

Ukraine: 1030th anniversary of Christianization of Kievan Rus celebration by UOC/ Kyiv Patriarchate

HRWF (29.07.2018) – On 28 July, the UOC/ KP celebrated the anniversary of the Christianization of Ukraine which took place with the conversion of Prince Vladimir in 988. President Poroshenko participated in the ceremony with his wife. On the previous day, the UOC/MP had celebrated the same historical event under the name of “Baptism of Rus” in Kyiv and so had the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow.

Up to 150,000 take part in UOC – KP procession in Kyiv

Interfax Ukraine (28.07.2018) – From 65,000 to 150,000 believers have participated in a religious procession of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP) dedicated to the 1030th anniversary of the Christianization of Kyivan Rus-Ukraine.

“About 65,000 people participated in the march as of 13.00. The situation is calm and controlled,” First Deputy Interior Minister Serhiy Yarovy said the Interior Ministry’s page on Facebook on Saturday.

According to him, bomb disposal experts and dog handlers checked the route along which the column of pilgrims moved in order to prevent terror attacks and provocations.

The safety of citizens was ensured by the police, the National Guard and the State Emergency Service.

The head of the information department of the UOC-KP, Archbishop Yevstratiy (Zoria), said that up to 150,000 parishioners had taken part in the events.

“‘The biggest religious procession in Ukraine’s history’ – this is what Patriarch Filaret said in his speech after a prayer service on Saint Volodymyr Hill. According to various estimates, from 65,000 to 150,000 believers or more gathered in the center of Kyiv for a prayer service,” Yevstratiy (Zoria) wrote on his Facebook page after the religious procession.

He noted that prior to this day “only the Maidan during the Revolution of Dignity brought together so many patriotic citizens who pray for the victory of truth and peace in Ukraine.”

Ukrinform: About 65,000 people participate in religious procession in Kyiv

Ukrinform (28.07.2018) – As of 13.00, about 65,000 people took part in a religious procession of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP).

The procession was guarded by 2,500 law enforcers, the press service of the Internal Ministry of Ukraine reported.

“As of 13:00, about 65,000 people participated in the religious procession. The situation was calm and controlled,” the deputy director of the Department of Communications of the Interior Ministry of Ukraine wrote on Facebook with reference to First Deputy Interior Minister Serhiy Yarovy.

The law enforcers continue to protect public order during the event.

As reported, on July 28, the ceremonial events on the occasion of the 1030th anniversary of the conversion of the Kyivan Rus-Ukraine to Christianity were held in Kyiv with the participation of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko.

President Poroshenko and his wife took part in the Cross Procession on the occasion of the 1030th anniversary of

Christianization of Ukraine-Rus

RISU (28.07.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2vfaQaV> President Petro Poroshenko and his wife Maryna Poroshenko took part in the Cross Procession on the occasion of the 1030th anniversary of Christianization of Ukraine-Rus'.

Believers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Patriarchate, headed by Patriarch Filaret, and believers of the UAOC, headed by Metropolitan Macarius, passed to the garden square near the monument to St. Vladimir.

The Head of State together with his wife also took part in the prayer service for Ukraine and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church.

The festive event was attended by representatives of the Government, members of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches, well-known public figures, volunteers, representatives of culture, science and education.

UKRAINE: 1030th anniversary of the 'Baptism of Rus' : the ROC and UOC/ Moscow Patriarchate narrative

Pictures: <https://bit.ly/2LKUYHu>

Heads, members of 10 local Orthodox Churches to celebrate 1030th anniversary of Baptism of Rus in Moscow

Moscow, July 27, Interfax – www.interfax-religion.com/ – Representatives of ten local Orthodox Churches from around the

world will come to Moscow to attend celebrations marking the 1030th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus.

Delegations from the Orthodox Church of Alexandria, the Church of Antioch, the Church of Jerusalem, the Orthodox Church of Georgia, the Orthodox Church of Serbia, the Orthodox Church of Bulgaria, the Orthodox Church of Cyprus, the Orthodox Church of Albania, the Orthodox Church of Poland, and the Orthodox Church of Czech Lands and Slovakia are coming to the Russian capital, the Moscow Patriarchate told Interfax-Religion.

Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia will meet Patriarch Theodore of Alexandria and All Africa and members of other church delegations on Friday.

“It is very significant that our brothers from all across the Orthodox world are now coming to Moscow and Kiev so that we together can express our unity on this date, which is so important for the Russian Orthodox Church,” the spokesman of the Russian patriarch, priest Alexander Volkov, told Interfax-Religion.

In turn, the deputy head of the Synodal Department for External Church Relations Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, described the Baptism of Rus as “an epoch-making event in Russian history.”

“Everything that happened before is lost in the dark and is known to us only in fragments. A new people and a new civilization were born in the Dnieper baptistery, and this event was accompanied by such a strong creative surge that the newly born Orthodox Rus expanded later to new territories, and we received from God a ‘sixth part of the Earth,’ where different people now live, and new state borders are drawn, but with its own history, its own culture, and its global vision united for many centuries to come,” the priest told Interfax-Religion.

