

MAIN AREAS OF INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY OF UKRAINIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

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Abstract

The article analyzes the international activities of the main Christian denominations in Ukraine (the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, and Protestant denominations) in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, which has been ongoing since 2014 and became full-scale in 2022. The war has radically changed the priorities of all denominations: from classical ecumenism and missionary work to mass humanitarian aid, the protection of religious freedom, and countering Russia's use of religion as an instrument of aggression. Despite repression, the destruction of more than 630 religious buildings, and the deaths of dozens of clergy, Ukrainian churches have demonstrated resilience and have become an important tool for strengthening international solidarity and preserving national identity amid the ongoing conflict. Thus, the international activities of Ukrainian Christian communities have become an integral part of supporting Ukrainians during the difficult war years and a significant aid in defending Ukraine's independence.

Keywords: international activities, Christian church, war, humanitarian aid, religious freedom, support.

Introduction

In modern Ukraine, religious organizations play a significant role not only in the spiritual life of society but also in shaping and implementing the state's foreign policy, particularly in the context of the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war. Accordingly, the research

presented in this article is of considerable relevance. The Russian-Ukrainian war has been ongoing for almost four years in its full-scale phase and shows no clear signs of ending in the foreseeable future. Ukrainian churches continue to be systematically destroyed, while new cases of the persecution of clergy are regularly reported, rendering the issue of protecting religious freedom and countering the instrumentalization of religion as a tool of hybrid warfare increasingly urgent.

The international activities of Ukrainian Christian denominations constitute an important channel of Ukraine's soft power, which often proves more effective than official diplomatic efforts in conveying the truth about the war to Western societies, mobilizing humanitarian assistance, and supporting millions of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Over the years of the full-scale invasion, there has been a further intensification of ecumenical cooperation among Ukrainian churches, including participation in international conferences and joint advocacy missions to international actors such as the United Nations, the United States, Norway, and the Vatican, which confirms the transformation of churches from primarily spiritual institutions into influential actors of public diplomacy and peacemaking.

Moreover, the issue of preserving national and cultural identity through religious networks within the diaspora has gained increasing significance in the context of a prolonged war and the growing risk of a demographic crisis.

Consequently, the article not only reflects the situation at a specific historical moment but also offers a systematic analysis of the mechanisms that continue to support Ukraine's resilience and the consolidation of international support. At a time when global war fatigue is intensifying, scholarly research into the role of churches as stable transnational bridges between Ukraine and the global community remains of substantial scientific and societal relevance.

The Main Content and Results

The Orthodox Church

The Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) was formed on December 15, 2018, through the merger of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. This event was a turning point not only for the internal church life of Ukraine, but also for its positioning on the international arena. In the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, which has been ongoing since 2014 and intensified with the full-scale invasion of 2022, the international activities of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine have taken on special significance. It encompasses its recognition in the world, ecumenical dialogue, work with the Ukrainian diaspora, humanitarian initiatives, and participation in secular and

religious international events. Throughout its existence, the OCU has actively expanded its ties, demonstrating resilience and a desire for unity in the Christian world.

One of the important areas of the OCU's international activity is its desire to have its autocephaly recognized by other churches. It has been working towards this goal since the very beginning of its existence. The active phase of negotiations on the recognition of the OCU's autocephaly began in April 2018 with the diplomatic participation of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko.¹ The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople was the first to recognize the independence of the OCU when, on January 6, 2019, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew signed the *Tomos* of Autocephaly.² In the fall of 2019, the OCU gradually began to receive recognition from local churches—on October 12, 2019, from the Greek Church,³ on November 8, 2019, from the Patriarchate of Alexandria,⁴ and on October 24, 2020, from the Orthodox Church of Cyprus.⁵ The Russian Orthodox Church and its representative in Ukraine, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, immediately began severing ties with anyone who recognized the existence of the independent OCU.⁶

The recognition of the OCU by secular international representatives was also considered important. On June 8, 2019, Metropolitan Epifaniy met in Kyiv with foreign ambassadors from all continents, who expressed their respect for him and promised their support if necessary. At this meeting, Epifaniy emphasized the importance of the OCU's role in state-building processes.⁷

Therefore, despite significant opposition from Russia regarding the legitimacy of the OCU, it has now been recognized by four local churches, as well as secular international

¹ Томос очима ВВС: як українська церква йшла до автокефалії. [Tomos through the eyes of the BBC: how the Ukrainian church moved towards autocephaly]. (5.01.2020). <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-50924608>

