



**Volodymyr Zelensky**

**73%**

landslide win on 21 April

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**Comedian** but trained  
as a lawyer

**Instagram** star with  
4.2m followers

**Millionaire** thanks to  
his production company Kvartal  
95

**Linked** to oligarch Ihor  
Kolomoisky through show on TV  
channel 1+1

# Russian Aggression: Ukraine

October 2019: Zelensky signs on to “Steinmeier’s Formula”

- Calls for (October 2020?) elections to be held in the separatist-held territories under Ukrainian legislation with OSCE supervision
- If OSCE judges the balloting to be free and fair, then a special self-governing status for the territories will be initiated and Ukraine will be returned control of its easternmost border
- Zelensky said local elections held only after Russian forces withdraw and Ukraine regains control of state border



# Conflict in Ukraine

**MORE THAN  
10,000**

*Estimated number of civilian  
casualties*

Source

**1.5 MILLION**

*Estimated number of internally  
displaced people*

Source

**280 MILES**

*Length of front line*

Source





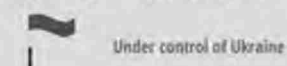


# THE SITUATION IN THE EASTERN REGIONS OF UKRAINE

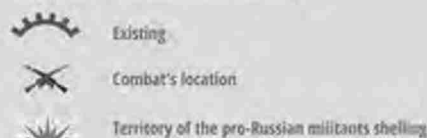
12 March 2019 (00:00)



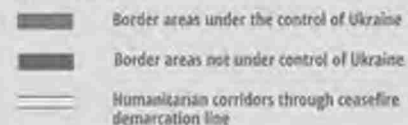
## Control over settlements:



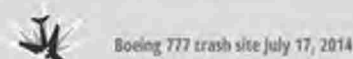
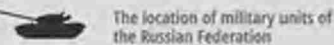
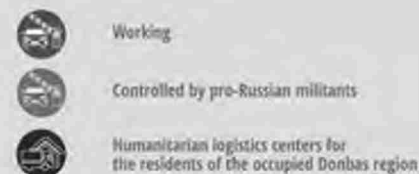
## Positions of Ukrainian military



## The border



## Main check-points on Ukraine-Russia border



<http://www.mil.gov.ua>

# Resources on Conflict in Ukraine

- **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE):**

Daily and spot reports from the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

Searchable daily reports with specific information about security and armed encounters (Apr. 14, 2014 to present)

- **Wikipedia:** Timeline of the war in Donbass

Useful but caution for bias (heavily cites Ukrainian government ATO HQ reports)

# Militant Groups in Ukraine

## Government forces

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- **Armed Forces of Ukraine:** engaged in fighting in Donbass but poorly equipped and led
- **National Guard of Ukraine:** Created March 2014; significant fighting
- **Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVS):** Primary police force with counter-insurgency operations in Donbass
- **Security Service of Ukraine (SBU):** Main intelligence Service; conducts “Anti-Terrorist Operation” in Donbass

# Militant Groups in Ukraine

## Government forces and Pro-Kiev militias

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- **Berkut Security Force (Golden Eagle):** Riot police; answered to Ministry of Interior, not police; reports of torture of detainees; committed violence against Maidan protesters resulting in deaths; disbanded after Maidan
- **Right Sector:** A far-right, ultra-nationalist, neofacist group known to have fought against Oplot and in Donbass; founding groups included Trident (Tryzub), the Ukrainian National Assembly-Ukrainian National Self-Defense (UNA-UNSO), the Social-National Assembly and its Patriot of Ukraine paramilitary wing, White Hammer, and Carpathian Sich; has also clashed with Ukrainian forces

