

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 Dniپر river waters of about 500 people to mark the 1030th anniversary of the Christianization of the Kyivan Rus (<https://bit.ly/2LE1fF6>)