“The Orthodox belief in Christ, the belief that St. Prince

Vladimir chose, formed all of us, that is, the Russians, the Ukrainians, the Belarusians, the Moldovans, and all descendants of the Baptism of St. Vladimir, no matter what they call themselves now," the patriarch's spokesman said.

"The anniversary of our Baptism is an event of global significance," and it is not accidental that all of the Orthodox Churches in the world deemed it fitting to attend it, "share their joy with us, sending their hierarchs both to Kiev and to Moscow," the priest said.

The Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa Theodore will be Russia's main guest, Father Nikolay said, noting that he "is our long-standing and faithful friend, who wholeheartedly fell in love with the Russians after spending ten years of study and service in Odessa."

"Let's pray together, let's share our joy and troubles, let's think about how to build up the unity of our global Orthodox family," the priest said.

The patriarchs of the Alexandrian and Russian Orthodox Churches, accompanied by members of other delegations, will lead a vigil service on Friday evening.

The Day of the Baptism of Rus was declared a state memorial date in Russia in 2010 at the Archbishop Council's request.

Over 100,000 pilgrims to attend Kiev cross procession – Ukrainian Orthodox Church

Moscow, July 27, Interfax – The Ukrainian Orthodox Church is expecting even more believers to attend the Kiev cross procession marking the 1030th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus than attended last year.

"It is still early to make final assessments, but in any case, there will be more than 100,000 people. I have been on Vladimirskaya Gorka [Vladimir Hill] for more than an hour,

waiting for a religious service, and there's a nonstop flow of people coming here from three streets," Ukrainian Orthodox Church spokesman Vasily Anisimov told Interfax-Religion.

He expressed hope that the festivities would not be marred by provocations. "God can never be cursed. Let's hope that everything will be alright," Anisimov said.

Dozens of buses from western Ukraine were stopped on the Zhitomir Highway leading to Kiev this morning because of they had supposedly been mined, he said.

There were reports of attempts to prevent believers from attending the cross procession in several Ukrainian regions on Thursday.

For instance, Ukrainian Security Service officers have stopped five buses in Zaporozhye for several hours under the pretext that they had been mined, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's press service said.

Cars full of armed people blocked another nine buses from Zaporozhye and Melitopol.

Attempts to keep people from the Kiev cross procession were also undertaken in the Zhitomir and Rovno regions, and obstacles were created for pilgrims from the Nezhin and Odessa dioceses.

Still, tens of thousands of people have come to Kiev, the church's press service said.

The attempts to block the highway have backfired, Archpriest Viktor Zemlianoy of the Rovno Diocese said. "Even more people than expected came because of this resistance," he said.

Kiev cross procession begins

Kiev, July 27, Interfax – A Ukrainian Orthodox Church cross procession marking the 1030th anniversary of the Baptism of

Rus has begun in downtown Kiev.

After the prayer service on Vladimirska Gorka (Vladimir Hill), believers moved across European Square and along Grushevsky Street toward the Kiev Lavra of the Caves, an Interfax correspondent reported.

Clergymen carrying religious banners and icons are leading the column.

Law enforcement officers are providing security.

In attendance are the co-chairs of the Opposition Bloc faction in the Verkhovna Rada, Yury Boyko and Aleksander Vilkul, faction members Vadim Novinsky, Nestor Shufrich, Mikhail Dobkin, and Yury Pavlenko, and Vladimir Litvin, an independent MP.

The situation is calm in downtown Kiev. Due to the high humidity and temperature, some participants sometimes have felt dizzy in the crowd, but ambulances are on site providing aid.

About 250,000 attend cross procession in Kiev – organizers (1)

Moscow, July 27, Interfax – The cross procession held in Kiev on Friday afternoon to mark the 1030th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus brought together 250,000 believers from various Ukrainian regions and from other countries, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's press service said.

"Participants in today's cross procession moved in a mighty flow toward the center of the capital for three hours. It was a marvelously joyful event," church spokesperson Vasily Anisimov told Interfax-Religion.

A total of 100,000 people attended the celebration last year.

(1) HRWF Comment: No alternative reliable source confirms or denies these statistics. Noteworthy is the fact that the UOC/

Moscow Patriarchate in Kyiv and the ROC in Moscow name the event “the baptism of the Rus” and not “the christianization of the Kievan Rus”.

UKRAINE: UOC – MP holds religious procession in Kyiv – See videos: <https://bit.ly/20o00IH>

Ukrinform (27.07.2018) – <https://bit.ly/20o00IH> – A religious procession of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) has ended in Kyiv without any incidents. The pilgrims marched from Saint Volodymyr Hill to the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra monastery.

According to an Ukrinform correspondent, the column was led by a security police patrol. In particular, several police cars, as well as a car with the inscription “bomb disposal service,” were used.