² Томос церкві України: Епіфаній отримав грамоту про автокефалію. [Tomos to the Church of Ukraine: Epiphanius received a certificate of autocephaly]. (6.01.2019). <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-46773365>

³ Грецька церква першою визнала ПЦУ: чому це важливо для України. [The Greek Church was the first to recognize the OCU: why is this important for Ukraine]. (12.10.2019). <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-49482653>

⁴ Олександрійський патріархат визнав ПЦУ. Чому це важливо? [The Patriarchate of Alexandria recognized the OCU. Why is this important?]. (8.11.2019). <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-50345287>

⁵ Кіпрська православна церква визнала ПЦУ та Епіфанія: що це значить? [The Orthodox Church of Cyprus recognized the OCU and Epiphany: what does this mean?]. (24.10.2020). <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-54673275>

⁶ УПЦ МП розірвала стосунки з церквами Греції та Олександрії слідом за Москвою. [The UPC-MP severed relations with the churches of Greece and Alexandria following Moscow]. (6.12.2019). <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-50687000>

⁷ Митрополит Епіфаній зустрівся з іноземними послами зі всіх континентів. [Metropolitan Epiphanius met with foreign ambassadors from all continents]. (8.06.2019). <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsinovyny/mytropolyt-epifanij-zustrivsyia-z-inozemnymy-poslamy-zi-vsih-kontyentiv/>

representatives from all continents, which indicates a promising start to international efforts in this direction.

Another important area of the OCU's international activity is the comprehensive promotion of ecumenical relations between Christian churches. An analysis of the OCU's official website shows active cooperation and friendly relations with representatives of the Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim churches or religious organizations.⁸ Despite differences in a number of religious views, the same trend of mutual support can be observed at the international level, which became particularly noticeable after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian army. On February 24, 2022, in his speech, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew condemned this war and called on the leaders of all states, European institutions, and international organizations to help resolve the situation peacefully. He also appealed to representatives of all Christian churches to pray together for the Ukrainian people and for the supremacy of peace and justice in Ukraine.⁹ On March 8, 2022, during a conversation between Metropolitan Epifaniy, Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, personal representative of Pope Francis, and Archbishop-Metropolitan of Lviv of the Roman Catholic Church Mieczysław Mokrzycki, on behalf of the Pope, support was expressed for the Ukrainian people through prayers for peace and care for refugees and victims of war. Metropolitan Mieczysław Mokrzycki announced a joint ecumenical prayer for peace in Ukraine with the participation of hierarchs of the OCU.¹⁰

In December 2024, representatives of the OCU joined the European Conference on Just Peace, which was attended by a delegation of representatives of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (AUCCRO). The event was organized by the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Polish Ecumenical Council. The OCU delegation took an active part in it. On the Ukrainian side, the event was also attended by Stanislav Nosov, president of the Ukrainian Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Sandor Zan-Fabian, bishop of the Transcarpathian Reformed Church, Bishop Pavlo Shvarts of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine, Deputy Chairman of the All-Ukrainian

⁸ Православна церква України: офіційний сайт. [Orthodox Church of Ukraine: official website]. (2019-2025). <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/>

⁹ Вселенський Патріарх Варфоломій засудив неспровоковане вторгнення Росії в Україну. [Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew condemned Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine]. (24.02.2022). <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/vselenskyj-patriarh-varfolomij-zasudyv-nesprovokovane-vtorgnennya-rosiyi-v-ukrayinu/>

¹⁰ Відбулася розмова Митрополита Епіфанія з кардиналом Краєвським. [Metropolitan Epiphanius had a conversation with Cardinal Krajewski]. (8.03.2022). <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/vidbulasya-rozмова-mytropolyta-epifaniya-z-kardynalom-krajevskym/>

Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches Ihor Bandura, and Chairman of the UGCC Commission for Interconfessional and Interreligious Relations Ihor Shaban. Their dialogue with the international community was prompted by a common problem—the war in Ukraine. Metropolitan Epifaniy of Kyiv and All Ukraine addressed the participants of the international event and emphasized the danger of the Kremlin using religion and Russian religious institutions, primarily the Russian Orthodox Church, to justify and support aggression against Ukraine.¹¹

The OCU maintains close ties with the Ukrainian diaspora around the world. The *Tomos of Autocephaly of the OCU* states that Orthodox Christians of Ukrainian origin in the diaspora fall under the jurisdiction of the diocesan bishops of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.¹² An analysis of the OCU website shows that during his trips abroad, Bishop Epiphanius mostly meets with Ukrainians living abroad. They, in turn, try to support their homeland. The Ukrainian community abroad has become particularly active since the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukrainian territory by the Russian army. The war has also led to the forced mass displacement of Ukrainians around the world, where representatives of the OCU support their compatriots.¹³

Through active cooperation with international organizations and representatives of the diaspora, the OCU has become an important institution for providing humanitarian aid to affected population groups and the military since the start of the war.¹⁴ Between 2022 and 2025, the church received and distributed millions of tons of aid, focusing on refugees and frontline areas.

