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## **Tomb of Rabbi Nachman in Uman desecrated by pig's head and fake blood**

RISU (21.12.2016) - [http://risu.org.ua/en/index/all\\_news/community/scandals/65526/](http://risu.org.ua/en/index/all_news/community/scandals/65526/) - Jewish worshippers in Ukraine were teargassed and the grave of Hasidic Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav was defiled with fake blood and a pig's head in a Wednesday night attack at the popular pilgrimage site visited by tens of thousands of Jews every year.



Police opened an investigation, but no arrests have been announced. The incident was quickly condemned by officials in Israel, with lawmakers calling on Ukrainian authorities to boost security and swiftly seek justice for the perpetrators. Ukrainian Embassy in Israel expressed regrets and assured that the Ukrainian side will take all possible measures to punish those responsible for the incident. The offenders might get up to eight years in prison.

Uman mayor declared that the city has strengthened the protection of places of worship and religious symbols.



Since the fall of Communism, Uman has seen the arrival of thousands of pilgrims on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, to visit the gravesite of Rabbi Nachman, the founder of the Bratslav Hasidic sect who died in 1810.

Smaller pilgrimages occur throughout the year and the city has recently seen a rise in Jews moving there permanently.

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## **Roman Catholics of Rivne want to repossess their church**

RISU (19.12.2016) - <http://bit.ly/2hrilDH> - A Roman Catholic community wants to regain possession of the church in Rivne, Soborna street, where the Organ Hall of Rivne Oblast

Philharmonic now operates. The building, erected in 1897, was the church of St. Anthony until 50's of the last century. Then the Soviets destroyed a part of it, including the Baroque spiers, opened there a cinema theatre, and in the 80's – an organ hall. Since Philharmonic is the municipal institution of the Regional Council, the Roman Catholics reached out to the council members to regain possession of the church.

Last week a representative of the Diocese of Lutsk of the Roman Catholic Church, Franciscan Father Tadeusz Fostakovskyy, who is rector of the church in Kovel. At the municipal commission before which the father spoke, the council deputies decided that this matter was up to the state administration and staff of the Philharmonic.

Chair of the Rivne Regional Council Mykola Draganchuk makes the case that the building remains in the ownership of the regional council, and the organ hall remained there.

"The council members will decide when they have the opinion of the state administration and staff of the Philharmonic determine the pros and cons of transferring the building," M. Draganchuk said in a comment to Rivne Vechirne. "In my view, I insist that the building remains in the ownership of the Regional Council and that the organ hall remained, since the Philharmonic is the people. We cannot dismiss people and close the Philharmonic, as finding new premises will be difficult now."

Philharmonic Director Mykola Oreshko refused to comment on the situation.

Speech of Fr Tadeusz in the regional council

"We do not claim someone else's property, we are just requesting to return the Roman Catholic temple seized by the Soviet authorities, so that Rivne residents could come there again to pray and listen to organ music," says Father Tadeusz.

"Now the Philharmonic holds 5-7 events a month, and the rest of the time the building is idle. We want to open the church's doors to spiritual needs of people, so they could come every day, we want to cooperate with youth. Moreover, the church is not the place for singing and dancing, but a place for prayer. The Catholic Church allows to listen to organ concerts in the churches, hold conferences." As the priest assured, they have benefactors who can help rebuild the temple.

The RCC noted they requested to return the church only now, because "the country has its vector of power changed, in President Yanukovych's tenure we would be granted consent." Father Tadeusz has said in a comment to "Rivne Vechirne" that first they came to the regional council, because they did not want to spend too much time and money on the courts. "But we know that there have been such cases in Ukraine and the courts were on the side of the church, returning the temples seized in the Soviet era. So, the Philharmonic will experience discomfort, but initially the church was not build to this end. The regional council has to find some other premises."

According to "Rivne Vechirne," the Roman Catholic community of Rivne has its own temple -at the intersection of Soborna and Dubenska streets. However, the architectural value of the church that hosts organ hall today is much higher. Incidentally, when the Church of St. Anthony was built in Rivne, its organ was one of the best in Europe, however, in Soviet times it was destroyed. The one located in the building now was mounted by the Philharmonic.

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## **Apostolic nuncio to Ukraine visits Catholics of Donetsk and Luhansk**

RISU (18.12.2016) - <http://bit.ly/2h1NLO3> - The Apostolic Nunciature in Ukraine has reported that Apostolic Nuncio in Ukraine Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti visited the Catholic community of Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic rite in Donetsk and Luhansk from December 16 to 18 2016, as he usually visits different communities on the eve of major religious holidays to convey the greetings and blessing of Pope Francis.

In spring 2016, the Apostolic Nuncio visited the community of Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk on the feast of Easter.

At the meeting His Excellence spoke about the tireless work of Pope Francis for peace in the region and his desire to be able to stay among all the aggrieved peoples of the world in order to give them an embrace of solidarity.

On the occasion of his visit to Luhansk, the Apostolic Nuncio visited Metropolitan Mytrofan of Luhansk and Alchevsk, Chair of the Department for External Church Relations of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Throughout the trip, the Apostolic Nuncio was accompanied by His Excellency Jan Sobilo, auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia of the Roman Catholic Church, which includes the two mentioned cities.

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## **Interference with worship continues in eastern regions of Ukraine**

JW.ORG (13.12.16) - <http://bit.ly/2icsCbk> - People living in the eastern regions of Ukraine daily confront situations that disrupt their lives and foster uncertainty and fear. The conflict in the region also brings a heightened sense of anxiety to Jehovah's Witnesses. It is not only the prevailing insecurity but also the religious discrimination that is alarming. Armed men have seized control of some of the Witnesses' Kingdom Halls (houses of worship). They have told the Witnesses that the Orthodox religion is the only approved religion and that they intend to "uproot Jehovah's Witnesses" from the eastern regions of Ukraine.

### ***Seizures of Kingdom Halls***

Between June 2014 and November 2016, groups of armed men have forcibly seized 18 Kingdom Halls, either for use as barracks or for other uses to support their cause. While most of these seizures of property took place when the conflict was growing in 2014, Kingdom Halls have also been seized recently.

A September 15, 2016, report issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights observed that after more than two years of conflict, the situation in the east of Ukraine remains volatile. The report states: "Those living in areas controlled by the armed groups are subject to arbitrary rule and various human rights abuses." The abuses suffered by Jehovah's Witnesses in the region include abductions, harassment, and beatings. They and their neighbors have also suffered material loss, as noted in the report: "Armed groups continued to loot and use civilian homes and other property for military purpose[s]."

On the morning of July 22, 2016, a group of Witnesses in Horlivka were gathered for worship in the Kingdom Hall at 105-A Vitchyzniana Street when armed men entered the building and ordered everyone to leave immediately. The men ransacked the building and removed all of the furniture and equipment. This same building had been seized on November 29, 2014, but was soon abandoned. The Witnesses had resumed using their house of worship for religious meetings until it was seized again, on July 22.

Three days later, armed men entered another Kingdom Hall in Horlivka, located at 9 Simferopolska Street. The men took everything from the building, even the radiators, and removed the exterior fence. The congregations that formerly met at the building have had to make other arrangements to gather for worship.

### ***Persisting in Meeting Together for Worship***

Some congregations that were forced out of their Kingdom Hall meet for worship in small groups to avoid undue attention from armed groups. Other Witnesses travel to Kingdom Halls outside the conflict zone for their religious meetings, coping with poor transportation and additional expense. Those who cannot travel because of age or poor health listen to their religious meetings by telephone.

The effort required to gather together is compounded by the hostilities and other hardships. Illia Kobel, a spokesman for Jehovah's Witnesses in Ukraine, stated: "Like their neighbors, Witnesses living close to the buffer zone are emotionally exhausted because of the frequent shootings and explosions. They face economic difficulties caused by rising prices and low income. Despite the challenges, the Witnesses persist in meeting together for worship with fellow believers."

### ***The Witnesses Return to Some Kingdom Halls***

Jehovah's Witnesses are grateful that they can once again use six of the seized buildings as places of worship. Although the buildings suffered damage, local Witnesses worked together to repair them to make them suitable for religious meetings. A seventh building was so severely damaged that it is not yet usable.

A congregation forced from its Kingdom Hall in the Luhansk region in September 2014 was able to worship in the building again about a year later. An elder in the congregation, Anatoliy Danko, expressed the feelings of many when he said: "At moments like this, we appreciate that our congregation is our family. After a long separation, we came back to our home."

Eleven buildings remain in the control of armed men. To see a revised list of the Kingdom Halls that have been seized, please click on the link below.

