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Part I. Common and specific forms of intolerance and discrimination

Plenary session 1: Combating anti-Semitism

Protection of the rights of the Jewish minority in Ukraine

The existing legislation of Ukraine in the field of protection of the rights of ethnic minorities guarantees the citizens of Ukraine equal political, economic, social and cultural rights irrespective of their ethnic origin, language and religion. Ukraine's Criminal Code envisages the punishment for the limitation of these rights as well as for the incitement of ethnic hatred, humiliation of honor and dignity of the representatives of ethnic groups.

Currently, there are about 300 Jewish associations and organizations in Ukraine, five of them have an all-Ukrainian status: the Jewish Council of Ukraine, the Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities of Ukraine-Vaad of Ukraine, the Jewish Congress of Ukraine, the Jewish Fund of Ukraine, the Jewish Confederation of Ukraine.

The Government of Ukraine has taken a number of measures to create all necessary conditions for addressing cultural, educational and informational needs of the Jewish minority.

37 schools provide education in Hebrew and Yiddish alongside with

60 Sunday schools, 12 Jewish school groups and 14 kindergartens. There are two Jewish universities - the International Solomon University in Kiev and the Jewish University in Odessa. Besides that the Department of Jewish history and culture of the Institute of Political and Ethnonational Studies and Judaica Institute functions in Ukraine. Four professional and 20 amateur theatres and folk groups preserve and familiarize the Ukrainian public with the Jewish cultural heritage.

Major activities of the NGOs and state authorities are focused on the revival of Jewish customs and traditions, comprehensive development of the Yiddish and Hebrew languages and education, including the Holocaust education, promotion of amateur and professional Jewish art, safeguarding historical and cultural heritage, monitoring and protection of social and other rights of Jewish population, information and mass-media activities.

The Central Specialized Publishing House of the literature in the languages of national minorities of Ukraine publishes books in Hebrew. Over thirteen years the Ukrainian national television broadcasts the Jewish program "Jahad". There are also regional radio programs in L'viv, Chernivtzi and other towns of Ukraine. Over

40 newspapers and journals have special sections devoted to the different aspects of the Jewish community life, including the state-sponsored supplement to the parliament's official newspaper - Jewish News.

285 Jewish religious communities promote the revival of Judaism in Ukraine. The Ukrainian President and the Government of Ukraine attach significant attention to the restitution to the Jewish community of its cult premises and other property, which have been previously taken from them during the Soviet times. 83 out of 109 synagogues have already been returned to the Jewish community.

The Ukrainian authorities take measures to ensure proper maintenance of the closed Jewish cemeteries and monuments. Today there are 169 Jewish cemeteries and 12 monuments preserved in Ukraine. President of Ukraine Victor Yushchenko on numerous occasions called upon the law enforcement authorities to enhance efforts aimed at bringing to justice those who desecrate memorials, dear to the Jewish and other minorities of the country.

The State guarantees to its citizens an adequate protection against infringement of their dignity and honour and takes necessary measures to prevent and to counteract possible manifestations of anti-Semitism and xenophobia in the Ukrainian society.

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The Ukrainian Government condemns the activities of the Interregional Academy of Personnel Management (IAPM) aimed at artificial incitement of inter-ethnic hostility in the Ukrainian society through anti-Semitic publications and discourse, and considers unacceptable any manifestations of discrimination of the Ukrainian citizens on the grounds of their nationality, race or religion.

The State Committee for Nationalities and Religions of Ukraine monitors mass media market tracking down publications of anti-Semitic or xenophobic character. In case of their emergence it submits requests for appropriate actions to the Prosecutor General, State Committee on TV and radio broadcasting, regional administrations, editors of newspapers, as well as publishes statements of its own. An active role in this respect is played by the Association "For interethnic peace and stability in Ukraine", the Institute of Judaica and Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities of Ukraine (Vaad of Ukraine). They monitor the relevant publications in the newspapers, hold dialogue with the state bodies, judiciary, organize conferences, seminars concerning the rights and freedoms of ethnic communities and their social protection.