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Foreword

This report is a follow-up on the Ministry's efforts to bring the international community's attention to the difficult human rights situation in Ukraine, which has significantly deteriorated over the past year. This is confirmed by the many cases on record of grave human rights violations in all spheres of public life, as well as the unwillingness to take action to improve the situation on the part of those who call themselves the country's leaders.

At the same time, it is definitely worth mentioning that the large number of problems in Ukraine have been observed by numerous international human rights monitoring mechanisms, as well as international and Ukrainian non-governmental human rights organisations. All of them have noted the systemic nature of human rights violations in Ukraine and noted with concern that the authorities should pay close attention to the identified problems and deploy significant efforts to resolve them.

However, the events confirm the Ukrainian leadership's inability to even go through the motions and attempt to address serious human rights violations. Such actions of the Kiev regime once again illustrate its lack of independence. In fact, Kiev is a neo-Nazi regime that is acting upon the instructions of external sponsors to create an anti-Russia project from its own country. The sole purpose of this entity is to serve as a source of tension in the immediate vicinity of Russia's borders despite destroying its own statehood in the process. It is precisely because of the obsequious readiness of the current Ukrainian government to deny everything that bounds it to Russia and, to the detriment of the interests of their people, to destroy the history and memory of the real rather than fictional past of their country, that the overseas sponsors turn a blind eye to its neo-Nazi nature and nudge it to follow the path of self-destruction.

General overview

The situation with human rights seriously deteriorated in Ukraine in 2022, and the current state of affairs in this area is extremely grave.

The systematic suppression of human rights, the opposition and dissent in Ukraine has become a deliberate policy of the regime that came to power in 2014 and set itself the goal of fighting everything that bounds it to Russia.

Vladimir Zelenskiy was elected president in 2019 under the banner of achieving peace and ending discrimination against the people of southeastern Ukraine. However, to date, on most key issues, including in the humanitarian sphere, the current Ukrainian leadership's policy has not only remained a carbon copy of President Poroshenko's aggressive course, but has exacerbated existing issues many times over and contributed to the emergence of new ones.

A number of researchers have rightly noted that the Kiev regime underwent a political mutation in 2022. The environment that it created in the wake of the martial law allowed it to build an authoritarian rule in that country which can be described as an absolute monopoly on power, out-of-court reprisals, tough censorship, liquidation of almost all independent media and the destruction of political opposition, total state propaganda, an active search for traitors and fictional Russian spies and saboteurs. Having adopted the ideology and practices of the Ukrainian national radicals, the current regime has, in fact, degenerated into a neo-Nazi dictatorship.

This kind of a regime needs a state of war and the widespread use of reprisals as the only and, at the same time, the surest way to preserve its domination. It will exist as long as a high degree of escalation in society is maintained, armed confrontation with an external enemy continues, and most importantly, widespread Western assistance, primarily military, is provided. Acting along the lines of this logic, such a regime will exist only as long as it maintains this degree of escalation in society and is at war with an external enemy. The end of the war for such a regime means the end of its existence.

Overall, the situation with promoting and protecting human rights in Ukraine has become critical. The right to freedom and personal inviolability is regularly infringed upon in that country. There are

numerous facts of illegal arrests and subsequent detention, torture, intimidation, and inhuman and cruel treatment that are aimed, among other things, at forcing the people in custody to confess their guilt.

The persecution of political opponents, independent journalists and media companies as well as members of public organisations that are objectionable to the authorities, which, as a rule, comes amid claims about the importance of combating “Russian aggression” and “separatism”, has acquired unprecedented proportions. To this end, the Kiev authorities actively engage members of radical nationalist organisations who often break the law, but always go unpunished.

The rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs), the Russian-speaking people and representatives of ethnic minorities, of whom there are many among the IDPs, have been restricted. Kiev’s campaign against the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church has reached a new level in terms of cynicism and hypocrisy. It has now taken the form of a total ban on the UOC, including Zelenskiy regime’s decision to evict its clergy from the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra.

The problem of corruption, which is deeply rooted in the Ukrainian state, remains unresolved. The measures declared by the Kiev authorities to combat it, including the creation of relevant specialised entities, turn out ineffective in practice. Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, an independent expert from the UN Human Rights Council on foreign debt and human rights, pointed out the state of affairs in this sphere at the end of his official visit to Ukraine in May 2018.¹ The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights also noted the scale of corruption in April 2014² and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted it in February 2017. According to CEDAW experts, corruption, as well as rising unemployment, declining standards of living and the ongoing crisis create favourable conditions for widespread human trafficking.³

¹ Report of UN Independent Expert J.P.Bohoslavsky on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, made following a visit to Ukraine in May 2018. December 2018. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/448/76/PDF/G1844876.pdf?OpenElement>

² Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 6th periodic report of Ukraine. April 2014. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fUKR%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

³ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 8th periodic report of Ukraine. February 2017. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f8&Lang=ru

In Ukraine, the situation with observance of the right to freedom and personal inviolability remains acute. Over the past years, international human rights monitoring organisations have recorded many facts of illegal detention, torture, intimidation, harsh treatment and sexual violence, including for the purpose of forcing people to confess their guilt or to cooperate. Such examples are regularly included in the reports of the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU). In November 2021, the Human Rights Committee expressed concern over information about ongoing torture and harsh treatment by the Ukrainian security forces, while indicating that the number of cases of convictions for such violations is small.⁴

Numerous violations of citizens' rights to a fair trial continue to occur, especially in criminal cases related to the conflict in Donbass. Court hearings are regularly held in the absence of defendants, and right-wing radicals often openly intimidate and attack lawyers and put pressure on representatives of the judiciary.

The use of torture and violence against detainees by law enforcement and security officers is systematic and, as a rule, goes unpunished.⁵

In November 2021, the Human Rights Committee pointed out the issues with bringing to justice the people who are responsible for crimes committed during Kiev's attempts to subdue the population of Donbass by force. Having taken into account the Kiev authorities' statement about their plans to investigate the crimes committed during the armed conflict (among them, arbitrary executions, sexual violence, kidnapping, forcible disappearances, arbitrary and illegal detentions; in this regard, an underground prison in Kharkov was mentioned which remained operational in 2014-2016), the Committee expressed concern about the lack of progress in this area and noted that victims, especially women, are afraid to report crimes due to fear of reprisals, lack of trust in the Ukrainian public authorities and plain ignorance of their rights.

In addition, he pointed out that lawyers defending victims of hostilities often receive threats. In this regard, the HRC recommended that measures

⁴ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 8th periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (Observations posted in February 2022)
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru

⁵ Report of the Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council N. Meltzer on the issue of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment following a visit to Ukraine on May 28 - June 8, 2018 January 2019
<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/010/58/PDF/G1901058.pdf?OpenElement>

be taken to hold the perpetrators accountable and provide protection for complainants and lawyers. It was also recommended to remove individuals who were convicted of serious human rights violations from government offices.⁶

Extorting confessions is a widespread occurrence. The HRMMU has on record people's complaints that they were forced by the SBU or investigating authorities to confess on camera their participation in or affiliation with armed groups. Several such videos were posted on the official websites of the National Police or the SBU. According to the mission, the detainees testified against themselves as a result of torture, harsh treatment or intimidation by SBU officers.⁷

With the beginning by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation of a special military operation to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine and to protect civilians in Donbass, the neo-Nazi Kiev regime finally abandoned even perfunctory attempts to create the appearance of maintaining law and order or observing human rights in Ukraine.

The authorities are handing out weapons to civilians without any control over the process, which the criminal elements are taking advantage of. Criminals charged with serious crimes are being released from prisons, such as former serviceman Sergey Torbin (convicted for the murder of Kherson activist Yekaterina Gandzyuk), Dmitry Balabukha (convicted for killing a civilian during the conflict in Donbass), deputy of the Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine and commander of the Donbass battalion Semyon Semenchenko, former commander of the Tornado battalion Ruslan Onishchenko (convicted of torture, rape and incitement to suicide). As a result, a surge of banditry, looting, armed attacks and murders has been observed in Kiev and other large Ukrainian cities, and self-appointed territorial defence detachments engage in robberies instead of sticking to the purported goal of protecting fellow citizens.

Chaos and lawlessness are rife. People who arouse the slightest suspicion are detained, interrogated and searched by radicals. Civilians face the risk of being killed under far-fetched pretexts such as for being part of

⁶ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 8th periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (Observations posted in February 2022) https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru

⁷ Report of the OHCHR "Human Rights in the Administration of Justice in Conflict-Related Criminal Cases in Ukraine from April 2014-April 2020". August 2020 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/Ukraine-admin-justice-conflict-related-cases-en.pdf>

numerous “sabotage groups” or “collaborators.” There are many videos posted online showing unlawful reprisals and abuse of civilians by the Nazis.

With the tacit permission of the Kiev authorities, right-wing radical combat units use civilians as a human shield, which was mentioned even in the materials of Amnesty International, an organisation that cannot be described as pro-Russian. The organisation's paper, “Ukraine: military endangering civilians by locating forces in residential areas – new research,” highlights the fact that Ukraine's armed forces are violating international humanitarian law by treating civilian sites as military targets. As a rule, Ukrainian military bases and military equipment are deployed in residential blocks or important civilian infrastructure facilities such as schools and hospitals.

Russian servicemen that have been taken hostage are being held in terrible conditions and subjected to torture and other forms of inhuman and cruel treatment. The Ukrainian armed formations and national battalions post online numerous testimonies of the crimes committed by them for everyone to see. The Ukrainian authorities are not even thinking about bringing perpetrators of these grave crimes to justice.

Glorification of Nazism

The Kiev regime's efforts to aggressively propagate neo-Nazism concurrently with the efforts to rewrite the history of the Great Patriotic War and World War II are notably consistent. Distorted interpretations of historical events are being imposed on the people which belittle the role and contribution of the Soviet Union to the victory over Nazism and are aimed at destroying the Ukrainian people's historical memory about the events of that war. The nationalist sentiments among the broad public are cultivated in Ukraine through state policy and vigorous efforts of the authorities of all levels to whitewash and glorify Nazism and Nazi collaborators during WWII and to glorify various formations of Ukrainian collaborators who sided with the Nazi invaders during the war under the guise of the "national liberation movement." Particular attention is paid to adopting a wide range of state support measures for the movements that glorify Nazi henchmen.

Notably, a regulatory framework has been created for this kind of activity.

In April 2015, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted a "decommunisation package" of legal acts, in particular, the law "On condemning the communist and national socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes in Ukraine and the ban on propaganda of their symbols," "On access to the archives of the repressive bodies of the communist totalitarian regime of 1917-1991," "On perpetuating victory over Nazism in 1939-1945 World War II" and "On the legal status and honouring the memory of fighters for independence of Ukraine in the 20th century."

In accordance with these documents, Soviet symbols were outlawed, the communist regime was condemned, the archives of the Soviet security services were opened, the WWII Ukrainian military nationalist formations and their leaders - the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) (Stepan Bandera) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)⁸ (Roman Shukhevich) – were recognised as independence fighters. Commander-in-Chief Shukhevich served in the Third Reich's Nachtigall Battalion, the 201st battalion of the Ukrainian Legion Schutzmannschaft.

In addition, criminal liability was introduced for negative assessment of the activities of the above units, as well as for the production, distribution and public use of symbols of the "totalitarian communist regime."

⁸ Both organisations are recognised as extremist in the Russian Federation.

The “decommunisation” laws covered issues such as provision of benefits to former members of the nationalist armed formations and a ban on the use of Soviet symbols, as well as Red Army symbols and insignia. In May 2017, the Code of Administrative Offences of Ukraine was amended to prohibit public use, wearing or displaying the St George (Guards) ribbon or its image.

On January 30, 2018, in line with the provisions of the law “On the legal status and honouring the memory of fighters for independence of Ukraine in the 20th century,” the Lvov Regional Council resolved to display the OUN-UPA flag along with the state flag of Ukraine. Similar decisions were adopted by the Volyn Regional Council, city councils in Ternopol, Kiev and a number of other cities.⁹

In December 2018, law No. 2640-VIII was adopted to amend the law “On the Status of War Veterans and Guarantees of their Social Protection,” which essentially equated collaborators as “participants in the fight for independence of Ukraine in the 20th century” and veterans who fought on the side of the Allies.¹⁰

⁹Infringement of rights and freedoms in Ukraine. Manifestation of discrimination, incitement of ethnic hatred, hate crimes and extremism. Report for the OSCE human dimension implementation meeting 2019. The Institute of Legal Policy and Social Protection, the Antifascist Human Rights Legal League. 2019.

¹⁰<https://strana.today/news/175167-bojtsy-upa-oun-i-unra-poluchili-v-ukraine-status-uchastnikov-boevykh-dejstvij.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/175244-vekhovnaya-rada-predostavila-status-uchastnikov-boevykh-dejstvij-bojtsam-upa-oun-uvo-polesskaja-sech-i-unra-sut-zakona.html>)

Perpetuating the memory of the Nazis at the legislative level

Including decisions on celebrating memorable dates and anniversaries of Ukrainian Nazi collaborators in the resolutions that are adopted annually by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine is among notable manifestations of Kiev's state policy to "preserve national memory". In addition, in 2018, the Verkhovna Rada approved the slogan of the OUN nationalists "Glory to Ukraine! Glory to heroes!" which is a copy of the infamous Nazi salute, for use as a salute in the army and law enforcement agencies.

In 2019, the anniversaries of the following Nazi collaborators were put on the calendar of memorable dates and anniversaries: Vladimir Kubiyovich (a rabid supporter of cooperation with the Germans and the initiator of the SS Galicia Division), Ivan Poltavets-Ostryanitsa (head of the Ukrainian National Cossack Movement (UNAKOR), which included auxiliary police units that took part in the massacres of Jews in Volyn, Zhitomir, Vinnitsa, and Belaya Tserkov), Vasiliy Levkovich (member of the Ukrainian auxiliary police in Dubno, then commander of the Bug Military District as part of the UPA, who was convicted in 1947 by the Military Tribunal of the Interior Ministry troops, Kiev region), Ulas Samchuk (OUN activist and editor-in-chief of the pro-Nazi *Volyn* newspaper in Rovno who published anti-Semitic articles calling for killing Jews), Vasiliy Sidor (member of the OUN and UPA, commander of a sotnya within the Nachtigall Battalion, which took part in punitive operations; after the war, until his death in 1949, he actively participated in underground activities and served as deputy chief commander of the UPA), Andrey Melnik (head of the OUN Board who openly collaborated with Nazis, head of the Ukrainian National Rada in Kiev during the war, organiser of the Ukrainian auxiliary police units, and organiser of mass killings of Jews), Kirill Osmak (member of the OUN (Stepan Bandera's wing), one of the leaders of the Ukrainian National Rada in Kiev led by Andrey Melnik), Alexander Vyshnivskiy (an organiser of the SS Galicia Division), Yaroslav Starukh (member of the OUN Board and an organiser of Jewish pogroms), Vasiliy Galas (one of OUN leaders who was in charge of an underground OUN network in Western Ukraine, organiser of Jewish pogroms in the Ternopol region and mass killings of Poles), as well as nationalists, in particular, Maxim Zheleznyak (head of the Kolivshchyna who was involved in the mass killings of Jews in Uman in the 18th

century). At the same time, in a number of cases, these individuals are mentioned simply as public figures as, for example, “historian and geographer” Vladimir Kubyovych, “political and military figure” Yaroslav Starukh, and “writer, publicist and journalist” Ulas Samchuk, without indicating their association with the nationalists. Public funds are allocated for holding commemorative events in honour of these “public figures.” The Ministry of Education and Science has been instructed to conduct lessons and awareness raising events. Commemorative coins and postage stamps in honour of these individuals will be issued.

The draft resolution “On Memorable Dates in 2021” was submitted to the Verkhovna Rada by deputies from the European Solidarity and Servant of the People parties on December 15, 2020, and provided for celebrating at the state level the anniversaries of individuals like Sergey Timoshenko (Minister of the Ukrainian People’s Republic who engaged in the construction of Wehrmacht military facilities in Poland), Leonid Perfetskiy (veteran of the SS Galicia Division), Nikolai Kapustyanskiy (deputy head of the Melnik-led OUN wing, who engaged in forming auxiliary Ukrainian units for the Nazis), Vladimir Shchigelskiy (he was a UPA member for a short time and then was executed by a firing squad in post-war Poland for collusion with the Nazis), Osip Dyakiy (OUN member, liquidated by the Soviet security agencies), and Rostislav Voloshin (OUN and UPA member).¹¹

Notably, this decision was taken to court. Lawyer and public figure Andrey Portnov filed a lawsuit in which he demanded a ban on the celebration of memorable dates, associated with the participants in the Holocaust and the mass killings of Jews and Roma by Nazi criminals, which were approved by the Kiev City Council in December 2019. On July 23, 2020, the Kiev Administrative Court of Appeal satisfied this claim.¹²

On December 17, 2021, the Verkhovna Rada adopted another resolution on celebrating memorable dates and anniversaries in 2022-2023. According to the document, the holidays include the 80th anniversary of the creation of the UPA and the 110th anniversary of Stepan Bandera’s ally

¹¹ <https://strana.today/news/306764-pamjatnye-daty-2021-hoda-koho-vnesli-v-postanovlenie-verkhovnoj-rady.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/306764-pamjatnye-daty-2021-hoda-koho-vnesli-v-postanovlenie-verkhovnoj-rady.html>)

¹² <https://strana.today/news/254461-portnov-osporil-reshenie-kievskoho-horsoveta-o-prazdnovanii-natsistskikh-dat.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/280541-sud-priostanovil-reshenie-kievsoveta-otmechat-daty-svjazannykh-s-natsizmom-portnov.html>)

Yaroslav Stetsko, 130th anniversary of SS Galicia Division member Porfiry Silenko-Kravets and 130th anniversary of Yury Polyanskiy, who was the burgomaster of Lvov under the Nazis and was directly involved in the killings of Jews and Poles, as well as looting, etc.¹³

To follow up on such resolutions by the Verkhovnaya Rada, the Ukrainian regional authorities adopt their own regulations.

On December 24, 2019, the Lvov Regional Council adopted a resolution on allocating state funds in 2020 for holding commemorative events in honour of an OUN leader Andrey Melnik, as well as in honour of an adept of the ideas of Ukrainian nationalism Ivan Lipa and his son Yury Lipa, who was an ideologist of nationalism.

On February 27, 2020, at the suggestion of a deputy from the Svoboda party Yury Sirotyuk, the Kiev City Council adopted a resolution on celebrating memorable dates and anniversaries in Kiev of the above collaborators, including Vladimir Kubyovych, Ivan Poltavets-Ostryanitsa, Vasiliy Levkovich, Ulas Samchuk, Vasiliy Sidor, Yury Lipa, Vasiliy Galas, and Andrey Melnik.¹⁴

Other draft laws to glorify Nazism were submitted to the legislative body of Ukraine as well. On September 21, 2020, representatives of the parliamentary parties Voice and Servant of the People, as well as a member of the Freedom party Oksana Savchuk took the initiative to submit to the Verkhovnaya Rada a draft resolution on celebrating the 80th anniversary of the proclamation in Lvov of the Act of restoration of the Ukrainian state adopted on June 30, 1941, during the Nazi occupation of Western Ukraine.

¹³ <https://vp.donetsk.ua/ukraina-mir/100938-vr-prinyala-postanovlenie-o-prazdnovanii-pamyatnykh-dat-v-2022>

¹⁴ <https://strana.today/news/252473-kollaboranty-v-ukraine-khha-podderzhal-postanovlenie-o-pamjatnykh-datakh-i-jubilejakh.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/252473-kollaboranty-v-ukraine-khha-podderzhal-postanovlenie-o-pamjatnykh-datakh-i-jubilejakh.html>)

Pro-Nazi statements and hate speech

Ukrainian officials expressed support for Nazis openly and on numerous occasions. In September 2018, former Verkhovna Rada Speaker Andrey Paruby said on air in an ICTV show that “the greatest man who practiced direct democracy was Adolf Hitler.”¹⁵

The media was shocked by Ukraine’s consul in Hamburg Vasiliy Marushchinets, who actively made xenophobic and racist posts on social media, justifying Nazism and anti-Semitism. He also posted his photographs against a Bandera flag and with a cake shaped like Hitler’s book *Mein Kampf*, which his colleagues gave him on his 60th birthday. In May 2018, Marushchinets was fired, but in early November 2019 media reported that the Ukrainian court declared his dismissal to be illegal.¹⁶

On May 3, 2019, Alexander Nakonechnyi, the mayor of Karlovka in the Poltava Region, posted his photograph in a Nazi uniform on his Facebook account.¹⁷

In October 2019, then Prime Minister of Ukraine Alexey Goncharuk attended a concert on the Defender of Ukraine Day by the band Sekira Peruna, against which a criminal case was opened in 2018 for glorifying Adolf Hitler, Rudolf Hess and Waffen SS forces and for using Nazi symbols. The concert was attended by Ukrainian neo-Nazis and organised by Andrey Medvedko, who had been detained for murdering writer and journalist Oles Buzina but was released together with the other potential perpetrator, Denis Polishchuk, under the neo-Nazis’ pressure. Alexey Goncharuk went on stage to welcome the “veterans” of the counter-terrorist operation against Donbass. He later confirmed his participation in the neo-Nazi gathering in a Facebook post and explained it by a desire to “congratulate veterans and to talk about felt needs.”¹⁸

On March 17, 2022, head of the Ukrainian State Border Guard Service Sergey Deineko called for killing Russian women and children in a Facebook post, which was later deleted.¹⁹

¹⁵ <https://korrespondent.net/ukraine/4007639-parubyi-vspomnil-o-priamoi-demokratyyi-hytlera>

¹⁶ <https://lenta.ru/news/2019/11/12/zvilen/>, https://aif.ru/politics/world/fashistom_byt_pochetno_ukrainskiy-konsul-antisemit_vosstanovlen_na-rabote

¹⁷ Online Environment as an Instrument of Human Right and Freedom Violations in Ukraine. Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, 2022.

¹⁸ <https://rg.ru/2019/10/14/premer-ukrainy-otdohnul-v-kompanii-neonacistov.html>

¹⁹ <https://politnavigator.news/ukrainskijj-general-poobeshhal-ubivat-russkikh-zhenshhin-i-detejj.html>

On March 8, 2022, former Acting President, Verkhovna Rada Speaker and Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council Alexander Turchinov published a post on his VKontakte account, in which he called for “exterminating Rusnya wherever possible, not only in Ukraine but also beyond it, in the territory of Russia.”²⁰

On July 1, 2022, then Ukrainian Ambassador to Germany Andrey Melnik said that Stepan Bandera was a “freedom fighter” and had nothing to do with the murder of Jews and Poles. This outraged the public not only in Poland but also in Germany. Melnik was criticised by Federal Government Commissioner for Jewish Life in Germany and the Fight against Antisemitism Felix Klein and the Israeli Embassy in Berlin.

On August 22, 2022, Ukrainian Ambassador to Kazakhstan Pyotr Vrublevskiy, who was later recalled to Kiev, told the media: “We are trying to kill as many of them [Russians] as possible. The more we kill now, the fewer our children will have to kill. That’s it.”

Before that, mayor of Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk) Boris Filatov spoke in the same vein: “This is a time for cold fury. We now have a moral right to kill these non-humans calmly and imperturbably around the world, as long as it takes and in the largest possible number.”

On December 15, 2022, commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces Valery Zaluzhnyi said in an interview with The Economist: “The most important experience we had and the one which we have practiced almost like a religion is that Russians and any other enemies must be killed, just killed, and most importantly, we should not be afraid to do it.”²¹

In December 2022, Ukraine’s police chief Igor Klimentenko said that the Russian-speaking people in Donbass were “poisoned by Russian propaganda” and were “the main problem of that region.”²²

On January 1, 2023, Ukraine’s Verkhovna Rada published a tweet on its official account in which it glorified Stepan Bandera and included some of his quotes. The tweet was deleted after Prime Minister of Poland Mateusz Morawiecki said that Poles would never agree to show any mercy for those

²⁰ https://vk.com/video-202555139_456240594

²¹ <https://www.economist.com/zaluzhny-profile>

²² <https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/igor-klimentenko-zaraz-ukrayini-bilshe-temryavi-1670509562.html>

who refuse to admit to that horrible genocide, plead forgiveness and fully redeem their guilt.²³

It is notable that these statements by Ukrainian officials, like the one by Melnik, caught the attention of the international public. Back in 2016, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) expressed concern over racist, hate and discriminatory statements that were increasingly made mostly against minorities during public debates, in the speeches of public figures and politicians, as well as on media resources, including internet.²⁴

NGOs and foreign politicians also spoke about the spread of neo-Nazism and the activities of far-right groups in Ukraine. In November 2020, the Centre for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) published a report in which Ukraine was named as one of the main promoters of the neo-Nazi ideology.²⁵

Following a visit to Kiev in May 2021, a group of French senators stated that the activities of neo-Nazi groups in Ukraine were a cause for concern. The senators said that when attending in a fair in central Kiev during the Kiev Day celebrations they came across members of the Azov Battalion who taught children to assemble guns, a stand where volunteers were enlisted for a war in Donbass and a shooting range where the far-right invited young people to shoot at a paper image of the Kremlin. People were also selling WWII Nazi IDs, swastikas and other symbols. Senator Nathalie Goulet, who witnessed that, sent an inquiry to the French Foreign Ministry. After that, the Security Service of Ukraine launched an investigation against the French senators.²⁶ However, the French Foreign Ministry did not consider the situation as alarming and replied to Goulet's inquiry that "there are neo-Nazi groups in Ukraine" but they are no more popular than the average in Europe.²⁷

²³ <https://strana.today/news/420555-v-polshe-osudili-publikatsiju-rady-ko-dnju-rozhdenija-bandery.html>

²⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the periodic 22nd and 23rd periodic reports of Ukraine, August 2016. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

²⁵ Hatebook. Facebook's neo-Nazi shopfronts funding far-right extremism. Report by Center for Countering Digital Hate. https://252f2edd-1c8b-49f5-9bb2-cb57bb47e4ba.filesusr.com/ugd/f4d9b9_55b47be4de914daf866cfa1810cc56c5.pdf

²⁶ <https://remembrance.ru/2021/06/30/kyiv-vozmushhen-tem-hto-evropejcy-na-ukraine-nashli-nacistov/>

²⁷ <https://i-sng.ru/publikacii/zabyli-shkolnyy-urok-istorii-pochem/>

In other words, Ukraine, enjoying the silent encouragement by the collective West, ignores the concern of the international community and continues to promote the neo-Nazi ideology.

Holding events in honour of Nazis and their accomplices

There are frequent cases in Ukraine when officials of different levels organise events and public actions glorifying Germany under Hitler as well as German Nazis and their accomplices.

In July 2018, Verkhovna Rada leaders organised a thematic exhibition dedicated to the 77th Anniversary of the Act of restoration of Ukrainian statehood, which was made public on June 30, 1941, and sealed the creation of a German protectorate and dependency in Galicia, determining its course for cooperation with Nazi Germany. The exhibition was devoted to the OUN leaders Stepan Bandera and Yaroslav Stetsko, and to Roman Shukhevich, who commanded the Nachtigall Battalion and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army at an early stage in the Great Patriotic War.²⁸

In February 2019, the nationalist forces were outraged by a police operation to disperse a nationalist rally in Kiev's Kontraktovaya Square, during which an officer shouted: "Lie down, Bandera!" In response, National Police heads launched a flash mob, #IAmABanderovite, in the social media. For example, National Police chief Sergei Knyazev and Patrol Police chief Yevgeniy Zhukov posted the hashtag on their Facebook pages.