[Kingdom Halls Seized](#)

### ***Neutrality Amid Conflict***

- Jehovah's Witnesses are known worldwide for their political neutrality—they do not take sides in any conflict. Witnesses living in the eastern regions of Ukraine are no different. They look forward to the time when they can live peacefully with their families and neighbors and freely practice their religion without hindrance.
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## **Head of Beleaguered Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Crimea detained after informing PACE of rights abuses**

Khpg.org (20.10.2016) - <http://bit.ly/2gfQxCT> - Archbishop Kliment, the Head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under the Kyiv Patriarchate in Crimea, was detained on Oct 19, on his return to Crimea under Russian occupation. No explanation was given, and although he was released after an hour, this is the second such occasion and bears ominous similarities to the treatment by the Russian occupation regime of Crimean Tatar leaders Mustafa Dzhemiliev and Refat Chubarov before they were banned from their homeland. Archbishop Kliment's voice has been vital in protesting against the mounting repression and politically motivated arrests under Russian occupation and this latest incident comes just a week after he addressed an urgent plea to international bodies to "take decisive measures to protect fundamental rights of Ukrainians in Crimea".

The Archbishop addressed the Autumn session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe [PACE] on October 11. He told them of the persecution which the Orthodox Church under the Kyiv Patriarchate has been subjected to since Russia's annexation, and of the danger which the Ukrainian language was facing under Russian occupation. He called on the international community to help protect the national, cultural and religious rights of all Ukrainian citizens in Crimea.

In late August Archbishop Kliment addressed an appeal to Russian Patriarch Kirill and the Russian Supreme Mufti Sheikh ul-Islam asking them to do all in their power to secure the release of Crimean political prisoners.

Beginning with the famous words from the Talmud: "Whoever saves one life, saves the entire world", he explained that it was the appalling use of punitive psychiatry against Crimean Tatar leader Ilmi Umerov that had prompted his letter. He had just visited Umerov, he explained, who was being forcibly held in a psychiatric hospital for supposed 'assessment'. 59-year-old Umerov is accused of 'public calls to action aimed at violating Russia's territorial integrity' for stating, as do all democratic countries, that Crimea is Ukrainian, and his health issues made the treatment he received a direct danger to his life.

Kliment called on the two religious leaders "to do everything to secure the release of Umerov, Oleg Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko & Oleksiy Chirniy; Oleksandr Kostenko; Akhtem Chiygoz and many other innocent Ukrainian citizens imprisoned for their convictions."

Pressure on the Orthodox Church under the Kyiv Patriarchate and against the Archbishop began as soon as Russia annexed Crimea. While seemingly wary of provoking international protest by openly banning the Church, Russia has done everything to drive its clergy and believers away. The Archbishop reported back in January that the Church was in danger of being dissolved and destroyed because it does not recognize Russia's annexation and is not prepared to re-register under Russian legislation. The situation with re-registration is critical for many religious communities.

Russian legislation is more restrictive than Ukrainian with respect to believers, imposing far more onerous demands on bodies wishing to function as a legal entity. One of the requirements is that the religious organization adds words to its association papers that Crimea is part of Russia which many are not prepared to do. The lack of such registration means that the communities lose the right to use and dispose of their churches, mosques, places of worship or other buildings, and face numerous other restrictions.

The battle to seize control of the Cathedral of Vladimir and Olga in Simferopol also began in 2014. At that time, Kliment has since said, he was even offered 200 thousand dollars to give the Cathedral up. In January 2016, the Crimean Arbitration Court under occupation issued a ruling ordering the Church to vacate the building within the next 10 days, and to pay half a million roubles, supposedly for communal services. The appeal against that ruling was rejected in June this year.

In January 2016, Kliment said that the number of churches held by UOC KP had halved since annexation, and that of the 10 remaining churches, one in Yevpatoria had faced several arson attacks. The seizure of the Church of the Intercession of the Holy Mother of God in the village of Perevalne came after a frightening armed attack on the church and believers.

There have also been threats on businesspeople supporting the Kyiv Patriarchate that they could lose their business if they continue to provide premises for places of worship.

The Archbishop has said that many of those who miss Ukraine come to their churches, although it is clear that they are very aware of being under observation.

"Russian-speakers also come here, and just people who never went to church, but whose heart lies with Ukraine and who miss Ukraine. They come just to talk, in Russian or in Ukrainian. We don't talk about politics, however, that's very dangerous. There were occasions when people in plain clothes came to church and sat at the back. Later they made comments on what needed to be removed from the service so that it didn't "jar". You mustn't say, for example, that the good times will return".

It may be that the short detention on Oct 19 was 'mere' harassment because of the Archbishop's appeal to the PACE and the strong resolutions which the latter produced. Russia has, however, reverted to Soviet tactics by imprisoning those it can and exiling those whose arrest would cause too great a scandal.

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## **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.

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## **Parliament exempts charitable activities of religious organizations from taxation**

***Parliament adopted a bill that clarifies the status of non-profit religious organizations. 281 MPs voted in favor of this decision.***

RISU (06.10.2016) - <http://bit.ly/2dNmpye> - The bill supplemented the definition of non-profit organization in the Tax Code, according to which religious organizations are now considered non-profit if engaged in non-profit activities (including implementation of humanitarian aid, charity, philanthropy, charity, etc.).

Until recently, only those organizations that redistributed funds for own maintenance were considered nonprofit.

The law also adjourned for one year the repeated registration of churches with the fiscal authorities, as previously they had to do it till the end of the year. According to chairman of the committee Nina Yuzhanina such re-registration must be agreed with the local authorities, so it takes lots of time and before January 1 it is impossible to do it.

She added that otherwise, after January 1, the fiscal services could impose taxes on church for charity.

According to the authors of the law, Unguryan, Prodan, Kirsch, Kozak, Lohvynskyy, the adoption of the proposed amendments will facilitate the implementation by religious and other non-profit organizations of socially important activities, including social and

charitable activities, including providing the necessary assistance to military personnel, temporarily displaced persons and other categories of citizens in need of proper care.

In addition, the adoption of the law will allow avoiding the need for re-registration of 34611 religious organizations, which cannot be effected until the date determined by the Tax Code. This will help avoid the negative effects and alleviate the risk of revocation of the non-profit status for over 34 thousand religious organizations.

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## **Parliamentary committee supports granting special status to UOC-MP**

RISU (06.10.2016) - <http://bit.ly/2dIih2d> - The Committee on Culture and Spirituality recommended the Parliament to adopt in the first reading Bill 4511 on the special status of religious organizations having their governing centers in Russia as the aggressor State.

The draft law was presented at the Committee meeting on October 5 by its collaborators: MPs of Ukraine Oleg Petrenko, Sergiy Vysotsky and Yuri Bublik, the Institute of Religious Freedom reports.

The essence of the special status which is apparently intended for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), is the duty of all relevant religious communities to enter into the contracts (agreements) with the state that envisage additional commitments in their activities.

In particular, the bill provides that the registration and re-registration of the statutes of religious organizations with the special status "is completed after the peer review by independent experts of the registration documents and given their provision of a positive expert opinion to the public authority which carries out this registration."

The project also proposes the appointment of the central and regional church leadership only after the approval of appropriate clergy candidates by the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine.

In addition, it is proposed that these religious organizations shall "necessarily agree with the public authority that has registered their charter (statute) the invitation of foreign religious leaders for outreach and other canonical activities."

It should be noted that the Central Scientific Experts Office of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine criticized Bill 4511, and called on the Parliament to reject it for the following reasons:

The bill proposal on granting the "special status" to some religious organizations by the state as opposed to others and concluding specific agreements may be viewed as state intervention in the church affairs, which violates the principle of equality of all confessions and attests to discrimination.

Criminal law already provides for the liability for violation of territorial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine, therefore the need for conclusion of contracts that contain the above obligations is not clear.

The proposed three months' term of submission by religious organizations of the documents required for the conclusion of relevant contracts (agreements) is absolutely unrealistic, as in the case of coming in effect of such regulation around 12.5 thousand

religious organizations will be unable to timely meet these requirements due to the Ministry of Culture's inaptitude to process so many documents.

The draft law does not outline a number of issues to be clarified as a result of peer review during the registration / re-registration of religious organizations and does not indicate who can act as "independent experts."

The requirement for the approval by the Ministry of Culture of all appointments of central and regional leadership of religious organizations violates the constitutional principle of non-interference and separation of church and state and violates the right to freedom of religion enshrined in Article 35 of the Constitution of Ukraine.

The Law of Ukraine "On freedom of conscience and religious organizations" (p. 4 Article 24) already envisages the responsibility of agreeing religious activities of foreign citizens for all religious organizations in Ukraine that invite these religious figures.

