

**Regarding the Situation with the Glorification of Nazism
and the Spread of Neo-Nazism and Other Practices That Contribute
to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination,
Xenophobia and Related Intolerance**

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* After the NATO aggression against Serbia in 1999, the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija does not fall under control of Belgrade. At the same time, the UN SC resolution 1244 confirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia as regards Kosovo.

Introduction

This report has been prepared to follow up the efforts by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation to draw attention to manifestations of various forms of glorification in foreign countries of the Nazi movement, neo-Nazism, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

We note that the trend of public justification of Nazism and support of neo-Nazism, which sharply intensified in a number of states in 2022, continued throughout this year. Previous campaigns to distort history and falsify the USSR role in ensuring Victory over Nazism and creating a present-day system of international relations, received a powerful acceleration boost. Cynicism, historical revisionism and revanchism that reached a new peak appeared to be aimed at a complete conceptual masquerade to ultimately reverse the places of the authors of racial purity ideologies who unleashed the war and nations that opposed them. Moreover, the expression of support for Nazism practically turned out to be a test of the loyalty of a particular state to the "collective West." In addition, the development stage the world community is currently at features an increased activity in the historical sphere, nothing short of "historical wars", where the countries involved often show lack of professionalism in treating historical facts and an almost "tabloid" approach to the presentation of their pseudo-historical materials. Thus, the materials they construct have nothing in common with scientific approaches and go in the wake of the latest trends to seriously simplify and even oversimplify what is written and said.

Now we can clearly trace how historical concepts have been changing in the West over recent years – from comparing the Nazi regime to the "totalitarian" Soviet one to attempts to rest all responsibility for the war on the Soviet Union and declare it "a criminal worse than the Third Reich." These motives as well contribute to uprightly obscuring the meaning and, most importantly, the essence of verdict of the International Military Tribunal for the trial and punishment of major war criminals from European Axis countries (the Nuremberg Tribunal). Let us recall that this verdict outlawed war crimes and crimes against humanity

committed by the Nazis and their henchmen, also condemning Nazi leaders, thus putting everything in its place. It was during the Nuremberg trials that the world learned in detail about the horrors of National Socialism and the atrocities committed by the followers of this ideology. And that is precisely why the verdict of the Nuremberg Tribunal is an inconvenient obstacle for the current "rules-based order" adherents. Today, many observers note already that history is repeating itself, and templates developed in the Nazi Germany and militarist Japan are being applied again.

One can single out a whole layer of states where all this, susceptible to impulses from the outside, is being implemented at the most active pace. There is another category of countries, whose leaders turn a blind eye to such manifestations and at the same time seek to retouch the unpleasant scenes from their own past, i.e. the racist treatment of their own colonies and the extermination of indigenous populations. In practice, such attitude encourages a steady increase in racist incidents, various manifestations of xenophobia and ethnic and religious intolerance.

In the first group of countries, collaborationists who supported the Nazis have been declared members of national liberation movements who fought for the "independence" of their states. A number of educational and outreach activities are being developed and implemented, and, more broadly, attempts are being made to reconfigure public thinking. Curricula and cultural projects serve to glorify the "feat" of volunteer members of the national SS legions who fought for the Nazi Germany and were involved in numerous massacres of civilians. The authorities' encouragement has unleashed radical nationalists and right-wing extremists, who are often the main perpetrators of the cynical "war" against monuments to Soviet liberator soldiers. For their achievements in fighting the "Russian world" and Soviet memorial heritage, nationalists are privileged to preach the "correct patriotism" idea to the entire society (we also note that such approach of vesting "their own" with broad powers to any violence is also typical for Western "democratic world" adherents in a broader sense). In most cases, national

authorities take no measures to suppress such bacchanalia; rather, on the contrary, they stimulate it. There has been virtually no response to protests from Russian diplomatic missions in connection with such incidents. Civil society members are simply ignored, or even taken measures against.

Besides Ukraine, the most threatening situation in this area has developed in the Baltic States, Poland and the Czech Republic. During the past two years, unimaginable hysteria with Russophobic motives has unfolded in these countries in connection with 9 May celebrations. As part of the hastily launched campaigns to "liquidate the legacy of the totalitarian regime," the main monuments in honour of Red Army soldiers were destroyed along with many other such monuments. The public was prohibited from paying tribute to the fighters against Nazism in any form. For participating in such actions and even defending the right to honour the memory of the Red Army heroes, activists and ordinary citizens are subject to arrest and criminal prosecution.