# Militant Groups in Ukraine

## Government forces and Pro-Kiev militias

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- **Aidar Battalion:** 450 fighters; troubling reputation for blocking aid to civilians and seizing a bread factory; dissolved in 2015 then select members formed the Army Unit 24<sup>th</sup> Indep Assault Bn "Aidar"
- **Batkivschchyna Battalion:** created in Kirovohrad region by Resistance Movement; small
- **"Chechen Battalions":** Anti-Russian Chechens; passionate, tough veterans of Chechnya wars, but squabbling
- **Donbas Battalion:** More than 800 fighters from Donbas loyal to Kiev; attracted instructors from Georgian military who had fought Russians in 2009; became part of National Guard

# Militant Groups in Ukraine

## Government forces and Pro-Kiev militias

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- **Azov movement/Battalion:** effectively an autonomous special operations detachment in the National Guard of Ukraine; Political and military wings; openly accepts self-avowed neo-Nazis; intolerance toward minority groups; human rights abuses in the conflict zone; founded the National Corps in October 2016, incorporating two other nationalist groups, including Patriot Of Ukraine; well-trained and armed military power
- **The National Militia:** Component of Azov; vigilante force with ultra-nationalist, far-right political ideology; weapons and tactical training for members; vowed to patrol Ukrainian streets though not authorized; attacks on minorities

# Militant Groups in Ukraine

## Government forces and Pro-Kiev militias

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- **Go Zirka:** satellite of Azov
- **Department for the Protection of Strategic Objects of The National Guard of Ukraine:** distinct protection police unit headed by a prominent Azov leader with links to Ukraine's Minister of Internal Affairs; far-right ideology and training
- **Tradition and Order:** aggressively expanding violent ultra-nationalist organization; carried out attacks on Roma, LGBT individuals and activists; advanced firearms and combat tactics training to members.



# Militant Groups in Ukraine



# Militant Groups in Ukraine

## Role of Neo-Nazi, militant groups in Zelensky government?

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- When Zelensky signed on to Steinmeier Formula, far right and nationalist groups marched in Kyiv's Independence Square to oppose any "capitulation"
- Some high-level members of the government openly support some neo-Nazi groups; militant groups being included in discussions on conflict in east (referred to as "veterans")
- When a troop pullback was initiated as part of the agreement, armed militants, including some from the Azov Battalion, came to the front and tried to replace the military in the positions they were leaving. Zelensky came in person to convince these groups to back down.
- October 2019, Ukrainian Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk and Minister of Veteran Affairs Oksana Koliada both attended a concert organized by Andriy Medvedko, an accused murderer and member of neo-Nazi group C-14, and headlined by neo-Nazi band Sokyra Peruna.

# Militant Groups in Ukraine

## Russian Forces

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- Up to 10,000 Russian soldiers often without insignia have been active, including artillery units, reconnaissance, sabotage detachments
- Russia providing arms, training, leadership, and fighters
- Approx. 42,000 Russian forces rotated in Crimea and in Russia close to border, including Army, FSB Border Guards, Black Sea Fleet
- Russian city of Rostov-on-Don a seaport, road, and rail hub – serving as logistical base with arsenals, weapons warehouses, and a significant GRU presence; volunteers and mercenaries screened and armed
- **Wagner Group:** Moscow-controlled private military company

# Militant Groups in Ukraine

## Russia-backed Separatists (Umbrella names)

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- **United Armed Forces of Novorossiia (“New Russia”):** Umbrella name for forces of Donetsk People’s Republic and Luhansk People’s Republic, consisting of many different groups
- **Novorossiia Party:** Ostensibly an umbrella political organization for the separatist region; sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department
- **Donetsk People’s Militia:** Umbrella name used at the start of the war to denote a haphazard collection of armed groups operating in Donetsk; later became **DNR I Army Corps** (17,000-22,000 soldiers)
- **Luhansk People’s Militia:** (aka “**Army of the Southeast**”) An umbrella name referring disorganized armed groups operating in Luhansk; less disciplined than Donetsk; later became **Luhansk II Army Corps** (9,000-13,000 soldiers)

