

Anti-Semitism and xenophobia in Ukraine: the Chronicle

Electronic information bulletin

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1. SIGNS OF XENOPHOBIA

1.1 Vandalism

Several Holocaust monuments in Odessa had been vandalized in the night of **8 April**.

Monuments at Prokhorov Square and on Tolbukhin Street, as well as several graves on the Tairovsk cemetery were vandalized. Unidentified vandals left drawings of swastika, the 'Wolf's hook' and the writings 'Praviy Sektor' and 'Glory to Ukraine'.

The Neo-Nazi sign of the 'Wolf's hook' is a symbol of the Social-National Assembly and 'Patriot of Ukraine' civic movement, which are members of the 'Right Sector'. However, there are grammatical mistakes in inscriptions written in Ukrainian, including the wrong spelling of 'Right Sector'.

Sergei Sternenko, head of the 'Right Sector' cell in Odessa, denied the organization's involvement in these acts of vandalism and called them 'provocations'. This view was also supported by the press secretary of 'Chabad' Jewish community in Odessa Boleslav Kapulkin.

On **10 April**, leaders of the 'Right Sector' in Odessa visited the synagogue and met the Chief Rabbi of Odessa and South of Ukraine Avraam Wolf after which they took part in brushing off the anti-Semitic graffiti.

Messages that were not confirmed

The information about anti-Semitic act of vandalism in Dnipropetrovsk appeared on **22 April**. Avigdor Eskin, famous pro-Russian political scientist, has shared a link to the Israel newspaper regarding the tombstone of the last Lubavitch rabbi, a remarkable Jewish authority, being vandalized.

Shmuel Kaminetskiy, the chief rabbi of Dnipropetrovsk, has refuted this message. According to the press-secretary of Dnipropetrovsk Jewish community Oleg Rostovtsev, Israeli pilgrims noticed a minor trace from swastika that was removed three years ago, spreading inaccurate messages about vandalism in mass media.

1.2 Arson

An attempt to set the synagogue on fire was made. The synagogue is located at 15 Karl Libknecht Street in Mykolayiv.

Around 2 am, the warden heard sounds of two glass bottles with flammable mixture being thrown on the facade of the building. One 'Molotov cocktail' hit the entrance door and the other smashed into the lattice of the window.

The fire was extinguished almost immediately by a person who was driving nearby. He called for the emergency service and the police, but managed to extinguish fire on his own with his fire extinguisher stored in the car before their arrival.

As a result, the door was mildly burnt and the plastic window was damaged.

Policemen who arrived after the call collected the pieces of the bottle's glass, remains of cloth, matches and flammable objects.

1.3. Anti-Semitic propaganda in the context of the military separatist demonstrations in southeast Ukraine

On **15 April**, three unknown men, wearing balaclavas and camouflage with the Russian tricolor, arrived by car, handing over and spreading leaflets with anti-Semitic content, which were allegedly signed by the leader of Donetsk separatists Denis Pushylin.

The leaflet contained the following message: "Dear citizens of Jewish ethnicity! Due to the fact that the leaders of the Jewish community support the Banderite junta in Kiev and hold hostile attitudes toward the Orthodox Donetsk Republic and its citizens, the Headquarters of the Donetsk Republic has ordered the following:

All citizens of Jewish ethnicity older 16 who reside on the territory of sovereign Donetsk Republic, should come to register their property and transport with the acting nationalities' commissar to Donetsk Oblast Administration, cabinet 514, until **3 May 2014**.

Those offenders who try to avoid the registration will be stripped from their citizenship and forcefully exiled outside the republic and their property confiscated".

As a result of an unofficial verification, our informant did not find any 'acting nationalities' commissar' in the seized building of Donetsk Oblast Administration.

Denis Pushylin, leader of the separatists, denied his links with these leaflets during the press conference; he called its distribution a 'provocation' and pointed to the number of contradictions in the text. For instance, there was a wrong title of the post that Denis Pushylin has invented for

himself. According to the leaders of the separatists, the governor of Dnipropetrovsk Ihor Kolomoyskiy could be involved in production of these leaflets (such allegations were spread in social networks without any evidence for this).

The chief rabbi of Donetsk Pinhas Vyshedskiy called the leaflet a 'gross fake and political provocation' and urged to stop discussing the subject.

The history about leaflets had an extraordinary wide resonance. Public officials of Ukraine, the United States and the European Union expressed their indignation. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Prime Minister of Ukraine, said: 'We will not allow the spread of Black Hundredism in Ukraine, contemptuous and disrespectful attitude to those who profess different religions and have other skin color. The ideology and practice of pogroms, which is exploited in one neighboring state, shall not pass in Ukraine'.

