, let us remember that 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. This process was legalised already in February 2022, when, referring to Article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Zelenskiy regime declared itself free from obligations under a wide range of articles of this document.

There are also examples of UN HRC special procedures blatantly covering up the Kiev regime. 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 by authorities to prevent it as "impressive".

In addition to that, due to the martial law declared in 2022, 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 and notified international bodies, as well as confirmed or modified the extent of its participation in international human rights treaties accordingly. With this in mind, the official suspension by Ukraine of a number of international treaty provisions remains in place to date, including Covenant Articles 12 (freedom of movement and choice of residence), 17 (interference in private and family life), 19 (freedom of expression), 21 (right to peaceful assembly) and 25 (participation in public affairs and elections) and Convention Articles 8 (right to respect for private and family life), 10 (freedom of expression), 11 (freedom of assembly and association), 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.

It should be noted that the numerous reports of crimes committed by Ukrainian neo-Nazi groups and foreign mercenaries with unprecedented brutality against Russian servicemen are not included in this document. Within the investigation of numerous relevant criminal cases, the Russian competent bodies are making an assessment of these heinous criminal acts by contemporary neo-Nazis in Ukraine, who have fully demonstrated their loyalty to the hateful ideas and tactics of German Nazis and local collaborators from the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)<sup>18</sup> during the Great Patriotic War. Significant efforts are also being made by Russian civil society organizations and all concerned individuals to uncover the truth about the Nazi essence of the Kiev regime and national radicals they are covering up. Crime data to be included in separate analytical materials.

The characteristic features of these criminal acts cannot be overlooked.

Russian servicemen who have fallen into the hands of the AFU militants are subjected to brutal torture and abuse. Neo-Nazis publish videos of their crimes on the Internet showing prisoners being castrated, shot in the knees, and wounded men being shot in the head. They mock the corpses, gouge out their eyes, and record videos for the relatives of the murdered.

In July 2024, The New York Times published an article with the revelations of foreign mercenaries who fought within one of the AFU units, The Chosen Company. They described the killing of unarmed wounded Russian servicemen. According to them, they witnessed such executions many times. The media outlet also has correspondence from the Company's soldiers discussing the killings.<sup>19</sup> No charges have been brought against them in Ukraine or in the United States.

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<sup>18</sup> Both organizations are recognised as extremist and banned in Russia

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/06/world/europe/ukraine-russia-killings-us.html>

At the same time, the media reported that the Czech Republic was trying a mercenary who had fought in Bucha and Irpen in the Kiev region as a member of the Carpathian Sich, an AFU battalion. He was charged with illegal service in the Ukrainian army and looting. Under interrogation, he said that he appropriated valuables of dead soldiers and civilians because it was something usual, a standard behaviour, i.e. everyone did it. He also reported on his unit's practice of arbitrary executions, including of prisoners of war, stating: "We were the police, we were the court, and we were also the firing squad, if you want to go there."<sup>20</sup>

There is enough evidence of the use of torture against Russian soldiers in Ukrainian captivity.

The OHCHR report on the human rights situation in Ukraine of 26 March 2024 noted that OHCHR interviewed 44 Russian prisoners of war "who provided credible accounts of torture or ill-treatment in transit places after their immediate evacuation from the battlefield": they were "held in unidentified basements of private buildings", "beaten at checkpoints on the way from transit places of internment", "during interrogations, POWs were punched and beaten with wooden mallets and sticks; subjected to electric shocks and mock executions." OHCHR also "documented arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, and the use of torture and ill treatment, including sexual violence, by Ukrainian authorities during the detention of conflict-related civilian detainees and Russian POWs, as well as the summary execution of at least 25 Russian servicemen hors de combat (all in 2022 and early 2023)."

The OHCHR Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine of 1 October 2024 documented that of 205 Russian POWs interviewed by the UN, more than half were subjected to torture or other forms of ill-treatment, "indicating a persistent pattern". According to the Office, people were subjected to severe beatings, including targeting knees and joints. Furthermore, captives

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<sup>20</sup> <https://ria.ru/amp/20240810/naemnik-1965202345.html>

were threatened with death or physical violence, shot close to the head, and subjected to electric shocks. This involved the use of "a variety of objects, including rubber batons, aluminium or wooden bats/mallets, tactical gloves, tasers, military phones or other electric devices, such as car batteries."<sup>21</sup>

A similar OHCHR report of 31 December 2024 states that between 1 September and 30 November 2024, OHCHR "interviewed 25 Russian POWs in Ukrainian internment facilities, including in the newly opened camp "Zakhid-4" in Lvov city. All but one reported experiencing torture or ill-treatment in 2024 at one or several stages of captivity. Fourteen POWs were subjected to sexual violence." POWs were subjected to "severe beatings with plastic tubes, batons, and a whip, dousing with cold water, and dog attacks." They "had also been strapped to a chair and received electric shocks, including with clamps attached to genitalia." OHCHR documented the death of one Russian POW and is investigating two other credible allegations of deaths of detained Russian servicemen as a result of torture by the Ukrainian side in May and June 2024.<sup>22</sup>

The UN Committee against Torture<sup>23</sup> had to pay attention to this problem when considering the Ukrainian report in May 2025 after a long break. Thus, the Committee expressed concern at allegations it received of torture, including sexual violence, ill-treatment, threats, humiliation and illegal deprivation of life and death in custody of Russian prisoners of war, as it noted, "allegedly committed by the Ukrainian armed forces and military police mainly in unofficial or transit places in several regions prior to their internment, although it notes the State party's denial of the existence of such unofficial places". CAT pointed to the lack of information on the procedural safeguards provided to

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/40th-periodic-report-human-rights-situation-ukraine-treatment-prisoners>

<sup>22</sup> <https://ukraine.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/PR41%20Ukraine%202024-12-31.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the seventh periodic report of Ukraine. May 2025

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F7&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F7&Lang=en)

captured prisoners of war. It also noted the inadequate recording of injuries of Russian soldiers sustained by torture or ill-treatment. In this regard, the Committee took note of the 20 investigations launched by the general prosecutor's office of Ukraine into war crimes committed by the AFU and indicated that it was expecting further information on their outcome.

It should be noted that CAT also pointed to a wide range of offenses related to torture and ill-treatment. Thus, the Committee's experts were concerned about the information on torture, ill-treatment and arbitrary detentions allegedly inflicted on the "conflict-related prisoners" charged with collaboration and other national security-related offenses by Ukrainian law enforcers. It is indicative that CAT singled out Ukrainian Security Service officers from all representatives of law enforcement agencies who used torture against detainees, including to obtain confessions. According to CAT, torture was also used in unofficial prisons in several regions, although the experts noted the Ukraine's negation of the existence of such unofficial places of detention. The Committee was also concerned about the alleged lack of adequate and prompt investigations into cases of torture, ill-treatment, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention and incommunicado detention by the AFU in the "conflict zones in the east since 2014". In this context, special mention was made of crimes committed by members of Tornado, Aidar<sup>24</sup> and Azov<sup>25</sup> national battalions. The Committee called on Kiev to provide it with additional information on the investigation of their crimes. The experts also noted that a number of cases were still pending on appeal and that only a handful of convictions had been delivered by May 2025. CAT also pointed to abuses committed by enlistment officers towards civilians and conscripts.

CAT also expressed concern about undue external influence and interference over the work of the judiciary of Ukraine through criminal charges

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<sup>24</sup> Designated as terrorist organization.

<sup>25</sup> Designated as terrorist organization.

against judges, which may have an impact on the work of judicial institutions, including the adjudication of cases of torture and ill-treatment. In this regard, the Committee called on Kiev to intensify its efforts to ensure the full independence, impartiality and effectiveness of the judiciary, in line with international standards, and guarantee that courts in the country were free to operate without undue pressure or interference in order to restore trust in the justice system.

The Committee's experts did not overlook the lack of progress in the investigation in Ukraine of numerous incidents of the use of force in an excessive way, accompanied by ill-treatment on the part of the Ukrainian law enforcement authorities, including the police and security services officers, during apprehension and police custody. In particular, they noted with concern that such cases continued to be reported in Ukraine. The Committee also noted that a high number of criminal cases relating to the events and excessive use of force during the Maidan protests in Kiev from December 2013 to February 2014, and in Odessa and Mariupol in May 2014, were still pending at the pre-trial investigation stage or under judicial consideration. In this regard, it noted reports that several defendants had fled the territory of Ukraine to avoid prosecution.

In Russia, crimes against civilians in the Donbass and Ukraine committed by the Kiev military and political leadership, nationalists and Ukrainian security forces since 2014 are recorded and investigated by the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation. As of 17 March 2025, some 6,500 criminal cases have already been initiated. Such crimes include genocide, terrorism, abuse of civilians, use of prohibited means and methods in 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 over 1.2 thousand persons, including representatives of the AFU high command, and commanders of military units who gave criminal orders to shell civilians and

civilian infrastructure. Cases against 550 representatives of Ukrainian armed formations have been sent to court, about 500 defendants have already been sentenced to long prison terms, 61 of them to life imprisonment.

Criminal prosecution is being carried out against more than 845 foreign nationals from 55 countries who have taken part in hostilities on the side of the AFU; 86 criminal cases have already been investigated and 51 sentences have been handed down.<sup>26</sup> 589 mercenaries have been put on the international wanted list.

Other criminal cases are still pending. The Investigative Committee of Russia investigates and provides a legal assessment of the actions of all persons involved in the crimes committed.

Moreover, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is constantly working to collect, systematize and make public information on the crimes committed by the Kiev regime.

As we can see, it is precisely the servile willingness of the current Ukrainian leadership to destroy the history and memory of its country's true, not fictitious, past to the detriment of the interests of its people, denying everything connected with Russia, that is the reason why its Western handlers are turning a blind eye to the neo-Nazi nature of the Kiev regime. History is replete with examples of the West's nurturing of overtly racist and Nazi regimes. Their fate is well-known. It is hard to escape 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.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://sledcom.ru/press/events/item/1945992/>

The numerous human rights violations committed by the Kiev regime include its efforts to glorify Nazism, which are manifested in many different ways and forms and constitute the basis of contemporary Ukrainian policy.



## **Glorification of Nazism**

In Ukraine, a policy of falsifying history and whitewashing Nazi criminals and fascist henchmen is being pursued at the state level. For these purposes, the Kiev regime has established a legal and regulatory framework.

In April 2015, the Verkhovna Rada adopted a "decommunization package" of legal acts. In particular, the package includes the law "On the Condemnation of Communist and National-Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols", "On Access to the Archives of Repressive Bodies of the 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 Honouring of Fighters for Ukraine's Independence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century".

These documents ban Soviet symbols, condemn the communist regime and disclose the archives of the Soviet special services, as well as recognize fighters of Ukrainian military nationalist groups of World War II – the OUN and the UPA<sup>27</sup> – and their leaders – OUN leader Stepan Bandera and UPA commander-in-chief Roman-Taras Shukhevych, who served in the Third Reich units (Nachtigall Battalion, 201<sup>st</sup> Ukrainian Schutzmannschaft Battalion) – as fighters for independence.

Furthermore, these laws criminalize the negative assessment of the activities of these structures, as well as the production, distribution and public use of symbols of the "communist totalitarian regime".

The "decommunisation" laws include such elements as granting benefits to former members of nationalist armed groups and banning the use of Soviet symbols and insignia of the Red Army. In May 2017, the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offences was amended to prohibit the public use, wearing or display of St. George (Guards) Ribbon or pictures of it.

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<sup>27</sup> Both organizations are designated as extremist in the Russian Federation.

On 30 January 2018, in line with the provisions of the law "On the Legal Status and Honouring of the Memory of the Fighters for Ukraine's Independence in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century", 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 several other cities.<sup>28</sup>

In December 2018, the country adopted a law amending the law "On the Status of the War Veterans, Guarantees of Their Social Protection" (No. 2640-VIII), which essentially equated collaborators as "participants in the struggle for Ukraine's independence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century" and veterans who fought on the side of the anti-Hitler coalition.<sup>29</sup>

On 20 June 2023, Zelenskiy signed a law on the payment of pensions to "political prisoners of Soviet times", 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 stating that from this year 9 May shall be celebrated in Ukraine as Europe Day instead of the Day of Victory over Nazism in World War II, which revealed the true attitude of the Kiev regime to the significance of the Day of Victory over Nazism.

Back in 2018, the Verkhovna Rada approved the OUN nationalists' slogan "Glory to Ukraine! – Glory to Heroes!" copying the well-known Nazi salute.

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<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> <https://strana.today/news/175167-bojtsy-upa-oun-i-unra-poluchili-v-ukraine-status-uchastnikov-boevykh-dejstvij.html> (earlier <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 aimed at "preserving national memory" is the inclusion of commemorative dates and anniversaries of Ukrainian Nazi collaborators in the resolutions adopted by the Verkhovnaya Rada on an annual basis. The persons whose anniversaries are celebrated in Ukraine include Andrey Melnik, Yaroslav Stetsko, Ulas Samchuk, Alexander Vyshnivskiy, Vasily Galas, Vladimir Kubyovych, Yaroslav Starukh, Nikolai Kapustyanskiy, Vladimir Shchigelskiy, Dmitry Klyachkovskiy, Stepan Lenkavskiy and many other criminals.

Detailed lists of such resolutions and Ukrainian nationalist figures named in them can be found in the 2024 Joint Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus on the Human Rights Situation in Certain Countries, as well as in the Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on the Situation with the Glorification of Nazism and the Spread of Neo-Nazism and Other Practices that Contribute to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

As a follow-up to such resolutions of the Verkhovnaya Rada, the authorities of Ukrainian regions adopt their own regulatory acts.

In this regard, it should be noted that during the years of "independence" many monuments, memorial plaques and other sites glorifying these and many other Nazi collaborators have been erected on the territory of Ukraine. Many streets have been named after Ukrainian collaborators, in particular as part of the intensified process of changing the names of topographical objects associated with Russia.<sup>30</sup> A detailed list of sites commemorating Ukrainian collaborators, including those who participated in the mass murder of Jews, Russians, Roma and other civilians, women, children and the elderly, is available on The Forward website, a project dedicated to the study of

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<sup>30</sup> More details on topographic changes in Ukraine are provided below.

monuments honouring Nazi collaborators in several countries around the world.<sup>31</sup>

Other draft laws aimed at glorifying Nazism have also been submitted to the Ukrainian parliament. Thus, on 21 September 2020, representatives of the Voice and the Servant of the People parliamentary factions, and Oksana Savchuk, a member of the Svoboda party, proposed an initiative to submit a draft resolution to the Verkhovna Rada to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the "Act of Restoration of the Ukrainian State" in Lvov on 30 June 1941, right after the start of the Nazi occupation of Western Ukraine in particular, it stated that "the restored Ukrainian State will closely cooperate with National Socialist Great Germany, which under the leadership of its Leader Adolf Hitler is building a new order in Europe and in the world".<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> A list of such "monuments" can be found at: <https://forward.com/news/462916/nazi-collaborator-monuments-in-ukraine/>

<sup>32</sup> 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**

Ukrainian officials have repeatedly and explicitly expressed support for Nazi figures and proclaimed Nazi ideas aimed primarily at the destruction of Russians. Earlier, Ukrainian officials published Nazi and Bandera symbols, images and flags.<sup>33</sup>

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 8 March 2022, former acting president, chairman of the Verkhovnaya Rada and secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine (NSDC) Alexander Turchinov called in social networks to "kill Russians wherever possible, not only in Ukraine, but also outside of it – on the territory of Russia".<sup>34</sup>

On 1 July 2022, Ukraine's ambassador to Germany Andrey Melnik (currently permanent representative of Ukraine to the UN) stated that Stepan 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.

On 22 August 2022, Ukrainian Ambassador to Kazakhstan Pyotr Vrublevsky<sup>35</sup> (who was recalled to Kiev), stated the following to the media: "We are trying to kill as many of them (Russians) as possible. The more Russians we kill now, the less our children will have to kill. That's it".

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<sup>33</sup> Examples of such actions are given in the previous Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus on the Human Rights Situation in Certain Countries, as well as in the Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on the Situation with the Glorification of Nazism and the Spread of Neo-Nazism and Other Practices that Contribute to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

<sup>34</sup> [https://vk.com/video-202555139\\_456240594](https://vk.com/video-202555139_456240594)

<sup>35</sup> Listed as a terrorist and extremist in the Russian Federation.

Boris Filatov, mayor of Dnepropetrovsk ("Dnepr" in the Kiev version) has made similar remarks: "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".

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".<sup>36</sup>

On 1 January 2023, the Verkhovna Rada, 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.<sup>37</sup>

On 18 May 2023, Mikhail Podolyak, advisor to the head of the Office of the President, wrote the following 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".<sup>38</sup>

On 15 June 2023, he also stated on the air of an all-Ukrainian telethon that "there is one plan: to move forward as tough as possible with maximum killing of Russians".

Vladimir Zelenskiy regularly makes derogatory and hateful statements about Russian citizens and the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin.

On 5 January 2025, Vladimir Zelenskiy said in an interview with American blogger Lex Friedman the following: "I have no respect for the leader or director of today's Russia or this nation...I truly despise them".<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/igor-klimenko-zaraz-ukrayini-bilshe-temryavi-1670509562.html>

<sup>37</sup> <https://strana.today/news/420555-v-polshe-osudili-publikatsiju-rady-ko-dnju-rozhdenija-bandery.html>

<sup>38</sup> [https://twitter.com/Podolyak\\_M/status/1659095813916688386](https://twitter.com/Podolyak_M/status/1659095813916688386)

<sup>39</sup> <https://youtube.be/u321m25rKXc?si=lnQRjB0l75HvbnXG>

On 27 March 2025, during a press conference broadcast by an all-Ukrainian telethon, Vladimir Zelenskiy called Russians "dinosaurs" and said that they just wanted to eat Ukrainians.<sup>40</sup>

It should be noted that these steps by Ukrainian representatives have drawn the attention of the international community. Back in 2016, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed its concern about a rise in racist hate speech and discriminatory statements in the public discourse in Ukraine, including by public and political figures, in the media, in particular on the Internet and during rallies, directed mainly against minorities.<sup>41</sup> After that, international organizations tended to overlook such manifestations in Ukraine.

The spread of neo-Nazism and the activities of radical groups in Ukraine have been highlighted by both NGOs and foreign politicians. Thus, in November 2020, the Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH), an NGO, presented its report, in which Ukraine was named as one of the centres for the spread of neo-Nazi ideology.<sup>42</sup>

Following their visit to Kiev in May 2021, a group of French senators stated that the activity of neo-Nazi forces in Ukraine was of concern. As the senators explained, in the midst of a fair within the Kiev Day celebrations in the centre of the capital, they unexpectedly came across a pavilion where members of the neo-Nazi Azov battalion<sup>43</sup> 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 the "performance," Ukrainian radicals offered young people to shoot at a paper

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<sup>40</sup> <https://ria.ru/2050327/zelenskiy-2007803441.html>

<sup>41</sup> 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=ru](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru)

<sup>42</sup> 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](https://252f2edd-1c8b-49f5-9bb2-cb57bb47e4ba.filesusr.com/ugd/f4d9b9_55b47be4de914daf866cfa1810cc56c5.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> Designated as terrorist organization.

Kremlin. Nearby, there were stalls offering IDs of Nazi soldiers from World War II, swastikas and other paraphernalia. Senator Nathalie Goulet, who personally witnessed all this, sent a parliamentary inquiry to the French Foreign Ministry. After that, the Security Service of Ukraine launched an investigation against this group of French senators.<sup>44</sup> 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".<sup>45</sup> If this is true, and the "average level" of neo-Nazi popularity in Europe has reached the Ukrainian level, then Europe itself, including France and its foreign policy agency, needs to think seriously about its bleak future.

In other words, Ukraine enjoying the silent encouragement by "the collective West," ignores the concerns of the international community and continues to actively promote the neo-Nazi ideology.

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

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



## **Holding events honouring Nazis and their collaborators**

There are frequent cases in Ukraine when officials at different levels organize events and public campaigns glorifying Hitler's Germany, German Nazis and their accomplices.

One well known example took place in June 2020, when Vladimir Mikolayenko, mayor of then Ukrainian Kherson,<sup>46</sup> congratulated 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.<sup>47</sup>

In 2022 it became clear 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 Azov<sup>48</sup>, Aidar<sup>49</sup>, and other nationalist units, captured by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, wore swastikas, chevrons and symbols of the Nazi battalions of the

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<sup>46</sup> 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.

<sup>47</sup> <https://easaily.com/ru/news/2020/06/26/mer-hersona-pozdravil-gorozhan-s-banderovskim-aktom-i-prisyagoy-gitleru>

<sup>48</sup> Designated as terrorist organization.

<sup>49</sup> Designated as terrorist organization.

Waffen-SS, had relevant tattoos and openly read and propagated Adolf Hitler's book "Mein Kampf".<sup>50</sup>

Recently, Nazi symbols on Ukrainian servicemen have increasingly come to the attention of the Western media. In May 2024, German authorities expelled seven Ukrainian military officers who were training under the Bundeswehr program because of their use of right-wing extremist symbols.<sup>51</sup>

In August 2024, a journalist of Rai News 24, an Italian state broadcaster, Ilario Piagnerelli, released a report about the Ukrainian army. The report included an interview with a Ukrainian wearing a cap with the symbols of the Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler SS division. The journalist later apologized: "I deeply regret that I gave the floor, even if only for a few seconds, to a Ukrainian soldier who was wearing a patch with Nazi symbols...", he said. It is quite reasonable to believe that such facts either indicate the incompetence of the journalist or that there are so many Nazis in the ranks of the AFU that even the pro-Ukrainian propaganda media fulfilling their assignment find it difficult to make a report without showing Nazi symbols.<sup>52</sup> Former US Army Lieutenant Colonel Earl Rasmussen commenting on the mentioned interview with the AFU fighter, said that allegations of Nazism against Ukraine were not groundless, as Nazi symbols were found everywhere despite bans in European countries.<sup>53</sup> He said it was also due to the support the CIA gave to Nazi formations and their followers to help them leave war zones after World War II. Earlier, the journalist Ilario Piagnerelli filmed stories with relevant content about an obviously staged provocation in Bucha, for which the West blames Russia, and about a dead neo-Nazi from the Right Sector.

On 15 August 2024, a video emerged on social networks showing two AFU fighters wearing helmets with symbols of Hitler's SS, who mocked a lost

<sup>50</sup> <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/997883-lavrov-nacifikaciya-ukraina>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/2024/05/16/1037533-semerih-ukrainskih-voennih-vislali>

<sup>52</sup> <https://euromore.eu/italyanczam-pokazali-naciztov-na-ukraine-potom-izvinilis/>

<sup>53</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/reabilitiruyushhij-nacizm-italyanskij-zhurnalist-popytalsya-opravdatsya-za-intervyu-s-boevikom-nacistom-vsu-v-kurskoj-oblasti.html>

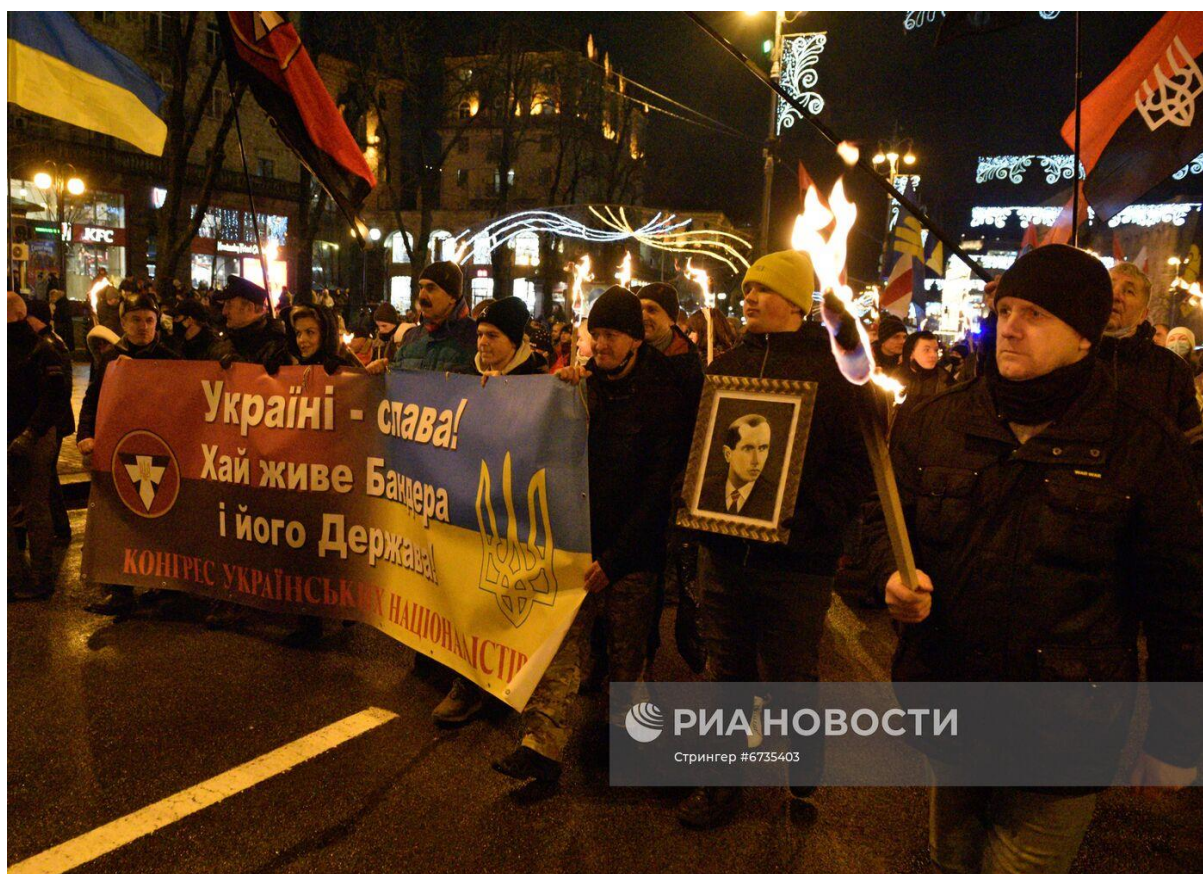
elderly resident of the Kursk region, imitating a German accent. In the video, the following words can be heard: "Du bist russische schweine."<sup>54</sup>

Ukrainian government representatives have also been seen using Nazi insignia. For instance, Zelenskiy's Telegram post congratulating the country's citizens on Victory Day, published on 9 May 2022, contained a picture of a Ukrainian military officer with the emblem of the Nazi SS division "Dead Head" on his chest as an illustration. After the scandal broke, the picture was promptly removed from the post. At the same time, the Ukrainian Defence Ministry, which used a similar photo of a serviceman with symbols of the Nazi SS division "Dead Head", did not remove it.

Every year on 1 January in Kiev and other Ukrainian cities torch processions are held 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. As of 2019, this date is "celebrated" at the state level.

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<sup>54</sup> <https://aif.ru/politics/russia/-russish-shvayn-ot-vsu-ukronacisty-izdevayutsya-nad-dedushkoy-pod-kurskom>



*Nationalists march in the centre of Kiev in honour of Stepan Bandera. 1 January 2022*

*Photo by RIA News*

*Source: [https://riamediabank.ru/media/6735403.html?context=list&list\\_sid=list\\_253292388](https://riamediabank.ru/media/6735403.html?context=list&list_sid=list_253292388)*

On 1 January 2023, ceremonies commemorating the 114<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>55</sup>

On 1 January 2024, a march honouring Bandera's birthday took place in Odessa, Ukraine.<sup>56</sup> On 1 January 2025, a torch procession honouring Stepan Bandera took place in Lvov.<sup>57</sup>

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

<sup>56</sup> <https://amp.ctvana.news/news/454325-video-marsha-v-chest-stepana-bandery-v-odesse-1-janvarja-2024-hoda.html>

<sup>57</sup> <https://glavcom.ua/country/incidents/u-lvovi-vidbulas-smoloskipna-khoda-do-dnja-narodzhennja-bandery-video-1038631.html>

## Activities of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory

The Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UINM) plays a prominent role in the propagation of neo-Nazism. Under its previous director, Vladimir Viatrovych, known for his Russophobic and nationalist views, the UINM worked in a number of areas, including promoting legislative initiatives to glorify the fascist henchmen of the OUN and UPA and to honour the memory of members of the Ukrainian "liberation movement", publishing "patriotic" literature and methodological recommendations for secondary and higher educational institutions, holding various events and festivals involving UPA veterans, participants in the so-called anti-terrorist operation in south-eastern Ukraine and Ukrainian "pro-banderite" historians, including the Bandershtat festival dedicated to the Nazi collaborators. Such figures of Ukrainian nationalism as Symon Petlyura, Evgeny Konovalets, Stepan Bandera, Roman Shukhevich, Yaroslav Stetsko and Andrey Melnik and others continue to be persistently promoted in the society as model citizens.

One of the vivid illustrations of this is the propaganda project "UPA: Response of the Unconquered People" announced by the Institute in early 2017, which was timed to coincide with the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of this criminal formation. 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 UINM leadership characterized it as an anti-Nazi entity. The UINM also released a Board game that glorified members of the Bandera bandit groups for propaganda purposes<sup>58</sup>. In July 2019, The Ministry of Education of Ukraine recommended this game for use in schools<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> <https://ukrinform.ru/rubric-culture/2548034-v-ukraine-razrabotali-nastolnuu-igru-o-borbe-upa.html>

<sup>59</sup> <https://golospravdy.eu/eduard-dolinskij-ministerstvo-obrazovaniya-rekomendovalo-lozh-falsifikacii/>, <https://strana.ua/opinions/212015-sredi-detej-prodvihajut-nastolnuju-ihru-s-heroicheskimi-banderoy-i-shukhevichem.html>

The Institute reconstructs "Rebel Awards", which are awarded to "participants of the "Ukrainian Liberation Movement", as well as to relatives of deceased "liberators". The UINM 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.