# Militant Groups in Ukraine

## Russia-backed Separatists (Donetsk)

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- **Oplot Battalion ("Oplot"):** One of the first insurgent units; shot and beat Maidan protestors, abducted and tortured Maidan leader; coordinates with Russian Secret Services; have targeted Jehovah's Witnesses in Donetsk; Sanctioned by Treasury Dept.
- **Republican Guard:** "Elite" unit with six battalions, 3,000 fighters
- **Kalmius Battalion:** "Special forces" unit with artillery and rockets; originally a group of miners who fought against Ukrainian forces
- **Miner's Division:** Recruited from coalminers; later redesignated the 4<sup>th</sup> Motor Rifle Battalion

# Militant Groups in Ukraine

## Russia-backed Separatists (Donetsk)

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- **Russian Orthodox Army:** Originated during insurgency as local force but contains Russian volunteers
- **Security Service Battalion:** Intended as “Praetorian Guard”
- **Sloviansk Brigade:** Reached peak of 2,000 battle-ready fighters; some defected to other militias and it became the DNR’s 1<sup>st</sup> Independent Motor Rifle Brigade
- **Somali Battalion:** Equipped with tanks; permanently stationed in Donetsk and Makiivka (Only a nickname – “brave as Somalis”)

# Militant Groups in Ukraine

## Russia-backed Separatists (Donetsk)

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- **Voskhod Battalion:** (aka **Consolidated Orthodox Battalion Voskhod** – “**Sunrise**”) 300 fighters; claimed providing humanitarian protection for civilians but engaged in combat
- **Voztok Battalion:** Defectors from the Security Service of Ukraine's (SBU) Donetsk unit, North Caucasus fighters, and some other elements; raised by GRU to assert Moscow control; “Ukrainianized” with locals and became **Vostok (“East”) Brigade**.
- **Death Battalion:** About 300 fighters from Chechnya; Muslims
- **Sparta Battalion:** Took part in key early battles; almost 1,000 fighters

# Militant Groups in Ukraine

## Russia-backed Separatists (Luhansk)

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- **Cossack National Guard: (aka Great Host of the Don Cossacks, & First Cossack Regiment)** Russia-created; over 4,000 fighters; participated in the annexation of Crimea - manned checkpoints on highways, guarded the headquarters of separatist government, patrolled the streets, helped build and defend fortifications on border with Ukraine
- **Zarya Battalion:** Luhansk's most capable force; artillery brigade well-equipped by Russia; sanctioned by Treasury Department
- **Prizrak Brigade ("Ghost" Brigade):** Primarily Luhansk but also cooperates with commanders in Donetsk; French-speaking Continental Unit; has a foreign communist Biryukov-Markov Unit



# Militant Groups in Ukraine

## Russia-backed Separatists (Luhansk)

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- **Rus Battalion:** Formed from several hundred workers and security guards from a mine complex
- **Leshy ("Forest Spirit") Battalion:** 500 fighters from locals and Cossacks
- **Rapid Reaction Group "Batman":** 400 fighters; reputation of looting, organized criminality, human rights abuses; leader killed in Jan. 2015 and fighters divided among other groups
- **USSR Battalion:** Controlled town of Bryanka; eventually incorporated in LNR Territorial Defense Battalions

# Militant Groups in Ukraine

## Russia-backed Separatists (Luhansk and other)

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- **1<sup>st</sup> Independent “August” Tank Battalion:** Only dedicated tank unit in LNR forces
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Stanichno-Luhansk Assault Battalion:** Former paratroopers and middle-aged veterans of Soviet war in Afghanistan
- **Night Wolves:** A biker gang closely connected to the Russian special services; have helped to recruit separatist fighters for Donetsk and Luhansk; intimidation and criminal activities; assisted in Crimea; sanctioned by Treasury Department
- **Ossetian and Abkhaz paramilitaries:** Small numbers joining battalions; allegiance to Russia

