

## Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

### Freedom of Religion or Belief, Fostering Mutual Respect and Understanding

2 - 3 July 2015

Vienna, Austria

## OVERVIEW OF SIDE EVENTS

### As submitted by the organizers

*The Helsinki Document of 1992 (Chapter IV) called for increasing the openness of OSCE activities and expanding the role of NGOs. In particular, in paragraph (15) of Chapter IV the participating States decided to facilitate during CSCE meetings informal discussion meetings between representatives of participating States and of NGOs, and to provide encouragement to NGOs organizing seminars on CSCE-related issues. In line with this decision, NGOs, governments, and other participants are encouraged to organize side meetings at the Review Conference on relevant issues of their choice.*

*The side events below have been exclusively organized and scheduled exclusively at the request of participants of the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting. The below descriptions have been provided by the organizers. They have been lightly edited by ODIHR for language but not for content. Responsibility for the content remains with the organizers. Neither the text below nor the events themselves necessarily reflect the views of the OSCE.*

### Thursday, 2 July

Time: **13:00-15:00**  
Venue: **Meeting Room 201**  
Title: When god becomes a weapon: persecution based on religious beliefs in the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine  
Convenor: International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR)  
Working languages: English

Summary: “When God Becomes The Weapon”, a report that will be presented at the event provides detailed, unsettling first-hand account of religiously motivated persecution in rebel-controlled areas in eastern Ukraine. The report has been prepared by the Center for Civil Liberties (CCL) and International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR) in the framework of the Civic Solidarity Platform. The new report, which is based on field monitoring undertaken by the CCL and IPHR, documents widespread and serious violations of the rights of non-Orthodox religious believers in the conflict-affected areas of Ukraine. The Orthodox religion is used as an ideological foundation of ‘state building’ by the rebel groups and anything that is non-Russian Orthodox is seen as alien. Since the conflict began in 2014, dozens of places of worship have been seized. Monitors dispatched by the CCL and IPHR have also collected evidence of abductions, unlawful deprivation of liberty, torture and ill-treatment and even killings in the

“crusade” against non-Orthodox believers. Because of these attacks believers have been forced to flee or to practice their religion in secret. The methodology used in preparing the report includes: witness and victim testimony, interviews with clergy from the region and church authorities, interviews with experts and specialists on religion, desk research, as well as an analysis of available audio and video material.

*Refreshments will be provided*

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Time: **13:00-15:00**  
Venue: **Segmentgalerie I**  
Title: The Muslim Righteous - Muslims who saved Jews in the Holocaust  
Convenor: United Kingdom Delegation to the OSCE  
Working languages: English

Summary: The panel discussion will involve representatives of Muslim and Jewish communities from the UK. It will raise awareness of stories that focus on fostering mutual respect and understanding through historical contexts such as the Holocaust. It will discuss stories involving people of the Muslim faith and their relationships with Jewish communities, relating them to the world today and the need for inter-religious co-operation and dialogue. Lunch will be served.

*Refreshments will be provided*

### **Friday, 3 July**

Time: **12:00-14:00**  
Venue: **Meeting Room 201**  
Title: Ukraine: hate crime and hate speech in religious sphere  
Convenor: Public Association "FORPOST - Legal Advocacy Union"  
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: At the round table we will familiarize the conference participants with the actual state of the protection of freedom of belief in Ukraine, with the evidence available related to illegal seizure of religious buildings in the Western Ukraine. Besides, we will present to all stakeholders practices which will improve the effectiveness of human rights protection in the sphere of religion in Ukraine.

*Refreshments will not be provided*

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Time: **12:00-14:00**  
Venue: **Segmentgalerie I**  
Title: Recognition of Religious or Belief Communities in Ukraine: Issues and Opportunities  
Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights  
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Paragraph 16 of the Vienna Concluding Document (1989) emphasizes the duty of OSCE participating States to recognize religious or belief communities. Moreover, the OSCE/ODIHR-Venice Commission Guidelines on the Legal Personality of Religious or Belief Communities - published on 16 June 2014 and launched on 4 February 2015 - constitute a benchmark document containing minimum international standards and good practices in the area of recognition of religious or belief communities. This publication was designed to provide guidance to participating States on ensuring voluntary access to legal personality for religious or belief communities, in a manner that is compliant with international standards and OSCE commitments. This document was developed to be used widely and assist all religious or belief communities in obtaining the status that they seek. Through the recent implementation of the project on “Promoting Security for Religious Communities and Others in the regions of Ukraine”, OSCE/ODIHR has identified a number of issues and opportunities related to the recognition of religious or belief communities in Ukraine, at both the legislative and practical level. This side event will provide an opportunity to explore these. The event will also focus on discussing practical and legal reform efforts, taking into account the standards and good practices contained in the OSCE/ODIHR-Venice Commission Guidelines and seeking to ensure that the legislation and practice in Ukraine are in line with international standards and OSCE commitments.

*Refreshments will be provided*