All these facts are appropriately reflected in the present report.

At the same time, the active measures taken by the authorities of a significant number of states to form mono-ethnic societies on the basis of titular ethnic groups and the increasing glorification of Nazi collaborators (as part of the "new" national history being created) are markedly aggravating the problem of protecting the rights of national minorities and ethnic groups, primarily linguistic and educational. Persons belonging to them are subjected to discrimination in many forms. Particularly large-scale persecution has been launched against the Russian-speaking population of such countries. The most alarming situation in this regard is again in the Baltic States and Ukraine, where the authorities are making every effort to squeeze the Russian language and Russian culture out of all spheres of public life. Moreover, probably fearing the penetration of Russian culture from outside, the Baltic States, acting as if on cue, initiated the closure of a significant part of the European space, i.e. the European Union, to all Russian citizens, and then began to develop the idea of collective expulsion of Russian-speaking residents under far-fetched pretexts.

Along with this, the political elites of the overwhelming majority of European and North American "democratic" states are demonstrating the cynical use of a policy of double standards. Following the narrowly approved guidelines, they are still trying their best to conceal the Nazi essence of the policy of the authorities in Kiev from the international community. It has even come to openly whitewashing the supporters of neo-Nazism – the fighters of the radical nationalist battalion Azov and other similar Ukrainian extremist groups that openly demonstrate their racist ideological nature. Any mention of the numerous brutal crimes committed by their members in Donbas is carefully excluded from the information space. The apotheosis of this approach was the blasphemous honouring in the Canadian Parliament of the former SS man Y. Gunko (Hunka).

Certainly, all such activities received additional impetus and motives for justification after the Russian Federation launched a special military operation in February 2022 to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilian population of Donbas. In practical terms, this has resulted in a shockingly savage total discrimination against Russians and Russian-speaking residents of European states and some other members of the "Western bloc".

This report builds on the provisions of the traditional profile resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, Neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" annually submitted for consideration of the UN General Assembly by Russia together with a wide range of co-authors. The text of the resolution and the table reflecting the results of the voting at the 77th UNGA session are included as annexes.

We consider it important to remind you, with regard to this resolution, that the world community by an absolute majority has sided with the Russian approach towards the glorification of Nazism and justification of racism. Unprecedented pressure from the Washington-led "collective West" failed to change this trend. In 2022, 32 states, including Russia, became co-sponsors of the document adopted on 15 December during the 77th session of the UNGA. The resolution was supported

by an impressive majority of countries – 120. 50 delegations voted against it, including the United States and Ukraine (which traditionally opposed the initiative), as well as EU member states (which previously abstained from voting, but now, under external pressure, are publicly demonstrating support for neo-Nazism).

With regard to the voting, the odious position of the Western countries, which, following the United States of America, voted against the document condemning the glorification of Nazism and manifestations of neo-Nazism, is striking. Serious concern is caused by the cohesion of the former Axis member states, which casts doubt on the sincerity of the repentance of Germany, Italy and Japan for the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the Second World War. Through their actions, those states demonstrated a blasphemous attitude towards the memory of the victims of German Nazism, Italian fascism and Japanese militarism.

Let us also recall the thematic focus of the resolution: it condemns the glorification of the Nazi movement and former members of the Waffen-SS, including through the unveiling of monuments and memorials, as well as public demonstrations to glorify the Nazi past, the Nazi movement and neo-Nazism. It is particularly stressed that the erection of monuments in honour of the SS, the organization of their processions and other similar actions desecrate the memory of countless victims of fascism, have a negative impact on the younger generation, and are absolutely incompatible with the obligations of UN Member States. The co-sponsors of the resolution cannot ignore the fact that in some countries those who fought against the anti-Hitler coalition or collaborated with the Nazis are persistently trying to be elevated to the rank of national heroes and heroes of national liberation movements. The Russian Federation and its associates are convinced that this is not a question of political correctness, as its ideologues are trying to convince us, but of the most blatant cynicism and blasphemy towards those who liberated the world from the horrors of National Socialism.