For the Victory Day, UINM prepared methodical books with recommendations on how to cover the holiday, which contained distorted historical facts. Among other things, they hold the Soviet Union equally responsible with Nazi Germany for unleashing the World War II<sup>60</sup>, in direct contradiction to the verdicts of the Nuremberg Tribunal.

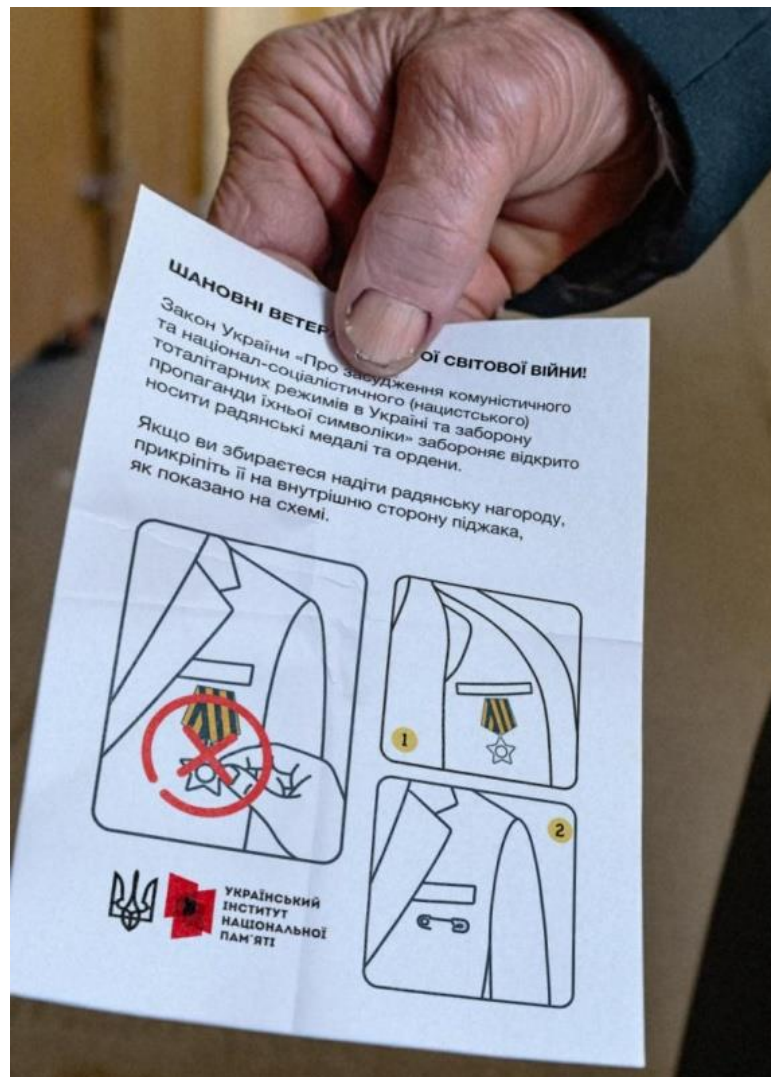
In 2025, guidelines prepared by the UINM for 9 May were published online. In these guidelines veterans of the Great Patriotic War were warned about the responsibility for wearing Soviet orders and medals and recommended to hide their blood-earned decorations on the inside of the jacket, so as not to embarrass the "sensitive" descendants of the Nazi followers who were defeated in that war<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup> <https://uinp.gov.ua/informaciyni-materialy/vchytelyam/metodychni-rekomendaciyi/informaciyni-materialy-do-dnya-pamyati-ta-prymyrennya-8-travnya-20231>

<sup>61</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/na-ukraine-v-ramkah-dekommunizacii-veteranam-sovetuyut-nadevat-sovetskie-nagrady-na-vnutrennyuyu-chast-pidzhaka-chtoby-ih-ne-bylo-vidno.html>





Source: <https://antifashist.com/item/na-ukraine-v-ramkah-dekommunizacii-veteranam-sovetuyut-nadevat-sovetskie-nagrody-na-vnutrennyuyu-chast-pidzhaka-chtoby-ih-ne-bylo-vidno.html>

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 UINM's prohibition to propagate back.

In 2017, N. Myasnikova, a Kiev resident, disputed in court the concept advocated by then-UINM Director V. Viatrovykh that the Waffen-SS Galicia Division and its emblems were not Nazi because the division belonged to SS troops rather than common SS divisions and was utilized largely as a combat unit. The claimant filed an appeal with the court asking it to recognize the UINM'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 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 14<sup>th</sup> Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (1<sup>st</sup> Galician) insignia in propaganda, taking into account any name changes that have occurred since. The claimant also requested the court to order the UNIP to retract its statements concerning the symbols of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division<sup>62</sup>.

On 27 May 2020, the Kiev District Administrative Court concluded that the UINM 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 plaintiff'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 from unidentified individuals on the day before the court's decision was issued.<sup>63</sup>

On 23 September 2020, in response to an application brought by the UINM, 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<sup>64</sup>. This

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<sup>62</sup> <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> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/291280-sud-priznal-nezakonnym-reshenie-o-priznanii-simvoliki-ss-halichina-natsistskoj.html>)

<sup>63</sup> <https://strana.today/news/291414-kak-natsionalisty-zastavili-sud-otmenit-zapret-na-simvoliku-ss-halichiny.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/291414-kak-natsionalisty-zastavili-sud-otmenit-zapret-na-simvoliku-ss-halichiny.html>)

<sup>64</sup> <https://rg.ru/2022/12/06/verhovnyj-sud-ukrainy-ne-priznal-nacistskoj-simvoliku-divizii-ss-galichina.html>



decision contradicts the verdict of the Nuremberg Tribunal, which recognized the SS troops, which included Waffen-SS Galicia Division, as a criminal 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 Sech Streltsy, the Ukrainian and Western Ukrainian People's Republics, participants in the anti-Bolshevik uprisings, the Karpatskaya Sech 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 book 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 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup>.

For more details on the inculcation of Nazi ideology among the younger generations of Ukrainians, as well as on the involvement of right-wing radical and ultra-nationalist groups in "patriotic work" with young people and the state support provided to them, see the previous report of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus on the human rights situation in individual countries, as well as the report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on the situation with the glorification of Nazism, the spread of neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to the elimination of Nazism, the spread of neo-Nazism, and the spread of neo-Nazism.

We only would like to note that in 2024, budget funding of such activities has reached 9 million grivnas. Over 1.1m grivnas was received by the Plast

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<sup>65</sup> <https://yavoriv-info.com.ua/novini/novini-lvivshhini/zi-shkilnogo-pidruchnika-priberut-naklep-na-ukrainskix-nacionalistiv>

<sup>66</sup> <https://dif.org.ua/article/den-peremogi-i-yogo-mistse-v-istorichniy-pamyati-ukraintsiv>

scout organization, which openly declares the continuity of the structure of the Bandera organization; 916,000 grivnas – by the Young People's Rukh. The Right Youth organization was allocated 788 thousand grivnas 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 grivnas for the events glorifying the UPA.

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 misbehavior, and exhausting physical training exercises made up the mentoring aspect of the Azov Battalion members. 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. The Western press has published articles on this topic<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>67</sup> <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 Kiev regime also continues 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<sup>68</sup>. As of December 2022, 50 monuments were set up in different regions of the country to Stepan Bandera alone, and more than 500 streets, lanes and avenues throughout Ukraine were named in honour of this criminal.

The biggest ultranationalist marches take place on the day the UPA was founded and on Stepan Bandera's birthday. Radicals who attend such gatherings engage in a variety of provocative acts and resort to use hostile language, usually directed against Russians.

The Ukrainian authorities honour former Nazis. In addition, the remains of UPA members and other liquidated punishers are regularly reburied in the country.

The following cases are most illustrative.

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 uniform<sup>69</sup>. 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<sup>70</sup>.

On 22 March 2020, Lvov authorities officially marked the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division Unterscharführer Roman

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<sup>68</sup> <https://forward.com/news/462916/nazi-collaborator-monuments-in-ukraine/?amp=1>

<sup>69</sup> <https://galychyna.if.ua/2020/01/28/martsinkiv-poobitsyav-nazvati-vulitsyu-imenem-mihayla-mulika/>

<sup>70</sup> <https://strana.today/news/246875-foto-kak-v-ivano-frankovske-proshchalas-s-umershim-natsistom-iz-divizii-ss.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/246875-foto-kak-v-ivano-frankovske-proshchalas-s-umershim-natsistom-iz-divizii-ss.html>)

Matsuk and presented him with a portrait of himself in his youth in a Nazi uniform as a gift<sup>71</sup>.

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. 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<sup>72</sup>.

On 23 May 2020, to mark the Heroes Day<sup>73</sup>, 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.<sup>74</sup>

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 100<sup>th</sup> 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 78<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UPA founding.<sup>75</sup>

On 19 August 2020, a memorial plaque in honour of Yuri Lipa was installed on the building of the district library in the village of Yavorov, Lvov region.<sup>76</sup>

On 30 August 2020, a monument to Kuzma Brichka – Nazi collaborator, member of the Polesian Sech and the UPA, who had participated in mass

<sup>71</sup> The online environment as a tool for violations of rights and freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

<sup>72</sup> <https://strana.today/news/262422-v-kalushe-nahradili-veterana-divizii-ss-poluchaja-nahradu-tot-zihanul.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/262422-v-kalushe-nahradili-veterana-divizii-ss-poluchaja-nahradu-tot-zihanul.html>)

<sup>73</sup> 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.

<sup>74</sup> Manifestations of Nazism, neo-Nazism, and xenophobia in Ukraine. Information and Analytical Review. 2020

<sup>75</sup> <https://city-adm.lviv.ua/news/society/public-sector/279791-mer-lvova-pryvitav-zviazkovu-romana-shukhevycha-zi-100-littiam>

<sup>76</sup> <https://golossokal.com.ua/ru/novyny-kultury/y-misti-iavorovi-vidbylos-vidkrittia-memorialnoi-tablici-na-fasadi-raionnoi-centralnoi-biblioteki-imeni-uriia-lipi.html>, <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2020/08/22/v-lvovskoy-oblasti-chestvuyut-vracha-evtanaziologa-iz-oun-upa>

murders of civilians of Polish and Jewish origin – was solemnly unveiled in Karpilovka village of the Chernigov oblast.<sup>77</sup>

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.<sup>78</sup>

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.<sup>79</sup>

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 Konovalts (OUN leader)<sup>80</sup>. Besides, the deputies of Ivano-Frankovsk city council came up with an initiative to bestow the title of Hero of Ukraine to former Galicia fighter Mikhail Mulik.

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<sup>77</sup> The online environment as a tool for violations of rights and freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

<sup>78</sup> The online environment as a tool for violations of rights and freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

<sup>79</sup> <https://zn.ua/UKRAINE/v-poltave-prokhorit-vseukrainskij-konkurs-na-luchshij-pamjatnik-simonu-petljure.html>

<sup>80</sup> <https://m.day.kyiv.ua/ru/news/160221-lvovskiy-oblsovet-trebuuet-vernut-bandere-zvanie-geroya-ukrainy-i-obyavil-2021-y-godom>

On 5 March 2021, the deputies of the Ternopol city council supported the initiative of city mayor Sergey Nadal to name the city's stadium after Roman Shukhevich, where the Ukrainian Soccer Cup Final was to be held.<sup>81</sup>

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. This initiative came from Petr Poroshenko's European Solidarity party.<sup>82</sup>

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.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> <https://strana.today/news/321233-ternopolskij-stadion-poluchil-imja-romana-shukhevicha.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/321233-ternopolskij-stadion-poluchil-imja-romana-shukhevicha.html>)

<sup>82</sup> <https://strana.today/news/323062-arena-lvov-imeni-bandery-chto-hovorjat-o-pereimenovanii-stadiona-v-chest-vozhdja-oun.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/323062-arena-lvov-imeni-bandery-chto-hovorjat-o-pereimenovanii-stadiona-v-chest-vozhdja-oun.html>)

<sup>83</sup> [https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2021/04/28\\_a\\_13576064.shtml](https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2021/04/28_a_13576064.shtml)





*Ukrainian radicals' march in honour of SS Galicia Division, Kiev, 28 April 2021.*

*Photo: a shot from video footage*

*Source: <https://www.mk.ru/politics/2021/04/28/v-kieve-proshel-marsh-vyshivanok-v-chest-divizii-ss-galichina.html>*

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 UINM, and others<sup>84</sup>.

On 18 August 2021, in Litin village (the Vinnitsa oblast), solemn events in commemoration of the 110<sup>th</sup> birthday of former OUN and UPA member Yemelyan Grabets were held. He had served as Ukrainian auxiliary police

<sup>84</sup> [https://aif.ru/politics/world/budni\\_ukrainy\\_veterana\\_ss\\_provodil\\_v\\_posledniy\\_put\\_prezidentskiy\\_polk](https://aif.ru/politics/world/budni_ukrainy_veterana_ss_provodil_v_posledniy_put_prezidentskiy_polk)

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.<sup>85</sup>

Late August 2020, a monument to Kuzma Brichka – Nazi collaborator, member of the Polesian Sech<sup>86</sup> and the UPA, who had participated in mass murders of Jewish civilians, Soviet soldiers and partisans<sup>87</sup> – was solemnly unveiled in Karpilovka village in the Chernigov oblast.

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.<sup>88</sup> 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. The deputies of the Lvov Regional Council appealed to the President of Ukraine to grant the former Nazi an honorary title on 22 October 2021.<sup>89</sup>

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 "Ukrainian Legion", was unveiled in the village of Ivanovtsy, Ivano-Frankovsk oblast.

In December 2022, in the State Historical and Cultural Reserve Naguevichi in the Lvov oblast, a nativity scene was installed, with a statue of

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<sup>85</sup> <https://vesti.ua/strana/v-vinnitse-otprazdnovali-110-letie-komandira-ukrainskogo-gestapo>

<sup>86</sup> Polesian Sech 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.

<sup>87</sup> <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/12257305>

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/6992022-44385>

<sup>89</sup> The online environment as a tool for violations of rights and freedoms in Ukraine. The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection. 2022.

Stepan Bandera, the leader of the OUN, placed among the traditional biblical characters.<sup>90</sup>

On 10 December 2022, Roman Shukhevich's son, Yuriy Shukhevich, who had headed the right-wing radical party UNA-UNSO<sup>91</sup> in 1990-1994, was buried with military honours in Lvov.

On 21 December 2022, in honour of the 80<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>92</sup>

On 14 February 2023, President Zelenskiy issued a decree naming the 10<sup>th</sup> Separate Mountain Assault Brigade of the AFU "Edelweiss". The same name was given to the 1st Mountain Infantry Division of Nazi Germany<sup>93</sup>.

On 29-30 March 2023, state-level celebrations were held to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ideologist of Ukrainian nationalism Nilokay Mykhnovsky, who formulated the slogan "Ukraine is for Ukrainians!" and called for killing Poles, Russians and Jews whom he saw as enemies of the Ukrainian people.<sup>94</sup>

On 8 May 2023, on the eve of the Day of Victory over Nazism (which is no longer celebrated in Ukraine), the UINM 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.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> <https://strana.today/news/419500-vo-lvovskoj-oblasti-v-rozhdestvenskij-vertep-ustanovili-fihury-bajdena-i-bandery-foto.html>

<sup>91</sup> Declared extremist by decision of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation of 17 November 2014, its activities are banned in Russia.

<sup>92</sup> [https://teren.in.ua/news/u-ternopoli-vstanovlyat-pam-yatnik-romanu-shuhevichu\\_394446.html](https://teren.in.ua/news/u-ternopoli-vstanovlyat-pam-yatnik-romanu-shuhevichu_394446.html)

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/802023-45805>

<sup>94</sup> <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/31-bereznia-vypovnytsya-150-rokiv-ideologu-ukrayinskoyi-nezalezhnosti-mykoli-mihnovskomu-zahody>

<sup>95</sup> <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/lokalna-pamyat-perepohovannya-uchasnykiv-drugoyi-svitovoyi-viyny-u-vinnyci-ta-inshi-novyny-z-regioniv>

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 Galicia 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 apologized and Canadian Parliament Speaker Anthony Rota resigned.<sup>96</sup> 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".<sup>97</sup>

As a reminder: Russia has issued an international arrest warrant for Yaroslav Gunko, the Canadian authorities was request to extradite the former SS man who is involved in the murder of at least 500 Soviet civilians. However, in violation of the principle of inevitability of punishment, Ottawa refused to extradite him. Russia insisted on Yaroslav Gunko's inclusion in the Interpol database.

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.<sup>98</sup>

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 Sech 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). At the same time, the mayor of the city A. Sayuk, citing his lack of expert knowledge

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<sup>96</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/09/27/poland-ukrainian-nazi-veteran-canada-extradition/>

<sup>97</sup> [https://zaxid.net/ternopil'ska\\_obrada\\_nagorodila\\_pochesnoyu\\_vidznakoyu\\_voyaka\\_diviziyi\\_galichina\\_yaroslava\\_gunku\\_n1582058](https://zaxid.net/ternopil'ska_obrada_nagorodila_pochesnoyu_vidznakoyu_voyaka_diviziyi_galichina_yaroslava_gunku_n1582058)

<sup>98</sup> <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/18886607> and

of history, said that he was "not aware" of the uncomfortable pages of the biography of the Nazi collaborator.<sup>99</sup>

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 annotation does not mention Pavelić's Nazi background or his crimes. The book itself also never speaks of it. Eduard Dolinskiy believes that the actions of the book chain, effectively, amount to whitewashing Nazi crimes and Holocaust denial.<sup>100</sup>

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 pressurize the authorities into making decisions that benefit them.<sup>101, 102</sup>

Since the beginning of the Special Military Operation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to demilitarize and denationalize Ukraine on 24 February, many representatives of Ukrainian far-right organizations have taken part in combat operations in the east of the country.<sup>103</sup> Their crimes have taken on an entirely different scale, evolving from unlawful acts of violence to

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<sup>99</sup> [https://www.rubaltic.ru/context/06032024\\_au-zapad-imenem-natsistskogo-prestupnika-petra-dyachenko-u-kotorogo-ruki-po-lokot-v-krovi-nazvana-ul/](https://www.rubaltic.ru/context/06032024_au-zapad-imenem-natsistskogo-prestupnika-petra-dyachenko-u-kotorogo-ruki-po-lokot-v-krovi-nazvana-ul/)

<sup>100</sup> <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/20402473>

<sup>101</sup> <https://strana.today/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html>)

<sup>102</sup> <https://strana.today/news/273216-sud-po-sternenko-kak-storonniki-radikala-izbivali-zhurnalistov-i-politsiju-foto-i-video.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/273216-sud-po-sternenko-kak-storonniki-radikala-izbivali-zhurnalistov-i-politsiju-foto-i-video.html>)

<sup>103</sup> <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/997883-lavrov-nacifikaciya-ukraina>

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.

## **Desecration of the memory of Red Army soldiers and obstruction of the Victory Day celebrations**

Given the course of official Kiev towards glorification of Nazism, representatives of the Ukrainian authorities have in every possible way prevented anti-Nazi public activists and millions of ordinary citizens from celebrating 9 May and other commemorative dates of the Great Patriotic War. The Kiev authorities also involved nationalists and right-wing radicals for this purpose. As a rule, no follow-up measures are being taken in relation to the threats against anti-Nazi activists. The Ukrainian law enforcement authorities have never prevented the illegal actions of these criminals or brought them to justice, instead allowing the radicals to hide. For more details on this, see the previous report of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus on the human rights situation in individual countries, as well as the report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Regarding the Situation with the Glorification of Nazism and the Spread of Neo-Nazism and Other Practices That Contribute to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

Despite this, on 9 May 2024, Ukrainians, just as before, brought flowers to the Eternal Flame in the Park of Glory in Kiev and in other cities.<sup>104</sup> At the same time, the police prevented pensioners who came in Soviet uniforms of the Great Patriotic War era from laying flowers. Two administrative protocols were drawn up in the capital for wearing Soviet symbols. In Ternopol, a man, born in 1947, was detained for wearing a St. George ribbon on his clothes.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> <https://rg.ru/2024/05/09/kiyvliane-nesut-cvety-k-vechnomu-ogniu-nesmotria-na-otmenu-prazdnika.html>

<sup>105</sup> <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/20766403>





*Residents of Kiev bring flowers to the Eternal Flame in the Glory Park. 9 May 2024.*

*Photo: Zuma / TASS*

*Source: <https://absatz.media/news/74189-kiev-zhdyot-osvobozhdeniya-eks-deputat-rady-o-vozlozhenii-ukraincami-cvetov-k-vechnomu-ognyu-9-maya>*





*Residents of Kiev bring flowers to the Eternal Flame in the Glory Park. 9 May 2024.*

*Photo: Strana.UA*

*Source: <https://www.gg34.ru/kyiv/34932-kyivlyane-nesut-tsvety-k-vechnomu-ognyu-v-parke-slavy.html>*

It came to the point that on 3 May 2025, Vladimir Zelenskiy made actual threats of terrorist attacks during the parade in Moscow, stating that he could not guarantee the safety of those who would come to the Russian capital city for the celebrations.<sup>106</sup> Head of the Ukraine's Presidential Office Andrey Yermak reposted in social networks a picture of Vladimir Zelenskiy standing in the background of the burning Kremlin with a quote from the Soviet song "Victory Day": "We hastened this day as best we could".<sup>107</sup>

<sup>106</sup> <https://ru.interfax.com.ua/news/general/1068863.html>

<sup>107</sup> <https://t.me/ermaka2022/6162>



Source: <https://t.me/ermaka2022/6162>

## **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.

Since 2022, the destruction of monuments to the Soviet soldiers has taken on a mass character. In numerous cases, such actions were accompanied by insulting statements of representatives of local authorities.

For more details on this, see the previous report of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus on the human rights situation in individual countries, as well as the report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Regarding the Situation with the Glorification of Nazism and the Spread of Neo-Nazism and Other Practices That Contribute to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

The following example demonstrates the scale of monuments' destruction. 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.

Among the cases of destruction of memorials in honour of Soviet soldiers who died fighting the Nazis in 2024 are the following.

On 24 January, in the town of Vatutino (renamed as Bagachevo on 19 September 2024) Cherkassy oblast dismantled the monument to Nikolay

Vatutin – Soviet General of the Great Patriotic War era, Hero of the Soviet Union.<sup>108</sup>

On 19 February, there was information about the planned dismantling of the monument to the Soviet soldier in the village of Golgocha, Ternopol oblast.<sup>109</sup>

On 12 April, in Kovel, Volyn oblast, a monument to Soviet artillerymen who liberated the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic from Hitler's troops during the Great Patriotic War was dismantled.<sup>110</sup>

On 26 April, in Rovno, the Eternal Glory monument, originally erected for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War, was demolished. The eight-meter-tall composition at the Glory Hill featured three bronze figures: a soldier, a partisan, and a young girl. Acting Mayor Viktor Shakirzyan stated that the sculptures would be scrapped, with proceeds funding drone purchases for Ukraine's Armed Forces.<sup>111</sup>

On 7 May, in Kanev (Cherkassy Oblast), a bust of Oleg Koshevoy – posthumous Hero of the Soviet Union and one of the organizers and leaders of the anti-fascist youth resistance group "Young Guard" – was removed.<sup>112</sup>

On 9 May, the Victory Day anniversary, vandals in Ivano-Frankovsk poured red paint on a monument commemorating the city's liberation from Nazi occupation<sup>113</sup>; unknown individuals defaced a bust of Hero of the Soviet Union Viktor Chaldayev at the Alley of Glory in Ternopol's Old Park<sup>114</sup>.

On 10 May, in Nikopol (Dnepropetrovsk Oblast), a monument to Vasily Usov, a native of the city and posthumous Hero of the Soviet Union, was dismantled. He commanded the third Border Outpost of the 86<sup>th</sup> Augustow

<sup>108</sup> <https://suspilne.media/amp/cherkasy/669368-na-cerkasini-demontuvali-pamatnik-rosijskomu-generalu>

<sup>109</sup> <https://suspilne.media/ternopil/688178-u-gromadi-na-ternopilsini-demontuut-radanskij-pamatnik/>

<sup>110</sup> <https://volyn-news.ru/society/2024/04/12/5670.html>

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/2024/04/26/1034548-v-rovno-demontirovali-pamyatnik>

<sup>112</sup> <https://ria.ru/amp/20240507/koshevoy-1944410048.html>

<sup>113</sup> <https://suspilne.media/amp/ivano-frankivsk/742069-v-ivano-frankivsku-oblili-cervonou-farbou-radanskij-monument/>

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.0352.ua/news/3773920/u-ternopoli-rozmaluvali-pamatnik-radanskomu-oficeru-caldaevu-foto>

Border Detachment (Belarusian Border District) and died heroically on 22 June 1941, while defending the USSR State Border against Nazi German forces.<sup>115</sup>

On 11 May, in Kamenskoye (Dnepropetrovsk Oblast), a memorial plaque honouring Hero of the Soviet Union Ivan Sachko was removed.<sup>116</sup>

On 9 July, monuments to Soviet liberator soldiers were dismantled in the village of Bukachevtsy (Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast) and Ternov (Lvov Oblast).<sup>117</sup>

On 3 August, in Kharkov, a memorial plaque honouring anti-fascist fighters was removed despite its Ukrainian-language inscription.<sup>118</sup> Authorities justified that it was removed because of the "Soviet star" symbol depicted on the plaque.<sup>119</sup>

On 14 August, memorial plaques dedicated to Marshals of the Soviet Union and twice Heroes of the Soviet Union Rodion Malinovsky and Ivan Konev were destroyed in Kharkov<sup>120, 121</sup>. Their troops fought for the liberation of the Kharkov Oblast from German fascist invaders. Rodion Malinovsky commanded the troops that participated in the battles for Kharkov and the Kharkov Oblast in 1942 and 1943. Troops under the command of Ivan Konev liberated Kharkov in August 1943.

On 15 August, the city council of Akhtyrka, Sumy Oblast, decided to dismantle several objects depicting Russian and Soviet symbols, including a monument to Akhtyrka residents who died during World War II, as well as to demolish two individual and five mass graves of partisans and Soviet soldiers.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> <https://www.prikhist.com/2024/05/u-nikopoli-demontuvaly-pam-iatnyk-viktoru-usovu-dyskusii-u-sotsmerezkhakh/>

<sup>116</sup> <https://t.me/DecolonizationUkraine/13334>

<sup>117</sup> [https://zaxid.net/u\\_bukachivskiy\\_gromadi\\_na\\_prikarpatti\\_demontuvali\\_dva\\_pamyatniki\\_radianskim\\_soldatam\\_n1589208](https://zaxid.net/u_bukachivskiy_gromadi_na_prikarpatti_demontuvali_dva_pamyatniki_radianskim_soldatam_n1589208)

<sup>118</sup> <https://ria.ru/amp/20240803/kharkov-1963896143.html>

<sup>119</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/nacistskij-revanshizm-v-harkove-v-gorode-demontirovali-memorialnye-doski-marshalam-konevu-i-malinovskomu.html>

<sup>120</sup> <https://atn.ua/ukraine/u-kharkovi-demontuvaly-dvi-pam-iatni-doshky-radianskym-marshalam-447763>

<sup>121</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/nacistskij-revanshizm-v-harkove-v-gorode-demontirovali-memorialnye-doski-marshalam-konevu-i-malinovskomu.html>

<sup>122</sup> <https://www.okhtyrka.net/content/view/15472/236>

On 22 August, it was reported about the demolition of two monuments to Soviet soldiers in the villages of Kornich and Rakovchik in the Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast.<sup>123</sup>

On 25 September, vandals destroyed a monument to the liberator soldiers of the Red Army in the village of Barvenkovo in the Kharkov Oblast.<sup>124</sup>

On 20 November, a monument to Hero of the Soviet Union Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya was demolished in Belgorod-Dnestrovsky in the Odessa Oblast.<sup>125</sup>

On 4 December, the Odessa city council approved the demolition of more than a dozen monuments<sup>126</sup>, including a monument to Odessa native, Marshal of the Soviet Union and twice Hero of the Soviet Union Rodion Malinovsky, under whose command the troops of the third Ukrainian Front liberated Odessa from fascist occupation in April 1944.

On the same day, busts of Heroes of war against Nazi Germany, twice Heroes of the Soviet Union Sidor Kovpak, Ivan Chernyakhovsky, Pavel Rybalko, and Alexey Fedorov, were dismantled in Kiev's Park of Glory.<sup>127</sup>

On 15 January 2025, the Lvov City Council approved a decision to exhume the remains of Red Army soldiers who died during the Great Patriotic War and were buried at the Hill of Glory. This concerned over 200 individual graves, four mass graves, and the burials of Heroes of the Soviet Union, including intelligence officer Nikolay Kuznetsov.<sup>128</sup>

On 24 April 2025, Lvov authorities began implementing these barbaric intentions and destroyed a mass grave of 1,804 Soviet soldiers who died

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<sup>123</sup> <https://zahid.espreso.tv/novyny-prykarpattya-na-prikarpatti-demontuvali-dva-pamyatniki-radyanskim-soldatam>

<sup>124</sup> <https://ria.ru/amp/20240925/kharkov-1974720214.html>

<sup>125</sup> <https://ria.ru/amp/20241120/pamyatnik-1984862840.html>

<sup>126</sup> <https://www.unian.ua/society/znesennya-pam-yatnika-pushkinu-v-odesi-miskrada-uhvalila-finansove-rishennya-novini-odesi-12841479.html>

<sup>127</sup> <https://suspilne.media/amp/kyiv/894791-teper-bez-kovpaka-u-kievi-u-parku-slavi-demontuvali-pogrudda-radanskih-diaciv>

<sup>128</sup> <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3948695-u-lvovi-radanski-pohovanna-z-pagorba-slavi-perenesut-na-goloskivske-kladovise.html>



liberating the city from the Nazis and were buried at the Field of Mars. Formally, this act of vandalism was called the exhumation of soldiers' and officers' remains for transfer and reburial at Lvov's Goloskovsky Cemetery. However, this exhumation was carried out using excavators, with the soldiers' bones collected in bags and sent to a warehouse. Lvov authorities justified their disregard for the remains of Soviet soldiers by claiming that the graves might contain servicemen of the USSR People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs who died in battles against OUN-UPA units. It is illustrative that the theoretical and ideological justification for the action was entrusted to Svyatoslav Sheremeta, head of the "Dolya" Memorial Search Center, who gained notoriety for wearing a specially tailored SS "Galicia" Division uniform during a 2019 reburial ceremony for its fighters.<sup>129</sup>

The Lvov City Council's website described the purpose of the event in the following manner: "The remains of Soviet Army servicemen and individuals from the World War II period will be reburied from the Field of Mars on Mechnikov Street. This decision was made by the Executive Committee of the Lvov City Council. A memorial complex for Heroes of Ukraine will be established at this site, in memory of Ukrainian soldiers who gave their lives for Ukraine's independence." Given the openly propagated policy of the current Kiev authorities to rehabilitate Nazis and their Ukrainian collaborators, there is little doubt about who these "heroes" will be.