The column was also accompanied by police officers with dogs. Law enforcers constantly checked flower beds located along the route of the column. National Guard servicemen were deployed along the route of the procession.

On the way to the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, UOC-MP Head Onufriy laid flowers at the monument to Hero of the Heavenly Hundred Mikhail Zhiznevsky, who was killed on Hrushevskoho Street in Kyiv on January 22, 2014 during clashes between the security forces and EuroMaidan activists.

Earlier, the UOC-MP held a prayer service on Saint Volodymyr Hill. In addition to the clergy, the event was attended by

Opposition Bloc MPs Yuriy Boyko, Vadim Novinsky, Nestor Shufrych, Oleksandr Vilkul, and independent MP Volodymyr Lytvyn.

President Petro Poroshenko did not attend the celebrations but will attend those to be organized by the UOC Kyiv Patriarchate on the next day.

Ukraine: 1030th anniversary of the Kievan Rus Christianization on a background of high tensions

Christianization will take place this 27-28 July in a context of high tension. On the one hand, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church/ Kyiv Patriarchate wants to secede from the Russian Orthodox Church and hopes the spiritual head of Eastern Orthodoxy, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople (Istanbul) will recognize its autocephaly. On the other hand, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church / Moscow Patriarchate has announced a procession in Kyiv on Friday in which 100,000 people would participate while the Kyiv Patriarchate has announced a similar religious procession with 100,000 participants on Saturday.

The police is on full alert.

100,000 people to participate in religious processions associated with Kievan Rus Christianization anniversary



Yevstratyy Zorya/Facebook – 5,000 police officers and 5, 000 officers of the National Guard will provide the security

112 International (24.07.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2JZkGDd> – About 100,000 people, parishioners of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of both Kyiv and Moscow Patriarchates, will participate in the sacred procession that will take place on July 27 and July 28 due to the Kievan Rus Christianization. The security measures will be the same as the previous year. Andry Kryshchenko, the Head of the Kyiv National Police claimed this as Interfax-Ukraine reported.

“The participation of up to 100, 000 people is indicated in the application. The application of the Moscow Patriarchate for the participation of up to 100,000 people in the sacred procession on Friday and the application of the Kyiv Patriarchate for the participation of up to 100,000 people in the sacred procession on Saturday,” he said.

About 5,000 law enforcers will provide the order at the streets.

Moreover, Deputy Interior Minister Serhy Yarove claimed that 5,000 officers of the National Guard will be attracted to the support of the Kyiv police these days.

As it was reported earlier, sacred processions and solemn prayers will be held in the capital dedicated to the celebration of 1030 th anniversary of Kievan Rus Christianization. This is why the traffic will be restricted

in downtown.

Last year's religious procession started in Ternopil and Donetsk regions, brought the two groups of believers to enter Kyiv on July 26, meet on July 27 in Kiev at St. Vladimir's Hill, and together with the Orthodox Kyiv citizens and pilgrims proceed to Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. The expected number was 30 000 participants, however, there were more than 4,500 pilgrims at Volodymyrska Hirka a year ago and around 6 000 people took part in celebration of Baptism of Rus last year. Law enforcers expected a high number of provocations by pro-Russian activists or Kremlin-backed militants, tightening preventive measures, however, there were no serious violations reported.

OSCE is informed how Ukrainian authorities impede to the procession with cross organized by the UOC

Interfax (25.07.2018) – <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=14385> – The OSCE officials registered all the facts of impeding the Ukrainian Orthodox Church believers in participating in the procession with cross on the Day of the 1030th Anniversary of Russia's Baptism, the UOC Information and Education Department reported on Wednesday.

Archbishop Kliment of Nezhin and Priluki reported the facts of violating believers' rights at his meeting with officials of a special OSCE monitoring commission in Kiev.

The archbishop told the officials about problems experienced by the believers who wanted to come to Kiev for participating in the procession with cross on July 27.

Earlier the UOC representatives reported that Ukrainian officials block the participation of believers in the procession with cross organized by the canonical Church. In various regions of Ukraine they prevent the UOC believers from going to the procession with crossing and put carriers under

pressure.

Pro-Russian clerics fomenting tensions ahead of Kievan Rus Baptism anniversary

UNIAN (26.07.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2NMMjBL> – In general, a new Russian narrative is being pushed into Ukraine's agenda – “religious war and the genocide of Orthodox believers.”

Following the fake news on Ukraine allegedly trying to “bribe Patriarch Bartholomew,” spun by Russian propaganda and its collaborators in Ukraine, certain representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine decided to add fuel to the fire with yet another fake report.

On Wednesday, representative of the Moscow Patriarchate, Protopriest Nikolai Danylevych, said that Kyiv allegedly intended “to create during celebrations of the Baptism of Kievan Rus a picture of mass support” for the idea of autocephaly.

