

# **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.

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# **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/](http://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”.

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## **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.

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## **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>)

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## **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.