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**CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS DURING
THE RUSSO-UKRAINIAN WAR (2014 – 2024)**

Abstract. *The purpose of the article is a comprehensive analysis of church and religious policy in the focus of political institutions under the conditions of the Russo-Ukrainian war 2014 – 2024; elucidation of the main areas of Church activity of different denominations, their position regarding the Russo-Ukrainian war, characteristics of the interaction between the Church and the state, taking into account the challenges of the national security, geopolitical influences. The Methodology of the Research.* To achieve the goal, general scientific and special scientific principles and methods, as well as principles of systematicity and consistency, have been used. **The Scientific Novelty.** A hybrid dimension of the Russo-Ukrainian war and its ideological basis, in particular in the concept of the “Russian world” promoted by the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate, actualizes the study of religious institutions activity. That is, the study of church-state interaction, socio-religious relations in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war is relevant in view of the national security issue. At the same time, a comprehensive study of the role of leading church institutions, not only of the Orthodox, but also of the Catholic denomination, in the Russo-Ukrainian war demonstrates their identification and civilizational choice. **The Conclusions.** Civilizational challenges of the Russo-

Ukrainian war, actualized under the conditions of a full-scale invasion, affected the identification processes of citizens, a religious landscape of the state. The Orthodox churches of the Kyiv Christian tradition were united, and the Tomos on autocephaly was received. The reformation of the religious network of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, in particular the loss of some religious buildings, the transfer of parishes to the newly created OCU, is accompanied by a significant polarization of relations between the UOC MP and the OCU, and even open aggression on the part of the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate. Under such difficult conditions, the state apparatus, responding to challenges, pursues the policy of making it impossible, reducing the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church and its Ukrainian representatives – the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. After all, supporting the independent Orthodox Church in Ukraine is the matter of national security, confirmation of the Ukrainian identity, and a geopolitical choice. Restrictions on the presence of the UOC MP in the Ukrainian public space are carried out through the discussion of draft laws banning the Russian Orthodox Church, banning the activities of religious organizations registered outside of Ukraine, and a gradual implementation of resolutions aimed at depriving the right to use religious buildings of the national level.

Key words: Russo-Ukrainian war, Church, state, religious policy.

ВІДНОСИНИ ЦЕРКВИ І ДЕРЖАВИ В ПЕРІОД РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ (2014 – 2024)

Мета роботи: комплексний аналіз церковно-релігійної політики у фокусі політичних інститутів в умовах російсько-української війни 2014 – 2024 рр. Виокремлення головних напрямів діяльності церков різної конфесійної приналежності, їхню позицію щодо російсько-української війни, характеристика взаємодії між Церквою та державою, враховуючи виклики національної безпеки, геополітичних впливів. **Методологія дослідження.** Для досягнення окресленої мети використано загальнонаукові та спеціально-наукові методи, а також принципи системності та послідовності. **Наукова новизна.** Гібридний вимір російсько-української війни та її ідеологічне підґрунтя, зокрема у концепції “русского мира”, пропорованої РПЦ та УПЦ МП актуалізує вивчення питання діяльності релігійних інституцій. Тобто вивчення церковно-державної взаємодії, суспільно-релігійних відносин у контексті російсько-української війни є актуальним з огляду на питання національної безпеки. Водночас комплексне дослідження ролі провідних церковних інституцій не лише православної, а й католицької конфесії у російсько-українській війні демонструє їхній ідентифікаційний та цивілізаційний вибір. **Висновки.** Цивілізаційні виклики російсько-української війни, актуалізовані в умовах повномасштабного вторгнення вплинули на процеси ідентифікації громадян, релігійний ландшафт держави. Відбулося об’єднання православних церков Київської християнської традиції, отримання Томосу про автокефалію. Переформатування релігійної мережі православної церкви в Україні, зокрема втрата частини культових споруд, перехід парафій до новоствореної ПЦУ супроводжується суттєвою поляризацією відносин між УПЦ МП та ПЦУ, та навіть відкритою агресією з боку керівників Московського патріархату. У таких складних умовах державний апарат, реагуючи на виклики, провадить політику унеможливлення, зменшення впливу РПЦ та її українських представників – УПЦ. Адже підтримка незалежної православної церкви в Україні є питанням національної безпеки, утвердження української ідентичності, геополітичного вибору. Обмеження присутності УПЦ МП в українському суспільному просторі здійснюються шляхом обговорення законопроектів про заборону Російської православної Церкви, заборони діяльності релігійних організацій, зареєстрованих за межами України, та поступової імплементації постанов, спрямованих на позбавлення права користуватися культовими спорудами національного рівня

Ключові слова: російсько-українська війна, Церква, держава, релігійна політика.