The leadership and representatives of the OCU actively participate in various international events, such as conferences, symposiums, meetings, where they raise issues relevant to Ukraine: preservation of spirituality, historical and cultural heritage, interreligious peace and cooperation, problems caused by military events, etc. Thus, analysis of the OCU's international activities indicates its active involvement in this process. Its activities strengthen Ukraine's position in the international arena of the religious world. Its recognition, participation

¹¹ Українська делегація взяла участь в миротворчій конференції. [Ukrainian delegation participated in the peacekeeping conference]. (12.12.2024). <https://irs.in.ua/p/225>

¹² Томос. Повний текст українською. [Tomos. Full text in Ukrainian]. (5.01.2019). <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/2614225-tomos-povnij-tekst-ukrainskou.html>

¹³ Предстоятель ПЦУ відвідав українську православну церкву в Лондоні. [The Primate of the OCU visited the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in London]. (7.07.2022). <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/predstoyatel-ptsu-vidvidav-ukrayinsku-pravoslavnu-gromadu-v-londoni>

¹⁴ Митрополит Епіфаній передав у 118 українських лікарень медикаменти зібрані Українською Православною Церквою США. (13.07.2022). [Metropolitan Epiphanius delivered medicines collected by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA to 118 Ukrainian hospitals]. <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/mytropolyt-epifanij-peredav-u-118-ukrayinskyh-likaren-medykamenty-zibrani-ukrayinskoyu-pravoslavnoyu-tserkvoyu-ssha/>

in peacekeeping processes, and humanitarian activities promote unity and peace, thus counteracting Russian aggression. Through spirituality, it implements important strategic goals, playing an important role in preserving national identity and international solidarity.

The Catholic Church

The international activities of the Catholic Church also play a significant role in Ukrainian society. Traditionally, Catholicism has a strong presence in western Ukraine (the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) is the largest in terms of membership), but in recent years it has been actively spreading in the eastern regions, including in the territories occupied by Russia.

In the part of Zaporizhzhia region occupied by Russia, in 2022, the newly appointed administration banned the Ukrainian Catholic Church and Catholic charitable organizations, making absurd accusations that their representatives were working in the interests of foreign intelligence services and storing weapons. So, as in Soviet times, Russia is now carrying out large-scale religious persecution, arresting and killing clergy. Since the start of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, Russian occupiers have killed 67 clergymen from various Ukrainian churches and religious organizations not affiliated with the Moscow Patriarchate. More than 630 places of worship and religious sites in Ukraine—churches, mosques, synagogues, and prayer houses—have been destroyed or damaged by Russian shelling.¹⁵

Numerous violations of religious freedom and repressive policies of oppression of Ukrainian clergy and believers by Russian occupiers have been documented in reports and monitoring materials of international organizations. In particular, in the concluding observations and recommendations of the UN Human Rights Committee, as well as in the annual reports on the state of religious freedom in the world by the US State Department.¹⁶

However, despite the extremely difficult circumstances, church members are looking for opportunities to carry out their spiritual activities without attracting attention and even clandestinely in the occupied territories: they support families, especially children fleeing the

¹⁵ В Україні від рук окупантів загинули 67 служителів церков і релігійних організацій [67 ministers of churches and religious organizations died at the hands of the occupiers in Ukraine]. ZMINA. (10.01.2025). <https://zmina.info/news/v-ukrayini-vid-ruk-okupantiv-zagynuly-67-sluzhyteliv-czerkov-i-religijnyh-organizaczij/>

¹⁶ Коментар МЗС щодо ситуації з релігійною свободою на тимчасово окупованих територіях України [Commentary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the situation with religious freedom in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine]. Міністерство закордонних справ України. (10.01.2025). <https://surli.cc/syqzrb>

war; they deliver humanitarian aid to Ukrainian military personnel and residents of villages and towns near the front line, etc.¹⁷

