

Project Interim Report: “Establishing Religious Freedom Dialogue in Ukraine” for the period from March 1 to June 1, 2019.

In line with Project goals and to establish a regular dialogue between various religious associations, churches and human rights organizations, to protect the freedom of religions in Ukraine and prevent discrimination, intolerance, and violence based on religion and faith in all its forms, as well as to implement a permanent platform for shaping public positions and the ability to peacefully resolve potential conflicts between the above groups, the Centre for Civil Liberties together with the Institute for Religious Freedom have organized the following events during the reporting period:

I.

April 16, 2019 – the first round table was held that united representatives of 59 churches, religious associations, and human rights organizations to establish a dialogue and coordinate joint actions for establishment of religious freedom, peacebuilding, prevention of radical ideology and extremism manifestations, strengthening sustainable peace and security. As a result of this round table, most attending organizations approved and signed a **Resolution on religious freedom in the Ukrainian territories of Crimea and Donbas occupied by Russian Federation**. In addition, an agreement was reached on continuous operation of this dialogue platform.

The Resolution states that the occupation authorities in the Crimea do not recognize freedom of religion, but consider it as a collective category, depending on the level of loyalty towards the Russian authorities. As a result, Russian authorities in the Crimea continue persecuting Muslims among Crimean Tatars, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, and some Ukrainian Evangelical churches.

"The annexation of Crimea led to numerous violations of religious freedom. The forcibly imposed Russian legislation is widely used to persecute religious communities and individual believers. Russia's so-called anti-extremist legislation contravenes international standards and is used for groundless accusations and persecutions of believers and religious communities," the Resolution states.

At the same time, the situation in the occupied territories of Donbas is even worse: most of the religious communities simply ceased to exist, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion is absent as a phenomenon.

In some places, just like during the period of the Soviet regime, believers of certain denominations are forced to gather underground just to have an opportunity for joint prayers and study religious doctrines, fulfil religious ceremonies.

Dozens of church buildings, prayer houses and places of worship have been captured and are now under the control of illegal armed units of the so-called “DPR” and “LPR” supported by Russia.

Practices of abduction, torture, and extrajudicial executions of clerics and individual believers of most confessions, except the Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate, are widespread.

"As a result of the deliberate policy of terror by the occupation authorities, which copies judicial arbitrariness and repressive laws of Russia, most clergy together with their families, left the occupied Donbas," said human rights defenders and religious figures of Ukraine.

Religious Freedom Roundtable in Ukraine requires the Russian Federation to take measures to de-occupy Ukrainian territories of the Crimea and Donbas and cease their offensive on the freedom of religion, as well as immediately release all Ukrainian citizens imprisoned on grounds of professing their religious beliefs, which is a direct violation of the Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

In addition, the resolution calls on the UN Member States to initiate a public report on the situation of freedom of thought, conscience and religion within occupied Ukrainian territories of the Crimea and Donbas in order to present it at special hearings in the UN, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the EU, and the United States.

Initiators of the Resolution also request the appointment of an EU Special Representative for Occupied Ukrainian Territories of the Crimea and Donbas to carry out continuous monitoring of the situation of human rights violation and report it to the EU Council publicly and regularly.

The Resolution was supported by 50 participants of the Religious Freedom Roundtable in Ukraine, among which were 25 churches and religious organizations and 25 human rights and other NGOs.

The full text of the Resolution is available at the following links:

- In English:

[ReligiousFreedom.in.ua/files/2019.04.16-Roundtable-Resolution-signed-ENG.pdf](https://religiousfreedom.in.ua/files/2019.04.16-Roundtable-Resolution-signed-ENG.pdf)

- In Ukrainian:

[ReligiousFreedom.in.ua/files/2019.04.16-Roundtable-Resolution-signed-UKR.pdf](https://religiousfreedom.in.ua/files/2019.04.16-Roundtable-Resolution-signed-UKR.pdf)

- In Russian:

[ReligiousFreedom.in.ua/files/2019.04.16-Roundtable-Resolution-signed-RUS.pdf](https://religiousfreedom.in.ua/files/2019.04.16-Roundtable-Resolution-signed-RUS.pdf)

Media monitoring of the event:

- [https://www.facebook.com/101391659985139/posts/1125194524271509/;](https://www.facebook.com/101391659985139/posts/1125194524271509/)
<https://www.facebook.com/ccl.org.ua/videos/1253038741529517/>
- https://m.censor.net.ua/ua/news/3122538/religiyini_diyachi_ta_pravozahysnyk_y_spivpratsyuvatymut_u_formati_kruglogo_stolu?fbclid=IwAR1Cw1QgmuTkPLdSoaiIbSu9ROJkZAnxzrTbfkzxiW3IPAkIIOhDpzIH4
- <https://crimeahrg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019.04.16-Roundtable-Resolution-signed-UKR.pdf>
- <https://www.religion.in.ua/news/vazhливо/43180-zapochatkovano-postijno-diyuchij-kruglij-stil-religijnix-diyachiv-i-pravozaxisnikiv-ukrayini.html>