It is unclear from the bill who the authors mean by the concept of "systemic violations of law," and how should the "facts cooperation with representatives of militant and terrorist groups" be established as grounds for termination of religious organizations with special status.

Despite this and other defects, voiced by the Committee during the discussion, the Parliamentary Committee on Culture and Spirituality supported Bill 4511. Among the comments was an opinion of untimeliness of this initiative, which can cause an international outcry and serve a pretext for the information war against Ukraine.

As reported by the IRS, the proposed changes were criticized not only by the UOC (MP), but also by experts in religious studies.

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## **ФРАНЦИЯ: FECRIS – НЕПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВЕННАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ, ФИНАНСИРУЕМАЯ ФРАНЦУЗСКИМ ПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВОМ**

### **Заявление Координации ассоциаций и отдельных лиц по вопросам свободы совести на Совещании ОБСЕ по учету человеческого измерения**

Координация ассоциаций и частных лиц по вопросам свободы совести (27.09.2016) – <http://www.osce.org/odihr/268651?download=true> – Координация ассоциаций и частных лиц по вопросам свободы совести была создана в 2000 году для защиты религиозных меньшинств от дискриминации во Франции и в Европе.

Координация является неправительственной организацией, признанной ООН.

На собрании Национальной Ассамблеи, состоявшемся несколько недель назад, нынешний премьер-министр Франции, г-н Вальс, напомнил, что во Франции не существует юридического определения слова «секта / культ».

Тем не менее, департамент Премьер-Министра Франции полностью (на 100%) финансирует Ассоциацию FECRIS (Европейскую федерацию центров по исследованию и информированию о сектантстве), которая признана Советом Европы и ООН как неправительственная организация, целью которой, согласно ее Уставу, является выявление «секты / культа, организации гуру или физического лица, неправомерно использующего убеждения и поведенческие методы для собственной выгоды».

Как Премьер-Министр может заявлять, что нет никакого юридического определения секты / культа во Франции и в то же время на 100% финансировать НЕПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВЕННУЮ ассоциацию, цель которой состоит в том, чтобы указывать на «секты / культы»?

Кроме того, в своем Уставе FECRIS говорит, что «действия Федерации не являются ни религиозными, ни политическими».

Если действие FECRIS не является религиозным и претендует на то, чтобы быть нейтральным в этом отношении, тогда как данная структура может объяснить факт, что организация, зарегистрированная в секулярном государстве – во Франции – массово финансируется за счет средств всех налогоплательщиков Франции, в то время как ее вице-президент Александр Дворкин, гражданин России, благословляется и финансируется Патриархом Русской Православной Церкви за свою анти-сектантскую деятельность. Русская Православная Церковь вместе с г-ном Путиным уже в течение долгих лет преследует религиозные меньшинства на территории России.

Кроме того, некоторое время назад Александр Дворкин подверг жесткой критике Фалуныгун.

Как вице-президент FECRIS Александр Дворкин, может атаковать Фалуныгун, в то время как преследование членов этой группы было широко осуждено в рамках докладов ООН, начиная с 2000 года?

Как Франция может пойти на финансирование такой ассоциации как FECRIS, атакующей группу Фалуныгун, преследования которой признаны ООН?

Даже нынешний Премьер-Министр Франции, г-н Вальс, будучи членом Национальной Ассамблеи, выразил свою глубокую озабоченность положением Фалуныгун в Китае. В то же время он и Министерство иностранных дел Франции подняли вопрос о судьбе практикующих Фалуныгун в Китае.

Несколько лет назад, FECRIS и ее члены-ассоциации напали на итальянского социолога, потому что ее доклад о конкретных религиозных меньшинствах не соответствовал ожиданиям FECRIS и итальянской анти-сектантской / культовой ассоциации.

Как недавно сообщила организация «Права человека без границ», теперь FECRIS атакует группу меньшинств в Украине.

В связи с этим мы просим Премьер-Министра Франции, г-на Вальса, положить конец финансовой поддержке FECRIS, вернув ей статус НЕПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВЕННОЙ организации.

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## **A film denounces the abuse of weakness and financial exploitation of parents by anti-cult activists in Ukraine and Russia**

***Alexander Dvorkin, Fecris vice-president, and Alexander Neveev, a psychologist, masterminded from Russia an operation carried out in Odessa***

***Watch the film at <https://youtu.be/fpx5fAO18AI>***



HRWF (03.10.2016) – On 2 October, an investigation film entitled “**Protect Your Dignity**”, which denounces the abuse of weakness and financial exploitation of parents by anti-sect activists in Ukraine and Russia, was launched on YouTube.

This very artistic movie is a joint production of the public organization “**Kavalyer**” with the Brussels-based NGO “**Human Rights Without Frontiers International (HRWF)**” and the **Unsolved Crimes Newspaper**.

The documentary film “**Protect Your Dignity**” is based on a true story. Key events of the film started on September 2, 2015 in an ordinary Ukrainian family in Odessa.

The main storyline of the film is a family drama whose victim was a 19-year old girl named **Yulia Yalovaya**. The Russian-Ukrainian anti-cultists’ group manipulated her parents and destroyed the harmonious relations existing in this family to destroy an imaginary cult and the business reputation of scientist **Oleg Maltsev**, a Ukrainian follower of the Jewish psychiatrist Leopold Szondi (\*) who founded the “International Schicksalsanalyse Community Research Institute”.

This movie also shows the model and algorithms of actions of some anti-cult actors who artificially create fears and social panic.

The anti-cult activists identified by the Ukrainian investigators are based in Ukraine, and Russia: **Alexander Dvorkin**, **Alexander Neveev**, **Maria Kapar**, an anti-cult activist in Odessa, **Dmitry Bakayev** (journalist of “Dumskaya TV”, a friend and fan of Alexander Neveev), **Maria Kovaleva** (journalist of “Channel 7”), **Vyacheslav Kasim** (journalist of “Channel 7”), **Eugene Lysyi** (“Channel 7” journalist), **Oksana Podnesbesnaya** (journalist “OODTRK TV” friend and fan of Alexander Neveev), **Dmitry Mikhaïlenko** (journalist of the “Third digital channel”).

(\*) **Léopold Szondi** was a Hungarian psychiatrist. He is known for the psychological tool that bears his name, the Szondi test. He was born on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1893 in Nitra, the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and present-day Slovakia. He was raised in a German and Slovak-speaking Jewish family. In June 1944, he was deported with his family to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp on the Kastner train (4). In December 1944, Szondi and his family,

along with other prominent intellectuals, were released to Switzerland after 1,700 American intellectuals paid a large ransom to Adolf Eichmann. He continued to live there after the war. He died in Küsnacht on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1986 at the age of 92. Szondi has a few followers in Ukraine that try to adapt his teachings to the modern world and to implement them in various contexts.

**Key links:**

[www.olegmaltsev.com](http://www.olegmaltsev.com)

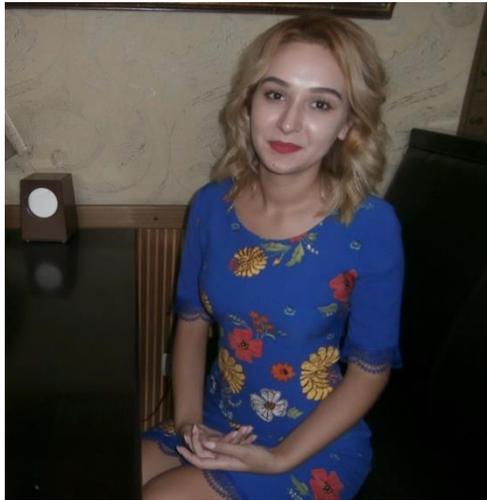
[www.hrwf.eu](http://www.hrwf.eu)

[www.zlochiny.com](http://www.zlochiny.com)

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## **How the propaganda of Fecris' vice-president disrupted a family in Odessa**

***Alexander Dvorkin's anti-sect propaganda destroyed a family: HRWF Int'l director interviewed a victim in Odessa***



*Yulia Yalovaya, who was interviewed by HRWF*

**By Willy Fautré, *Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l***

HRWF (03.10.2016) - Yulia Yalovaya was born in the Odessa region. She is around twenty years old and an engineering student at the Odessa Maritime University. Until September 2015, she was also a journalist for "*Unsolved Crimes*," and she had a very good relationship with her parents, but the vice-president of FECRIS, Alexander Dvorkin, put an end to it... Her story is the main topic of the film realized entitled "*Protect your Dignity*."