The Problem Statement. The unfolding of the modern Russo-Ukrainian war in 2014 became a civilizational challenge, and a full-scale invasion (according to analysts of the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies) – an existential war (Telvak & Ihnytskiy, 2023, pp. 249–250). Responding to threats, the Ukrainian civil society underwent a significant transformation consolidating the efforts in supporting the state’s defense capability, a

humanitarian aid to victims of military operations (Kravets & Barvinenko, 2024, p. 200). Religion is an important institutional resource in politics at all levels (Kulahina-Stadnichenko, 2023, p. 97). At the same time, the Church as an institution and community is part of a civil society (Lotiuk, 2014, p. 125). The annexation of the Crimea and the occupation of parts of Luhansk and Donetsk regions in 2014, and later the full-scale war of Russia against Ukraine in 2022, affected qualitative and quantitative changes in the religious landscape of the country (Kolodny & Fylypovych, 2022, pp. 6–7).

The Review of Recent Researches and Publications. The issues of the study of Ukrainian Orthodoxy and the political influence on these processes are raised in the publications of well-known researchers: Anatoly Kolodny (Kolodny, 2014, pp. 122–127; Kolodny & Fylypovych, 2022, pp. 6–17), Liudmyla Fylypovych (Fylypovych, 2024, pp. 210–220), Serhiy Zdioruk and Volodymyr Tokman (Zdioruk & Tokman, 2023), Svitlana Kahamlyk (Kahamlyk, 2021, pp. 79–84), Mykola Obushny (Kahamlyk & Obushny, 2023, p. 74–82). Andrii Kobetiak (Kobetiak, 2022; Kobetiak & Sliusar, 2022, pp. 43–49; Kobetiak, 2023, pp. 41–48). Among a number of researches on the study of the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church on Ukraine, its role at the beginning of the Russo-Ukrainian war, there should be singled out the publications by Pavlo Artymyshyn (Artymyshyn, 2020, pp. 236–252; Artymyshyn, 2024, pp. 221–238), Oleh Muravskyi (Muravskyi, 2022, pp. 39–40), Andriy and Mariana Mishchuk (Mishchuk & Mishchuk, 2023, pp. 43–52), Dmytro Vovk and Elizabeth E. Clark (Clark & Vovk, 2019), Andriy Fert (Fert, 2019, pp. 192–210; Fert, 2024, pp. 1–36), Jerry Pankhurst (Pankhurst & Kilp, 2022, pp. 1–23; Pankhurst & Kilp, 2023, pp. 1–27). Therefore, the historiography of political influence of the Russian Orthodox Church, the UOC MP, and creation of the concepts of the “Russian world”, their promotion in various spheres of a public life remain a constant research focus by both domestic and foreign scholars, but there are significantly fewer publications on a comprehensive analysis of the specifics of the state-church and social-religious processes under the conditions of war, opposition to anti-Ukrainian activities, a full-scale military aggression of Russia against Ukraine.

The purpose of the article: a comprehensive analysis of church and religious policy in the focus of political institutions under the conditions of the Russo-Ukrainian war 2014 – 2024; elucidation of the main areas of Churches activity of different denominations, their position regarding the Russo-Ukrainian war, characteristics of interaction between the Church and the state, taking into account challenges of national security, geopolitical influences.

The Research Results. Religion has a great influence on social structures, so it has always been in the field of state, political and ideological structures (Buchma, 2023, p. 55; Kryński, Bodak & Tkachenko, 2021, p. 196). The Government of Ukraine, i.e. the Cabinet of Ministers (exercises executive power through ministries and central bodies), the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (responsible for the “formation and implementation of state-church and inter-religious relations) belong to the political institutions that influence the formation of a religious policy within the limits of their powers” (Kobetiak, 2022, pp. 355–356). The President of Ukraine acts as a guarantor of state sovereignty and territorial integrity, compliance with the Basic Law of Ukraine, human rights and freedoms. Also, as the head of the state, the President forms the directions of state policy, including religious ones. Its duties also include ensuring the right to freedom of conscience and religion. In practical terms, this is regulation of the state policy directions in a religious sphere, in particular through introduction of draft laws for consideration by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, creation of advisory bodies in the sphere of religion (Kobetiak & Sliusar, 2022, p. 44).