According to Danylevych, “free shuttle buses are being provided, whole railway cars are being booked, and many people are coming [to Kyiv] who have no relation to the Church,” according to Information Resistance, a Ukraine-based OSINT NGO.

Developing his manipulative idea, Danylevich asserts that these attempts “will not help” Kyiv to influence the position of Patriarch Bartholomew, which is strange because they shouldn't – the Constantinople has been positively consistent on the Ukraine issue, thus apparently irritating Moscow.

In general, a new Russian narrative is being pushed into Ukraine's agenda – “religious war and the genocide of Orthodox believers.”

Experts note that this is reminiscent of the events of 2014, when the slogan was “to protect Russian-speakers in Ukraine”,

and today it sounds like “protecting the Orthodox believers in Ukraine.”

In this regard, a reasonable question arises: are the Russians launching the initiative only within a new round of information war or, as it was 2014, preparing public opinion for larger-scale provocations and more aggression against Ukraine under the guise of “saviors from the DPP-LPR”?

In fact, no one wants to save those “Russian-speakers” anymore, most of whom Moscow left to the mercy of fate in Donbas. At the same time, voicing a new call, this time “To our God, our Orthodox faith and our Tsar” Moscow once again expects to recruit new ‘useful idiots’,” IR wrote.

As Donbas blogger Aleksandr Chernov recently reported, in the occupied part of Donetsk region, self-styled Russian-controlled “authorities” are actively collecting groups of locals to be sent to Kyiv to “support” opponents of Ukrainian Orthodox Church independence from Moscow. These people will participate in “events” organized by the so-called “UOC-MP” on the day of the Baptism of Kievan Rus.

According to information available, it is about deploying a nearly 200-strong group of men.

At the same time, participation is funded, at RUB 20,000 per person. It is noteworthy that the funds are taken from local business.

As UNIAN reported earlier, Ukrainian MP Vadym Novinsky, an ardent supporter of the Moscow Patriarchate from the entourage of disgraced ex-president Viktor Yanukovich, is also contributing to artificially raising the temperature of public tensions ahead of the Baptism celebrations.

In a recent interview with LB.ua he claimed he would personally defend the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra against supporters of Ukrainian church’s independence, hinting at possible

violence that the Russian propaganda claims will ensue if the Constantinople grants autocephaly to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Mass baptism of 500 Protestants in the Dnipro river



Ukrainian Evangelical Protestants take part in a mass baptism in the Dnipro River in Kyiv on July 22.

Ukrainian Evangelical Protestant churches held a large-scale baptism in the Dniper river waters of about 500 people to mark the 1030th anniversary of the Christianization of the Kyivan Rus (<https://bit.ly/2LE1fF6>)

CHINA: Bitter Winter event opens religious liberty week on Capitol Hill, Washington



Bitter Winter (24.07.2018) –

<https://bitterwinter.org/bw-event-opens-religious-liberty-week/> = The first side event of a week centered on the meeting of 80 foreign ministers in Washington D.C. was hosted by Bitter Winter and devoted to the persecution of Uyghurs, Falun Gong, and The Church of Almighty God in China.

80 foreign ministers arrived in Washington DC on July 23, invited by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for the first ever “Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom,” which will continue throughout the week.

In addition to the plenary meeting, a number of side events are also scheduled, some of them on Capitol Hill. The first side event was hosted by Bitter Winter together with a number of religious communities persecuted in China. Editor-in-Chief Massimo Introvigne introduced Bitter Winter, discussed “reformation through education camps” in China and the massive fake news campaigns launched by the Chinese Communist Party to defame The Church of Almighty God and other groups it persecuted as “heterodox.”

Rosita Soryte, president of the International Observatory of Religious Liberty of Refugees (ORLIR), called for an increased awareness of the persecution in China, which should lead to asylum be granted to refugees of The Church of Almighty God. She also mentioned the Zou Demei case in Detroit, where a

leader of the same Church faces deportation back to China, where she may be executed.

Attorney Alex Amicarelli detailed the cases filed with the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in Geneva against China on behalf of two members of The Church of Almighty God detained in China. Before the discussion, the audience heard moving testimonies from and on behalf of victims of torture in China of The Church of Almighty God, Falun Gong, and Uyghurs. Stories of one million Uyghurs detained in the dreaded camps, including soccer stars, actors, intellectuals, of torture and organ harvesting of Falun Gong members, and of systematic violence against the Christians of The Church of Almighty God moved to tears the audience, which included academics, seasoned politicians and diplomats, and human right activists.

Romania: Surprise as fired DNA Chief Prosecutor immediately gets new anti-corruption role

EU TODAY (24.07.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2AhTRdM> – Laura Kovesi lost her position as Chief Prosecutor at Romania's National Anti-corruption Department (DNA) this month, after claims of incompetence and misconduct. To the surprise of many Romania-watchers, she was straight away granted a new post in the same field.