**HRWF: Under what circumstances did your relationship with your parents deteriorate?**

**Yulia Yalovaya:** In summer last year, my mother was alerted by some very negative information found on internet concerning Oleg Maltsev, the co-founder of the *Redut Law Company* I was working for as a journalist for his media outlet "*Unsolved Crimes*" newspaper. We had a long, vivid conversation, and, at the end, she said "You have to choose: your job or your parents." I am an adult, and I decided to keep both my job and my good relationship with my parents. Without my knowledge, my mother went to the police and reported that my professional activities were criminal. On 2 September 2015,

the police came to my parents' house and asked me to follow them to the police station for a hearing. While in the car, I sent a sms to Olga Panchenko, attorney at law and director of *Redut Law Company*, asking her to come and help me. At that time I was still unaware that my mother was behind this illegal police investigation. My parents joined us at the police station. My mother was very excited and started pushing me onto the wall, shouting, "She is my daughter and nobody will touch her. I don't want that sect to send her to a prostitution ring." The whole atmosphere was very emotional. I was also crying because I realized that my mother whom I had always fully trusted was behind the whole mess. The conversation with the police officers was very strange. They were not asking questions. They were just trying to convince me that my boss was a bad man, and they wanted to know about his activities. Attorneys at law Olga Panchenko and Evgenia Tarasenko arrived with a journalist to help me. In all I was illegally kept for eight hours by the police officers and they only stopped after other attorneys and journalists arrived.

**HRWF: What was the information source your mother came across on Internet?**

**Yulia Yalovaya:** It was the website of the Saint Irenaeus of Lyons Center for Religious Studies (1) whose head is Alexander Dvorkin. The Center had been alerted by an Odessa woman, Maria Kapar (2), that the co-founder of the *Redut Law Company*, where I was working for the newspaper "*Unsolved Crimes*," was the leader of a dangerous, destructive and totalitarian cult. Dvorkin arouses hatred and religious intolerance in people in Moscow. The information published on the site of the Saint Irenaeus Lyons Center is not confirmed by any evidence. It's simply a lie, and this lie has destroyed my family. Someone so easily influenced, like my mother, who is guided by the teachings of Dvorkin and his false beliefs, can commit any crime. It is scary. My mother paid 12,000 dollars for my "rescue" to people like Dvorkin. They destroyed our family and introduced me as a "victim" – a person who needs "psychological rehabilitation." These stories were broadcast on all Odessa TV channels. These people, in particular Dmitriy Bakaev, slung mud at me – people from the whole city, where I live, saw it, – and they did it for profit under the guise of Dvorkin's extremist teachings.

**HRWF: What is your relation with your family now?**

**Yulia Yalovaya:** After all that happened, no matter how much we try, my mother and I cannot find a common language. Any attempt ends in conflict.

**Footnotes:**

(1) The Center was founded in 1993 by Alexander Dvorkin with the blessing of Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexy II. The Center is also a missionary faculty department of St Tikhon's Orthodox University in Moscow the objective of which is "to spread credible information on doctrines and activities of totalitarian sects and destructive cults". The Center is the umbrella organization of the Russian Association of Centres for Religious and Sectarian Studies (RATSIRS) whose president is also ... A. Dvorkin. The vice-presidents are Archpriest Alexander Novopashin and Archpriest Alexander Shabanov; the executive secretary is priest Lev Semenov, associate professor.

(2) Maria Kapar recently got married with a Frenchman and now lives in Strasbourg.

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**Public religious meetings in Ukraine can be carried out without permits of authorities – Court's judgment**

IRF (13.09.2016) - <http://bit.ly/2cyF2WL> - Ukraine's Constitutional Court has declared unconstitutional the demand that permission be received from the local authorities for holding a religious peaceful assembly.

*The requirement was discriminatory and illogical since Ukraine's Constitution (1996) requires only that people notify of plans to hold a peaceful assembly.*

The Constitutional Court announced the decision on September 13 to an audience made up of members of the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations, the Institute for Religious Freedom, the media and members of the public. The religious organizations mentioned had, at the request of the Constitutional Court, presented arguments for revoking the requirement.

The judgment is dated September 8, 2016 and states that "in a democratic law-based country there cannot be different rules for holding peaceful assembly, depending on the organizers and participants, the aim, place, form, etc.," the Institute for Religious Freedom reports.

Up till now, political demonstrations, for example, required notification only, while religious gatherings needed a permit. The Court has now agreed that there must be only one legal mechanism for regulating peaceful assembly. There can also be no excuse for such effective religious discrimination.

The conclusion seems too obvious to need to run through the arguments given, however the Court does cite both Ukrainian law and the European Convention on Human Rights.

The legal requirements have now been declared unconstitutional and are null and void. The Court's judgment is final.

This is indeed a victory, but one that has taken too long to achieve. The requirement in question has been in force for the last 10 years.

The next step should, of course, be formulation of proper legislation protecting freedom of peaceful assembly generally.

The difference is now sadly dramatic if one compares Ukraine with Russian-occupied Crimea.

"The de facto authorities have recently imposed severe limits to the right to freedom of assembly of persons belonging to the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian communities who openly express their identity and opposition to the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. Cultural, religious and symbolic elements of Ukrainian identity have been restricted and/or suppressed through various administrative or law-enforcement measures," the [OSCE Human Rights Assessment Mission on Crimea reports](#) in 2015.

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## **Followers of Jewish psychiatrist Léopold Szondi accused by FECRIS vice-president Alexander Dvorkin of belonging to a 'cult'**

***Earlier this year, the director of HRWF Int'l met with, and interviewed, some victims of the media campaign demonizing them in Odessa***



*Journalist Konstantin Slobodyanyuk, who was interviewed by HRWF*

**By Willy Fautré, *Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l***

HRWF (05.09.2016) – Ukrainian followers of Jewish psychiatrist Léopold Szondi have been demonized and maligned by **Alexander Dvorkin**, vice-president of FECRIS (1), on the website of FECRIS' affiliate organization in Russia (<http://bit.ly/2csYDZv>): *Saint Ireneus of Lyons Center for Religious Studies in Moscow* (2).

**Léopold Szondi** was a Hungarian psychiatrist. He is known for the psychological tool that bears his name, the Szondi test. (3)

Szondi was born on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1893 in Nitra, the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and present-day Slovakia. He was raised in a German and Slovak-speaking Jewish family. In June 1944, he was deported with his family to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp on the Kastner train (4). In December 1944, Szondi and his family, along with other prominent intellectuals, were released to Switzerland after 1,700 American intellectuals paid a large ransom to Adolf Eichmann. He continued to live there after the war. He died in Küsnacht on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1986 at the age of 92.

Szondi has a few followers in Ukraine that try to adapt his teachings to the modern world and to implement them in various contexts.

*Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l* met journalist **Konstantin Slobodyanyuk** in Odessa and interviewed him about the nefarious influence of some of Alexander Dvorkin's anti-sect activities in Ukraine. Slobodyanyuk is also the editor-in-chief of "[Unsolved Crimes](#)" newspaper; he shares the views of Léopold Szondi.

**HRWF: When and how did your interest in Szondi's teachings start?**

**Konstantin Slobodyanyuk:** In 2014, **Oleg Maltsev**, scientist and my director, together with **Michael Vigdorichik**, who is well-known for his psychological diagnoses, established the Private Enterprise "*International Schicksalsanalyse Community Research Institute*". Of course, the preparation for the establishment of this Institute began long before its official registration – it took a few years. During the preparation of this project, I became familiar with the works of Léopold Szondi. The research and techniques, which allow one

to diagnose the conditions of a subject and predict his actions in the future, are extremely important in journalism, especially in the case of our profile edition "The *Unsolved Crimes*" newspaper.

### **HRWF: What is "Unsolved Crimes" newspaper?**

**Konstantin Slobodyanyuk:** "Unsolved Crimes" newspaper is a non-profit legal entity that was officially registered on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2014 under the series and certificate number OD 1742-613P. "Unsolved Crimes" only prints a minimum of official editions, as required under the law of Ukraine, but it is strategically focused on internet.

Originally, the "Unsolved Crimes" newspaper was created as a mass media outlet of the **Redut Law Firm** in Odessa, in order to cover issues related to criminal justice in Ukraine. Also our goal was to give our colleagues (other attorneys at law who do not work for our company) a chance to speak freely in a legally recognized mass media, and some of our colleagues gratefully took advantage of this opportunity.

Eight journalists work for the "Unsolved Crimes" newspaper. One of them, **Yulia Yalovaya**, was a victim of the activities of Alexander Dvorkin.