Currently, in addition to spiritual work, a large part of the activities of religious organizations is humanitarian work – helping internally displaced persons and all those affected by the war: providing basic necessities and food, medicine, clothing, temporary housing, assistance with evacuation, etc. Ukrainian Catholic organizations (primarily Caritas Ukraine and Caritas-Spes, in cooperation with the international structures Caritas Internationalis and Caritas Europa) coordinate international supply chains, aid delivery, reporting, and coordination with partners in the EU and around the world. This activity also includes long-term recovery programs for regions where infrastructure has been damaged.¹⁸ It also includes projects to preserve and restore infrastructure and provide basic necessities (e.g., WASH projects – water, sanitation, hygiene) in areas affected by the war. In 2024, Caritas Ukraine's WASH projects helped 200,000 people in the Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, and Mykolaiv regions. However, needs continue to grow every day.¹⁹

It is important to note that most projects of Catholic organizations (especially Caritas Ukraine and Caritas-Spes) are implemented thanks to grants and donations from international partners such as Caritas Internationalis, CRS, Misereor, Cordaid, as well as material support from EU countries and Canada. However, such external funding is not stable and may be interrupted, resulting in limited project sustainability, especially in the areas of rehabilitation and psychological support.

Through its dioceses and exarchates, the UGCC maintains ties with Catholic communities in Europe and acts as a mediator in interfaith and interchurch contacts. It also communicates the situation in Ukraine to the Vatican and European church circles through appeals to international church institutions.²⁰

At the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) in Rome in 2024, Bishop Vasyl Tuchapets, head of the UGCC Department of Social Service, reporting on the Church's social service in 2024 and its response to the ongoing challenges of war, noted that communities and dioceses in the Ukrainian diaspora play a key role in organizing regular

¹⁷ T. Peter, A. Vasovic. Ukraine's Catholics tend to faithful driven out by Russian occupation. Reuters. (06.08.2025). <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/ukraine-crisis-greek-catholics/>

¹⁸ Caritas Internationalis. CI SITUATION REPORT SITREP. (1.01.2023-31.12.1023). <https://caritas.pt/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/CI-Sit-Rep-Ukraine-on-2023.pdf?utm>

¹⁹ WASH in WAR – An informational and educational campaign. (2025). <https://washinwar.caritas.ua/en/?utm>

²⁰ Pope meets with head of Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine, who invites him to Kyiv. POLITICO. (05.15.2025). <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/05/15/pope-ukraine-kyviv-00353231?utm>

collections and sending humanitarian packages that include medicines, medical equipment, food, generators, and other essential items. Parishes abroad have set up centers to receive and support Ukrainian refugees, offering temporary shelter, counseling, and spiritual care. Through partnerships with international charitable organizations such as Renovabis, Caritas, Die Sternsinger, and Missione Calcutta, the UGCC provides targeted support to Ukraine's healthcare system, protects the most vulnerable population groups, and offers spiritual and psychological assistance to victims of war.

These activities are coordinated through the Social Service Department of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which helps optimize resources, respond to new challenges, and direct aid to where it is most needed. Much of the Church's humanitarian work is made possible by the generosity of donors and believers from both Ukraine and abroad who support charitable projects through local parishes and church funds. In particular, educational support is provided to children, especially in frontline areas where students are studying remotely. Parishes of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church have begun opening children's centers offering school preparation for first graders, developmental classes for 4-5-year-olds, and tutoring for students preparing for Ukraine's National Multidisciplinary Testing.²¹

Ukrainian Catholic structures work in cooperation with international Catholic charitable organizations (such as Aid to the Church in Need, Knights of Columbus, international Caritas centers), as well as with interfaith and secular humanitarian networks to lobby for the protection of the rights of believers, households, and internally displaced persons (IDPs), to raise funds, deliver aid, and provide psychosocial support. These partnerships cover information work, advocacy in international institutions, and resource mobilization for affected communities.²² In Ukraine, Cordaid funds partner organizations through Caritas Internationalis, a global network of Catholic humanitarian organizations. Since the beginning of the conflict, Caritas has supported more than 3.5 million people.²³

In the field of education, international academic cooperation, and cultural diplomacy, Catholic educational institutions in Ukraine actively implement international programs, exchanges, scientific partnerships, and volunteer initiatives. The most influential of these is the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU). Through a network of partnerships, the universities of

²¹ Social Service Without Borders: The Church's Response to the Challenges of War, Presented at the UGCC Synod of Bishops. (7.07.2025). <https://surl.li/eocghf>