Ukrainian law-enforcement confirmed their readiness to find persons linked to the provocation and bring them to justice, as well as warned regarding unacceptability of ethnic strife.

According to the unofficial information, a suspect in this crime was detained by Ukraine's Security Service (SBU) in Donetsk and delivered to Kiev.

On **18 April**, a separatist group called 'Slavic shield', which supports accession of Donetsk and the rest of left-bank Ukraine into Russia, has published anti-Semitic attacks on Boris Filatov, deputy head of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast Administration led by Ihor Kolomoyskiy. The message on the 'Slavic shield' page on Facebook stated: "Boris Filatov, deputy head of the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast led by Kolomoyskiy announced an official Jewish offer to the Nazis. Kolomoyskiy is member of the Board of the Jewish community of Dnipropetrovsk, head of the United Jewish community of Ukraine, head of the European Council of Jewish communities and the president of the European Jewish Union (EJU). Citizen of Israel since 1995; he told about that in 2007 in London Arbitration Court".

1.4 Signs of xenophobia in Slaviansk seized by terrorists. Anti-Roma pogroms

On **19 April**, mass media spread the information (the original source was 'Donbass News' website) about mass violence on the territory of compact residence of Roma people on the outskirts of Slaviansk, Donetsk Oblast, seized by pro-Russian terrorists, particularly the area near train station in Cherekovka village). According to the media, armed men wearing camouflage broke into houses, referring to the order of the so-called 'people's mayor' (leader of the pro-Russian terrorists) Vyacheslav Ponomarev, rape and pillage Roma and demand to leave the district immediately.

This message acquired wide currency and was commented by the Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk.

There is confirmation of this information from Roma organizations, although they do not clearly state whether the armed men referred to the order of V. Ponomarev. Slaviansk journalists who met Roma people confirmed this information. The fact of forceful re-settlement of Roma from Slaviansk was fixed in other cities and settlements of Donetsk Oblast, which confirmed the information about pogroms.

According to the 'Ukrainska Pravda' website, the leader of the terrorists Vyacheslav Ponomarev admitted the fact of pogroms, commenting them as "Attacks on gypsies did not take place. We cleanse the city from drugs". In Ponomarev's words, he negotiated with representatives of local Roma people and those families involved in drug trade were "expelled from the city".

According to 'Donbas News', a second wave of anti-Roma pogroms took place in Slaviansk on **22 April**.

Apart from this, Vyacheslav Ponomaryov urged to inform him about all citizens who speak Ukrainians during the rally of his supporters near the building of city administration seized by the terrorist.

Armed pro-Russian separatists in Slaviansk of Donetsk Oblast are supported by Russian military specialists and volunteers – activists of nationalist-radical groups and Cossack regiments. Once they installed their control over the city, they seized a TV tower on **17 April** that broadcasted signal over Slaviansk and other cities of Donetsk Oblast, namely Kramatorsk, Horlivka and Makeevka. Separatists turned off Ukrainian channels and started to broadcast Russian channels that spread propaganda support for the revolt.

On **20 April**, separatists replaced the broadcast of the Ukrainian channel 'Inter' with their own channel and uploaded the presentation video in the Internet during this celebratory moment. Happy men boast on camera: "– Here, from Slaviansk, we are dealing a powerful informational conceptual blow on the biblical matrix...on our TV aimed to zombie-broadcast... Zionist zombie-broadcast... Zionist zombie-box... That is why we do, guys. Here, in Slaviansk, new history starts. Slavs pave their way to Rama. The victory will be ours". After such a promising announcement, the new TV channel demonstrated its first broadcast that was a lecture of Konstantin Perov who died several years ago. He was a retired general who led a Russian anti-Semitic neo-pagan nationalist-Stalinist sect created on the basis of the 'Cause of Truth and Unity' party.

2. SIGNS OF XENOPHOBIA ON THE TERRITORY OF THE AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC OF CRIMEA

On **9 April**, news about Tatar-phobic vandalism appeared in Alushta region. Unidentified persons vandalized the commemorative stone in Malorechenskoye village (Big Alushta region) devoted to the Crimean choreographer Akim Dzhemilev, as well as painted swastika on the cabinet of director of the school who is also a Crimean Tatar.

On **18 April**, according to the leader of the Crimean Tatars Mustafa Dzhemilev, those Crimean Tatars who refuse to accept Russian citizenship are getting fired from their jobs.

