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ЗБЕРЕЖЕННЯ ІДЕНТИЧНОСТІ ТА СВОБОДИ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ РЕЛІГІЙНИХ МЕНШИН В УМОВАХ ВІЙНИ В УКРАЇНІ: ВИКЛИКИ ТА ОРІЄНТИРИ

У статті звертається увага на вразливість релігійних меншин в Україні в умовах війни, їхній сучасний стан, взаємодію з державою, українським суспільством, а також відносини з домінуючими релігіями.

Хоча в українському законодавстві відсутнє поняття релігійних меншин, воно використовується в інформаційному просторі та науковому дискурсі. До категорії релігійних меншин (міноритарних релігій) зазвичай відносять релігії національних/етнічних меншин, нові релігійні рухи, інші релігії, що мають незначну чисельність та/або поширеність.

Законодавство України забезпечує високий рівень свободи віросповідання та переконань. Але у зв'язку з російським вторгненням релігійні меншини в Україні стикаються з новими викликами та проблемами. З початку вторгнення багато релігійних громад втратили свої культові будівлі або були змушені залишити їх на окупованих територіях, а деякі переїхали до інших регіонів України або за кордон, де довелось розпочинати свою діяльність заново, здебільшого, в умовах браку послідовників після втрати сформованого роками "ядра" прихожан. Дослідження демонструє відмінності у становищі міноритарних релігій на території України та її окупованій частині, їхню взаємодію із суспільством і владою в нових умовах. Зазначається, що на окупованих територіях громади релігійних меншин або припинили свою діяльність через низку чинників, або все більше функціонують в умовах маргіналізації. З іншого боку, свобода діяльності релігійних меншин в Україні забезпечує самоідентичність їхніх послідовників або ж слугує альтернативою усталеним релігіям.

Ключові слова: релігійні меншини, війна, окупація, свобода совісті, свобода віросповідання, свобода релігії.

The paper draws attention to the vulnerability of religious minorities in Ukraine, their current status, interactions with state, their relations with dominant religions and Ukrainian society in war conditions.

There is no concept of religious minorities in Ukrainian legislation, but it is used in informative and scientific discourse. At the same time, religious minorities often express the interests of a national / ethnic minority, or operate as new religious movements, other religions with a small number and/or prevalence.

The legislation of Ukraine provides a high level of freedom of religion or belief. But in connection with the Russian invasion and the war beginning, religious minorities in Ukraine face new challenges and problems. After the Russian invasion many religious communities lost their buildings of meeting places, or were forced to leave them in the occupied territories, and some moved to other regions of Ukraine or abroad and started their activities anew, mostly in conditions of lack of followers after the loss of the "core" of parishioners formed over the years. The study demonstrates the differences in the position of minority religions in the territory of Ukraine and its occupied part, their interaction with society and the authorities in the new conditions. It is noted that in the occupied territories, religious minority communities have either ceased their activities due to a number of factors, or are increasingly functioning in conditions of marginalization. On the other hand, the freedom of activity of religious minorities in Ukraine ensures the self-identity of their followers or serves as an alternative to established religions.

Key words: religious minorities, war, occupation, freedom of conscience, freedom of religion or belief.

Introduction. In the Ukrainian context, religious minorities include religious organizations that, in terms of their number, constitute an insignificant quantitative part within the religious network of our country. At the same time, several of the most obvious groups are distinguished among them: religions of national minorities; religious movements which is new for Ukraine; the so-called natural or autochthonous religions that are currently being revived; small Christian churches (as a rule, Protestant or neo-Christian).

Religious pluralism, which has become established in Ukraine during the years of independence, created comfortable conditions for the existence of religious minorities and the preservation of their doctrinal, national, regional identity, etc. The state of religious freedom during the years of independence did not cause any significant concern - neither among the world community, nor among international experts, nor among domestic scientists, nor among representatives of the religions themselves.

The war accelerated identification processes in Ukrainian society, adjusted state-confessional relations in the country. In the vast majority of regions of Ukraine, the state and religious organizations dynamically strengthened their partnership, developed new forms of relations, and with joint efforts preserved religious pluralism and freedom of religion.