²² Aid to the Church in Need (ACN). (2025). <https://acninternational.org/>

²³ Six months of war in Ukraine: over 3.5 million supported. *Cordaid*. (24.08.2022). https://www.cordaid.org/en/news/six-months-of-war-in-ukraine-over-3-5-million-people-supported-through-the-caritas-network/?utm_source

the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and related institutions are spreading Ukraine's academic and cultural presence around the world, developing humanitarian aid programs, training specialists to work with internally displaced persons, and participating in international discussions on the restoration and transformation of society after conflict.²⁴

The Ukrainian Catholic Church (in particular, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and its charitable structures, such as Caritas) has a fairly significant influence at the international level, especially in the context of humanitarian work, social assistance, and cross-church dialogue.²⁵ Its representatives provide international pastoral contacts, chaplaincy on the front lines, volunteer mobilization, and an international network of support for parishes abroad.²⁶

In many countries around the world, Catholic organizations, together with local diaspora communities, support refugees and displaced persons, provide social services, legal and psychological assistance, and develop and implement integration programs in coordination with European dioceses..

An important component is work on the information front, which consists of documenting violations of religious freedom and repression in frontline and occupied territories, informing international institutions and the media about the persecution of priests and communities.²⁷

Thus, it can be concluded that at the current stage both the domestic and international activities of Ukrainian Catholic organizations are significantly shaped by the extremely complex challenges posed by Russia's aggressive war against Ukraine, which is accompanied by substantial human losses, large-scale destruction of critical infrastructure, the damage to and destruction of church buildings, the prohibition of church institutions' activities, as well as the persecution and abduction of clergy in the occupied territories, logistical constraints, and other related factors.

²⁴ International Academic Relations UCU. (2025). https://international.ucu.edu.ua/international-profile/international-cooperation/?utm_source

²⁵ Косик О. «Використайте час війни для зближення українських Церков», – отець Іван Дацко. [“Use the time of war to bring Ukrainian Churches closer together,” – Father Ivan Datsko]. Institute of Ecumenical Studies. (05.10.2023). <https://ies.ucu.edu.ua/en/news/vykorystaty-chas-viyny-dlya-zblyzhennya-ukrayinskyh-tserkov-o-d-r-ivan-datsko/?utm>

²⁶ O. Sokolovskyi, V. Sluysar, O. Hordiichuk. The Experience of Religious Organizations in the Formation and Development of the Chaplaincy Movement in Ukraine. *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*. 2024. 44 (3). 74–92. <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2517&context=ree>

²⁷ Хресна дорога в Колізеї: голоси миру з охоплених війною районів [Stations of the Cross at the Colosseum: Voices of Peace from War-Torn Areas]. Новини Ватикану, (7.042023). <https://www.vaticannews.va/uk/pope/news/2023-04/rozdumy-na-hresnu-dorogu-2023.html>

Under these circumstances, the main areas of international activity of Catholic organizations differ markedly from those pursued in peacetime. Pastoral and social work has been reinforced through cooperation with the global network of Catholic charitable organizations (Caritas, Aid to the Church in Need, etc.), as well as partnerships with European dioceses and Catholic diaspora structures, including coordination of refugee reception and financial support. The scale of humanitarian assistance and comprehensive support for victims of the war has increased significantly. International advocacy, diplomatic engagement to strengthen partnerships, dissemination of accurate information, and countering propaganda have become particularly crucial. Ukrainian Catholic leaders continue to call for peace and the protection of rights on international interfaith platforms and within intergovernmental organizations. Concurrently, academic cooperation persists through international educational projects, facilitating knowledge exchange and capacity-building in the field.

The Protestant Churches

Protestant denominations in Ukraine focus their international activities on key areas such as integration into global religious structures, membership in international alliances, missionary work and evangelism, international cultural and educational programs, and activities related to the war in Ukraine. On July 8, 2025, the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (AUCCRO) addressed the global community of believers with an appeal, calling on believers to pay attention to the humanitarian and spiritual situation in Ukraine in connection with Russia's military aggression. It contains a call to “raise a common voice” for an end to the war and the restoration of justice.²⁸ The All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists (VSC EB) is a member of the Baptist World Alliance.²⁹ In 2019, a delegation from the youth department of the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists met for the first time with the general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, Elijah Brown, to discuss current trends and challenges in youth work and BWA assistance in the conflict zone in Donbas.³⁰

²⁸ Відозва Всеукраїнської Ради Церков і релігійних організацій до світової спільноти віруючих людей. [Appeal of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations to the global community of believers]. (9.07.2025). <https://www.chve.org.ua/vrciro-vidozva-09-07-2025/>