The beginning of the hybrid war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine in 2014 became possible due to the anti-state activities of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC MP). Therefore, it is necessary to outline the main milestones of the Russian Orthodox Church activities directed against the statehood of Ukraine. In 2013 and 2015, according to Pavlo Artymyshyn, the Ukrainian researcher of Russian issues, the specified church structures were “the ideological basis for the promotion of Russian geopolitical interests” (Artymyshyn, 2020, pp. 247–248). With the rise to power of Volodymyr Putin in Russia, at the beginning of the 2000s, the ROC became an important political actor for implementation of pro-Russian politics and ideology. The rhetoric of the Russian clergy (ROC) was aimed at affirming theses about the historical commonality and cultural heritage of the Russians, the Ukrainians, and the Belarusians, who created the so-called “Eastern Slavic Orthodox civilization”. Since the mid-2000s, an even more aggressive concept has been established – the “Russian world”. In 2007 V. Putin issued Decree on the establishment of the “Russian world” fund, the main goal of which was to popularize the Russian culture and language. In 2009, the ROC was headed by Metropolitan Kyryl (Hundiayev), who publicly emphasized the importance of the “Russian (“Rusky”) world”, which aims to unite the society of Russia and the Russians (“Rusky”) – a cultural community, which also included the Ukrainians and the Belarusians) abroad in order to preserve their identity, while the ROC assigned the role of a consolidating institution (Artymyshyn, 2020, pp. 238–239). The leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church condemned the events of the Revolution of Dignity and called it the “Ukrainian crisis”, which was initiated by the West in order to destroy the “spiritual unity” of the Russians and the Ukrainians; supported the preservation of Viktor Yanukovich’s regime. After the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and the occupation of a part of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church expressed support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine formally, but in practice the Russian Orthodox Church took diametrically opposite steps. At the same time, following the leadership of the Russian Federation, the Russian Orthodox Church used the definition “political crisis in Ukraine” to describe the military operations in Donbas (Artymyshyn, 2020, pp. 242–243).

The UOC MP relayed the ideas of the Russian Orthodox Church together with a number of public Orthodox associations that promoted the ideologies of the “Russian world” actively. No less revealing was the organization of the All-Ukrainian Orthodox Forum “For Peace in Ukraine” in November of 2014 in Kyiv with the assistance of the UOC MP. Only pro-Russian religious formations from Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and representatives from the Russian Federation took part in it. The resolutions of the forum reflected the ideological influence of the concept of the “Russian world”, the participants appealed to this identification. But they believed that the achievement of peace is possible only with the improvement of the Russian-Ukrainian relations and rejection of European integration aspirations, they favourably evaluated the “peacemaking mission of the Russian Orthodox Church” (including the mission in Donbas) (Artymyshyn, 2020, p. 245).

It is worth noting that the leadership of the UOC MP did not condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which led to the violation of civil rights, in particular, the freedom of religion in the regions occupied by the Russian Federation. Instead, some bodies of the UOC MP, in particular in Luhansk and Donetsk regions, instead took a neutral position regarding the spread of separatism, or on the contrary, openly supported the Russian side and the so-called “militia” (Artymyshyn, 2020, pp. 245–246; Kahamlyk, 2021, p. 81).

Instead, the UOC KP took a distinctly pro-Ukrainian position. This Church openly condemned the actions of the Russian aggressor at the Synod. Also, the priests of the Kyiv Patriarchate actively helped in the provision of servicemen, internally relocated people from the eastern regions of Ukraine (Marchyshak, 2015, pp. 65–66).

It is also worth noting that after the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Federation, systematic violations of the rights of religious communities, in particular the UOC KP, began. In 2014, 6 parishes were liquidated on the Crimean peninsula, approximately 10% of the priests left, instead the parishes of the UOC KP were joined to the Russian Orthodox Church (Marchyshak, 2015, p. 65)

With the beginning of the hybrid Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014, the UOC KP and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church activated the institution of chaplaincy. The position of military chaplain was introduced in the units that participated in the anti-terrorist operation in the eastern regions of the country (Kahamlyk, 2021, p. 81). According to a researcher Dmytro Vovk, the process of introducing the service of military clergy, i.e. chaplaincy, is one of the manifestations of “convergence of the state and the church” (Vovk, 2016, p. 108).

Among the researchers of the military religious relations, different stages of formation and institutional design of the chaplain service are distinguished (Nepinenko, 2022, pp. 128–130). Since 2014, according to the Ukrainian philosopher Larysa Vladychenko, there has been a significant revival of cooperation between religious and military bodies, the formation issue of the institute of chaplaincy began to be considered at the national level (Vladychenko, 2016).