# Militant Groups in Ukraine

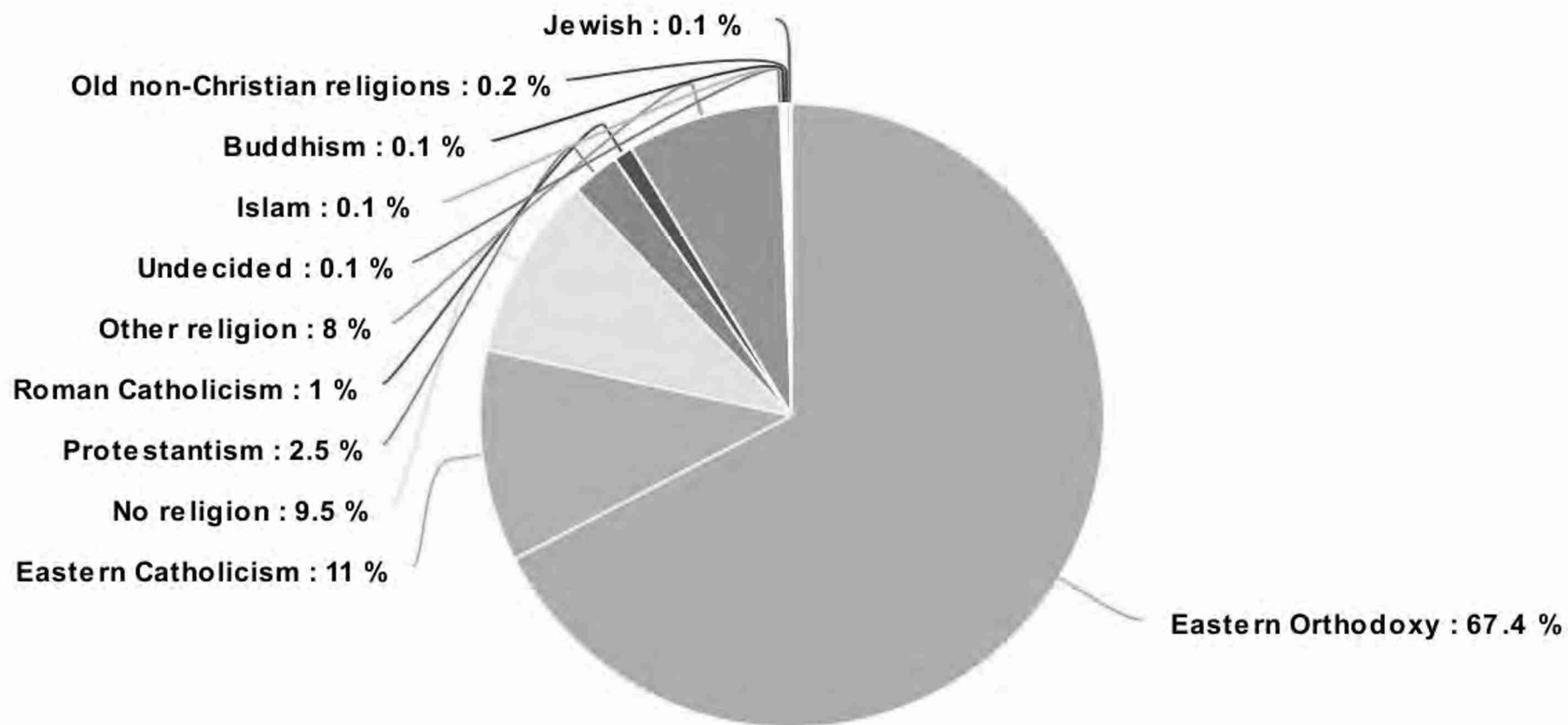
## Citizens Groups Assisting Fighters:

Numerous citizen groups voluntarily assist the forces on both sides of the conflict, but mostly assisting pro-Kiev forces against separatists. Support includes medical care and training, supplies such as body armor, surveillance and drone support.