²⁹ Баптисти – це: хто вони, у що вірять і як живуть. [Baptists: who they are, what they believe in, and how they live]. (19.06.2025). <https://www.2000.ua/baptysty-cze-hto-vony-u-shho-viryat-i-yak-zhyvut/>

³⁰ Всесвітній баптистський альянс допомагатиме у зоні конфлікту на Донбасі. [The Baptist World Alliance will provide assistance in the conflict zone in Donbas]. (15.04.2019). <https://www.religion.in.ua/news/vazhливо/43156-vseshvitnij-baptistskij-alyans-dopomagatime-u-zoni-konfliktu-na-donbasi.html>

As part of the Baptist World Alliance, the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists actively participates in global missionary work. As of 2017, missionaries from Ukraine were mainly active in North Africa and Asia, particularly in the countries of the former USSR, gradually expanding their work to Western Europe, where they worked among migrant workers.³¹ For several years in a row, the Foreign Mission Committee of the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists has been organizing fundraising for Christmas missionary projects. In 2021, evangelical activities were carried out in countries such as Papua New Guinea, Kazakhstan, and Georgia, and material assistance was provided by the mission to widows, orphans, and children with disabilities. After February 2022, the missionary activities of the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists began to spread to Ukrainian refugees in Europe. The head of the Foreign Mission Committee of the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, Eduard Petrov, stated that as of 2023, there were churches and groups of believers of the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in 17 European countries. He added that missionary work in Europe should take into account local conditions and culture, maintaining ties with local Christian organizations.

With the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the international activities of Ukrainian Baptists have been closely linked to the war. Igor Bandura, deputy chairman of the All-Ukrainian Union of Baptist Churches, took part in a roundtable discussion entitled “Global Response to the War in Ukraine,” held during the General Council meeting of the Baptist World Alliance in Birmingham, Alabama, USA, on July 10-15, 2022. Of the four resolutions published by the BWA General Council, the main one concerned Ukraine. It condemned the war and expressed the support of the Baptist World Alliance for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.³²

The All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches is expanding its cooperation with international charitable foundations. In 2023, cooperation began with the Dutch foundation “Metadidomi,” whose assistance already extends to frontline and de-occupied territories. The parties have developed a memorandum on post-war cooperation and

³¹ Українські місіонери – виклики, підготовка, географія. [Ukrainian missionaries – challenges, training, geography]. (2017). <https://www.baptyst.com/ukrayinski-misionery-vyklyky-pidgotovka-geografiya/>

³² За даними Міністерства економіки України, близько 6,2 мільйона українців перебувають за кордоном через російську агресію. [According to the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, approximately 6.2 million Ukrainians are abroad due to Russian aggression]. (2023). <https://www.baptyst.com/31100-2/>

reconstruction.³³ In 2024, a memorandum of cooperation was signed with the US-based non-profit organization Protez Foundation. It will include prosthetics for Ukrainian military personnel and children who have lost limbs due to combat operations, provided by the organization, as well as pastoral care for those in the clinic from the chaplaincy service of the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists.³⁴

The Ukrainian Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith (UCCEF) is actively involved in international activities as a member of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (AUCCRO). On April 28-30, 2025, its representatives were part of a delegation that held a series of advocacy meetings at the UN, as well as with American religious and public figures. Among other issues, they discussed the problem of disseminating accurate information about Russian military aggression against Ukraine and protecting Ukraine's interests at the UN level.³⁵ On October 19-22, 2025, a delegation from the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations visited Oslo, Norway, with the assistance of the Christian Council of Norway and the Norwegian Bible Society. The events included meetings with Their Majesties the King and Queen of Norway, the Christian Council of Norway, and the President and members of the Norwegian Parliament.³⁶ Issues of chaplaincy, recovery from the ravages of war, and future cooperation were raised.³⁷

The Council of Evangelical Protestant Churches of Ukraine (CEPCU), co-founded by the UECV, is realizing its aspiration for ecumenical dialogue: it officially joined the European Evangelical Alliance on September 17, 2025. The European Evangelical Alliance is active in

³³ Формування меморандуму про повоєнну співпрацю: зустріч ВСЦ ЄХБ із фондом “Metadidomi”. [Formation of a memorandum on post-war cooperation: meeting between the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists and the Metadidomi Foundation]. (2025). <https://www.baptyst.com/formuvannya-memorandumu-pro-povoyennu-spivpratsyu-zustrich-vsts-yehb-iz-fondom-metadidomi/>