In March 2019, Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine Viktor Muzhenko approved new brigade chevrons of the Land Forces. A red-and-black chevron with a skull and the inscription "Ukraine or Death" was approved for the 72nd Black Zaporozhian Cossacks Mechanised Brigade. This chevron bears a striking resemblance to those of the 3rd SS Panzer Division Totenkopf.²⁹

In June 2020, Vladimir Mikolayenko, mayor of then Ukrainian Kherson,³⁰ congratulated the local residents on an anniversary of the Act of restoration of Ukrainian statehood promulgated by the OUN collaborationists in Lvov in 1941. The Act committed to "work closely with the National-Socialist Greater Germany, under the leadership of its leader Adolf Hitler which is forming a new order in Europe and the world and is helping the Ukrainian People to free itself from Moscovite

²⁸ <https://rada.gov.ua/ru/news/Novosty/Soobshchenyya/160401/html>; <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2018/07/05/v-rade-ukrainy-otkryta-vystavka-vo-slavu-nahtigalya-i-evreyskih-pogromov>

²⁹ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/2587743.html>

³⁰ On September 30, 2022, the Russian Federation and the Kherson Region signed a treaty on the accession of the Kherson Region to the Russian Federation.

occupation.” The city was adorned with outdoor advertisements reproducing the front page of the OUN newspaper *Samostiynaya Ukraina* dated July 10, 1941, with the text of the said Act.³¹

In 2022, it became clear that the Nazi ideas prevailed not only among members of the volunteer units (mostly manned by neo-Nazis) but also among ordinary Ukrainian officers and men. Nazi symbols are commonly found in tattoos covering the bodies of Ukrainian Army personnel, who also openly wear chevrons bearing Nazi symbols and slogans. Quite frequently these are exact copies of chevrons that Germans and their accomplices sported during the Great Patriotic War.

Specifically, there were media reports that militants from Azov, Aidar, and other nationalist battalions were wearing chevrons and swastika symbols of Waffen-SS units, to say nothing of their tattoos and propaganda of Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, their favourite read.³²

There are cases on record of Nazi symbols being used by Ukrainian officials. President Vladimir Zelenskiy, for one, illustrated his Victory Day greetings to the public on May 9, 2022 (posted in his Telegram account), with a photograph showing a Ukrainian soldier with the SS Totenkopf emblem on his chest. This caused an uproar, whereupon the image was promptly removed. But in parallel, the same photograph was used by the Ukrainian Defence Ministry, and the agency decided to stand by it.

On January 1 of each year, Kiev and other Ukrainian cities host torch marches honouring the birthday of the Nazi henchman Stepan Bandera. The pageants are accompanied with shouted nationalist slogans and a show of Nazi symbols. Since 2019, Bandera’s birthday is celebrated as an official holiday.

On January 1, 2021, the nationalists as usual organised torch marches in honour of Bandera in major Ukrainian cities. The Ukrainian media noted, however, that there were fewer radicals involved in the rallies, which was interpreted as a sign of dwindling public support for the nationalists. At the same time, these gatherings are held unopposed during the presidency of Vladimir Zelenskiy, who is not hiding the fact that he follows the policy of his predecessor, Petr Poroshenko.³³

³¹ <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2020/06/26/mer-hersona-pozdravil-gorozhan-s-banerovskim-aktom-i-prisyagoy-gitleru>

³² <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/997883-lavrov-nacifikaciya-ukraina>

³³ <https://strana.today/news/309866-marsh-bandery-v-kieve-1-janvarja-2021-onlajn-transljatsija-video.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/309866-marsh-bandery-v-kieve-1-janvarja-2021-onlajn-transljatsija-video.html>)

January 1, 2022, saw another torch march in Kiev led by the activists of Svoboda, a radical nationalist party, and other extreme right-wing organisations, as well as representatives of the schismatic “Orthodox Church of Ukraine.” The composition on the main poster of the march featured Bandera’s portrait against the background of the Moscow Kremlin in flames. Other posters called for holding a “Nuremberg-2 trial against Moscow Judaic Communism,” with their bearers shouting nationalist and xenophobic slogans.

The nationalist march was denounced by the embassies of Israel and Belarus in Ukraine as well as the German Foreign Ministry.³⁴ On January 3, 2022, Dmitry Yarosh, head of the Ukrainian Volunteer Army and former leader of the extremist Right Sector party, called Israeli Ambassador Michael Brodskiy “a Kremlin agent of influence” on his Facebook page and urged the authorities to “drive such ‘diplomats’ out of Ukraine.” Director of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee Eduard Dolinskiy said in a comment that Yarosh’s statement was an “anti-Semitic message” and an attempt at a “Judaophobic division of Jews into bad and good characters: a good Jew must love his murderers. But a Jew who dislikes Bandera and Shukhevich is an enemy, a Kremlin agent, and should be driven away.”

On January 1, 2023, ceremonies commemorating Bandera’s 114th birth anniversary were held in Western Ukraine, whereas the traditional torch march in Kiev was cancelled on account of the curfew and other restrictions on public events.³⁵

³⁴ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/13358107>

³⁵ <https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/stepan-bandera-yak-v-ukrajini-vidznachatimut-den-narodzhennya-providnika-oun-v-umovah-viyni-50294650.html>

Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance

The Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance (UINR) plays a significant role in the propagation of neo-Nazism. While it was led by former director Vladimir Vyatrovich, who is known for his Russophobic and nationalistic views, the institute was engaged in activities on several tracks. The team promoted legislative initiatives to glorify Nazi accomplices from the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and immortalise the memory of the Ukrainian “liberation movement” participants; published “patriotic” literature and guidelines for secondary and higher education institutions; and held various events involving veterans of the UPA and the so-called antiterrorist operation, and local pro-Bandera historians, including the Banderstadt festival in honour of Nazi accomplices. Simon Petlyura, Yevgeniy Konovalts, Stepan Bandera, Roman Shukhevich, Yaroslav Stetsko, Andrey Melnik, and other champions of Ukrainian nationalism continue to be persistently imposed as moral reference points for Ukrainians.

In early 2017, the institute announced a propaganda project titled UPA: A Response of the Unconquered People, to mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of that criminal entity. The UINR leadership described the UPA as an anti-Nazi organisation, although more than 70 percent of UPA officers were former Nazi henchmen – fighters from collaborationist units, and its command was part of the Nazi auxiliary police Schutzmannschaft (Rifle Team) until 1943. According to the 2018 UINR report, the project included a series of events such as photo exhibitions, lectures, and seminars at educational institutions, military units, and state institutions aimed at popularising the activities of the UPA militants. Moreover, the UINR released a board game glorifying members of the Bandera underground³⁶ for propaganda purposes. In July 2019, the Ministry of Education of Ukraine recommended this game for use in schools.³⁷

The UINR has reproduced “insurgent decorations,” which are awarded to “members of the Ukrainian liberation movement” and relatives of deceased “liberators.” The UINR also organised an exhibition The

³⁶<https://ukrinform.ru/rubric-culture/2548034-v-ukraine-razrabotali-nastolnuu-igru-o-borbe-upa.html>

³⁷<https://golospravdy.eu/eduard-dolinskij-ministerstvo-obrazovaniya-rekomendovalo-lozh-falsifikacii/>,
<https://strana.ua/opinions/212015-sredi-detej-prodvihajut-nastolnuju-ihru-s-heroicheskimi-banderoj-i-shukhevichem.html>

Ukrainian Army: 1917-1921, at the Verkhovna Rada, dedicated to a series of events that, in line with the official Ukrainian version of history, are interpreted as the fight of the people for political self-determination and statehood.

While the leadership of the UINR changed in December 2019, its historical revisionism policy was largely continued. In 2020, ahead of Victory Day, the new head of the UINR Anton Drobovich recorded a video address on the occasion of the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation celebrated on May 8³⁸ and the 75th anniversary of Victory over Nazism. Apart from the usual attempts of current Ukrainian authorities to present Ukrainian collaborators as fighters against Nazism, despite the indisputable evidence of their cooperation, the head of the UINR essentially equated the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation to the Day of Victory over Nazism in World War II.³⁹

In May 2021, the UINR published yet another report containing distorted historical facts. Head of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee Eduard Dolinskiy wrote on social media that the institute was distributing a manual with instructions on celebrating Victory Day. In particular, the manual states that the 100,000-strong UPA fought against Nazism on the side of the anti-Hitler coalition, while even during its heyday, the organisation had 35,000 members⁴⁰ at best, according to official data.

The Ukrainian courts' rulings on requests to recognise the SS Galicia Division symbols as Nazi symbols and to ban the UINR from disseminating falsifications to the contrary were revealing.

In 2017, Natalya Myasnikova from Kiev challenged in court UINR Director Vladimir Vyatrovich's statement (widely promoted by the UINR) that the symbols used by the SS Galicia Division were not Nazi symbols because the division was not one of the general SS units – it was part of SS troops, and was primarily used as a combat unit. The UINR gave one of the Ukrainian online publications its interpretation of Paragraph 5 of Part 1 of Article 1 of the Law “On the condemnation of the communist and

³⁸ The Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation (May 8) in Ukraine became a public holiday in 2015. Former President Petr Poroshenko established it to honour the feat of the Ukrainian people, their outstanding contribution to the anti-Hitler coalition's victory in World War II and express respect to all fighters against Nazism, thus trying to equate the Red Army fighters and Bandera associates, many of whom served in the SS and other volunteer auxiliary Nazi units.

³⁹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/08052020-ukraina-vstrechaet-den-pobedy-istoricheskoy-shizofreniy/>

⁴⁰ <https://strana.today/news/332149-ukrainskij-institut-natspamjati-sozdal-metodichku-o-pravilnom-otmechani-dnja-pobedy.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/332149-ukrainskij-institut-natspamjati-sozdal-metodichku-o-pravilnom-otmechani-dnja-pobedu.html>)

national socialist (Nazi) regimes, and prohibition of propaganda of their symbols,” which includes a list of recognised symbols of the national socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regime, regarding SS Galicia Division. The plaintiff asked the court to declare this action by the UINR and its head illegal and to prohibit any propaganda of the symbols of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (1st Galician), taking into account subsequent changes in its name. She also demanded that the UINR refute its statements about the SS Galicia Division symbols.⁴¹

On May 27, 2020, the District Administrative Court in Kiev ruled that the UINR exceeded its authority in distributing the statements made by its director and ordered the organisation to “refrain from any action to promote” the symbols in question. However, the court supported Myasnikova’s claim only in part. Ukrainian radical nationalists from the Right Sector, National Corps, Sokol (the youth wing of Svoboda), Traditions and Order staged a pyrotechnic show outside the courthouse during the consideration of the case; the judges and Myasnikova’s lawyer received anonymous threats the day before the verdict.⁴²

On September 23, 2020, the Sixth Administrative Court of Appeal in Kiev granted the UINR’s appeal overturning the previous decision of the court, which de facto had recognised the SS Galicia Division symbols as Nazi.

On December 6, 2022, the Supreme Court of Ukraine supported the appellate court’s ruling, making SS Galicia Division symbols legal again in Ukraine and no longer condemned as Nazi symbols⁴³. That decision ran counter to the verdict of the Nuremberg Tribunal, which recognised the Waffen SS troops, the SS Galicia Division among them, as a criminal organisation. Its members were involved in punitive operations and murders of Soviet soldiers and civilians during the Great Patriotic War, participated in the suppression of the Warsaw and Slovak uprisings, and fought against Yugoslav partisans.

⁴¹ <https://www.unn.com.ua/ru/news/1893299-sud-skasuvav-rishennya-oask-yakim-simvoliku-diviziyi-ss-galichina-viznavali-natsistskoyu>; <https://strana.today/news/291280-sud-priznal-nezakonnym-reshenie-o-priznanii-simvoliki-ss-halichina-natsistskoj.html> (paree <https://strana.ua/news/291280-sud-priznal-nezakonnym-reshenie-o-priznanii-simvoliki-ss-halichina-natsistskoj.html>)

⁴² <https://strana.today/news/291414-kak-natsionalisty-zastavili-sud-otmenit-zapret-na-simvoliku-ss-halichiny.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/291414-kak-natsionalisty-zastavili-sud-otmenit-zapret-na-simvoliku-ss-halichiny.html>)

⁴³ <https://rg.ru/2022/12/06/verhovnyj-sud-ukrainy-ne-priznal-nacistskoj-simvoliku-divizii-ss-galichina.html>

Neo-Nazi ideology in education

After seizing power as a result of a state coup in February 2014 and starting a war in Donbass, the neo-Nazi forces launched a policy of “patriotic education” based on militant Russophobia, the promotion of a nationalist and xenophobic ideology in the younger generation, and the glorification of Nazi accomplices as members of the “national liberation movement.” These activities relied on the 2020-2025 Strategy for National-Patriotic Education adopted by President Poroshenko in May 2019.

It stipulates that “values and civil responsibility” should be instilled in young people, based on “the examples of heroic struggle for sovereignty, the ideals of freedom and community” inherited from Cossacks, Sich Riflemen, the Ukrainian and West Ukrainian people’s republics, participants in anti-Bolshevik uprisings, Carpathian Sich units, the UPA and the dissident movement.

The interpretation of historical events has been distorted to promote nationalist sentiments among the general public, primarily young people. Information is presented in nearly all textbooks from the viewpoint of the so-called new national idea of Ukraine, which is based on the propaganda of hatred for the Russian people and Russia. Ukraine is depicted as the victim and the Russian state, throughout its history, as the aggressor and bloody butcher. Such books are also published for the youngest children: shortly after the Maidan uprising in 2014, historian Oleg Vitvitskiy published a new “patriotic” alphabet book.

Textbooks were adjusted to the official interpretation of history and cleansed of facts of the Ukrainian nationalists’ collaboration with Nazis. For example, the Ministry of Education and Science retracted textbooks for the 10th and 11th grades that included information about the collaboration of Roman Shukhevich and the Roland and Nachtigall Battalions with the Nazi army during WWII.⁴⁴

According to polls, the policy of glorification of the Nazis and their accomplices had a negative effect on many Ukrainians. The Democratic Initiatives Foundation conducted a poll according to which the majority of Ukrainians (52 percent) continued to celebrate May 9 as Victory Day of

⁴⁴ <https://yavoriv-info.com.ua/novini/novini-lvivshhini/zi-shkilnogo-pidruchnika-priberut-naklep-na-ukrainskix-nacionalistiv>

the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War. At the same time, 56 percent of the respondents agreed that both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union were responsible for starting the bloodiest conflict in human history. Only 32.2 percent ticked the variant according to which the anti-Hitler coalition won the Second World War (not the Great Patriotic War). Nearly 40 percent supported the status quo according to which the nation celebrates both Victory Day (May 9) and the day of remembrance and reconciliation (May 8).⁴⁵

Moreover, the Ukrainian authorities attracted far-right and ultra-nationalist groups and organisations to “patriotic work” with young people and provided government assistance to some of them.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports (formerly the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports) allocated substantial annual funds for “military-patriotic youth education” projects such as festivals, competitions, conferences, camps, military field games and other events that glorified Stepan Bandera, Roman Shukhevich and other Nazi collaborators and promoted hatred of Russians and Russia.

For example, during the annual national youth game Dzhura (Falcon), children and young people aged 6 to 17 years were divided according to the UPA structure into primary units (“roi,” 10-12 people) and larger units (“kuren,” about 300 people). In keeping with the theory of the “historical struggle for independence,” they were called “insurgents,” “Azovians,” “Aidarians,” and Shukhevich units.

Since 2007, the All-Ukrainian Youth Movement National Alliance has regularly held the Banderstadt Festival of Ukrainian Spirit in Lutsk, Volyn Region, with support from the Kiev regime. According to its organisers, the festival’s mission is to “immortalise Stepan Bandera as a national symbol.”

In 2018, the Svoboda and S14 associations received over 1 million hryvnias in government grants for “patriotic youth education” projects. In 2019, the authorities allocated funds for the military patriotic youth camp Khorunzhiy, named after Nazi collaborator Taras Bulba-Borovets, and several other similar projects. In the summer of 2019, a Banderstadt Festival was held in Lutsk, a festival of the Ukrainian nationalist ideologist Dmitry Dontsov in Melitopol, and a Taras Bulba-Borovets Path festival in Olevsk.

⁴⁵ <https://dif.org.ua/article/den-peremogi-i-yogo-mistse-v-istorichniy-pamyati-ukraintsiv>

In December 2019, the Verkhovna Rada adopted a law on state recognition and support of the Plast National Scout Organisation of Ukraine. That law actually provided the basis for broad state support for an organisation that was similar to the notorious Hitler Youth (Hitlerjugend) which subjected young people to indoctrination. It is clear what such indoctrination can lead to if we recall that nearly all UPA commanders, including Stepan Bandera, Roman Shukhevich and Vasiliy Kuk, were members of Plast.⁴⁶

In December 2019, the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports again allocated funds (20 million hryvnias) for “military-patriotic youth education” projects in 2020, including 2 million hryvnias for Plast, which openly declared its connection to Bandera’s organisation. Out of these funds, 770,000 hryvnias went to military-patriotic camps, 450,000 hryvnias to a national game, and 500,000 hryvnias to a Plastun Cultural Identity Day. Out of the 20 million hryvnias, 440,000 hryvnias were allocated to the Banderstadt Festival of Ukrainian Spirit, which was presented as “a dedicated patriotic” event. As much as 350,000 hryvnias went to the Youth Nationalist Congress for promoting the Ukrainian nationalist ideas during Camp Season 2020 and its central event, the Gurby-Antonovtsy military field game dedicated to the UPA battle against the NKVD interior troops in the Ternopol Region. Another 485,000 hryvnias were allocated for the Dzhura military-patriotic game; and over 250,000 hryvnias to the Ukrainian Youth Association, which calls for the rehabilitation of Semyon Petlyura, Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevich, for organising a Global Ukraineness (Ukrainity) conference and history events (180,000 hryvnias) and Zagrada children’s camps (95,000 hryvnias), where children visit UPA’s memorable sites. A total of 300,000 hryvnias were allocated for the military history festival Under the Veil of Trizub (Trident) in Boyarka, Kiev Region; 560,000 hryvnias to the Ukrainian reserve army for the Kuznya Unizh (Unizh Smithery) and Povstancheskoje Serdtse (Insurgent Heart) patriotic sport camps for the children of fighters in south-eastern Ukraine; and 250,000 hryvnias were provided to the Ukrainian Association of Military History Organisations for organising contests at a military unit.

In January 2020, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports announced the results of a competition of children’s and youth projects, following which

⁴⁶ <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/385-IX>; <https://news-front.info/2019/12/24/detyam-ukrainy-slugi-naroda-pod-yolochku-podlozhili-plast/>

the winners were to receive government allocations of 8 million hryvnias (over 20 million roubles) in 2020.⁴⁷ This is approximately half of the funds the ministry allocated to children's and youth organisations.⁴⁸ Plast received 2.7 million hryvnias for summer camps and themed forums. The Youth Nationalist Congress was allocated 400,000 hryvnias for the Free People and Young Banderite training courses. The All-Ukrainian Youth Movement National Alliance was given 200,000 hryvnias for the Pobeda (Victory) national field games (first held in 2006). The Education Assembly affiliated with the S14 far-right group received 120,000 hryvnias for the Proud of Ukrainians campaign, and 200,000 hryvnias were provided to the Freedom Falcon youth wing of the Svoboda organisation for holding Patriot Games in the Ternopol Region. The ministry also planned to finance a True History of Ukraine campaign and a festival of social advertising by the Ukrainian People's Youth. Many of these organisations or their affiliated agencies received government allocations for national patriotic education and also direct funding from the state and local budgets for their activities.⁴⁹

In March 2021, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which was reshaped in March 2020, distributed 8 million hryvnias of budgetary funds for "military-patriotic youth education" projects. Of these funds, 350,000 hryvnias went to the Zashkiv (Zashkov) festival in the Lvov Region dedicated to OUN leader Yevgeniy Konovalets; 185,000 hryvnias were given to the Khorunzhiy camp in the Volyn Region, where children were educated in the OUN-UPA spirit; 1.2 million hryvnias were allocated for the "commemoration of the heroes of the Ukrainians' struggle for the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine"; and 3 million hryvnias were provided for educational events, including to nationalist organisations and affiliated agencies.⁵⁰

In January 2022, the Ministry of Youth and Sports allocated 9 million hryvnias for "national patriotic education." Plast received 1.7 million hryvnias for "military patriotic field camps"; 715,000 hryvnias were provided to the Youth Nationalist Congress for a similar purpose. The Youth Corps, a branch of the far-right National Corps Party, was given

⁴⁷ http://www.dsmsu.gov.ua/media/2019/12/27/1/Rishennya_26.PDF

⁴⁸ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/713423-ukraina-nacionalisty-deti-vospitanie-granty>

⁴⁹ <https://strana.today/news/247099-natsionalisty-poluchili-ot-minkulta-pochti-polovinu-bjudzheta-na-molodezhnye-orhanizatsii.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/247099-natsionalisty-poluchili-ot-minkulta-pochti-polovinu-bjudzheta-na-molodezhnye-orhanizatsii.html>)

⁵⁰ Online Environment as an Instrument of Human Right and Freedom Violations in Ukraine. Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, 2022.

240,000 hryvnias for the Igor Beloshitskiy Games (named after an Azov fighter who died near Mariupol in 2014) and 100,000 hryvnias for the national patriotic school named after Yelena Stepaniv, a fighter of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen of the Austro-Hungarian Armed Forces during the First World War. The Volyn Student Brotherhood was allocated 270,000 hryvnias for the UPA Path events.⁵¹

Kiev's efforts to use the state budget to finance radical nationalists did not go unnoticed. In July 2019, the Ukrainian government was accused of secretly funding far-right extremist groups under the guise of educational programmes. According to Bellingcat, the government allocated funds to carry out "national-patriotic education" (NPE) programmes aimed at building up the nationalists' influence and attracting new supporters.⁵²

In March 2020, Acting Minister of Education and Science Lyubomira Mandziy was involved in a high-profile scandal. It turned out that in 2018, when she headed the education department of the Lvov Region administration, she co-organised a drawing contest for schoolchildren about the Waffen SS Galicia Division and its Ukrainian members. Children were invited to draw "an SS soldier or a meeting of Reichsfuehrer Heinrich Himmler with the division staff." The awards ceremony was scheduled for April 28, 2020. The agenda included a march on the 75th anniversary of the Waffen SS Galicia Division and a weapons exhibition. When this caused a public outcry, Mandziy told journalists that the education department's involvement was limited to "informing schools about the competition."⁵³

The members of the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion (declared a terrorist organisation in the Russian Federation) recruited children into the Ukrainian Armed Forces and nationalist units and trained them in the spirit of hatred of everything Russian. They assumed patronage of the Pilgrim Orphanage in then Kiev-held Mariupol. The programme included military training, harsh punishment for any violations and exhausting physical exercises. Boys were trained in hand-to-hand fighting, while girls were mostly given sniper training. Ideological indoctrination focused on Russophobia, anti-Semitism and the glorification of Nazi Germany.

⁵¹ https://mms.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/16/Patriotychne_vyhovannia/Konkursy/richenia/2022%20%D1%80%D1%96%D0%BA/rishennya-no-1-vid-17012022.pdf

⁵² <https://ukraina.ru/news/20200130/1026509598.html>

⁵³ <https://strana.today/news/257560-io-ministra-obrazovaniya-mandzij-orhanizovyvala-vo-lvove-konkurs-v-chest-divizii-ss-halichina.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/257560-io-ministra-obrazovaniya-mandzij-orhanizovyvala-vo-lvove-konkurs-v-chest-divizii-ss-halichina.html>)

Information about that camp was reported by Western media outlets.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3195711/Now-CHILDREN-taking-arms-Shocking-pictures-inside-Ukraine-s-neo-Nazi-military-camp-recruits-young-six-learn-fire-weapons-s-ceasefire.html>
<https://apimagesblog.com/blog/2018/11/12/training-kids-to-kill-at-ukrainian-nationalist-camp>

Commemorating the Nazis

The Ukrainian authorities continue to erect monuments and memorial plaques in honour of the OUN-UPA militants and pay tribute to former Nazis who are still alive today. The anniversary of the founding of the UPA and Stepan Bandera's birthday are marked with the biggest ultranationalist marches. The radical nationalists participating in such gatherings use hate rhetoric, mainly directed against Russians, and carry out a variety of provocations.

On January 29, 2020, former Nazi collaborator and member of SS Galicia Division Mikhail Mulik was buried in a solemn ceremony on the Alley of Glory in Ivano-Frankovsk with regional officials and clergy attending. Many of those present at the event were dressed in Nazi uniforms.⁵⁵ According to the Ukrainian media, Mikhail Mulik headed the regional brotherhood of former SS Galicia soldiers and was an honorary citizen of Ivano-Frankovsk.⁵⁶

On March 22, 2020, the Lvov authorities officially honoured SS Galicia Division Unterscharführer Roman Matsuk on his 95th birthday, presenting him with his own portrait as a young man in a Nazi uniform.⁵⁷

In April 2020, a ceremony to present an award established by the Brotherhood of Soldiers of the SS Galicia Division to its veteran Vasiliy Nakonechniy took place in Kalush (Ivano-Frankovsk Region). The society bestows these awards on all former SS members who are alive. When accepting the award, the 95-year-old member of the SS Division reflexively raised his arm in the Nazi salute. Earlier, in May 2018, he earned honorary citizenship of Kalush following a decision by the Kalush City Council.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ <https://galychyna.if.ua/2020/01/28/martsinkiv-poobitsyav-nazvati-vulitsyu-imenem-mihayla-mulika/>

⁵⁶ <https://strana.today/news/246875-foto-kak-v-ivano-frankovske-proshchelas-s-umershim-natsistom-iz-divizii-ss.html>
(previously <https://strana.ua/news/246875-foto-kak-v-ivano-frankovske-proshchelas-s-umershim-natsistom-iz-divizii-ss.html>)

⁵⁷ Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights & Freedoms in Ukraine by the Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy & Social Protection, 2022.

⁵⁸ <https://strana.today/news/262422-v-kalushe-nahradili-veterana-divizii-ss-poluchaja-nahradu-tot-zihanul.html>
(previously <https://strana.ua/news/262422-v-kalushe-nahradili-veterana-divizii-ss-poluchaja-nahradu-tot-zihanul.html>)

On May 23, 2020, on the occasion of the “Day of Heroes,”⁵⁹ UPA veterans and their widows living in the Lvov Region were paid a lump sum benefit from the regional budget – a total of 989 recipients.⁶⁰

On June 21, 2020, the Lvov City Council press service reported that Lvov Mayor Andrey Sadovoy wished a happy 100th birthday to Olga Ilkiv, signaller for UPA leader Roman Shukhevich. According to the report, the city and the region bought Olga Ilkiv an apartment in Lvov as a recognition of her services to the state and on the occasion of the 78th anniversary of the creation of the UPA.⁶¹

On July 18, 2020, a memorial cross was erected in honour of UPA general Ivan Treiko in the woods between Gorodnitsa, Zhitomir Region, and Storozhev, Rovno Region, with the support of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance (UINR). The event was attended by representatives of local authorities, politicians, public activists, and a representative of the UINR.⁶²

In August 2020, a Petlyura Subbotnik volunteer community work event was held in Kiev to “honour” the fighters of the 1st Bogdan Khmelnytskyi Ukrainian Regiment buried on the Castle Hill.