Overview of literary sources. The analysis of scientific works devoted to processes in the religious sphere during the war demonstrates the relevance and importance of this issue both among scientists and among society. Thus, a systematic scientific description of the above processes takes place in the works of famous Ukrainian religious scholars A. Kolodnyi and L. Fylypovych [6, 7, 8], O. Sagan [10], D. Bryliov [1], which reveal various aspects of the impact of the war on religious life in Ukraine, the difficulties in ensuring religious pluralism in war conditions, confessional transformations in Ukraine in the context of georeligious processes.

An extremely important component in studying the topic of changes in the religious space of Ukraine during war conditions is the use of qualitative sociological data and appropriate analytics. For many years, such data and qualitative analytics based on them have been provided by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine [2, 3], the Razumkov Center [4], and official data of the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience [5] are also used.

Given the public resonance of many processes in the religious sphere, the impact of the war on the functioning of religious communities is also being studied by journalists and NGOs [11, 13]. Despite the wide range of mentioned studies, these processes in context of religious minorities remain insufficiently studied comprehensively. In particular, there is a lack of analysis among minority religions.

Task statement. The purpose of the article is a scientific study of the contemporary religious situation in Ukraine through the lens of changes that have taken place and are taking place during the war among minority religions. Such changes are considered foremost in the context of intra-religious factors and also some inter-religious, which are simultaneously influenced by processes related to the war.

Results and discussion. After the Russian invasion, many religious minority communities lost their places of worship, buildings for meetings and other religious activities either as a result of destruction by bombing or as a result of appropriation by the new "authorities" in the temporarily occupied territories for their administrative needs. Russia continues to systematically destroy Ukraine's religious infrastructure and spiritual and cultural heritage. In addition, some places of worship have been looted by the Russian military, closed, or converted by the occupation authorities into administrative buildings. There are numerous cases of the seizure of places of worship by the Russian military, which has used them as military bases or as cover for their firing positions. Orthodox churches suffered the most damage from Russian aggression. Protestant churches were also destroyed on a large scale, at least 206 in total. Among them, Pentecostal (94), Baptist (60) and Seventh-day Adventist Church (27) prayer houses suffered the most. Halls of the Kingdom of Jehovah's Witnesses

were also severely damaged: a total of 110 religious buildings, of which 12 were completely destroyed, 20 heavily damaged, and 78 slightly damaged. Furthermore, 32 Halls of the Kingdom were seized by the Russian military or occupation authorities [13].

Also, the mass migration of Ukrainian citizens from dangerous regions caused the cessation of the activities of the vast majority of these religious organizations or their relocation to other regions of Ukraine, where they had not previously functioned. Members of the communities also left their places of permanent residence, going abroad, and therefore some small religious centers ceased to exist altogether due to the lack of parishioners. The question arose about the possibility of faith itself, its manifestation, its practice by religious minorities in conditions of war.

Religious minority communities in the conditions of war were forced to change not only the forms of their activities, but also to reconsider their overall strategy. Thus, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints withdrew its foreign missionaries from Ukraine, although it continues to operate actively at the level of local communities that have still survived. Despite the fact that not all Ukrainian members of the Church left Ukraine, some of them still live here, the activities of this organization are significantly limited due to the decrease in its members as a result of migration and temporary displacement [9].

Some religious movements, which in Ukraine (as in most countries of the world) operate freely and legally, are considered extremist organizations in the Russian Federation and their activities are prohibited. This mainly concerns "minority religions". The occupying authorities have declared the faithful of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Jehovah's Witnesses, Church of Scientology and other numerous evangelical Protestant groups to be "enemies of the people" and "extremists." In addition, the Russian occupation of certain territories of the Ukrainian southern and eastern regions is accompanied by the brutal persecution of Ukrainian local religious leaders and all faith-based communities of religious minorities. Authorities in the occupied territories resort to persecution, detention, imprisonment, torture, physical violence, and confiscation of property of citizens due to their religious beliefs or affiliation with groups recognized as "extremist," according to representatives of religious minority communities in the government-controlled territory of Ukraine, in particular in the deoccupied territories. In territories controlled by Russia, the activities of such religious communities are banned, their religious buildings are confiscated, access to websites is restricted, they are deprived of the right to peaceful assembly and collective confession of their faith, they are subjected to persecution and intimidation, and they are purposefully conscripted for military service despite their conscientious objections [11].