On July 2, 2014, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine issued Order “On Service of Military Clergy (Chaplain Service) in the Armed Forces, the National Guard, State Special Transport Service and State Border Service”. By the end of 2014, regulations on the service of military clergy had been developed and approved, and a new profession was introduced in the National Classification of Professions – a military priest (chaplain). Further legitimization of the institute of chaplaincy took place in 2015 and 2017. In particular, the official status of the activity of military chaplains was approved by the Order of the Ministry for Defense of Ukraine No. 40 “On Approval of Regulations on Service of Military Clergy (Chaplaincy) in the Armed Forces of Ukraine” (dated January 27, 2015), Order of the Ministry for Defense No. 685 “On Approval of Regulation on Service of Military Clergy (Chaplain Service) in the Armed Forces of Ukraine” (dated 14.12.2016). In 2017, the process of transition of chaplains to full-time positions in military units took place, for the first time in the structure of the National Guard of Ukraine (Nepinenko, 2022, p. 132).

In December of 2021, the President of Ukraine signed the Law “On Military Chaplaincy Service” approved by the VRU, which entered into force on March 19, 2022. According to this law, “The Military Chaplaincy Service is formed as a separate structure within the Armed Forces, the National Guard, and other military formations formed in accordance with the laws of Ukraine”. The law also provides for amendments and additions to the Laws of Ukraine “On Military Duty and Military Service”, “On Social and Legal Protection of Servicemen and Members of Their Families”, “On Statute of Internal Service of the Armed Forces of Ukraine” (Nepinenko, 2022, pp. 132–133).

At the end of 1996, an inter-confessional institution was formed – the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (VRCiRO). The main goal of the activity was to unite “the efforts of denominations in the cause of the spiritual revival of Ukraine and the coordination of inter-church dialogue both in Ukraine and abroad, as well as participation

in the development of projects of normative acts on issues of state-confessional relations and the implementation of comprehensive measures of a benevolent nature”. As of 2020, VRCiRO included 15 churches and religious organizations (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical churches, Jewish and Muslim religious associations), 1 inter-church organization. VRCiRO represents about 90% of religious organizations in Ukraine (Informatsiia pro VRTsiRO, 2021; Kobetiak, 2022, p. 371).

The Council of Churches is actively involved in a public life in Ukraine. With the beginning of the Russian aggression in 2014, it spoke in support of the current government, condemned the aggression of the Russian Federation, and appealed to the international community for help “to preserve peace in Ukraine and preserve the territorial integrity, sovereignty and inviolability of the borders of the Ukrainian state” (Statement of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations, 2014; Vasin, 2021, pp. 186–187). Also, at the beginning of 2015, VRCiRO called on “believers, in accordance with their religious beliefs and capabilities, to participate in the defense of Motherland” (Vasin, 2021, pp. 197–198). Church organizations that had been part of the Council of Churches since 2014 were also actively included in the process of protecting believers who suffered from religious persecution in the temporarily occupied territories of Luhansk and Donetsk regions, Autonomous Republic of the Crimea. Another important area of activity of this interfaith organization is the work to facilitate the release of Russian military prisoners and people who were arrested for political reasons (Informatsiia pro VRTsiRO, 2021).

VRCiRO also conducts multi-vector international activities, in particular, in 2014, its delegation held a number of meetings in Oslo (Norway) with the Russian religious figures, testifying about the war in Ukraine. In 2015, the delegates of the Russian Orthodox Church held meetings in Kyiv with the delegation of the World Council of Churches (Informatsiia pro VRTsiRO, 2021).

Church-state interaction of the Russian Orthodox Church of Ukraine is carried out at all levels, in particular with all heads of state. After the election of Petro Poroshenko as the President of Ukraine, the Council of Churches appealed to the President to make a stable dialogue aimed at “establishing freedom of religion, high moral values and developing partnership relations between the state and the religious community in Ukraine”. Subsequent meetings with President P. Poroshenko confirmed the recognition of importance of interfaith institution activities for the support of the territorial integrity of Ukraine. After the appointment of Volodymyr Zelenskyi as the President of Ukraine, a meeting was also held with the new head of state (Kobetiak, 2022, pp. 372–373).

Considering the Church as one of important elements of a social life, aware of geopolitical challenges of the Russo-Ukrainian war, President P. Poroshenko actively contributed to the process of obtaining the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. A comprehensive activity of President Poroshenko and his associates, the church leadership became the final link in the long-term process of establishing the national church in Ukraine (Bondarenko, Vysotska & Kushnirchuk, 2024, pp. 10–11).