On August 19, 2020 a memorial plaque in honour of Yury Lipa was installed on the wall of the district library in Yavorov, Lvov Region.⁶³

On August 30, 2020, in the village of Karpilovka, Chernigov Region, a monument was unveiled to a Nazi collaborator, member of the Polissian Sich and the UPA Kuzma Brichka, who participated in the massacres of the Polish and Jewish population.⁶⁴

On October 5, 2020, UPA veteran Alexander Derkach, a participant in the killing of the Jewish and Polish population in the Rovno Region, was

⁵⁹ The Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) established the Day of Heroes in 1941. After 2014, Ukrainian nationalist organisations began to celebrate it and persuaded certain representatives of state and municipal authorities in Ukraine to join those events.

⁶⁰ The Manifestations of Nazism, Neo-Nazism and Xenophobia in Ukraine. Analytical Review, 2020.

⁶¹ <https://city-adm.lviv.ua/news/society/public-sector/279791-mer-lvova-pryvitav-zviazkovu-romana-shukhevycha-zi-100-littiam>

⁶² <https://uinr.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/na-polissi-vstanovyly-pamyatnyy-hrest-general-horunzhomu-upa-ivanu-treyku>

⁶³ <https://golossokal.com.ua/ru/novyny-kultury/y-misti-iavorovi-vidbylos-vidkrittia-memorialnoi-tablici-na-fasadi-raionnoi-centralnoi-biblioteki-imeni-uriia-lipi.html>, <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2020/08/22/v-lvovskoy-oblasti-chestvuyut-vracha-evtanaziologa-iz-oun-upa>

⁶⁴ Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights & Freedoms in Ukraine by the Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy & Social Protection, 2022.

buried with military honours and an honorary military guard in Dubrovka, Zhitomir Region.⁶⁵

On October 13, 2020, in Lutsk, local authorities organised the third All-Ukrainian festival and competition of insurgent songs, For Ukraine, for its Freedom. The remote-participation event included songs glorifying members of the UPA. On the same day, an exhibition dedicated to Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevich opened in Vinnitsa.

On October 14, 2020, in Kiev, radicals from Svoboda, Right Sector and National Corps held a traditional march to mark the 78th anniversary of the UPA. The procession participants carried glass jars with photographs of Anatoly Shariy, Viktor Medvedchuk and a number of other public figures and opposition politicians doctored to look like severed heads. They chanted slogans demanding “legal” persecution of Ukrainian citizens for “pro-Russia” activities, the removal of 112-Ukraine, NewsOne, ZIK, NASH, Inter and Kiev Live channels from air, and lifting the ban on firing in Donbass for the Ukrainian military.

On the same day, flower-laying ceremonies were held in Lvov at the tombs of UPA militants; Deputy Head of the Lvov Regional Administration Maxim Kozitskiy took part in them. Funeral requiems and processions were held using Ukrainian nationalist paraphernalia.⁶⁶ A historical exhibition, Fighting Goliath, opened in Vinnitsa. The event, organised by the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, commemorated the UPA leaders including Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevich.

On November 12, 2020, a ceremony took place in the Lvov Historical Museum, supported by the city government, to award relatives of the OUN-UPA militants their organisation’s medals For Military Merit and For Special Contribution to the Development of the OUN Armed Underground.

On January 20, 2021, an all-Ukrainian competition for best monument to Simon Petlyura was announced in Poltava.⁶⁷

On January 29, 2021, the Kiev City Council initiated another Bandera Readings event.

⁶⁵ Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights & Freedoms in Ukraine by the Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy & Social Protection, 2022.

⁶⁶ <https://lviv.depo.ua/rus/lviv/yak-u-lvovi-svyatkuyut-den-zakhisnika-ukraini-fotoreportazh-202010141229260>

⁶⁷ <https://zn.ua/UKRAINE/v-poltave-prokhodit-vseukrainskij-konkurs-na-luchshij-pamjatnik-simonu-petljure.html>

In February 2021, Ivan Fialka, formerly of the SS Galicia Division, was buried with honours in Stryi (Lvov Region), with the city mayor and members of nationalist groups attending.

On February 16, 2021, the Lvov Regional Council appealed to President Zelenskiy to reinstate Stepan Bandera's title as Hero of Ukraine. The deputies also decided to proclaim 2021 the Year of Yevgeniy Konovalts (an OUN leader).⁶⁸ In addition, members of the Ivano-Frankovsk City Council decided to award the title of Hero of Ukraine to former SS Galicia Division fighter Mikhail Mulik.

On March 5, 2021, deputies of the City Council of Ternopol supported Mayor Sergey Nadal's initiative to assign the name of Roman Shukhevich to the city stadium, which was going to host the Ukrainian Football Cup final. The then Israeli Ambassador to Ukraine, Joel Lion, called on the council to reverse the decision. In turn, the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry spokesperson defended the local authorities, saying that "the preservation of national memory is one of the priorities of the country's state policy," and that such topics should be discussed by historians, not diplomats.⁶⁹

The Lvov Regional Council decided to follow suit and submitted a proposal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on March 16, 2021 to rename the Arena Lvov stadium as Stepan Bandera Arena Lvov. That stadium was to host the first rounds of qualifying matches for the 2022 World Cup. The initiative came from Petr Poroshenko's European Solidarity Party.⁷⁰

On April 28, 2021, radical nationalists marched in Kiev for the first time in honour of the creation of the Nazi SS Galicia Division. The procession included public use of Nazi symbols. Police officers accompanied the procession, blocking traffic on a number of central streets in Kiev. According to Director of the Ukrainian Institute for Policy Analysis and Management Ruslan Bortnik, the city government partially financed the march, but later claimed that it had happened by mistake. Prior to this, similar marches in support of SS Galicia Division took place mainly in Lvov and other cities in western Ukraine. According to experts, this march

⁶⁸ <https://m.day.kyiv.ua/ru/news/160221-lvovskiy-oblsovet-trebuuet-vernut-bandere-zvanie-geroya-ukrainy-i-obyavil-2021-y-godom>

⁶⁹ <https://strana.today/news/321233-ternopolskij-stadion-poluchil-imja-romana-shukhevicha.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/321233-ternopolskij-stadion-poluchil-imja-romana-shukhevicha.html>)

⁷⁰ <https://strana.today/news/323062-arena-lvov-imeni-bandery-hto-hovorjat-o-pereimenovanii-stadiona-v-chest-vozhdja-oun.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/323062-arena-lvov-imeni-bandery-hto-hovorjat-o-pereimenovanii-stadiona-v-chest-vozhdja-oun.html>)

in Kiev could be viewed as a provocation in the run-up to May 9, and Kiev's failure to act could be explained by the threat of pressure from the right-wing forces, which were gaining influence.⁷¹

On May 2, 2021, members of the National Corps held rallies in Lvov and Ternopol to glorify the militants of the SS Galicia Division. Nazi symbols were also used during those events.

On May 22, 2021, the remains of UPA militants were buried in a solemn funeral ceremony in Strelki, Lvov Region. The event was attended by head of the European Solidarity Party group in the Lvov Regional Council Oleg Duda.

In mid-June 2021, Orest Vaskul, head of the Kiev Regional Brotherhood of OUN-UPA Veterans, a former member of the SS Galicia Division and former OUN leader, was buried in Kiev. The funeral included a service at St Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral of the schismatic “Orthodox Church of Ukraine,” and an official solemn ceremony of the Defence Ministry of Ukraine with a guard of honour by the Separate Presidential Hetman Bogdan Khmelnytsky Regiment. Former Minister of Education Sergey Kvit, former head of the UINR Vladimir Vyatrovich and others attended the event.⁷²

On July 25, 2021, the remains of SS Galicia Division members killed by the Soviet troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front in the battle for Brody in 1944 were reburied with honours in Chervonoye, Lvov Region.

In July 2021, according to reports, a children's team called “Hitlerites” participated in a street basketball tournament on City Day in Novomirgorod, Kirovograd Region.⁷³

On August 10, 2021, a ceremony was held in Lvov to mark the centenary of the birth of Vladimir Shchigelskiy, UPA Lieutenant and Commandant of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police who took an active part in the persecution and killing of the Jewish and Polish population during World War II. Shchigelskiy was executed in Poland in 1949 for aiding the Nazis, committing war crimes and mass murder of civilians.

On August 18, 2021, ceremonies were held in Litin, Vinnitsa Region, in honour of the 110th anniversary of Yemelyan Grabets, an OUN and UPA member who served as Commandant of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police of

⁷¹ https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2021/04/28_a_13576064.shtml

⁷² https://aif.ru/politics/world/budni_ukrainy_veterana_ss_provodil_v_posledniy_put_prezidentskiy_polk

⁷³ https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2021/07/22/n_16278944.shtml

Rovno and was directly involved in the murder of about 30,000 Jews in that city. In addition to the memorial procession along Grabets Street and the laying of flowers at his commemorative plaque, a roundtable was held in the local history museum that issued a recommendation to the local authorities to name Litin sport complex after him.⁷⁴

In September 2021, a plan was reported to install a memorial stone in the centre of Kiev in honour of Vladimir Bagazyi, a high-ranking OUN member who set up the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police of Kiev and was later appointed Mayor of Kiev by the Nazis, as part of the One Stone, One Life project.⁷⁵ Head of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee Eduard Dolinskiy underscored that Bagazyi was directly involved in the murders of Jews in Kiev. According to media reports, the name and photo of the collaborator appeared on the interactive map on the official website of the project, which showed the planned locations of the memorial stones and the names of the people they would commemorate. The website included Bagazyi's biography without any mention of his involvement in the execution of Jews during the Nazi occupation of Kiev.⁷⁶ Asked for comment by the RT newspaper, the German Foreign Ministry noted that the "disputes concerning Vladimir Bagazyi" were taken into account, and the plan to install the memorial stone was suspended. The ministry said they were planning to further research Bagazyi⁷⁷ with the Ukrainian Centre for the Study of the History of the Holocaust and other experts because they were taking the reports of his involvement in the Holocaust "very seriously." As of October 12, 2021, Bagazyi's biography was removed from the project website.

On October 7, 2021, more UPA militants were ceremonially re-buried near Sokolovka, Lvov Region.

On October 19, 2021, the Commemorative Cross for the 100th birth anniversary of Stepan Bandera was unveiled in Kiev. The city authorities refused permission for the installation of the memorial when it was created in 2009. This time, they did not raise any objections against the nationalists' initiative.

⁷⁴ <https://vesti.ua/strana/v-vinnitse-otprazdnovali-110-letie-komandira-ukrainskogo-gestapo>

⁷⁵ The One Stone, One Life project was launched by the Ukrainian Centre for Holocaust Studies and supported by the Kiev City Administration and the Ukrainian branch of the Goethe-Institut, and co-sponsored by the German Embassy in Ukraine. It was part of *Stolpersteine* (Stumbling Blocks), a larger decentralised commemorative initiative by the Cologne artist Gunter Demnig aimed to commemorate individuals persecuted by the Nazis.

⁷⁶ <https://ria.ru/20210928/natsizm-1752215853.html>

⁷⁷ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/912962-babii-yar-ukraina-germaniya-pamyatnik>

On January 11, 2022, one of the libraries in Nikolayev, Lvov Region, hosted a presentation of the book *Ukrainian Junkershaft* about the SS Galicia Division. One of the people attending the event was a man wearing a Nazi uniform, a cap with a Roman eagle and a skull and cross bones, and a shoulder cross strap.⁷⁸

On February 4, 2022, during the Russia vs Ukraine match in the European Futsal Championship semifinals, Ukrainian fans chanted nationalist and Russophobic slogans, including “Ukraine above all,” “Anyone who does not jump is a Moskal,” etc. They also sang the song *Smash the Moskal*, which calls for the annihilation of Russians.

On February 5, 2022, the 9th Bandera Readings were held in Kiev, dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the creation of the UPA. Yury Syrotyuk, one of the leaders of Svoboda and former Verkhovnaya Rada member, presided at the conference. According to the organisers, Bandera Readings are an “intellectual forum” building on Stepan Bandera’s ideas. The event was timed to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the creation of the UPA. One of the speakers was Yevgeniy Karas, head of the ultra-right group S14 (later renamed Foundation for the Future). Among other things, Karas mentioned that nationalists “were having fun fighting and killing.” He also warned that Ukraine could strike at European countries, in particular, Hungary, if radical nationalists came to power.

On the same day, a Unity March was held in Kharkov, organised by the National Corps and other nationalist parties and movements. The participants brought OUN-UPA flags, and chanted nationalist slogans during the march.

On October 14, 2022, the President of Ukraine awarded the Hero of Ukraine title and the Order of the Golden Star to Miroslav Simchich,⁷⁹ a 99-year-old war criminal, organiser and participant in the mass killings of Poles during World War II, and unit commander at the UPA. After the war, he was convicted by a Polish court for murdering the predominantly Polish population of Pisten, Ivano-Frankovsk Region. On October 22, 2021, deputies of the Lvov Regional Council appealed to the President to award the honorary title to the former Nazi.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ <http://pravua.info/v-biblioteke-pod-lvvovom-proveli-prezentacziyu-knigi-ob-ss-galichina-s-muzhchinoj-v-naczijskoj-forme/>

⁷⁹ <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/6992022-44385>

⁸⁰ Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights & Freedoms in Ukraine by the Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy & Social Protection, 2022.

On November 8, 2022, a monument to Mikhail ‘Spartan’ Moskalyuk was unveiled after renovation in Ivanovets, Ivano-Frankovsk Region. Moskalyuk was a unit commander at the UPA, participated in the punitive operations of the Nachtigall Battalion and fought against Soviet partisans with the 201st Ukrainian Legion Schutzmannschaft Battalion.

On November 30, 2022, the remains of ten UPA members were reburied with honours in Ledykhov, Ternopol Region. They were killed in 1944 in battles with the Red Army and NKVD troops liberating the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR from the nationalist underground and Nazi henchmen.

In December 2022, a Christmas nativity scene, featuring OUN leader Stepan Bandera’s statue alongside traditional biblical characters, was installed in the Naguevichi State Historical and Cultural Reserve in the Lvov Region⁸¹

On December 10, 2022, the son of Roman Shukhevich, Yury Shukhevich, who from 1990 to 1994 headed the radical right-wing party Ukrainian National Assembly – Ukrainian National Self Defence⁸², was buried with military honours in Lvov.

On December 21, 2022, to mark the 80th anniversary of the UPA, the Ternopol Regional Council decided to erect a monument to Roman Shukhevich who was involved in the massacres of Poles and Jews in western Ukraine.⁸³

On February 14, 2023, Vladimir Zelenskiy issued an executive order awarding the title Edelweiss to the 10th separate mountain assault brigade of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Nazi Germany's 1st Mountain Infantry Division had a similar title.⁸⁴

⁸¹ <https://strana.today/news/419500-vo-lvovskoj-oblasti-v-rozhdestvenskij-vertep-ustanovili-fihury-bajdena-i-bandery-foto.html>

⁸² Recognised as extremist by the decision of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation of November 17, 2014; its activities are prohibited in Russia.

⁸³ https://teren.in.ua/news/u-ternopoli-vstanovlyat-pam-yatnik-romanu-shuhevichu_394446.html

⁸⁴ <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/802023-45805>

Violence by Ukrainian radicals

Supported by the authorities and with no accountability, the radical far-right forces are using methods of violence and intimidation against their political opponents, activists, human rights advocates and journalists, and are putting pressure on government agencies to adopt decisions that suit their purposes.

The radicals are conducting their actions with impunity. The open aggressiveness of these forces, combined with the negligence and sometimes connivance of law enforcers, is creating a dangerous situation in which marginal groups are intimidating the rational majority.

On May 4, 2020, members of the far-right National Corps, National Militia and Democratic Axe organised a protest rally in Kharkov against the appointment of Yevgeniy Gritskov as head of the coordination council on national patriotic education. The reason for the rally was a 2015 photograph of Gritskov with former Kharkov Region Governor Mikhail Dobkin, who was holding a red banner. On May 6, Yevgeniy Gritskov resigned.

On May 23, 2020, members of the far-right National Corps stormed the Kiev office of the Opposition Platform – For Life Party, which opposed the glorification of Nazis and xenophobia. The nationalists attempted to set the office on fire, throwing flares and smoke bombs through the windows and splashing paint on the building. While the police obstructed the work of the security guards at the office and did nothing to stop the rampage, the radicals attacked the party's staff.⁸⁵

In mid-July 2020, nationalists staged protest rallies in Kiev, Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk), Lvov, Kharkov and Chernovtsy to stop parliamentary hearings on amendments to the law on the use of national languages in education. The amendments provided for a postponement in the enactment of restrictions and for an extension of the transition period during which Russian would be used as the language of instruction. The nationalists acted aggressively, vandalised the Russian state symbols and even clashed with the police. They were supported by local deputies. For example, the Lvov Region Council filed an address to President Zelensky, which said that all those who voted for the document prepared by MP Maxim Buzhanskiy (Servant of the People Party), would be declared collaborators

⁸⁵ <https://112.ua/mnenie/nacional-radikaly-napali-na-ofis-oppozicionnoy-platformy--za-zhizn-537009/html>

and “traitors of Ukraine.”⁸⁶

On February 4, 2021, members of far-right organisations attempted to force their way into the NASH (Ours) television channel in Kiev. They demanded that the channel be shut down because of its “pro-Russian” views. The police used tear gas against the radicals and detained some of them.

On February 22, 2021, members of the far-right organisation Tradition and Order attacked left-wing activists in Odessa who took part in protest rallies against the increase in utility prices. The attackers used tear gas and threatened the left-wing protesters with knives.⁸⁷

On February 28, 2021, members of the National Corps attacked and poured brilliant green on businessman and politician Viktor Vikarchuk, who ran for a seat in the Khmelnytskyi city and regional councils in 2020 as a candidate for the Opposition Platform – For Life Party.⁸⁸

In April 2021, members of the far-right organisation Freikorps demanded that lecturer Natalya Semeikina be fired from the Kharkov State Academy of Design and Arts for criticising the authorities and publishing positive media posts about Donbass, which they interpreted as “pro-Russia propaganda.” The demand was supported by members of the academy’s administration. Vice Rector Yury Loshkov said that Semeikina did not deserve to be called a teacher because she must not be allowed to teach at a Ukrainian university “if she really holds such views and beliefs.” Semeikina was later added to the database of the extremist website Mirotvorets.⁸⁹

On May 7, 2021, far-right radicals destroyed the “No to fascism” banners the Opposition Platform – For Life Party installed in Kharkov for the May 9 celebrations.⁹⁰

On May 9, 2021, nationalists provoked a fight with members of the Antifascist Committee of Ukraine during Victory Day events in Kiev. They tore away their red ribbons, snatched their flowers and trampled on them.

⁸⁶ <https://ukraina.ru/exclusive/20200718/1028290011.html>

⁸⁷ <https://violence-marker.org.ua/blog/2022/06/03/ultrapravi-konfrontacziyi-ta-nasylstvo-u-2021-roczii/>

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ <https://strana.today/news/328307-v-kharkove-natsionalisty-trebujut-uvolit-prepodavatelja-akademii-nauk-za-post-v-seti.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/328307-v-kharkove-natsionalist-trebujut-uvolit-prepodavatelja-akademii-nauk-za-post-v-seti.html>)

⁹⁰ <https://violence-marker.org.ua/blog/2022/06/03/ultrapravi-konfrontacziyi-ta-nasylstvo-u-2021-roczii/>

On July 7, 2021, far-right radical Alexei Svinarenko and members of his organisation National Resistance attacked and used tear gas against people who held a rally under Belarusian flags in Kiev. Svinarenko wrote on his Telegram account that he had “attacked Belarusian antifascists.”

On July 23, 2021, far-right radicals tore the T-shirt off a member of the Party of Shary and beat him up in Kharkov. The news was published on right-wing public pages.⁹¹

On October 30, 2021, members of far-right organisations attacked a crew of the NASH (Ours) television channel in Sumy, beating up the cameraman and the reporter and damaging their equipment.⁹²

In November 2021, pogroms were staged in the bars and clubs in the Podol District of Kiev. On November 6, far-right extremists from the organisations Osnovy Budushchego (Foundations of the Future), Ukrainian Flag and National Resistance attacked a popular Khvilyovy Bar in the Podol District. They blocked the door leading to the yard, chanted racist and homophobic slogans, painted letters NS-WP (NS = National Socialism, WP = White Power) on the wall, and threw firecrackers, smoke bombs, flour and eggs at the bar’s personnel. On November 10, members of the extremist organisation Centuria wrote YAKARTA VIENIE (Jakarta is coming) on the bar’s walls, possibly as a reference to the massacre of supporters of the Communist Party of Indonesia in 1965-1966, when between 500,000 and a million people were killed. On November 16, extremists attacked the club Shoom and wrote “Death to the Leftists” on its door. On November 26, far-right extremists from the Foundations of the Future, National Resistance and Centuria entered the Khvilyovy bar, smashed windows and furniture, sprayed tear gas, beat guests and guards with clubs, and chanted “White Power” and other racist war cries.⁹³

On November 27, 2021, extremists attacked a NASH (Ours) television crew, hitting a journalist in the face when he was interviewing Mayor Vladimir Moskalenko in Korosten, Zhitomir Region.⁹⁴

On December 11, 2021, “patriotic activists” tried to prevent a NASH (Ours) television crew from filming a tour of the Nikolayev museum dedicated to the occupation and liberation of the city during the Great Patriotic War. One of the extremists said that if he was on the battlefield,

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² <https://ria.ru/20211030/telekanal-1757027767.html>

⁹³ <https://delo.ua/society/samoprovozglasennaya-policiya-nravov-kak-pravoradikaly-voyuyut-protiv-kieva-389685/>

⁹⁴ <http://pravua.info/v-korostene-radikaly-napali-na-zhurnalistov-telekanala-nash/>

he would have shot the crew members in the head.⁹⁵

On December 18, 2021, members of the National Corps disrupted a conference of the Opposition Platform – For Life Party in Poltava. Tear gas was used during a fight between the extremists and the staff who were guarding the event.⁹⁶

On February 1, 2022, far-right extremists staged a rally at the office of the NASH (Ours) television channel in Kiev. They lighted flares, shouted “Russians, surrender” and called for the hanging of “Nashists” (personnel of the NASH channel).

In February 2022, radicals threatened the owner of the Oblaka restaurant in Odessa, where a concert of Russian rapper Basta (Vasiliy Vakulenko) was to be held. Member of the Right Sector Demyan Ganul, one of those who organised and took part in the massacre in the House of Trade Unions in Odessa on May 2, 2014, wrote on Facebook: “The concert is to be held in the Oblaka restaurant owned by Andrey Zarichanskiy. If Andrey has a brain and a pro-Ukraine stance, he will cancel the occupier’s concert. Otherwise, his business is in for trouble: Oblaka is not his only restaurant. Vakulenko will come and go, but you will have to live in this city.” After that, Ganul posted a selfie with a gun and a video with uniformed and armed men. Zarichanskiy cancelled the concert.⁹⁷

Nobody stopped extremists when they organised protest rallies against legislative initiatives they did not like and court rulings against their followers. For example, the trial of one of two young men who splashed brilliant green on the monument to General Nikolai Vatutin in Mariinsky Park in Kiev on the night of February 9, 2020, in the Pechersky District Court was attended by head of the extremist organisation S14 Yevgeniy Karas and representatives of the Brotherhood party of Dmitry Korchinskiy. The prosecutor demanded that the suspect be arrested for the duration of the investigation. However, Judge Olesya Batrin ruled that the young man should be released on bail paid by MP Mikhail Bondar.⁹⁸ Human rights activists believe that the extremists attended the hearing to put pressure on the court. There have been cases where radicals acted aggressively during hearings, demanding that the court release their supporters.

⁹⁵ <http://pravua.info/v-nikolaeeve-radikaly-napali-na-zhurnalistov-telekanala-nash/>

⁹⁶ <https://violence-marker.org.ua/blog/2022/06/03/ultrapravi-konfrontacziyi-ta-nasylstvo-u-2021-roczii/>

⁹⁷ <http://pravua.info/radikaly-shantazhom-dobilis-otmeny-konczerta-basty-na-ukraine/>

⁹⁸ <https://strana.today/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-yatutinu.html>)

A similar story was reported in mid-June 2020, when a court in Kiev heard the case of a premeditated murder committed by member of an extremist organisation, Sergei Sternenکو, in Odessa in May 2018. Radicals attacked journalists from media resources Strana.UA and Sharij.net and television channels ZIK and NewsOne who were covering the process. The nationalists stormed the building, provoked fights with the police and lighted flares and firecrackers to put pressure on the court. In all of these cases, the police ordered the journalists to leave the court, which only led to other attacks. The extremists threatened journalist Bogdan Aminov, who attempted to interview the defendant, that “ATO fighters will teach him to love Ukraine.” None of the attackers was detained. Moreover, according to Strana.UA, the police later apologised for the beating the “activists” received and promised that the “offenders” would be punished.⁹⁹

On July 20, 2021, about 40 extremists from the Society of the Future, the National Corps, the National Resistance, the Alternative, Traditions and Order, the Right Youth and the Unknown Patriot tried to frustrate a Court of Appeals hearing of a complaint by Belarusian antifascist Alexey Bolenkov against the Security Service decision to expel him from Ukraine. The far-right radicals who gathered at the building attacked the left-wing activists who were there to support Bolenkov.¹⁰⁰

After the special military operation to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine began on February 24, 2022, many members of Ukrainian far-right organisations took part in the hostilities in the east of the country. The crimes they committed there were no mere illegal acts of violence, but actions aimed at exterminating civilians in the Kiev-occupied territories, as well as the torture and execution of Russian prisoners of war.

It came to light in 2022 that Nazi ideas were widely popular not only in volunteer detachments, where neo-Nazi constituted the core, but also in regular army units. Many Ukrainian military have Nazi tattoos and openly wear chevrons with Nazi symbols and slogans, or even exact replicas of the chevrons Nazi troops and their accomplices used during the Great Patriotic War.

⁹⁹ <https://strana.today/news/273216-sud-po-sternenko-kak-storonniki-radikala-izbivali-zhurnalistov-i-politsiju-foto-i-video.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news.273216-sud-po-sternenko-kak-storonniki-radikala-izbivali-zhurnalistov-i-politsiju-foto-i-video.html>)

¹⁰⁰ <https://violence-marker.org.ua/blog/2022/06/03/ultrapravi-konfrontacziyi-ta-nasylstvo-u-2021-roczy/>

Desecration of the memory of fallen Red Army soldiers

While Nazis and their accomplices are being rehabilitated in Ukraine, attempts are being made to slander Red Army soldiers and even accuse them of the crimes committed by Nazis. A case in point is the massacre in Koryukovka, Chernigov Region, where nearly all residents were killed in a punitive Nazi operation in March 1943. The Ukrainian media, which published items on the 75th anniversary of that massacre, presented the situation as if the extermination of innocent civilians had been provoked by the actions of the partisans.