The most important regulatory framework for combating these adverse phenomena and the basis for the development of multilateral cooperation come from the provisions of international human rights treaties, and first of all, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The overwhelming majority of the UN Member States, including countries that vote against the Russian initiative or abstain are parties thereto.

In accordance with Article 4, the States Parties to the Convention particularly undertake to:

- condemn all propaganda and all organizations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form;

- declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred;

- declare illegal and prohibit organizations, and also organized and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognize participation in such organizations or activities as an offence punishable by law.

Article 4 is one of the key provisions of the Convention. It is important, primarily, because it draws a clear line between acts punishable by law and the rights to freedom of assembly and association as well as freedom of opinion and its expression. That is why claims by certain states that marches of Waffen-SS veterans and various collaborationists, erection of monuments to Nazis or other manifestations are but the implementation of the above liberties have absolutely no basis. In this regard, we are convinced that it is imperative that the states promptly withdraw reservations to this treaty, including reservations to Article 4.

Based on data from international and national sources the document summarizes the factual information on new displays in any form of the glorification of the Nazi movement, Neo-Nazism, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in focal countries. It shows their systemic and

even programmatic nature, consistently shaped by the policies of the authorities of these states in this area. It also takes into account the recommendations of international and regional human rights mechanisms, in particular treaty bodies (committees) and regional (especially European) law enforcement institutions to the states in question. Besides, the report draws on the relevant research by the civil society organizations. Therefore, thorough work to identify former members of Nazi units and collaborationist structures remains a major asset.

As part of the efforts to establish the Victory as a common heritage of the UN Member States and prevent, in line with the provisions of the UN GA resolution on combatting the glorification of Nazism, the destruction and desecration of monuments and memorials dedicated to fighters against Nazism, this report traditionally focuses on the treatment by European countries of statues, monuments and memorial complexes dedicated to the Red Army soldiers who liberated Europe from the Brown Plague, antifascist warriors and members of the Resistance Movement, as well as their preservation. The increased focus on this issue is also due to a sharp rise in attempts by several countries, first of all Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Estonia, to settle a historical score with Russia, and in broader sense with their historic past, by blasphemously destroying monuments to Soviet liberator soldiers.

The report further traditionally highlights the problem of the discrimination of national minorities, as well as Russian and Russian-speaking population, especially in the Baltic States and Ukraine. This includes persecution of national communities in public life, hindering them from preserving their national culture and using their native language, harassment of the media, etc. As noted above, in 2022, this kind of discriminatory practice was given a major impetus by the "cancel Russia" campaign in European countries. It continued in 2023, by the Baltic States demonstrating their mood for a total cleansing of their space through the prepared deportation of Russian-speaking residents, including the elderly.

As for all sorts of pseudo-historical concepts, "historical aggressions" and falsifications of historical facts, we would make it clear again and again: Russia

will always remember that all the people of the Soviet Union together played the crucial role in winning the Victory over Nazism. The importance of this historic event for all mankind can hardly be overestimated. There is no need to explain its significance in our country. We will always remember it as the Great Patriotic War. Its horrors and hardships impacted every single family in Russia.

The above-mentioned trends and manifestations only re-confirm the Russia-defended thesis that such manifestations of racial discrimination and glorification of Nazism pose a direct threat to the fundamental values of true democracy and human rights and a serious challenge to international and regional security and stability. However, there seems to be no urge for unification and meaningful cooperation in the interests of sustainable development and equal partnership on the part of certain states so far. The events of the recent years have been increasingly reminiscent of the "values" of the superiority of one race or nation over other peoples and cultures that were in force over half a century ago. Naturally, Russia, together with its opinion allies, does not intend to put up with such neo-colonial approaches and will resist them in every possible way.

Australia

At the national level, Australia does not seek to wipe out from the World War II history any reference to the Red Army and its contribution to the defeat of Nazism or to justify the aggression of Germany and its allies. Sites commemorating the troops of the anti-Hitler coalition, as well as memorial plaques established in Sydney and Melbourne in honour of Soviet heroes are protected by Government. No desecration incidents have been recorded.