One of the first important documents that testified to the leading role of the state in the establishment of autocephaly was the Appeal of the Supreme Ukraine of June 16, 2016 to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople with a request for the recognition of the autocephaly of the UOC, which will help in settling the issue of internal divisions within the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, “normalizing the canonical status of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine in the spirit of ... the historic Address to the Ukrainian Nation on July 26, 2008, as well as the

canonical actions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to normalize church life in the Orthodox churches of Estonia (1996), Bulgaria (1998) and the Czech Republic and Slovakia (2014)”; a request for cancellation of the transfer act of the Metropolis of Kyiv (Orthodox) to the Patriarchate of Moscow, carried out with gross violations in 1686; with a request for an active involvement in overcoming the consequences of “church division by convening under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate the All-Ukrainian Unification Council for the purpose of resolving all controversial issues and unifying the Ukrainian Orthodoxy” (Kobetiak, 2023, p. 46; Postanova Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy, 2016).

There were held numerous meetings at the international level in 2016 – 2019, the official documents were adopted that contributed to the establishment of the autocephalous status of the OCU. The USA also supported the above-mentioned aspirations. In 2018, the draft “Resolution on Supporting the Appeal of the President of Ukraine to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew Regarding Granting of Tomos on Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine” was submitted to the VRU for consideration. There were the following people, who were involved in the creation of this project: A. Parubiy, the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada, I. Herashchenko, the First Vice-Speaker, the leaders of factions “Petro Poroshenko Bloc”, “Narodny Front”, “Batkivshchyna”, Radical Party, “Samopomich”; a representative of the president in the Verkhovna Rada I. Lutsenko and the others. Instead, the representatives from the Opposition Bloc (V. Novinsky and O. Dolzhenkov) submitted an appeal to the Constitutional Court to recognize the resolution of the Verkhovna Rada supporting the granting of autocephaly as illegal. The CCU replied that it was beyond its competence to consider the following affairs, in particular, the appeals of the Orthodox Church religious communities to recognize as illegal VRU Resolution No. 241-VIII dated 04/19/2018 “On Support of Appeal of the President of Ukraine to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on Granting of Tomos on Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine” (Kobetiak, 2022, pp. 360–362).

The Synod of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople, was an important step in resolving the issue of obtaining autocephaly to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which took place on October 9 – 11, of 2018 in Kyiv. The Synod cancelled the Act of 1686 on the subordination of the Metropolis to the Moscow Patriarchate (Synodal letter of 1686), renewed the stauropygy of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Kyiv, a canonical status of the Ukrainian clergy. The Ukrainian state and the Patriarchate of Constantinople signed Cooperation Agreement in order to intensify the negotiation process for granting Tomos in the future. The key condition for obtaining Tomos was the unification of the Ukrainian Orthodox churches, so the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew invited the leadership of the UOC KP, UAOC and UOC MP to join the organization of the Unification Council. However, the leadership of the UOC KP forbade its Metropolitans to take part in this event. There were present all the hierarchs of the UOC KP, UAOC and two Metropolitans of the UOC MP, who took part in the Council’s Congress. The President of Ukraine P. Poroshenko and the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada A. Parubiy were also present (Palinchak, Kapitan, Mehela & Pupena, 2020, p. 87; Kobetiak, 2022, pp. 347–348).

There was a landmark event, which was hold on December 15, 2018. The Council adopted the resolution on unification of the Ukrainian Orthodox churches into the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), the Statute was approved, the Primate was elected – “Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kyiv and All Ukraine” (Kobetiak, 2022, p. 348). The newly elected Head of the OCU, Epiphanius, was invited to Istanbul by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for the presentation of Tomos on autocephaly, as well as official representatives of the state (the President and the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine). The Ecumenical Patriarch

Bartholomew signed the Tomos document on January 5, 2019, and it was officially presented to Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kyiv and All Ukraine on January 6, 2019 (Khronolohiia, 2019).

Metropolitan Epiphanius and his team began to work on the governing bodies formation of the newly created church – the Holy Synod, synodal institutions, and diocesan structures after a protracted and successful struggle to obtain Tomos on the autocephaly of the OCU. The next issues that needed to be resolved were the following ones: process of introducing the New Julian calendar, intensifying international contacts, training priests, especially for the Ukrainian citizens who, as a result of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation in 2022, found themselves abroad (Bondarenko, Vysotska & Kushnirchuk, 2024, p. 12).