In this context, it should be noted that the first exhumation of Soviet soldiers in Lvov began in March 2023, with reports claiming 459 burials were uncovered. This was reported, in particular, by journalist Oleg Khavich from "Ukraina.ru". Media also reported that the exhumed remains of Soviet soldiers were being stored in bags at a warehouse by local authorities "for further decisions".

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<sup>129</sup> <https://ukraina.ru/20250424/pole-slavy-tolko-nashikh-geroev-tragediya-bespamyatstva-v-ukraine-priblizhaetsya-k-finalu-1062727571.html>

At the same time, there are isolated examples where residents of Ukrainian settlements refuse to demolish monuments to Soviet soldiers. 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.<sup>130</sup>

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.<sup>131</sup>

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.<sup>132</sup>

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. The villagers held a meeting during which they opposed the demolition of the monuments. It was noted that the names of OUN and UPA victims were indicated on the monuments, but the

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<sup>130</sup> <https://vz.ru/world/2023/12/14/1244233.html>

<sup>131</sup> <https://iz.ru/1502674/2023-04-22/v-zakarpatskoi-oblasti-ukrainy-otkazalis-snosit-pamiatnik-sovetskim-soldatam>

<sup>132</sup> <https://vz.ru/world/2023/12/14/1244233.html>



inscription "Died at the hands of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists" was daubed over.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> <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 the fight against monuments in Ukraine did not begin after the 2014 coup, when the most intense and active phase of this "fight" (aside from the current one) began. As early as the 1990s, a wave of demolitions of monuments to Vladimir Lenin swept the country. In the first decade after the collapse of the USSR, more than 2,000 such monuments were destroyed in Ukraine, mainly in its western part. Then, at the turn of the 1990s and 2000s, more than 600 Lenin monuments were dismantled in the western and central regions, and in 2005-2008, more than 600 monuments were removed, mainly in the central parts of the country. Another wave of demolitions in 2013–2014 began with an attack by so-called Euromaidan "activists" on the Vladimir Lenin monument on Bessarabskaya Square. A total of 552 monuments were destroyed.<sup>134</sup>

After the launch of the "decommunization" process on 15 May 2015, by then-President of Ukraine Petr Poroshenko, which aimed to eliminate all communist monuments except those dedicated to the Great Patriotic War, a new wave of demolitions followed. In less than two years, on 16 January 2017, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UINM) announced that 1,320 monuments to Lenin had been removed.

In addition to monument demolitions, the "decommunization" pursued by Kiev from the outset primarily involved renaming settlements and streets, as well as removing commemorative signs and images associated with the Soviet past.

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<sup>134</sup> [https://riafan.ru/23789952-hronika\\_voini\\_s\\_pamyatnikami\\_na\\_ukraine](https://riafan.ru/23789952-hronika_voini_s_pamyatnikami_na_ukraine)

According to official records, in six years (from 2015 to 2021) 52,000 geographic names were changed, 987 villages, towns and cities have been renamed and more than 2,500 Soviet-era monuments were taken down.

Two regional centres 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 centre, Kirovograd, was named after play writer Mark Kropivnitsky 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.<sup>135</sup>

It is quite indicative that in recent years in Ukraine, the geographic names have been increasingly renamed 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 109<sup>th</sup> battalion of the SS auxiliary police, and Nil Khasevich, active OUN participant, organizer and participant of the mass murders of Jews, Ukrainians, Belorussians, including women and children, in the cities of Belaya Tserkov, Vinnitsa, Zhitomir as well as on the territory of Belarus. Eduard Dolinsky, head of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee, expressed his disdain over these blasphemous actions.<sup>136</sup> 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 Donbass on the side of Ukrainian security forces.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> <https://iz.ru/1118073/igor-karmazin/proshchai-lenin-kak-na-ukraine-zakonchilas-dekommunizatsiia>

<sup>136</sup> <https://ukraina.ru/20230421/1045528163.html?ysclid=lmgnybcvmz65187943>

<sup>137</sup> <https://vz.ru/news/2019/11/13/1008211.html>

In April 2021, the Sixth Administrative Appeals Court supported the city authorities' decision to rename Moskovsky Avenue as Stepan Bandera Avenue, and General Vatutin Avenue as Roman Shukhevych Avenue.<sup>138</sup>

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, Moskovsky Prospect to Stepan Bandera Prospect, Druzhby Narodov Boulevard in Kiev to Boulevard of Nikolai Mikhnovsky (one of the major Ukrainian nationalism ideologists, author of the chauvinistic slogan "Ukraine for Ukrainians!") and the street named after Marshall Malinovsky received the name of the modern Ukrainian neo-Nazi militarized unit, i.e. the Heroes of the Azov Regiment.

At the end of May 2021, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory drew up a list of 26 sites in Kiev that remained to be 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.<sup>139</sup> 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.

The Verkhovnaya Rada provoked a new wave of renaming in 2022 by starting to consider a draft law that would ban geographical names in Ukraine related to Russia, its history and prominent personalities. On 29 December 2022, the UINM and the Ministry of Culture reported that 7,652 geographical

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<sup>138</sup> <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/739447.html>

<sup>139</sup> <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/11504093>

names throughout Ukraine had been renamed over the past year within the framework of the derussification (decolonisation) campaign.<sup>140</sup>

In Kiev only, the names of 237 streets, squares, prospects and boulevards were changed during 2022.<sup>141</sup>

In 2023, Ukrainian authorities continued "derussification" and in January submitted a corresponding draft law to the Verkhovna Rada, aimed at legalizing the fight against "hundreds of Pushkin street names" and "reducing the influence of Russian narratives." According to Minister of Culture Alexander Tkachenko, the document would enable Ukrainian authorities to promptly rename streets with Russian names and demolish monuments to Russian figures.<sup>142</sup> On 27 July 2023, this law, passed by the Verkhovna Rada on 21 March 2023 under the title "On Condemnation and Prohibition of Propaganda of Russian Imperial Policy in Ukraine and Decolonisation of Place Names", came 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.

On 3 August 2023, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory published the first list of 183 places to be renamed in accordance with the adopted law.

In December 2023, the authorities of the city of Nikopol, Dnepropetrovsk Oblast, motivated by the desire to get rid of the USSR heritage and any reminders of Russia set a kind of "record". They renamed almost 50 streets and alleys – that is, the reforms affected every eighth street in the city. The old names were replaced with toponyms associated with Ukrainian figures. Among them, the street named after Field Marshal Mikhail Kutuzov became the street

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<sup>140</sup> <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/mkip-ta-uinp-pidbyly-pidsumky-za-rik-shchodo-podolannya-naslidkiv-rusyfikaciyi-y-totalitaryzmu>

<sup>141</sup> <https://www.wsws.org/ru/articles/2023/03/14/monu-m14.html>

<sup>142</sup> <https://iz.ru/1450760/2023-01-05/na-ukraine-reshili-uzakonit-derusifikaciiu-radi-borby-s-pushkinym>

of the leader of the OUN (terrorist organization banned in Russia) Stepan Bandera, the street of the hero of the Soviet Union Oleg Koshevoy – in honour of Oleg Olzhich, another figure of the OUN, the street of the artist Viktor Vasnetsov – after the Ukrainian ethnographer and poet Panteleymon Kulish, and the street of Fedor Tyutchev became Cherkasskaya street.<sup>143</sup>

The renaming is proceeding at a very rapid pace. According to the interim results of the "decolonization" published by certain Ukrainian regions in late January 2024, in the Poltava Oblast, 2,028 geographic sites had changed their names since 2022, and 772 more were waiting for renaming.<sup>144</sup> During 2024, over a thousand more objects will be renamed in the Poltava Oblast.<sup>145</sup>

At the end of July 2024, the head of the Odessa Regional Military Administration Oleg Kiper signed an order to rename 84 place names in Odessa. Among them Pushkinskaya Street is to become Italian Street, Paustovsky Street – 28<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Army Street – Independence Street, Bunina Street – Nina Strokata Street (a participant of the Ukrainian dissident movement). Babel Street will be renamed D. Ivanov Street, Ilya Ilf and Yevgeny Petrov Street will become Semia Glodan Street, and Duma Square will become Birzhevaya Square.<sup>146</sup> Odessa Mayor Gennady Trukhanov opposed the initiative, emphasizing that neither he nor the city council had anything to do with it. He also said that the city authorities were forced to take all measures stipulated by law to cancel the renaming and preserve Odessa's historical and cultural heritage. Oleg Kiper in his social network account reacted sharply to the criticism of the Odessa mayor, saying: "If someone really wants to walk along streets with imperial / Soviet names – there are Moscow and Ufa, not Ukrainian Odessa. This will not happen in Odessa". He called the city a

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<sup>143</sup> <https://www.mk.ru/politics/2023/12/23/vlasti-odnogo-goroda-dnepropetrovskoy-oblasti-ukrainy-derusificirovali-okolo-50-ulic.html>

<sup>144</sup> <https://poltava.to/project/8222/>

<sup>145</sup> <https://suspilne.media/poltava/922487-perejmenuvanna-sil-na-poltavsini-so-zrobleno-za-2024-rik>

<sup>146</sup> <https://www.mk.ru/politics/2024/07/29/v-odesse-pereimenuyut-ulicy-bunina-paustovskogo-i-zhvaneckogo.html>

"Ukrainian place", which was allegedly "created, built and developed by Ukrainians".<sup>147</sup>

On 24 January 2024 in Verkhovtsevo, Dnepropetrovsk Oblast, by the decision of the city council, the streets named after the world-famous Russian scientists Ivan Pavlov and Kliment Timiryazev were renamed in honour of Nazi collaborators Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevich.<sup>148</sup>

After renaming of toponyms in January, April, July and August 2024, streets of Stepan Bandera, Yevgeny Konovalts, Roman Shukhevich, UPA heroes, as well as other Hitler's henchmen from among the OUN appeared in Krivoy Rog.<sup>149</sup>

On 1 February 2024, the Renaming Commission of the Poltava City Council approved a number of proposals to rename streets in Poltava. Among other things, Gvardeyskaya Street was proposed to be called the street of Peter Dyachenko<sup>150</sup>, a former employee of the Nazi German intelligence agency "Abwehr", commander of the 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the SD Schutzmannschaft, officer of the 14<sup>th</sup> Waffen-SS Division "Galicia", awarded the Iron Cross by Hitler for services to Nazi Germany.

On 19 September 2024, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Resolution on renaming 328 settlements.<sup>151</sup>

In November 2024, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory reported that in the year since the law on the Condemnation and Prohibition of Propaganda of Russian Imperial Policy in Ukraine and the Decolonization of Toponymy came into force, i.e., from 27 July 2023 to 27 July 2024, at least

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<sup>147</sup> <https://ria.ru/20240802/odessa-1963588656.html>

<sup>148</sup> [https://rada.info/upload/users\\_files/35950156/23977f9a31d7870e6fa03fb32b5c8c61.docx](https://rada.info/upload/users_files/35950156/23977f9a31d7870e6fa03fb32b5c8c61.docx)

<sup>149</sup> <https://www.novakom.com.ua/posts/rename-toponim/rename202408.html>

<sup>150</sup> <https://suspilne.media/amp/poltava/675896-propozicii-novih-nazv-toponimiv-cetvertoi-cergi-u-poltavskij-gromadi-perelik>

<sup>151</sup> <https://decentralization.ua/news/18645>

25,194 toponymic objects were renamed across the country, and 1,066 monuments and commemorative signs were dismantled.<sup>152</sup>

Activists note that the full-scale war conducted by the Kiev regime 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 grivnas (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.<sup>153</sup>

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 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

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<sup>152</sup> <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/ponad-25-tysyach-obyektiv-toponimiyi-pereymenovano-pershi-oficiyni-dani-shchodo-realizaciyi-dekolonizacijnogo-zakonu>

<sup>153</sup> <https://www.wsws.org/ru/articles/2023/03/14/monu-m14.html>



national importance. At the same time, the director of the department Eduard Pavlenko emphasized that the issue of demolishing or simply moving the bust was not in his competence.<sup>154</sup> In late February 2023, the authorities of Kamenskoye (Dnepropetrovsk Oblast) where General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Leonid Brezhnev was born, stated that they would not demolish a monument erected in 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 Leonid Brezhnev would be considered after the normalization of the situation.<sup>155</sup> However, later, on 27 July 2023, the monument was dismantled.<sup>156</sup>

According to deputy head of the agricultural cooperative society (the village of Letava, Khmel'nitskaya Oblast) V. Cherny, 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 centre. 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.<sup>157</sup>

One of the trends that emerged in 2022 was the announcement of a personal war against the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin by fighters against the "Russian past", because Russian literature is allegedly a conductor of imperial ideas, and Alexander Pushkin himself, in his poem "Poltava," negatively portrayed Hetman Ivan Mazepa, who betrayed Peter I and moved to the service of the Swedes. By late 2022, about 30 monuments to the Russian poet were dismantled across Ukraine for 11 preceding months only.<sup>158</sup>

Numerous cases of the destruction of monuments and memorial plaques honouring prominent Russian and Soviet figures, as well as representatives of culture and science, in large and small cities and rural settlements have been

<sup>154</sup> <https://iz.ru/1417509/2022-10-28/v-kharkove-otkazalis-demontirovat-biust-pushkina>

<sup>155</sup> <https://iz.ru/1476101/2023-02-27/na-ukraine-otkazalis-snesti-pamiatnik-brezhnevu>

<sup>156</sup> <https://life.ru/p/1596481>

<sup>157</sup> <https://vz.ru/world/2023/12/14/1244233.html>

<sup>158</sup> [https://riafan.ru/23789952-hronika\\_voini\\_s\\_pamyatnikami\\_na\\_ukraine](https://riafan.ru/23789952-hronika_voini_s_pamyatnikami_na_ukraine)

documented. Among those demolished are monuments to Russian military commander Alexander Suvorov, Prince Grigory Potemkin, Mikhail Lomonosov, Nikolay Ostrovsky, Nikolay Gogol, Lev Tolstoy, Dmitry Mendeleev, Mikhail Bulgakov, Pyotr Tchaikovsky, pilot Valery Chkalov, Ivan Michurin, cosmonaut Yuriy Gagarin, and outstanding Soviet educator Anton Makarenko.

On 25 February 2025, another historical monument was destroyed. The authorities of Poltava demolished a monument to Russian Emperor Peter I, located near the Museum of the History of the Battle of Poltava. The statue of the emperor was crafted as early as in 1915 in St. Petersburg. Initially, from 1919, it stood in the main lobby of the Petrovsky Poltava Cadet Corps. After the corps was disbanded, the statue was sent to Poltava. Commenting in her social media post on the demolition, acting city head Ekaterina Yamshchikova, described the action as a deliberate societal effort and a liberation from "Russian imperial markers".<sup>159</sup>

Detailed information on this can be found in the previous Joint Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus Regarding Human Rights Situation in Certain Countries, as well as in the Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Regarding the Situation with the Glorification of Nazism and the Spread of Neo-Nazism and Other Practices That Contribute to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

Among the barbaric incidents that took place in 2024, the following should be noted:

On 9 January, in Kherson, occupied by the Kiev regime, a bust of Soviet poet Vladimir Mayakovsky was demolished.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> <https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/67bdc6d9a7947b6b267aba1>

<sup>160</sup> <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/19695265>

On 12 January, a bas-relief of Alexander Pushkin was removed from the Pushkinskaya metro station in Kharkov, which was the last depiction of the poet in the city.<sup>161</sup>

On 19 March, a memorial plaque to Vladimir Mayakovsky was dismantled in Kharkov.<sup>162</sup>

On 3 April, in Krivoy Rog (Dnepropetrovsk Oblast) a monument to Maxim Gorky, located near School No. 71, was dismantled.<sup>163</sup>

In early May, a monument commemorating the Pereyaslav Rada, located under the Arch of Freedom of the Ukrainian People (formerly the Arch of Friendship of Peoples), was destroyed in Kiev. The Arch of Friendship of Peoples was removed from the register of immovable monuments by Ukraine's Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, as it was deemed to have lost its status as a historical monument.<sup>164</sup>

On 17 May, in Pokrovsk, on the territory temporarily occupied by the Zelenskiy regime in the DPR, a monument to Maxim Gorky was demolished.<sup>165</sup>

On 4 June, a monument to the great Russian scientist Mikhail Lomonosov was demolished in Kharkov.<sup>166</sup>

On 16 August, a bust of Alexander Pushkin was dismantled in Belgorod-Dnestrovsky (Odessa Oblast).<sup>167</sup>

On 9 September, a monument to Soviet cosmonaut Yuriy Gagarin was demolished in Kharkov.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> <https://iz.ru/1634015/2024-01-14/so-stancii-metro-v-kharkove-ubrali-eshche-odin-barelef-s-izobrazheniem-pushkina>

<sup>162</sup> <https://www.ukr.net/ru/news/details/kharkiv/103423291.html>

<sup>163</sup> <https://gorod.dp.ua/news/229898>

<sup>164</sup> <https://iz.ru/1691339/2024-05-03/v-kieve-demontirovali-monument-v-chest-pereiaslavskoi-rady>

<sup>165</sup> <https://pokrovsk-rada.gov.ua/uk/articles/item/10044/dekolonizaciya-publichnogo-prostoru-v-pokrovskij-tg-proveli-demontazh-pamyatnika-maksimu-gorkomu>

<sup>166</sup> <https://suspilne.media/kharkiv/761211-u-harkovi-demontuvali-pamatnik-rosijskomu-vcenomu-lomonosovu-komentar-miskradi>

<sup>167</sup> <https://suspilne.media/amp/odesa/815285-u-misti-na-odesini-demontuvali-pogrudda-pushkina>

<sup>168</sup> <https://www.ukr.net/ru/news/details/kharkiv/106681571.html>

On 13 September, in Odessa, a monument to writer Maxim Gorky, located in a park previously named after him and later renamed in honour of Mark Twain, was dismantled.<sup>169</sup>

On 21 September, a monument to the legendary characters from the novels *Twelve Chairs* and *The Golden Calf* by Ilya Ilf and Yevgeny Petrov was demolished in Kharkov.<sup>170</sup>

On 10 October, a monument to Soviet writer Nikolay Ostrovsky was dismantled in the village of Viliya in the Rovno Oblast.<sup>171</sup>

On 15, 20, and 28 November, monuments to Russian poets and writers Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov<sup>172</sup>, Maxim Gorky,<sup>173</sup> and Lev Tolstoy<sup>174</sup> were demolished in Krivoy Rog (Dnepropetrovsk Oblast).

According to the Odessa City Council's decision on 4 December 2024, the following monuments are subject to demolition: the historical monument to Alexander Pushkin on Primorsky Boulevard, which is a cultural heritage site and under UNESCO protection, and the monument to Alexander Pushkin on Italiyanskaya (formerly Pushkinskaya) Street<sup>175</sup>, erected for the poet's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The first monument is not only one of the symbols of the city, but it can rightfully be called a people's monument, as it was erected in 1887-1889 at the expense of the city residents, about which there is a corresponding inscription: "To Alexander Pushkin by the citizens of Odessa".

On 12 December, a memorial plaque to Alexander Pushkin was dismantled in Belgorod-Dnestrovsky (Odessa Oblast).<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> <https://www.ukr.net/ru/news/details/society/106765786.html>

<sup>170</sup> <https://2day.kh.ua/ua/kharkov/z-tsentralnoyi-vulytsi-kharkova-prybraly-ostapa-bendera-ta-panikovskoho>

<sup>171</sup> <https://www.ukr.net/ru/news/details/society/107277871.html>

<sup>172</sup> <https://nachasi.kr.ua/kryvyj-rig/znesly-pamiatnyky-pushkinu-ta-liermontovu>

<sup>173</sup> <https://vidomo.media/rus/events/1732103098-v-krivom-roge-demontirovali-pamyatnik-rossiyskomu-pisatelyu-gorkomu-foto>

<sup>174</sup> <https://1kr.ua/news-97193.html>

<sup>175</sup> <https://www.unian.ua/society/znesennya-pam-yatnika-pushkinu-v-odesi-miskrada-uhvalila-finansove-rishennya-novini-odesi-12841479.html>

<sup>176</sup> <https://bilhorod.rayon.in.ua/news/767845-u-bilgorodi-dnistrovskomu-demontuvali-memorialnu-doshku-pushkinu>

On 31 December, a monument to Soviet actor, poet, and singer Vladimir Vysotsky was demolished in Odessa.<sup>177</sup>

On 27 January 2025, a monument to Russian and Soviet scientist Ivan Pavlov was dismantled in Kiev.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3943574-v-odesi-demontuvali-pamatnik-visockomu.html>

<sup>178</sup> <https://www.ukr.net/ru/news/details/kyiv/109282268.html>

## **The West's whitewashing of Ukrainian neo-Nazism**

In the light of the special military operation carried out by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and to protect the civilians of Donbass, 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. 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. These resources also actively disseminated calls to "kill Russians", manuals on how to kill and make explosives and other similar content since late February-March 2022. 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.

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. So far, there are still materials about the Alley of Angels in Russian, Ukrainian and six other languages. However, the

media noticed false information there.<sup>179</sup> 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 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 the Kherson and Zaporozhye Oblasts, the DPR and the LPR. 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, Donbass, integration with the European Union and NATO. Although the stated goal of the Ukrainian diplomats was to fill the online encyclopaedia with supposedly unbiased information about the country, in reality it turned into a blatant attempt to edit a free information resource with the help of state agencies and distort

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<sup>179</sup> [https://riafan.ru/23779823-angloyazichnuyu\\_versiyu\\_stat\\_i\\_ob\\_allee\\_angelov\\_v\\_donetske\\_udalili\\_s\\_vikipedii](https://riafan.ru/23779823-angloyazichnuyu_versiyu_stat_i_ob_allee_angelov_v_donetske_udalili_s_vikipedii)

facts to suit the current political objectives of Kiev and its Western curators, justifying such actions by referring to the "opinions of people".<sup>180</sup>

At the same time, even Western media outlets are publishing articles that directly point to the Nazi inbeing of the right-wing radical structures in Ukraine<sup>181</sup>, to which the image of "fighters for independence" is artificially created. Whilst particular attention is drawn therein to the fact that prior to the beginning of the special military operation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, many Western mass media denoted the Nazi component of radical Ukrainian formations and glorification by them of such Nazi collaborators as Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevich. After February 2022, however, such view was conscientiously withdrawn from Western public space. Furthermore, the aforementioned articles rightly emphasize that the Russian leadership's explanation of the reasons for the special military operation largely coincides with what was previously published in unbiased articles of the Western journalists who acknowledged the presence of neo-Nazism in Ukraine.

In addition, it should be noted that Ukrainian neo-Nazi groups are closely linked to right-wing radical and extremist groups in European countries and the United States. 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 was involved in combat operations in Ukraine on the side of nationalist battalions

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<sup>180</sup> <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/740011-kiev-vikipediya-perepisat>, [https://news.rambler.ru/world/44072204/?utm\\_content=news\\_media&utm\\_medium=read\\_more&utm\\_source=copypink](https://news.rambler.ru/world/44072204/?utm_content=news_media&utm_medium=read_more&utm_source=copypink)

<sup>181</sup> As an example, one can have a look at 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](https://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 Ukrainian Nazis. Standpoint Zero. 16 March 2022. <https://standpointzero.com/2022/03/16/protecting-the-ukrainian-nazis/>



since 2015 and shot to death a married couple after returning to the United States, is well-known.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy in the Military How to Stop It? 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>

## **Persecution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church**

The canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC)<sup>183</sup>, which represents the country's largest religious confession that counts the greatest number of believers, also got under Russophobic Kiev regime's blows. For many years, the authorities have been waging an aggressive struggle with the aim of completely squeezing it out the country's religious space.

A large-scale information campaign has been launched against the clergy of the UOC aimed at discrediting its members in the eyes of the charge and creating an image of them as "collaborators of the enemy". Slanderous rumours are spread about the UOC archpriests and hierarchy, and diverse fake news is posted on social network saying the church hierarchs allegedly assist the Russian Armed Forces. Accusations from the Ukrainian police and the SBU are heard daily of the UOC churches being the places of storage of weapons, ammunition and foodstuffs for the "aggressor". Such "arguments" underlie Ukrainian politicians' and officials' calls to ban the UOC and deprive it of its property. Established are many cases of seizures of the churches belonging to the canonical UOC and their subsequent "transfer" to the splinter Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) created by the Kiev regime. Thus, prepared with the assistance of the Russian Association for the Defence of Religious Freedom, the monograph entitled "Chronicle of the "Black Decade". Religious Persecution in Ukraine, 2014-2023"<sup>184</sup> that contains references to mass media publications, notes that in the period from 2019 to 2021 about 500 parishes of the UOC were illegally re-registered in favour of the OCU and 144 churches were seized by schismatics. In April 2021, the then-Head of the State Committee for Religions

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<sup>183</sup> Special report by the Foreign Ministry of Russia on this issue entitled "Illegal Actions by the Kiev Regime Targeting the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), its Clergy and Parishioners" was published in July 2003.

<sup>184</sup> Melnikov S.A., P.V. Lebedev, V.A. Begdash. Chronicle of the "Black Decade". Religious Persecution in Ukraine 2014 – 2023. Moscow, 2023. p. 199. The monograph can be found 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>

of Ukraine Yuri Reshetnikov said that the Ukrainian authorities were ignoring over one million appeals of the UOC believers.

Specific legislative steps have already been taken in this respect by the Kiev regime. In 2022, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine registered five bills aimed at eliminating the canonical UOC and seizing its parishes, securing for the OCU an exclusive right to be called "Orthodox" and a *de facto* monopoly on the performance of Orthodox worship in the country as well as at simplifying the procedure for the transition of the UOC communities and also entire dioceses and monasteries to the OCU. It was also envisaged that the OCU communities could be registered at the address of the existing UOC communities, in their churches, monasteries or other premises. In essence, this meant a legalization of illegal takeovers of canonical parishes by the schismatics. Besides, by such projects, the authorities were paving the way for the future decisions to terminate lease agreements with religious organisations "connected with Russia," to be followed by an eviction of all of the UOC monastic and ordinary communities from the state- or municipalities-owned premises.

On 19 January 2023, the Ukrainian government submitted to the Verkhovna Rada a draft law No. 8371 on Amendments to the Laws of Ukraine on the Activities of Religious Organisations in Ukraine that prohibited "the activities of religious organisations which governing centre (administration) is located in a state that is carrying out armed aggression against Ukraine" in the country. The document provided for a significant simplification of the procedure for legally banning the functioning of the UOC.<sup>185</sup> Therefore, it paved the way for the closure of the canonical church accompanied by the deprivation of property in case the Ukrainian authorities came to the conclusion that it had affiliated ties with the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC).

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<sup>185</sup> <https://ria.ru/20221123/rpts-1833602560.html>

All those efforts by the Kiev regime led to 20 August 2024, when the Verkhovnaya Rada adopted a law to ban the canonical UOC (entered into force on 23 September 2024). The bill was supported by 265 out of 450 parliamentarians. The law was effective 30 days after its publication. The UOC communities were given nine months to break all ties with the Russian Orthodox Church. It gave Ukrainian courts the ability to liquidate all religious administrations, monasteries, communities, parishes and educational institutions that were separate legal entities and transfer them to the ownership of other religious organisations, primarily the splinter OCU. This novelty provided grounds and set into action a judicial mechanism of the complete prohibition of the UOC in Ukraine. This law contradicts Article 35 of the Constitution of Ukraine which provides for the guarantees of the right to freedom of thought and religion.

Mass media report that it was Vladimir Zelenskiy who personally lobbied the law by stating that its adoption would "strengthen the spiritual independence" of Ukrainians and "deprive Moscow of its last opportunities to restrict their freedom".<sup>186</sup> By doing this, the Kiev regime re-confirmed its dictatorial nature and readiness to disregard the faith of millions of citizens of the country for its political ambitions.

There is also information about attempted extortion taking place among the Verkhovnaya Rada's deputies in order to force them to support this scandalous initiative. The first essay to adopt the aforementioned law failed in June 2024 (shortage of vote *causa*) and Petr Poroshenko got down to re-gathering signatures in support of consideration thereof. As far as in July 2024, Verkhovnaya Rada's deputy and active member of Poroshenko's Party Irina Gerashchenko threatened to publish the names of all those who did not want to support the bill, stating that they were "defensive of the Russian aggression".

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<sup>186</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/unichtozhenie-pravoslaviya-na-ukraine-teper-po-zakonu-chast-1.html>

The fact that the law adopted on 20 August 2024 pursues the goal of absorbing the canonical church by the OCU is indirectly evidenced by the appeal of the OCU "Metropolitan" Epiphanius (Dumenko) to the Head of the UOC Onufry (Berezovsky) to unite the churches, published several days earlier, on 15 August 2024.