³⁴ Всеукраїнський союз церков ЄХБ підписав меморандум про співпрацю із організацією ProtezFoundation. [The All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of the Evangelical Christian Baptists signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Protez Foundation]. (30.05.2022). <https://www.baptyst.com/vseukrayinskyj-soyuz-tserkov-yehb-pidpysav-memorandum-pro-spivpratsyu-iz-organizatsiyeyu-protezfoundation/>

³⁵ Делегація ВРЦіРО провела адвокаційні заходи у Нью-Йорку. [The AUCCRO delegation held advocacy events in New York]. (2.05.2025). <https://www.chve.org.ua/vrc-oon-28-30-04-25/>

³⁶ Делегація ВРЦіРО зустрілася з Міністром закордонних справ Норвегії та відвідала Нобелівський центр миру. [The delegation of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway and visited the Nobel Peace Center]. (23.10.2025). <https://www.chve.org.ua/delehatsiia-vrtsiro-zustrilasia-z-ministrom-zakordonykh-sprav-norvehii-25/>

³⁷ «Подайте ваш сильний голос на захист українських дітей» – Анатолій Козачок на зустрічі Ради Церков з Королем та Королевою Норвегії. [“Raise your powerful voice in defense of Ukrainian children” – Anatoliy Kozachok at a meeting of the Council of Churches with the King and Queen of Norway]. (21.10.2025). <https://www.chve.org.ua/delehatsiia-vrtsiro-zustrilasia-z-korolem-i-korolevoiu-norvehii/>

areas such as the protection of religious freedom, combating discrimination, and addressing contemporary challenges in the doctrine and social activities of churches.³⁸

Theological education and cultural initiatives occupy an important place among the international activities of the UCEC. Representatives of Ukrainian Pentecostals, together with pastors and believers from the United States and Canada, participated in the Pentecostal Church Summit, which took place on November 7-8 in Cleveland, Ohio (USA), where areas of cooperation and educational projects were discussed. Among the areas of cooperation outlined were missionary projects, the opening of new churches and support for ministers, as well as pastoral care and humanitarian missions.³⁹ Issues related to ensuring the quality of theological education and promoting and disseminating theological research for the service of the Church and society, primarily in Europe, Central Asia, and beyond were discussed at a meeting of representatives of the General Assembly of the International Evangelical Theological Alliance (IETA), which took place on November 3-7, 2025, in Lviv. The meeting was attended by representatives from Poland, Austria, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Great Britain, and the United States of America⁴⁰. Christian camps were organized in June-July 2025 in Germany, Sweden, and Norway for Ukrainian refugees in Europe, where children and youth from the Ukrainian Christian Evangelical Church had the opportunity to spend time relaxing, socializing, and studying the Bible.⁴¹

With the outbreak of full-scale war in Ukraine, the Ukrainian Union of Seventh-day Adventist Churches (UUU SDA) was directly affiliated with the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (previously it was part of the Euro-Asia Division of the General Conference).⁴² Its international activities are coordinated by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC) and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). In

³⁸ 17 вересня РСПЦУ офіційно увійшла до складу Європейського Євангельського Альянсу. [On September 17, the СЕPCU officially joined the European Evangelical Alliance]. (17.09.2025). <https://www.chve.org.ua/r%d0%b5p%d1%81u-uviiishla-do-skladu-eea/>

³⁹ Місійні, душеопікунські та гуманітарні проекти – головні теми україно-американського саміту в Клівленді. [Missionary, pastoral care, and humanitarian projects are the main topics of the Ukrainian-American summit in Cleveland]. (13.11.2025). <https://www.chve.org.ua/ukraino-amerykanskyi-samit-u-klivlendi-11-25/>

⁴⁰ В Україні відбулася зустріч представників Генеральної Асамблеї Міжнародного Євангельського Теологічного Альянсу (МЄТА). [A meeting of representatives of the General Assembly of the International Evangelical Theological Alliance (IETA) took place in Ukraine]. (8.11.2025). <https://www.chve.org.ua/international-evangelicals-theological-alliance25/>

⁴¹ У церквах УЦХВЕС Швеції, Норвегії, Німеччини та Фінляндії відбулися молодіжні табори. [Youth camps were held in churches of the Ukrainian Christian Evangelical Church in Sweden, Norway, Germany, and Finland]. (30.07.2025). <https://www.chve.org.ua/tabory-evropa-lypen-25/>

⁴² Executive Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church votes to attach Ukrainian administrative office to the General Conference. (2025). <https://adventist.news/news/executive-committee-of-the-seventh-day-adventist-church-votes-to-temporarily-attach-ukrainian-administrative-office-to-the-General-Conference/>

addition to missionary work and educational and cultural initiatives, the focus of international activities is on supporting refugees and religious freedom for believers.