Prosecutor General Augustin Lazar appointed her almost immediately as Prosecutor at the Guidance and Control Service within the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of

Cassation and Justice. This new role will involve responsibility for the implementation of the National Anti-corruption Strategy for the period 2016–2020 at the level of the Public Ministry.

It is surprising that she has gained a role in this field, given the nature of the claims that led to her dismissal. She lost her DNA position via a presidential decree, after a ruling by Romania's Constitutional Court (CCR). President Klaus Iohannis said that his decision to dismiss Kovesi from the position of DNA chief prosecutor should be understood as "a step towards respecting the Constitution and the rule of law".

In a February report, Justice Minister Tudorel Toader had accused Laura Kovesi of being authoritarian, and claimed that prosecutors managed by her had faked evidence and an inordinate number of defendants had been acquitted. She was accused of repeatedly abusing her authority. The Kovesi saga has rumbled on for months, with one allegation of abuse following another. These allegations have called the DNA's very methods and motives into question.

The first alarming case hit the headlines in the summer of 2017, when an audio recording emerged in which Ms. Kovesi could be heard commanding her employees to pursue investigations against the Prime Minister and his cabinet colleagues. She was heard using the phrase "put pressure" with reference to the government in retaliation for their efforts to limit her authority. Laura Kovesi has claimed these recordings were fake, but she has failed to produce credible evidence to prove that and the recordings are widely accepted to be authentic.

The scandals kept coming, as more recordings surfaced. This next episode in the saga revealed attempts by two senior DNA prosecutors in 2015 to force a witness to fabricate evidence in the case against Sebastian Ghita, a media owner and former

MP who fled Romania the following year. According to the witness, prosecutors threatened to target his family unless he co-operated and claimed that they were acting with the approval of their superiors, including Laura. Kovesi.

The scandal did not end there. More evidence was produced as part of a parliamentary inquiry into the activities of the intelligence services launched in 2017. This inquiry revealed the existence of 65 secret protocols linking the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI) with the DNA and a wide range of other law enforcement, judicial and administrative agencies. The constitutional impropriety of such protocols sent shockwaves through Romania and beyond.

There are some analysts and international commentators who were not that shocked by these allegations. There has long been an understanding that the DNA, along with Romania's intelligence service, the SRI, have over-stretched their powers and committed human rights abuses. What these scandals have done is provide hard evidence of exactly what those abuses are. There is now hard evidence in the public domain that the DNA, under Ms Kovesi, has pursued politically-motivated prosecutions; they have faked evidence and extracted witness testimony through intimidation and blackmail. Moreover, they have acted without regard for constitutional limits or democratic scrutiny, the separation of powers or the rule of law. For impartial observers, this evidence just confirms what was already understood. What is completely surprising is that the person who was in charge throughout such systematic abuse of office has landed another influential role in the same field. Even long term Romania observers are a little taken aback that the system could move so quickly to defend and re-employ Ms. Kovesi.

Odessa : No parking for the « cults »

By Massimo Introvigne

CESNUR (23.07.2018) – http://www.cesnur.org/2018/mi_odessa.htm
– In June 2018, The Journal of CESNUR published a special issue on the Applied Sciences Institute, an organization founded by Dr Oleg Maltsev and headquartered In Odessa, Ukraine. On July 13, 2018, it was involved in a bizarre incident, which deserves some attention.

The principles of the Applied Sciences Institute apply to a variety of fields, including the practice of law, and their network of organizations and companies include a law firm called Redut. Outside the law firm, there is an area that belongs to it. They believe they have a right to put there devices preventing persons not authorized by the law firm from parking, which they did. The City of Odessa thinks otherwise, and they asked the law firm to dismantle the devices.

They refused, and the following day they sent 20 municipal guards in camouflage plus 20 plainclothes agents to forcibly dismantle the devices, which employees of the law firm protested. Journalists of the “Unsolved Crimes” newspaper, which is located nearby and is also part of the larger Applied Sciences Institute organization, came to film the scene. The municipal guards used tear gas to disperse the protesters, and both the journalists and one attorney were beaten with rubber clubs. One journalist, according to his own account, was taken away in a Municipal Guard car, beaten again, and thrown away on the road.

The spokesperson of the Deputy Mayor of Odessa issued a press release, where he justified the Municipal Guard’s activities by claiming that the Guard was attacked with a gas pistol

(which is denied by the Redut law firm) and that those beaten belonged to the "Maltsev Cult." This reference is crucial, as it shows that the disproportionate use of force in connection with a trivial administrative incident reflects the hostile attitude of the Municipal Guard and other Odessa authorities against groups designated as "cults."

This is somewhat surprising, considering that in Ukraine in general a critical attitude prevails against anti-cult activities in nearby Russia, and attacks on the Applied Sciences Institute originated from Russian anti-cultists such as Alexander Dvorkin, who has been declared persona non grata in Ukraine and prevented from entering the country.