In the past few years, the Ukrainian authorities turned a blind eye to the nationalists' and far-right radicals' efforts to frustrate Victory Day and other memorial and anti-fascist events. In most cases, nothing was done to prevent this. Ukrainian law enforcers did not stop the perpetrators and did not call them to account, allowing them to escape and keeping the victims away from them. The nationalists' actions were reported as disorderly conduct regardless of the reasons for and the form of their actions. At the same time, police opened cases under laws that prohibited the use of Soviet symbols. Experts interpret these actions by the authorities as a desire to intimidate active citizens and to create an environment in which they would prefer to keep silent about their relatives who fought in the Red Army.

On Victory Day in 2018 and 2019, nationalists dressed in clothes with Nazi symbols on them attacked Yelena Berezhnaya, Director of the Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, who organised memorial events in Kiev. Police did not react to the radicals' attacks and detained Berezhnaya.¹⁰¹

In February 2020, then Foreign Minister Vadim Pristaiko announced that Ukraine would not hold May 9 celebrations.¹⁰² In January 2020, Vladimir Zelensky said during a visit to Poland that the Soviet Union was responsible for starting WWII.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Infringement of rights and freedoms in Ukraine. Manifestation of discrimination, incitement of ethnic hatred, hate crimes and extremism. Report for the OSCE human dimension implementation meeting 2019. Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, the Antifascist Human Rights Legal League. 2019.

¹⁰² <https://strana.today/news/252459-pristajko-i-den-pobedy-pochemu-hlava-mid-ne-khochet-prazdnovat-9-maja.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/252459-pristajko-i-den-pobedy-pochemu-hlava-mid-ne-khochet-prazdnovat-9-maja.html>)

¹⁰³ <https://ria.ru/20200128/1563949212.html>

Nevertheless, Ukrainians flocked into the streets on May 9, 2020, to celebrate the 75th anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany. Ukrainian nationalists staged provocations. In Odessa, they prevented a car rally, provoked fights and otherwise disrupted the Victory Day celebrations. Far-right radicals held a march with portraits of Nazi accomplices from OUN-UPA and other organisations and the symbols of Waffen SS Galicia Division.¹⁰⁴ In Lvov, young neo-Nazis organised a rally, displaying Nazi symbols and switching on a recording that sounded like a Nazi announcement when people brought flowers to the graves of the fallen on the Hill of Glory. The authorities did not react to that misconduct in any way.¹⁰⁵ In Kharkov, active members of nationalist organisations such as Freikorps,¹⁰⁶ the Union of ATO Veterans, the Right Sector, and the Veterans' Association for the Defence of Ukraine placed banners on three city bridges saying: Thanks to Granddad for killing Moscow bastards.¹⁰⁷

In 2021, radicals staged fights and attacked people on Victory Day. They attacked a stringer of RT Ruptly after he interviewed people in a Ukrainian city about their attitude to Victory Day. The Strana.UA media resource filmed a fight near the Monument to the Unknown Sailor on the Glory Alley in Odessa where nationalists tried to snatch a portrait of Marshal Zhukov with a St George's ribbon from a woman. Police detained not the nationalists but instead, the injured woman. Police also detained a 63-year-old man in Shevchenko Park in Odessa for wearing a St George's ribbon.¹⁰⁸ On May 10, 2021, the press service of Odessa Region police announced that it had opened a criminal case against a city resident for wearing a side cap with a Soviet symbol on Victory Day.

On May 9, 2022, official Victory Day celebrations were cancelled in Kiev because of martial law. However, people went to the Park of Eternal Glory to lay flowers at the memorial to the unknown soldier, but there were fewer people in the park than usual. A curfew was declared in Odessa and Zaporozhye from 10 pm on May 8 to 5 am on May 10.

¹⁰⁴ <https://ria.ru/20200509/1571213659.html>

¹⁰⁵ <https://tass.ru/politika/8476375>

¹⁰⁶ Freikorps were detachments of right-wing volunteers in Germany after the First World War, many of whom later joined the Nazi party.

¹⁰⁷ https://www.sq.com.ua/rus/news/novosti/09.05.2020/den_pobedy_natsionalisty_razvesili_po_harkovu_bannery_fot

¹⁰⁸ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/860361-ukraina-9-maya-zelenskii-napadeniya>

Desecration and demolition of monuments to Red Army soldiers

Concurrently with honouring Nazi collaborators and vilifying the memory of Red Army soldiers, the Ukrainian authorities are making efforts to demolish monuments to Soviet liberator soldiers. Alongside local authorities, right-wing radicals are waging “war” on monuments to Red Army soldiers and victims of the tragic events of WWII, including the Holocaust. Until 2022, such instances were put on record by Ukrainian law enforcement agencies and entered into the unified pre-trial investigation register. However, the participants of these blasphemous actions were never brought to justice.

In February 2020, in Odessa, nationalists removed a memorial plaque with a bas-relief of Marshal Georgy Zhukov from the wall of the Mechnikov Odessa National University’s student dormitory, which, in the post-war years, was home to the Odessa military district headquarters headed by Georgy Zhukov in 1946-1948. It was the last bas-relief of that Soviet commander in the city. The “activists” did this with the consent of the university’s administration.¹⁰⁹

In the same month, in Odessa, vandals desecrated a monument commemorating the liberation of the city, located on April 10 Square¹¹⁰, and in Kiev, two young people desecrated the monument to Nikolai Vatutin in Mariinsky Park by dousing it with brilliant green.¹¹¹ The monument to Vatutin is right on the general's grave. Initially, the media reported that the police opened a criminal case under Part 3 of Art. 297 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (desecration of the grave, other burial site or the body of the deceased).¹¹² However, later, when the police took just one vandal into custody, he was charged with an offence under Part 2 of Art. 296 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (disorderly behaviour by a group of individuals).¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ <https://ria.ru/20200204/1564239120.html>

¹¹⁰ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/721345-vandaly-oskvernili-memorial-odessa>

¹¹¹ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/716870-kiev-zelyonka-pamyatnik-vatutin>

¹¹² <https://kyiv.npu.gov.ua/news/novini/u-stoliczi-speczpriznachenci-zatrimali-molodika-za-poshkodzhennya-pamyatnika>

¹¹³ <https://strana.today/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html>)

In March 2020 in the town of Nyrkov, Ternopol Region, unknown perpetrators chipped off the head and part of an arm of a monument to a Soviet soldier. Law enforcement agencies opened criminal proceedings under Part 2 of Art. 297 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine.

In May 2020, in Shelkovichny Park in Slavyansk, prior to the celebration of the anniversary of Victory, nationalists desecrated a monument by daubing the colours of the OUN flag onto the figure of a Soviet soldier against the background of the Banner of Victory. The monument, erected on the mass burial site of the soldiers who died during the liberation of Ukraine from Nazi invaders, was damaged as well.¹¹⁴

On May 19-20, 2020, the monument to Georgy Zhukov in Kharkov was attacked again: for two consecutive nights, unknown perpetrators poured red paint over it.¹¹⁵

On January 12, 2021, in the city of Kherson, unknown individuals desecrated a mass grave of liberator soldiers of the Great Patriotic War. Vandals smashed and knocked down 17 monuments at the city's memorial cemetery.

In Yareski, Poltava Region, on January 13, 2021, the radicals desecrated a monument to Soviet soldiers who died in the Great Patriotic War and damaged the pedestal of the monument with a combustible mixture.

On March 23, 2021, in Cherkasy, nationalists desecrated and damaged a memorial complex to soldiers-internationalists on Shevchenko Boulevard.

On the night of May 9, 2021, vandals damaged monuments to Red Army soldiers in the towns of Novy Rozdol and Sudovaya Vishnya, Lvov Region.

By July 2021, the USSR Armed Forces Military Glory Monument was demolished in Lvov. The figures of the Soviet warrior and the Motherland were the last to be dismantled. Reportedly, all parts of the monument were shipped to the Territory of Terror museum. The authorities plan to build a small park to commemorate heroes of Ukraine on the site of the former monument.¹¹⁶

On August 18, 2021, the authorities of the town of Drogobych, Lvov Region, initiated the dismantling of the Eternal Flame memorial, which

¹¹⁴ <https://rusскиymir.ru/news/272570/>

¹¹⁵ <https://www.interfax.ru/world/709467>

¹¹⁶ https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2021/07/24/n_16288910.shtml

was installed on the mass grave of Red Army soldiers who died while liberating Western Ukraine from Nazis.

On September 30, 2021, in the town of Kolomiya, Ivano-Frankovsk Region, the local authorities demolished a monument on the mass grave of Red Army soldiers, and several tombstones with the names of the buried soldiers were broken.

On October 19, 2021, nationalists desecrated and damaged a monument on a mass grave of Soviet soldiers on the Lodomir Cemetery's central alley in the town of Vladimir, Volyn Region. Earlier, on the same alley, vandals desecrated the monument on a mass grave of soldiers who died during the First World War.¹¹⁷

On October 22, 2021, in Poltava, vandals smashed a memorial plaque in honour of the Hero of the Soviet Union Filipp Kiva.

On October 25-27, 2021, by a decision of the Executive Committee of the Lvov City Council, the central element of the Marsovo Polye memorial burial site in the form of a massive copy of the Order of the Patriotic War was dismantled under the pretext of "renovation, renewal and redesign of the space around the Lychakov Military Cemetery."

On November 2, 2021, in the town of Dergachi, Kharkov Region, a monument to the fallen soldiers of the Great Patriotic War was desecrated and a granite monument to the 227th NKVD regiment soldiers who died during the defence of Kiev was demolished.

On November 5, 2021, extremists from Society of the Future (S14) group damaged a memorial at the burial site of Soviet soldiers in the town of Zubra, Lvov Region.

On the night of March 15, 2022, at Fontanka outside Odessa, attackers destroyed a monument to NKVD soldiers who defended the city from Nazi invaders in 1941.

On April 11, 2022, a monument to the Soviet T-34 tank was dismantled in Mukachevo, Transcarpathian Region. On the same day, in the town of Stryi, Lvov Region, a stele to a Soviet soldier was destroyed with the use of special equipment.

On April 14, 2022, a monument to Soviet pilots was dismantled in Ternopol. The monument was made in the form of a MIG-17 aircraft and

¹¹⁷ Online Environment as an Instrument of Human Right and Freedom Violations in Ukraine. Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, 2022.

was located at the entrance to the National Renaissance Park in the Vostochny residential area.

On April 16, 2022, a monument to Hero of the Soviet Union partisan Nikolai Prikhodko was demolished with a tractor in the town of Zdolbunov, Rovno Region.

On April 17, 2022, militants from the local armed formation Kraken demolished a monument to Soviet military leader Georgy Zhukov in Kharkov.

On April 19, 2022, in pursuance of a decision by the executive committee “On dismantling historical monuments and monumental art,” an obelisk of glory in honour of the soldiers who died during the Great Patriotic War was dismantled in the town of Mukachevo, Transcarpathian Region. According to local authorities, the bodies will be reburied.

On the same day, a monument to the Soviet Soldier was demolished in the town of Kremenets, Ternopol Region.

On April 21, 2022, Ukrainian vandals destroyed a monument to Hero of the Soviet Union Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya in Chernigov. On the same day, the Red Army Soldiers in Battle sculpture was demolished in Chernovtsy, and an Eternal Flame memorial in the park of Drogobych, Lvov Region, was dismantled.

On April 29, 2022, a monument on the grave of the division commander Mikhail Bogomolov, a hero of the Civil War, was demolished in Rovno. Plaques with the names of the Great Patriotic War heroes were destroyed in that city as well.

In May 2022, a campaign was launched in the town of Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk) to destroy sites related to the Soviet past. The Zhukov Square stele on Pobedy Boulevard was among the first to be dismantled. A total of 13 monuments were demolished.

In the same month, in Zaporozhye, a monument to Soviet pilots on Shevchenko Boulevard was demolished. It was an La-5 fighter mounted on a pedestal which took part in air battles during the Great Patriotic War.

On May 4, 2022, a monument to the legendary Soviet intelligence officer and Hero of the Soviet Union Nikolai Kuznetsov was demolished in Rovno. During the war years, Kuznetsov personally liquidated 11 generals and high-ranking officials of the occupation Nazi Germany administration.

On May 8, 2022, a monument to the Soviet child hero, partisan and recon operative Valya Kotik was dismantled in the village of Dolgoye, Transcarpathian Region. On the same day, local authorities in Uzhgorod decided to demolish a monument to the Liberator Soldier.

On May 13, 2022, a monument to the Soviet soldier was dismantled from the Eternal Flame memorial complex in the town of Chervonograd, Lvov Region.

On May 18, 2022, a monument to the Red Army soldiers who liberated that town from the Nazis was demolished in Pustomyty, Lvov Region.

On May 19, 2022, the Verkhovina village council, Lvov Region, decided to demolish monuments to the Red Army soldiers in the villages of Verkhovina, Iltsy, Verkhny Yasenev and Krasnik.

On May 20, 2022, the Lvov Regional administration initiated the demolition on its territory of all monuments to the Red Army soldiers who liberated the Region from Nazi invaders.

On May 30, 2022, in Brovary, Kiev Region, work began to dismantle three Soviet memorial sites in Victory Park. The Soviet MiG-15 fighter, which was produced in Ukraine as well as other locations, was among these monuments.

In May 2022, a star was dismantled from a monument to Soviet soldiers in Svalyava, Transcarpathian Region. In Zaleshchiki, Ternopol Region, a monument to Soviet tank crewmen was destroyed. In the Zbarazh district, Ternopol Region, a monument to partisans led by Sidor Kovpak was demolished. In the village of Iltsy, Verkhoviny district, Ivano-Frankovsk Region, a monument to the Soviet soldier was destroyed. In the town of Borislav, Lvov Region, the local authorities decided to dismantle a monument to the Soviet soldier. In Rakhov, Transcarpathian Region, vandals doused red paint over a monument to Red Army soldiers. A few days later, the monument was demolished. In the town of Rovno, a monument to the Budyonny cavalrymen was destroyed. In the village Yasenya, Transcarpathian Region, a monument to the Soviet soldier was destroyed. In the village of Kapustiany, Khmelnytskyi Region, Nikolai Vatutin's bust was dismantled.

On June 2, 2022, a monument to the Soviet 52-K anti-aircraft gun, which defended Odessa from Nazis during World War II and was installed in front of school No. 56 on Tenistaya Street, was demolished. In addition, in early June, a monument to Vasiliy Chapayev was demolished in the village

of Mazurovo, Krivoye Ozero Community, Nikolayev Region and a model of the Soviet order was dismantled. In Naroditskaya Community, Zhitomir Region, Soviet symbols were removed from plaques featuring the names of the Red Army soldiers. In Karlovka, Poltava Region, a mosaic with a hammer and sickle was dismantled. In Rovno, a bust of the Soviet actress Gulya Korolyova, who served as combat medic during the Great Patriotic War, was dismantled. In Korsun, Cherkasy Region, commemorative plaques with the names of the heroes of the Soviet Union were dismantled.

On June 3, 2022, in the city of Krivoy Rog, Dnepropetrovsk Region, vandals glued a flyer glorifying Roman Shukhevich on top of a memorial plaque to Nikolai Vatutin. Also, the street sign on Nikolai Vatutin Street was covered with a piece of paper saying Roman Shukhevich Street.

On the same day, a monument to the Red Army soldiers was dismantled in the town of Rovno.

In June 2022, a monument to a Soviet soldier was demolished in the town of Busk, Lvov Region. In Chernovtsy, vandals doused red paint over the monument to the liberators of Bukovina from the Nazi invaders calling the result an “art installation.” In the town of Glukhov, Sumy Region, Soviet symbols were dismantled from the Red Army memorial. In June, monuments to the Red Army soldiers who died during the liberation of Ukraine from Nazis were demolished in the town of Rava-Russkaya, Lvov Region; Berezhany, Ternopol Region; Torgovitsa, Transcarpathian Region, Zhdeneyevskaya Community, Transcarpathian Region; Shumsk, Ternopol Region; Borislav, Lvov Region; village of Urezh, Lvov Region; village of Gukalevtsy, Ternopol Region; and the village of Rozhnyatov, Ivano-Frankovsk Region. Memorial plaques to Nikolai Gastello, Sidor Kovpak, Feodora Pushina, Pavel Rybalka and Ivan Sergiyenko were dismantled in Kiev.

Near the Medical University in Lvov, a plaque from the monument to military doctors who worked during the Great Patriotic War was dismantled.

In the town of Kamenets-Podolsky, Khmelnytskyi Region, a Soviet T-34 tank was removed from a pedestal.

In Uzhgorod, the second memorial plaque to the participant of the Great Patriotic War and Hero of the Soviet Union Ivan Ankudinov was dismantled.

In Kropivnytskiy (former Kirovograd) a commemorative plaque to Semyon Budyonny was removed.

In Privolnenskaya Community, Volyn Region, a monument to NKVD officers was dismantled.

In the village of Podobna, Cherkasy Region, the Nikolai Shchors' bust was demolished.

In the town of Rovno, the pedestal of the monument to Oleko Dundich, a participant in the First World War and the Russian Civil War, was dismantled. Earlier, vandals damaged the monument by tearing off the head of the sculpture. Later, the remains of Oleko Dundich were removed from the city centre and reburied at the local cemetery.

On August 10, 2022, the executive committee of the Chernovtsy city council decided to dismantle some of the Soviet monuments in the city centre, including the mass grave of the Red Army generals and officers, the Warrior with a Machine Gun monument and the T-34 tank of the crew of the Guards Lieutenant Nikitin, and to transfer them to Odesskaya Street.¹¹⁸

On August 19, 2022, the Lvov city council decided to dig up and transfer the remains of Soviet soldiers who died during the Great Patriotic War and were buried at the Marsovo Polye war memorial.

On October 19, 2022, after a failed demolition attempt, a monument to the Nikolayev Region police officers who died in the Great Patriotic War battles and in the line of duty was blown up in Nikolayev.

On November 3, 2022, unidentified individuals blew up the Motherland obelisk located in the Grieving Mother Park which is part of a memorial complex with a mass grave in Nikolayev.

On November 9, 2022, the monument "Ukraine to the Restorers" was demolished in Uzhgorod. The monument was included in the list of the country's cultural heritage.

On November 26, 2022, it came to light that in Khmelnytskyi the monument to the T-34 tank, installed in 1967 at the intersection of Svoboda and Proskurovskaya streets in honor of the military units that liberated the city from Nazi invaders, was dismantled. Mayor of the city Aleksandr Simchishin wrote in his social media account that this tank is “a unique historical exhibit” and there are no “similar artifacts in the world”,

¹¹⁸ <https://ria.ru/20220810/pamyatniki-1808630229.html>

so “it will be a museum exhibit that will remind everyone of the “occupation past”¹¹⁹.

On December 16, 2022, a monument to pioneer Volodya Dubinin, who was a member of a partisan unit near Kerch during the Great Patriotic War, was demolished in Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk).

On December 25, 2022, the monuments to Soviet generals of the Great Patriotic War Nikolai Vatutin and Alexey Zygin were daubed with red paint in Poltava. They both died during the war on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR.

¹¹⁹ <https://ria.ru/20221126/pamyatnik-1834477083.html?in=t>

De-communisation and de-Russification

The radicals vandalised the memorials of Red Army soldiers who fell fighting Nazi and Ukrainian nationalists as well as the monuments to Russian writers and poets and other outstanding citizens of the Russian Empire.

On May 15, 2015, President Poroshenko initiated a de-communisation campaign, which provided for dismantling all communist-era monuments with the exception of monuments dedicated to the Great Patriotic War. According to the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, 1,320 monuments to Lenin have been dismantled by January 16, 2017.

The de-communisation campaign above all stipulated the renaming of cities and streets and the removal of memorial plaques and images connected with Ukraine's Soviet past.

According to official data, between 2015 and 2021, 52,000 placenames and 987 cities and villages have been renamed and over 2,500 Soviet-era monuments have been dismantled.

In February 2021, the Kiev City Council filed an appeal against the ruling of the District Administrative Court of Kiev to revert the Kiev city government's decision to rename Moskovsky Prospekt as Stepan Bandera Prospekt and General Vatutin Prospekt as Roman Shukhevich Prospekt.¹²⁰

In April 2021, the Sixth Administrative Court of Appeal upheld the renaming.¹²¹

In late May 2021, the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance compiled a list of 26 sites in Kiev that had not been de-communised. It included the Soviet emblem on the shield of the Motherland Monument, the equestrian monument of Nikolai Shchors on Shevchenko Boulevard, the sculptures of workers under the People's Friendship Arch (the monument was removed on April 26, 2022) and the bust of Lenin in the Teatralnaya metro station. The sites slated for de-communisation must either be dismantled or renamed.¹²²

A new renaming campaign was launched by the Verkhovnaya Rada in 2022, when it began hearings of a draft law prohibiting all placenames in

¹²⁰ <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/722799.html>

¹²¹ <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/739447.html>

¹²² <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/11504093>

Ukraine that are associated with Russia, its history and its outstanding citizens. On December 29, 2022, the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance and the Culture Ministry reported that 7,652 placenames throughout Ukraine had been renamed over the past year within the framework of the de-Russification (de-colonisation) campaign.¹²³

The war on monuments reached a new high in 2022. Ukraine not only destroyed the monuments of Soviet leaders and soldiers who fought in the Great Patriotic War, but also other prominent people associated with Russia.

A new trend in the battle against “the Russian past” in 2022 was a personal war against great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, because Russian literature promoted imperial ideas and Pushkin’s poem Poltava gave a negative picture of Hetman Ivan Mazepa, who betrayed Peter the Great and defected to the Swedish king. As of December 8, 2022, about 30 monuments to Pushkin were dismantled across Ukraine.¹²⁴

On February 3, 2022, a monument to Russian military leader Alexander Suvorov was removed in Poltava, allegedly because the monument was “not a historical, artistic, cultural, architectural, urban, scientific or technological landmark” and included “elements of Soviet propaganda.”

Initially, the monument was erected in the Kiev Suvorov Military School (renamed as the Ivan Bogun Military High School in 1992). In January 2019, the monument was dismantled at the initiative of the school’s director supported by Deputy Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kirilenko and Director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance Vladimir Vyatrovich. The monument was later moved to the Poltava Museum of Long-Range and Strategic Aviation, a branch of the National Museum of Military History of Ukraine.

On April 7, 2022, a bust of Alexander Pushkin was dismantled in Mukachevo, Transcarpathian Region, and a memorial plaque was removed from a school named after the poet, by decision of the local authorities.

On April 9, 2022, a monument to Pushkin was dismantled in Ternopol. Mayor Sergei Nadal explained the decision by saying that “everything that is Russian must be dismantled, including this monument to the Russian poet.”

¹²³ <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/mkip-ta-uinp-pidbyly-pidsumky-za-rik-shchodo-podolannya-naslidkiv-rusyfikaciyi-y-totalitaryzmu>

¹²⁴ https://riafan.ru/23789952-hronika_voini_s_pamyatnikami_na_ukraine

On April 10, 2022, a monument to the great Russian poet was dismantled in Uzhgorod by decision of the city authorities.

On April 29, 2022, a monument to writer Maxim Gorky (Alexey Peshkov) was dismantled in the Leontovich Central Park in Vinnitsa.

On April 30, 2022, the government of Cherkassy decided to burn off the inscription on the reunification of Ukraine and Russia from the monument of Bogdan Khmelnytskyi.

The same day, the 119th Territorial Defence Brigade destroyed a monument to Pushkin in Chernigov that was unveiled 121 years before.

On May 1, 2022, a monument to the Sumy hussar regiment was destroyed in Sumy only because they served in the Russian Imperial Army.

The same day, a Glory to Russian Weapons plaque was removed from a monument in Odessa that was unveiled in 1904. The plaque was on the gun that had been removed from a British warship during the Crimean War of 1854-1855.

On May 7, 2022, vandals overturned a Soviet-era monument to Komsomol members in Korosten, Zhitomir Region, which had been renamed as Monument to the 21st Century Young People of Korosten.

On May 10, 2022, a monument to Komsomol members (a young man and a woman planting a tree) was dismantled in Cathedral Square in Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk). The inscription on the monument said: Legends will tell what we were like.

On May 11, 2022, the Chernigov authorities decided to dismantle the Three Sisters monument that was unveiled at the junction of the Chernigov, Gomel and Bryansk regions in August 1975 to commemorate friendship between Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The removal has begun.

On May 16, 2022, a bust of Maxim Gorky was moved from the village of Leventsovka, Poltava Region, to the Soviet Park in Putivl. The Maxim Gorky Museum in Manuilovka was temporarily closed by decision of the executive committee of the Kozelshchina Town Council, Kremenchug District.

In mid-May 2022, a monument to Gorky was dismantled in Kegichevka, Kharkov Region. A monument to Alexander Nevsky, which stood near the Orthodox Church of St Alexander Nevsky, was removed in Kharkov.

On May 19, 2022, the authorities of Pereyaslavl, Kiev Region, decided to dismantle a monument to Ukraine's reunification with Russia.

On May 21, 2022, a monument to Pushkin was removed from its base in a garden park at the junction of Pushkinskaya and Naberezhnaya streets in Nikolayev.

In late May 2022, a school named after Gorky and Dnepropetrovskoye Motorway were renamed in Aleksandriya, Kirovograd Region, and the possibility of dismantling a bust of Gorky was raised. A monument to the writer was removed in Golozubentskiy, Khmelnytskyi Region, and a bust of Soviet statesman Nikolai Podgorniy, who was born in the Poltava Region, was dismantled in Karlovka. A monument and memorial plaques to famous Soviet physician Nikolai Semashko were removed in Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk).

In the same period, a number of memorial sites were vandalised. The vandals sprayed paint on a bust of Yevdokim Shcherbinin, head of the Sloboda Ukraine (Kharkov) Governorate, in Kharkov, and on May 29, red paint was splashed on a monument to Alexander Suvorov in Izmail, Odessa Region.

Some of the remaining monuments to communist leaders fell prey to the war on the Russian and Soviet legacy. In late May 2022, a bust of Karl Marx was dismantled in Khotin, Chernovtsy Region.

On May 2, 2022, members of territorial defence demolished a monument to Pushkin in Chernigov.

On June 3, 2022, a memorial plaque to Leo Tolstoy was dismantled in Kiev.

In June 2022, the Khmelnytskyi Region Council decided to remove a monument to writer Nikolai Ostrovsky in Shepetovka.

On June 29, 2022, a monument to Nikolai Ostrovsky was dismantled in Boyarka, Kiev Region.

On August 13, 2022, an excavator was used to destroy and remove a monument to Maxim Gorky in Aleksandriya, Kirovograd Region.

On August 15, 2022, a memorial plaque to Russian writer Mikhail Bulgakov, who was born in Kiev, was removed from the building of Taras Shevchenko University in Kiev.

On October 11, 2022, they removed the oldest monument to Pushkin, which was unveiled at the building of the National Transport University in 1899.

On October 30, 2022, offensive inscriptions and calls to the city mayor for dismantling a monument to Empress Catherine II were made in Odessa. On November 2, 2022, vandals placed a red sack over the monument, a rope with a noose was woven around the sculpture's arm, and the pedestal was sprayed with red paint.

On November 7, 2022, unidentified vandals put a noose on a monument to Alexander Suvorov in Odessa. On November 8, 2022, the word "Next" was painted on the monument.