The humanitarian mission provides support to victims of the war in Ukraine. On September 11, 2025, ADRA Ukraine met with representatives of the Canadian government at the Canadian Embassy in Kyiv to discuss the details of the MHWP (Mental Health, Winterization, and Protection) project for 2025-2026. It includes a number of activities to give social and psychological help, as well as providing private households with fuel for the winter.⁴³

The integration and ecumenical activities of the UUC ASD gained new opportunities after the opening of the Digital Evangelism Center in Bucha with the assistance of Adventist World Radio (AWR) on October 28, 2025. This opens up new opportunities for digital ministry and meeting the spiritual needs of Adventist believers in Ukraine and Eastern Europe.⁴⁴

The German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine, as a member of the AUCCRO, actively participates in its international activities. In addition, it maintains ties with Lutheran communities in European countries. On October 28-29, 2025, a working meeting of the International Group “Reconciliation in Europe – the task of the Churches in Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, and Germany” took place in Berlin. In addition to issues of reconciliation between nations, the situation surrounding the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (Ukraine) was discussed, emphasizing the danger that Russia's aggression poses not only to Ukraine but also to the world.⁴⁵ During the Synod of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession on October 19, in the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Pasym (Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship) the Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession in Poland and the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ukraine signed a partnership agreement for the years 2025–2035. The goal of the cooperation is joint action for justice, peace, and reconciliation in Europe.⁴⁶

⁴³ ADRA Україна та Уряд Канади обговорили реалізацію гуманітарного проєкту MHWP. [ADRA Ukraine and the Government of Canada discussed the implementation of the MHWP humanitarian project]. (12.09.2025). <https://adventist.ua/news/ukraine/adra-ukraina-ta-urid-kanady-obhovoryly-realizatsiiu-humanitarnoho-proiektu-mhwp/>

⁴⁴ Адвентистське Всесвітнє радіо започаткувало в Україні Центр цифрового євангелізму. [Adventist World Radio launches Digital Evangelism Center in Ukraine]. (2025). <https://adventist.ua/news/ukraine/adventystske-vseshvitnie-radio-zapochatkuvalo-v-ukraini-tsentri-tsyfrovoho-yevanhelizmu/>

⁴⁵ Церкви Європи про примирення та відповідальність. [European churches on reconciliation and responsibility]. (9.11.2025). <https://nelcu.org.ua/tserkvy-yevropy-pro-prymyrennya-ta-vidpovidalnist/>

⁴⁶ Партнерство між Євангелічно-Лютеранськими Церквами Польщі та України. [Partnership between the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Poland and Ukraine]. (25.10.2025). <https://nelcu.org.ua/partnerstvo-mizh-yevangelichno-lyuteranskymy-tserkvamy-polshhi-ta-ukrayiny/>

Conclusions

The Russian-Ukrainian war, ongoing since 2014 and escalating into a full-scale conflict in February 2022, has profoundly transformed the international activities of Ukrainian Christian churches, positioning them as one of the key instruments not only of spiritual but also of national and diplomatic defense of Ukraine. Christian denominations have demonstrated unprecedented unity of action, despite historical and doctrinal differences, bound by the shared goal of protecting national identity, safeguarding religious freedom, and countering Russia's use of religion as a tool of hybrid aggression.

Despite systematic repression by occupying forces, Ukrainian churches have shown extraordinary resilience and adaptability. Their international engagement has extended well beyond the purely religious sphere, complementing state diplomacy, strengthening international solidarity, and preserving Ukrainian identity among millions of displaced persons.

In the face of this unprecedented civilizational challenge, Ukrainian Christian churches have become a powerful institution supporting the Ukrainian people, defending human dignity, and upholding just peace. Their activities provide compelling evidence that, in times of war, the church is capable not only of preserving the spiritual dimension of society but also of acting as an influential player in global politics, significantly shaping international support for Ukraine and countering Russian aggression. The continued development of ecumenical cooperation and the institutional capacity of churches will be crucial for Ukraine's post-war recovery and ultimate victory.

***Regarding the use of AI, we confirm that we only used it for minor language refinement and stylistic improvement. All ideas, structure, and content of the article were entirely our own. We fully respect and follow the ethical guidelines concerning the appropriate use of AI tools in academic writing.**

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