Q: How difficult is it to arrange for a truck driver to travel to Eastern Ukraine now?



Religion in Ukraine (2014-2015)



# Religious Freedom in Ukraine

## Christian Orthodox (before Dec. 15, 2018):

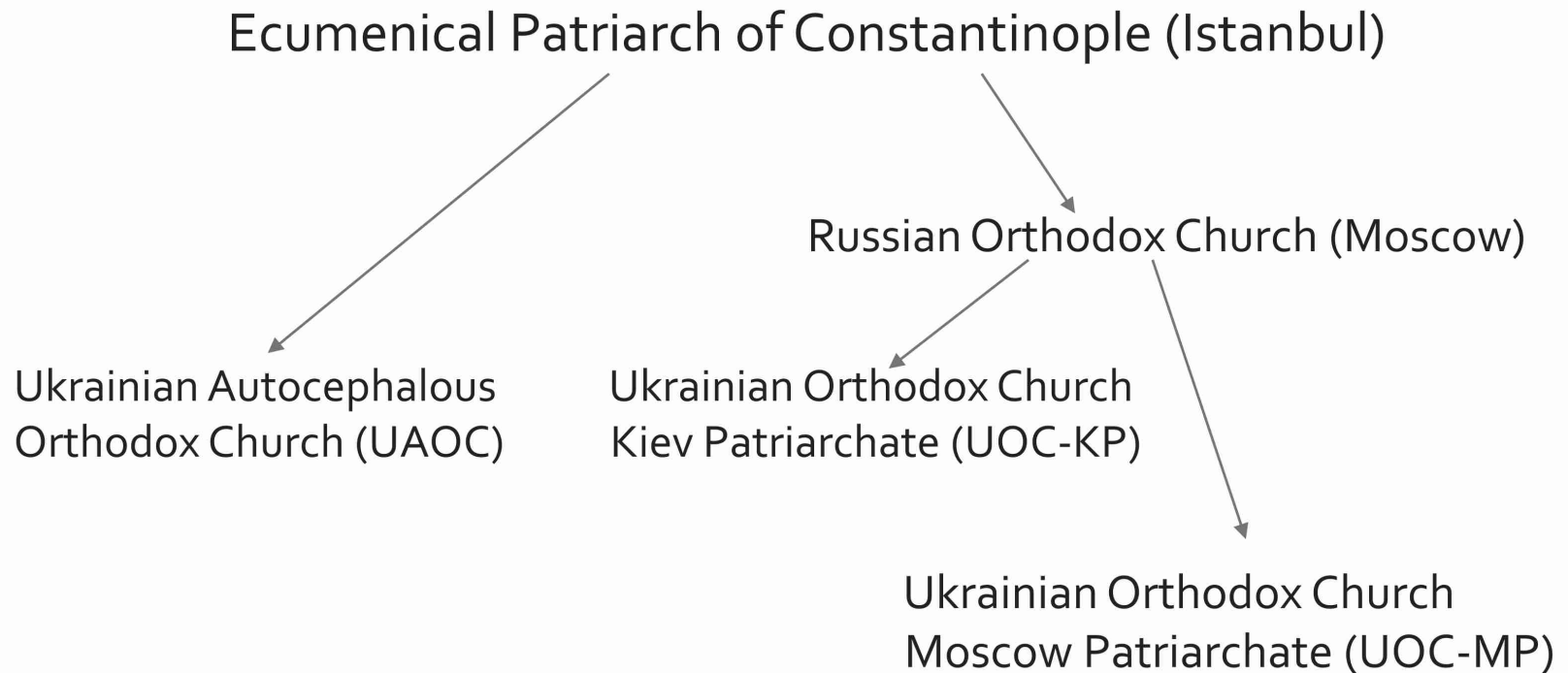
- 26.5% Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kiev Patriarchate (UOC-KP)
- 12% Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP)
- 24.3% “just an Orthodox believer”
- 3.5% the Russian Orthodox Church (as distinct from the UOC-MP)
- 1.1% the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC)
- 0.8% undecided

The Evangelical Baptist Union of Ukraine is the largest Protestant community. Other Christian groups include Pentecostals, Seventh-day Adventists, Lutherans, Anglicans, Calvinists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons).