- <https://www.baptyst.com/pershe-zasidannya-kruglogo-stolu-z-religijnoyi-svobody-v-ukrayini/>
- <https://umma.in.ua/ua/node/2243>
- <http://www.dumk.org/2019/04/16/%D0%B4%D1%83%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%BA-%D0%B1%D1%83%D0%B4%D0%B5-%D1%81%D0%BF%D1%96%D0%B2%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%86%D1%8E%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B8-%D0%B7-%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BB%D1%96%D0%B3%D1%96%D0%B9%D0%BD/>
- https://www.irs.in.ua/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1967%3A1&catid=34%3Aua&Itemid=61&lang=ru&fbclid=IwAR19chECs7R7Z8y84ndSn8cMyZHMkzIb-foM8SjgaR88XIr0nVu3CTjrhEY
- https://www.irf.in.ua/eng/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=476%3A1&catid=34%3Aua&Itemid=61&fbclid=IwAR15CNI2Q0VOAtwGCLoXXd-MsR9yh0D4YGV1BxdxeQZtyKqLwIDoQ3IVRNA
- https://www.irf.in.ua/eng/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=479%3A1&catid=34%3Aua&Itemid=61&fbclid=IwAR3EAQ2IW8epGDZenUIr2az75_c2P7-EekYFOpAQGbd4YF5JZJexTB-EUp8

II.

May 14, 2019 - press conference was held to announce the Resolution.

Attendees of the press conference:

- **Pastor Anatoliy Kozachok**, First Deputy Senior Bishop of the Ukrainian Pentecostal Church.
- **Fr. Oleksa Petriv**, Head of the Department of Foreign Relations in Ukraine, Mitered Archpriest of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.
- **Hennadiy Bilorytskyi**, representative of the Association of Jewish Religious Organizations of Ukraine, legal counsel to the Chief Rabbi of Kyiv and Ukraine.
- **Sheikh Rustam Gafari**, Deputy Mufti of the Religious Administration of Muslims of Ukraine.
- **Oleksandr Zayets**, Chairman of the Board of the Institute for Religious Freedom, Moderator of the Religious Freedom Roundtable in Ukraine.
- **Oleksandra Matviychuk**, Head of the Centre for Civil Liberties.
- **Yevheniy Zaharov**, Director of Kharkiv Human Rights Group.
- **Olha Skrypnyk**, Coordinator of the Crimean Human Rights Group.

Video of the press conference:

[In Ukrainian](#)

[In English](#)

Media monitoring of the event:

- <https://www.5.ua/suspilstvo/kruhlyi-stil-shchodo-relihiinoi-svobody-obhovoryly-peresliduvannia-virian-riznykh-konfesii-ta-vidnovlennia-svobody-virosповідання-v-ordlo-192219.html>

- <https://theworldnews.net/ua-news/kruglii-stil-shchodo-religiinoyi-svobodi-obgovorili-peresliduvannia-virian-riznikh-konfesii-ta-vidnovlennia-svobodi-virospovidannia-v-ordlo-video>
- https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all_news/community/freedom_of_conscience/75786
- <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-crimea/2699664-majze-vsi-religijni-gromadi-v-krimu-zaznaut-utiskiv-i-peresliduvan.html>
- <https://www.religion.in.ua/news/vazhливо/43411-religijna-spilnota-ukrayini-za-vinyatkom-upc-mp-vimagaye-vid-rosiyi-zaxodiv-dlya-deokupaciyi-krimu-i-donbasu-ta-pripinennya-tam-nastupu-na-svobodu-religiyi.html>
- https://censor.net.ua/news/3126773/rf_neset_otvetstvennost_za_pritesneniya_r_eligioznoyi_svobody_na_okkupirovannyh_territoriyah_kryma_i
- <https://rubryka.com/2019/05/14/z-yavylas-rezolyutsiya-shhodo-svobody-religiyi-v-okupovanomu-krymu-ta-na-donbasi/>
- https://humanrights.org.ua/material/situacijia_zi_svobodoiu_virospovidannjia_na_okupovanomu_donbasi_girsha_nizh_u_krimu_ppravozahisniki
- <https://uazmi.net/news/post/g2bc40jUiEW3fXqjuns3wU>
- <http://uacrisis.org.ua/71890-freedom-of-religion-in-occupied-crimea-and-donbas>
- https://www.irs.in.ua/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1976:1&catid=34:ua&Itemid=61&lang=uk
- <https://rubryka.com/2019/05/14/z-yavylas-rezolyutsiya-shhodo-svobody-religiyi-v-okupovanomu-krymu-ta-na-donbasi/>

III.

In the framework of obtained sub-grant, the Institute for Religious Freedom developed and prepared for launch a continuous platform to be used for subsequent preparation of the Roundtable: ReligiousFreedom.in.ua

Further website development model is available [by this link](#).

Head of board «Center for Civil Liberties»
O.Matviichuk