Numerous scholars analysed the issues on the introduction of autocephaly and a further development of the OCU, in particular, Viktor Bondarenko, Tamara Vysotska, Vasyl Kushnirchuk, and noted that P. Poroshenko's decision to actually stop working with the bishopric of the UOC MP, involving only two bishoprics in the transition to the OCU, was politically incorrect, and were not fully settled as well as relations within the leadership of the OCU, which led to ambiguous actions of Filaret (Denysenko) – the “honorary patriarch” of the OCU. The above-mentioned scholars also noted that among the complex of unresolved problems faced by the leadership of the OCU and the Ukrainian state is a low intensity of the recognition process of the OCU by other Orthodox churches, a long transition process of the UOC MP parishes to the OCU, and especially monasteries, the Ukrainian lavras (Bondarenko, Vysotska & Kushnirchuk, 2024, pp. 11–12).

It is obvious that the President of the Russian Federation and the church leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church criticized systematically the actions of the Ukrainian authorities aimed at obtaining Tomos on autocephaly, had openly clashes with Constantinople, and threatened to break relations with the Ecumenical Patriarch (Ecumenical Patriarchate recognized the illegal annexation in 2018). However, the issue of the OCU MP existence remains unresolved, because according to the statutory documents the ROC Ukraine, as it was noted by a researcher A. Kobetiak, it is “a canonical territory over which its jurisdiction extends. The UOC can maintain relations with the Local Orthodox Churches of the world only through the Russian Orthodox Church. The Primate of the UOC takes office only after presentation to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, blessing and handing over of the “Blessed Letter”” (Kobetiak, 2022, p. 349). There were also some scholars, who specialize in the study on the state-church relations in Ukraine, in particular Anna Slubska. She expressed some concern that the creation of the OCU became “a challenge to the established model of state-church relations”, because the support of prominent state bodies for obtaining Tomos can lead to its formation in Ukraine models of the state-church relations with a dominant role of the OCU, which will play the role of the so-called “state church”. Although after the Presidential elections, when Volodymyr Zelensky came to power these processes slowed down (Slubska, 2019, p. 110).

There were not included any items related to a religious policy in V. Zelenskyi's election programme, and in his public statements he also maintained neutrality towards any Church (Shchotkina, 2019; Bokoch, 2019, p. 15). According to a scholar Viktoriya Bokoch, due to Zelenskyi's “lack of clear religious orientations”, it was difficult for the church leaders to predict his further actions, however, after his victory, he was welcomed by many church figures of various denominations in Ukraine, and at the same time Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Head of the Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Kirill (Bokoch, 2020, p. 100).

President V. Zelenskyi showed respect for the religious organizations representatives of various faiths and denominations, so one of the first official meetings was with religious

leaders. Diverse political, social, and religious issues were discussed at the above-mentioned meeting. The issue of a spiritual care, support of the population in the occupied territories, internally relocated people was emphasized. The mandate of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to prepare invitations for the representatives of various faiths to take part in the celebrations of the 28th anniversary of Ukraine's Independence, the request to hold prayers for Ukraine on this day, was the evidence regarding further steps to establish cooperation between the Office of the President and the religious leadership (Bokoch, 2020, p. 101).

It should be noted that the President's meetings with the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew played an important role in the state religious policy in August of 2019. However, the parties did not sign the joint statement that was planned the day before, even though, according to the Official Release of the Office of the President, "Bartholomius supported the sovereignty of Ukraine, and V. Zelenskyi was grateful to him for his support". During the meeting the Head of state also highlighted that "the authorities of Ukraine will not interfere in the affairs of the church in any way and will protect and defend people's right to freedom of religion in every possible way" (Na zustrichi Zelenskoho, 2019). The President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyi had an audience with Pope Francis in the Vatican in February of 2020. The Head of Ukraine highlighted the important role that the Holy See could play in the cessation of hostilities and bringing peace. In addition, there were discussed the issues on the humanitarian initiatives and the release of prisoners. V. Zelenskyi expressed gratitude for the help to the victims of the war in Donbas, invited His Holiness to visit Kyiv (An audience with the President of Ukraine was held in the Vatican, 2020; Bokoch, 2020, p. 101).

There were certain misunderstandings, which still existed in the religious and church sphere, despite all the above-mentioned steps taken by V. Zelenskyi, in particular with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which remained under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church interprets the events in the East of Ukraine as a "civil conflict", but according to the President it is a consequence of the aggression of the Russian Federation. At the same time, the UOC condemned Zelenskyi's statements regarding the adoption of the course of the European integration and Euro-Atlantic rapprochement of Ukraine. Although Metropolitan Onufriy stated that some special treatment was not expected from the new Head of state, but sought the same treatment as for the other Churches, so that "we are equal before the law" (Mytropolyt Onufriy zaveril, 2019).