# Religious Freedom in Ukraine

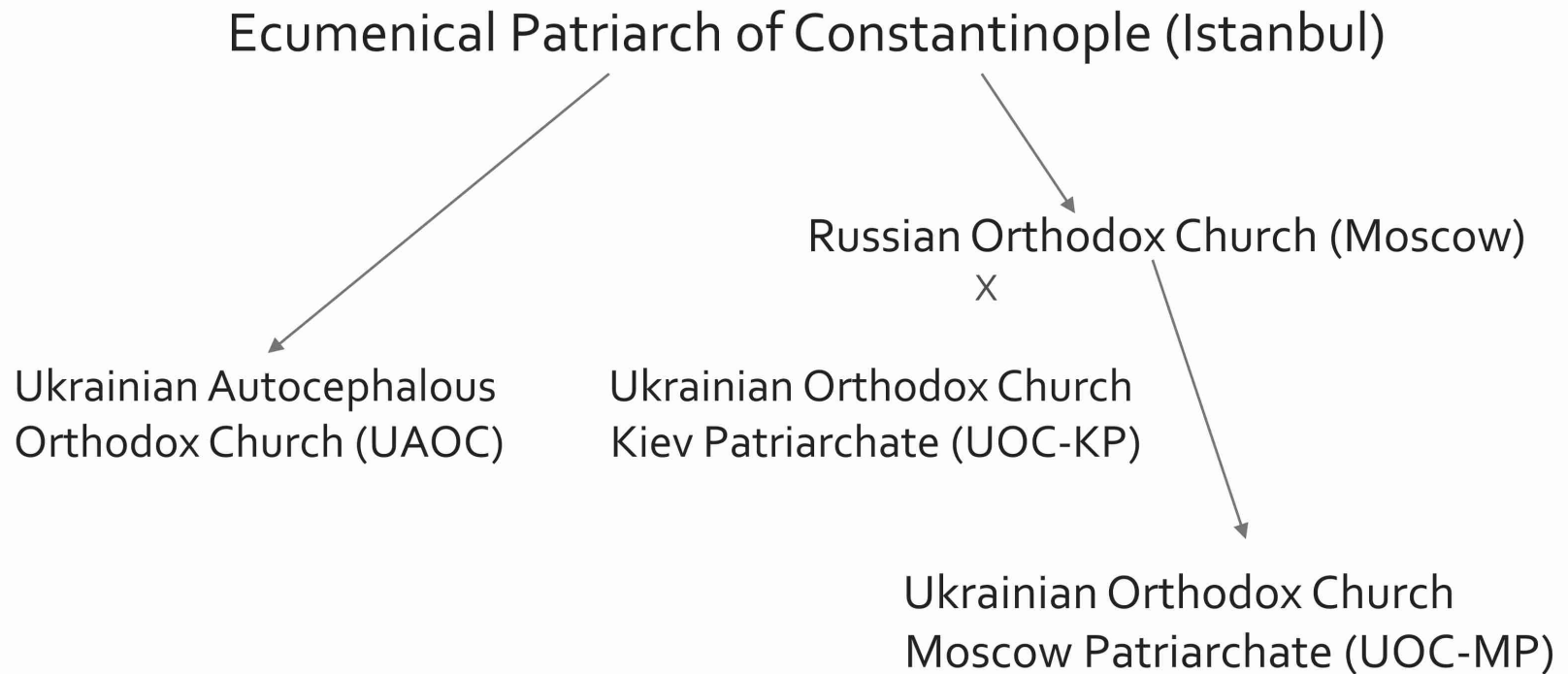


# Religious Freedom in Ukraine





# Religious Freedom in Ukraine



# Religious Freedom in Ukraine

Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople (Istanbul)

Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow)

X

Ukrainian Autocephalous  
Orthodox Church (UAOC)

Ukrainian Orthodox Church  
Kiev Patriarchate (UOC-KP)

Ukrainian Orthodox Church  
Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP)

Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU)



# Religious Freedom in Ukraine



# Religious Freedom in Ukraine



# Religious Freedom in Ukraine

## Kiev-controlled Ukraine

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- Conflict between Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) and Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kiev Patriarchate (UOC-KP)
- SBU carried out dozens of raids at priests' residences and churches aligned with the Russian Orthodox Church
- Other religious groups and radical political groups, including the Right Sector, disrupted UOC-MP prayer services, and in some cases, radical nationalists physically assaulted parishioners.
- National Guard banned UOC-MP chaplaincy
- Anti-Semitic acts by government: honoring Nazi collaborators and erecting statue of 1918-1921 leader who allowed anti-Jewish pogroms
- Baptist Union representatives accused members of a UOC-MP congregation of disrupting a religious ceremony
- Vandalism of Christian monuments, Holocaust memorials, synagogues, and Jewish cemeteries, and at Jehovah's Witnesses' Kingdom Halls.

# Religious Freedom in Ukraine

## Donbass

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- Separatist forces detain and imprison religious leaders
- Armed men – often from the State Security Ministry or police of the self-declared Luhansk People's Republic – raid religious communities, halt worship meetings and seize religious literature. Courts hand down fines of several weeks' average wages to punish "illegal" worship meetings.
- Raids of **Pentecostal**, Baptist, Jehovah's Witness, and UOC-KP communities; fines; buildings and property seized
- All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christian/Baptist Churches and non-Moscow Patriarchate Orthodox congregations banned
- Forces occupy religious buildings of minority religious groups and use them as military facilities.

# Religious Freedom in Ukraine

## Crimea

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- Occupation authorities subject Muslim Crimean Tatars to abductions, forced psychiatric hospitalizations, imprisonment, and detentions, especially if the authorities suspect the individuals of involvement in the Muslim political organization Hizb ut-Tahrir
- Jehovah's Witnesses banned in Russia – all 22 Crimean congregations de-registered
- Protestants and Muslims face charges for illegal missionary activities
- Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church report authorities make it difficult to operate
- OCU parish refused registration, made to vacate cathedral in Simferopol

# Ukraine: Dissent and Social Media

Q: Zelensky administration monitoring social media of people expressing their political opinions?

- Zelensky administration is social media savvy
- Not significant policy change and SBU work continues
- Most investigations of individuals for content on social media have been for posting “extremist” or “separatist” content; legislation used for targeting these individuals remains
- Popular Russian social media sites banned since 2017 (VKontakte, Odnoklassniki, Yandex (a Russian search engine), and Mail.ru); some users use VPNs to circumvent; Facebook and Twitter have become more popular
- Attacks on journalists



# Ukraine: LGBTI

- Conditions improving but environment is still very difficult; decriminalized 1991 but widespread negative societal attitude towards LGBTI persons
- Frequent disruption of events from violent far right groups (C14), without sufficient police protection (esp. before/after)
- Hate crimes infrequently investigated, unless intense pressure from civil society
- Discriminatory raids on LGBTI night clubs (“prevention of human trafficking”)
- high social stigma against those with HIV/AIDS (treatment, housing, or employment)
- workplace discrimination protected, but discrimination widespread in hiring, housing, education, etc.
- Russia-controlled/separatist areas severe (eg. “gay propaganda” laws)

# Ukraine: Corruption and Whistleblowers

- Zelensky platform to fight corruption, but little real change and some questionable moves (dismissed Ruslan Ryaboshapka - prosecutor general who instigated the anti-corruption drive)
- High Anti-Corruption Court created April 2019; most outside views are positive (selection of judges with help of foreign expert panel); success will depend on whether anticorruption investigators and prosecutors are reliable (unknown)
- November 2019 law on whistleblowers (protection; financial incentive); Likely greater will to protect a whistleblower speaking out against corruption from those formerly in power; less favorable for those exposing Zelensky's Servant of the People party
- Oligarchs still wield great influence, protect their interests (Kolomoisky)

# Ukraine: Race/Nationality

Q: Problems in Ukraine because Georgian? Ethnic Russians?