See videos at http://www.cesnur.org/2018/mi_odessa.htm

Chronology of events July 12-13, 2018

July 12, 2018

Unsolved Crimes (23.07.2018) – At about 12.00 in a parking lot on the Nekrasova street #1: two employees of the Department of the Municipal Guard and one "Municipal Guard" car. About four people were in a camouflage type of clothing and three others in civilian clothing.

There was a dispute which lasted 15 minutes regarding the illegality of their actions for dismantling. Opinions differed. Attorney Panchenko said that she will call the police, let them sort things out and that there should not be any action taken before the arrival of the police.

Despite this, at about 12.15 – 12.30 pm the employees of the "Municipal Guard" tried to start dismantling constructions that belonged to a law company. Two security officers of the company tried to prevent them. "Municipal Guard" outnumbered them. The obstacle of the Law company was in the following: one person picked up a coil with a wire from an electric saw, which was connected to the power unit found in the car of the

“Municipal Guard”, and simply tried to put it aside. At this point he was attacked by 2 people from the “Municipal Guard”, a fight ensued, Law Company employee was struck twice in the groin. While turning he touched one of the attackers with his elbow, as a result of which his cheekbone area was cut open.

The director of LC (Law Company) called the police several times, but no one came.

After the scuffle ended, the deputy chief of the MG (Municipal Guard) arrived, as well as 2 more cars with their employees. He refused to show his identity card and to give his name. He behaved defiantly and ordered to continue dismantling.

At around 13.00-14.00 the patrol police arrived. The police asked for the document on the basis of which the dismantling was being carried out. They were provided with a poorly made copy of some document which didn't have neither signatures nor stamps. The police began to demand the original document, but the others did not have it. The police told everyone to go to the Primorsky police station, but the MG staff who arrived refused to go and said that they will continue to dismantle. The police blocked them from doing so by placing their car along the parking lot of the LC, an investigative group was called.

Before the arrival of the operative-investigative group, those who arrived abruptly got into their cars and fled.

On the same day the LC filed a complaint to the police.

The journalists that were there on this day: Konstantin Slobodyanuk, editor-in-chief of the “Unsolved Crimes” newspaper; Stas Dombrovsky, journalist of the “Kakogo” newspaper were phoned and informed by their acquaintances from the cafe opposite from LC parking lot about the incident; Darina Karuna, editor-in-chief of the “Obshestvennyi Priboi” newspaper – made the report the same evening and gave an editorial task to 3 journalists to visit the place the next

day and interview the employees of the LC.

July 13, 2018

At around 10.00 am, LC lawyers Panchenko and Tarasenko, as well as lawyer of LC Kuzmenko were having coffee in a cafe opposite to the parking lot of LC "Redut" (which is located 5 meters from their office). There was a journalist Slobodyanuk. The journalist of "Obshestvennyi Priboi" Anatoly Poryadko was in the same cafe, speaking before the interview with an employee of LC Evgeniy Belousov.

At this point, about 15 people in civilian clothing came to the parking lot. The attorney Panchenko was surprised at this and started filming on her phone. After those who arrived realized that they were being videotaped, they divided into 2 groups and dispersed in different directions.

About 10-15 minutes later the car of the "Municipal Guard" came to the parking lot. One man came out of the car and started doing something in the trunk. Simultaneously, 2 journalists from the OP and 2 LC employees approached the parking lot and the journalists began interviewing LC employees on video cameras.

At that moment two more cars showed up, people came out in the uniform and rushed to the LC parking lot to dismantle the constructions that are the property of LC. Director of LC attorney Panchenko ran up and began demanding so that people introduce themselves, show documents, but no one reacted. A member of LC who saw several attackers used a pepper spray. Several people began beating him with clubs, they were beating him even when he was already sitting on the sidewalk and had his hands on his head. At the same time, the MG began to use tear gas and beat the journalist Miroslav Bekchiv with clubs. Bekchiv states that he was in the parking lot and saw people in uniform that were rushing at him, he was pushed in the back, there were about 10 attackers, he was frightened for his

own life and for the life of the LC employees who were beaten up clubs, and in order to stop the people from being killed he sprayed gas cartridge. After that, he was beaten up, he was chased after in the parking lot and on the street, as a result, three employees of the MG caught him, grabbed him by the throat, two men were holding his hands, and a third man sprayed the tear gas right into his face from a distance of less than a meter. After that, despite attorney Tarasenko trying to stop them, four men pushed him into the car, and took to the district department, he was beaten up on the way (in the car). Journalist Tkachenko was also beaten up because he was filming, he was beaten by several people, somebody tried to snatch his video camera from him and insulted him. From the force of impact, the journalist Tkachenko's one shoe flew out. The journalist Slobodyanyuk, who at the time of the attack was sitting with lawyers in a cafe, saw what was happening, turned on the video on his phone and approached the incident. He did nothing except tape things on his phone. He shouted that he was a journalist so that all participants could be heard, moreover, the day before these events, he personally showed his ID to the head of the MG which is on the video. To ensure that Slobodyanyuk was unable to record the faces of the attackers at a close range, he was sprayed with gas in his face, he was beaten with clubs and fell to the ground. At the moment when Slobodyanyuk was already lying on the ground and covered his head with his hands, one of the MG employees hit him with a club while he was on the ground.