Also illustrative is the support expressed for this law by the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organisations. In particular, the ban was approved by the "Head" of the splinter OCU, Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC), the bishop of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and the chief rabbi of Kiev and Ukraine. In doing so, this entity ignored its own Charter, according to which all its decisions were made only based on the consensus and consent of the leaders or authorized representatives of all religious organisations participating therein. As for the representatives of the canonical church that is part of the Council, they were not even admitted to the meeting that adopted the above decision to ban the UOC.<sup>187</sup>

In conjunction with bringing the law on the Protection of the Constitutional Order in the Sphere of Activities of Religious Organisations into action, on 25 September 2024, the Ukrainian authorities decided to conduct an all-Ukrainian audit of the property of religious communities of the UOC.

On 13 January 2025, Head of the State Service for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience of Ukraine (EFCU) Viktor Yelensky announced at a press conference that the government of the country was awaiting approval of a draft regulatory act defining the procedure for closing religious organisations that "were spreading the ideology of the Russian world". The latter may include parishes that have names of saints of "Russian origin" in their titles. For example, that of Prince Alexander Nevsky, who, as the Ukrainian authorities believe, represents "a threat to the national security of Ukraine". He said that the authorities were going to demand that UOC parishes created in the name of

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<sup>187</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/unichtozhenie-pravoslaviya-na-ukraine-teper-po-zakonu-chast-1.html>

saints of Russian origin change their names. In fact, they would be forced to renounce their Patron Saints. Otherwise, the state threatens to deprive the "wrong" parish of its registration in court.

In May 2025, as the Head of the EFCU reported, an active phase of inspections of religious organisations for connections with the ROC would commence. The law defines seven markers of affiliation as follows, leaders' membership in ROC-related entities, financial ties, common statutory documents, etc. If at least one marker is identified by the EFCU, the religious organisation would be sent an instruction. "If the religious organisation complies with the instruction, there will be no claims against it. If it does not, the EFCU has the right to go to court that will decide the future fate of the organisation," Yelensky emphasized.<sup>188</sup>

Apart from the formal side of the issue, in a number of cities and regions (Lvov, Chernovtsy, Konotop, Sumy Oblasts as well as Ivano-Frankovsk, Kiev, Lvov, Zhytomir, Rovno and Khmelnytsky Oblasts, etc.), the local authorities have already banned the activities of the UOC without waiting for the adoption of the law by the country's Parliament.

The Ukrainian authorities began to demonstrate their determination to destroy the UOC parallel to the beginning of the discussion of the corresponding legislative initiative in the Verkhovna Rada back in 2023. On 1 February 2023, the EFCU published the results of the religious expert examination of the UOC Charter. The document stated, as expected, that there was an ecclesiastic 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 UOC highest bodies of church power and administration were indicated that the UOC continued to be in a relationship of subordination to the ROC. The UOC called these findings "gross manipulation

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<sup>188</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/85949-elenskij-uzhe-mae-hess-nachnet-aktivnye-proverki-obshchin-upts-na-svjazi-s-rpts>

and an attempt to violate the right to freedom of religion,"<sup>189</sup> 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 had not severed its ties with the ROC and was 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 EFCU posted on its website a list of clarifications the UOC was to provide to prove its separateness from the ROC. However, experts note that none of those clarifications by the UOC will lead to the Ukrainian state entities showing readiness to lift the restrictions imposed on the canonical church.<sup>190</sup>

Another reason for persecution against the UOC was the issue of the use of the ecclesiastical 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, OCU's "Head" Epiphanius spoke for celebrating Christmas together with Europe, on 25 December, rather than "with the Russian world", on 7 January. At that time, according to sociologists, the majority of Ukrainians did not support such a transition. So, in 2019, the "Rating" Ukrainian Sociological Group published information that only one in four Ukrainians (25 per cent) supported the idea of moving the celebration of Christmas from 7 January to 25 December, while 64 per cent of citizens spoke out against it.

Since 2022, the topic of the transition to the new style has become more frequently brought up in the Ukrainian media space under the pretext of fighting the Russian World and distancing from the ROC, thus turning into another weapon of info-ideological war. The OCU representatives called the old style,

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<sup>189</sup> <https://tass.ru/info/17394971>

<sup>190</sup> Melnikov S.A., P.V. Lebedev, V.A. Begdash. Chronicle of the "Black Decade". Religious Persecution in Ukraine 2014 - 2023. Moscow, 2023. p. 199. The monograph can be found on the website of the Russian Association for the Protection of Religious Freedom: <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/doklad-rars-hronika-chernogo-desyatiletija-religioznye-goneniya-na-ukraine-2014-2023-g>

*inter alia*, an instrument for knuckling down the ROC, or the "Russki" living style, while the transition to the new style was called "a blow to the Russian World".

The issue of the transition of churches to the new calendar 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 wanted to celebrate Christmas was carried out through the "Diya" official application for public services.<sup>191</sup>

On 28 June 2023, Zelenskiy introduced a bill to the Verkhovnaya Rada that was to abolish the country's celebration of Christmas on 7 January, calling the Julian calendar a "Russian ideology". Signed by Zelenskiy, it finally came into force on 28 July 2023 to legalize the "calendar reform". Chairman of the Synodal Information and Education Department of the UOC Metropolitan Kliment (Vecherya) said in connection with this novelty that the UOC would continue to celebrate Christmas on 7 January,<sup>192</sup> and that the decision to change the calendar was due to political and not ecclesiastical reasons.<sup>193</sup>

On 12 September 2024, the EFCU ordered to block access to websites publicizing the UOC activities (<https://raskolam.net>, <https://www.dialogtut.org>, <https://spzh.livet>). The order did not indicate the reasons for blocking.

Public statements by Ukrainian politicians confirm Kiev's Russophobic course and its deliberate actions that put canonical Orthodoxy in a discriminatory position. Thus, advisor to the Head of the Ukrainian President's Office Mikhail Podolyak said on 30 March 2023 that only the OCU should remain in Ukraine and that the UOC "would gradually go to Russian cities". For the time being already former Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine (NSDC) Aleksey Danilov made strong statements against the UOC, calling the existence of the UOC in the country a "special operation of

<sup>191</sup> <https://spzh.news/ru/mysli-vsluh/70310-vlast-vkljuchilas-v-propahandu-novostilnoho-rozhdestva>

<sup>192</sup> <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75145-upts-budet-i-dalshe-prazdnovat-rozhdestvo-7-janvaja>

<sup>193</sup> <https://spzh.news/ru/news/75238-upravdelami-objasnil-pochemu-upts-ne-perekhodit-na-novyj-kalendar>



the Russian Federation," the actions of its priests having nothing to do with God and welcoming the demolition of churches of this confession.<sup>194</sup> On 15 July 2024, former President Poroshenko posted a congratulatory message on his Facebook account on the 1036<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Christianization of Russia, calling the canonical church "an evil force that is against the faith" and promising to "enter into battle" with it. He also said that "today, more than ever, the issue of adopting a law banning the Russian pseudo-church FSB structure, which disguises itself under the guise of the UOC MP, is acute".

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.

Numerous instances of the UOC churches seizures and participation of Ukrainian radicals in these barbaric actions are provided in the previous report of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus on the Human Rights Situation in Individual Countries as well as in the Report by the Foreign Ministry of Russia on Glorification of Nazism and the Spread of Neo-Nazism and Other Practices that Contribute to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

Since November 2022, the SBU has stepped up the activities against the UOC to the maximum. "Counterintelligence measures" in churches and

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<sup>194</sup> Melnikov S.A., P.V. Lebedev, V.A. Begdash. Chronicle of the "Black Decade". Religious Persecution in Ukraine 2014 – 2023. Moscow, 2023. p. 199. The monograph can be found on the website of the Russian Association for the Protection of Religious Freedom: <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/doklad-rars-hronika-chernogo-desyatiletia-religioznye-goneniya-na-ukraine-2014-2023-g>

monasteries belonging to it aimed at intimidating the believers were launched. The media reported that the SBU conducted searches at 19 UOC locations in Zakarpatye, Chernovtsy, Rovno, Volyn, Nikolayev, Sumy, Lvov, Zhitomir Oblasts and the Kiev-controlled part of Kherson Oblast. In total, more than 100 organisations of the UOC were sought through. In particular, searches took place in the Holy Protection Cathedral and Cross Exaltation Cathedral in Uzhgorod, Holy Trinity Church in Lvov and Saint Basil's Cathedral in the city of Ovruch in Zhitomir Oblast and Holy Dormition Monastery in Rovno District.<sup>195</sup> Ukrainian security forces have repeatedly searched the territory of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra.

In the course of such "events", the special services interrogated clergymen and monks and searched also for allegedly "subversive pro-Russian literature," including Easter messages from the Moscow Patriarch, which are sent to all dioceses of the Moscow Patriarchate.

In early December 2022, Vladimir Zelenskiy enacted the NCSD decision on restrictive measures and sanctions against the canonical church, essentially formalizing its complete ban and triggering a new wave of UOC prosecutions.

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 the UOC 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 that such "preventive measures" were implemented 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 Criminal Code of Ukraine that punish crimes against national security. He called his actions to intimidate the clergy a "development of responsibility for their actions". Along with that, he cited

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<sup>195</sup> <https://rg.ru/2022/12/14/sbu-prishla-s-obyskom-v-pravoslavnye-hramy-v-deviati-oblastiah-ukrainy.html>

examples of "heroism" of a number of Kherson residents who participated in punitive operations in the Donbass in order to "foster a sense of patriotism" in the priests. To intimidate the clergymen, the SBU officer told the UOC clerics 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 sound assimilation of the material" he left packages mimicking explosive devices in St. Catherine's and St. Dukhov Cathedrals.<sup>196</sup>

The number of seizures of the UOC churches increased for almost 20 times in 2022. The report of Manager of the UOC Affairs Metropolitan Antony notes a manifold increase in the number of illegal takeovers of the UOC churches and unlawful re-registration of its parishes in 2022 in Ukraine. In particular, 129 such seizures of the UOC churches were recorded, as well as 93 cases of preparation for forced change of subordination of the UOC parishes, 74 decisions of local authorities to ban the activities of the UOC religious organisations, 84 cases of re-registration of parishes by regional administrations, 31 transitions of parishes with rectors and 13 cases of transition without a rector as well as ten acts of vandalism.<sup>197</sup>

At the same time, the emergence of new parishes belonging to the OCU resulted in a serious staff shortage within this entity, and its churches were not filled with parishioners.<sup>198</sup>

On 21 December 2022, in an interview published on the "1+1" Ukrainian TV YouTube channel, SBU Head Vasily Malyuk stated that the agency had opened 50 criminal cases against the UOC priests. He especially emphasized the need to "clean out this entire hostile environment of 'moles' in cassocks".<sup>199</sup> The

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<sup>196</sup> <https://rg.ru/2022/12/13/sbu-neskolko-let-vela-rabotu-protiv-ukrainskoj-pravoslavnoj-cerkvi-obnaruzheny-sekretnye-dokumenty.html>

<sup>197</sup> <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/16691353?ysclid=lmgpw2342o357713255>

<sup>198</sup> Melnikov S.A., P.V. Lebedev, V.A. Begdash. Chronicle of the "Black Decade". Religious Persecution in Ukraine 2014 – 2023. Moscow, 2023. p. 199. The monograph can be found on the website of the Russian Association for the Protection of Religious Freedom: <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/doklad-rars-hronika-chernogo-desyatiletija-religioznye-goneniya-na-ukraine-2014-2023-g>

<sup>199</sup> <https://iz.ru/1444393/2022-12-21/na-ukraine-zavedeno-50-ugolovnykh-del-protiv-sviashchennikov-uptc>

defendants in these criminal cases were 55 clergymen of the UOC, including 14 bishops.<sup>200</sup>

According to the head of the legal service of the canonical UOC, the year of 2023 saw about 300 illegal takeovers of the UOC communities. In its turn, the EFCU said that the SBU officers have conducted criminal prosecutions against almost a hundred priests of the UOC since February 2022, including 16 metropolitans. 19 hierarchs of the canonical church were deprived of the Ukrainian citizenship. By mid-2024, the schismatics from the OCU took away about 700 churches of the canonical church. The peak of such seizures occurred in 2023, i.e. 386 churches: 164 in the Kiev Oblast, 155 – in Khmelnytsky and 75 – in Vinnitsa Oblasts, correspondingly. From December 2023 to April 2024, their number grew by 96 churches. Most of the UOC churches are left in the south-eastern regions of Ukraine. Fewer are in the Lvov and Ivano-Frankovsk Oblasts. In total, since 2019, more than 1,500 churches of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church have been forcibly transferred to the OCU.<sup>201</sup>

In April 2024, the media quoted Head of the SBU Malyuk as saying that 23 priests of the UOC were arrested in Ukraine, 37 clergymen were declared suspects, and criminal proceedings were initiated against more than 80 ministers of the canonical church. According to Malyuk, religious figures are mainly charged with such crimes as inciting interreligious hatred and treason.<sup>202</sup>

As already mentioned, 19 bishops of the UOC were deprived of Ukrainian citizenship, which is prohibited by the country's Constitution. Among them are the metropolitans Jonathan (Yeletsikh) of Tulchin and Bratslav, Meletius (Egorenko) of Chernovtsy and Bukovina as well as Ireneus (Seredny) of Dnepropetrovsk and Pavlograd, abbot of the Svyatogorsk Lavra of the Holy Dormition Metropolitan of Svyatogorsk Arseny (Yakovenko), Metropolitan of

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<sup>200</sup> <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/18462289?ysclid=lmgs853axa989219718>

<sup>201</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/unichtozhenie-pravoslaviya-na-ukraine-teper-po-zakonu-chast-1.html>

<sup>202</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/kapellan-mer-pensionerka-i-pevica-na-ukraine-kollaborantom-i-agentom-fsb-mozhet-stat-kazhdyj.html>

Khust and Vinogradov Mark (Petrovtsev), archbishops Panteleimon (Bashchuk) of Bucha and Viktor (Bykov) of Artsyz, and others. On 11 April 2023, a petition appeared on the website of Zelenskiy's Office demanding that Head of the UOC Metropolitan Onufriy be stripped of the Ukrainian citizenship.

Among the many clergymen of the UOC who fell under the repressions of the Kiev regime were viceroy of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra Metropolitan Pavel (Lebed) of Vyshgorod, Metropolitan Joseph (Maslennikov), administrator of the affairs of the UOC Metropolitan Anthony (Pakanich) of Borispol and Brovary and chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the UOC Metropolitan Meletius (Egorenko) of Chernovtsy and Bukovina.

Besides, on 21 January 2023, the NSDC imposed sanctions against two dozen Russian clerics.

The SBU is also trying to prosecute the ROC bishops under Article 27, Part 5, and Article 110, Part 3, of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (accessory in wilful actions committed to change the territorial boundaries or national borders of Ukraine in violation of the order provided for in the Constitution of Ukraine upon a preliminary collusion by a group of persons, which entailed other grave consequences).

On 4 November 2023, the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine reported on the *in absentia* suspicion of Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill. He was accused of encroachment on the territorial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine.<sup>203</sup>

On 9 December 2024, four ROC representatives, i.e. Metropolitans Barsanuphius of St. Petersburg and Ladoga, Anthony of Volokolamsk, Pavel of Krutitsy and Kolomna, and Dionysius of Omsk and Taurida, were charged *in absentia* under the above-mentioned Articles of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. According to the SBU, they "facilitated the seizure of property of Ukrainian

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<sup>203</sup> <https://ria.ru/20231104/obvinienie-1907398425.html>

churches" on the left bank of the Kherson Oblast, as well as in Crimea, Zaporozhye and the LPR".<sup>204</sup>

On 22 April 2025, the SBU announced *in absentia* suspicion of 14 ROC clergymen, i.e. Metropolitan Artemy of Khabarovsk and Priamurye, Bishop Methodius of Kamensk and Kamyshlov, Metropolitan Ambrose of Tver and Kashin, retired Metropolitan Leonid (Gorbachev), who previously served as the Patriarchal Exarch of Africa, Archbishop Feodor of Petropavlovsk and Kamchatka, Bishop Peter of Kalachinsk and Muromtsev, Metropolitan Lev of Novgorod and Staraya Russa, Metropolitan Arseny of Lipetsk and Zadonsk, Metropolitan Kirill of Kazan and Tatarstan, Bishop of Severobaikalsk and Sosново-Ozersk Nikolai, Archbishop Ipaty of Anadyr and Chukotka, Bishop Hilarion of Kineshma and Palekh, Bishop Tarasy of Severomorsk and Umba, Archbishop Arkady of Rovenkovsky and Sverdlovsk. The bishops are accused of the fact that, as members of the Synod in 2022-2024, they "arranged the Synod's decision to join" the UOC's Dzhankoy, Berdyansk, Rovenki and Kherson dioceses to the ROC and appointed "Moscow-controlled" bishops there.<sup>205</sup>

At the background of preparation to the adoption of the outrageous law on the complete ban of the UOC in Ukraine, repressions against the UOC clergymen and parishes stepped up. Mass media informed that the SBU carried out arrests and searches of journalists working for church or church-related media outlets – the Union of Orthodox Journalists, Pervy Kozatski as well as human rights defenders and public activists, including representatives of the Miryane Public Organisation and the Centre for Legal Defence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

On 12 March 2024, the SBU carried out searches of the Union of Orthodox Journalists and brought charges against fourteen of its employees

<sup>204</sup> <https://news.tek.fm/news/225951>

<sup>205</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/85936-sbu-zaочно-objavila-podozrenie-14-svjashchennosluzhiteljam-rpts>

under various articles of the Criminal Code of Ukraine ("high treason," "collaboration," "creation of and participation in a criminal organisation," "incitement of religious hostility and hatred committed by an organized group") and detained four of them: Andrey Ovcharenko, Valery Stupnitsky, Vladimir Bobechko and Archpriest Sergey Chertilin. In August 2024, Chertilin was released from the Kiev pre-trial detention centre on bail, and in September and November, Bobechko as well as Ovcharenko and Stupnitsky were released, correspondingly. The trial against them continues.

At the same time, the SBU press service cynically reported on a special operation conducted to "liquidate the largest agent network in Ukraine since the beginning of the full-scale invasion". Ukrainian special services accused those arrested of working for the "aggressor," having ties to Russian special services, high treason, and participating in a criminal group. However, according to the lawyers of the detained orthodox activists, the real reason was that they had reported the truth about the crimes of the Kiev regime and the nationalists under its control against the followers of the canonical UOC. In particular, it was reported that representatives of the splinter church of Ukraine staged the seizure of the Church of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin of the canonical church in the Volyn Oblast. Orthodox journalists also reported on arrests and persecution of clergy. Among such facts is the detention by the SBU of the archpriest of the Khust diocese of the canonical church in the Zakarpatye Oblast, Father Johannes, and his lawyer Nikolay Krail. After these and many other unsightly stories of persecution of believers of the canonical church were made public, the Ukrainian special services arrested the journalists themselves.<sup>206</sup>

Another reason for the persecution of Orthodox journalists by the Kiev authorities was the "Empty Churches of Ukraine: What is happening with the captured UOC churches" documentary. The film shows that the churches that the OCU took away from the UOC believers are empty – Ukrainians do not go

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<sup>206</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/unichtozhenie-pravoslaviya-na-ukraine-teper-po-zakonu-chast-1.html>

to pray in the captured churches. It turns out that "nobody needs captured temples – not even the invaders themselves".<sup>207</sup> The abovementioned film only confirms the opinion expressed by experts about the shortage of both personnel and parishioners in the OCU.<sup>208</sup>

In early June 2024, the SBU sent letters to the diocesan bishops of the UOC, in which it demanded that the hierarchs of the canonical church provide data about all churches and property under the jurisdiction of diocesan administrations, and the personal data of all persons responsible for their storage. In addition, they were ordered to provide information about religious organisations under the jurisdiction of the diocese.<sup>209</sup>

On 4 June 2024, the SBU reported that it blocked the distribution channel of "anti-Ukrainian literature" in the UOC church shops in four cities of the country – Uzhgorod, Zhitomir, Nikolaev and Kiev.<sup>210</sup> The confiscated products included publications that allegedly promoted religious intolerance and justified the Russian special military operation.

A separate area of repressive measures by the Kiev authorities against the canonical church has been attempts to confiscate church property and monastery complexes. Zelenskiy's regime continues to take steps to establish control over the country's main shrine, a UNESCO World Heritage Site – the Kiev Pechersk Lavra. At the beginning of 2023, the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine terminated the lease agreement with the UOC for part of the Lavra buildings. After that, the clergy of the canonical church were not allowed into these premises to conduct

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<sup>207</sup> <https://antifashist.online/item/uzniki-sovesti-ukrainskim-pravoslavnym-zhurnalistam-predyavili-novye-obvineniya.html>

<sup>208</sup> See the already mentioned study: Melnikov S.A., P.V. Lebedev, V.A. Begdash. Chronicle of the "Black Decade". Religious Persecution in Ukraine 2014 – 2023. Moscow, 2023. p. 199. The monograph can be found on the website of the Russian Association for the Defence of Religious Freedom: <https://religsvoboda.ru/content/doklad-rars-hronika-chernogo-desyatiletia-religioznye-goneniya-na-ukraine-2014-2023-g>

<sup>209</sup> <https://spzh.live/ru/news/80576-sbu-trebuetsya-ot-ierarkhov-uups-vse-dannye-o-khramakh-i-imushchestve-eparkhii>

<sup>210</sup> <https://tass.ru/proisshestviya/20991069>



the Christmas service. Instead, representatives of the OCU were demonstratively brought in.



*The believers of the UOC at the liturgy on the square near the Church of the Exaltation of the Cross of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra on 19 March 2023.*

Source: <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/tysyachi-lyudey-prishli-na-liturgiyu-v-kievo-pecherskuyu-lavru>

Since March 2023, Ukrainian security forces began to regularly put pressure on the monks. In early July 2023, the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture demanded that the monks vacate five buildings of the Lower Lavra, the territory of which was under the jurisdiction of the UOC. In case of refusal, representatives of the ministry threatened to replace the locks and seal the buildings.



*Believers gathered to protect the Church of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin (operates as an academic church and reports directly to the rector of the Kiev Theological Academy and Seminary) on the territory of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra. 30 March 2023.*

*Photo by: Ukrainian Orthodox Church*

*Source: <https://news.church.ua/2023/03/30/kijivska-duhovna-akademiya-povidomila-pro-sprobu-provokacii-navkolo-akademichnogo-xramu/>*

On 20 May 2023, acting Minister of Culture of Ukraine Rostislav Karandeyev threatened to use force to evict the monks of the UOC from the territory of the Lower Lavra, since, according to him, they stayed there illegally. The monks of the canonical church were given a month to do this voluntarily.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> <https://pravfond.ru/press-tsentr/v-ministerstve-kultury-ukrainy-prigrozili-siloy-vyselit-monakhov-upts-iz-nizhney-lavry/>





*Hundreds of believers gathered in the Kiev Pechersk Lavra to defend their holy sites. Liturgy on the square near the Church of the Exaltation of the Cross.*

*Photo by: REUTERS.*

*Source: <https://www.kp.ru/daily/27484/4740415/>*



*Head of the canonical UOC Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine surrounded by the faithful after the liturgy on the square near the Church of the Exaltation of the Cross of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra on 19 March 2023.*

*Source: <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/tysyachi-lyudey-prishli-na-liturgiyu-v-kievo-pecherskuyu-lavru>*

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.<sup>212</sup>

On 11 August 2023, 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.<sup>213</sup>

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.<sup>214</sup>

On 15 August 2024 it became known that the directorate of the Kiev-Pechersk Historical and Cultural Reserve sealed the Church of the Life-bearing Spring in Lavra, closing the parishioners access to the shrine. The church itself was closed.<sup>215</sup> Director General of the reserve Maksim Ostapenko explained the sealing of the church by the fact that the church is allegedly "state property". At the same time, he said that the contract with the monastery of the UOC Reserve "unilaterally cancelled".<sup>216</sup>

On 6 December 2024, the "Day of the Armed Forces of Ukraine", Vladimir Zelenskiy arranged a "military prayer breakfast" in the Refectory Church of Kiev-Pechersk Lavra with his own speech and its broadcast on large screens inside the church, which covered part of the icons. This buffet was

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<sup>212</sup> <https://ria.ru/amp/20230810/lavra-1889366070.html>

<sup>213</sup> <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>

<sup>214</sup> <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-kyiv/3760404-u-niznij-lavri-pid-kontrol-zapovidnika-povernuli-vze-13-obektiv.html>

<sup>215</sup> <https://lavra.ua/lavrs kij-hram-by l-o pechatan-i-otobran-u-bratii-lavry>

<sup>216</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/ministerstvo-kultury-ukrainy-otobralo-u-upc-hram-zhivonosnogo-istochnika-v-kievo-pecherskoj-lavre.html>

attended by the "head" of the OCU Epiphanius, the bishop of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) Vitaly Krivitsky, representatives of Protestant denominations, Muslims and representatives of other religious organisations.<sup>217</sup>

On 15 December 2024 in this temple were held a cooking show of chef and restaurateur Yevgeny Klopotenko<sup>218</sup>, as well as "folklore-academic" concert "Christmas – New Style" with the participation of Ukrainian folklore-ethnographic song and dance ensemble "Kalina" and ensemble "Blagovest".<sup>219</sup>

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, 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.<sup>220</sup>

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

<sup>217</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/83406-zelenskij-ustroil-voennyj-zavtrak-v-trapeznom-khrame-lavry>

<sup>218</sup> <https://iz.ru/1807603/2024-12-15/ukrainskii-sef-povar-ustroil-kulinarnoe-sou-v-kievo-pecerskoi-lavre>

<sup>219</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/83563-ansambl-pesni-i-pljaski-vystupil-v-trapeznom-khramy-lavry>

<sup>220</sup> <https://360tv.ru/news/obschestvo/vlasti-ukrainy-natselilis-na-zahvat-pochaevskoj-lavry-smi/>



Oblasts: Ternopol, Khmelnytskyi and Rivne. At the place of gathering of believers in the cathedral in Kamenets-Podolskyi in the Khmelnytskyi Oblast, parishioners and clergy were faced with police. The law enforcers also tried to serve summonses to men of conscription age.<sup>221</sup>

On 17 April 2024, the Ternopol City Council decided to deprive the UOC of land in the city, as a result of which the Ternopol diocese of the UOC lost control over the site where the Cathedral of the canonical church is located. In the same month, the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Information Policy set up a commission to check the use of facilities in Pochaev Lavra.<sup>222</sup> In November 2023, the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) conducted searches in the monastery. And on 5 June 2024, it came to light that a commission of the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine with the support of the SBU began its work in Pochaev Lavra.<sup>223</sup> According to experts, these actions indicate the beginning of the seizure of the monastery and its property.

On 14 August 2024, the Economic Court of Ternopol Oblast decided to expropriate the complex of premises of Pochaev St. Dukhov Monastery, a skit of the UOC, belonging to it. On 31 October 2024, the Western Court of Appeal in Lviv dismissed the appeal and upheld the decision.<sup>224</sup>

It is known about the efforts of the Kiev regime to seize other monasteries of the UOC with giving these actions the appearance of legality. On 5 July 2024, the Economic Court of Appeal in Kiev, following a lawsuit filed by the National Architectural and Historical Reserve "Ancient Chernihiv", ruled that the administration of the Chernihiv diocese of the canonical UOC has no right to be on the territory of the Eletsy monastery, and ordered the clergy to leave the monastery. In autumn 2023, a commission of the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture announced the start of work on the transfer to state ownership of the

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<sup>221</sup> <https://www.1tv.ru/news/2023-08-19/459560-vlasti-ternopolskoy-hmelnitskoy-i-rovenskoy-oblastey-zapretili-krestnyy-hod-k-pochaevskoy-lavre>

<sup>222</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5952188>

<sup>223</sup> <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/20999583>

<sup>224</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/82792-apelljatsionnyj-sud-otdal-skit-pochaevskoj-lavry-hosudarstvu>

objects of the reserve "Ancient Chernigov", the list of which included the temples that were in the use of the canonical church.<sup>225</sup> In March 2024, the acting director general of the reserve, Vladimir Khomich, demanded that the UOC vacate the Trinity and Eletsy monasteries, as well as the Transfiguration Cathedral in Chernigov.<sup>226</sup>

As part of the Kiev regime's actions to alienate monasteries belonging to the UOC, efforts have been made to seize Orthodox shrines, including relics of saints, and items of church decoration, which the current authorities of the country, who are voluntarily selling off their history, regard as artifacts whose value is determined not by history and tradition, but by their auction value. In June 2023, the media reported that the Ukrainian authorities had agreed with UNESCO to export ancient icons and relics of saints from the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra to museums in Europe "for their preservation". It is known that the oldest Byzantine icons that were secretly taken out of the country, allegedly with the mediation of the above-mentioned United Nations agency and the Swiss NGO International Alliance for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Conflict Zones, were exhibited in the Louvre Museum in Paris. After that, it was reported that agreements had been reached on the removal of relics of Orthodox saints from Lavra. At the same time, the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine called them just "exhibits". It was assumed that the ancient objects of Orthodox art, which had been stolen with the consent of the Kiev regime, could have been used as a means of payment for Western arms supplies<sup>227</sup>. In this situation, the bigger question is not even for Kiev – everything is clear with it, sooner or later it will face the court of history, but what will Paris do when everything is over and it will have to give an account for its wrongful actions, including indulging in the persecution of believers and clerics?