### **HRWF: What is Redut Law Firm?**

**Konstantin Slobodyanyuk:** The founders of the **Redut Law Firm** are **Oleg Maltsev** and **Olga Panchenko**. Both of them are Jewish attorneys at law and followers of Léopold Szondi's teachings. The director is attorney Olga Panchenko. Redut Law Firm is comprised of seven attorneys at law in total.

Oleg Maltsev is also the founder and director of the Private Enterprise "*International Schicksalsanalyse Community research Institute*". In the last 20 years Oleg Maltsev has conducted a series of fundamental scientific researches in the field of applied history, depth psychology, human memory and consciousness. He is also the author of dozens of intellectual property rights objects. In addition, Oleg Maltsev is preparing a PhD in psychology.

### **HRWF: Who was behind the public campaign against Oleg Maltsev?**

**Konstantin Slobodyanyuk:** It all started in 2012. One of the scientific seminars of Oleg Maltsev was attended by **Maria Kapar**. As it turned out later on, Maria Kapar had graduated from an Orthodox theological seminary, and for about 10 years she had served in a Russian Orthodox Church in Odessa. In 2014, it came to light that she had illegal business in Odessa. To cover up this illegal business, Maria Kapar misused one of the brand names of a company that had an agreement with Oleg Maltsev without his permission and his knowledge (5). Under cover of the opening of an art exhibition, Maria Kapar held a gathering with men and women who drank alcohol and had sexual activities in a private house. According to the laws of Ukraine, this kind of place is called a place of debauchery and is punishable by criminal law. When Oleg Maltsev heard about this, he took the necessary measures to stop this illegal activity.

Then Maria Kapar turned to more radical actions:

1. She started discrediting Oleg Maltsev on internet. She accused him of sectarianism, fraud, and having sex with all his female employees. She reported to **Alexander Neveev** - a psychologist engaged in internet-trolling and also a main follower of Dvorkin's ideas who calls himself a sectologist. Alexander Neveev works with Alexander Dvorkin. Also, Kapar reported to members of the Saint Ireneus of Lyons Center for Religious Studies in Moscow and on their website, they accused Oleg Maltsev of heading a dangerous, destructive, and totalitarian sect.

2. On the recommendation of the wife of a Russian Orthodox Church priest, she contacted the Saint Irenaeus of Lyons Center for Religious Studies, a missionary faculty department of St Tikhon's Orthodox University in Moscow, the objective of which is "to spread credible information on doctrines and activities of totalitarian sects and destructive cults." This Moscow-based Center, headed by Alexander Dvorkin, vice-president of FECRIS, then posted a defamatory article against Oleg Maltsev, calling him a sectarian and organizer of a sect.

3. After that, Maria Kapar contacted the mass media. This resulted in the production of sixteen slanderous TV-reports in which Oleg Maltsev was groundlessly accused of: having committed fifteen crimes in the territory of the European Union (without specifying which crimes and who were the victims), fraud, witchcraft, creation of a totalitarian sect, organizing events against the Orthodox in Odessa, establishing a harem, enslaving young girls in a sect, reviving the Order of the Solar Temple (6) and being one of its members, pseudo-scientific activities, threats to people on the internet, and the preparation of an armed military organization. Her public accusations led to some 'collateral' damage: the disruption of the relations between Yulia Yalovaya, a young journalist working for "*Unsolved Crimes*", and her mother.

4. Maria Kapar also made false accusations about alleged violations of the law by Redut Law Company and its director Olga Panchenko.

All these actions were carried out with the collaboration of Alexander Dvorkin, Alexander Neveev, and the Saint Irenaeus of Lyons Center for Religious Studies in Moscow.

#### **HRWF: Which media and journalists were behind the campaign against the followers of Léopold Szondi?**

**Konstantin Slobodyanyuk:** The Ukrainian journalists who spread the lies of Maria Kapar, Alexander Dvorkin and Alexander Neveev are:

Dmitry Bakaev (journalist of "Dumskaya TV", a friend and fan of Alexander Neveev)  
Oksana Podnesbesnaya (journalist "OODTRK TV" friend and fan of Alexander Neveev)  
Mariya Kovalyova (journalist of "Channel 7")  
Vyacheslav Kasim (journalist of "Channel 7")  
Eugene Lysyi ("Channel 7" journalist)  
Dmitry Mikhailenko (journalist of the "Third digital channel").

These journalists (except Dmitry Bakaev) said that their motivation was to fight for the truth. Dmitry Bakaev first stated that his motivation was money but then claimed that it was also to fight for the truth.

Yulia Yalovaya learnt from her father that her mother had spent \$ 12,000 to fight Oleg Maltsev (7). There is an audio recording available, where the mother of Yulia argues that she is ready to sell her apartment and her car just to hurt Oleg Maltsev.

#### **HRWF: What sort of results do you expect from your action against FECRIS affiliates in Russia with regard to their activities in Ukraine?**

**Konstantin Slobodyanyuk:** We have already reached our objective. The anti-cultists' actions have stopped. Some people, who work with Dvorkin, put an end to their activities. More than ten criminal cases in total were instituted against these persons. We have shown by example that it is possible to fight effectively and terminate the activities of such scoundrels as Dvorkin, Neveev, and corrupt journalists such as Bakaev, Podnebesnaya, and Kovalyova. As a result, Oleg Maltsev, my boss, created "The Cavalier" organization, which today helps several structures to protect themselves effectively from religious extremists' attacks.

**HRWF: This month there will be an important human rights conference of the OSCE/ ODIHR in Warsaw. Several sessions will be devoted to freedom of religion or belief, religious discrimination, and intolerance. Are you planning to participate in it and testify?**

**Konstantin Slobodyanyuk:** If we can get a visa in due time, we will go.

**Footnotes:**

- (1) FECRIS: European Federation of Centres of Research and Information on Cults and Sects.

Alexander Dvorkin was a persona non grata in Ukraine. In May 2014, he complained in numerous Russian media that he was denied entry in Ukraine because of the international "sectarian lobby" behind the Maidan movement in Kyiv. He had been invited by the Archbishop of Lugansk and Alchevsk Mitrofan (Ukrainian Orthodox Church/ Moscow Patriarchate) to give some lectures about sects on 9-10 April in Lugansk (Eastern Ukraine). He was denied entry in Ukraine at the airport of Donetsk and sent back to Russia. The official reason justifying his deportation was that he had been seen with the wife of Gubarev, the self-proclaimed governor of Donetsk.

Like other pro-Russian and Russian Orthodox extremists in Ukraine, Dvorkin discredited the Maidan movement, saying that the Acting President, Alexander Tourchynov was a Baptist – which is true –, his Prime Minister Arseni Yatseniuk was a Scientologist whose sister chaired a major scientologist organization in the USA – both accusations that were spread by Interfax-Religion, a Russian press agency, were found to be false by Human Rights Without Frontiers.

With such allegations, he wanted to show that the Maidan movement was an American plot supported by non-Orthodox/ anti-Orthodox new religious movements and that "foreign sects" were then in power in Kyiv with some extreme-right elements. See <http://bit.ly/2cdQDe6> (5 March 2014)

- (2) The Saint Irenaeus of Lyons Centre for Religious Studies is the head centre of the Russian Association of Centres for Religious and Sectarian Studies (RATsIRS) established in February 2006. Both organizations are led by Alexander Dvorkin.

RATsIRS groups together regional Orthodox anti-sect organizations in the post-Soviet space. A non-exhaustive list of the member organizations can be found in the book "Freedom of Religion or Belief, Anti-Sect Movements and State Neutrality: A Case Study: FECRIS" published in English in 2012 by the University of Dresden with *Human Rights Without Frontiers*. The list of those Orthodox anti-sect groups affiliated to the Russian branch of FECRIS can also be found on pages 164-166 of the electronic version of the book: <http://bit.ly/2bDqBQy>.

- (3) For more information about the Szondi test, see:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Szondi\\_test](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Szondi_test)  
<http://users.skynet.be/am030868/szondi.htm>

- (4) The Kastner train consisted of 35 cattle trucks that left Budapest on 30 June 1944, during the German occupation of Hungary, carrying over 1,600 Jews to safety in Switzerland. The train was named after Rudolf Kastner, a Jewish-Hungarian lawyer and journalist, who was a founding member of the Budapest Aid and Rescue Committee, a group that smuggled Jews out of occupied Europe during the Holocaust. Kastner negotiated with Adolf Eichmann, the German SS

officer in charge of deporting Hungary's Jews to Auschwitz in German-occupied Poland, to allow over 1,600 Jews to escape in exchange for gold, diamonds, and cash. See more at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kastner\\_train](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kastner_train).

