

UKRAINE: Clergymen and parliamentarians discuss bill on military chaplaincy

RISU (20.10.2016) – <http://bit.ly/2f6rmWc> – At the initiative of the Parliamentary Committee on Culture and Spirituality, a meeting on the legislative regulation of military chaplaincy was held.

The discussion was led by the subcommittee chairman, MP Victor Yelenskyy who presented to representatives of denominations and effective military chaplains a number of conceptual issues that require adopting a coordinated solution, the Institute of Religious Freedom reports.

“It has been a long time that we move forward to the law on military chaplaincy, a chaplain of the UGCC, Lubomyr Yavorsky, commented on the purpose of the meeting. “For over 2.5 years of war, it became clear that the various orders and regulations on the subject are ineffective and do not work. The main and important thing is to venture and to pass a law that will enable the Church to carry out official pastoral care of the military. Then the Church and the state will be able to work effectively: the state will invite the Church to serve military and the Church will perform this service.”

MP Yuriy Miroshnychenko, author of Bill No.1153 on the introduction of chaplaincy for military and law enforcement as well as the adopted law on chaplaincy, joined the discussion.

On behalf of the Institute for Religious Freedom, a number of proposals on this issue were voiced by lawyer Maksym Vasin, one of the co-authors of the draft law "On military chaplaincy." On agreement of those present, the draft was taken as a basis for further elaboration on the results of the agreements reached during the meeting.

The meeting was also attended by officials of the Ministry of Defense, National Guard, State Border Service and the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine.

In particular, during the meeting the position on the following issues was coordinated:

In what way has the activity of military chaplains to be regulated?

What model of chaplaincy service should be introduced in Ukraine: an officer chaplain or a chaplain as a civilian employee, or a mixed one?

Is it necessary to regulate the way in which the number of full-time chaplains correlate with the number of troops?

What should be the functional duties of chaplains?

As reported by the IRS, the Council for Pastoral Care at the

Ministry of Defense of Ukraine has prepared its own draft law to regulate the activities of military chaplains.

Earlier, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine issued Resolution No. 677-p of 07.02.2014 on the establishment of military clergymen service (chaplaincy service) in the Armed Forces, National Guard and the State Border Service. The document provides that the clergymen, chaplains, proposed by religious organizations, who successfully passed the selection, shall be hired as members of staff of the respective military units with an employment contract.