On November 10, 2022, sacks with sand were placed around a monument to Nikolai Gogol in Kharkov. The day before, a bust of Alexander Pushkin was dismantled in Poetry Square in the city; some time before that, it was also surrounded with sacks with sand.¹²⁵

On November 10, 2022, unidentified vandals painted the word "Out" on all sides of a sculpture of Alexander Pushkin in Pushkin Square in Odessa.¹²⁶

On November 11, 2022, a monument to Alexander Pushkin, which was unveiled in the late 19th century, was dismantled in the centre of Zhitomir. Mayor Sergei Sukhomlin said the monument could be moved to a museum or swapped for Ukrainian POWs.¹²⁷

It was reported the same day that the busts of writer Maxim Gorky, scientist Dmitry Mendeleev, poet Alexander Pushkin and scientist Mikhail Lomonosov were boarded up in Universitet metro station in Kiev (overall, there were eight busts of outstanding scientists and cultural figures at the station, which opened in 1960). It is located near Taras Shevchenko National University.¹²⁸

On November 13, 2022, a bust of Maxim Gorky was dismantled in the Gorky Spa Resort in Odessa by decision of the resort's administration.¹²⁹

On November 17, 2022, a monument to Alexander Pushkin was dismantled in Chernovtsy. The city administration posted a cynical post in its social media account: "Did you know that there used to be two

¹²⁵ <https://ria.ru/20221110/pamyatnik-1830499944.html?in=t>

¹²⁶ <https://ria.ru/20221110/pamyatnik-1830551444.html?in=t>

¹²⁷ <https://radiosputnik.ria.ru/20221111/zhitomir-1830770172.html>

¹²⁸ <https://ria.ru/20221111/kiev-1830880339.html>

¹²⁹ <https://ria.ru/20221114/odessa-1831333092.html?in=t>

monuments to ‘great Russian poet Pushkin’ in the city? We have dismantled one of them, and the same fate will befall the other one too.”¹³⁰

On November 18, 2022, a monument to Pushkin was vandalised in Odessa. A yellow package was placed on its head and swathed in tape, inscriptions were painted on the body, and the word “Occupier” was painted at the pedestal.¹³¹

On November 21, 2022, a bust of Alexander Pushkin was dismantled in Kremenchug. The local newspaper Kremenchugskaya Gazeta reported that the monument would be moved to a museum.¹³²

On November 25, 2022, inscriptions in black and white were made on a monument to Pushkin in Berezovaya Square in Poltava. Mayor Alexander Mamai announced after a meeting of the city council that the inscriptions would be washed off.¹³³

On November 29, 2022, a memorial plaque to Alexander Pushkin was removed in Nikolayev. The news was announced in a social post by Yuri Lyubarov, Head of the Department for the Protection of Culture and Cultural Heritage of the Nikolayev City Council.¹³⁴

On November 30, 2022, the Odessa City Council decided to dismantle monuments to Empress Catherine II and military leader Alexander Suvorov, which had been vandalised several times. The vandals sprayed paint and made inscriptions on the monument to Catherine II, placed a red hood on it and placed a noose in the sculpture’s hand to show that the empress, who established the city, was an “executioner.”¹³⁵

It is notable that a call for saving the monument was made by proactive citizens of Italy. A petition for saving the monument was posted on change.org by journalist Marco Baratto, who wrote that Catherine II was one of the most important women of the Age of Enlightenment. He proposed moving it to Milan or Naples, which have many admirers of the Age of Enlightenment.¹³⁶

¹³⁰ <https://ria.ru/20221117/pushkin-1832349833.html>

¹³¹ <https://radiosputnik.ria.ru/20221118/odessa-1832493489.html>

¹³² <https://ria.ru/20221121/kremenchug-1833034746.html>

¹³³ <https://ria.ru/20221125/vandaly-1834261086.html>

¹³⁴ <https://ria.ru/20221129/nikolaev-1834964507.html?in=t>

¹³⁵ <https://ria.ru/20221130/pamyatnik-1835241748.html>

¹³⁶ https://aif.ru/society/history/v_italii_prizvali_spasti_pamyatnik_ekaterine_ii_v_odesse

On November 30, 2022, a monument to Pushkin was dismantled in Ananyev, Odessa Region.¹³⁷

On December 1, 2022, a monument to Alexander Suvorov, which was unveiled in the early 20th century to commemorate the 120th anniversary of the conquest of the fortress of Izmail by Suvorov's army, was moved from a central avenue in Izmail, Odessa Region, to a museum.

Th same day, a monument to Soviet writer Nikolai Ostrovsky was dismantled in Shepetovka, Khmel'nitskiy Region.

On December 6, 2022, when the Supreme Court of Ukraine ruled that the symbols of Waffen SS Galicia Division were not Nazi symbols, Mayor of Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk) Boris Filatov (he said in 2014: "Every promise should be given to the Russian Spring activists; we'll hang them later.") announced the decision to dismantle monuments to Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lomonosov and Maxim Gorky.¹³⁸

On December 10, 2022, monuments to Pushkin and Suvorov were dismantled in Tulchin, Vinnitsa Region. They are to be sold as scrap metal and the proceeds are to be sent to the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

On December 23, 2022, the last of the two monuments to Alexander Pushkin was dismantled in Chernovtsy.

On December 29, 2022, the Odessa authorities dismantled a monument to Suvorov and the Monument to the Founders of Odessa, also known as monument to Empress Catherine II of Russia and her companions.

In January 2023, the Culture Minister of Ukraine Alexander Tkachenko announced that a law submitted to the Verkhovna Rada proposed, in part, a "de-Pushkinisation" campaign to get rid of all monuments associated with Russia and the Soviet Union.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ <https://ria.ru/20221130/pushkin-1835220510.html?in=t>

¹³⁸ <https://russian.rt.com/opinion/1083328-sokolov-sud-simvolika-ss-galichina>

¹³⁹ <https://t.me/otkachenkoyiv/2876>

The West whitewashing Ukrainian neo-Nazism

In light of Russia's special military operation to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine, the Western media and NGOs are clearly ramping up their efforts to whitewash Ukrainian neo-Nazis whom they cast as fighters for freedom and independence in a "democratic" country that is struggling against the "aggression of a dictatorial regime."

The American IT companies are providing tangible assistance to Kiev. As you may be aware, YouTube administrators and moderators do not object to dissemination of information by extremist organisations, primarily the Right Sector and Azov that are outlawed in Russia. In fact, YouTube has become a key platform for spreading falsehoods about the special military operation in Ukraine and discrediting the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

Meta, which owns the Facebook and Twitter social platforms, often engages in censorship. Since late February or March 2022, these resources have also been widely disseminating calls to "kill Russians," manuals on methods of killing and making explosives, and other content of a similar nature. Moderators ignored user complaints about the blatant spread of hateful ideology. At the same time, the messages by the Russian media and public figures, as well as ordinary citizens, containing Russia's position or simply objective points of view on the events in Ukraine, were blocked.

In the wake of applying double standards to Russian citizens, which became known after the company's in-house correspondence had been made public, Meta tried to make amends but its statement once again confirmed its racist approaches to publications. In particular, it was stated that users would be allowed to call for "death to Russian occupiers."

After Twitter's ownership changed, information began to appear in the public domain indicating the active use of censorship by its previous management in order to manipulate public opinion. The new owner Elon Musk has taken a number of steps to increase the platform's popularity and restore its credibility. Internal Twitter documents are now regularly published which confirm the fact that this social network not only blocked the accounts of certain individuals, but also used shadow bans for a long time, meaning that tweets by objectionable users simply could not be seen by anyone, to the point where they could not even be seen in search queries. The users were not informed about the fact that they had been

blocked, either. They knew that their accounts were not blocked, but, at the same time, the number of views of their tweets was very low.

Nevertheless, many international online resources help conceal and divert public attention from materials that show the Kiev regime's crimes. In December 2022, it became known that the English-language Wikipedia website removed an article in English about the Alley of Angels memorial that had been built in Donetsk in memory of children who died as a result of the shelling by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. So far, the materials about the Alley of Angels in Russian, Ukrainian and six other languages are still there. However, the media spotted false information there.¹⁴⁰

Efforts to whitewash Ukrainian neo-Nazis have become apparent as well. In February 2023, the Meta management excluded the Ukrainian nationalist formation Azov from the list of dangerous organisations, thus allowing this extremist entity to openly post on social media accounts and to promote violence and its criminal methods of warfare. The Azov militants never hid, and even publicly emphasised, their commitment to the ideas of neo-Nazism and hatred based on national and ethnic grounds. These actions by Meta serve as yet another proof of the fact that the collective West is at odds with the democratic values that it previously proclaimed and is using hate as a tool to ensure its dominance.

Notably, the Ukrainian authorities were previously caught red-handed in their attempts to edit online information publications in order to hide the true picture of the developments in Ukraine. Thus, in April 2020, the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry announced the launch of a campaign to edit Wikipedia articles, in particular, about "Russian aggression," as well as articles about Crimea, Donbass, and integration with the EU and NATO. Even though the Ukrainian diplomats' stated goal was to post allegedly impartial information about the country in the online encyclopedia, in reality this turned into an overt attempt to edit the free information resource with the help of government agencies and to distort facts to suit Kiev and its Western curators' current political goals that justify their actions by citing "people's opinions."¹⁴¹

At the same time, publications appear even in the Western media that directly point to the Nazi nature of the right-wing radical entities in

¹⁴⁰ https://riafan.ru/23779823-angloyazichnyuyu_versiyu_stat_i_ob_allee_angelov_v_donetske_udalili_s_vikipedii

¹⁴¹ <https://russian.rt.com/usst/article/740011-kiev-vikipediya-perepisat>,
https://news.rambler.ru/world/44072204/?utm_content=news_media&utm_medium=read_more&utm_source=copylink

Ukraine¹⁴², which are dressed up as “fighters for independence.” At the same time, these papers focus on the fact that before the beginning of the Russian special military operation, many Western media pointed to the Nazi component of the radical Ukrainian formations and their glorification of Nazi accomplices such as Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevich. However, since February 2022, this opinion has been carefully withdrawn from the Western public space. The above articles rightly note that the Russian leadership’s clarifications regarding the reasons behind the special military operation largely coincide with what was previously published in objective articles by Western journalists who recognised the existence of neo-Nazism in Ukraine.

A report drafted by Amnesty International, which acknowledged the facts of war crimes committed by the Armed Forces of Ukraine against civilians, in particular, the use of civilians as “human shields” highlights the collective West’s efforts to whitewash Kiev’s crimes. In fact, this international organisation has revealed Kiev’s true nature and its terrorist tactics. In order to minimise the damage, the Western countries have set up a campaign to divert attention from this unseemly fact, acting as an almost united front. In response to the accusations coming from Kiev, human rights activists apologised and rechecked the facts, but did not completely recant their words.

In addition, it should be noted that Ukrainian neo-Nazi groups are closely tied with right-wing radical and extremist groups in Europe and America. These entities have established relations. Nationalists from abroad regularly came to Ukraine, where they trained in Ukrainian nationalist formations and at the Ukrainian military’s combat positions in Donbass. Former American soldier Craig Lang took part in the hostilities in Ukraine on the side of the nationalist battalions starting in 2015, and fatally shot a married couple after returning to the United States.¹⁴³

¹⁴² As an example: A.Ripp. Ukraine’s Nazi problem is real, even if Putin’s “denazification” claim isn’t. NBC News. 5 March 2022. www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/ukraine-has-nazi-problem-vladimir-putin-s-claim-war-nca1290946; B.Marcetic. Whitewashing Nazis doesn’t help Ukraine. Jacobin. 4 July 2022. <https://jacobin.com/2022/04/ukraine-russia-putin-azov-neo-nazis-western-media>; J. McCann. Protecting the Ukrainian Nazis. Standpoint Zero. 16 March 2022. <https://standpointzero.com/2022/03/16/protecting-the-ukrainian-nazis/>

¹⁴³ Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy in the Military - How to Stop It? U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Military Personnel (Committee on Armed Services) Hearing. 11 February 2020. Dr. Mark Pitcavage. Witness Statement. <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS02/20200211/110495/HHRG-116-AS02-Wstate-PitcavageM-20200211.pdf>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-49803732>, <https://strana.today/news/230444-azov-i-neonatsisty-ssha-pochemu-v-konhresse-khotjat-priznat-polk-terroristami.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/230444-azov-i-neonatsisty-ssha-pochemu-v-konhresse-khotjat-priznat-polk-terroristami.html>)

Other information about Americans and Europeans' participation in hostilities in Donbass made it to the public space. Thus, BuzzFeed News talked about more than 40 US citizens, and the report by the Soufan Centre titled "White supremacy extremism: the transnational rise of the violent white supremacist movement" released in September 2019 noted that 3,879 foreigners received training during the hostilities in Donbass. The participation of foreign gunmen from European countries and the United States in the Azov nationalist battalion (recognised as a terrorist organisation in the Russian Federation) is mentioned in a detailed article about neo-Nazi activities in Die Zeit newspaper.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ The Brown Internationale. Die Zeit. 10 February 2021. <https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/221-02/facism-international-right-wing-extremism-neo-nazis-english>

Persecution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church

The Russophobic Kiev regime is targeting the canonical the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC). After trying to uproot the canonical church from Ukraine's religious field for years, the Kiev authorities have unleashed a broad information campaign against the UOC clergy aimed at discrediting its priests in the eyes of their flock, portraying them as "enemy accomplices." Slanderous rumours are being spread about the bishops of parishes and other UOC clergy; numerous fake reports published on social media are alleging that the church leaders assist the Russian armed forces. Every day, the Ukrainian police and the SBU security service accuse them of storing weapons, ammunition and supplies for the "aggressor" at the UOC churches. Relying on this evidence, Ukrainian politicians and officials demand banning the UOC and confiscating its property.

Ukraine has been taking specific legislative steps to achieve this. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has registered four anti-UOC bills. Draft Law No. 7204 of March 22, 2022, proposed by a representative of Svoboda (an all-Ukrainian nationalist union) Oksana Savchuk, provides, in particular, for a direct ban on the activities of the Moscow Patriarchate and any religious entities related to it in Ukraine and the nationalisation of all their property, while giving any religious communities that wish to avoid the new restrictions 14 days to "change their affiliation." Draft Law No. 7213 was proposed on March 26, 2022 by a group of parliamentarians from various parties, supporters of the schismatic OCU. They proposed introducing "a ban on the activities of any religious organisations that are part of (structural units of) a religious organisation (association) that is governed by a management centre located outside Ukraine, in a state that is recognised by law as carrying out armed aggression against Ukraine and/or temporarily occupying part of the territory of Ukraine."

On November 23, 2022, the European Solidarity Party introduced Draft Law No. 8221 "On ensuring the strengthening of national security concerning the freedom of conscience and the activities of religious organisations." Under this legislation, any organisation or community identifying as Orthodox, should act "with due account of the Tomos [of Autocephaly]" in canonical and organisational matters and be subordinate to the OCU. In other words, this bill grants the schismatic entity an

exclusive entitlement to identify as “Orthodox” and a de facto monopoly on Orthodox worship in the country.

On December 5, 2022, the Ukrainian parliament registered Draft Law No. 8262 “On improving the legal regulation of the activities of religious organisations,” also directed against the UOC and complementing No. 8221. It was co-sponsored by 24 deputies from the pro-presidential Servant of the People party and the European Solidarity party. This legislation greatly simplifies the procedure for Ukrainian Orthodox communities to change affiliation to the OCU – not only for church communities, but also for whole UOC dioceses, monasteries and convents. Moreover, new OCU communities can be registered using the address already used by existing UOC communities, their churches, monasteries or other premises. In fact, this will legalise the seizure of canonical parishes by the schismatics, something they have sought since 2019. In addition, the bill paves the way for future decisions by the authorities to terminate lease agreements with religious organisations “associated with Russia,” which will facilitate the eviction of all monastic and ordinary believer communities of the UOC from any premises that are in state or communal ownership.

A significant role in attacking the UOC is played by organised groups of radical nationalists who actually seize the churches. Simultaneously, the UOC parishes become the target of numerous “independent” looters and marauders who cite the ideological struggle against the “occupiers” and their “spiritual proxies” to justify their raids. Videos of such attacks are being disseminated on Ukrainian social media with calls to do the same.

On February 3, 2022, the management of the Khotin Fortress State Historical and Architectural Reserve refused to extend the agreement with the UOC community on the use of the local church, and closed the church, which Orthodox believers had restored from ruin. The decision was the result of brutal pressure from the Right Sector militants who demanded the church to be transferred to the OCU.

Multiple fake stories about “priests acting as saboteurs” began circulating on social media. As a result, the Kiev Archdiocese of the UOC had to refute the disinformation about a priest and a certain 38-year-old man allegedly detained by law enforcement officers in Kiev on suspicion of espionage. Another popular misleading story mentioned a group of saboteurs allegedly tracked down in the Convent of St Mary Magdalene Equal-to-the-Apostles in Belaya Tserkov, when two of them were shot

during arrest.

Several cases of abduction of priests of the canonical church were reported in March 2022 alone. On March 9, Archimandrite Titus (Drachuk), abbot of the Trinity Dukonsky Monastery of the Ivano-Frankovsk Diocese, and a novice went missing. A few days later, they were found in the Chernovtsy Region. They had been kidnapped and interrogated with the use of violence. After that, the kidnappers told them they were not allowed to perform services in the Ivano-Frankovsk Region, nor even reside there, on penalty of death.

Archimandrite Laurus (Berezovsky), the bishop of a church in Ivanovka, Zhitomir Region, was attacked on March 16. On the same day, a local priest, Father Gennady, was kidnapped from Tomashovka, Fastov District, Kiev Region.

On March 28, Hieromonk Vasiliy was kidnapped by armed men during a service in the Intercession Church in Smela, Cherkassy Region.

The bishop of the Archangel Michael Church from Borodyanka, Kiev Region, Archpriest Viktor Talko and his family are still missing; their whereabouts remain unknown. All of them stopped responding to calls in early March. Earlier, the priest received threats for voicing his assessment of the political situation in Ukraine to the Russian media.

In March 2022, at least six attacks on UOC churches and clergy were recorded in the Vinnitsa Region alone. On March 6, radical nationalists broke into a church in Malye Krushlintsy during a service, desecrated the altar, assaulted the priest and dragged him outside. On March 12, supporters of the OCU tried to throw the priest and parishioners out of the church during a service in Lavrovka, Vinnitsa Region, threatening them with physical violence. The police who arrived at the scene closed and sealed the church. However, it re-opened a few days later, but for the OCU believers only. On March 13, schismatics forced the chairman of the parish council to unlock a church in Sosnovka, allegedly to check for weapons. Once he complied, the village chief forcibly took the keys from him and handed them over to the OCU supporters. On the same day, radical nationalists sawed off the padlocks and seized the local church in Penkovka. Church utensils and liturgical books belonging to the community were thrown out of the window. On March 19, representatives of the so-called territorial defence blocked the entrance to the church in Mzyakovskiye Khutora preventing the priest and parishioners from

entering and threatening them with violence. On March 20, the same individuals seized the church in the neighbouring village of Pereorki. In Bolshiye Krushlintsy, local [OCU] supporters tried to take the church keys from the Orthodox priest, threatened to disrupt the service and demanded they change affiliation to the schismatic church.

In the Ivano-Frankovsk Region, the schismatics seized several churches with the help of territorial defence militants: the St Nicholas Church in Kalush, the Church of the Conception of St Anne in Verkhovina, and the Church of the Vsetsaritsa Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos in Tsenyava. The Church of the Intercession on Markova Hill in Golovy was closed; and the chapel on Shkindovsky Grun was sealed. The monks were evicted from the Archangel Michael Monastery in Babyanka.

On April 3, 2022, law enforcement officers searched the UOC John the Baptist Church in Dolina, Ivano-Frankovsk Region, and closed it.

On April 8, 2022, the UOC clergy and believers of the Ivano-Frankovsk diocese published an appeal to the President of Ukraine about the pressure on the clergy and parishioners and threats they receive from the authorities and the OCU supporters. They wrote that on April 4, 2022, Mayor of Ivano-Frankovsk Ruslan Martsinkiv announced, in an address to the townspeople, an allegedly “voluntary” change of church affiliation by the religious community of the Cathedral of the Nativity of Christ, and called on the residents to “help the community transition to its new church jurisdiction.” The parishioners viewed that “call for help” as crude pressure to force the religious community to change its affiliation and a threat of a violent seizure of the church if they do not comply.

On April 10, 2022, representatives of the OCU accompanied by armed men seized the Assumption Church of the UOC in Mikhalcha, Chernovtsy Region.

On April 14, 2022, a group of armed men led by “OCU leader” Alexander Drabinko forcibly seized the Church of the Assumption of the Most Holy Theotokos in Kruglik, Kiev Region. The attackers broke down the door and announced the UOC community’s “voluntary” change of affiliation to the OCU.

In early May 2022, head of the Dubno military administration Vsevolod Pekarsky gave the keys to the previously sealed UOC church in Perenyatin to the supporters of the OCU. In Palchi, Volyn Region, “activists” cut the locks in the Church of the Intercession and handed it over to the

schismatics, and in Ozero, also Volyn Region, the UOC parishioners “changed affiliation” to the OCU while they were praying at the church.

On May 21, 2022, schismatics from the OCU, supported by the police and the territorial defence, seized the church of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos in Ivankov, Kiev Region, and a church in Belashov, Rovno Region. The seizure was accompanied by clashes provoked by the supporters of the OCU.

On May 26, 2022, a forceful seizure of the Church of the Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian in Fursy, Kiev Region, was reported. Supporters of the OCU committed physical violence against the church bishop, Archpriest Andrei Mukha, and parishioners of the UOC. The bishop said the religious community had been aware of possible provocations and officially appealed, on behalf of the parish assembly, to the head of the territorial community, the Ministry of the Interior and the SBU, asking them to prevent illegal actions, seizure of property and interference in the affairs of the church community. However, the authorities did not take any action.

On May 30, 2022, supporters of the OCU, led by people in priestly vestments, attempted to seize the Church of the Holy Prince Alexander Nevsky in the village of Tsarevka, Zhitomir Region, but the clergy and parishioners were able to defend their church.

In addition to the use of violence and intimidation, radical nationalists and the OCU supporters encourage acts of vandalism and provocations against churches and priests of the canonical church.

On May 9, 2022, in the village of Dorogostai, Rovno Region, unknown persons splashed animal blood in the courtyard, on the fence, crosses and walls of the Church of Spyridon of Trimythos.

On May 22, 2022, the bishop of the Resurrection Church in Stryi, Lvov Region, Archpriest Vladimir Mandzyuk, was doused with brilliant green dye during a service.

On May 23, 2022, it was reported that an aggressive crowd of OCU supporters, threatening the UOC priest and parishioners, replaced the locks in the Church of St Archdeacon Stephen in Chernyatin, Vinnitsa Region. The raid took place during a Sunday service performed by the congregation of the canonical church. At first, the schismatics interfered with the service; they began to show aggression, shout slogans and threats. After that, the OCU supporters held a “vote” for a change of affiliation,

shut the church changed the locks. None of the actual members of that parish took part in the voting.

On May 29, 2022, supporters of the OCU simultaneously showed up at Sunday services at UOC churches in Lvov, Volyn, Rovno, Zhitomir and Kiev Regions with the aim to disrupt the Orthodox believers' prayers. Several "activists" disrupted the service, humiliated and insulted believers at the Vladimir Church of the UOC in Lvov. Supporters of the OCU broke into St Michael's Church in Ozhishche, Volyn Region, also during the service, and demanded that the church be given to them. They were very aggressive and attacked believers.

The Church of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince Vladimir in Lvov, affiliated with the UOC, was attacked by vandals several times in May 2022 alone. On May 1, the attackers tried to disrupt the service; on May 8, unknown persons poured foam on the church door and wrote offensive inscriptions on its walls. On May 14, vandals tried to set fire to the church and again desecrated its walls with inscriptions. On May 25, unknown persons wrote more offensive inscriptions. On May 28, vandals again desecrated the church, making offensive inscriptions and crossing out the crosses.

On June 14, a group of unknown persons attacked the house of Father Pyotr Monastyrsky, the bishop of the UOC Church of the Intercession in Novozhivotov, Vinnitsa Region. The vandals threw stones at the priest's house and broke the windows.

In the early hours of June 20, 2022, a fire broke out in the Lvov Church of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince Vladimir in the Lvov-Sikhov area, as a result of arson.

In November 2022, the SBU stepped up pressure on the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church and started what they referred to as "security measures" in its churches and monasteries aimed at intimidating believers. It has been established that the SBU has searched at least 19 UOC facilities in nine regions. In particular, such "security measures" have been reported at the UOC religious facilities in the Transcarpathian, Chernovtsy, Rovno, Volyn, Nikolayev, Sumy, Lvov and Zhitomir regions and the Kiev-controlled part of the Kherson Region. In particular, the SBU searched the Holy Intercession Church and the Holy Exaltation Cathedral in Uzhgorod, the Holy Trinity Church in Lvov, the St Basil's Cathedral in Ovruch, Zhitomir Region, and the Holy Assumption Monastery in the

Rovno District.¹⁴⁵ The Ukrainian security service repeatedly searched the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra.

As part of their raids, security officers interrogated priests and monks and searched for some “subversive pro-Russian literature.” The Paschal Messages of the Moscow Patriarch, routinely distributed to all dioceses of the Moscow Patriarchate, were qualified as such.

Kiev's persecution of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church reached its climax in early December, when Vladimir Zelensky enacted the National Security and Defence Council (NSDC) decision on restrictive measures and sanctions against the UOC, in fact formalising a complete ban on its activity.

In mid-December 2022, official documents of the SBU Department for the Kherson Region published by the media confirmed that Ukrainian security forces had been working to intimidate UOC priests for several years after the 2014 coup. They threatened the priests with criminal charges and tried to instil in them a “different interpretation of patriotism.” In particular, such “preventive measures” have been reported in the Holy Spirit Cathedral and St Catherine’s Cathedral in Kherson, in January and April 2016. An SBU agent visited the churches allegedly to check the vigilance of church personnel and intimidated the priests, threatening them with charges of crimes against national security punishable under various articles of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. He described his actions to intimidate the priests as “fostering responsibility for their actions.” He also spoke about the “heroism” of certain Kherson residents who participated in punitive operations in Donbass, in the ATO, in order to “instil a sense of patriotism” in the priests. To intimidate them further, the SBU officer spoke to them about “the success of the Security Council of Ukraine in the Kherson Region in the fight against separatism and other unconstitutional activities of certain groups and individuals.” He also left objects imitating explosive devices in the St Catherine and Holy Spirit Cathedrals “to make sure that the information sinks in properly.”¹⁴⁶

Shortly after the New Year, the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture terminated the lease agreement with the UOC for part of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra structures. That cut off the canonical church clergy’s access to those premises to conduct the Christmas Service. Instead, representatives of the

¹⁴⁵ <https://rg.ru/2022/12/14/sbu-prishla-s-obyskom-v-pravoslavnye-hramy-v-deviati-oblastiah-ukrainy.html>

¹⁴⁶ <https://rg.ru/2022/12/13/sbu-neskolko-let-vela-rabotu-protiv-ukrainskoj-pravoslavnoj-cerkvi-obnaruzheny-sekretnye-dokumenty.html>

OCU were brought there, making a show of it. In January 2023, President Zelensky issued an order stripping 14 UOC clerics of Ukrainian citizenship, a practice prohibited by the country's constitution.

On January 19, 2023, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine submitted to the Verkhovna Rada a draft law “On amendments to the laws of Ukraine on the activities of religious organisations in Ukraine,” which introduced a complete ban on the activities of any religious organisations and institutions with any ties with Russia.¹⁴⁷

On January 21, 2023, the NSDC imposed sanctions against 20 Russian religious figures, including Metropolitan Anthony (Sevryuk), Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, and Vladimir Legoida, acting head of the press service of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, and Chairman of the Synodal Department for Church’s Relations with Society and Mass Media, among others.