All in all , there were about 40 people attacking. They were led by a local city official – Deputy Director of the Department of the Municipal Security of Odessa City Council – Savchenko Yuri Alexandrovich. This local official also prevented the attorney Tarasenko, who was trying to stop the violence against the journalist Bekchiv and also tried to stop people who pushed him into the car. Savchenko made her a footboard, then pushed her away from the journalist Bekchiv.

More videos about the incident:

- Kidnapping of the journalist Miroslav Bekchiv: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXliNDSeay0>
- The journalist Vitaly Tkachenko was beaten up by the employees of Municipal Guard: https://youtu.be/Nga0bv_QYvo
- By blood or in a normal way. Working principle of Odessa “Municipal Guard”: <https://youtu.be/3A9BVndSHC0>
- The journalist Vitalyi Tkachenko was beat up by Odessa City Council representatives: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZE_-wsk9t_Y
- The journalist Miroslav Bekchiv was attacked by tear gas: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VL0ZCv4YKKw>
- The editor-in-chief of “Unsolved crimes” newspaper has been attacked: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdkEBD5cFo0>
- Interview with Ruslan Forostyak: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hmzt7e070Hs>
- Interview with the deputy of Odessa City Council – Vadim Tereshchuk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3XrcFAPxy0>
- The interview with a former representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office – Massimo Introvigne on the situation in Odessa: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlFHCgIOQ7k>

Human Rights Without Frontiers: 30 years of fighting totalitarianism

EU Today (18.07.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2uCzliW> – On 20 June, Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF) held a reception in Brussels to celebrate its 30 years of existence. Dozens of partners, collaborators, former staff, and volunteers who had

contributed to its growth over the last three decades were in attendance, writes Willy Fautré, founder and executive director of Human Rights Without Frontiers.

In 1988, the year which marked of the 40th anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a group of Brussels-based human rights activists launched HRWF, with a lot of faith and no funding. At that time, there were no mobile telephones, internet, or social media... It was another world. One of the initial main objectives of the organisation was to highlight political and religious persecution in European Communist countries and to help human rights defenders in the Soviet Bloc.

In June 1988, they published the first issue of a magazine in French named "Droits de l'Homme sans Frontières". At that time, Western Europe was under constant threat of Soviet nuclear attack. Unsurprisingly, the first magazine issue covered a summit between Reagan and Gorbachev in Moscow. On that occasion, Reagan had invited 100 Soviet dissidents to the US embassy in the Soviet capital, an unthinkable move after 70 years of communism in the USSR. Also unthinkable at that time was the idea that 18 months later the Iron Curtain would unexpectedly fall and Communist totalitarianism would collapse.

In subsequent issues, the magazine dealt with the apartheid regime in South Africa, Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the genocide in Rwanda, religious persecution in China, and many other human rights issues around the world.

Throughout its 30 years of existence, HRWF has adapted itself to a fast-changing world, to the expansion of the European Union, and to the development of new communication technologies. HRWF now distributes a well-known daily newsletters to more than 10,000 recipients, which serves as an early alert tool meant to sensitize members of the European

Parliament, EU member states, think tanks, journalists, and embassies in Brussels, Geneva, New York and Washington to pressing human rights news. HRWF organizes conferences at the European Parliament and regularly advocates human rights in academic seminars, at the UN in Geneva, and at the OSCE.

In the 21st century, the world is now facing new threats, new forms of warfare, and new forms of totalitarianism. One of them is Islamic totalitarianism, an ideology that first wants to radically change the existing nature of Muslim-majority states into some form of a theocratic regime dominated by a radical and retrograde form of Islam. This ideology seeks to change the structures of pluralistic civil societies into societies to be ruled with an iron hand by one religious worldview imported from the Arabic peninsula.

Islamic totalitarianism wants daily life and the behaviours of each individual to be dominated by one religious worldview, as did the late Communist ideology with the political philosophy of Marx and Engels.

Islamic totalitarianism, mainly but not exclusively embodied by ISIS, is a political ideology which instrumentalises the Quran to create an alternative and challenging system of political governance. It is definitely not a religion. Its siren song divides and fragments Muslim communities around the world, and the primary 'collateral victims' of its fight for power are Muslims themselves, who in many countries adhere to a historically peaceful Islam. Christians in Muslim-majority countries are a second category of 'collateral victims'. EU member states are also targeted, suffering from terrorist attacks and the radicalization of young Muslims.