- (5) Academy of Slavic Applied Science and Academy of Applied Science are the brand names (not legal entities) that belong to the company in Finland. This company has the rights to some of the intellectual property objects of Oleg Maltsev. These brand names are associated with the name of Oleg Matsev and his scientific activity.
- (6) The Order of the Solar Temple is a secret society that claims to be based upon the ideals of the Knights Templar. OTS was started by Joseph Di Mambro (French) and Luc Jouret (Belgian) in 1984 in Geneva. The OTS is most notorious for being associated with a series of murders and mass suicides of their members in 1994 and 1995 that claimed several dozen lives in Canada, France, and Switzerland.
- (7) In Ukraine, TV channels are owned by oligarchs and politicians for the promotion of their personal interests. It is not unusual for outsiders to pay mass media and journalists for campaigning on specific issues.

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## **How the propaganda of Fecris' vice-president disrupted a family in Odessa**

***Alexander Dvorkin's anti-sect propaganda destroyed a family: HRWF Int'l director interviewed a victim in Odessa***



*Yulia Yalovaya, who was interviewed by HRWF*

**By Willy Fautré, Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l**

HRWF (05.09.2016) - Yulia Yalovaya was born in the Odessa region. She is around twenty years old and an engineering student at the Odessa Maritime University. Until September 2015, she was also a journalist for "Unsolved Crimes," and she had a very good relationship with her parents, but the vice-president of FECRIS, Alexander Dvorkin, put an end to it... Her story will be part of a film realized by "Unsolved Crimes" with Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l, entitled "Protect your Dignity."

**HRWF: Under what circumstances did your relationship with your parents deteriorate?**

**Yulia Yalovaya:** In summer last year, my mother was alerted by some very negative information found on internet concerning Oleg Maltsev, the co-founder of the Redut Law Company I was working for as a journalist for his media outlet "Unsolved Crimes" newspaper. We had a long, vivid conversation, and, at the end, she said "You have to choose: your job or your parents." I am an adult, and I decided to keep both my job and my good relationship with my parents. Without my knowledge, my mother went to the police and reported that my professional activities were criminal. On 2 September 2015, the police came to my parents' house and asked me to follow them to the police station for a hearing. While in the car, I sent a sms to Olga Panchenko, attorney at law and director of Redut Law Company, asking her to come and help me. At that time I was still unaware that my mother was behind this illegal police investigation. My parents joined us at the police station. My mother was very excited and started pushing me onto the wall, shouting, "She is my daughter and nobody will touch her. I don't want that sect to send her to a prostitution ring."(1) The whole atmosphere was very emotional. I was also crying because I realized that my mother whom I had always fully trusted was behind the whole mess. The conversation with the police officers was very strange. They were not asking questions. They were just trying to convince me that my boss was a bad man, and they wanted to know about his activities. Attorneys at law Olga Panchenko and Evgenia Tarasenko arrived with a journalist to help me. In all I was illegally kept for eight hours by the police officers and they only stopped after other attorneys and journalists arrived.

**HRWF: What was the information source your mother came across on Internet?**

**Yulia Yalovaya:** It was the website of the Saint Irenaeus of Lyons Center for Religious Studies(2) whose head is Alexander Dvorkin. The Center had been alerted by an Odessa woman, Maria Kapar(3), that the co-founder of the Redut Law Company, where I was working for the newspaper "Unsolved Crimes," was the leader of a dangerous, destructive and totalitarian cult. Dvorkin arouses hatred and religious intolerance in people in Moscow. The information published on the site of the Saint Irenaeus Lionskiy Center is not confirmed by any evidence. It's simply a lie, and this lie has destroyed my family. Someone so easily influenced, like my mother, who is guided by the teachings of Dworkin and his false beliefs, can commit any crime. It is scary. My mother paid 12,000 dollars for my "rescue" to people like Dvorkin. They destroyed our family and introduced me as a "victim" – a person who needs "psychological rehabilitation." These stories were broadcast on all Odessa TV channels. These people, in particular Dmitriy Bakaev, slung mud at me – people from the whole city, where I live, saw it, – and they did it for profit under the guise of Dvorkin's extremist teachings.

**HRWF: What is your relation with your family now?**

**Yulia Yalovaya:** After all that happened, no matter how much we try, my mother and I cannot find a common language. Any attempt ends in conflict.

**Footnotes:**

(1) See a video of the scene at: <http://bit.ly/2c95Hv5>

(2) The Center was founded in 1993 by Alexander Dvorkin with the blessing of Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexy II. The Center is also a missionary faculty department of St Tikhon's Orthodox University in Moscow the objective of which is "to spread credible information on doctrines and activities of totalitarian sects and destructive cults". The Center is the umbrella organization of the Russian Association of Centres for Religious and Sectarian Studies (RATsIRS) whose president is also ... A. Dvorkin. The vice-presidents are Archpriest Alexander Novopashin and Archpriest Alexander Shabanov; the executive secretary is priest Lev Semenov, associate professor.

(3) Maria Kapar recently got married with a Frenchman and now lives in Strasbourg.

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## **Contradictory amendments were proposed to Ukrainian Law on Freedom of Conscience**

Institute for Religious Freedom (06.07.2016) - <http://bit.ly/29AOQNQ> - A vivid discussion on draft Law #4128 on the change of affiliation to religious centers by religious communities occurred during a meeting of the Secretariat of the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations on 29 June 2016, at the Institute for Religious Freedom reports.

Despite the assurance by Andriy Yurash, Director of the Department for Religions and Nationalities to the Minister of Culture of Ukraine, who stated that the draft Law met the OSCE and Venice Commission standards of religious freedom, religious representatives provided a number of critical comments to this initiative.

Archpriest Mykolai Danylevych, Deputy Chair of the Department for External Church Relations of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), believes that the proposed amendments do not simplify the transition of Orthodox communities from one jurisdiction to another, but on the contrary, "will provoke more conflicts."

Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kyiv Patriarchate, Archbishop Yevstratii (Zorya) believes that discussion of this bill on the merits will increasingly improve its content. While the original wording raised concerns, the wording of the relevant Committee can be supported. He proposed to hold committee hearings in Parliament, which invited all interested persons to take account of all views and improve the proposed initiative.

Fr. Oleksa Petriv, mitered archpriest of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church says that the best way to settle the problems of changing affiliation by religious communities will be to sum up the current lawsuits by the Supreme Court of Ukraine. He said the wording of the Committee is much better than the original text. However, he expressed concerns about the decision-making procedure to change the religious community's subordination to another religious center, because this issue is too important to make decisions by simple majority.

According to Ihor Rudzik, secretary of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, the most problematic part of draft Law #4128 is an innovation regarding the "self-identification" of the person as the basis for his/her recognition of a member of a religious community with the right to voting.

This approach completely disregards internal guidelines of the evangelical churches, which provide certain membership criteria, including baptism and confirmation.

These concerns have been supported by Dr. of Law Gennadii Bilorytskyi, legal counsel to Chief Rabbi of Kyiv and Ukraine. According to him, the draft Law #4128 will make possible the ordinary raiding by criminals who will be able to create pseudo religious communities for acquisition of buildings or lands of real religious communities.

According to him, the legitimacy of statutory procedures and existing governing bodies of religious communities are questioned, and after that the criminals will have opportunity to take advantage of the so called "self-identification" with the religious community of any outman. Therefore, the proposed changes indicate the state's intervention into internal self-regulation of every religious community.

Other religious figures did not yet express their attitude to this legislative initiative.

As IRF reported, the draft Law #4128 was elaborated by the Expert Council under the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine and submitted to the Parliament by a group of MPs (Yelensky, Voytsehovska, Kyshkar etc.) without consulting with the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations.

On 1 June 2016, the Parliamentary Committee on Culture and Spirituality considered the draft Law and decided to recommend that Parliament adopt it at first reading in the version proposed by the Committee. However, the wording proposed by the Committee has not been published on the Parliament website for a month.

Besides this the Ukrainian Council of Churches and religious organizations has criticized the adopted amendments to the Tax Code of Ukraine, which require for mandatory re-registration of the statutes of all non-profit organizations till the end of 2016. Otherwise all of them, including religious organizations, should pay taxes from all donations like commercial enterprises.