At some point, Kiev's persecution of the canonical church came to the attention of international human rights organisations. In November 2021, the UN Human Rights Committee expressed concern about the situation around the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church. In particular, the UNHRC mentioned cases of aggression, intimidation and vandalism in churches accompanying the process of these churches and religious communities’ change of affiliation to the newly formed OCU. The UNHRC also pointed out the inaction of the Ukrainian police in such incidents and the lack of information on the investigations of respective offences.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ <https://ria.ru/20221123/rpts-1833602560.html>

¹⁴⁸ Human Rights Committee. Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine. Retrieved: November 2021. (Distributed: February 2022)
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru

Elimination of the Russian language

Ban on the Russian language and Ukrainisation of the public sphere

From the moment Ukraine gained independence, the country's authorities embarked on a course of forcible Ukrainisation of all spheres of public life and assimilation of all ethnic groups in order to create a mono-ethnic state. These processes have noticeably accelerated after the 2014 coup and Kiev's policy towards various ethnic communities became differentiated. This contradicts the Constitution of Ukraine, which guarantees equal rights and freedoms to all citizens.

Crimean Tatars, Krymchaks and Karaites, who, according to Kiev's best estimates, do not exceed 0.1 percent of the population, enjoy a privileged position in Ukraine in legislative terms. This is a recent occurrence. The law On Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine¹⁴⁹ was adopted in July 2021 in the interest of the above groups, which laid out their rights to education in their native language, to create their own educational institutions and media and guaranteed them protection against assimilation (other ethnic minorities were not accorded this privilege).

As for other ethnicities, the Kiev regime is pursuing a steady course on legislative consolidation of the dominant role of the Ukrainian language and the reduction of the scope of opportunities for using other languages in the public space with varying degrees of ruthlessness. The rights of the Russian and Russian-speaking population have been restricted the most. The gradual legislative restriction of the linguistic rights of ethnic Russians and numerous Russian-speaking representatives of other ethnicities was the main step in this direction.

Thus, in 2017, the law On Education¹⁵⁰ was adopted, which provides for the transition of instruction at all Ukrainian educational institutions to the state language beginning in 2020. Teaching in minority languages was allowed only in preschools and elementary schools.

According to the expert findings of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe¹⁵¹, many provisions of the above act are discriminatory. The PACE resolution "The protection and promotion of regional and minority

¹⁴⁹ https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=36748189

¹⁵⁰ https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=37708387

¹⁵¹ [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2017\)030-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2017)030-e)

languages in Europe”¹⁵² contained critical assessments of that document as well. In particular, the person who compiled the report on the subject of the resolution, the deputy from Hungary Rozsa Hoffman said as follows: “I firmly believe that when adopting the new legislation, the country failed to comply with its international obligations and the Council of Europe’s regulations.” In December 2018, OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities Lamberto Zannier stressed that Ukraine should remain a space for all ethnicities speaking different languages, which they should have the right to use.¹⁵³

In April 2019, the law On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language¹⁵⁴ was adopted, which enshrined the use of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of public life, except interpersonal communication and the performance of religious rites. Under this law, any attempts to introduce official multilingualism in Ukraine shall be recognised as actions aimed at forcibly changing or overthrowing the constitutional order.

The Constitutional Court of Ukraine’s ruling passed in February 2018 which recognised as unconstitutional the law On the Fundamentals of the State Language Policy¹⁵⁵, under which the Russian language was granted the status of a regional language in certain regions of the country (13 out of 24 regions), was one of the prerequisites for this law. Subsequently, at the suggestion of a number of “language activists,” Ukrainian courts deprived the Russian language of the status of a regional language.

Under the law “On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language,” the office of the Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language and the National Commission for the Ukrainian Language Standards was created in 2019 to monitor the implementation of regulatory legal acts in the language sphere. The Office of the Commissioner actually performs the functions of a repressive mechanism, since its areas of responsibility include monitoring compliance with the requirements of the language legislation, including conducting official investigations and making proposals for holding individuals and organizations, who violate the language legislation, accountable under disciplinary or administrative regulations. In 2022, the scope of its duties was expanded, since an article on liability for debasement of or disrespect

¹⁵² <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/23532#trace-1>

¹⁵³ <https://ria.ru/20181206/1547556068.html>

¹⁵⁴ https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=33624660

¹⁵⁵ <https://ria.ru/20180228/1515481546.html>

for the Ukrainian language came into force. The newly introduced fines are quite impressive and range from 200 to 400 minimum wages.

On June 21, 2019, a group of 51 people's deputies submitted a request to the Constitutional Court of Ukraine about the constitutionality of the law "On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language" in view of the restrictions it imposes on the right of citizens to use and protect their native language and the right to develop the linguistic identity of indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities of Ukraine.¹⁵⁶ According to one of the initiators of this request Vadim Novinsky, instead of regulating public relations in the sphere of language policy in the multi-ethnic state, this law pits the people who speak Ukrainian and Russian against one another.¹⁵⁷ On July 14, 2021, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine ruled to recognise the law on the state language as consistent with the Constitution.¹⁵⁸

In addition to the Russian language, languages of other ethnic communities, in particular the Hungarian language, were also impacted. In December 2020, after Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language Taras Kremin submitted a request to the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, all rulings by the Beregovsky and Vinogradovsky district councils of the Transcarpathian region on the functioning of regional languages were repealed as unlawful.¹⁵⁹

After the law On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language was adopted, its provisions have been coming into force gradually.

Article 32 of the above law, which says that the state language is the language of advertising in Ukraine, has been in force since January 16, 2020. Exceptions are made in the same way as in other spheres: print media published in one of the EU languages are allowed to place advertisements in the language of the publication. The law On Advertising has been amended accordingly.

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.ukrinform.ru/rubric-politics/3057613-konstitucionnyj-sud-vo-vtornik-vozmetsa-za-azykovoju-zakon.html>

¹⁵⁷ <https://vesti.ua/strana/obrashnenie-v-ksu-po-yazykovomu-zakonu-yavlyaetsya-zashhitoy-prav-russkoyazychnyh>, <https://strana.today/articles/analysis/277345-pochemu-predstavitel-prezidenta-v-ks-zajavil-cto-ne-nuzhno-otmenjat-zakon-o-totalnoj-ukrainizatsii-.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/articles/analysis/277345-pochemu-predstavitel-prezidenta-v-ks-zajavil-cto-ne-nuzhno-otmenjat-zakon-o-totalnoj-ukrainizatsii-.html>)

¹⁵⁸ <https://tass-ru.turbopages.org/turbo/tass.ru/s/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/11902213>

¹⁵⁹ <https://strana.today/news/312768-na-zakarpate-utratili-dejstvie-mestnye-reshenija-o-rehionalnykh-jazykakh.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/312768-na-zakarpate-utratili-dejstvie-mestnye-reshenija-o-rehionalnykh-jazykakh.html>)

On July 16, 2020, more provisions of the law came into force, under which the Ukrainian language was introduced into the scientific sphere as well. According to new requirements, in addition to Ukrainian, the publication of research papers in the official languages of the EU was also allowed, but such papers were to necessarily contain an abstract in Ukrainian. From then on, dissertations, monographs and abstracts were to be written in Ukrainian or English. These languages are now also used for defending theses and holding public academic events.

On January 16, 2021, Article 30 of the law came into force, which provides for a full transition of the service sector to the state language.

On July 16, 2021, a new phase of Ukrainisation of all spheres of public life began in that country where articles 23 and 26 of the law on language came into force, under which all cultural events were to be conducted in the Ukrainian language, including theatre performances, concerts and shows. It is not allowed to make posters or ad posters in foreign languages, except for the names of authors, performers or performance groups. Information stands, audio and video guides, flyers and signs on exhibits in museums, galleries and exhibition halls were to be in the state language. Films in foreign languages shown on television or in cinemas must be dubbed in Ukrainian. Book publishers must publish in Ukrainian at least 50 percent of all books published in a given year. The Ukrainisation also applies to tourism and sightseeing tours. At the same time, there is compulsory certification for fluency in Ukrainian for candidates applying for civil service jobs.

On January 16, 2022, a new language-related provision of the law went into effect in Ukraine concerning the media sphere. National print media were instructed to issue, starting January 2022, mandatory Ukrainian editions of the publications in non-state languages (for regional media, this regulation will take effect in July 2024). The Russian-language content is available only as an option. By July 2024, the quota of programmes and films in Ukrainian on television and radio will have increased to 90 percent for national TV channels and 80 percent for regional ones (now 75 percent and 60 percent, respectively).

The law prohibits placing ads in the media in any languages other than Ukrainian. Exceptions are made for English, the official EU languages and the languages of indigenous peoples. In this regard, the Opposition Platform - For Life political party issued a statement in which it called the destruction of Russian-language print media discrimination and

humiliation of millions of Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine. The party noted that the new rule would make publishing Russian-language media unprofitable and obtaining information in their native language for Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine impossible.

Since July 16, 2022, in accordance with yet another provision of the law on language entering into force, all websites and social media operated by public authorities, local governments, enterprises, institutions and organisations registered in Ukraine must have a Ukrainian-language version, which will be loaded by default. All items with computer programmes installed must have the Ukrainian-language interface. Also, starting that day, individuals may be charged fines for using the Russian language should it be considered as violating provisions of the above law.

Notably, due to the sharply negative reaction of a number of European countries, primarily Hungary, to the discriminatory provisions of the law On Education, a provision was included in the law On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language stating that representatives of ethnic minorities whose languages are official in the European Union, in case they started to receive general secondary education before September 1, 2018, have the right to continue receiving it in their native language until September 1, 2023. However, other ethnic minorities remained outside the scope of the new rule. Thus, the Russian language has been subjected to double discrimination (simultaneously as a state language and an official EU language), which was once again pointed out by the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe¹⁶⁰, as it mentioned the contradiction between the content of the law on language and Ukraine's international obligations, and also voicing fears that the law could create interethnic tensions in society. The Commission's assessments and recommendations were supported by the OHCHR.¹⁶¹

Nevertheless, the expert body's recommendations were ignored, and the adoption of the law On Comprehensive General Secondary Education¹⁶² on 16 January 2020 came as another step towards establishing a mono-ethnic language regime in a multi-ethnic country. The document introduces three instruction models depending on the linguistic affiliation of the students. For the indigenous peoples of Ukraine which, under Ukrainian law,

¹⁶⁰ [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2019\)032-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2019)032-e)

¹⁶¹ The OHCHR Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine. 16 February – 31 July 2020. https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Countries/UA/30thReportUkraine_EN.pdf

¹⁶² <https://iz.ru/986778/2020-03-13/prezident-ukrainy-podpisal-zakon-ob-obrazovanii>

include Crimean Tatars, Krymchaks and Karaites, instruction in their native language is provided during the entire period of study. Members of ethnic minorities whose languages are official languages of the European Union can receive instruction in these languages during the first four years, after which the number of subjects taught in Ukrainian will gradually increase from 20 to 60 percent by the ninth grade. For all other students, the share of instruction in the state language should reach 80-100 percent already in the fifth grade.

As a result of adoption of the aforementioned laws, in particular, On Education, On Comprehensive General Secondary Education and On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language, the Russian language in Ukraine has been subjected to triple discrimination, namely, as regards the state language, the official EU languages and the languages of indigenous peoples.

Importantly, the Ukrainian authorities were not ready to implement the above innovations. In the run-up to the universal transition to the Ukrainian language of instruction in the second half of June 2020, the country carried out a nationwide inventory of school library funds to make textbooks available to all educational institutions. However, there were not enough resources to implement the legal provisions in practice. According to students' parents, schools were unable to provide children with the textbooks, so the parents were encouraged to buy them with their own money.¹⁶³

The 2020/2021 academic year showed that the law on education was implemented according to the toughest scenario, and in some regions the situation was made even tougher by local governments. Thus, in Lvov, the Ukrainisation of the Russian Lyceum No. 45, one of the most prestigious educational institutions in the city, where about 1,000 children of different ethnicities studied, was portrayed as an outstanding “achievement.” The school principal, an active promoter of Russian-language education, had to resign to give way to someone who was in favour of abandoning Russian-language teaching and had no previous ties with the lyceum whatsoever.

“Civil society” (often radical organisations) was used to “squeeze out” the Russian language as well. With the tacit consent of the authorities, they staged all kinds of aggressive rallies against teachers who continued to use the Russian language. In March 2020, nationalists organised bullying of

¹⁶³ <https://strana.today/news/272272-zakrytie-russkikh-shkol-v-ukraine-hde-brat-uchebniki-na-move.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/272272-zakrytie-russkikh-shkol-v-ukraine-hde-brat-uchebniki-na-move.html>)

teachers at a lyceum in Lvov. The teachers were accused of “propaganda of the Russian world” and “Russification of Ukrainian children.”¹⁶⁴ A similar fate befell the Merited Teacher of Ukraine Pavel Viktor. In April 2020, the nationalists mounted an aggressive campaign against him, because he created Russian-language physics video lessons.¹⁶⁵

In November 2020, Valery Gromov, a professor at the National Technical University Dnepr Polytechnic (Dnepropetrovsk) was forced to resign under pressure from the university after an official complaint against him was filed by a student who was outraged that the professor was giving a lecture in Russian.¹⁶⁶

Overall, the Ukrainian government's education policy has resulted in a decrease in the number of Russian-language schools in the country from 1,275 in 2013 to 25 in the 2021/2022 academic year.

In 2022, Ukraine completed the process of pushing the Russian language out of the education sphere: the 2022/2023 curricula for the secondary school academic year no longer provide for teaching subjects in Russian or studying Russian either as a subject or as an elective. All literary works by Russian and Soviet (with the exception of Ukrainian) authors have been removed from literature classes in Ukrainian schools.¹⁶⁷ The Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine developed recommendations for withdrawing Russian literature from libraries. According to the ministry officials, these works “will be recycled to publish books in Ukrainian.”

On February 7, 2022 two teachers in Kiev schools (Lyceum No. 303 and School No. 152) were fired for using the Russian language in class. They were dismissed following an inspection conducted in these two education institutions by the office of Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language Taras Kremin. The teachers were reprimanded before being dismissed.

On February 9, 2022, Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language Taras Kremin demanded that the mayors of several Ukrainian cities dismantle outdoor advertising, billboards and signs installed in

¹⁶⁴ <https://strana.today/news/253594-kak-vo-lvove-natsionalisty-atakujut-shkolu-s-russkim-jazykom-obuchenija-.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/253594-kak-vo-lvove-natsionalisty-atakujut-shkolu-s-russkim-jazykom-obuchenija-.html>)

¹⁶⁵ <https://vesti.ua/odessa/rabotaet-na-kreml-v-odesse-zatravili-izvestnogo-professora-iz-za-yazyka>

¹⁶⁶ <https://strana.today/news/299846-jazykovej-skandal-v-dnepre-za-cto-uvolili-professora-hromova-iz-dpi.html>

(previously <https://strana.ua/news/299846-jazykovej-skandal-v-dnepre-za-cto-uvolili-professora-hromova-iz-dpi.html>)

¹⁶⁷ https://ru.osvita.ua/doc/files/news/866/86629/1_Rishennya.pdf

violation of the language law. This information was published on Kremin's Facebook page. In particular, reportedly the letters were sent to the heads of Kiev, Kharkov, Odessa, Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk), Zaporozhye, Nikolayev, Kherson, Sumy, Poltava, Chernigov, Cherkassy, Chernovtsy, Kropivnitskiy, Uzhgorod, Kremenchug, Beregovo, Mariupol, Kramatorsk, Bakhmut and Krivoy Rog, as well as the heads of the Volnovakha, Slavyansk, Severodonetsk and Lisichansk military-civil municipal administrations.

In April 2022, Taras Kremin publicly called to abolish teaching in Russian at all educational institutions of the country starting September 1.¹⁶⁸ He proposed replacing “The Russian Language” subject with other subjects, such as history of Ukraine or the English language and, pending this, he proposed that before each lesson of the Russian language teachers tell their Russian-speaking students that their native language is the language of the aggressor and it's a shame to speak it. Also, Kremin said that the foreign literature programme should be revised, as it contains many works by Russian writers. On April 11, 2022, he called to get rid of Russian names of the localities in that country backing it up by the slogan “Ukraine is for Ukrainians.”¹⁶⁹

The Kiev authorities are not limiting themselves to excluding the Russian language from education and science. In mid-December 2022, Verkhovnaya Rada adopted in the first reading Draft Law No. 7633 to ban the use of the “Russian sources of information” in education, meaning a ban on using Russian-language literature in research and education. The document envisages amending the law On Education to stipulate that Ukrainian educational programmes cannot contain references to literature or information sources published in the state language by individuals or legal entities of the Russian Federation residing within its borders. Similar changes are envisaged in the law On Research and Scientific-Technical Activities. All of that has been introduced to “protect Ukraine's education and information space from the influence of Russian imperialism.”¹⁷⁰ In fact, it means a complete ban on academic literature in the Russian language that was published in Russia or by Russian citizens. Source literature in Russian will no longer be allowed to be used in schools, universities, or scientific papers.

¹⁶⁸ <https://strana.today/news/386692-v-shkolakh-mohut-perestat-obuchat-russkomu.html>

¹⁶⁹ <https://ria.ru/20220411/yazyk-1782979284.html>

¹⁷⁰ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/amp/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221219-v-pogone-za-movoy-ukraina-polnostyu-khoronit-ostatki-svoey-nauki-i-kultury/>

Obstacles earlier imposed by the Ukrainian authorities on imports of Russian books (in the form of refusals to issue corresponding licenses) have already led to negative consequences. According to Strana.UA, between November 2019 and July 8, 2020, not a single Russian publication was imported into Ukraine and not a single license was issued. This does not apply only to fiction; technical literature fell under restrictions as well, which led to shortages, especially of up-to-date scientific papers on virology during the pandemic.¹⁷¹

On March 14, 2022, the Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting of Ukraine announced a ban on importing and distributing all publishing products from Russia, including for the purpose of “preventing Russia’s cultural and informational influence on Ukrainians.”¹⁷²

In addition, in June 2022 laws were adopted that banned the import and distribution of books and other publishing products from Russia and Belarus, as well as the publication and sale of books authored by Russian citizens.

In May 2020, the ban on access to 468 Russian websites and social media platforms, including Yandex, Mail.ru, VKontakte and Odnoklassniki, as well as software products made by 1C, Kaspersky Lab and Doctor Web, was renewed for three years in Ukraine. The ban was first imposed in 2017. In September 2020, Secretary of Ukraine’s National Security and Defence Council Alexei Danilov said the Ukrainian security services will track and keep a registry of users of the above mentioned social media.¹⁷³

Despite legislative restrictions, television programmes in Russian are still popular, even though the Ukrainian authorities are trying to reverse the situation. Notably, on January 13, 2022, Ukraine’s National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council announced during an online meeting that it would conduct inspections of Ukrainian channels in the wake of their abundant Russian-language content on New Year's Eve.

Along with this, the law On Television and Radio Broadcasting¹⁷⁴ prohibits broadcasting films and programmes with the participation of the “banned” actors. The law On Cinematography¹⁷⁵ in Ukraine does not allow

¹⁷¹ <https://strana.today/news/277505-zapret-na-vvoz-knih-iz-rossii-sprovotsiroval-defitsit-na-rynke-nauchnoj-literatury-v-ukraine.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/277505-zapret-na-vvoz-knih-iz-rossii-sprovotsiroval-defitsit-na-rynke-nauchnoj-literatury-v-ukraine.html>)

¹⁷² <https://iz.ru/1304904/2022-03-14/na-ukraine-vveli-zapret-na-vvoz-i-rasprostranenie-vsekh-knih-iz-rossii>

¹⁷³ <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/25/09/2020/5f6db5599a794765448c5e81>

¹⁷⁴ https://urst.com.ua/ru/act/o_televidenij_i_radioveschaniij

¹⁷⁵ https://kodeksy.com.ua/ka/o_kinematografii.htm

the screening of films and TV series about Russian security forces and Russian television and film products released after 2014.

On October 7, 2022, the law On Amending Certain Laws of Ukraine on Supporting National Music Products and Restrictions on Public Use of Music Products Created by the Aggressor State took effect¹⁷⁶ According to this law, broadcasting Russian music on television and radio and in public places is prohibited, as are tours by performers from Russia.

Even before this law was passed, nationalists widely engaged in opposing public performance of Russian songs and the use of the Russian language in everyday life. Unofficial associations that were radically opposed to the Russian language and known as “language activists”¹⁷⁷, mostly young people¹⁷⁸, have been active in Lvov since the early 2021, where they staged a number of stunts to that effect. For example, the “language activists” demanded that the Puzata Khata café management stop playing Russian music and submitted a complaint to the company’s headquarters. They have also provoked a conflict in downtown Lvov with an entertainer who worked to Russian music. Another conflict took place in AzArt hookah bar between “activist blogger” Vladimir Andreyev and the owner of the establishment. Andreyev demanded that the owner turn off the Russian music playing in the bar, but his demand was ignored and he was kicked out of the bar. After that, the blogger posted on social media criticising the bar and asked the city administration to conduct an inspection there.

The pressure on the people who use the Russian language in everyday life was not limited to formal measures. Thus, on March 5, 2021 in Lvov, nationalists beat up street musicians who were singing songs in Russian. Local police did not respond to this unlawful act.¹⁷⁹

Instances of discrimination against Russian-speaking visitors took place in a number of cafes and restaurants, especially in Western Ukraine. For example, the administration of the New York Street Pizza cafe in Chernovtsy put up a crossed out image of a pig painted in the colours of the Russian flag at the entrance. In response to journalists' question, the administrator said: “Such visitors refuse to speak English or Ukrainian.

¹⁷⁶ <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/go/2310-20>

¹⁷⁷ They call themselves “language patrol”.

¹⁷⁸ <https://is.gd/TmiDr3> (profile of one of such “language patrols” in Facebook).

¹⁷⁹ <https://lvov.strana.today/366447-zakon-o-jazyke-vo-lvove-izbili-ulichnykh-muzykantov-za-pesni-na-russkom.html> (previously <https://lvov.strana.ua/321171-zakon-o-jazyke-dobraljsja-do-muzykantov-vo-lvove-izbili-ljudej-za-russkij-jazyk.html>), <https://iz.ru/1262808/2021-12-10/vo-lvove-izbili-ispolnivshikh-pesni-na-russkom-muzykantov>

We do not use Russian as a matter of principle. It is our language policy.”¹⁸⁰

On May 30, 2022, a video from Lvov was posted online, in which a volunteer refuses to provide UN humanitarian aid to displaced people from eastern Ukraine because they speak Russian. The volunteer told the women he did not understand them and wanted them to speak Ukrainian. A nearby police officer told the displaced persons they cannot take pictures of the volunteer and, in response to their outrage, threatened to take the women to the police station.

Statements by Ukrainian officials clearly show that the authorities are deliberately pursuing a policy of annihilation of the Russian-speaking space in Ukraine. In particular, Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council Alexei Danilov openly stated that “the Russian language must disappear altogether.”¹⁸¹

Some Ukrainian officials have also been subjected to reprisals for using the Russian language. On January 13, 2023, Kharkov Mayor Igor Terekhov filed a lawsuit against language ombudsman Taras Kremin for repeatedly imposing a fine on him for using the Russian language. Earlier, in November 2022, he was fined for using a non-state language while appearing on the Ukrainian national telethon and issued a warning to the effect that the mayor of Kharkov was using Russian to post on social media. Terekhov said he would continue to use the Russian language in communication with Kharkov citizens, as 80 percent of its residents speak Russian.

Meanwhile, a poll conducted by Kiev International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) in February 2020 showed that 33 percent of the respondents believed that the state should provide Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine with the right to receive school education in Russian throughout the country. Forty percent of the respondents said Russian speakers should have that right in the regions where the majority of the population wants it, but not throughout Ukraine. Another 24 percent of the respondents believe that the state should not provide this right. At the same time, 37 percent of the respondents believe that the state should provide Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine with the right to communicate with officials in Russian throughout Ukraine, while 31 percent want this right to be provided in the

¹⁸⁰ Online Environment as an Instrument of Human Right and Freedom Violations in Ukraine. Irina Berezhnaya
Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, 2022.

¹⁸¹ <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/21/10/2022/6352a7b49a7947f3b9632b73>

regions where the majority of the population wants it, but not throughout Ukraine, and 28 percent believe the state should not provide this right at all.¹⁸²

Moreover, according to another poll conducted by KIIS in April 2020, 48.8 percent of the respondents believe the Russian language is a historical legacy of Ukraine which should be promoted.¹⁸³

With the above in mind, all of these laws adopted by the Kiev regime are directed against the Russian language and their purpose is to narrow the scope of its use. For instance, in October 2020, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Concept for the State Targeted Social Programme of National Patriotic Education to 2025¹⁸⁴, which contains survey results showing that less than half of the country's population – only 46 percent – use the Ukrainian language at home, with this indicator being almost zero in Donbass. This situation is described by the Ukrainian authorities as “threatening.”¹⁸⁵

This shows that the real goal of the legislative regulation of the language sphere in Ukraine is not to popularise or promote the Ukrainian language, as the Kiev authorities claim, but to forcibly change the linguistic identity of non-Ukrainian speaking citizens residing in that country.

The above list of legislative measures aimed at gradually pushing Russian out of public life contradicts national legislation and Ukraine's international commitments. In particular, the policy of Ukrainianisation is at odds with Article 10 of the Constitution of Ukraine, which guarantees free development, use and protection of Russian and other languages of ethnic minorities of Ukraine; Article 22, which states that the content and volume of existing rights and freedoms cannot be restricted when new laws are adopted or existing documents are amended; and Article 53, which lays out the ethnic minorities' right to receive instruction in their native language.

The provisions of the above laws contradict Ukraine's commitments under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe

¹⁸² <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=rus&cat=reports&id=920&page=7>

¹⁸³ https://www.kiis.com.ua/materials/pr/20200406_pressconf/politics_april%202020.pdf

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/prijnyato-koncepciyu-derzhavnoyi-cilovoyi-socialnoyi-programi-nacionalno-patriotichnogo-vihovannya-na-period-do-2025-r>

¹⁸⁵ <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1233-2020-%D1%80#Text>, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1233-2020-p#Text>.

Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and a number of soft law acts, such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference of Human Dimension of the CSCE, Concluding Document of the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting of the CSCE and the Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities.

Inculcating hatred for Russians and discriminating against them

Along with the effort to squeeze Russian out of all spheres of public life in Ukraine, there was regular propaganda of intolerance towards local Russian inhabitants and the whole of Russian culture. The Ukrainian authorities not only failed to condemn or oppose this in any way but, but actually engaged in these activities themselves. President Vladimir Zelensky, for one, urged Russians to get out of Ukraine in an interview published on August 5, 2021.¹⁸⁶

National and regional TV channels openly incited hatred for Russians. Russophobic comments and calls to kill Russians were a fixture on the air. For example, the official teaser ad for the Yanina Sokolova show on Channel 5 said: “Switch on the fifth! This drives the Russkies nuts!” In August 2022, Sokolova told NTA that Russians should not be taken prisoner; rather they must be killed to the maximum extent. And she added: “I wish they had been wiped out, all of them, and as soon as possible!”