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<sup>225</sup> <https://ruskiymir.ru/news/326748/>

<sup>226</sup> <https://spzh.live/ru/news/72173-upts-objazali-osvobodit-rjad-khramov-i-monastyrej-chernihova>

<sup>227</sup> <https://www.pravda.ru/world/1852040-moschi/>

In November 2023, the director of the National Reserve "Kiev-Pechersk Lavra", Maksim Ostapenko, tried to somehow offset the criticism of the international community, he told journalists: "The Ministry of Culture together with specialists from various sectors will conduct an expert examination, check these shrines for authenticity. We want to avoid any accusations that we keep the wrong shrines or that the shrines have been stolen". On 31 March 2024, a representative of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, Marianna Tomin, supported this line, stating the department's plans to conduct an inventory of the relics of the Kiev-Pechersk Monks, located in the caves of the Lavra, which she called "unburied remains of the saints". It is planned to involve anthropologists, military chaplains, and archaeologists in the work, she said. The situation is aggravated by the fact that UOC clergymen are not allowed to participate in these actions, because according to the provisions of Ukrainian legislation on military chaplains, adopted in December 2021, priests of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church are forbidden to be chaplains, only priests of the UGCC or schismatics from the OCU can be chaplains. Accordingly, they are also authorised to carry out this "examination of the unburied remains" of Orthodox saints. Representatives of both denominations have previously repeatedly stated that "wrong" remains – that is, the relics of "Russian saints" – rest in the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra. Since several "wrong" saints have been removed from sainthood by the OCU, experts believe that it is quite likely that the relics of saints who do not meet Ukrainian criteria of patriotism will be taken out of the Lavra.<sup>228</sup>

On 5 March 2025, by order of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine was established a commission "to verify the historical and scientific value of the remains of the saints", located in the caves of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra. Its composition, as announced earlier, included the holder of numerous awards of

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<sup>228</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/svyatye-po-shodnoj-cene-ukrainskoe-ministerstvo-kultury-sobiraetsya-proverit-moshhi-v-kievo-pecherskoj-lavre-na-ih-ukrainskost.html>



false patriarch Philaret and the OCU – Doctor of Veterinary Sciences, head of the Department of Vertebrate Biomorphology of the National University of Bioresources and Nature Management of Ukraine Oleg Melnik, head of the Department of Human Anatomy of Odessa Medical University Elena Appelhans, professor of the Department of Anatomy of Vinnitsa University Yuriy Guminsky, head of the Department of Military Surgery of the Ukrainian Military Medical Academy Sergey Korol, professor of the Department of Public Health and Nutritiology Gennady Tkach and others. These people are hardly directly related to culture and religion. Therefore, there is every reason to believe that their conclusions will be corresponding. In fact, under the leadership of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, a process of systematic looting and destruction of values of special significance for the entire Orthodox and Christian world has actually begun.

On 28 March 2025, during Lent, members of the commission, accompanied by the police, broke into the Near and Far Caves of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, replaced the locks, sealed part of the premises. They intend to open the reliquaries of the saints in the Near Caves of Kiev-Pechersk Lavra and take samples for DNA-expertise. The commission will work in the Lavra until the end of May.<sup>229</sup>

According to Verkhovna Rada deputy Aleksandr Dubinskiy, who is currently imprisoned for his allegedly "pro-Russian views", the main goal of the commission set up by the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture is to seize the relics of Ilya Muromets and send them to Great Britain for examination. The result of the "research" should be the conclusion that Ilya Muromets is not a Slav, but a Finn, therefore, the basis of the Russian ethnos – Finno-Ugric tribes, not the Slavs, which "proves" the lack of connection between Kievan Rus' and Moscow.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/zashhita-very/85618-koshchunstvo-vlasti-v-lavre-zachem-anatomy-i-veterinary-izuchajut-moshchi-svjatykh>

<sup>230</sup> <https://t.me/dubinskypro/21021>, <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2025/04/22/moshchi-ili-muromca-poedut-iz-kievo-pecherskoy-lavry-na-ekspertizu-v-britaniyu-nardep>

Precedents of carrying out inventory of remains have already taken place. On 5 October 2023, the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine confiscated from the Chernigov Holy Trinity Cathedral of the UOC the relics of three saints: St. Theodosius, St. Philaret and St. Lawrence of Chernigov. At present there is no information whether the relics are still in the Holy Trinity Cathedral, nor is it known whether they were damaged by the workers of the Ukrainian department during the unexpected seizure of the cathedral and afterwards. The National Architectural and Historical Reserve "Ancient Chernigov" does not have any documents on the "inventory" of the relics of St. Philaret and St. Lawrence.<sup>231</sup>

The fact that the Kiev regime is considering the possibility of using the relics of Orthodox saints as a "bargaining chip" is also indicated by an article published in the Romanian patriarchate's publication *Basilica* in October 2023, entitled "Ukraine is ready to offer Romanians the relics of St. Theodora in exchange for the remains of national heroes".<sup>232</sup> The article refers to unofficial agreements between the governments of Romania and Ukraine to search for the relics of St. Theodora Sihlovskaya, which, as Romanian researchers suggest, may be in the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, in order to exchange them for the remains of Hetmans Orlik and Mazepa buried on Romanian territory.

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. Amid efforts to seize the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, its vicar, Metropolitan Pavel (Lebed) of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl, was charged with "denial of Russian aggression". In mid-July 2023, he was placed in a detention centre and released on 7 August 2023 after posting bail (almost \$1 million, which was

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<sup>231</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/svyatye-po-shodnoj-cene-ukrainskoe-ministerstvo-kultury-sobiraetsya-proverit-moshhi-v-kievo-pecherskoj-lavre-na-ih-ukrainskost.html>

<sup>232</sup> <https://basilica.ro/ucraina-dispusa-sa-ofere-romanilor-moastele-sfintei-teodora-la-schimb-cu-ramasitele-unor-eroi-nationali/>, <https://antifashist.online/item/besovshhina-prodolzhaetsya-sbu-provodit-obyski-v-pravoslavnyh-hramah-a-moshhi-svyatyh-v-kievo-pecherskoj-lavre-budut-proveryat-na-podlinnost.html>

raised with the participation of more than a thousand people).<sup>233</sup> The criminal case against the Metropolitan is still pending. On 21 August 2024, the court once again extended the clergyman's measure of restraint in the form of bail, the hearing on the merits of the case was postponed. During the court session, Metropolitan Pavel became ill and was hospitalised. The cleric's lawyer Archpriest N. Chekman drew attention to the inappropriate behaviour of journalists from the channels "1+1", "Suspilne" and a number of others, who, despite the requests of the cleric's defenders and security guards to leave the room, continued to film the process of providing medical care to the priest.<sup>234</sup>



*Metropolitan of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl Pavel, the vicar of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, speaks to the faithful and the media on the territory of the Lavra, 30 March 2023.*

*Photo: Valentyn Ogirenko / Reuters*

*Source: <https://lenta.ru/articles/2023/04/08/lavra/>*

<sup>233</sup> [https://risu.us/ru/vosstanavlivaetsya-posle-operacii-advokat-o-sostoyanii-mitropolita-pavla-lebedya\\_n141809](https://risu.us/ru/vosstanavlivaetsya-posle-operacii-advokat-o-sostoyanii-mitropolita-pavla-lebedya_n141809)

<sup>234</sup> <https://spzh.live/ru/news/81727-vladyku-pavla-hospitalizirovali-prjamo-vo-vremja-zasedaniya-suda-advokat>

Repressions against other hierarchs and clerics of the UOC also began. Metropolitan Theodosius (Snegirev) of Cherkassy, Metropolitan Ioasaph (Gubenya), former Metropolitan of Kirovograd and Novomirgorod and now Metropolitan of Vasilkov, Metropolitan Jonathan (Eletsikh) of Tulchyn and Bratslav, Metropolitan Pavel (Lebed) of Vyshgorod and others have been subjected to criminal prosecution on charges of "inciting religious discord" since 2022.

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, in the 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.<sup>235</sup>

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)<sup>236</sup> 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 the Chernovtsy 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. During 2023-2024, the SBU repeatedly came to his monastery with searches, which was accompanied by insulting and violent actions against the abbot. By decision of the Synod of the UOC on 25 September 2023, Father Longin was dismissed from the position of Vicar of

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<sup>235</sup> <https://rusk.ru/newsdata.php?idar=116887>

<sup>236</sup> <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>



the Banchen Monastery.<sup>237</sup> On 22 January 2024, he was beaten in his own home.<sup>238</sup>

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".<sup>239</sup>

In February 2024, the Archdeacon of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra Pavel (Muzychuk) was persecuted, accused of justifying "the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine" and imprisoned in a pre-trial detention centre. The Solomenskiy District Court of Kiev released him on bail in the amount of 121,000 grivnas, with the mandatory wearing of an electronic bracelet. Archdeacon Pavel of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra 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.<sup>240</sup>

Metropolitan Feodosiy (Snegirev) was arrested in April 2024 on charges of "inciting inter-confessional discord" (Article 161 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine), as well as "justification of aggression". The cleric faced four more absurd charges, including religious discrimination. Before the next court session on his case in Cherkassy, Ukrainian activists organised an action of disgustingly immoral content: they spread a Russian flag with a printed portrait of Patriarch Kirill on the ground in front of the narrow passage to the courthouse. Metropolitan Theodosius refused to follow them and asked them to remove the flag. But under the onslaught of nationalists he still had to walk to the

<sup>237</sup> <https://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/2245564?ysclid=machmdm1sj278996538>

<sup>238</sup> <https://radonezh.ru/2024/02/06/na-ukraine-neizvestnye-izbili-mitropolita-banchenskogo-longina>

<sup>239</sup> <https://informator.ua/uk/sbu-oglosila-pro-pidozru-mitropolitu-upc-mp-yakiy-blagosloviv-priyednannya-luganska-do-rf>

<sup>240</sup> Report of the Foundation for Humanitarian Economic Co-operation "On the persecution of dissidents and political repression in Ukraine" (December 2023 – February 2024)

courthouse.<sup>241</sup> On 8 July 2024 he had a heart attack.<sup>242</sup> His relatives and friends are sure that this was the result of pressure to which the clergyman was subjected by the SBU. Until March 2025, by decision of the Sosnovsky district court, he was under overnight house arrest, after which he was appointed a measure of restraint in the form of personal commitment.



*Metropolitan Theodosius with the faithful on the porch of the UOC cathedral in Cherkassy.*

*Photo: /t.me/Cherkasy\_Blagovest*

*Source: <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/82566-sbu-trebuets-usilit-arest-mitropolitu-feodosiju>*

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.<sup>243,244</sup>

<sup>241</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/v-cherkassah-pered-zdaniem-suda-raskolniki-pcu-ustroili-bozhij-sud-mitropolitu-upc-feodosiyu.html>

<sup>242</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/u-mitropolita-ukrainskoj-pravoslavnoj-cerkvi-feodosiya-serdechnyj-pristup-sudit-ego-budut-posle-vyzdorovleniya.html>

<sup>243</sup> [https://risu.ua/ru/sbu-soobshchila-o-podozrenii-proti-episkopa-upc-mp-nikolaju-danilevichu\\_n147559](https://risu.ua/ru/sbu-soobshchila-o-podozrenii-proti-episkopa-upc-mp-nikolaju-danilevichu_n147559)

<sup>244</sup> <https://spzh.live/ru/news/79686-k-zamhlavy-ovtss-upts-proti-episkopa-nikolaju-danilevichu-prishli-s-obyskom>

Metropolitan Arseny (Yakovenko), the vicar of the Holy Assumption Svyatogorsk Lavra, has been under arrest since 24 April 2024. His arrest has been repeatedly extended. The reason for the persecution was a sermon he delivered in 2018, during which he revealed the truth that in 2014 the Ukrainian Armed Forces shelled Slavyansk and allegedly gave the addresses of Ukrainian troops' roadblocks to the parishioners during the liturgy.<sup>245</sup> Metropolitan Arseny himself has been in Donetsk region since the beginning of the conflict. It is also known that he was tortured: an elderly man with health problems was driven from the Dnepropetrovsk pre-trial detention centre to Slavyansk and back every day for at least 15 hours in both directions without water or food. On 9 July 2024, during the next hearing in the case against him, despite the defence's motion and the abnormal heat in the room, the judge did not allow Metropolitan Arseny to be taken out of the glass box to sit next to his defence counsel.<sup>246</sup> These tortures forced Metropolitan Arseny to ask the court to allow him to participate via video link or at least not to schedule hearings on two consecutive days. But the court, whose impartiality is clearly not present, refused to stop the torture.<sup>247</sup> On 30 January 2025, the court once again extended his detention.

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<sup>245</sup> [https://risu.ua/ru/sbu-soobshchila-o-podozrenii-mitropolitu-svyatogorskoj-lavry-vydal-vragu-pozicii-vsua\\_n147798](https://risu.ua/ru/sbu-soobshchila-o-podozrenii-mitropolitu-svyatogorskoj-lavry-vydal-vragu-pozicii-vsua_n147798)

<sup>246</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/uzniki-sovesti-mitropolita-arseniya-sudyat-za-pravdu-ob-obstrelah-slavyanska.html>

<sup>247</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/unichtozhenie-pravoslaviya-na-ukraine-teper-po-zakonu-chast-1.html>.



*Metropolitan Arseny, vicar of the Sviatogorsk Lavra, after commemorating the 71<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the end of the Great Patriotic War with a procession to the city's memorial complex – the Hill of Glory – and a memorial service, laying a wreath at the monument to the fallen soldiers. 10 May 2016.*

*Photo: Svyatogorsk Lavra.*

*Source: <https://pravlife.org/ru/content/mitropolit-arseniy-narod-pobedil-v-voyne-potomu-chto-lyudi-ostalis-lyudmi>*

Metropolitan Luka (Kovalenko) of Zaporozhye and Melitopol was also subjected to repression by the Kiev regime. According to the mass media, he became Zelenskiy's personal enemy when he demanded the removal of blasphemous stories by the Kvartal 95 studio, which contained jokes about how much one should pay for humiliating and attacking priests. On 1 May 2024, the SBU searched his house.<sup>248</sup> Metropolitan Luke is accused of "publicly and actively lobbying the position of the Russian Orthodox Church", he is also suspected of "anti-Ukrainian activities" and incitement of religious hatred.<sup>249</sup>

<sup>248</sup> <https://iz.ru/1690315/2024-05-01/smi-soobshchili-ob-obyskakh-sbu-u-mitropolita-uptc-zaporozhskogo-i-melitopolskogo-luki>

<sup>249</sup> <https://rg.ru/2024/05/01/upc-mitropolita-zaporozhskogo-i-melitopolskogo-luku-obvinili-v-sviazhah-s-rpc.html>



Allegedly in his phone found messages with prayers for Moscow.<sup>250</sup> On 7 May 2024, he was elected a measure of restraint in the form of night house arrest and wearing an electronic monitoring device.

On 1 August 2024, the SBU detained the rector of one of the UOC churches in Kharkov on suspicion of "adjusting strikes on critical infrastructure".

On 19 September 2024, the SBU reported suspicion of the archimandrite of the Vvedensky monastery of the UOC in Kiev in connection with his publications in social networks. He faces up to 5 years in prison with confiscation of property for "justification and denial of Russian aggression".<sup>251</sup>

On 30 December 2024, the SBU announced suspicion of the former Metropolitan of Izium and Kupyansk Elisey (who is in Russia) on charges of "justification of Russian armed aggression and glorification of its participants".<sup>252</sup>

On 18 January 2025, The Prosecutor-General's Office of Ukraine has charged former Verkhovnaya Rada MP and protodeacon of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Vadim Novinsky with suspicion of state treason and "violation of equal rights of citizens depending on their race, nationality, regional affiliation and religious beliefs". He is accused of spreading since 2014 "Kremlin narratives", "the ideology of the Russian World" and the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church, and "incitement of hatred and hostility on religious grounds".<sup>253</sup>

The Kiev authorities, while continuing to persecute UOC clergy, have begun to pass sentences in the criminal cases they have stamped on Orthodox priests. The first conviction of a UOC clergyman was handed down in May 2023. The Leninsky District Court of Kirovograd sentenced Metropolitan

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<sup>250</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2024/05/1/7453725/index.amp>

<sup>251</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2024/09/19/7475809>

<sup>252</sup> <https://nv.ua/ukraine/events/mitropolit-moskovskogo-patriarhata-prizval-podderzhivat-rossiyu-v-harkovskoy-oblasti-50478025.html>

<sup>253</sup> [https://risu.ua/ru/sbu-i-gbr-obyavili-podozrenie-diaconu-upc-mp-vadimu-novinskomu\\_n153659](https://risu.ua/ru/sbu-i-gbr-obyavili-podozrenie-diaconu-upc-mp-vadimu-novinskomu_n153659)

Ioasaph (Gubenya) and Roman Kondratyuk, the secretary of the diocese, to three years. The priests were found guilty of "inciting religious discord".<sup>254</sup>

On 7 August 2023, the head of the Tulchin diocese of the UOC, 75-year-old Metropolitan Ionafan (Eletsikh), was sentenced to five years in prison "for publicly justifying armed aggression against Ukraine". On 11 August, the Vinnitsia prosecutor's office expressed its displeasure with the fact that instead of six years the hierarch was sentenced to five years in prison.<sup>255</sup> On 22 June 2024, as a result of negotiations, the clergyman was released at the request of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, after which he arrived in Russia.

On 13 February 2024, a court in the Dnepropetrovsk Oblast sentenced the rector of a church of the local diocese of the UOC to five years in prison in a case of justification of Russian aggression.<sup>256</sup>

On 18 December 2024, the Kalinovsky District Court sentenced a priest of the Vinnitsia diocese of the UOC, Archpriest Yevgueni Koshelnik, to 5 years' imprisonment in a politicised criminal case for "supporting the SMO" in Internet publications.<sup>257</sup>

Another form of pressure on the canonical church was the forced mobilisation of priests by the Kiev regime. A number of such unprecedented cases came to light.

On 14 March 2024, SBU officers detained and took Ioann Rozman, archpriest of the Khust diocese of the UOC in the Transcarpathian Oblast, to an unknown destination. Later he was forcibly drafted for military service.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> <https://360tv.ru/news/mir/mitropolitu-upts-dali-tri-goda-tjurmy-na-ukraine/>

<sup>255</sup> <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/18462289?ysclid=lmgs853axa989219718>, <https://iz.ru/1557646/elena-vasileva/opechatnoe-slovo-v-kieve-nachalsia-silovoi-zakhvat-lavry>

<sup>256</sup> <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/prigovor-svyashenniku-upz-mp/32817825.html>

<sup>257</sup> <https://rg.ru/2024/12/18/na-ukraine-svishchennika-kanonicheskoy-upc-osudili-na-piat-let-tiurmy.html>

<sup>258</sup> <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/20304779>

On 31 August 2024, Archimandrite Varlaam (Didenko), vicar of the Spaso-Preobrazhensky Monastery in the village of Tereblya, Tyachev District, of the Transcarpathian Oblast, was forcibly drafted.<sup>259</sup>

On 23 September 2024, in the Zakarpatye Oblast, TCC officers attempted to kidnap Father Vasily and Father Stepan in order to draft them during their divine service in the Church of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Khust, but the faithful managed to fight them off.

On 1 October 2024, as part of the forced mobilisation by the TCC representatives in Kremenets, the Ternopol Oblast, a UOC priest, Father Ioan Polishchuk, was detained. The TCC officers used physical force and psychological pressure on him, after which he was sent to the Uzhgorod military training ground.<sup>260</sup>

On 8 October 2024, employees of the TCC in Kiev abducted and took Father Ioann Krysia to the commission for further sending to the front.<sup>261</sup>

On 25 October 2024, Father Piotr Cholak, dean of the Novovolynsky District of the Vladimir-Volyn diocese, was forcibly drafted in Lutsk.<sup>262</sup>

On 2 November 2024, 54-year-old Archpriest Oleg Melnik of the UOC was forcibly drafted in the Ternopol Oblast. For more than a day he was held in the TCC without food and subjected to beatings. After his release he was diagnosed with a broken rib.<sup>263</sup>

On 13 November 2024, 68-year-old Archpriest Demetrius Sidor, the rector of the UOC Cathedral of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Uzhgorod, was served with a summons for mobilisation to the AFU.<sup>264</sup>

On 25 January 2025, Archimandrite Bogdan, the vicar of the UOC monastery in honour of the Mother of God Skoroposlushnitsa, located in the

<sup>259</sup> <https://ua-reporter.com/news/v/zakarpate-tck-prinuditelno-mobilizoval-arhimandrita-monastyrya-upc>

<sup>260</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/82317-v-ttsk-k-ottsu-ioannu-polishchuku-primenjajut-fizicheskiju-silu-svjashchennik-upts>

<sup>261</sup> <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/22071625>

<sup>262</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/82815-na-volyni-mobilizovali-eshche-odnoho-svjashchennika-upts>

<sup>263</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/82833->

<sup>264</sup> <https://iz.ru/1604568/2023-11-13/na-ukraine-68-letnij-svjashchennik-poluchil-povestku>

village of Babai, Kharkov diocese, was detained. After that, TCC officers tried to enrol him in several military units, but they did not accept him because the priest refuses to take up arms due to his religious beliefs.<sup>265</sup>

According to experts, the threats to mobilise UOC priests are aimed at forcing the clergy to switch to the OCU, as the schismatics and Uniates of the UGCC have a "reservation" from mobilisation.

In total, according to the SBU, from February 2022 to the end of August 2024, more than 100 criminal cases were opened against UOC clerics, 50 hierarchs and clerics were served notices of suspicion, and 26 of them were convicted. In addition, 19 priests were deprived of citizenship for conducting "pro-Russian propaganda".<sup>266</sup>

The actions of schismatics to seize churches by force and destroy them continue and even escalate. Also, the activists of the OCU use a fraudulent scheme, when meetings are held at which completely unauthorised people vote and make decisions on behalf of the religious community. And then the local authorities on the basis of these "decisions" transfer the churches of the UOC to the structure of the OCU. Including the seizure of the Church of the Apostles Peter and Paul in the village of Horov, in the Rovno Oblast, on 6 June 2023, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the village of Uladovka, in the Vinnitsa Oblast, on 20 June 2023, the Archangel Michael in the village of Belogorodka, in the 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 Neteshin, in the Khmelnytskyi Oblast, on 27 July 2023.

On 21 August 2023, in the village of Khaliavin in the 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.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/84271-v-kharkovskoj-oblasti-ttsk-pytaetsja-mobilizovat-namestnika-monastyrja-upts>

<sup>266</sup> <https://suspilne.media/amp/817893-sbu-rozpovila-skilki-karnih-sprav-poruseno-sodo-svasennikiv-upc-mp>

<sup>267</sup> <https://iz.ru/1562132/2023-08-21/khram-kanonicheskoi-upc-pochti-polnostiu-sgoresl-pod-chernigovom-posle-podzhoga>

22 August 2023, the Khmelnytskyi diocese of the UOC reported that activists of the OCU seized two temples of the canonical church in the Khmelnytskyi Oblast – St. Nicholas Church in the village of Mytintsy and St. Ioann 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.<sup>268</sup>

On 4 September 2023, police broke into the Holy Epiphany Nunnery in the 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.<sup>269</sup>

In early January 2024, there was a forceful seizure of the Kazan Church of the UOC in the town of Ladyzhin in the Vinnitsa Oblast. During the seizure, raiders from among the followers of the OCU beat the priest and parishioners.<sup>270</sup>

On the night of 10 January 2024, in the village of Lesniki in the 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 the 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.<sup>271</sup>

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 the Khmelnytskyi Oblast. Besides "athletic" men, the deputy of the Khmelnytskyi district council Aleksandr Chernievich and deputies of Krasilov city council took part in this seizure.

<sup>268</sup> <https://iz.ru/1562558/2023-08-22/storonniki-ptcu-zakhvatili-dva-khrama-uptc-v-khmelnitckoi-oblasti?ysclid=lmgpw5jtit524131723>

<sup>269</sup> [https://www.1tv.ru/news/2023-09-04/460551-na\\_ukraine\\_politsiya\\_vorvalas\\_v\\_svyato\\_bogoyavlenskiy\\_zhenskiy\\_monastyr](https://www.1tv.ru/news/2023-09-04/460551-na_ukraine_politsiya_vorvalas_v_svyato_bogoyavlenskiy_zhenskiy_monastyr)

<sup>270</sup> <https://t.me/stranaua/139396>

<sup>271</sup> <https://spzh.media/ru/news/77932-v-sele-pishcha-na-volyni-storonniki-ptsu-zakhvatili-kazanskij-khram-upts>

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 the Volyn Oblast were recorded. The UOC believers managed to defend it.<sup>272</sup>

On 27 January 2024, after a church service in the UOC church in the village of Pecheskoye in the Khmelnytskyi Oblast, local supporters of the OCU took possession of the church premises in the absence of police officers. They pushed the rector Archpriest Mikhail Furman and Archpriest Vitaly Duntz, dean of Krasilov District, out of the church.

On 14 March 2024, activists of the OCU broke down the door of the St. George Church of the UOC in Kotsiubinskoye, in the Kiev Oblast, kicked out its rector and, against the resistance of the parishioners, introduced a cleric of the schismatic OCU into the church.<sup>273</sup>

On the night of 27 April 2024 in the Kirovograd Oblast of Ukraine, unknown persons set fire to the prayer house of the UOC, where believers had been praying after the church of the Dormition of the Mother of God in the village of Korobchino was seized by schismatics in 2022. The fire destroyed the walls, a temporary shrine and altar.<sup>274</sup>

On 8 May 2024, raiders of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine seized the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the village of Chernoguz, Chernovtsy Oblast. Parishioners of the church, who tried to defend their sanctuary, were beaten with tear gas used against them.<sup>275</sup>

On 15 May 2024 in the village of Sutkovtsy, Khmelnytskyi Oblast, representatives of the local administration accompanied by the police broke down the doors of the Holy Protection Church of the UOC, which is a unique

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<sup>272</sup> <https://spzh.media/ru/news/78517-v-kamne-kashirskom-prikhozhane-upts-otstojali-svoj-khram-ot-zakhvata-rejderami>

<sup>273</sup> <https://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6111606.html>

<sup>274</sup> <https://vera24.eu/v-kirovogradskom-sele-korobchino-podozhgli-domovoj-xram-prizoda-upc>

<sup>275</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ua/news/80121-rejderi-ptsu-pobivshi-virujuchikh-zakhopili-khram-upts-u-chornohuzakh>

monument of medieval cult and military architecture of the 15-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, and declared that it was being transferred into their ownership.<sup>276</sup>

On the night of 17 May 2024 in Kiev, the authorities demolished the Vladimir-Olginsky Chapel of the Tithe Monastery of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church built on the foundation of the Tithe Church destroyed in the XIII century by Khan Batyi's Hordes, which was the first stone Orthodox church in Russia.<sup>277</sup>

On 26 May 2024, supporters of the schismatic OCU with the assistance of the police seized the church of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in honour of Saint Demetrius of Thessalonica, located in the village of Berezov in Khmelnytskyi Oblast. Law enforcers pushed the UOC believers away from the entrance to the church, while the representatives of the schismatic OCU broke down the doors and entered the church.<sup>278</sup>

On 31 May 2024, the UOC cathedral church of the Mandylion in the town of Korsun-Shevchenkivskyi, Cherkassy Oblast, was captured. The seizure was led by one of the heads of the local Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) department.<sup>279</sup>

On 20 June 2024, supporters of the OCU seized the Saint George's Church of the canonical church in the city of Irpen, Kiev Oblast.<sup>280</sup>

On 28 June 2024, the court of appeal in Ternopil deprived the UOC of the right to use the land under the city's cathedral in honour of the martyrs Fides, Spes and Caritas and their mother Sophia. As a result, the local Orthodox community was banned by the authorities from using the church building as well.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ua/news/80234-u-sutkivtsjakh-vibili-dveru-starovinnoho-khramu-upts-ta-zakhopili-joho>

<sup>277</sup> <https://www.ukr.net/ru/news/details/society/104539832.html>

<sup>278</sup> <https://ruskiymir.ru/news/325528/>

<sup>279</sup> <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6134036.html>

<sup>280</sup> <https://spzh.live/ru/news/80820-storonniki-ptsu-zakhvatili-svjato-heorhievskij-khram-v-irpene>

<sup>281</sup> <https://suspilne.media/amp/ternopil/780809-sud-zaboroniv-upc-mp-koristuvatisa-v-ternopoli-zemleu-de-rozmisenij-sobor>



On 5 July 2024, the Northern Economic Court of Appeal in Kiev ordered the clergy of the Holy Dormition Eletsy Monastery to leave it under the pretext of its transfer to state ownership as one of the "objects of the National Architectural and Historical Reserve 'Chernigov the Ancient'".<sup>282</sup>

On 11 July 2024, schismatics took away the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the village of Rudnya, Kiev Oblast, despite the opinion of the local Orthodox community.<sup>283</sup> Earlier, the religious community refused to change the jurisdiction of the temple, but in spring unknown persons, who had nothing to do with the parish, organised a meeting on behalf of parishioners and illegally transferred the temple to the OCU. At the same time, a week before the parishioners of the UOC held a meeting, where they confirmed their intention to remain in the canonical Church. This decision was signed by 600 people.<sup>284</sup>

On 16 July 2024, deputies of the Khmelnytsky District Council, village headman and schismatics from the OCU forcibly seized the Saint Nicholas Church of the UOC in the village of Pilipy in Khmelnytsky Oblast. The religious community together with the rector in full remained faithful to the canonical Church.<sup>285</sup>

On 5 August 2024 in Zastavki, Khmelnytsky Oblast, supporters of the OCU together with the village headman seized the Holy Trinity Church of the UOC.<sup>286</sup>

On 23 August 2024, the authorities deprived the Romanian-speaking Orthodox community in honour of the Three Saints of the opportunity to conduct divine services in its church, which is the tomb of the Bukovina Metropolitans in the city cemetery of Chernovtsy. The temple was sealed and handed over to the OCU.<sup>287</sup> On 4 September 2024, such actions of the Kiev

<sup>282</sup> [https://siver.com.ua/news/moskovska\\_cerkva\\_povinna-zvilniti-eleckij\\_monastir/2024-07-05-35953](https://siver.com.ua/news/moskovska_cerkva_povinna-zvilniti-eleckij_monastir/2024-07-05-35953)

<sup>283</sup> <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/21340981>

<sup>284</sup> <https://ruskiymir.ru/news/326888/>

<sup>285</sup> <https://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6144573.html>

<sup>286</sup> <https://ria.ru/amp/20240806/khram-1964485776.html>

<sup>287</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/81796-v-chernovtsakh-vlasti-zapretili-pervyj-v-ukraine-rumynojazychnyj-prikhod>



regime were criticised by the Romanian Orthodox Church, which called on the Romanian authorities to intervene in the situation.<sup>288</sup>

On the night of 24 August 2024, unknown persons threw a grenade into the prayer room of the Holy Protection congregation in the village of Strel'sk in the Sarnensk-Poles'sk diocese of the UOC, which led to an explosion and partial destruction of the building where the UOC believers prayed after the seizure of their church by supporters of the OCU.<sup>289</sup>

On 31 August 2024, a group of raiders in camouflage cut locks and broke into the territory of the Church of the Saint George of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the village of Priyutovka, Kirovograd Oblast. Tear gas and fire extinguishers were used against Orthodox Christians.<sup>290</sup>

On 2 September 2024, the Holy Dormition Cathedral of the UOC was seized in Zolotonosha, Cherkassy diocese. Roman Lychak, a cleric of the OCU, re-registered the parish of the UOC in his name, appointing himself its director. The religious community of the UOC, headed by the rector of the temple, remained faithful to the canonical Church.<sup>291</sup>

On 4 September 2024 in the village of Zeremlya, Baranovka District, Zhitomir Oblast, the church in honour of the Intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was set on fire. The temple was completely burnt out inside and outside.<sup>292</sup>

On 6 September 2024, in Khmelnytsky Oblast, bandits hired by the authorities de-energised the house of the UOC priest, Archpriest Oleg Tsaruk, and attempted to evict him, his wife and four minor children from their own home. The incident took place in the village of Mytint'sy on the territory of the

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<sup>288</sup> [https://risu.ua/ru/v-rumynskom-patriarhate-nedovolny-iz-za-peredachi-pcu-chasovni-v-chernovcah-i-prosyat-vlasti-vmeshatsya\\_n150800](https://risu.ua/ru/v-rumynskom-patriarhate-nedovolny-iz-za-peredachi-pcu-chasovni-v-chernovcah-i-prosyat-vlasti-vmeshatsya_n150800)

<sup>289</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/81788-v-strel'ske-neizvestnyj-vzorval-hranatoj-molitvennyj-dom-upts>

<sup>290</sup> <https://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6156348.html>

<sup>291</sup> <https://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6156456.html>

<sup>292</sup> <https://tass.ru/proisshestiya/21791343>

Saint Nicholas Church, which was seized in 2023.<sup>293</sup> Such attacks were repeated several times in the future, but as of the beginning of November 2024, the bishop managed to defend his house.