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## **Annual report on freedom of thought, conscience and religion in Ukraine**

***The article is prepared by Maksym Vasin, an executive director of the Institute for Religious Freedom (Kyiv)***

Institute for Religious Freedom (22.06.2016) - <http://bit.ly/28ORTIG> - Compared to the previous year, the number of religious organization in Ukraine at the beginning of 2015 increased by 328, thus totaling 35,317 religious organizations, including 989 religious communities without a corporate status.[1]

As of 1 January 2015 there are 87 religious centers and 292 religious institutions (archdiocese, dioceses etc.) in Ukraine representing over 50 different religious and confessional judicatories. There are also 32,792 local religious communities, 516 monasteries, 365 religious missions, 78 brotherhoods, 198 religious educational establishments, and 12,406 Sunday schools. According to official statistics, nowadays 31,871 clergies are involved on religions affairs, including 693 foreigners. There is a tendency about the annual slight growth of a number of religious organizations (about 0.5-1.8% a year).

This official data doesn't take into account religious organizations on the territory of Ukraine illegally annexed by Russia – in the AR of Crimea (2083 – in 2014) and in Sevastopol (137 – in 2014)[2], where the situation with freedom of religion and expression of ideas is getting worse based on the data of the monitoring mission of OSCE and human rights advocates.[3] These statistics also do not reflect the real religious situation in the Donets and Luhansk regions. That's why the slight stated growth in the number of religious organizations on these territories is not in line with the monitoring data about the closings of such organizations, migration to other regions of Ukraine, and hidden religious communities that were pursued by pro-Russian forces and separatists, as reported in the human rights advocacy report, "When God becomes a weapon".[4]

During 2015, there was a conflict in inter-Orthodox relationships related to property disputes at the time of jurisdiction changes by orthodox communities. The number of conflict points was 70, often occurring in cases where religious communities transferred jurisdiction from Moscow to Kyiv Patriarchate.

Law of Ukraine No.498-VIII on establishment of educational institutions by religious organizations (draft No.1447) became effective on August 04, 2015. From now on registered religious organizations can be founders (owners) of pre-school, general education, out-of-school, vocational and higher institutions. Such institutions will be private and undergo licensing procedure in the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, on the same level with other private educational institutions established by public associations, charitable foundations, companies, or natural persons.[5]

Despite the fact that the military mobilization in Ukraine has been ongoing for over one and a half years, during this period, neither government nor parliament took appropriate measures to eliminate legislative vacuums in the sphere of practical provision of constitutional guarantee for substitution of military obligation with an alternative (non-military) service.[6]

Problems arise due to the fact that the Law of Ukraine "On alternative (non-military) service" first of all relates to military conscription and reserve training, however, it doesn't clearly state the procedure for substitution of military obligation with an alternative service at the time of mobilization. Due to multiple complaints, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine agreed with the fact that by analogy, in order to regulate this issue legally, it is necessary to the mechanism, provided by the Law for the purposes of doing alternative service in times of peace. The corresponding order was sent to military commissariats.

Meanwhile, another problem relating to the legislative vacuum in this sphere is regular refusal of structural subdivisions regarding the operation of local state administrations to consider applications of the mobilized about confirmation of their right to alternative service. Thus, it makes a vicious circle with mobilized religious citizens immersed in it, which often ends up with their criminal prosecution and accusation of mobilization evasion. However, judicial practice regarding this issue is quite controversial.

On the one hand, an acquittal from the Novomoskovsk Municipal District Court of Dnipropetrovsk region dd.13.11.2014 concerning the mobilized religious person from Jehovah's Witnesses was confirmed in the court of appeal and the court of cassation.[7] On the other hand, there are many examples when courts ignore a provision of the Constitution of Ukraine and detail their position in the judgement by explaining the lack of legal standards allowing exemption for those mobilized for military service, but whose religious beliefs forbid using weapons.

For example, the decision of the Court of Appeal of Rivne region dd.17.11.2015, which, after repeated review of the judgement and comments of the court of cassation, resulted in the mitigation of a sentence, however, the right of the mobilized religious person to an alternative service was repeatedly denied.[8]

On September 10, 2015, Terny District Court in the city of Kryvyi Rig sentenced a religious person, who "refused being mobilized due to the fact that he is not allowed to hold weapon based on his religious beliefs" to 2 years in prison with a probation period. Text of the judgement doesn't even contain information about the right of the citizen to alternative service, and only says that reasons for exemption from military service have no objections based on religious beliefs in article 23 of the Law of Ukraine "On mobilization training and mobilization".[9]

Another controversial issue is that the law and bylaws can narrow the constitutional guarantee on substitutions of military obligation with an alternative service. In particular, the list of religious organizations, whose beliefs do not allow the use weapons, that was approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dd.10.11.1999 No.2066 was never reviewed.

The problem of mobilization of the religious became the subject of examination in administrative proceedings as well. For example, on June 11, 2015, Kharkiv County Administrative Court fully sustained a claim of a religious person who was mobilized by the military registration and enlistment office despite his requests about an alternative (non-military) service.

The court found his call-up illegal. The court decision specified that at the moment of the plaintiff's call-up, the territory of Ukraine had not declared any military or emergency status, which, by law, would place particular restrictions on constitutional rights and freedoms for a specified period. In this case, the norms of the Constitution should be directly applied.[10]

On April 14, 2015, Rivne County Administrative Court also obliged Zdolbuniv District State Administration to reexamine an application of the mobilized religious person regarding exemption from military service at the time of mobilization due to his religious beliefs. The Court pointed out that "analysis of the applicable legislation gives reasons to state that military service at the time of mobilization can be substituted with an alternative (non-military) service for religious citizens, who told about the inability to do military service due to their religious beliefs".[11] Such conclusion is also approved by practice of the European Court of Human Rights in cases of Bayatyan v. Armenia, Bakharatyan v. Armenia, Tsaturyan v. Armenia, Stefanov v. Bulgaria, and Erchyep v. Turkey.

An old norm requiring one to get a permit from the local authority to carry out public peaceful religious meetings 10 days before the desired meeting date remains valid in part 5 of article 21 of the Law of Ukraine "On the freedom of conscience and religious organizations". This norm contradicts provisions of Article 39 of the Ukrainian Constitution, which is silent on restrictions regarding the notification period. Provisions of this article were explained by the Constitutional Court of Ukraine. However, Article 24 of the Constitution guarantees equality of constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens, with no religious discrimination.

Nevertheless, despite direct nonconformity with the Constitution, applications and decisions of officials from local state administrations and self-governing authorities still require religious organizations to get a permit for public peaceful meetings – either outside or even inside of rented premises - based on the old legal norm.

Due to this fact, on October 26, 2015, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, Valeriia Lutkovska, made a submission to the Constitutional Court of Ukraine regarding unconstitutional part 5 of article 21 of the Law of Ukraine "On the freedom of conscience and religious organizations"[12].

The need to improve the procedure of state registration of religious organizations was separately pointed out in the Order of the President of Ukraine dd.25.08.2015 No.501/2015 "On Approval of the National strategy in the Sphere of Human Rights", and in the Plan of actions for its implementation approved by the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dd.23.11.2015 No.1393-p. First of all, it is recommended to set information exchange and cooperation between government authorities, competent registrars of statutory religious organizations, and state registrars entering data to the Unified State Register. However, the main reason for difficulties is the nonconformity of different legislative acts, which can be eliminated only by means of the Parliament of Ukraine.

### ***Recommendations***

#### **1. To the Parliament of Ukraine together with the Ukrainian Council of Churches and religious organizations:**

Form principles of the nation-wide state policy in the sphere of provision of the freedom of conscience and belief that have to be based on democratic principles and provide full participation of religious organizations in public life, namely by adopting the Law of Ukraine "On the Concept of State Confessional relations in Ukraine".

## **2. To the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine:**

Resume operation of the Board regarding realization of rights of religious organizations for solving issues that require interdepartmental interaction (provision of constitutional rights of citizens to alternative service at the time of mobilization, exchange of information between registrars of articles of association of religious organizations and state registrars, simplification of customs clearance procedure and distribution of humanitarian aid, etc.).

## **3. To the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine together with the Ukrainian Council of Churches and religious organizations:**

Develop and submit to Parliament of Ukraine a draft law on provision of a constitutional right of citizens to substitution of military obligation at the time of mobilization with alternative (non-military) service and exemption of the clergies of registered religious organizations from mobilization to the military service.

## **4. To the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine together with the Ukrainian Council of Churches and religious organizations:**

Develop and submit to Parliament of Ukraine a draft law on improvement of the procedure of acquisition of legal personality for religious organizations by coordinating applicable legislative acts in this sphere.