The Islamic totalitarian virus spreads gender segregation and discrimination, the division of society into new social castes, hate speech, anti-Semitism, and many other 'social diseases'. It is infecting the software of the ummah and is trying to infect humankind. Antidotes need to be administered

and vaccinations have to be discovered, a challenge to the political researchers and engineers of the defense and security of the EU and of human rights.

Combating Islamic totalitarianism with ideas, with words and in practice is not only legitimate but it is obligatory, it is a duty for the EU and human rights organizations for it is a fight for human dignity, equality, and human rights for all.

By Willy Fautré, founder and executive director of Human Rights Without Frontiers

This article was published in EU Today under the unfortunate title "EU member states targeted by radicalization of young Muslims"

Russia: 23 Jehovah's Witnesses behind bars (+ 1) and 3 put under house arrest

JW Headquarters (18.07.2018) – On Sunday 15 July 2018, around 4 p.m., a police raid took place in Penza (about 650 km SE of Moscow). The police officers arrived at homes where four small groups of Witnesses had gathered. They had waited for someone to leave the apartments before bursting in and conducting searches. In one of the groups, a female investigator searched 6 women, ordering them to remove all of their clothes. As is often the case, the police seized all electronic devices and storage media, printed photographs, personal notes and notebooks. They detained about 20 adults in total, taking them to the police station. At 2 or 3 a.m. they finally let all the women go, along with most of the men. However Vladimir

Alushkin, Vladimir Kulyasov, Andrey Magliv, and Denis Timoshin were detained. On 17 July, a judge sentenced Mr. Alushkin to pre-trial detention (two months), while the other three men have been placed under house arrest (two months).

Additionally, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum issued a press release (<https://bit.ly/2uK9y7G>) to express their 'deep concern' over the escalating persecution of JW's in Russia. The press release included a reminder that JW's were persecuted (many even killed) during the Nazi regime. The German government targeted JW's largely due to the fact they would not swear allegiance to the state (any state) or serve in the military. Thus, learning from such a dark period in history, the Museum's director urged "leaders from across society to forcefully denounce the anti-Jehovah's Witnesses campaign currently underway" in Russia:

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum remains deeply concerned over the continuing harassment and persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses by Russian authorities. Since the Russian Supreme Court labeled Jehovah's Witnesses an "extremist organization" in April 2016, Witness property has been seized by the state, numerous Witnesses have been arrested, and hundreds have fled the country.

"The state-sponsored persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses continues to escalate in the Russian Federation," said Tad Stahnke, the Museum's director of international educational outreach. "The Museum urges leaders from across society to forcefully denounce the anti-Jehovah's Witness campaign currently underway."

During the Nazi regime, the German government targeted Jehovah's Witnesses because their religious beliefs prevented them from adhering to the requirements of the Nazi state. Witnesses do not swear allegiance to any state or serve in the military. These religious convictions as well as their international connections—the headquarters are in

the United States and some Witnesses travel abroad for their missionary work—made them a perceived threat to Nazism. Of the 25,000–30,000 active Jehovah’s Witnesses in Nazi Germany, about half were convicted and sentenced during the Nazi period. Of those convicted or sentenced, between 2,000 and 2,500 were sent to concentration camps, as were a total of about 700 to 800 non-German Witnesses. An estimated 1,000 German Witnesses and 400 non-German Witnesses died in the camps.

A living memorial to the Holocaust, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum inspires citizens and leaders worldwide to confront hate, prevent genocide, and promote human dignity. Its far-reaching educational programs and global impact are made possible by generous donors. For more information, visit ushmm.org.

CHINA: Over 30 Church of Almighty God members arrested within one month

Bitter Winter (17.07.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2LoiNVm> – On July 14, the city of Xuzhou issued a notice reporting that from mid-May to mid-June, 32 members of The Church of Almighty God were arrested in Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province, 15 of them are still being detained. The Jiangsu police have been carrying out province-wide, large-scale arrests and suppression targeted at this Chinese Christian new religious movement since May.

According to the available information, members of the Church from nearly all of Xuzhou’s five municipal districts, three

counties, and two county-level cities were arrested: ten from Jiawang district, three from Tongshan district, three from Gulou district, eight from the city of Pizhou, four from the city of Xinyi, one from Feng county, and three from Suining county.

One of the arrested is an 80-year old elder who was detained despite her ill health and whose condition has worsened since the arrest on June 15 and subsequent police interrogation. According to accounts by those who saw her at the police station, she could not even walk steadily, and the corners of her mouth were black and blue. She had clearly undergone brutal torture by the police.

Bitter Winter has continuously reported about the continuous persecutions of The Church of Almighty God, in some cases with as many as 500 believers arrested in a short period of time. In just 20 days in May, in Jiangsu's major cities of Nanjing and Yangzhou, over 70 members of The Church of Almighty God were arrested and their homes were raided by authorities, some of them have not been heard from since. The Church members in Jiangsu are currently living under precarious circumstances, fearing that the number of arrests will most likely continue to climb.

Report by Ling Tian