On 7 September 2024, representatives of the OCU, with the active assistance of the police and "volunteer formations" of nationalists, attempted to seize the Pokrovsky Church of the UOC in Boyarka, Kiev Oblast. The raiders blocked all the entrances to the temple, preventing parishioners from entering it, and used tear gas against them.<sup>294</sup>

On 10 September 2024, supporters of the OCU seized the Saint Michael the Archangel Church of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, located in the village of Zelenov in Chernovtsy Oblast.<sup>295</sup>

On 19 September 2024 in Irpen, Kiev Oblast, a group of OCU raiders, supported by the mayor and police, seized Saint Nicholas Church and the Chapel of the Resurrection of Christ, the last remaining UOC church in the city.<sup>296</sup>

On 19 September 2024, in the village of Kalita, Brovary District, Kiev Oblast, nationalists dressed in balaclavas and military uniforms changed the locks on the Saint Nicholas Church, illegally transferred in April 2024 to the OCU.<sup>297</sup>

On 26 September 2024 in the village of Starye Koshary, Volyn Oblast, in order to force the parish to come under the omophorion of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, nationalists set fire to the church of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is being built in honour of the Intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary instead of the previous church in honour of the Apostle John the Theologian, which had been seized by schismatics.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/81960-v-mytintse-mnohodetnuju-semju-svjashchennika-upts-storonniki-ptsu-vyhonjajut-iz-doma>

<sup>294</sup> <https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2024/09/07/23869747.shtml>

<sup>295</sup> <https://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6158310.html>

<sup>296</sup> <https://www.patriarchia.ru/ua/db/text/6160668.html>

<sup>297</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/82115-v-sele-kalita-storonniki-ptsu-zakhvatili-khram-upts>

<sup>298</sup> <https://tass.ru/proisshestviya/21963915>

On 6 October 2024, a group of raiders from the OCU seized the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the village of Novoselki, Kiev oblast<sup>299</sup>.

On 17 October 2024, there was an attempt to raid the Holy Dormition Cathedral of the UOC in Kremenchug, Poltava Oblast. During the evening service, unknown young men in balaclavas burst into the church, behaving aggressively and provoking the parishioners. The invaders brought with them bolt cutters and crowbars, with which they cut the locks on the doors and replaced the lock of the central entrance. Thanks to numerous parishioners of the UOC, the cathedral was defended, but later the building was closed and sealed by the police.<sup>300</sup>

On 17 October 2024, about one hundred people in camouflage and balaclavas, among whom, in addition to radicals, were later identified as OCU activists, military personnel and representatives of local city authorities, forcibly entered the territory of the Archangel Michael Cathedral of the UOC in Cherkassy, where a night liturgy was taking place at that time. They beat Metropolitan of Cherkassy and Kanevsk Theodosiy and the believers and used tear gas and traumatic weapons against them. The priest was diagnosed with concussion of the brain, first degree corneal burns of both eyes and skin burns. More than 30 lay people were injured, 12 of them were seriously wounded and hospitalised.<sup>301</sup> The attackers looted the church, stole the treasury, documents, computers, icons, and all the cathedral jewellery that looked like gold or silver. The desecration of the shrine lasted six hours.

On 1 November 2024, in Chernigov's Transfiguration Cathedral, which had previously been forcibly taken away from the UOC, radicals removed all the icons and arranged film screenings in it.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> <https://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6164824.html>

<sup>300</sup> <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/22238773>

<sup>301</sup> <https://tass.ru/proisshestiya/22165629>

<sup>302</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/82823-v-otobranom-u-upts-sobore-v-cherkassakh-ustroili-kinopokaz>

On 10 November 2024, supporters of the OCU held a "meeting" in the village of Seyantsy, Rovno Oblast, as a result of which they sealed the Saint George's Church of the UOC.

On 18 December 2024, OCU radicals accompanied by police cut the locks on the Holy Trinity Church of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the village of Pasechnaya in Kiev Oblast and seized it.<sup>303</sup>

On 25 December 2024, a concert of opera and classical music was held in the Archangel Michael Cathedral in Cherkassy, which was seized by the OCU, in exchange for donations of 100 grivnas.

On 27 December 2024 in Kremenchug, representatives of the OCU under the leadership of self-proclaimed archimandrite F. Ovcharuk cut the locks and entered the Holy Dormition Cathedral of the UOC, breaking out the Royal Gate of the iconostasis under the pretext of conducting an inventory of property.<sup>304</sup>

On 19 January 2025, supporters of the OCU, ignoring the opinion of the local Orthodox community, with the help of a pseudo meeting of activists fabricated the transfer in their favour of the Assumption Church of the UOC in the village of Komarovtsy in Vinnitsa Oblast.<sup>305</sup>

On 16 February 2025 in Chernovtsy, a crowd of unknown people led by several clerics of the OCU held a meeting under the fence of the Holy Spirit Cathedral of the UOC to "transfer" three churches of the canonical church at once: the Holy Spirit Cathedral, Saint Nicholas Cathedral and Petro-Pavlovsky Church (these are the main churches of the Chernovtsy-Bukovina Eparchy of the UOC). During the event, several hundred believers of the real community of the UOC of Saint Dukhovsky Cathedral were praying inside the temple. Accordingly, none of them took any part in the action.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/83657--v-pasechnoj-obshchina-upts-posle-zakhvata-khrama-molilas-v-voskresnoj-shkole>

<sup>304</sup> <https://pravoslavie.ru/166145.html>

<sup>305</sup> [https://www.smi.today/ua\\_smi/3151891-v-komarovcakh-raskolniki.html](https://www.smi.today/ua_smi/3151891-v-komarovcakh-raskolniki.html)

<sup>306</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/84971-smert-voroham-v-chernovtsakh-neizvestnye-pereveli-v-ptsu-3-khrama-upts>

On 12 April 2025, on Lazarus Saturday, there was a forceful seizure of Saint Nicholas Church in the village of Verkhnie Stanovtsy, Bukovina. The church had previously been transferred to the schismatic OCU on 3 February 2025 by a fraudulent scheme of the OCU activists at a fake community meeting. The local authorities immediately re-registered the church. The first attempt to seize the temple on the night of 8-9 April 2025 was repulsed by parishioners. This time the schismatics were well-prepared and developed a forceful operation, for which, under the pretext of "helping neighbours", an OCU cleric Nikolai Khimyak called storm troopers.<sup>307</sup>

On 21 April 2025, in village of Stavchany, Bukovina, activists of the OCU forcibly seized the Archangel Michael Church of the UOC, which had previously been re-registered in the OCU, against the opinion of the parishioners. About two dozen men entered the church during the service and pushed the parishioners, mostly elderly women, into the street. Two days later, the rector of the temple, Archpriest Vyacheslav Gogol, was stopped by the police and obliged to report to the Territorial Center of Recruitment and Social Support (TCR).<sup>308</sup>

On 4 May 2025 in the village of Banilov-Podgorny, Chernovtsy Oblast, supporters of the OCU, backed by local authorities, organised a meeting without community participation, at which they transferred two UOC churches in honour of the Ascension of the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the OCU at once.<sup>309</sup>

On 6 May 2025, there was a fraudulent transfer of the Saint Andrew's Church in Cherkassy to the OCU by attributing to the church a non-existent congregation, which allegedly made the decision to transfer to the structure of the OCU. Parishioners arrived to defend the temple, but the police blocked the gates and did not let them inside. The mayor of Cherkassy also came to the

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<sup>307</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/zashhita-very/85856-khroniki-odnoho-zakhvata-na-bukovine-kohda-ptsu-bez-politsii-ne-smohla>

<sup>308</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/85955-v-stavchanakh-ptsu-zakhvatila-mikhajlovskij-khram>

<sup>309</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/86127-v-bukovinskom-sele-banilov-podhornyj-pereveli-v-ptsu-dva-khrama-upts>

temple and accused those gathered that they were creating "a picture for Russian TV channels".<sup>310</sup>

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 Gorodenka, 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 Oblast 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.<sup>311</sup>

Ukrainians now openly admit to condoning forceful seizures of UOC churches. On 7 February 2025, Elena Bodnar, Head of the Department of Culture of the Government of the Chernovtsy Oblast, reported that the regional administration, which registers the transfer of UOC religious communities in favour of the OCU, is not responsible for the reliability of information in the documents submitted for its consideration. According to her, the regional administration does not check the reliability of information in the documents submitted for re-registration. The responsibility for this, in her opinion, lies with the chairperson of the assembly where the decision on the transition is made. The legality of the chairperson's authority, as well as the legality of the meetings, is not checked either. It is noteworthy that the Ukrainian state authority takes into account only documents on the transition to the OCU, whereas documents from the UOC community denying such a transition are not taken into account.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/86139-v-cherkassakh-ptsu-s-vlastjami-zakhvatili-andreevskij-khram-prikhozhnan-ne-puskajut>

<sup>311</sup> S. Melnikov, P. Lebedev, V. 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>

<sup>312</sup> <https://spzh.eu/ru/news/84483-chernovitskaja-ova-my-ne-proverjaem-zakonnost-sobranij-po-perekhodu-v-ptsu>

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 concern over this. In particular, it referred to incidents of aggression, intimidation and vandalism in churches related to the process of re-registration of churches and religious communities from the jurisdiction of the UOC to that of the OCU. The Human Rights Committee also highlighted the inaction of the Ukrainian police in such incidents and the lack of information on the investigation of offences.<sup>313</sup>

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has drawn attention to the restrictions on the activities of the UOC, the increase in hate speech against its clergy and violence against them in its reports on the human rights situation in Ukraine. Thus, the OHCHR report for 1 June – 31 August 2024 "Treatment of Prisoners of War and Review on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine" noted that references to national security considerations as a justification for restrictions on religious freedoms do not comply with the provisions of basic international human rights documents.<sup>314</sup> The report on the human rights situation in Ukraine from 1 September to 30 November 2024 also condemns the Law of Ukraine on protection of the constitutional order in the sphere of activities of religious organisations", which entered into force on 23 September 2024 and created a legal framework for a complete ban on the UOC. In this regard, the conclusion was that the authorities failed to justify the necessity and proportionality of severe prohibitive measures restricting freedom of religion.<sup>315</sup>

In early 2024, the human rights organization Public Advocacy recognized at the international level the violation of the rights of the UOC and that the

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<sup>313</sup> Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (observations published in February 2022).  
[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru)

<sup>314</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/40th-periodic-report-human-rights-situation-ukraine-treatment-prisoners>

<sup>315</sup> <https://ukraine.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/PR41%20Ukraine%202024-12-31.pdf>



Ukrainian authorities pursue a systematic policy of discrimination against this religious denomination and restrict the rights of its hierarchs and believers.<sup>316</sup> 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 Ukraine<sup>317</sup> 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 against believers and clergy of the UOC in some areas of Ukraine, especially in the western regions.

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<sup>316</sup> <https://www.protiktor.com/rus/srua-un-communication/>

<sup>317</sup> <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.



Public Defence human rights organization said that despite the fact that violations committed against the believers of the UOC in 2022-2023, as well as in earlier periods are obvious, 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.<sup>318</sup>

The World Council of Churches also stated that the anticlerical draft law violates international norms of freedom of religion and may divide Ukrainian society.<sup>319</sup> 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, pointed out that such actions of the Ukrainian authorities threaten freedom of religion and do not comply with the norms of international law.<sup>320</sup>

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".<sup>321</sup>

The lawyer himself claimed about a campaign of disinformation and intimidation against him. In particular, a number of Ukrainian mass media spread information that he allegedly works on behalf of Patriarch Kirill and the Russian Orthodox Church. In a published statement, Amsterdam said that such an allegation has all the hallmarks of "aggressive disinformation with the purpose of intimidation and threats during consultations with his client in Kiev".

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<sup>318</sup> <https://www.protiktor.com/rus/srua-un-communication/>

<sup>319</sup> <https://strana.today/news/447901-zapret-dejatelnosti-ukrainskoj-pravoslavnoj-tserkvi-vsts-vystupili-protiv-zakonoproekta.html>

<sup>320</sup> <https://www.pnp.ru/politics/kirov-sobiraetsya-zapretit-ukrainskuyu-pravoslavnyuyu-cerkov-vopreki-svoey-zhe-konstitucii.html>

<sup>321</sup> <https://spzh.news/ru/news/77895-juristy-prizvali-liderov-ssha-britanii-i-es-vmeshatsja-v-situatsiju-vokruh-upts>

He also stressed that during his consultations with representatives of the UOC in the Ukrainian capital he had documented "numerous cases of harassment and false statements", among them searches of one of the UOC clergymen, which took place the morning after his meeting with his lawyer.<sup>322</sup>

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.<sup>323</sup>

Criticism from many church hierarchs of the Christian world, as well as human rights organisations, was caused by the odious law adopted on 20 August 2024 on the protection of the constitutional order in the sphere of activities of religious organisations. In particular, the Primates of the Russian, Serbian, Jerusalem, Bulgarian, Albanian, Macedonian, Antiochian Orthodox Churches, the Orthodox Church in America, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Assyrian Church of the East, as well as Pope Francis made critical remarks to the law.

In addition, the law was criticised by the NGO Human Rights Watch.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has also drawn attention to this problem. It is telling that when the Committee considered the Ukrainian report, the persecution of the UOC was presented as a dispute over the administrative jurisdiction of the various Orthodox churches in the country. Even so, the Committee expressed concern at reports that disputes over the control of church property had at times escalated into physical violence and that the response of Ukrainian law enforcement authorities had been inadequate, and pointed out that the fairness of legal proceedings involving a large number of cases related to such disputes was questionable. Accordingly, the Committee recommended that Kiev ensure that changes in the status of the various Orthodox churches in Ukraine do not lead to racial discrimination

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<sup>322</sup> <https://antifashist.online/item/fashistskaya-politika-i-otkrytyj-terror-agoniziruyushhij-kievskij-rezhim-otygryaetsya-na-pravoslavnyh-svyashhennikah.html>

<sup>323</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2023-003695\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2023-003695_EN.html)

against any particular ethno-religious group and that the fairness of proceedings in such cases is guaranteed.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination following its consideration of the 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> periodic reports of Ukraine. May 2025.  
[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F24-26&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F24-26&Lang=en)

## **Banning of the Russian language and Ukrainization of public life**

Particularly active efforts are being made by the Kiev regime to completely destroy the Russian-speaking area and the possibilities of using the Russian language in the country. 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 Ukraine<sup>325</sup> 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 (with varying degrees of severity) of adopting laws aimed at ensuring the dominant role of the Ukrainian language and restricting the opportunities for the use of other languages in the public sphere. The Russian language, which is the mother tongue of millions of Ukrainian citizens – 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

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<sup>325</sup> [https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc\\_id=36748189](https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=36748189)

linguistic rights of ethnic Russians and numerous Russian-speaking representatives of other nationalities.

For example, in 2017, the Law on Education<sup>326</sup> 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,<sup>327</sup> 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.<sup>328</sup> 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."<sup>329</sup>

In April 2019, the Law on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language<sup>330</sup> 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 (CCU) in February 2018 preceded this Law. This decision declared unconstitutional the Law on the Principles of State Language Policy,<sup>331</sup> according to which Russian was a regional language in certain regions of the country (in 13 out of 24 Oblasts). Later, at the instigation of some "language activists," Ukrainian courts stripped Russian of its regional status in these areas.

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<sup>326</sup> [https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc\\_id=37708387](https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=37708387)

<sup>327</sup> [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)

<sup>328</sup> <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/23532#trace-1>

<sup>329</sup> <https://ria.ru/20181206/1547556068.html>

<sup>330</sup> [https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc\\_id=33624660](https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=33624660)

<sup>331</sup> <https://ria.ru/20180228/1515481546.html>

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.

In July 2021, the CCU expectedly recognised the above-mentioned law on ensuring the functioning of the Ukrainian language as a state language as compliant with the country's constitution.<sup>332</sup>

The decision also states that Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine do not constitute a coherent social unit entitled to legal protection as an ethnic or linguistic unit. People who have lived for hundreds of years in the territories that are now part of Ukraine are labelled a "political construct".<sup>333</sup>

In addition to the Russian language, the languages of other national minorities, especially Hungarian, were also subject to restrictions. In December 2020, after Taras Kremen, State Language Protection Commissioner (Language Ombudsman) requested the Ukrainian Prosecutor General, all decisions of the

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<sup>332</sup> <https://tass-ru.turbopages.org/turbo/tass.ru/s/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/11902213>

<sup>333</sup> <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/v001p710-21>

Beregovsky and Vinogradovsky District councils in Transcarpathia on the functioning of regional languages were declared illegal and revoked.<sup>334</sup>

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. Thus, provisions were introduced on the mandatory use of Ukrainian in advertising. Scientific, service, cultural events (including theatrical performances, concerts, show programmes) and any information in museums and exhibition centres were translated into the state language, and mandatory dubbing into Ukrainian of films on television and in cinema distribution was introduced. At the same time, compulsory certification of Ukrainian language skills for candidates applying for civil service positions was introduced. At the same time, a mandatory Ukrainian language proficiency test was introduced for candidates applying for civil service positions. Compulsory publication of the Ukrainian version of the media issued in a non-state language has been introduced. At the same time, Russian-language content is available only as an additional option. All websites and social network pages of state authorities, local self-government bodies, enterprises, institutions and organisations registered in Ukraine now have a mandatory Ukrainian-language version, which must be downloaded by default. All goods with computer programmes installed must have a Ukrainian-language interface. The scientific sphere has also switched to Ukrainian. According to the new requirements, in addition to Ukrainian, scientific publications may be published in the official languages of the EU, but such works must necessarily contain an abstract in Ukrainian. Dissertations, monographs and abstracts from the same time must be written in Ukrainian or English. The same language is used for defence and public scientific events.

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<sup>334</sup> <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>)

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.

Thus, the Russian language has been subjected to double discrimination (both as a State language and as an official language of the EU), which has already been highlighted by the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe<sup>335</sup>, noting the contradiction between the content of the Language Law and Ukraine's international obligations, and fearing that the law may create inter-ethnic tensions in society. The Commission's assessments and recommendations were supported by OHCHR.<sup>336</sup>

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.<sup>337</sup> 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

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<sup>335</sup> [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)

<sup>336</sup> OHCHR report on the human rights situation in Ukraine. 16 February – 31 July 2020.

[https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/30thReportUkraine\\_RU.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/30thReportUkraine_RU.pdf)

<sup>337</sup> <https://iz.ru/986778/2020-03-13/prezident-ukrainy-podpisal-zakon-ob-obrazovanii>



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.

On 13 December 2022, the Law "On National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine" was adopted as part of the requirements necessary for Ukraine's "European integration".<sup>338</sup> The document did not contribute to a real improvement in the protection of their rights and freedoms. Moreover, its text contains explicitly discriminatory wordings with regard to the Russian language (defined as "the language of a national minority that is the state (official) language of the state recognised by the Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine as an aggressor state or occupying state") and ethnic Russians.

On 8 December 2023, the Verkhovnaya Rada adopted and signed the same day the law "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".<sup>339</sup> The document envisages adjustments to a number of laws regulating the language policy of Ukraine, including the above-mentioned ones, allegedly in order to bring the legislation in line with European norms in the sphere of ensuring the rights of national minorities. It does provide some "preferences" for national minorities speaking official EU languages. However, restrictions on the rights of Russian and Russian-speaking residents of Ukraine were further tightened and became indefinite.

The Law "On Media", which came into force in March 2023, also contains restrictions on the use of the Russian language. This norm, in particular, 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 above-mentioned Law of

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<sup>338</sup> <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2827-20>

<sup>339</sup> <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3504-20>

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.

On 6 June 2024, the Law "On Preschool Education"<sup>340</sup> was adopted, which prescribes the possibility for representatives of indigenous peoples and national minorities to receive preschool education in their native language along with the study of the state language. Despite the fact that its Article 9 prohibits discrimination in preschool education, this right does not apply to speakers of Russian, and there are millions of them in Ukraine.

Moreover, even private subjects of educational activity, which have the right to freely choose the language of the educational process, are prohibited from choosing Russian as such.

Thus, the mentioned normative acts are aimed at total Ukrainianization and provide for the translation of all spheres of life in the country into the state language – education, science, services, advertising, mass media, as well as the introduction of language quotas on radio and television, etc.

At the same time, there are relaxations for the use of English, the official languages of the EU and the languages of the indigenous peoples of Ukraine.

It is also important to note that as a result of the adoption of the said laws, 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:

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<sup>340</sup> <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3788-20>

in respect of the state language, official languages of the EU and indigenous people's languages.

Many parties, media and civil society activists noted that all such restrictive norms make the production in Russian and any use of such products unprofitable. Accordingly, it has become impossible for Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine to receive information in their native language.

Meanwhile, even Western sociologists recognize that in Ukraine Russian is the language of everyday communication for the majority of the local population.<sup>341</sup> This was also acknowledged by Ukrainian sociologists: according to the results of a survey conducted in Ukraine by the Social Monitoring Center in 2021, more than half of Ukrainians actively use Russian at home. In addition, over 50 per cent of the country's residents declared themselves willing to watch films and read books in Russian.<sup>342</sup>

The Venice Commission of the Council of Europe drew attention to the multiple discrimination of the Russian language,<sup>343</sup> noting the contradiction between the Law on Language and Ukraine's international obligations, and also expressing fears that the Law could create inter-ethnic tensions in society. The Commission's assessments and recommendations have been supported by OHCHR.<sup>344</sup>

According to the residents of Ukraine themselves, the strongest discrimination in the country is based on language. The results of a nationwide survey conducted by the Kiev International Institute of Sociology in October 2023 indicate that 45 per cent of Ukrainians feel harassed because of the language they use.<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230608-russkoyazychnykh-ukraintsev-ne-sushchestvuet-v-chem-slaboe-mesto-ideologii-kievskogo-rezhima/>

<sup>342</sup> <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/896925-ukraina-opros-yazyk>

<sup>343</sup> [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)

<sup>344</sup> OHCHR Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine. 16 February – 31 July 2020.

[https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/30thReportUkraine\\_RU.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/30thReportUkraine_RU.pdf)

<sup>345</sup> <https://life.pravda.com.ua/society/653a39b5707b3/>

As a result of the Kiev authorities' policy, 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. All literary works by Russian and Soviet (except for Ukrainian) authors have been erased from the literature programs of Ukrainian schools.<sup>346</sup>

The Nazi nature of the Kiev regime is convincingly illustrated by the following fact. 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 million Russian-language books were written off and destroyed in public libraries as part of the "derussification" program.<sup>347</sup> In 2023, that number was nearly 9 million copies.<sup>348</sup> This continued in 2024. Such actions mimic the destruction of "non-German spirit" literature in Nazi Germany.

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,<sup>349</sup> i.e. nearly 600 times.

On 2 May 2025, Kremen said that the number of pupils studying Russian in Ukrainian schools had dropped to 345 people, with 109 people studying it as a foreign language. He called these children a "residual contingent" and promised that from the next school year the situation will definitely change.<sup>350</sup>

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

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<sup>346</sup> [https://ru.osvita.ua/doc/files/news/866/86629/1\\_Rishennya.pdf](https://ru.osvita.ua/doc/files/news/866/86629/1_Rishennya.pdf)

<sup>347</sup> <https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreeneews/63e1f2a79a79470c4ae86e5b>

<sup>348</sup> <https://suspilne.media/culture/750451-66-z-usih-spisanih-knizok-z-ukrainskih-publicnih-bibliotek-za-ostanni-dva-roki-rosijskou-movou/>

<sup>349</sup> <https://kommersant-ru.turbopages..org/turbo/kommersant.ru/s/doc/6679806>

<sup>350</sup> <https://informer.ua/uk/skilki-shkolyariv-v-ukrajini-navchayutsya-rosiyskoyu-movoyu-resultat-divuye>

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.

Taras Kremen has repeatedly publicly called for a complete ban on the Russian language in education and interpersonal communication. In April 2022, he publicly called for abolition of teaching in Russian language in all educational institutions of the country since September 1 of the current year.<sup>351</sup> His proposal was, in particular, 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 program 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".<sup>352</sup> Moreover, in October 2023 he said that students and teachers should also speak only in Ukrainian during breaks between classes.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> <https://strana.today/news/386692-v-shkolakh-mohut-perestat-obuchat-russkomu.html>

<sup>352</sup> <https://ria.ru/20220411/yazyk-1782979284.html>

<sup>353</sup> <https://informator.ua/uk/ce-tezh-osvitniy-proces-kremen-povidomiv-yakoyu-movoyu-mayut-spilkuvatisya-vchiteli-ta-diti-na-perervah>

His proposal has been developed into a number of legislative initiatives. On 1 October 2024 the Draft Law "On Amending the Law of Ukraine 'On Education' regarding the creation of Ukrainian-language educational environment in educational institutions"<sup>354</sup> was submitted to the Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine, which provided for the use of exclusively Ukrainian language both during the educational process and in any other forms of interaction taking place in the premises and on the territory of the subject of educational activity. For some reason this bill has not been approved, but this did not stop the fighters against the Russian language, and on 1 March 2025 the Verkhovnaya Rada adopted a bill "On Amending Certain Laws on the Use of Language in the Educational Process", which in order to "create a Ukrainian-language environment" prescribes that students and teachers communicate in the territory of the educational institution only in the Ukrainian language both in classes and outside of school hours. The only exception is for persons receiving education in educational institutions where there are classes or groups with instruction in minority languages, which are official languages of the EU. They will be given the right to use the language of the respective national minority in lessons and breaks along with Ukrainian. As for the Russian language, the bill specifically stipulates that private schools that have the right to choose the language of instruction may not choose "the language of the state recognized by the Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine as an aggressor state or occupant state". Obviously, the purpose of such acts is to forcibly change the ethno-cultural identity of Russian/Russian-speaking children.

Ukrainian Education Minister Aleksandr Lisovoy also spoke out against the existence of schools that teach any subjects or even separate lessons in Russian. Thus, on 6 September 2023, he stated: "We are now fighting for a value system that is radically different from the value system of the Russian

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<sup>354</sup> <https://itd.rada.gov.ua/billinfo/Bills/Card/44959>

Empire. We are definitely not on the same path as the Russian world. Why then do we prepare children to use Russian?"<sup>355</sup>

At the same time, a study conducted by the State Education Quality Service of Ukraine in the 2023-2024 school year showed that despite years of restrictions and bans on the use of the Russian language, even in the west of the country not all children speak Ukrainian between classes – only 74 per cent. In the east, 83 per cent of children use Russian during breaks. Outside of school, less than 40 per cent of pupils across the country use Ukrainian exclusively.<sup>356</sup>

In addition to all sorts of legal prohibitions, in order to "squeeze out" the Russian language, the forces of "civil society" (often radical organizations) were also involved, which, with the indulgence of the authorities, organized various aggressive actions against teachers who continued to use the Russian language. At the same time, repressions were launched against Russian-speaking teachers by the heads of educational institutions themselves. On 7 February 2022, Kiev schools (Lyceum No. 303 and School No. 152) fired two teachers for using the Russian language in class. The dismissals took place after an inspection carried out by the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language Taras Kremen at two educational institutions. Teachers were reprimanded before being dismissed.