Journalist and announcer Ostap Drozdov, former media director of ZIK TV, repeatedly insulted Russian speakers in public, claiming that for Ukraine, Russian was not only a foreign but also an “aggressively invading and threatening” language. He also called the Russian-speaking residents of Ukraine “a pledge of war” and opined that they should “disappear as a species.” In November 2022, one Olga Lakunova, a Ukrainian POW exchange returnee, declared that “all the Russian population, including children, should be annihilated.”

Russophobia is spreading unopposed in the internet and social media. By now, there are numerous posts, images, and collages that are not just derogatory towards Russians but directly dehumanise them. Russians are branded as “Colorado bugs,” “rag-tags,” and “orcs.” Content justifying the killing of Russians or calling for it is energetically promulgated.

NGOs upholding the rights of Russian speakers in Ukraine have repeatedly sent relevant appeals to European organisations, including the Council of Europe and the OSCE, but there was no reply. Among other things, the NGOs reported that OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

¹⁸⁶ <https://kanal-dom.tv/esli-ty-schitaesh-hto-my-russkie-bolshaya-oshibka-ostavatsya-zhit-na-donbasse-zelenskij-video/>

Kairat Abdrakhmanov, while paying an official visit to Ukraine in September 2021, failed to meet with representatives of Russian communities and leaders of Russian human rights organisations. Similarly, no arrangements were made for Secretary General of the Council of Europe Marija Pejčinović Burić to meet with Russian speaking human rights activists.¹⁸⁷

The Kiev-controlled media were fomenting a Russophobic hysteria that reached unprecedented levels and was instrumental in dramatically aggravating the existence of Russian compatriots as the special military operation continued. Ukrainian officials spare no effort in this regard as well. For example, in a comment on the Kiev regime's cynical provocation in Bucha, Ukrainian Minister of Culture Alexander Tkachenko told Channel 1+1 that "there's no mention of good Russians anywhere, because good Russians don't exist," and urged Ukrainians to make short shrift of Russians all over the world. Presidential adviser Anton Gerashchenko said on social media that it was necessary to "find and punish" all civilians in the Kiev region, who had collaborated with the Russian military. Mayor of Dnepropetrovsk (now Dnepr) Boris Filatov, notorious for his hatred of all things Russian, posted on his Facebook page an appeal "to kill Russians all over the world in large numbers." Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council Alexei Danilov called Russians "rats" and "swine dogs" ("schweinehund") and urged everyone to "poison them" and "destroy them by all possible methods."

Against this background, the human rights situation in Ukraine, especially where Russian citizens and compatriots are concerned, remains extremely grave.

In 2021, the National Security and Defence Council approved a number of decisions on introducing restrictions against Russian legal entities and individuals, which suspended their business activities, froze their assets, imposed controls on their travel to Ukraine, and more. In all, about 1,500 Russians and over 1,000 Russian businesses and companies were put on the sanctions lists.

Citizens of Russia arriving in Ukraine from Crimea are subjected to unjustified criminal prosecution. They are taken to court on charges of "high treason," or "infringement on territorial integrity and inviolability," or "formation of paramilitary units," or "assistance to terrorists and

¹⁸⁷ Online Environment as an Instrument of Human Right and Freedom Violations in Ukraine. Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, 2022.

separatists,” etc. Numerous violations of Russian citizens’ procedural rights during criminal prosecution have also been recorded.

According to the State Border Service of Ukraine, over 6,600 Russian citizens were denied entry under various pretexts in 2021, including 500 or so for “illegally” visiting Crimea or the self-proclaimed Donbass republics. On June 17, 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted Directive № 692¹⁸⁸ on Ukraine’s withdrawal from the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of Ukraine on the Visa-Free Travel of Citizens of the Russian Federation and Ukraine of January 16, 1997, and on the suspension of the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the Procedure for Crossing the Russian-Ukrainian Border for Residents of the Border Regions of the Russian Federation and Ukraine of October 18, 2011.

Russian journalists were actually deprived of the right to engage in their professional activities in Ukraine as early as 2021. They were prevented from attending government press events and their accreditation applications were left unprocessed. The same year saw the closure of the TASS office in Kiev following the introduction of sanctions against it.

Russian compatriots, whose rights and freedoms are regularly infringed, remain in a difficult situation. Russian-speaking activists face constant violations of their rights to inviolability of the person, domicile, and property; they are intimidated and pressurised by law enforcement agencies, secret services, and nationalist groups.

In December 2018, the Security Service of Ukraine searched the Russian community’s premises in Poltava, confiscating the Pushkin Medal owned by Sergei Provatorov, coordinator of the All-Ukraine Coordinating Council of Organisations of Russian Compatriots.

An investigation was launched into the activities of historian Yury Pogoda (a researcher of the Northern War period) and the poet and political writer Viktor Shestakov (head of the Russian Community of the Poltava Region), with criminal proceedings under Art. 110 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (“infringement of territorial integrity”) instituted against them.

In May 2019, the Security Service of Ukraine searched the house of Vladimir Saltykov, head of the Rus Transcarpathia Regional Society,

¹⁸⁸ https://base.spininform.ru/show_doc.fwx?rgn=141570

confiscating his mobiles and PC.

In August 2020, the Security Service of Ukraine detained Tatyana Kuzmich, Russian language and literature teacher, head of the Rusich Russian National Community (a public organisation), and Merited Educationist with many years' experience, known for her active efforts to popularise the Russian language in Ukraine. Her arrest caused a stir among the public because she is suspected of high treason. The Security Service accused her of having been recruited as a spy by the Federal Security Service of Russia (FSB) while visiting Crimea. Allegedly, she delivered materials for conducting subversive work in the Kherson Region and all over Ukraine and was involved in creating a spy ring. It must be noted that Ms Kuzmich had visited Crimea regularly since 2008 as part of her professional duty to participate in the Great Russian Word festival. Remanded in custody, she was released on bail in early October 2020. If found guilty, she faces a sentence of 12 to 15 years imprisonment and confiscation of property.

After the start of the special military operation designed to de-Nazify and demilitarise Ukraine and protect peaceful civilians in Donbass, more than 5,000 Russian citizens stranded in Ukraine sent messages to the Russian Foreign Ministry, most of them inquiring about safe routes to leave Ukraine either for Russia or other countries. Many compatriots complained of the reign of terror unleashed in Ukrainian cities by members of so-called territorial defence units and other individuals, who had obtained weapons during the campaign of their uncontrolled distribution.

The Ukrainian authorities actually held hostage a large group of foreign citizens, including foreign students from Ukrainian universities and crews of sea-going vessels, specifically about a hundred Russian sailors in the ports of Odessa and Izmail. They suffered maltreatment and physical coercion. It became possible to free the Russian sailors through several prisoner exchanges, the last of which was held only in mid-October 2022.

The Kiev regime took measures to restrict the rights of Russian citizens, with the National Bank of Ukraine being the first to ban any currency operations with the Russian rouble on the national scale. This step left thousands of people all over the country without a livelihood.

On March 1, 2022, all Ukrainian mobile operators cut off communications for phones with Russian numbers.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ <https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2022/03/03/17376829.shtml>

Russians' rights to private property have been breached as well. The Ukraine Law On the Main Principles of Appropriation in Ukraine of the Properties of the Russian Federation and its Residents¹⁹⁰ came into force on March 7, 2022. The instrument provides for the confiscation of movable and immovable assets, money, bank deposits, etc., without any compensation or recourse to court proceedings. The seizure could be authorised by the National Security and Defence Council, whose decision was put into effect by Presidential Executive Order.

On November 2, 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine decided to suspend the consideration of immigration applications or requests for residence permits tendered by citizens of Russia, this for the duration of martial law.¹⁹¹

On December 30, 2022, Vladimir Zelensky signed Law № 8224 On National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine, which the Verkhovna Rada passed on December 13, 2022. Under the law, ethnic Russians, or as they are euphemistically called “individuals identifying their ethnicity with a nation recognised in Ukraine and/or by international organisations as a terrorist state (aggressor state)” shall be divested of practically all their rights and freedoms, including the right to peaceful assembly, the right to obtain funding, the right to establish deliberative bodies under local administrations, and the right to participate in international activities for the duration of martial law currently in effect in Ukraine and during six months after its repeal.

¹⁹⁰ https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=33474326&pos=10;-32#pos=10;-32

¹⁹¹ <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/02/11/2022/6361c4e79a79478937e28120>

Other manifestations of discrimination

Manifestations of anti-Semitism

Present-day Ukraine stands out for a whole spectrum of manifestations of xenophobia. Large-scale efforts to glorify Ukrainian accomplices of the Nazis who also organised and took part in the murder of Jews during World War II, are leading to a tangible increase in incidents of anti-Semitism.

They are even directly borrowing Nazi methods (the Ukrainian authorities started doing this on a broad scale in 2022). The first indicative incident happened with the Jewish community in Kolomyia. On February 11, 2020, head of the town's Jewish community Yakov Zalitsker received a letter from the Ivano-Frankovsk department of the National Police with a demand to submit a full list of all Jewish residents, including students, their addresses and contacts. The demand was justified by the need to counter organised crime.¹⁹²

According to a study conducted by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Ukraine is second in Europe in terms of anti-Semitic sentiments. In 2016, intolerance to Jews amounted to 32 percent and increased to 46 percent in 2019.¹⁹³

A report by the Kantor Centre on the status of anti-Semitism in the world shows that the number of anti-Semitic incidents in Ukraine recorded in 2020 increased compared to the previous years.¹⁹⁴

A report by the United Jewish Community of Ukraine on anti-Semitism in 2020¹⁹⁵ mentioned, in part, attacks on synagogues in Vinnitsa and Mariupol, and an attempt to set fire to a synagogue in Kherson on April 20, 2020. The investigation of the latter incident revealed that the criminals supported Nazi ideology and tried to set fire to the synagogue to celebrate Hitler's birth anniversary.

On January 19, 2020, a memorial sign in memory of 15,000 Jews killed during the Holocaust was desecrated in the city of Krivoy Rog in the Dnepropetrovsk Region.

¹⁹² https://lenta.ru/news/2020/05/13/perepis_jude/

¹⁹³ <https://apnews.com/f18c9fa70b794974b214b6e9f1552cfd>

¹⁹⁴ <https://lenta.ru/news/2021/04/07/antisemitism/>

¹⁹⁵ Report on Anti-Semitism in Ukraine in 2020. <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/otchyot-po-antisemitizmu-v-ukraine-za-2020-god>

On February 20, 2020, an unknown man in camouflage rushed into a synagogue. Shouting “Beat the Yids” he attacked a member of the local community.

On June 15, 2020, an announcement on the conduct of the first Ukrainian contest-festival of modern music was published online, including on Facebook. It was called Gonta-Fest in honour of the organiser of the Uman massacre Ivan Gonta¹⁹⁶.

On September 11, 2020, a plaque in Ukrainian and Hebrew saying “No service/no entry for Hasids” appeared in the Kozerog coffee shop in the city of Uman, Cherkassy Region.

On the night of October 24-25, 2020, unknown offenders desecrated the Mourning the Unborn monument to the Holocaust victims in Melitopol, Zaporozhye Region.

In December 2020, employees of the Southeastern Interregional Department of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance used anti-Semitic images in its presentation materials.

In 2021, the total number of anti-Semitic incidents slightly exceeded the figures of 2020 but the number of acts of anti-Semitic vandalism increased, reaching its peak during the celebration of Hanukkah in late November-early December of 2021. Anti-Semitic vandals also damaged six Hanukahs and a memorial to Holocaust victims in Lisichansk.¹⁹⁷

On February 7, 2021, the Centre of Educational Materials publishers issued a book by Zinovy Knysh, a Nazi collaborator and OUN activist under the title “Jews or Yids.” Knysh was directly involved in organising Jewish pogroms and headed the anti-Semitic Ukrainian Central Committee.¹⁹⁸

Anti-Semitic incidents and attacks continued in 2022.

On January 18, 2022, another act of anti-Semitic vandalism was recorded in Lisichansk. Unknown people destroyed a memorial sign to the Jewish victims killed in Lisichansk during World War II in the Green Forest Cemetery. This was the second attack on this memorial. It was destroyed

¹⁹⁶ Online Environment as an Instrument of Human Right and Freedom Violations in Ukraine. Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, 2022.

¹⁹⁷ Anti-Semitism in Ukraine – 2021. <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/antisemitism2021>

¹⁹⁸ Online Environment as an Instrument of Human Right and Freedom Violations in Ukraine. Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, 2022.

for the first time in December 2021 but restored using the funds raised by the city residents who care.

In early February 2022, Ivano-Frankovsk Centre of Modern Art displayed anti-Semitic paintings by Ukrainian artist Roman Bonchuk at the Precursor Show. One of them was entitled “Jew with a pig.” Another depicted a monster in a black hat and a Torah in place of meat in a shawarma machine. They were removed on February 6 after complaints by the United Jewish Community of Ukraine.

On March 31, 2020, Head of the Ivano-Frankovsk Jewish Community Igor Perelman was attacked while handing out free meals to the needy. He was stabbed with a knife three times. Physical violence was accompanied by anti-Semitic statements in front of many eye-witnesses.¹⁹⁹

On May 16, 2022, vandals painted a swastika on the Tehiya Jewish community centre.²⁰⁰

On July 26, 2022, ex-deputy of the Kiev Municipal Council and Head of the National-Patriotic Movement of Ukraine Mikhail Kovalchuk published an anti-Semitic post on his Facebook page, claiming that “Orthodox Jews practice ritual murder of people”.²⁰¹

On September 29, 2022 (the Day of Remembrance of the Babi Yar tragedy), Hasidic Jews were denied service on ethnic and religious grounds at the OKKO petroleum station near Yavorov, Lvov Region.²⁰²

On October 4, 2022, a group of young people destroyed part of the fence by tearing away the Star of David at the oldest cemetery of Ivano-Frankovsk.

On December 26, 2022, graffiti containing anti-Semitic words and an appeal to kill Jews appeared in Uzhgorod.²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ <https://www.unian.net/incidents/direktor-evreyskoy-obshchiny-ivano-frankovska-poluchil-tri-nozhevyh-raneniya-novosti-ukraina-amp-11767225.html>

²⁰⁰ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/vandalyi-narisovali-svastiku-na-evrejskom-obshhinnom-czentre-v-xmelniczkom>

²⁰¹ <https://amp.strana.today/news/401075-eks-deputat-kievrady-mikhail-kovalchuk-zajavil-hto-evrei-ubivajut-detej.html>

²⁰² <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/na-okko-v%D1%96dmovlyayut-v-obslugovuvann%D1%96-xasidam-zanacz%D1%96onalnoyu-ta-rel%D1%96g%D1%96jnoyu-oznakoyu>

²⁰³ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/vipadok-antisem%D1%96tskogo-vandal%D1%96zmu-v-uzhgorod%D1%96>

Discrimination against national minorities and manifestations of racism

A spike in the harassment of the Russian and Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine in 2022 did not ease the challenges facing other national minorities. Hungary and Romania are seriously concerned about the continued infringements of the rights of their compatriots in Ukraine. They see that Kiev has not abandoned attempts at assimilating the Hungarian and Romanian communities and continues its policy of preventing them from using their native languages outside their households and from receiving an education in their native languages. The Hungarian and Romanian human rights commissioners have announced their intention to visit Ukraine to check whether Law No. 8224 on National Minorities (Communities), adopted by the Verkhovna Rada on December 13, 2022 really protects the minorities' rights.

The replacement of the statue of the mythical Turul bird from the Palanok Castle in Mukachevo (Transcarpathian Region) with the Ukrainian trident on October 13, 2022, was a flagrant violation of the Hungarian community's cultural identity rights proclaimed in that law.

The Kiev regime put crude pressure on the Hungarian community residing in Transcarpathia. In late 2020, the house of Laszlo Brenzovics, president of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association (KMKSZ), and the organisation's office were searched in connection with charges of separatism. The reason for the raid was that the Hungarian anthem was sung at one of the organisation's meetings. According to its representatives, the anthem was previously sung on festive occasions where no decisions were made, and this did not cause any concern. The KMKSZ believes that the actions by Ukrainian law enforcers were based on fabricated political accusations and were designed to thwart the activities of Hungarian organisations and to intimidate Transcarpathian Hungarians and their leaders.²⁰⁴

The administrative reforms underway in Ukraine are also threatening the interests of national minorities. For example, on July 17, 2020, the Verkhovna Rada adopted a decision to enlarge the Berehovo District, where Hungarians made up 76 percent of population. According to Jozsef

²⁰⁴ <https://strana.today/news/304131-venhry-zakarpatja-nazvali-okhotoj-na-vedm-obyski-v-venherskom-fonde-i-proverku-sbu.html>

Barta (Ukrainian: Yosyp Borto), deputy head of the Transcarpathian Region Council and a member of the Party of Hungarians of Ukraine, the enlargement of the Beregovo District through the addition of the Vinogradov District would dilute the proportion of ethnic Hungarians to 43 percent. Similar actions have been taken in all the other areas of Transcarpathia where ethnic Hungarians live. For example, the enlargement of the Uzhgorod District decreased the number of ethnic Hungarians from 33 percent to 13 percent, and their proportion in the Mukachevo District went down from 12 percent to 4 percent.²⁰⁵

Members of the Romanian community also voiced concern about infringements of their rights as a result of the language and administrative reforms. Changes in the administrative borders of the districts where there are large Romanian communities have diluted their proportion to about 10 percent of the population, which means that they cannot have their representatives in Ukraine's parliament and they have fewer delegates at local councils. Ultimately, this amounts to the forced assimilation of ethnic Romanians contrary to Ukraine's international commitments.²⁰⁶

International human rights organisations also noted the risk of discrimination and stigmatisation for the majority of members of ethnic and national minorities in Ukraine. For example, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted that far-right organisations in Ukraine, such as the Right Sector, the Azov Civilian Corps and the Social National Assembly, promoted activities that amount to incitement to racial hatred and racist propaganda.²⁰⁷ There are numerous instances of incitement to racist intolerance on the internet. Nationalist resources are posting racist and anti-Semitic posts.²⁰⁸ Ukraine's human rights organisations have reported the growth of xenophobia and aggression against foreigners at law enforcement agencies. People are detained, arrested and requested to show ID on grounds of race and ethnicity.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination also reported a rise in racist hate speech and discriminatory statements in the public

²⁰⁵ <https://ukraina.ru/exclusive/20200613/1027978005.html>; <https://gordonua.com/amp/newspolitics/rada-vmesto-490-sozdala-v-ukraine-136-rajonov-polnyj-spisok-1509766.html>

²⁰⁶ <https://strana.today/news/278990-ukrainskie-rumyny-pozhalovalis-bukharestu-na-prinuditelnuju-ukrainizatsiju-i-adminreformu.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/278990-ukrainskie-rumyny-pozhalovalis-bukharestu-na-prinuditelnuju-ukrainizatsiju-i-adminreformu.html>)

²⁰⁷ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Concluding observations on the twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Ukraine, August 2016. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

²⁰⁸ <https://strana.ua/opinions/161506-ukrainskie-natsionalisty-nachali-raspolzatsja-po-seti.html>

discourse, including by public and political figures and in the media, in particular on the internet and during rallies, directed mainly against minorities.²⁰⁹

The Human Rights Committee reported in November 2021 that it is concerned about reports of intolerance, prejudice, hate speech and hate crimes against members of vulnerable and minority groups, including Roma, Hungarians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Crimean Tatars and LGBTI persons perpetrated by extreme right-wing groups.²¹⁰

Human rights organisations have reported dozens of instances of intolerance and/or aggression against members of ethnic minorities or people with alternative political views. They are especially concerned about the illegal activities of members of far-right nationalist organisations, such as S14, the Right Sector, Tradition and Order, the National Corps, the National Militia and the OUN. Their violent actions go almost unnoticed by law enforcers. Moreover, the right-wing forces make no secret of coordinating their actions with the Security Service and the Interior Ministry of Ukraine.

They are concerned about the persistence of discrimination, stereotypes and prejudices against Roma, including reports of physical attacks and killings. Far-right groups are conducting a harassment campaign against them on the internet where they post offensive texts, cartoons and collages. In November 2020, several media outlets in Ivano-Frankovsk published articles that used negative ethnic stereotypes in descriptions of Roma, which incited hate and calls for violence against them on social media.²¹¹

International human rights organisations and mechanisms noted the insufficient reaction of the Ukrainian judicial authorities to the local nationalists' attacks on Roma.²¹² Moreover, some Ukrainian officials took part in the persecution of this ethnic minority. In March 2020, then

²⁰⁹ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Concluding observations on the twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Ukraine, August 2016.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

²¹⁰ Human Rights Committee. Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine, November 2021 (published in February 2022)
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru

²¹¹ Online Environment as an Instrument of Human Right and Freedom Violations in Ukraine. Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, 2022.

²¹² Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Concluding observations on the twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Ukraine, August 2016.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

Minister of Infrastructure Vladislav Krikly took part in a raid against Roma conducted by members of the far-right organisations S14 and Municipal Guard at the railway terminal in Kiev.

On April 22, 2020, Mayor of Ivano-Frankovsk Ruslan Martsinkiv issued an official order to remove all Roma from the city to the Transcarpathian Region.²¹³

Attacks on Roma are frequently reported in Ukraine. On January 10, 2021, unidentified persons attacked a Roma in Lvov, accused him of stealing, sprayed him with brilliant green and beat him.²¹⁴

On October 5, 2021, a similar attack was reported in Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk), where an unidentified member of a far-right group beat a Roma and pepper-sprayed him in the face.²¹⁵

On October 17, 2021, members of the far-right organisations S14 and the Municipal Guard attacked a Roma camp in Irpen with flares and smoke bombs. One of the organisers of that attack was Andrey Medvedko, who had been charged with the murder of writer Oles Buzina.

On October 23, 2021, member of the Azov Battalion Maxim Yarosh openly and cynically beat up Roma women in the centre of Kiev. A video of the attack was posted online.²¹⁶

On November 17, 2021, Ukrainian neo-Nazis attacked young Roma women in central Kiev, leaving them with facial injuries and ripped clothing. They made a video of the attack and posted it online.²¹⁷

On January 14, 2022, a man armed with a gun attacked a Roma family, threatening to kill them and hitting a Roma child with a brick.²¹⁸

Nationalists also attacked members of parliament. On August 13, 2021, two radicals insulted MP Jean Belenyuk, from the Servant of the People Party, in Kiev, calling him “a black monkey” and telling him to “go back to Africa.”

There were shocking reports about racist attacks on Asian and African citizens in Ukraine in February and March 2022. For example, Indian

²¹³ Online Environment as an Instrument of Human Right and Freedom Violations in Ukraine. Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, 2022.

²¹⁴ <https://violence-marker.org.ua/blog/2022/06/03/ultrapravi-konfrontacziyi-ta-nasylstvo-u-2021-roczy/>

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Online Environment as an Instrument of Human Right and Freedom Violations in Ukraine. Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, 2022.

²¹⁸ <https://youtu.be/ru71taHU3yU> (Lutsk and Volyn News)

students were beaten because India refused to vote against Russia at the UN General Assembly, Africans willing to leave Ukraine were attacked, and citizens of China were maltreated.

The media published numerous reports of discrimination against foreigners who attempted to leave the country together with Ukrainians. For example, Asians and Africans were prevented from boarding trains and buses, ordered to get off and to join separate queues at border checkpoints.

The African Union expressed concern about the ill-treatment of Africans in Ukraine in a statement it published on February 28, 2022. It said, in part, “reports that Africans are singled out for unacceptable dissimilar treatment would be shockingly racist and in breach international law.”

Suppression of opposition and restrictions on political rights

The Kiev authorities are conducting an undisguised campaign to purge the country's political circles of undesirable figures and forces that oppose the biased domestic and foreign policy line and compete with the ruling regime. They are vigorously employing the country's security services and judicial system to achieve their goals.

The media described the actions taken by Zelensky's office against the Opposition Platform – For Life political party and its leaders as a sanctions massacre. In early February 2021, the authorities shut down three national news channels owned by Opposition Platform member Taras Kozak; on February 19, the National Security and Defence Council imposed sanctions on the party's leader, Viktor Medvedchuk and his wife, TV presenter Oksana Marchenko, blocking all their assets and property in Ukraine. The action was taken following an SBU security service investigation on suspicions of financing of terrorism²¹⁹. In addition, Marchenko was blacklisted by the odious Kiev-based Mirotvorets (*Peacemaker*) website for “financing terrorists and Russian occupiers, denying Russian aggression, participating in the aggressor country's (Russia's) propaganda activities, etc.”²²⁰

In May 2021, a criminal case was opened against Medvedchuk and Kozak on charges of treason and attempted embezzlement of national resources in Crimea. Medvedchuk's home was searched, and he was placed under round-the-clock house arrest.

Representatives of the Opposition Platform - For Life and Medvedchuk's defence lawyers insisted that the criminal prosecution against him was politically motivated, as the party he represented opposed the current authorities' policy line. They also noted numerous procedural violations recorded during the investigation of his case; in particular, the criminal case against an MP was opened by the SBU, not the Prosecutor General, as is the legal requirement for such cases.²²¹

²¹⁹ <https://strana.today/news/318673-sanktsii-snbo-protiv-medvedchuka-19-fevralja-hlavnoe.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/318673-sanktsii-snbo-protiv-medvedchuka-19-fevralja-hlavnoe.html>)

²²⁰ <https://strana.today/news/316460-oksanu-marchenko-vnesli-v-mirotvorets.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/316460-oksanu-marchenko-vnesli-v-mirotvorets.html>)

²²¹ <https://strana.today/news/334552-kiievskij-apelljatsionnyj-sud-vynes-reshenie-po-mere-presechenija-medvedchuku.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/334552-kiievskij-apelljatsionnyj-sud-vynes-reshenie-po-mere->

In addition, Renat Kuzmin, a deputy from the Opposition Platform – For Life party, reported that the President of Ukraine issued an executive order at the end of March 2021 to award honorary titles to experts from the SBU Research Institute, whose conclusions provided the grounds for accusing Medvedchuk of high treason. The deputy also recalled that the Supreme Court of Ukraine declared illegal any forensic examinations by experts who are subordinate to the bodies that appointed such examinations.²²²

On January 10, 2023, Vladimir Zelensky approved the decision to revoke the Ukrainian citizenship of four Opposition Platform – for Life MPs including Viktor Medvedchuk, Taras Kozak, Andrey Derkach and Renat Kuzmin. After that, Verkhovna Rada voted for the early termination of their MP status. A discussion is now underway of stripping several more Opposition Platform - for Life MPs of their Ukrainian citizenship and parliamentary mandates.²²³

In 2022, the government stepped up efforts to eliminate opposition political parties in Ukraine. On May 14, 2022, Vladimir Zelensky signed a law banning “pro-Russia parties.” As a follow-up to that decision, as of January 11, 2023, Ukrainian courts banned the activities of 17 opposition parties that represented the interests of millions of Russian-speaking Ukrainians and advocated for starting a dialogue with Russia. Their property, finances and other assets were seized and transferred to the state. The leaders of those parties faced criminal prosecution.