"The situation in Crimea is grim. You get inspections at every step. People do not know what to do. Crimean Tatars who do not want to become citizens of Russia are essentially forced to do so; if they do not get the Russian passport, they will not be able to find a job," Dzhemilev comments.

On **20 April**, during the Easter, a 16-year-old youth from Rivne who studied in Crimea was beaten to death. According to his friend who was beaten too, the reason for the police assault was that they were talking in Ukrainian.

The information about the incident is due to be verified.

On **21 April**, Russian activists attacked the building of Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People. Several witnesses told that activists wanted to put down the flag of Ukraine, which was hanged on the building. Liliya Muslimova, press secretary of the Mejlis, has suffered as a result of the attack.

On **22 April**, the information appeared about the Holocaust victims' monument in Sevastopol being vandalized. Unidentified vandals drew Soviet symbols – hammer and sickle, red star, writings 'USSR' and 'AFA' (apparently it means an abbreviation that stands for 'antifascism', 'antifascists' widespread in some subcultures) and the number '228'.

The number 228 stands for the Article 228 of the Russian Criminal Code ('illegal purchase, storage and production of narcotics'). The combination of the number '228' in some Russian marginal youth nationalist hip-hop subcultures means the negative evaluation of drug addiction (coupled with a possibility of punishment).

Such a bizarre combination of symbols (members of informal 'afa'-movement do not usually use Soviet symbols, as well as it is strange to see the use of the far-right subculture code of '228' and the very choice of an object for graffiti) can be explained if we may presume that the act of vandalism was done by nationalist-radicals.

This version explains the choice of the object to vandalize and strange combination of symbols that represent specific projective representation of the far right about their opponents: 'antifascist' = 'admirer of the Soviet Union' = 'drug addict'.

On **22 April**, according to Liliya Muslimova, press secretary of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, it was prohibited provide a platform on 'Crimea' State TV and radio company to Mustafa Dzhemilev, the leader of the Crimean Tatars and the Ukrainian lawmaker, and Refat Chubarov, head of the Mejlis, as well as other members of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People.

*Mejlis is an executive body of the *Kurultay* (Congress), the national assembly where the delegates are elected by all Crimean Tatars.

On **25 April**, the Crimean diocese of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kiev Patriarchy issued a statement regarding the violation of the current Crimean government of earlier written guarantees of the immunity of the clergy, the believers and the Kiev Patriarchy's property in Crimea.

The Archbishop of Simferopol and Crimea Clement announced that the believers were outraged by how the government organized actual resistance to the activity of churches in the Crimean diocese. The Cathedral of martyr Clement of Rome located on the territory of the former Training unit of the Military-Maritime Forces of Ukraine in Sevastopol was taken away from the Kiev Patriarchy. Russian military who guarded this territory denied access to the Archimandrite Makariy, rector of the cathedral, ethnic Russian and former serviceman of the military fleet, and members of his congregation.

3. ACTIONS OF THE LAW-ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND THE GOVERNMENT

On **1 April**, the Lenin district court in Luhansk issued a ruling in the case of Nigerian student Olaolu Femi.

On 5 November 2011, A group of four young men and two young women had beaten Olaolu Femi, his friend who was also from Africa on grounds of racial hatred. While protecting himself, Olaolu Femi used a spout of the shattered glass bottle.

The police detained the Nigerian student after the fight. He was accused in murder attempt on life of Gaman V.I., Lemenchuk D.Yu, Loboda A.S. and Pashkova I.R., all citizens of Ukraine. Olaolu spent most of time from the moment of the fight until the court ruling in detention center.

The prosecution demanded Olaolu Femi to be imprisoned for 11 years. The court convicted Olaolu Femi to 5-year imprisonment with a 3-year probation term.

After the ruling was issued, the prosecution announced it was going to appeal the decision.

5. POSITION OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

On **15 April**, the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was published, drawing on the results of the monitoring mission.

According to this report, there were no fixed cases of violations of rights of the Russian-speaking minority in Ukraine. However, the report emphasized violations of human rights in Crimea, which was occupied due to the Russian military aggression in the area.

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Translation of quotes from Ukrainian and English to Russian is made by the editors of the bulletin unless it is stated otherwise.

In the course of preparation of this bulletin, information from mass media, communities of ethnic minorities, human rights organizations and civic activists was used.

*The bulletin's editorial kindly asks to report about signs of anti-Semitism and xenophobia.
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