The development of relations with the OCU was another important direction of V. Zelenskyi's state-religious relations. An unambiguous line of communication was hindered by political differences. As it was noted by Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kyiv and All Ukraine, he maintains contacts with the President: "The new government has a conceptually different attitude towards the Church than the previous one. The new government has an equidistant attitude towards all Churches. Although we established a good rapport, we met with Zelenskyi... It shows that the authorities understand the role of the UOC. We are satisfied with this position, because we strive to have friendly relations with the state authorities" (Predstoiatel PTsU, 2020).

According to the scholars: Svitlana Kahamlyk and Mykola Obushnyi, the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine on February 24, 2022 "ultimately polarized... the positions regarding the national identification and civilizational choice" of the institutions of the Ukrainian Orthodoxy (Kahamlyk & Obushny, 2023, p. 76). The Orthodox Church of Ukraine condemned the military aggression of the Russian Federation immediately in 2022, in contrast to it, contrary to the leadership of the UOC MP continued to profess the pro-

Russian views and supported the invasion of the Russian troops. For example, Metropolitan Iosyf of Romensky and Burynsky (Olexii Maslenikov) (Hierarch's page. Ukrainian Orthodox Church) visited Moscow during a full-scale invasion, namely, when there was the period of the Russians' mobilization in order to be sent to the war in Ukraine. In addition, the representatives of the UOC MP from Eastern Ukraine took part in the celebrations on the occasion of the declaration of illegal annexation of 4 regions of Ukraine (Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk) on September 30 of 2022 in Moscow. Law enforcement bodies and the Security Service of Ukraine also revealed numerous facts of an open cooperation between the Russian Federation and UOC MP (Koshkina, 2022). However, it is worth emphasizing that part of the leadership of the UOC MP distances itself from the Russian Orthodox Church, the priests together with the believers join the OCU. There should be singled out among such "oppositionally"-minded leaders of the UOC MP Andriy Pinchuk, the group of the protopriest of Dnipropetrovsk Diocese, who was one of the initiators concerning collecting the signatures for the international church tribunal against Patriarch Kirill on April 18 of 2022 (Sviashchennyky UPTs (MP) zibraly, 2022).

The UOC MP continued to declare an ambiguous position regarding the war in Ukraine at the official level, its attitude towards the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church. After the appearance of the draft law on the Moscow Patriarchate ban in Ukraine on March 22, 2022, despite the declared separation from the structures of the Russian Orthodox Church, in accordance with the decision of the Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Russian Orthodox Church of May 27, 2022 on "autonomy and independence from the Russian Church". However, in this resolution of the Council, the UOC did not condemn the actions of Patriarch Kirill, stating the formation of the OCU non-canonical (Kahamlyk & Obushny, 2023, p. 77). The following scholars Serhii Zdioruk and Volodymyr Tokman emphasized that the attitude of the UOC to the aggression of the Russian Federation did not change, the Eucharistic communication with Constantinople was not restored, the establishment of a dialogue with the OCU did not take place, the visits of the UOC MP representatives to Russia continued, collaborationism only intensified during the following year (Zdioruk & Tokman, 2023, p. 16).

The state apparatus took numerous important measures after the full-scale invasion, as it was cognisant of the threats related to the national security in the religious sphere. The draft law was registered in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine On the introduction of amendments to the Law of Ukraine "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" regarding the prohibition of the activities of religious organizations (associations) that are part of the structure (are part of) a religious organization (association), the management centre (management) of which is located outside of Ukraine in a state recognized by law as having carried out military aggression against Ukraine and/or temporarily occupied part of the territory of Ukraine" No. 7213 issued on March 26, 2022; "On Ensuring Strengthening of the National Security in the Sphere of Freedom of Conscience and Activities of Religious Organizations" No. 8221 on November 23, 2022; "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding Improvement of Legal Regulation of Activities of Religious Organizations" No. 8262 dated December 5, 2022. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine also prepared its draft law "On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine Regarding Activities of Religious Organizations in Ukraine" No. 8371 dated January 19, 2023 (Здіорук, Токман, 2023, pp. 15–16). According to this draft law, "it is offered to amend the laws of Ukraine "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations", "On State Registration of Legal Entities, Individual Entrepreneurs, and Public Organizations", providing for provisions on making it impossible for religious

organizations to operate in Ukraine, the management centre (management) which is located outside of Ukraine in the state that carries out armed aggression against Ukraine. The changes envisage reliance on the central body of an executive power, which implements the state policy in the field of religion (State Service of Ukraine for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience)” (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy pryiniata zakonoproekt, 2023).

Draft Law No. 8371 issued on January 19, 2023 was supported in the first reading on October 19, 2023 (the Council previously supported the ban of the UOC MP (2023)), at the beginning of May of 2024. The Humanitarian and Information Policy Committee of the Verkhovna Rada completed work on this Draft Law, it is expected that it will be adopted in May-June of 2024 (Povna zaborona UPTs MP: u Radi, 2024).