On 4 April 2023, in Yerpen, a teacher of philosophy was suspended from work in the State Customs University for lecturing in Russian after a student pointed to it during the online course. The internal investigation was launched against the teacher after the complaints from students.<sup>357</sup>

On 21 April 2023, in Odessa, a Music and Arts History teacher was fired from the Odessa Theatre and Arts College for teaching in Russian. Not in the

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<sup>355</sup> <https://t.me/stranaua/121684>

<sup>356</sup> <https://life.pravda.com.ua/society/uchni-ta-vchiteli-stali-menshe-rozmovlyati-ukrajinskoyu-pid-chas-navchannya-ta-u-pobuti-doslidzhennya-302622/>

<sup>357</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/v-irpene-studentka-donesla-na-professora-za-otkaz-vesti-lekcii-na-ukrainskom-yazyke.html>

mood to listen to the music by Russian composers Pyotr Tchaikovsky and Sergey Rachmaninov at the music lessons, a student informed against her.<sup>358</sup>

On 4 July 2023, a teacher of mathematics in school No. 126 in Dnepropetrovsk (Dnepr) was fined 3,400 grivnas for teaching in Russian during the online course. The decision was taken by Commissioner Kremen after the parents of the pupil informed him thereabout. At the same time, the Ukrainianization advocates were not supported by the rest of the class.<sup>359</sup>

Not only teachers, but also students themselves are subjected to bullying for using the Russian language. In April 2024, schoolchildren in a Kiev school brutally beat their classmate for, in their opinion, watching a cartoon in Russian. For ten days, the child did not tell his mother anything because he was intimidated by a teacher's aide. As a result, the boy needed surgery.<sup>360</sup>

Kiev have also actively banned any public use of the Russian language. On 9 February 2022, Taras Kremen addressed the mayors of a number of Ukrainian cities to demand them to dismantle the outdoor advertising, signs and plates installed in breach of the language law. The message informing about this demand was published on the Facebook page of Taras Kremen. In 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 from

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<sup>358</sup> <https://focus.ua/ukraine/562187-ne-zahotel-slushat-chaykovskogo-v-odesse-prepodavatelya-kolledzha-uvolili-iz-za-zhaloby-studenta>

<sup>359</sup> <https://t.me/stranaua/112809>

<sup>360</sup> <https://ria.ru/amp/20240422/ukraina-1941474945.html>



September 1 of the current year.<sup>361</sup> 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 program 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".<sup>362</sup> Moreover, in October 2023 he said that students and teachers should also speak only in Ukrainian during breaks between classes.<sup>363</sup>

To this end, relevant bills prohibiting any use of the Russian language in schools are regularly submitted to the Verkhovna Rada. In March 2025, a group of deputies registered another such bill, which proposes a ban on the use of Russian in schools, even during breaks.<sup>364</sup>

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 stipulated amendments to the Law on Education, which will stipulate that Ukrainian educational program 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 introduced for the sake of "protecting Ukraine's educational and information space from the

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<sup>361</sup> <https://strana.today/news/386692-v-shkolakh-mohut-perestat-obuchat-russkomu.html>

<sup>362</sup> <https://ria.ru/20220411/yazyk-1782979284.html>

<sup>363</sup> <https://informator.ua/uk/ce-tezh-osvitniy-proces-kremen-povidomiv-yakoyu-movoyu-mayut-spilkuvatisya-vchiteli-ta-diti-na-perervah>

<sup>364</sup> <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/23379607>

influence of the Russian imperialism".<sup>365</sup> 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.

If earlier the Ukrainian authorities simply prevented the import of Russian book products (by refusing to issue appropriate licenses), then on 14 March 2022 the Committee of Television and Radio Broadcasting of Ukraine announced a ban on the import and distribution of all publishing products from Russia, including for the purpose of "preventing the cultural and informational influence of Russia on Ukrainians."<sup>366</sup> Furthermore, in June 2022, regulations were passed prohibiting the import and distribution of books and other publishing products from Russia and Belarus, as well as the publication and sale of books written by Russian citizens.

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, Andrey Danilov, said that the Ukrainian security services intended to track and register users of the above-mentioned social networks.<sup>367</sup>

In accordance with the law "On Cinematography",<sup>368</sup> 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

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<sup>365</sup> <https://www.rubaltic.ru/amp/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221219-v-pogone-za-movoy-ukraina-polnostyu-khoronit-ostatki-svoey-nauki-i-kultury/>

<sup>366</sup> <https://iz.ru/1304904/2022-03-14/na-ukraine-veli-zapret-na-vvoz-i-rasprostranenie-vsekh-knig-iz-rossii>

<sup>367</sup> <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/25/09/2020/5f6db5599a794765448c5e81>

<sup>368</sup> [https://kodeksy.com.ua/ka/o\\_kinematografii.htm](https://kodeksy.com.ua/ka/o_kinematografii.htm)

Russian Federation and Belarus, publication and sale of books authored by Russian citizens were also banned (the laws came into force in June 2023).

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"<sup>369</sup> came into force that bans the broadcasting of Russian music on television, radio and in public places, as well as the touring of performers from Russia.

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.

This set of legislative measures, aimed at the complete 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 the Constitution of Ukraine, whose Article 10 guarantees free development, use and protection of Russian and other languages of national minorities of Ukraine, Article 22 states that the content and scope of existing rights and freedoms may not be restricted when new laws are adopted or when

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<sup>369</sup> <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/go/2310-20>

existing documents are amended, and Article 53 states the right of national minorities to study in their native language.

Moreover, the Kiev regime's actions 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 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 also 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),<sup>370</sup> 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),<sup>371</sup> which pointed out the inconsistencies between its provisions and Ukraine's

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<sup>370</sup> 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)

<sup>371</sup> 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)

international obligations. The Commission's assessments and recommendations have been supported by OHCHR.<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> OHCHR Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine. 16 February – 31 July 2020.  
[https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/30thReportUkraine\\_RU.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/30thReportUkraine_RU.pdf)

Nevertheless, the Ukrainian authorities continue to create new bans on the use of the Russian language. On 17 July 2024, certain provisions of the Article "On Media" came into force, continuing to tighten the use of Ukrainian language on television. From now on, the use of non-state language on air is allowed only in the form of stable expressions, short phrases or individual words used by the participants of the program broadcast live, except for the presenters (announcers) of the program, if the total duration of such remarks does not exceed 10 per cent of the timing of the program. All speeches, interviews, comments, explanations, questions, individual lines, etc. in a non-state language must be translated, dubbed or voiced in Ukrainian.<sup>373</sup>

In December 2024, Ukrzaliznytsia (Ukrainian Railways) announced that there will no longer be Russian dubbing on rail tickets. Instead, information will be posted in Ukrainian and English.<sup>374</sup>

On 24 December 2024, the representative of the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers in the Verkhovna Rada, Taras Melnychuk, said that Ukraine intends to exclude the Russian language from the list of languages protected by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.<sup>375</sup>

The pressure on citizens who use the Russian language in everyday life is not limited to formal measures. Ordinary Ukrainians who venture to use the Russian language are harassed and persecuted not only by the official authorities, but also by their fellow citizens. There have been a number of egregious cases.

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 told the women that he did not understand them and demanded to address him

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<sup>373</sup> <https://mova-ombudsman.gov.ua/news/z-17-lypnia-posyliuetsia-vymohy-shchodo-vykorystannia-ukrainskoi-v-efirakh>

<sup>374</sup> <https://suspilne.media/908149-ukrzalizniva-pribrala-z-blankiv-kvitkiv-rosijsku-movu>

<sup>375</sup> <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/3941530-urad-proponue-vikluciti-rosijsku-j-bilorusku-iz-pereliku-mov-aki-potrebuut-zahistu.html>

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, 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.<sup>376</sup> In connection with this scandal, the head of the State Agency for Art under the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture, Olga Rossoshanskaya, officially said that the law on language does not prohibit the public performance of Tsoi's songs in Ukraine.

A similar conflict occurred in August 2024 in Odessa. The scandal around street musicians performing songs on Deribasovskaya Street was provoked by blogger Yulia Karavadzhak. The reason was that they performed the songs in Russian. The media reported that the initiator of the scandal, Yulia Karavadzhak, who banned the musicians from performing Russian-language songs, shoots explicit videos for one of the relevant Internet portals. During this job, she communicates with her clientèle in Russian.<sup>377</sup>

On 20 February 2024, a female cab driver in Odessa was fired following a complaint by a female passenger that Russian songs were playing in the car's cabin.<sup>378</sup>

On 15 June 2024, at a "networking evening" in Odessa, several participants began interrupting the speaker, who spoke Russian, and demanded that he switch to Ukrainian. After his refusal, the audience supported his position with applause. On the same day, Ukrainian authorities promised a

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<sup>376</sup> <https://focus.ua/ukraine/571602-skandal-s-pesney-coya-vo-lvove-paren-vyshel-iz-priyuta-i-rasskazal-o-planah-video>

<sup>377</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/umeet-orudovat-yazykom-zashhitnica-movy-podrabatyvala-v-pornoindustryi.html>

<sup>378</sup> <https://ria.ru/20240220/taksi-1928587272.html>

"harsh response" to the Russian-speaking "infiltrator" who allowed himself "gross abuses against Ukrainian citizens."<sup>379</sup>

On 14 July 2024, in Odessa, "language activists" called the police after accusing a valet of a private parking lot of speaking Russian. However, the police officers who arrived on the scene supported the latter, stating that "a person has the right to speak in the language in which they are comfortable".<sup>380</sup>

On 20 September 2024 in Ternopol, a local resident called the police because two men were singing songs in Russian. The law enforcement officers who arrived not only drew up protocols against them under the article "hooliganism", but also took them to the local recruitment centre for further transportation to the combat zone. Thus, the conditions created in Ukraine make the use of the native language for Russian-speaking citizens not only illegal but also life-threatening.<sup>381</sup>

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".<sup>382</sup>

As practice shows, even the use of radical nationalists and persons close to them in spirit does not help the Ukrainian authorities to completely eradicate the Russian language, which is native to millions of the country's citizens. The "language commissioner" Taras Kremen admitted that the institution under his control relies on denunciations of "responsible patriotically-minded citizens" in its work. At a press conference in early May 2024, he said that Russian is ubiquitous on the streets of Ukrainian cities. "We ask local authorities to go out

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<sup>379</sup> <https://www.unian.ua/society/movniy-skandal-v-odesi-divchinu-vignali-z-zahodu-za-pretenziyu-do-rosiyskomovnogo-spikera-novini-odesi-12668328.html>

<sup>380</sup> <https://tsn.ua/ru/ukrayina/v/-odesse/parkovschik-otkazalsya-obsluzhivat-na-ukrainskom-patrulnye-stali-v-ego-zaschitu-video-2620863.html>

<sup>381</sup> <https://ria.ru/amp/20240920/ukraina-1973794986.html>

<sup>382</sup> <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/21/10/2022/6352a7b49a7947f3b9632b73>, <https://iz.ru/1414045/2022-10-21/sekretar-snbo-prizval-iskorenit-russkii-iazyk-na-ukraine>



to the people, walk the streets and look at the signboards, advertisements, at such an overpopulation of the Russian language as we see on the streets of many of our cities – from Odessa to Kharkov. We need to put an end to this," Kremen said. He added that representatives of his office cannot "personally go around every street, every alley and every government office" and rely only on those who write complaints.<sup>383</sup>

As a follow-up to this idea, the mayor of Ivano-Frankovsk, Ruslan Marcinkiv, in September 2024 announced the creation of a "language inspectorate" in the city made up of representatives of "civil society" who would patrol the streets to counteract the spread of the Russian language.<sup>384</sup> Announcing the start of the "inspection" from 28 October 2024, the head of Ivano-Frankovsk wrote: "We have ensured that there is not a single Moscow church in Frankovsk... We must be a 100 per cent Ukrainian-speaking city... We have no moral right to tolerate the language of the enemy."<sup>385</sup>

In an interview on 24 October 2024, Taras Kremen said that "soft Ukrainianization" has been replaced by "offensive" one, which "provides for strict control over compliance with the language law in all spheres of public life in Ukraine without exception". According to him, there are now "tools and levers to monitor, control and penalize each of the business entities."<sup>386</sup>

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".<sup>387</sup> Subsequently, this view was supported by the speaker of the Verkhovna Rada, Ruslan Stefanchuk.

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<sup>383</sup> <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/20698775>

<sup>384</sup> <https://tsn.ua/ukrayina/u-zahidnomu-misti-z-yavlyatsya-movni-inspetori-yak-voni-pracyuvatimut-2656860.html>

<sup>385</sup> <https://strana.today/news/474117-kohda-v-ivano-frankovske-nachnut-rabotu-jazykovye-inspektory.html>

<sup>386</sup> <https://life.pravda.com.ua/society/chi-ye-shche-misce-lagidniy-ukrajinizaciji-poyasnyuye-movniy-ombudsmen-interv-yu-304453/>

<sup>387</sup> [www.eurointegration.com.ua/rus/news/2023/11/9/7173188/](http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/rus/news/2023/11/9/7173188/)

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 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.

Former Verkhovna Rada deputy Irina Faryon, known for her neo-Nazi views, said in connection with this incident on the air of the program "Big Lvov is Speaking" that the Russian-speaking residents of Ukraine who refuse to switch to the state language "deserve only one thing – complete and absolute disposal".<sup>388</sup> Spreading hate speech against all Russian-speaking residents of Ukraine, she went so far as to call Russian-speaking VSU (Ukrainian armed forces) fighters "rabble".<sup>389</sup> A few months later, in July 2024, she was murdered in the backyard of her own home, a victim of her own cultivated hatred.

On 13 October 2024 in Lvov, a bus passenger was beaten for talking on the phone with his mother in Russian.<sup>390</sup>

On 18 November 2024, a lecturer at Ivano-Frankovsk National Medical University was forced to resign after a student complained that he used Russian words when teaching neurosurgery.<sup>391</sup>

On 20 December 2024, the media reported that a Russian-language teacher in Odessa was dismissed due to complaints from pupils. The issue of opening administrative proceedings against her is under consideration.<sup>392</sup>

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<sup>388</sup> <https://lenta.ru/news/2023/10/29/na-ukraine-prizvali-utilizirovat/>

<sup>389</sup> <https://suspilne.media/culture/611357-farion-rozkritikuvala-rosijskomovnih-vijskovih-ombudsmen-pisla-cogo-zvernuvsa-do-policii-ta-sbu/>

<sup>390</sup> <https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2024/10/13/24141805.shtml>

<sup>391</sup> <https://life.pravda.com.ua/society/u-frankivskomu-vishi-provodili-pari-rosiyskoyu-movniy-ombudsmen-i-kerivnictvo-vidreaguvali-304915>

<sup>392</sup> <https://focus.ua/ukraine/684846-odessa-yazykovoy-skandal-uchitelnica-istorii-prodvigala-narrativy-rf>

Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine have also faced harassment by Ukrainian cultural figures.

Thus, on 28 April 2025, actor Bogdan Beniuk, who previously had acted in Soviet and Russian films, called on Ukrainian television to beat children for speaking Russian: "You take a wooden stick. And hit them in the ass with a stick, so that they forget for ever that there is a Russian language... You should fight with them, struggle with them, hit them with the stick, and, for the elders, hit them on the head with a water bottle."<sup>393</sup>

And Ukrainian writer Vitaly Kapranov urged to "punch in the face" those who consume Russian content on 8 May 2025: "You should bully them at all levels, despise them, mock them, fight them fire with fire, and punch them in the face. This is the only way to explain something to them."<sup>394</sup>

Meanwhile, the 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. According to 40 per cent of the respondents, the Russian-speaking population should have that right in those Oblasts 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 apply in those Oblasts 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.<sup>395</sup>

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<sup>393</sup> <https://t.me/stranaua/194084>

<sup>394</sup> <https://t.me/stranaua/195200>

<sup>395</sup> <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=rus&cat=reports&id=920&page=7>

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 that should be developed.<sup>396</sup>

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 Ukrainian government approved the Concept of the State Target Social Programme for National-Patriotic Education until 2025<sup>397</sup>, which published the sociological survey data 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 is practically zero in the Donbass. This situation is qualified by the Ukrainian authorities as "threatening".<sup>398</sup>

Discrimination against Russian-speaking residents was highlighted in 2025 by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.<sup>399</sup> With respect to the odious 2022 Law on National Minorities and its subsequent amendments in 2023, CERD noted that the Law on National Minorities and its amendments discriminate against ethnic and ethno-linguistic minority groups whose languages are not official languages of the EU, particularly in relation to the enjoyment of their rights to education in their mother tongue and to participate in elections as well as cultural rights. However, the Committee had identified Russian, Armenian and Romani as such languages, effectively equating the languages of national minorities with Russian, which was the mother tongue of a much larger part of the population. Discrepancies in the

<sup>396</sup> [https://www.kiis.com.ua/materials/pr/20200406\\_pressconf/politics\\_april%202020.pdf](https://www.kiis.com.ua/materials/pr/20200406_pressconf/politics_april%202020.pdf)

<sup>397</sup> <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/prijnyato-koncepciyu-derzhavnoyi-cilovoyi-socialnoyi-programi-nacionalno-patriotichnogo-vihovannya-na-period-do-2025-r>

<sup>398</sup> <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1233-2020-%D1%80#Text>, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1233-2020-p#Text>.

<sup>399</sup> Concluding observations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-fourth to twenty-sixth periodic reports of Ukraine, May 2025. Available at: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fGBR%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fGBR%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en)

legislative framework, according to CERD, result in discrimination and inconsistent level of access to education in the mother tongue between recognized Indigenous Peoples, unrecognized Indigenous Peoples and ethnic and ethno-linguistic minorities. It was also noted that the Law on National Minorities suspends temporarily, for the duration of martial law and for six months after its revocation, several rights, including the right to peaceful assembly for ethnic minority groups who "identify their affiliation by ethnic origin" with the "aggressor State." The Committee had also highlighted various manifestations of discrimination against Roma.

More generally, CERD pointed out the continuing prerequisites for the existence of racial discrimination in Ukraine, both in law and in practice. In particular, the Committee expressed concern about the lack of comprehensive statistics on the demographic composition of the population, disaggregated by ethnicity, including with regard to members of Roma communities, Indigenous Peoples, internally displaced persons and non-citizens, such as stateless persons, undocumented migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The lack of such information limits the CERD's ability to properly assess the situation of such groups, including their socio-economic status and any progress. In this regard, the Committee recommended that the Kiev authorities provide comprehensive and disaggregated statistics on the demographic composition of the population.

CERD was also concerned that Ukrainian legislation does not prohibit racial discrimination on all grounds enumerated in Article 1 of ICERD, particularly on grounds of national origin and descent and that it does not explicitly prohibit intersecting forms of discrimination. The Committee urged that Kiev review its legal framework, particularly the Law No. 5207-VI on Principles of Preventing and Combating Discrimination in Ukraine, to bring them into line with the Convention.

CERD also noted that the absence of provisions in the legislative framework that explicitly criminalize racist hate speech and hate crimes. It also

noted that motives of racial, national or religious hatred or enmity were not considered by the courts as aggravating circumstances.

In the context of the implementation of measures to counter racial discrimination in practice, the Committee noted the need for Kiev to strengthen measures to monitor and combat racist hate speech in the media, on the Internet and in social media, as well as the importance of implementing measures to combat the use of racist hate speech by Ukrainian politicians and influential public figures.

With regard to the work of the executive bodies, the absence of a data collection system on racial discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes, as well as the low level of reporting on racial discrimination and hate crimes, were cited. Low prosecution rates for racial discrimination and hate crimes were noted, as well as the failure to adequately recognize and investigate those crimes by law enforcement agencies.

The above-mentioned 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.

## **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, the Russian language 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, Vladimir Zelenskiy, in an interview<sup>400</sup> published on 5 August 2021, advised Russians to get out of Ukraine. Minister of Culture Alexander Tkachenko declared that "these are not "good Russians" because there are no good Russians" and demanded that they be massacred all over the world. The adviser to the Interior Minister 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 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."

Hatred of Russians was openly propagandized on national and regional TV channels. Russophobic statements and calls for killing Russians were regularly heard on air. For example, the official program advertisement of Ukrainian journalist Yanina Sokolova on "Channel 5" stated as follows: "Turn on 5! This infuriates the Moskals!" 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."

State officials also demonstrate a similar Nazi attitude towards the Russian-speaking residents in Ukraine. In September 2023, a Russian-speaking woman in Odessa wanted to homeschool her child, but was faced with racist

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<sup>400</sup> <https://kanal-dom.tv/esli-ty-schitaesh-cto-my-russkie-bolshaya-oshibka-ostavatsya-zhit-na-donbasse-zelenskij-video/>

behaviour by a children's services official. The reason for the insults was precisely the fact that the applicant spoke in Russian. The female official demanded to speak to her only in Ukrainian and stated that those who speak Russian are enemies of Ukraine and therefore have no rights. Meanwhile, she herself spoke not in Ukrainian, but in "surzhik", making grave mistakes.<sup>401</sup>

Russophobia spreads unhindered on the Internet and social media. By now, there have been published many different publications, pictures and collages, containing not just derogatory attitudes towards Russians, but directly dehumanizing them. Well-known are such abusive nicknames as "Colorado beetles", "vatniks", and "orcs". Materials justifying the murder of Russians and calling for such acts are being actively circulated.

### **Manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance**

The whole spectrum of xenophobia is typical for modern Ukraine: according to the Kiev International Institute of Sociology, the xenophobia index in 2024 compared to 2023 increased from 3.4 to 4.2.<sup>402</sup>

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 NGOs, 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

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<sup>401</sup> <https://antifashist.online/item/nikakih-prav-u-vas-net-i-byt-ne-mozhet-zhitelnice-odessy-ne-pozvolyayut-perevesti-rebenka-iz-ukrainskoj-shkoly-na-domashnee-obuchenie.html>

<sup>402</sup> <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/symvoly-i-nastroyi-chy-ye-oznaky-zrostannya-antysemitizmu-v-ukrayini-/33266149.html>



Council of Europe, with Russian-speaking human rights defenders was not organized.<sup>403</sup> 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 situation with Russian compatriots in Ukraine, whose rights and freedoms are regularly infringed, remains difficult. In recent years, the rights of Russian-speaking defenders to inviolability of person, home, and property have been constantly violated. They are subjected to intimidation and pressure from law enforcement agencies, intelligence services and nationalist groups.

There are numerous examples that confirm the persecution of Russian-speaking residents in Ukraine. Information about the persecution of activists of the Russian-speaking community, including Sergei Provatorov, Yuri Pogoda, Victor Shestakov, Vladimir Saltykov, and Tariana Kuzmich, the detention of Russian sailors and truck drivers who were effectively taken hostage, is given in the previous report of the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of the Republic Belarus on the Human Rights situation in certain countries, the Report of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Situation with the Glorification of Nazism and the Spread of Neo-Nazism and Other Practices that Contribute to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, as well as the Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on Violations of the Rights of Russian Citizens and Fellow Citizens in Foreign Countries.

The above-mentioned reports include information on numerous measures taken by Kiev to restrict the rights of our citizens, including bans on banking services, seizure of property, etc.

Moreover, on 30 December 2022, Vladimir Zelenskiy signed the Law No. 8224 on National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine, adopted by the

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<sup>403</sup> The Online Environment as a Tool for Violating Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine. Institute of Legal Policy and Social Protection named after Irina Berezhnaya, 2022.

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 a State recognized in Ukraine and/or by international organizations as a terrorist State (aggressor State)", for the period of martial law in Ukraine and for six months after its termination (cancellation), are restricted 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. Furthermore, 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.<sup>404</sup>

This finding is confirmed by an OHCHR report published on 26 March 2024, which states that the Law on National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine discriminates against those whose language is not an EU language, such as Russian, Armenian or Romani. The report also urges the Kiev authorities to lift bans on peaceful assemblies of people identifying themselves as ethnic Russians.<sup>405</sup>

The Kiev regime not only glorifies Nazism and its accomplices in the Great Patriotic War, but also practically implements many of the attitudes of Hitler's Germany. In the spirit of the best Nazi examples, the Kiev authorities are conducting a campaign to purge political sphere of undesirable figures and forces that oppose the biased domestic and foreign policy and represent competition to the ruling elite. To this end, the intelligence services and the

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<sup>404</sup> <https://ukraina.ru/20230922/1049615530.html>

<sup>405</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/ukraine/2024/report-human-rights-situation-ukraine-1-dec-2023-29-feb-2024.pdf>

country's judicial system are actively involved. The main reason for persecution is an independent vision of the situation in Ukraine that does not coincide with the official interpretation or criticism of the Kiev regime. Very often such far-fetched persecutions are committed against Russian-speaking public figures. Accusations of "working for Russia" – this can be adapted to almost any activity of the accused – are very common.

The situation has reached the point of directly borrowing the methods used by the Nazis (the Ukrainian authorities began to demonstrate this 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.<sup>406</sup>

According to a survey conducted by the Anti-Defamation League, Ukraine is the second most antisemitic country in Europe. The rate of intolerance towards Jews was 32 per cent in 2016 compared to 46 per cent in 2019.<sup>407</sup> Moreover, the position of this US-based non-governmental organization towards Ukraine has recently softened. According to the 2023 monitoring data, the level of anti-Semitism was 29 per cent.<sup>408</sup> Furthermore, in March 2022, the organization virtually 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 neo-Nazis in

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<sup>406</sup> [https://lenta.ru/news/2020/05/13/perepis\\_jude/](https://lenta.ru/news/2020/05/13/perepis_jude/)

<sup>407</sup> <https://apnews.com/f18c9fa70b794974b214b6e9f1552cfd>

<sup>408</sup> <https://global100.adl.org/country/ukraine/2023>

Ukraine were a small and very marginal group with no political influence and who didn't attack Jews.<sup>409</sup>

Among the specific manifestations of anti-Semitism, the following should be highlighted. Considerable public outcry was caused by the statements made by Yuri Vakhotsky, deputy mayor of Shepetovka (Khmelnysky Oblast), in September 2021 saying that the tragedy of Babiy Yar is "God's punishment to the Jews for the Holodomor," and the statements by Alexander Sholovey, Head of the Khmelnytsky branch of the All-Ukrainian Union "Batkivshchyna" ("Fatherland"), who said that the more he watches the Hanukkah celebration, "the better he understands Hitler."

On 7 February 2021, the Centre 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.<sup>410</sup>

Examples of such actions are given in the previous Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus on the Human Rights Situation in Certain Countries, as well as in the Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on the Situation with the Glorification of Nazism and the Spread of Neo-Nazism and Other Practices that Contribute to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

A number of manifestations of anti-Semitism were also recorded in 2024.

On 26 January 2024, on the eve of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, vandals destroyed a memorial to Holocaust victims in the

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<sup>409</sup> 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>

<sup>410</sup> The Online Environment as a Tool for Violating Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine. Institute of Legal Policy and Social Protection named after Irina Berezhnaya, 2022.

village of Sosnovoye (former Ludvipol), Rovno Oblast, where the Nazis shot more than 1,000 prisoners of the local ghetto in 1942.<sup>411</sup>

On 25 February 2024, 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."<sup>412</sup>

On 12 April 2024, a man drew a swastika on the building of a Jewish canteen near the pilgrimage quarter of Bratslav Hasidic Jews in Uman, Cherkasy Oblast.<sup>413</sup>

On 21 November 2024, vandals drew graffiti on the facade of the ancient Templ synagogue in Ivano-Frankovsk.<sup>414</sup>

On 22 December 2024, an inscription "I will bite the throat of the Jew" was found on one of the slabs of the Space of Synagogues memorial in Lvov.<sup>415</sup>

On 31 December 2024, an attempt was made to set fire to a synagogue in Nikolaev using a "Molotov cocktail".<sup>416</sup>

On 1 January 2025, an unknown person extinguished the Hanukkah menorah for the first time installed at the city memorial in Lvov.<sup>417</sup>

On 2 January 2025, the Israeli Embassy in Kiev expressed "concern over anti-Semitic incidents during the Hanukkah celebrations in Ukraine, as well as over manifestations of anti-Semitism on social media."<sup>418</sup>

Antisemitic attitudes among certain groups are also maintained by the Ukrainian authorities, who are actively trying to rewrite the history of the Great Patriotic War and use such falsifications to rehabilitate Nazi criminals by

<sup>411</sup> <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/vandali-zrujnuvali-memor%D1%96al-zhertvam-golokostu-na-r%D1%96vnnshh%D1%96n%D1%96>

<sup>412</sup> <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/akt-antisem%D1%96tskogo-vandal%D1%96zmu-zd%D1%96jsneno-u-lvov%D1%96>

<sup>413</sup> <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/v-uman%D1%96-namalyuvali-svastiku-na-evrejsk%D1%96j-bud%D1%96vl%D1%96>

<sup>414</sup> <https://jewishnews.com.ua/suspilstvo/vandali-rozmalyuvali-grafiti-fasad-sinagogi-v-ivano-frankivsku>

<sup>415</sup> <https://vaadua.org/obshchinnye-otchety-vaada-ukrainy>

<sup>416</sup> <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3943607-u-mikolaevi-vnoci-kinuli-koktejl-molotova-u-sinagogu.html>

<sup>417</sup> <https://lviv.vgorode.ua/news/sobytiya/a1271562-u-lvovi-vandal-pohasiv-khanukalnu-menoru-na-jevrejskomu-memoriali-joho-zatrimali>

<sup>418</sup> <https://slovoproslovo.info/posolstvo-izrailyu-vyslovylo-sturbovanist-cherez-antysemityzm-v-ukraini-pid-chas-hanuky>

distorting the real facts about the Holocaust in Ukraine and the role of Ukrainian nationalists in it. After the 2014 unconstitutional armed coup d'état, Ukrainian politicians (as well as their Western mentors, in particular the US Embassy in Kiev) stopped mentioning even in statements on the anniversaries of the tragedy that Ukrainian nationalists, including members of the OUN, organized and executed these brutal massacres. Referring to the tragic events in Babiy Yar and the fact that the Soviet Union allegedly "did not notice the tragedy" became a separate element of the "oratorical skills" of such authors, including Vladimir Zelenskiy and people close to him. Meanwhile, Ukrainian politicians began to "torpedo" the project to build a memorial complex in Babiy Yar, citing the alleged involvement of Russian businessmen in financing the project. Such an attitude of the Kiev regime with regard to the Babiy Yar tragedy is not surprising, since the recalling this tragedy raises many uncomfortable questions for the authorities. On the one hand, the Ukrainian collaborators committed a crime by playing a role in the tragedy. On the other hand, it is undeniable evidence that it was the Red Army that stopped the Nazi machine of mass murder by liberating Kiev. Therefore, this situation clearly demonstrates that the ideological ancestors of the Kiev regime are criminals and murderers, and that the Soviet authorities and Red Army soldiers who are now "banned" are genuine heroes. Thus, it is not surprising to hear the news of October 2023 that the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory planned to hold an official discussion at the Kiev History Museum on the 82<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the mass shooting of Jews at Babiy Yar (11 October) on the topic "Is Babiy Yar needed after Bucha?" The event's philosophy was to find out whether it was worth remembering the tragedy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century against the backdrop of the current conflict. However, as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict escalated on 7 October 2023, the idea was abandoned.<sup>419</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20231013-neudobnaya-istoriya-na-ukraine-obsuzhdayut-nenuzhnost-pamyati-o-zhertvakh-babego-yara/>

The situation of ethnic minorities in Ukraine, especially the Hungarian minority, as well as discrimination against people of African descent is described in the previous report Joint Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus on the Human Rights Situation in Certain Countries, as well as in the Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on the Situation with the Glorification of Nazism and the Spread of Neo-Nazism and Other Practices that Contribute to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

It should be noted that this problem was highlighted in May 2025 by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which pointed out the lack of information from the Ukrainian authorities on investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sanctions for incidents of discriminatory treatment and racist hate speech and violence against persons belonging to groups exposed to racial discrimination whilst attempting to flee Ukraine into neighbouring countries. CERD has identified people of African, Asian, Middle Eastern and Latin American descent. And among the violations, it noted denying their access to bomb shelters, preventing them from crossing the border or pushing them to the back of queues for transportation.<sup>420</sup>

It should be noted, however, that international human rights mechanisms have paid attention to the issue of national minorities in Ukraine.

