

**SPEECH OF DIRECTOR OF THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATION “INSTITUTE OF LEGAL POLICY AND SOCIAL
PROTECTION NAMED AFTER IRINA BEREZHNYAYA” ELENA
BEREZHNYAYA**

**AT THE PLENARY MEETING
OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
SEPTEMBER 25, 2019 (3 pm - 6 pm)
(TOPIC: HATE CRIMES)**

Our Institute monitors facts of violations and infringement of rights and freedoms in Ukraine since 2014 (in particular, incidents associated with hate crimes).

Authorities use right-wing radicals to seize temples, to apply pressure and intimidate citizens and clergymen. Law enforcement officers in most cases do not interfere and do not prevent such criminal actions on the grounds of religious hate and intolerance.

Representatives of national radical parties and organizations, as well as of volunteer battalions, systematically commit illegal actions against the canonical UOC religious communities.

In 2018-2019, the right-wing radicals committed numerous registered illegal actions (threats, beatings of the UOC parishioners, blockade of Kiev-Pechersk Lavra (featured in UNESCO World Heritage List), and acts of vandalism at the territory of the ancient Tithe Church in Kiev.

The UOC parishioners and priests are systematically subjected not only to violent attacks, but also to discriminatory attacks initiated by the authorities.

In 2014-2019 the UOC communities (in particular, in the Rivne, Ternopol, Volyn regions) suffered massive attacks initiated by radical nationalists in order to seize religious buildings. In 2014-2019 at a time of incitement to hatred towards the UOC (both from authorities and from some mass media controlled by the authorities) multiple facts of systematic violence against the UOC representatives were registered as well as acts of vandalism targeted at religious buildings and temples. In January-February 2018, right-wing radicals representing “C14” organization and a number of other groups tried to demolish the Tithe Monastery in Kiev, owned by the UOC.

In February 2018, in Lviv, some neo-Nazis with connivance of the authorities burnt down the UOC church.

In March 2018, right-wing radicals set the UOC Church of the Transfiguration of the Lord located in Obolonsky district of Kiev on fire.

In June 2018, the “Freedom” nationalists during the sermon threatened the bishop of the Nezhin diocese of the UOC, Archbishop Clement with infliction of bodily harm.

On July 29, 2018 (it was Sunday) some neo-Nazis committed an act of vandalism against the church of St. Spyridon of Trimythous Svyatoshinsky deanery in Kiev by throwing a smoke grenade into the temple and painting one of temple’s walls with insulting inscriptions.

On September 28, 2018, some neo-Nazis with assistance provided by deputies of local council of urban-type settlement of Bogorodchany, Ivano-Frankivsk Region, seized buildings of the Metropolitan Chambers at the Holy Trinity Church, used by the UOC religious community. They beat up the believers, broke doors down and smashed windows.

In October 2018, in Lviv, in the UOC Church of St. Prince Vladimir, some neo-Nazis pasted the temple with inscriptions like "Stalin's patriarchy", and in February 2019 they set this temple on fire.

In December 2018, Dmitry Yarosh, founder and leader of “The Right Sector” group, leader of the Ukrainian Volunteer Army and former MP openly declared a “hunt for Moscow priests” – the UOC clergy.

On June 20, 2019, in the village of Postoyannoe, Kostopolsky District, Rivne Region, about a hundred aggressively behaving right-wing radicals attempted to capture the church house, where the abbot of the Petropavlovsk parish lived with minor kids, and beat up women – the UOC believers. As a result of the attack, one woman got her nose broken, another was diagnosed with a concussion, and the third one was hospitalized with severe injuries. In course of beating victims summoned police - officers stood aside and only watched at what was happening there.

In February 2018, some neo-Nazis in Zaporozhye dispersed a rally dedicated to liberation of Stalingrad from German invaders. On October 14, 2018, they attacked participants of a rally dedicated to the 75th anniversary of liberation of Zaporozhye from Nazi Germany, dousing them with brilliant green.

On May 1, 2018, in the city of Odessa, right-wing radicals attacked the rally participants - the elderly people.

On May 2, 2018, in the city of Odessa, right-wing radicals beat participants of the solemn memorial service dedicated to people who died the Kulikovo Field in 2014, calling this event “The Ukrainian Order” triumphant march in social networks.

Based on the foregoing, it is obvious that hate crimes in Ukraine are of systemic and permanent nature, while Ukrainian authorities take no measures at all to curb such crimes.

In this contest, I ask the organizers of this Meeting to add data on numerous hate crimes in Ukraine to the General Resolution.

All participants who wish to receive the monitoring report on violations of rights and freedoms in Ukraine and on infringement on access to justice in 2014-2019 can contact me after conclusion of the Plenary Meeting.