Kremlin uses religion as a tool to weaken the resistance of the population in the temporarily controlled territories of Ukraine. Russian intelligence services force local religious leaders to cooperate to strengthen the influence of occupation authorities, identify and persecute pro-Ukrainian activists, and prevent dissent and opposition to the Russian authorities.

Now, human rights in the religious sphere are undergoing significant changes, and these changes are different for the controlled and temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, for majority and minority religions, for traditional and non-traditional confessions.

Despite the statistically greater losses of church property and members of religious communities from among the so-called "majority religions" [5], the losses of religious minority communities are no less serious, but are more traumatic due to significantly fewer resources - both human and material, which are not amenable to rapid restoration.

These changes-challenges require constant monitoring and analysis. There is no exact data on how much religious minorities suffered as a result of the war. It is difficult to calculate what percentage of their followers changed their place of residence. Some information is collected and analyzed in-house, but it is not systematic, as it requires more resources.

In this situation, religious minorities are faced with the challenges of preserving their worldview / belief identity in the conditions of war, ensuring their free functioning in new conditions, and preventing the complete disappearance of their communities from the religious map of Ukraine.

Ukrainian religious minority communities, like any religious organization, face a choice in a war situation: either you are on the side of Russia or on the side of Ukraine. In general, it can be stated that the level of civic responsibility (identity) according to surveys is growing rapidly. And today, 73.5% of Ukrainians called civic identity a priority, while a little more than 4% called the priority of the confession [4].

This also applies to members of minority religious communities, whose patriotism and civic consciousness, according to our observations, have increased compared to previous periods. Non-national, universal values-oriented MR faithful, or representatives of ethnic minorities focused on their ethno-national religion, are mostly positive about Ukraine's successes in the war and have actively participated in overcoming its negative consequences.

Our observations and surveys of Jewish, Armenian, and Eastern religious communities showed that, on the one hand, they are trying their best to preserve their own identity, and on the other hand, they are adopting the norms of Ukrainian identity, interacting with Ukrainian society as much as possible during the war.

Conclusions. *Changing Religious Map and Adaptation.* The Russian invasion has caused significant changes in the religious landscape of Ukraine. Many religious minorities, especially those concentrated in the east and south of the country, have been forced to adapt to the new conditions. This includes: relocation of communities - communities of Jehovah's Witnesses, Protestant churches (Baptists, Pentecostals), and other minorities that were in the occupied territories have been forced to relocate to western Ukraine or abroad.

Changing forms of service. Many communities have switched to online worship services, providing psychological and humanitarian assistance, which has become a new form of expression of their faith and identity.

Social and Humanitarian Identity. The war has strengthened the humanitarian component of religious minorities' identities. Instead of focusing solely on internal religious practices, many have become centers of volunteer and humanitarian assistance. This includes: sheltering for IDPs - many Protestant churches, as well as Jewish communities, have provided their facilities for the accommodation of internally displaced persons; providing aid - they have organized the collection of funds, food, medicine, and assisted in the evacuation and support of victims. This activity not only demonstrates their civic responsibility, but also forms a new, more socially active identity that is deeply rooted in Ukrainian society.

A kind of *resistance identity* is being formed in the temporarily occupied territories. Faith and belonging to one's community become an act of patriotism and resistance to Russian aggression, as their religious freedom is a direct target.

Integration and Ukrainian Patriotism. In general, there is an increasing integration of religious minorities into Ukrainian society. Believers who may have previously been less involved in national events are now actively expressing their support for Ukraine. This trend is especially noticeable among: Protestant churches - many pastors and believers of these communities take a clear pro-Ukrainian position, condemning Russian aggression; Jewish communities - they actively support the Ukrainian Armed Forces, provide humanitarian assistance, and emphasize their belonging to Ukraine.

We may argue that the war has triggered a multidirectional process of identity transformation, and it challenges its conventional understandings of belonging in wartime Ukraine and in communities of the displaced. Currently situation shows that religious minorities have come to position themselves as more and more Ukrainian while at the same time deepening their own identity.

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