From the moment of the full-scale invasion, the UOC MP parishes were transferring to the OCU, however, as it was noted by Taras Antoshevskiy, a director of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2024, the activity of such transitions decreased significantly (Haliv, 2024). However, there is a constant positive dynamic of support for the local church in Ukraine, according to the data of a sociological study conducted by Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) in July of 2022, the number of supporters of the UOC MP decreased from 18% to 4% (Dynamika, 2022). There was another sociological study also conducted by KMIS at the request of the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, carried out at the end of December of 2022, and it showed that only 6,6% of people consider themselves the supporters of the Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, as compared to 21,9% in 2021 (Zdioruk & Tokman, 2023, p. 18).

Under the conditions of war the OCU develops the institute of military chaplaincy, provides a comprehensive support to families affected by the war (Kagamlyk & Obushnyi, 2023, p. 76). In the autumn of 2022, the Metropolitan Fund of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine allocated funds for the construction of 50 houses for the families from Kyiv region (in Hostomel, in the villages of Ozerne, Moschun, Irpin, Bucha), the next series of houses was also supposed to be built at the beginning of autumn of 2022 (Mytropolychy fond, 2022).

According to a scholar Olha Spys, Western Christendom was mostly “pacifist” at the beginning of a full-scale war. There were demonstrated significant disagreements regarding the understanding of the peacekeeping mission of the Church in war by the Vatican, in particular the organization of the annual Way of the Cross prayer on April 15, 2022. During the event, a Ukrainian woman and a Russian woman carried “the Cross as a symbol of forgiveness and reconciliation of warring nations” together (Bodak). There was also no clear condemnation of V. Putin’s actions in the statements of the Pope Francis in 2022 – 2023. The pontiff got into another scandal, reflecting in an interview “about the courage to win under the white flag” in 2024 (Bodak, 2022; Novyi skandal iz pontyfikom, 2024). Despite the odious statements of Pope Francis, the RCC in Ukraine and the Vatican envoys conduct active charity service, provide assistance to the victims of war (Yakubovska, 2023; Dianova, 2023, p. 92).

The UGCC condemned the Russian aggression of February 24, 2022, emphasizing that “Our Country... calls us today to stand up for its defense – to defend its dignity before God and humanity, its right to exist and the right to choose its future. It is our natural right and sacred duty to defend our land and our people, our state”. The leadership of the UGCC also condemned the crimes of the Russian military against the civilian population in Ukraine on February 28, 2022; together with the representatives of other faiths, in cooperation with the network of Catholic charitable organizations “Caritas”, they provide humanitarian aid to the victims of war throughout Ukraine (Moroz, 2022; Dyrektory ukrainskykh Karitasiv,

2022). It should also be noted that on the eve of the invasion of the Russian Federation, His Beatitude Sviatoslav addressed in absentia to representatives of the International Forum “The Mediterranean – The Border of Peace”: “These days, the Russian government has officially violated the territorial integrity and sovereignty of our country, recognizing the autonomy of the self-proclaimed republics of D/LPR and sending the Russian army... Ukraine defends European values at the cost of the blood of its children” (Ukraina zakhyschaie, 2022).

Another important contribution of the UGCC under the conditions of full-scale Russian aggression is the actualization of the “issue of war and defense of the Motherland” in religious documents, in particular, in 2022, the “Catechism of the Christian Warrior” was prepared. It “contains various prayers, an examination of conscience, a number of answers to pressing questions to soldiers, as well as a kind of “decalogue” to the Ukrainian defenders” (Nedavnia, 2023, pp. 87–90).

The Conclusions. The Russo-Ukrainian War affected all spheres of a social and political life in Ukraine significantly. There was a temporary occupation of part of the eastern and southern regions, the country suffered demographic losses. Hence, significant qualitative and quantitative changes took place in the church and religious sphere. The systematic violations of the rights of religious communities began, some religious premises were lost or damaged due to the Russian aggression. Intensification of the processes of establishing national identity in the context of violation of the state territorial integrity by the Russian aggressor affected the religious and church environment, politics in this area. An important place in the state policy of the religio-political vector was played by the promotion of obtaining Tomos on autocephaly as a countermeasure to the spread of the “Rusky myr” and the subsequent approval of the international recognition of the OCU. The full-scale aggression of Russia in 2022 actualized the issue of regulating the activities of the UOC MP, strengthening opposition to the ROC network, and resolving inter-confessional conflicts.

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