- Attacks against ethnic minorities in Ukraine are relatively common, but the targets are frequently Roma, not Georgian
- Ukrainian citizens/natives better positioned than migrants (2010 Georgian asylum seekers mistreated in detention)
- Georgian Legion formed 2014 to fight in Donbass; they left 2017 due to mistreatment
- Policies restricting Russian language and promoting Ukrainian impact non-Ukrainian speakers
- Attitudes toward Russians soured; but many families are mixed ethnic Russian/Ukrainian
- Association/sympathy with separatists creates risk

# Ukraine: Crimea

- Repressive environment of Russia exported to Crimea
- Not finding reports that ethnic-Ukrainians targeted merely on that basis
- Prominent members of the Crimean Tatar community, pro-Ukrainian activists, outspoken critics of authorities subjected to harassment, intimidation or politically-motivated prosecution (terrorism-related charges)
- Independent media and journalists unable to operate; online media resources was blocked
- December 2018 Russia's Justice Ministry requested that the Crimean Bar Association expel human rights lawyer Emil Kurbedinov for "extremist activities" (Hizb ut-Tahrir)

# Russia Concerns



# Russia Concerns

- Political dissent: Targeting protestors, activists, NGOs (foreign connections); monitoring social media and journalists; arrests, fines, torture in detention, physical attacks and murders
- Religion: Monitoring, registration; Jehovah's Witnesses banned; charges of extremism, fines, property confiscation, prison sentences
- LGBT: "Gay propaganda" laws; targeting protestors; serious government and societal discrimination and abuses

# Past Membership or Military Service

- Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)
- Soviet Military
- Russian Military
- Ukrainian Military

# OUN and UPA

- **Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN)**: 1929 to 1950s; split into OUN-M and OUN-B in 1940
- **Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)**: Subset of OUN-B Oct. 1942 to 1958; guerillas fighting against Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, the Polish Underground State, and Communist Poland
- Far Right, Ultra-nationalist; use of violence to achieve ethnically-pure Ukrainian state; some alleged cooperation with Nazi Germany
- Extermination of Poles committed over 17 months (from November 1942 to April 1944)
- As of March 2019, recognized as veterans with all benefits: “fighters for independence of Ukraine in the 20th century”



# UKRAINE

NO 'THE'

# GEOGRAPHY





# LANGUAGE

Як вас звати  
Yak vas zvaty

Как тебя зовут  
Kak tebya zovut

# ANCIENT(?) HISTORY

- KIEV RUS
- NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS – 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY
- INDEPENDENCE/WW I
- SOVIET UNION/ WW II - BANDERA
- INDEPENDENCE

"The **past is never dead**. It's **not** even **past**." - Faulkner



# ORANGE REVOLUTION - 2004



# MAIDAN REVOLUTION - 2013



# CURRENT – SPRING 2019

- PRESIDENT – ZELENSKY, ‘SERVANT OF THE PEOPLE’



**В каждой шутке есть доля правды**

**There's a grain of truth in every joke**

# CONFLICT IN DONBASS





# STATUS OF CRIMEA

- Citizenship issues
- Claimed by Russia



The Economist

# COMMON CLAIMS

- RELIGION
  - UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX, JEWISH, CATHOLIC, AND MORE....
- CORRUPTION
- POLITICS
  - DRAFT CLAIMS
  - 'NATIONALISTS BEAT ME UP' 'LITTLE GREEN MEN BEAT ME UP'