Earlier, on April 23, 2022, Ukraine enacted amendments to its Criminal Code to “ensure that any individuals engaged in collaborationist activities are held accountable.” Aiding the “aggressor state” is now punishable by imprisonment for up to 12 years. In fact, the Ukrainian authorities are using this innovation to persecute dissidents. As of the end of December 2022, the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine opened 18,519 criminal cases on suspicions of crimes against national security, including 11,720 cases under Article 110 (encroachment on Ukraine’s territorial integrity and inviolability), 1,915 under Article 111 (high treason), 3,789 under Article 111-1 (collaborationism), 365 under Article 111-2 (aiding the “aggressor state”), and 63 under Article 113 (sabotage). More than 350

presechenija-medvedchuku.html); <https://strana.today/news/334654-opzzh-trebuetsn-jat-obvinenija-s-medvedchuka.html>

²²² <https://strana.today/news/335121-delo-medvedchuka-zelenskij-eshche-v-marte-prisvoil-ekspertam-iz-sbu-pochetnye-zvanija.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/335121-delo-medvedchuka-zelenskij-eshche-v-marte-prisvoil-ekspertam-iz-sbu-pochetnye-zvanija.html>)

²²³ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/16863881>

convictions have already been handed down.

Public figures and human rights activists are also being persecuted on these charges. One of the most telling examples was the case of Yelena Berezhnaya, a prominent Ukrainian civil activist defending the rights of the Russian-speaking population and national minorities in Ukraine. Her regular reports at the UN, OSCE and other international organisations were the most likely reasons for her persecution by the Ukrainian special services. On March 16, 2022, Berezhnaya was detained by the SBU on far-fetched suspicions of treason and has been held in a pre-trial detention centre since then.

Writer, satirist, commentator and TV host Yan Taksyur was detained in March 2022 because his works allegedly “undermined the sovereignty of the state.” Taksyur was kept in a pre-trial detention centre despite serious health problems and was released on bail after several months.

In June 2022, charges of treason were brought in absentia against the well-known Ukrainian political scientist, Mikhail Pogrebinskiy. He was charged with “repeatedly disseminating overworked Russian ideas aimed at destabilising the sociopolitical situation in Ukraine” while participating in a variety of talk shows as an expert. Earlier, in March 2022, Pogrebinskiy's apartment was searched.

Numerous cases of persecution of public figures in Ukraine should be noted in the spring of 2022 against those who dared express independent judgments about the situation in the country and deviate from official approaches. In particular, there were reports in the media about the detentions of activist Alexander Gorbenko, political scientist and journalist Dmitry Dzhangirov, political scientist Yury Dudkin, who participated in the live broadcasts on the 112-Ukraine, NewsOne and ZIK channels closed by the Kiev regime, politicians Mikhail and Alexander Kononovich, political scientist and blogger Gleb Lyashenko; anti-fascist activist Alexander Mayevskiy (he managed to escape during the arson of the House of Trade Unions in Odessa on May 2, 2014), communist and anti-fascist Alexander Matyushenko, anti-Maidan activist Oleg Novikov, journalist of the NewsOne and NASH (Ours) channels Max Nazarov, head of the Revived Rus Slavic Movement public organisation Alexander Tarnashinskiy, lawyer Dmitry Tikhonenkov who defended anti-Maidan activists, journalist Yury Tkachov, professor of the Nikolayev Institute of Law Sergey Shubin and many others. Convictions have been handed down in the cases of certain public figures. In May 2022, Alexander

Matyushenko was sentenced to three years in prison on charges of “violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine.”²²⁴

After the start of the special military operation, the SBU began to harass and intimidate local deputies and officials in Ukraine who received humanitarian supplies from Russia or negotiated with the Russian military to arrange corridors for the evacuation of civilians. On March 1, 2022, Mayor of Kremennaya Vladimir Struk was abducted by men in military uniform. Two days later, his body was found with signs of torture. On March 7, 2022, Mayor of Gostomel Yury Prilipko was found dead. He had negotiated with the Russian military on arranging a humanitarian corridor for the civilian population. On March 24, 2022, Mayor of Kupyansk Gennady Matsegora published a video calling on Vladimir Zelenskiy and his administration to release his daughter, who had been kidnapped by SBU agents to put pressure on the official. There were reports in the media about the detentions of Mayor of Yuzhnoye Alexander Bryukhanov, deputy of the Cherkassy City Council from the Opposition Platform - For Life Alexander Zamirailo, deputy of the Kherson City Council Ilya Karamalikov, deputy of the Mariupol City Council Vladimir Klimenko, politician Igor Kolesnikov, Mayor of Stariy Saltov Eduard Konovalov, Mayor of Buryn Viktor Ladukha, and deputy of the Solonitsevskiy Village Council, Kharkov Region, Andrey Lazurenko.

In many cases, representatives of the Ukrainian security services tell their detainees directly that they have been arrested to be exchanged for Ukrainian servicemen who surrendered to the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

In July 2022, in her report to the 50th session of the UN Human Rights Council, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet pointed out that such actions ran counter to international law.

It should be noted that representatives of Kiev's Western partners and various international bodies have expressed complaints about the judicial system in Ukraine, most often mentioning such flaws as widespread corruption, inefficiency and lack of public confidence. Judicial reform was one of the main requirements of the IMF. After taking office, Vladimir Zelensky took a number of steps to reform the judicial system. In November 2019, he signed a bill to halve the number of Supreme Court judges, from 200 to 100. The document also dissolved the High Judges

²²⁴ <https://ukraina.ru/20220715/1036459856.html>

Qualification Commission and reduced the number of its members from 16 to 12 (the commission was reinstated in March 2021). However, many experts doubted that the reform would be successful. Instead, the move provoked a confrontation between the judiciary and the president.

In September 2020, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine ruled certain powers of the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption (NAPC) to be unconstitutional, as well as the [Criminal Code] article requiring accountability for false declaration of income of officials. This decision dissatisfied Vladimir Zelensky, who submitted to Verkhovna Rada a bill terminating the powers of the current Constitutional Court members. In response to his move, Constitutional Court Judge Igor Slidenko announced that the president was attempting to usurp power and warned of the tragic consequences of such a scenario. The president had to withdraw his bill when he realised that his demand for the dissolution of the court would not be fulfilled. According to experts, Zelensky made a concession as a result of pressure from the oligarchs.

It should also be noted that the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe acknowledged that the decision of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine concerning the NAPC lacked “clear reasoning,” had “no firm basis in international law, and was possibly tainted with a major procedural flaw – an unresolved question of a conflict of interest of some judges.”²²⁵

In November 2021, the Human Rights Committee noted a number of problems with the activities of political parties in Ukraine.²²⁶ Its main concerns included cases of corruption, lack of transparency in the financing of political campaigns, as well as the use of public funds for them. The HRC was also concerned about the broad and vague legislative provisions allowing for the denial of registration to parties or the cancellation of existing registration citing threats to national security. In addition to the need to ensure transparent, effective monitoring of campaign funding and the investigation of corruption allegations, the HRC recommendations to Kiev included the promotion of a political pluralism culture. At the same time, the HRC experts pointed out that the Ukrainian authorities’ COVID-19 response efforts had an impact on the civil and

²²⁵ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/838711-sudebnaya-reforma-rada-zelenskii>

²²⁶ Human Rights Committee. Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine, November 2021 (published in February 2022)

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2F8%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru

political rights in the country. In particular, the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers used the virus as a pretext to impose restrictions that mostly affected residents of armed conflict zones, women, Roma and the elderly.

The HRC also had concerns about the judiciary in Ukraine, including the lack of measures to fully ensure the independence of judges and prosecutors, the lack of a transparent procedure for the appointment and dismissal of judges, the holding of qualification examinations, as well as the investigation of corruption allegations. These factors, along with the shortage of judges in the country, cause delays in the consideration of cases and other difficulties with accessing justice for a significant number of Ukrainian citizens. The country's authorities were advised to refrain from interfering in the judicial system and guarantee its independence. According to the HRC, the underfunding of courts and personnel shortages were hindering investigations into the tragedies on Maidan and in Odessa.

Restrictions on media activities

The state of affairs with freedom of the media and freedom of speech overall remains extremely worrisome in Ukraine. The authorities are openly interfering with the media activities. The right to freedom of opinion and its free expression had been severely restricted, limitations have been imposed on independent work of journalists, and attempts are being made to ratchet up censorship. The level of aggression against media professionals remains high. Right-wing “activists” blocked television channels that are objectionable to Kiev on numerous occasions. The security services intervene in the work of the media and the NGOs that promote points of view that are alternative to the official position.²²⁷

Despite the calls by multiple human rights entities and mechanisms, there is still no noticeable progress in investigating high-profile killings of Oles Buzina and Pavel Sheremet.

International observers are pointing to numerous media-related issues as well. In particular, they are talking about the lack of editorial independence of the media stemming from their owners’ political bias. Difficulties with journalists' access to public information resulting from the administrative barriers created by the authorities are part of the problem as well. In addition, it is noted that the actions of the National Broadcasting Council, the national regulator, with regard to the media may also be biased due to its affiliation with a number of politically biased media resources.

Any attempts to describe the situation in the country or its relations with Russia that are alternative to the official stance are abruptly cut short by the Kiev regime. This began long before 2022. On February 2, 2021, President Zelensky issued an executive order to block the broadcasting of the nationwide news television channels such as 112-Ukraine, NewsOne and ZIK, which were owned by Taras Kozak, a deputy from the Opposition Platform – For Life party. Sanctions were imposed on Kozak for five years. He believed these actions were caused by differences

²²⁷ Monitoring of human rights observance in Ukraine in January 2018 – April 2019
<https://forbiddentoforbid.org.ua/ru/monitoring-prav-cheloveka-konets-2018-nachalo-2019/>

between the positions of the television channels and that of the core policy pursued by the authorities.²²⁸

ZIK, 112-Ukraina and NASH (Ours) channels saw clampdowns on the part of Ukrainian law enforcement agencies on earlier occasions as well. They were accused of broadcasting programmes whose participants allegedly made statements containing national and racial hatred, called for undermining the constitutional order, violating its territorial integrity and sovereignty, and also made statements praising the “aggressor country’s” authorities and justifying the “occupation of Ukrainian territories.” However, they were not closed.

After the President of Ukraine’s decision to close the television channels, the journalists who worked there created a new television channel, Pershiy Nezalezhny (First Independent). The channel was taken off the air almost instantly after the first broadcast which was led by several dozen well-known Ukrainian journalists representing various media to create an association to protect their rights and demanded that the authorities stop attacking the press.²²⁹

Criminal prosecution became a popular means of putting pressure on objectionable journalists. The news agencies’ editorial offices were subjected to numerous searches. Since 2015, numerous charges have been brought against Igor Guzhva, editor-in-chief of the largest independent online media in Ukraine – Strana.UA – which had him leave the country and seek political asylum in Austria. In August 2021, in accordance with the decision of the National Security and Defence Council, sanctions were imposed on him which also applied to the legal entities that were associated with him. In particular, the Strana.UA website was blocked and the owner of the Open Ukraine news agency and former serviceman Alexander Medinsky²³⁰, the head of RIA Novosti-Ukraine Kirill Vyshinsky, and independent journalists Yury Lukashin and Vladimir Skachko were persecuted as well. Several journalists were held in pre-trial detention centres, usually without bail, such as Dmitry Vasilets²³¹ (who was released under house arrest in 2018 after the Court of Appeal

²²⁸ <https://strana.today/articles/analysis/315598-kakimi-budut-posledstviya-blokirovki-kanalov-dlja-zelenskoho-.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/articles/analysis/315598-kakimi-budut-posledstviya-blokirovki-kanalov-dlja-zelenskoho-.html>)

²²⁹ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/11581293>

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ <https://riafan.ru/1212680-otsidevshii-bolee-dvukh-let-ukrainskii-zhurnalist-rasskazal-o-terrore-rezhima-poroshenko>

overturned the verdict, but the case was not closed), Vasiliy Muravitsky²³² (who was held under 24/7 house arrest starting in 2018, and under night house arrest from November 2019), or Pavel Volkov²³³ (fully acquitted in March 2019).

In addition to direct impact on the media that adopt independent positions on the most sensitive issues, the nationalists attack these media resources' offices with the authorities' blatant connivance. Thus, the buildings and premises of the Inter, NASH (Ours), 112-Ukraine, and NewsOne television channels have repeatedly come under threats and aggression by the radicals. As a rule, these incidents occurred during events involving participants from Russia or the demonstration of materials that criticised the Kiev authorities (including American film director Oliver Stone's famous film *Ukraine on Fire*).

On June 11, 2020, the supporters of Sergei Sternenکو, a radical who is accused of committing a murder in May 2018 in Odessa, chased away the journalists who worked on Anatoly Shariy's resources from the SBU building, where an investigation were taking place. In a video posted on Twitter, it can be seen how, in response to a journalist's question about the reasons for their disparaging conduct with her colleagues, the nationalists turned on a siren and, staying close to her, yelled profanities into the loudspeaker.²³⁴

On November 28, 2020, correspondent of the NewsOne television channel Violetta Tovkes was attacked while reporting from Kiev's Park of Glory. An unknown person wearing a mask and a hood approached the journalist, grabbed the microphone and smashed it on the asphalt yelling "This is a Russhist channel!" That individual then pushed the journalist, shouted several invectives and took off. The police opened criminal proceedings in connection with this incident, but there has been no news about identifying or detaining the perpetrator.

On February 12, 2021, in Kiev, radicals from S14 attacked journalist Sergei Shevchuk (Pravovoi Kontrol), who was covering a rally staged by nationalists outside the NASH television channel office. The police did not

²³² <https://uspishna-varta.com/ru/pravozashhitnye-kejsy/delo-vasiliya-muravitskogo>

²³³ <https://ukraina.ru/news/20190327/1023114167.html>

²³⁴ <https://strana.today/news/272646-storonniki-sternenko-prohnali-ot-zdaniya-sbu-storonnikov-sharija.html> (панее <https://strana.ua/news/272646-storonniki-sternenko-prohnali-ot-zdaniya-sbu-storonnikov-sharija.html>); <https://strana.today/news/272487-pod-zdaniem-sbu-hruppa-podderzhki-sternenko-prizyvaet-plevat-v-litso-zhurnalistam.html> (previously <https://strana.ua/news/272487-pod-zdaniem-sbu-hruppa-podderzhki-sternenko-prizyvaet-plevat-v-litso-zhurnalistam.html>))

arrest the attacker, even though Shevchuk had tackled him, and deliberately delayed the provision of footage from surveillance cameras. Shevchuk's lawyer pointed to the fact that the investigative bodies had a stake in hiding traces of the crime.²³⁵

In all, 197 cases of violation of freedom of expression were put on record in 2021, of which 145 were cases of physical violence involving media members (229 and 171 in 2020, respectively).

Human rights groups pointed out that the impunity of the perpetrators of the earlier attacks worsened the situation with media freedom citing the brutal beating in Cherkassy of journalist Vadim Komarov who specialised in investigative journalism. He was in a coma for 45 days and died on June 20, 2019.²³⁶ The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine noted in 2019 that right-wing nationalist radical groups had been putting pressure on the investigation into the murder of Oles Buzina, which had lasted for more than three years by that time. As a result, the case, which was considered by different courts, was, in fact, stopped, and the process was back to square one after the judge in charge of the case recused in May 2019.²³⁷ At the same time, on December 12, 2019, law enforcement bodies arrested three suspects of the murder of the renowned journalist Pavel Sheremet in 2016.²³⁸

In November 2021, the Human Rights Committee mentioned with concern the attacks and acts of intimidation against journalists and human rights activists by right-wing radicals (anti-corruption fighters and LGBT activists were hit especially hard). Delays in the investigations into the murders of journalists Oles Buzina, Pavel Sheremet and Vadim Komarov are mentioned as well, the perpetrators have not been identified so far due to those delays. Kiev was encouraged to bar the officials from intervening into the legitimate activities of journalists and human rights activists, to guarantee them protection against all kinds of threats, pressure or attacks, and to ensure confidentiality of journalists' sources of information.²³⁹

²³⁵ <https://strana.today/news/317443-ljudi-karasja-sovershili-na-menja-otkrovennoe-napadenie-a-politsii-zatjahivaet-s-rassledovaniem-zhurnalist-serhej-shevchuk-o-podrobnostjakh-napadenija-.html>

²³⁶ Amnesty International Report "Human Rights in Eastern Europe and Central Asia – Review of 2019."
<https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/EUR0113552020ENGLISH.PDF>

²³⁷ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/AttacksAgainstJournalists.aspx>

²³⁸ https://ria.ru/20191224/1562805139.html?rcmd_alg=svd

²³⁹ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 8th periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (published in February 2022)

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru

As noted above, in 2022 the Kiev authorities used the existing situation to turn the state into the only source of information. Ukraine has taken measures to that effect before as well. On March 11, 2021, President of Ukraine Zelensky approved the National Security and Defence Council decision to establish the Centre for Counteracting Disinformation, which is the working body of the Council.²⁴⁰ Now, this Centre is known for spreading numerous false reports and fake news.

Legislative steps are being taken in order to combat alternative points of view in the country. On March 19, 2022, the President of Ukraine put into effect the decision of the National Security and Defence Council “On implementing the unified information policy under martial law,” according to which all national television channels were to be united on a single strategic communication information platform, namely, the 24/7 Single News marathon.

On August 30, 2022, the Verkhovnaya Rada supported in the first reading the controversial draft law On the Media, which is designed to become a tool in the war waged by the authorities on objectionable media members. In particular, this document provides for a ban on the publication of “materials containing popularisation or propaganda of the bodies of authority of the aggressor state,” as well as “unreliable materials” (the criteria for determining such materials are fairly vague).

On December 16, 2022, this biased document was finally adopted by the Verkhovnaya Rada. The new regulation introduces the Kiev regime’s total control over the media, out-of-court blocking and an actual ban on the disclosure of any neutral information about Russia. In accordance with it, the National Council of Ukraine on Television and Radio Broadcasting has obtained unlimited mechanisms for exerting pressure on any media outlet, including sizable fines and extrajudicial closure.

The regulatory act was adopted without regard for the media community’s opinion. In the summer of 2022, the European Federation of Journalists, among other entities, came out with its criticism calling this project “worthy of the worst authoritarian regimes.” Even during the drafting stage, the draft law was severely criticised by the parliament’s scientific and expert department, which noted in its findings that “the provisions of the draft contradict the constitution of Ukraine, do not take into account the legal positions of the constitutional court of Ukraine, international

²⁴⁰ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/10952263>

legal obligations of Ukraine and the practice of the European Court of Human Rights.” It was also pointed out that “the mechanism for general regulation contains classical indicators of state coercion that are typical of harsh regulation of public bodies’ activities.”²⁴¹

The General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists, Anthony Bellanger, in his statement on January 12, 2023, came down hard on the new law On the Media as threatening media freedom and pluralism of opinions and called on the Kiev authorities to revise it in a dialogue with journalistic associations.²⁴²

Amid the Ukrainian authorities’ efforts to put the law-abiding media sphere under their control, a resource that is openly violating the right to privacy, the infamous Mirotvorets website, continues to operate in the country without any hindrance. It publishes illegally gathered personal data of Ukrainian and foreign citizens referred to as “separatists” or “enemies of Ukraine,” including reporters, politicians, cultural figures and even Russian diplomats.

This online resource is widely used by the Ukrainian security services and radical nationalists to exert psychological pressure on those whom they accuse of “separatism and high treason.” The most egregious case was the publication in 2015 of personal data, including home address, of the writer and journalist Oles Buzina, who was killed shortly after this information was posted online. A number of media representatives said their bank accounts had been blocked after they had been put on the list of the “enemies of Ukraine.” It is also known that in May 2016, Governor of the National Bank of Ukraine Valeriya Gontareva signed a letter that encouraged Ukrainian organisations and enterprises to use the Mirotvorets website to obtain important data to “combat financial abuses and the financing of terrorism.”

In addition, the fact that the information posted on the Mirotvorets website is used by Ukrainian courts at all phases of proceedings as evidence was highlighted by Ukrainian human rights platform Uspishna Varta, which discovered over 100 court rulings on criminal cases where the statement of reasons cited materials from Mirotvorets.²⁴³

²⁴¹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221216-dostoyunnyy-khudshikh-avtoritarnykh-rezhimov-na-ukraine-prinyali-shokiruyushchiy-zakon-o-smi/>

²⁴² <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/ukraine-ifj-calls-on-the-government-to-revise-new-media-law.html>

²⁴³ Use of the Mirotvorets website materials in judicial practice. Human rights platform Uspishna Varta. January 22, 2019. <https://uspishna-varta.com/ru/news/ispolzovaniye-materialov-sayta-mirotvorets-v-sudebnoy-praktike>

On March 14, 2021, in an interview with the Ukrainian edition Fakty, head of Mirotvorets Roman Zaitsev made it clear that this online resource enjoys the support of the Ukrainian authorities, such as the Foreign Ministry, the Interior Ministry and the Ministry of Defence, the Security Service of Ukraine and the border service, as well as foreign (Western) intelligence agencies.

To date, more than 240,000 people have been included in the Mirotvorets database, among them about 75,000 Russians. The website posted personal information of 327 minors. In October 2021, a 12-year-old resident of Lugansk, Faina Savenkova, was added to the Mirotvorets database as a “threat to the national security of Ukraine,” only because of her public call to the UN Security Council on Children's Day, in which she drew attention to the situation of children in Donbass.

In January 2022, Mirotvorets announced that it launched a new area of activity to fight against corrupt law enforcement officers who allegedly fabricate criminal cases. However, the website administrators included in this category only those investigators and prosecutors who conducted criminal proceedings against ATO veterans and members of nationalist battalions, as well as against deputy Sofia Fedina, who is known for her extremist statements.

The problems that this odious Internet resource is creating in Ukraine were noted by international human rights organisations. In 2019, the OHCHR Monitoring Mission in Ukraine called on the Verkhovna Rada deputies to initiate the closure of this nationalist resource, and similar calls were made by the EU Delegation in Kiev and the NGO Journalists without Borders, but to no avail.

In November 2021, the Human Rights Committee pointed to inadequate information about the results of investigations of criminal cases in connection with the operation of the infamous Mirotvorets website. We are talking about cases involving the publication of personal data of thousands of Ukrainians and other individuals accused by this web resource of having links with “armed groups” or branded as “terrorists.”²⁴⁴ The HRC prioritised this issue, which can be seen, in particular, from the fact that the recommendation to ensure the right to privacy, including in the context of

²⁴⁴ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 8th periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (published in February 2022)

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru

the Mirotvorets website, along with comments regarding ensuring independence of the judiciary and the administration of justice, as well as freedom of expression in the context of journalists' activities, was included by the Committee on the list of issues information on which must be submitted within the year.

Crimes against civilians in Donbass

Unleashed by Kiev nine years ago, the internal armed conflict in southeastern Ukraine has inflicted untold suffering on hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens, including the elderly, women and children. Due to the restrictions imposed by the Ukrainian authorities, residents of areas where hostilities were in progress faced grave threats and challenges. Their lives were jeopardized and they had difficulty accessing basic services, including water supply, heating, and healthcare. There was a shortage of decent housing and a lack of mechanisms for legal protection and compensation of damage. The restrictions created extremely unfavourable conditions for residents of the southeastern regions and made it hard for them to receive their pensions and allowances.

This spectrum of problems attracted the attention of many international human rights organisations, mechanisms and activists that expressed concern over the continuing combat operations, which affected the country's entire population, primarily people living in direct vicinity of the theatre of operations and internally displaced persons, causing widespread impoverishment and economic stagnation.

The UN Human Rights Committee noted in October 2021 (its Concluding Observations were published in February 2022) that the residents of Donbass did not enjoy the same rights as people in Kiev-controlled territories of Ukraine. Among other things, they encountered difficulties when seeking the issuance of birth certificates, which required a prior court decision. The HRC also pointed to the need to step up efforts directed at protecting civilians, particularly children, under war conditions, including by clearing land mines. The Committee noted with concern the severe restrictions imposed on civilians at the checkpoints along the line of contact under the pretext of preventing the spread of COVID-19. The Committee was concerned that internally displaced persons faced various types of discrimination, including with regard to their political rights, and that such discrimination hampered their reintegration into society. In this connection, it was recommended that the Kiev authorities take measures to facilitate the procedure for the registration of the actual place of residence

of internally displaced persons and encourage them to exercise their right to vote²⁴⁵.

In addition, there were media reports on a sharp increase in human trafficking in Ukraine in 2022, or rather in human organ harvesting for transplantations. (The previous peak of this illegal activity was recorded between 2014 and 2015, as was noted by international organisations, including the OSCE, which stated in 2014 that bodies missing internal organs, most likely victims of organ transplant surgeons, were being found in mass graves in areas of hostilities.) This information was reported, among others, by Tsargrad channel²⁴⁶. Experts also note that the Verkhovna Rada urgently considered bills aimed at facilitating as much as possible the work of transplant surgeons in the country as the Kiev regime was preparing for an attack on the Donbass republics. In 2022, the legislative effort in this area grew even more pro-active. In late 2021, deputies from the presidential Servant of the People party tabled a bill enabling every Ukrainian citizen to become an organ donor under a simplified procedure and had the Verkhovna Rada vote it into law. On April 14, 2022, the Verkhovna Rada adopted a new law on transplantation, which granted businesses of this sort an exemption from VAT, thereby preparing the ground for maximally simplified Ukrainian organ exports.²⁴⁷

The Kiev regime and the armed units it controls continue perpetrating crimes against civilians in Donbass and the liberated areas of the Kherson and Zaporozhye regions. The artillery attacks they launched since February 2022 killed over 4,600 civilians, including over 200 children there, with several thousand people, including over 300 children, receiving injuries. Almost 100 civilians, including nine children, got injured after stepping on banned PFM-1 Butterfly anti-personnel landmines.

It must be mentioned that this report does not include the large body of evidence on crimes against Russian military servicemen, crimes perpetrated with unprecedented Nazi brutality by Ukrainian neo-Nazi units

²⁴⁵ Human Rights Committee. Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (published in February 2022.)
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUkr%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru

²⁴⁶ See, for example, https://amp.tsargrad.tv/articles/chjornaja-transplantologija-na-ukraine-izvestna-propiska-doktora-smert_604078, https://tsargrad.tv/investigations/koncy-v-krematorij-ukraina-platit-za-oruzhie-vnutrennimi-organami-grazhdan_523850

²⁴⁷ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221027-zelenskiy-prevratil-ukrainu-v-ray-dlya-chernyh-transplantologov/>

and foreign mercenaries. The relevant Russian authorities investigate numerous criminal cases related to these heinous crimes and it is up to them to assess these criminal acts which have fully confirmed that the present-day Nazis in Ukraine are faithful to the ideas and tactics of German Nazis and local collaborationists from the OUN and UIA during the Great Patriotic War. Russian civil society organisations and all concerned people are also pro-active in discovering the truth about the true colours of the Ukrainian authorities and their radical nationalist protégés.

In Russia, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation has been engaged, since 2014, in recording crimes against civilians in Donbass and the rest of Ukraine, crimes perpetrated by the Kiev military and political leadership, the nationalists, and Ukrainian security services. As of early December 2022, 2,244 criminal proceedings were initiated, including on charges of terrorism, ill-treatment of civilians, use of prohibited means and methods in an armed conflict, murder, deliberate destruction of or infliction of damage on property (Articles 205, 356, 105, and 167 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation), and others. The list of suspects includes 350 persons, specifically members of the top command echelon of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and unit commanders who issued criminal orders to shell the civilian population and civilian infrastructure facilities. In all, investigations have been completed on 132 criminal cases²⁴⁸, with other cases under consideration. The Investigative Committee identifies and provides legal assessments of acts committed by all individuals involved in crimes.

²⁴⁸ <https://sledcom.ru/news/item/1747425/>