### **Sources:**

[1] Order of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine dd.13.03.2015 No. 126 "On training and approval of statistical and informative reports for 2014 regarding religions and state confessional relationships": <http://bit.ly/28PuMX8>

[2] Maksym Vasin. Religious map of Crimea – infographic: <http://bit.ly/28RADxn>

[3] Report of the OSCE mission about the assessment of a situation with observance of human rights in Crimea: freedom of belief: <http://bit.ly/28PuDTJ>

[4] Human rights advocates collected facts of religious pursuits in occupied Donbas: <http://bit.ly/28OVQrT>

[5] Law of Ukraine "On amendments to some laws of Ukraine on establishment of educational institutions by religious organizations" No.498-VIII dd. 02.06.2015: <http://bit.ly/28QHbxV>

[6] Part four of art.35 of the Constitution of Ukraine: <http://bit.ly/28PnVvc>

[7] Decision of Novomoskovsk Municipal District Court of Dnipropetrovsk region dd.13.11.2014 in the case No. 183/6316/14: <http://bit.ly/28PnW2r>

[8] Decision of Court of Appeal of Rivne region dd.17.11.2015 in the criminal proceeding No.12014180050000848: <http://bit.ly/28XqLiR>

[9] Terny District Court in the city of Kryvyi Rig dd.10.09.2015 in the criminal proceeding No.12015040760001335: <http://bit.ly/28RBfCT>

[10] Decision of Kharkiv County Administrative Court dd.11.06.2015 in the case No. 820/5487/15: <http://bit.ly/28Pyjno>

[11] Decision of Rivne County Administrative Court dd.14.04.2015 in the case No.817/818/15: <http://bit.ly/28TGoKA>

[12] Find more at: <http://bit.ly/28QHiJF>

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## **In Ukraine towns ravaged by war, evangelical missionaries find fertile ground**

NY Times (03.03.2016) - <http://nyti.ms/1RU1qba> - On a recent frosty morning, a group of evangelical missionaries piled out of a Volkswagen minivan to meet elderly and poor people who had gathered on a roadside here. They handed out loaves of bread and Bibles, declaring, "Jesus wants peace!"

In the distance, the fighting that had been rattling along the front all morning picked up. A pastor, Yevgeny M. Medvedev, raised his hands and said, "Let us pray."

By the time he had wrapped up the Lord's Prayer, loud explosions were echoing through the town. "Deliver us from evil," he said, finishing with an "amen" just as a shell exploded in the distance.

Maryinka, a Ukrainian-held town of apartment blocks and one-story homes outside the rebel capital of Donetsk, has become a hot spot not only for fighting, but also for saving souls.

As Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists carry on an almost forgotten fight in half-deserted towns like this one, despite a year-old cease-fire, several well-organized evangelical groups are staging a campaign of their own. Based on their accounts and evidence seen here, they are finding fertile ground for their efforts.

Maryinka lies in what Ukrainians call the "gray zone," between or close to the positions of government troops and Russian-backed rebels. While virtually everyone in eastern Ukraine has suffered in the nearly two years of war, residents of these areas have endured even more hardship.

About 6,000 civilians, including 350 children, remain in Maryinka, about half of the prewar population. Two schools remain open, though kindergartens, not much in demand in a place where nobody works, have closed.

In places, it is a town of bombed-out houses and overgrown yards, where people shuffle quickly across streets exposed to the high-powered sniper rifles of the separatists on the outskirts.

Like many towns along the line of contact between Russian-backed rebels and Ukrainian forces, Maryinka is without natural gas or hot water, because it is too dangerous for municipal workers to fix the holes torn in the pipes by shelling.

People in such places follow a glum routine of hauling firewood, waiting in lines for handouts of bread and groceries, and sleeping in root cellars.

The Ukrainian soldiers, bivouacked on the edge of town, are not much better off. In their dugouts, rough-hewed logs heaped with dirt form the roofs and discarded packing crates keep boots off the muddy floor. Clothes hang drying from nails on the wall.

There is sporadic fighting during the day, when monitors with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe roam in armored white S.U.V.s. Only after they leave at 6 p.m. does the heavy mortar fire begin, said Lt. Col. Mikhailo M. Prokopiv, the Ukrainian commander in the town.

"Maybe their leadership objects to them working at night," he said. "Anyway, at 6:30, the shooting starts."

Mortar bombs regularly overshoot the combatants' positions and land in the town instead, creating a never-ending nightmare for residents.

Natasha O. Ivanenko, one of those picking up fresh bread from the missionaries, said the explosions frequently frightened her 2-year-old son, Sergei.

"My child is afraid," she said. "He says, 'Mama, boom.' And I say, 'Yes, Seryozha, boom, boom.' "

Evangelical missionaries began to appear here in the weeks after the Ukrainian Army pushed back a large rebel assault last summer.

Some Protestant denominations have deep historical roots in Ukraine, while others spread after the breakup of the Soviet Union, competing in the east of the country with the Russian wing of the Orthodox Church.

Yet the speed of the evangelicals' expansion in the conflict area is new, as is their approach of blending humanitarian aid with proselytizing.

"When Jesus was on Earth, he fed people and people followed him for that reason, too," said Lyubov V. Shpikhernyuk, a missionary. And finding religion has always been easier during a war, she said, because "when fear comes, people are open to God."

The missionaries have established combined aid distribution points and churches in 10 towns on the Ukrainian side of the border, according to Sergei N. Kosyak, the leader of the site in Maryinka, called the Christian Aid Center of the Transfiguration Church.

Mr. Kosyak estimates that, in the course of a year, these sites have drawn 600 people to regular religious services, a few of whom have been baptized.

Evangelical churches in the United States are underwriting some of the aid for the missionaries, who are all Russian speakers from Ukraine or other former Soviet states.

One church in the city of Slovyansk north of here, the Good News Church, has opened a school specifically to train missionaries for work in this conflict zone. So far, about 75 people have completed the one-month course and deployed along the 300-mile front.

It is a spiritual turning of the tables, of sorts. When pro-Russian rebels held Slovyansk, they arrested and drove out evangelicals. Then the city changed hands, and the missionaries found their way back.

Starting with two followers in July when he opened the site, Mr. Kosyak has built a congregation of 70 people, with a bakery, a church choir and various services on offer, like delivering firewood.

That number rivals the turnout for Sunday services at the Orthodox Church of the Kazan Virgin in Maryinka.

In an interview, the Orthodox priest, the Rev. Sergi Geiko, said he disapproved of luring doubters to God with material rewards, like groceries or bread. The foreign donors helping the evangelicals, he said, were trespassing in Orthodox land.

"This is not only a political war, but a spiritual war," he said. "This is a crusade. The West is helping them."

Mr. Kosyak was unapologetic. "He thinks we are competitors, and that the people of Maryinka are his property," he said of Father Geiko.

Out at the roadside prayer, as explosions thudded along the positions at the edge of town, Mr. Medvedev, the pastor, took pains to speak of unity in a town with enough conflict.

"Hate divides, love unites," he said. "Use this chance, call his name, bring him into your life. When he comes like bread, there will be no hunger. I want you to think of this, my dears — we don't want people lost to God."

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## **Rights of conscientious objectors in Ukraine threatened**

### ***President's bill complicating alternative service adopted***

Institute of Religious Liberty (18.02.2016) - <http://bit.ly/20UAF7m> - The Supreme Soviet (Verkhovna Rada) of Ukraine adopted draft law No. 4020, whose provisions may deprive believers of the constitution right to alternative (nonmilitary) service during a special period.

Parliament voted in favor of the legislative changes initiated by President Poroshenko immediately as the foundation and as a whole, without consideration of the bill on second reading, which is required by the law "On the regulation of the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine," the Institute of Religious Liberty reports.

The parliament supported a corrected version of the draft law, which was proposed by the standing committee and whose transcript was read by its secretary, Ivan Vinnik.

"The timing of conducting a draft (drafts) of citizens of Ukraine for compulsory service is determined by order of the president of Ukraine. Such an order is published in news media no later than one month before the end of the year preceding the year of the draft (drafts) of citizens of Ukraine to compulsory military service, except that an order of a draft (drafts) of citizens of Ukraine to compulsory military service in a special period is published no later than one month before the start of conducting a draft (drafts) of citizens of Ukraine to compulsory military service," the transcription of the session of 18 February 2016 says.

That is, in a special period (during mobilization), the president of Ukraine will be granted the right to announce a draft to compulsory service no later than one month before its start. However the rule of part 1 of article 9 of the Ukrainian law "On alternative (nonmilitary) service" requires of believers who want to perform alternative service that they submit the relevant application no later than two calendar months before the start of the announced period of conducting a draft to compulsory military service.

Thus, the president's draft law introduces preconditions by which believers in practice may be deprived of the possibility of exercising their constitutional right to alternative (nonmilitary) service, since they will not be able to submit the relevant application in a timely manner. . . .

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