The international human rights monitoring mechanisms have pointed out that the majority of persons belonging to ethnic or national minorities in Ukraine are at risk of discrimination and stigmatization. Among others, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted that radical right-wing organizations operating in the country, such as the Right Sector, the

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<sup>420</sup> Concluding observations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-fourth to twenty-sixth periodic reports of Ukraine, May 2025.  
[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F24-26&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F24-26&Lang=en)

Azov Civilian Corps and the Social National Assembly, promote activities that amount to incitement to racial hatred and racist propaganda.<sup>421</sup> There have been numerous instances of intolerance propaganda on the Internet. Racist and antisemitic content is posted on specific web sites promoting a nationalist agenda.<sup>422</sup> Ukraine's human rights organizations have 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 CERD 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, directed mainly against minorities.<sup>423</sup>

In November 2021, the Human Rights Committee indicated that hate speech is widespread in the country, and hate crimes against minorities are frequently committed by members of right-wing organizations. These minority groups included Roma, Hungarians, Crimean Tatars, etc.<sup>424</sup>

Human rights defenders have recorded dozens of instances of intolerant and/or aggressive conduct against persons belonging to minorities or holding alternative political views in Ukraine. They are particularly concerned about illegal actions by the members of radical nationalist organizations (S14, Right Sector, Tradition and Order, National Corps, National Vigilantes, OUN, etc.). Their violent attacks are almost entirely ignored by Ukraine's law

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<sup>421</sup> Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 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](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=en)

<sup>422</sup> <https://strana.ua/opinions/161506-ukrainskie-natsionalisty-nachali-raspolzatsja-po-seti.html>

<sup>423</sup> Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 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](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=en)

<sup>424</sup> Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine, November 2021 (observations published in February 2022).  
[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=en)



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. Moreover, Ukrainian officials are involved in the persecution of this national minority.<sup>425</sup>

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<sup>425</sup> Examples of such actions by the Ukrainian authorities are given in the book titled "The Online Environment as a Tool for Violating Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine." Institute of Legal Policy and Social Protection named after Irina Berezhnaya, 2022.

## **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. The independent work of journalists is being restricted, and attempts are being made to tighten censorship. Intelligence services often interfere in the activities of the media and public organizations that hold views alternative to the official position.<sup>426</sup> Criminal prosecution remains a common means of exerting pressure on journalists undesirable to the Kiev regime. Repeated searches were conducted in the editorial offices of news agencies. Like in many other spheres, those journalists who have in any way demonstrated their sympathies for the "Russian world" and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church are the first to be persecuted. 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. It is not surprising that the level of aggression against media workers remains high. There have been repeated cases of right-wing radical "activists" blocking television channels undesirable to Kiev and just cases of neo-Nazis attacking media workers.

The Ukrainian leadership maintained the continuity of its policy in terms of cleansing the information space: it began back in 2014 with the banning of 12 Russian and Russian-language TV channels. Blacklisted are the following: "Channel One. The World Wide Web", "RTR-Planeta", "NTV", "NTV Mir", "Russia-24", "Russia-1", "TNT", "Peterburg-5", "Zvezda", "REN TV", and "TV Centre – Integrated" (TVCI). The repressive measures against the Russian media continued thereafter, with new bans and restrictions on the broadcasting of an increasing number of TV channels.

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<sup>426</sup> Monitoring of the human rights situation in Ukraine, January 2018 – April 2019. Available at: <https://forbiddentoforbid.org.ua/ru/monitoring-prav-cheloveka-konets-2018-nachalo-2019/>

Thus, on 6 March 2020, the National Council for Television and Radio Broadcasting in Ukraine reported that it had restricted the broadcasting of 86 foreign TV channels between 2014 and 2019, of which 74 were "of direct Russian origin".<sup>427</sup>

Meanwhile, the authorities imposed restrictions not only on Russian TV channels. In 2015, the Law of Ukraine on Television and Radio Broadcasting was amended with new provisions that prohibited the broadcasting of TV programmes produced after 1 August 1991, containing popularization or propaganda of the organs of the "aggressor state and their individual actions, justifying or recognizing the legitimate occupation of the territory of Ukraine."

On 9 November 2023, the National Council for Television and Radio Broadcasting banned 16 providers and services linked to Russia. Thus, "24TV", "Amediateka", "Baskino", "Filmix", "HD REZKA", "KINOGO", "Kinokrad", "Kinotochka", "KinoZapas", "Kion", "Viju", "GuideOnline", "Lime HD TV", "Smotreshka", "Tricolour Cinema and TV Online", and "Digital TV 20 channels for free" were to stop working. The ban was caused by the fact that these media services are fully or partially targeted at the territory of the "aggressor State", i.e. their domain name is registered in the Russian Federation, they use Russian as the default interface language, and they distribute advertisements aimed at the Russian audience.

It is noteworthy that not only Russian but also Ukrainian media resources were subject to Kiev's restrictions. In particular, the sanctions were imposed on Taras Kozak, member of the Opposition Platform – For Life, as well as eight legal entities controlled by him, by a decree issued by Vladimir Zelenskiy on 2 February 2021. Thus, the broadcasting of the popular opposition TV channels 112, ZiK and NewsOne was banned. On 20 August 2021, the

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<sup>427</sup> <https://glavcom.ua/country/society/u-nacradi-nazvali-kilkist-rosiyskih-telekanaliv-yaki-zaboronili-v-ukrajini-protiyagom-ostannih-shesti-rokiv-664017.html>

National Security and Defence Council (NSDC) of Ukraine imposed sanctions on the Ukrainian online newspaper Strana.UA and its editor-in-chief Igor Guzhva. The restrictive measures included blocking the website. In December 2021, another NSDC decision imposed sanctions on the companies that own the channels First Independent and UkrLive.<sup>428</sup>

It is noteworthy that numerous pro-Western international human rights bodies, especially those dealing with the independence of the media, supported the Kiev authorities and paid no attention to the blocking of Russian resources. However, even they sometimes pointed out restrictions on the activities of Ukrainian channels. For instance, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Teresa Ribeiro, expressed concern about the sanctions imposed by the NSDC against Strana.UA and other editions, recommending that the Ukrainian authorities find a balanced and proportional solution to media-related issues that preserves media pluralism, the free flow of information and diversity of opinions in line with relevant international standards and OSCE commitments.

Recently, it was openly reported that Western structures, primarily USAID, have assisted the Kiev regime in monopolizing the information space and promoting its preferred narrative. According to "WikiLeaks", this agency sponsored nine out of ten Ukrainian media outlets.<sup>429</sup> Consequently, the independence, impartiality, and objectivity of most Ukrainian media outlets raise serious doubts.

The Kiev regime has completely monopolized the information sphere. Since 2022, all news on Ukrainian television has been presented in the format of a "United News (telethon)," meaning all TV channels broadcast information deemed necessary by the country's leadership, covering it from just a single perspective. On Ukrainian platforms, this project was described as being

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<sup>428</sup> For more detailed information on the restriction of media activities in Ukraine, see the previous report by the Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus on the Human Rights Situation in Certain Countries.

<sup>429</sup> <https://x.com/wikileaks/status/1887501752213409919>

designed "to inform the population about the security situation and the activities of state authorities" and it was noted that its programming consists "primarily of informational and/or analytical broadcasts."<sup>430</sup>

According to the Kiev International Institute of Sociology (KIIS), "the idea of the 'United News' telethon enjoyed broad support in 2022, but since 2023, there has been a steady decline in trust. As of February 2024, a negative trust-distrust balance was recorded for the first time. In December 2023, 43 per cent trusted the 'United News' telethon, while three per cent distrusted it. By early February 2024, the share of those who trust it had decreased to 36 per cent."<sup>431</sup>

Most Ukrainian journalists considered the "telethon" a form of censorship. For example, in May 2023, the ZMINA Human Rights Center, together with the Democratic Initiatives Foundation named after Ilko Kucherev, conducted a survey. According to its findings, 62 per cent of Ukrainian journalists called the "Unified News" telethon a form of censorship.<sup>432</sup> Western media have also reported on the negative perception of this informational (or rather, propagandistic) project among Ukrainian military personnel. For instance, the Spanish newspaper *El Mundo* noted in January 2024 that Ukrainian soldiers viewed the telethon as pure propaganda and a soap opera where everything goes smoothly and no one dies.<sup>433</sup>

Beyond strict censorship and the promotion of a single narrative aligned with the Kiev authorities, anti-Russian sentiment is widespread in Ukrainian media. This is reinforced by legal measures introduced by the Kiev regime. On 31 March 2023, the law on Media came into force, targeting journalists deemed undesirable by the government. It imposes a ban on the publication of

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<sup>430</sup> <https://cpmsdvarva.itmed.org/news/ dini novini zagalnoukrainskiy informatsiyiny telemarafon zapushche niy 24 lyutogo 2022 roku z metoyu/>

<sup>431</sup> <https://kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1369>

<sup>432</sup> <https://zn.ua/ukr/war/ponad-60-zhurnalistiv-vvazhajut-odnijeju-iz-form-tsenzuri-jedinij-telemarafon-opituvannja.html>

<sup>433</sup> <https://www.elmundo.es/internacional/2024/01/22/65ae764afdddf2028b457a.html>

"materials containing popularization or propaganda of bodies of the aggressor state" and "unreliable materials" (the criteria for defining such materials are very vague), which in practice introduces a total control over the media<sup>434</sup> and an gives 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. Along with this, the law has tightened language quotas – since January 2024, the required share of Ukrainian-language content on national television has increased from 75 per cent to 90 per cent.

The Ukrainian law on Media was criticized by the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), which stated that "the coercive regulation envisaged by the bill on Media is worthy of the worst authoritarian regimes."<sup>435</sup>

However, Zelenskiy's regime apparently found these measures insufficient. In January 2025, Ukraine's Verkhovnaya Rada passed a law in its first reading requiring media to delete negative comments about officials. This applies to any comments containing accusations of corruption, legal violations, or simply offensive remarks against the regime.

The media situation in Ukraine has also drawn attention from the international community. On 19 June 2024, the NGO Reporters Without Borders (RSF) spoke out about the "shrinking press freedom in Ukraine" and "pressure on independent media," urging authorities to protect independent journalism and the right to information in the country. The organization highlighted cases of "surveillance, military conscription threats, and increased government control," stating that "political pressure and obstacles against Ukrainian media have been growing." Since the beginning of 2024, "at least

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<sup>434</sup> 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.

<sup>435</sup> <https://ctrana.one/news/401135-v-es-nazvali-zakonoproekt-o-media-dostojnym-khudshikh-avtoritarnykh-rezhimov.html>

five journalists have been under surveillance or threatened because of publications on corruption."<sup>436</sup>

On 30 October 2024, the European Commission, in its progress report on EU candidate countries, criticized the funding of the "United News" telethon from Ukraine's state budget, expressed doubts about its unbiased nature, and emphasized that Ukraine should "gradually restore a transparent, pluralistic, and independent media landscape."<sup>437</sup>

The U.S. State Department's 2023 Human Rights Report, published on 22 April 2024, also noted instances of restrictions on freedom of speech in Ukraine, including against journalists. According to the report, these included violence and threats of violence, unjustified arrests, persecution of journalists, censorship, and restrictions on Internet freedom and freedom of movement.<sup>438</sup>

As Ukrainian authorities expand control over mass media and enforce strict censorship, an increasing number of citizens are turning away from the "telethon" and seeking alternative sources of information. One such alternative is social media and messaging apps – particularly Telegram, which, according to several Ukrainian surveys, has recently become the most popular news source for Ukrainians. In September 2024, the Rating Sociological Group conducted a poll showing that Telegram was the primary news source for 47 per cent of Ukrainians, while the "telethon" accounted for just 16 per cent.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> <https://strana.today/news/467053-reportjory-bez-hranits-obespokoeny-sokrashcheniem-svobody-pressy-v-ukraine.html>

<sup>437</sup> <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2024/10/30/7197351>

<sup>438</sup> <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/20620473>

<sup>439</sup> <https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/uspih-chi-ni-yak-ukrayinci-ocinyuyut-reformuvannya-organiv-pravoporyadku-ta-pidtrimku-yes.html>

## **Suppression of opposition and political rights restriction**

The Kiev regime not only glorifies Nazism and its collaborators from the Great Patriotic War era but also implements many policies reminiscent of Hitler's Germany in practice. In the spirit of the best Nazi policies, the Kiev authorities are conducting a campaign to purge political area of undesirable figures and forces that oppose the biased domestic and foreign policy and compete with the ruling circles. To this end, Ukrainian authorities make use of the country's intelligence services and judicial system. The primary reason for being persecuted is to have independent views on the situation in Ukraine that deviate from the official narrative of the Kiev regime or criticize it. Public figures who speak Russian are frequently targeted by such fabricated persecutions. Accusations of "collaboration with Russia" are widespread and can be applied to virtually any activity of the accused.

Moreover, Kiev continues to compile expanding lists of "enemies of Ukraine." Notably, the notorious "Myrotvorets" (Peacemaker) website remains operational without restriction, openly violating the right to privacy. 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 this resource to exert psychological pressure on those whoever they may accuse of "separatism and high treason." Those who are listed in the "Myrotvorets" database automatically become potential targets for repression. The most outrageous case involved the publication in 2015 of personal data, including residential address, of writer Oles Buzina and journalist Pavel Sheremet. They were murdered shortly after this information had been posted on the website. Ukrainian radicals have been repeatedly accused of involvement in these killings. However, despite numerous appeals from the international community, no investigation into these cases has been conducted.



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, Alexey 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, even from natural causes, 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." "Myrotvorets" is 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.<sup>440</sup>

Editor-in-chief of "Myrotvorets" Roman Zaitsev, in an interview with Ukrainian periodical Fakty 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.

As of late 2021, more than 240,000 people were listed in the "Myrotvorets" database, of which about 75,000 are Russians. Personal information of over 300 minors is also disclosed on the website. In October 2021, Faina Savenkova, a 12-year-old girl from Lugansk who allegedly "posed

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<sup>440</sup> 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>

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 – combating 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 so-called "antiterrorist operation" (against the Donbass residents) 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 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."<sup>441</sup> The HRC attached great importance to this issue. This is indicated, in particular, by the fact that the recommendation to ensure the right to privacy, including in the context of the Myrotvorets website, was included by the Committee in the list of issues on which information should be sent during the year.

In September 2022, UNICEF called for removal of children's names and information from the "Myrotvorets" website. "The publication of children's

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<sup>441</sup> 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=ru](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru)

information in ways that put them at risk is completely unacceptable," the organization emphasized.<sup>442</sup>

Another privacy-violating platform is the recently created "The Germs of 'Russian World'" website. It features data of 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", just like its prototype, will be used to harass those featured in it, target people for any dissent, and purposefully spread hatred between nations.

Ukrainian authorities also initiate politically motivated cases against dissenting individuals under Articles 09 – 114-2, 258 – 258-6, 260, 261, 437 – 442 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, for crimes against the foundations of national security (Articles 109 – 114-2), offenses against civil security (Articles 258 – 258-6, 260, 261; these articles have typically been used to prosecute militia members and residents of the DPR and LPR), and crimes against peace, security, and international legal order (Articles 437–442, covering incidents directly related to hostilities). 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

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<sup>442</sup> <https://ria.ru/amp/20221207/mirotvorets-1836999067.html>

aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine"; and "glorification" of its participants – Article 436 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine.<sup>443</sup>

In reality, all of the criminal law regulations in the country are used by Ukrainian authorities to persecute the dissidents or those who speak positively of Russia. As of 3 June 2024, the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine reported opening of 17,577 cases on suspicion of committing crimes against national security, including: encroachment on the territorial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine (Article 110 of the Criminal Code) – 3,248 cases, high treason (Article 111 of the Criminal Code) – 3,360 cases, collaborationism (Article 111-1 of the Criminal Code) – 8,095 cases, aiding the aggressor state (Article 111-2 of the Criminal Code) – 1,235 cases, sabotage (Article 113 of the Criminal Code) – 120 cases.

According to the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, as of the end of February 2025, a total of 20,960 crimes against national security were recorded. Of these, nearly 9,500 cases were under Article 111-1 of the Criminal Code (collaborationism) and over 4,000 cases under Article 111 of the Criminal Code (high treason).<sup>444</sup>

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.<sup>445</sup>

A significant number of such prosecutions are initiated against residents of the eastern regions of Ukraine. 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 and Kiev Oblasts and areas of the

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<sup>443</sup> Report of the Foundation for Humanitarian Economic Cooperation entitled "Persecution of Dissidents and Political Repressions in Ukraine" (December 2023 – February 2024)

<sup>444</sup> <https://court.gov.ua/press/news/1768021/>

<sup>445</sup> <https://ukraina.ru/20240119/1052773811.html>

Donetsk, Zaporozhye and Kherson Oblasts occupied by Kiev). Besides, residents of these territories, some of which have temporarily got back under control of the Ukrainian armed forces, fall under the articles "collaborationism" (111-1) and "aiding and abetting the aggressor state" (111-2).<sup>446</sup> Human rights activists note that the given statistics do not 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 Ukrainian human rights activist Larisa Shesler, as of late January 2024, the number of political prisoners in Ukraine amounted to tens of thousands. In one of her interviews, citing data from the Deputy UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, she stated that a year and a half after the start of the special military operation, over 6,000 criminal cases had been initiated under the charge of "collaborationist activity" in territories controlled by Kiev.<sup>447</sup> Shesler noted that there is virtually no one left to defend political prisoners, as many honest and professional lawyers have fled the country, while numerous activists are themselves imprisoned.

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 posts, 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, and 176 from October 2022 to September 2023.<sup>448</sup>

Detainees held on such charges are kept in horrific conditions and subjected to torture. According to journalist Nikita Shmelev, who also became a

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<sup>446</sup> Report of the Foundation for Humanitarian Economic Cooperation entitled "Persecution of Dissidents and Political Repressions in Ukraine" (December 2023 – February 2024)

<sup>447</sup> <https://www.mk.ru/politics/2024/01/02/desyatki-tysyach-v-tyurme-sotni-ischezli-borba-s-inakomysliem-na-ukraine.html>

<sup>448</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/russian/articles/c4nmxm1ev7o>

victim of unfounded criminal prosecution for publishing an article about Ukrainian territorial defence forces killing civilians, the primary reason for arrests is people's attempts to express opinions that diverge from the official stance of the Ukrainian authorities. Any critical remark about the Kiev regime – whether on social media, in the press, or even in casual conversations on the street or public transport – immediately turns Ukrainian citizens into "traitors," "separatists," and "collaborators." Most of those accused of treason or complicity in waging an aggressive war allegedly passed information directly to Russian military personnel or citizens, as claimed by SBU investigators, prosecutors, and judges. However, this so-called "classified" information was often taken from open online sources – a fact even acknowledged in some indictments. Nearly all detainees held on "political" charges were brutally beaten during arrest. The conditions for "political" prisoners are far worse than those for regular criminals: overcrowded cells lack even the most basic necessities. Prison staff subject them to cruel treatment, including torture. The scale of such unlawful detentions is vast. According to Nikita Shmelev, five other detainees held on similar charges shared his cell. Moreover, the number of such prisoners in pre-trial detention was much higher – in just one prison block alone, there were 172 "separatists."<sup>449</sup>

International human rights organizations have also confirmed the facts of unlawful criminal prosecutions and torture on the aforementioned grounds. During the 55<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk stated that after Ukraine "regained control of parts of its territory," some residents suffered "at the hands of Ukrainian authorities." "By applying an overly broad definition of 'collaboration,' Ukrainian authorities have prosecuted and convicted local residents who were simply carrying out ordinary work within their

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<sup>449</sup> <https://antifashist.online/item/gluhonemoj-shpion-izmenniki-rodiny-pytki-rossijskih-voennoplennyh-kak-v-sizo-dnepropetrovska-izdevayutsya-nad-lyudmi-svidetelstva-ochevidca.html>

communities." He also noted that, in some cases, the OHCHR "documented torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary detention, and violations of the right to a fair trial for those accused of collaboration."<sup>450</sup>

In its March 2023 report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, OHCHR documented that "since 24 February 2022, the Office has recorded 91 cases of enforced disappearances and arbitrary detentions (79 men, 12 women) perpetrated by Ukrainian armed forces and law enforcement in government-controlled territories, occurring both during and prior to the reporting period. The majority of detainees were arrested on suspicion of collaborating with or assisting Russian Armed Forces. Several others were detained over alleged participation in armed groups during 2014–2015."<sup>451</sup>

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 Yelena 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 her persecution by the Ukrainian security services. On 16 March 2022, Yelena 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 has also written letters to the Council of Europe and the OSCE. After enduring two and a half years in Kiev's pre-trial detention centre under inhumane conditions, she was sentenced by a Ukrainian court on

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<sup>450</sup> <https://tass-ru.turbopages.org/turbo/tass.ru/s/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/20417189>

<sup>451</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/ukraine/2023/23-03-24-Ukraine-35th-periodic-report-RU.pdf>

10 December 2024 to 14 years' imprisonment.<sup>452</sup> By the time her sentence concludes, she will be 82 years old.

Since the spring of 2022, there have been numerous cases of persecution against the public figures in Ukraine that expressed their personal views on the situation in the country and supported the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church. In March 2022, writer, satirist, publicist and TV host Yan Taksyur was detained. The reason was 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.

In February 2023, Dmitriy Skvortsov, a journalist and blogger who defended the canonical tradition of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, was detained for "justifying Russian aggression."<sup>453</sup>

Against the background of persecution by the Kyiv regime of the UOC, in March 2024 there were searches at the office of the Union of Orthodox Journalists – which regularly reports on the Kiev regime's repression against the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the arrests of its journalist staff.

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

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<sup>452</sup> <https://tass.ru/proisshestviya/22663493>

<sup>453</sup> <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/19638953>



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, and many others.<sup>454</sup>

Other political prisoners of particular concern include:

- Energy expert and commentator Dmitry Marunich (detained by the SBU in April 2022; current whereabouts unknown);

- Kiev historian and publicist Alexander Karevin, author of books on the history of East Slavic peoples (seized by the SBU in his own apartment on 9 March 2022; fate remains unknown);

- Former district council deputy, disabled activist of Anti-Maidan Oleg Novikov (arrested by the SBU in April 2022; current location unknown);

- Head of the Russian community in Poltava Oblast, writer, and journalist Viktor Shestakov (detained by the SBU in July 2023; on 11 April 2024 sentenced to 15 years in prison with asset confiscation on charges of "high treason" and "justifying, considering legal and denying Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine");

- Kiev lawyer Svetlana Novitskaya accused of "treason". She is a UN and OSCE-recognized legal expert who defended former head of the Lvov branch of the Opposition Platform – For Life party and organizer of the Immortal Regiment in Ukraine, Inna Ivanochko (on 23 February 2024 Novitskaya was notified that she was suspected of "high treason" for calling things by their proper names during her interviews to Russian media (2017–2022): she said that the Ukraine conflict was a "civil war" and the 2014 Maidan events – a

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<sup>454</sup> <https://ukraina.ru/20220715/1036459856.html>

"coup". On 29 February 2024, she was placed in pre-trial detention without bail. She faces 12–15 years' imprisonment with asset confiscation).<sup>455</sup>

On 29 July 2024, the SBU announced the detention of "six pro-Russian Internet agitators," though their names were not disclosed. One detainee was described by the security service as a "pseudo-expert" who "authored several pro-Kremlin publications" and in his "quasi-scientific works falsifies historical facts about the formation and development of Ukrainian statehood to favour Russia."<sup>456</sup> It was later revealed that the detainee was Oleg Vusatyuk, a Candidate of Philosophical Sciences, state expert at the National Institute for International Security Issues in Kiev, and long-time head of the Ukrainian Academy of Russian Studies, a public organization.<sup>457,458</sup> His publications were also dedicated to Russian Studies. For instance, the Russian journal *Svobodnaya Mysl* (No. 3/2020) published his article titled "The War Over Historical Memory: How to Stop the 'Erasing' of the Great Patriotic War."<sup>459</sup>

Sentences have been handed down in the cases of some public figures. For example, in May 2022, Aleksander Matyushenko was sentenced to three years in prison on charges of "trespass against territorial integrity of Ukraine".<sup>460</sup> In November 2023, head of the Department of Humanities of the Nikolayev 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.

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<sup>455</sup> [https://zaxid.net/sud\\_vidpraviv\\_advokatku\\_liderki\\_opzzh\\_u\\_lvovi\\_inni\\_ivanochko\\_v\\_sizo\\_bez\\_prava\\_zasta\\_vi\\_n1580778](https://zaxid.net/sud_vidpraviv_advokatku_liderki_opzzh_u_lvovi_inni_ivanochko_v_sizo_bez_prava_zasta_vi_n1580778)

<sup>456</sup> <https://ukraina.ru/20240730/1056559813.html>

<sup>457</sup> <https://rg.ru/2024/08/06/obnulenie.html>

<sup>458</sup> <https://ukraina.ru/20240730/1056566806.html>

<sup>459</sup> <http://www.svom.info/collection/54/?page=2>

<sup>460</sup> <https://ukraina.ru/20220715/1036459856.html>

On 23 May 2024, the Galitsky District Court in Lvov convicted 74-year-old KGB veteran Alexander Kostorny – head of the Russian Society named after Alexander Pushkin and member of the "International Society for Human Rights"—of "treason" and sentenced him to 15 years in prison with asset confiscation.<sup>461</sup>

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 Alexander Brukhanov, Mayor of Yuzhnoye, Cherkasy City Council deputy from the "Opposition Platform – For Life" Alexander Zamiraylo, Kherson City Council deputy Ilya Karamalikov, Mariupol City Council deputy Klimenko, politician Kolesnikov, and the mayor of the village of Kherson, Eduard Konovalov, Mayor of Stary Saltov, Viktor Ladukha, Mayor of Buryn, Andrey Lazurenko, deputy of Solonitsevskiy village council of Kharkov region.

On 25 July 2023, the SBU accused of high treason former deputy of the Verkhovna Rada, leader of the now-banned party "Nashi" Evgeny Muraev.<sup>462</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> [https://24tv.ua/ru/obstrel-javorivskogo-poligona-korrektirovshik-ognja-kostornyj0poluchil-surovyj-prigovor-24-kanal\\_n2561648](https://24tv.ua/ru/obstrel-javorivskogo-poligona-korrektirovshik-ognja-kostornyj0poluchil-surovyj-prigovor-24-kanal_n2561648)

<sup>462</sup> <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/18353577?ysclid=lmgo78j2vv396866235>

In the same month, a criminal case for high treason was opened against another former deputy Vadim Rabinovich. He was arrested in absentia.<sup>463</sup>

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. For example, 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. She 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.<sup>464</sup>

At the same time, it was reported about the arrest in Kharkov of six former employees of Ukrainian design institutes (traditionally, they are often 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.<sup>465</sup>

Similarly, since October 2022, Vyacheslav Boguslaev, the director of another Ukrainian plant, Motor Sich, a public and political figure and Hero of

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<sup>463</sup> <https://ren.tv/news/v-mire/1128632-ukrainskogo-deputata-rabinovicha-zaochno-arestovali-za-gosizmenu?ysclid=lmgoejpg3r636374100>

<sup>464</sup> <https://antifashist.com/item/inzhenery-atomshhiki-pedagogi-i-informatory-s-trikolorom-sbu-prodolzhaet-shtampovat-absurdnye-ugolovnye-dela-protiv-ukraincev.html>

<sup>465</sup> Ibid.

Ukraine, has been in custody on suspicion of "collaborationism" and "aiding Russia."

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 Tatiana Moskalkova.

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.<sup>466</sup>

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.<sup>467</sup> 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 those convicted on these counts were held in separate 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

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<sup>466</sup> <https://news.un.org/ru/story/2023/10/1445597>

<sup>467</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/02/jailed-as-collaborators-the-stories-of-ukrainians-who-ended-up-in-prison>

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.