The Government does not interfere with the activities of various associations of veterans and victims of the Nazi aggression, including those established by Soviet-born immigrants. For instance, Victorian Association of WW2 Veterans from the ex-Soviet Union (AVWSU), established in 1982 in Melbourne, is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission, which has been in charge of regulating the activities of such entities and allocating grants since 2012.

Combating Nazism, neo-Nazism, racism and xenophobia in Australia is regulated by the 1995 Racial Hatred Act,¹ which prohibits any conduct of a harassing nature against people based on their colour, race or ethnicity, as well as the bearing of Nazi symbols, its public display and racist speech. The law provides for administrative liability in the form of a fine and public apology for such acts. Australia's Criminal Code Act 1995 does not contain articles relating to manifestations of Nazism, racism and xenophobia.² Racial discrimination is criminalised only in Western Australia,³ as regulated by the state legislation.

Only two states so far have criminalised the intentional display of Nazi symbols (swastikas) - New South Wales (in June 2022) and Victoria (in December 2022). Similar bills are being drafted in Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania. This, however, did not prevent leader of the far-right European Australian Movement Thomas Sewell from publicly performing the Nazi salute

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2004A04951>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00235>

³ The Racial Hatred Act: What is the racial hatred act? Australian Human Rights Commission
<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/racial-hatred-act-what-racial-hatred-act>

gesture in front of the Melbourne Magistrates' Court in January 2023, as such actions are not currently banned in Victoria.

Far-right sentiments in Australia have been taking place since the establishment of the federal State in the early 20th century. A set of legislative measures was then adopted to restrict the non-Caucasian migration to the country. Such immigration selectivity was based on hostility towards Asian and Pacific Islanders prevailing in the Australian society at the time, as well as the strong influence of local labour unions, which sought to prevent the emergence of a competitive workforce.

Although the country has officially moved away from the "white Australia policy" promoting the principles of multiculturalism, hostility towards people from Asian and Middle Eastern countries persists. Thus, sociological surveys have revealed⁴ that 43 per cent of respondents have negative attitude towards people of Chinese origin, more than half – towards Australians from Iraq and Sudan, and 32 per cent – towards Muslims. At the same time, 40 per cent of Asian-born people were discriminated against in everyday life, especially during the pandemic. Still, the country enjoys great ethnic diversity: according to the 2021 census, there are more than 270 different ethnic groups in Australia with 27.6 per cent reporting a birthplace overseas.

About 70 far-right organizations, political parties, or registered protest movements operate in the country. Many of them seek access to the political decision-making process at top Government level through Federal parliamentary elections. Yet, the only right-wing party represented in the legislative branch is Pauline Hanson's One Nation, which won two senate seats in the federal election in May 2022.

Australia's right-wing and far-right socio-political groups can be roughly subdivided into patriots, nationalists and racists.

Civic patriots adhere to ideas and concepts shared by most Australians. For

⁴ 2021 report by the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute
https://scanloninstitute.org.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/Mapping_Social_Cohesion_2021_Report_0.pdf

example, they support the sustainable development of a secular society, its civil institutions, moral and social values, with citizenship (rather than race, ethnicity or religion) remaining a fundamental element and identity marker. Civic patriots tolerate non-Europeans and non-Christians immigrating to Australia provided that they are assimilated into the Australian system of social values. At the same time, civic patriots share the belief that Islamic fundamentalists, being unable to integrate into a secular society due to their traditional religious affiliation, are a "fifth column" seeking the Islamization of Australia. Some supporters of the movement take a firmer stance condemning Islam in general as an imperialist and totalitarian ideology that infringes on the rights of non-Muslims. At the same time, civic patriots are not anti-Semites, to the contrary, they call Israel the "lone bastion of Western civilization" in the Middle East.

The following groups and organisations consider themselves civic patriots: Party for Freedom, Rise Up Australia Party, protest movement Reclaim Australia, European Australian Civil Rights League, Love Australia or Leave, Restore Australia, Nationalist Republican Guard.

More radical right-wing group is represented by the nationalist movement, which is both Islamophobic and anti-Semitic. Nationalists prioritize race and ethnicity over citizenship. Although nationalists' main activity is to confront Muslims, their ideology is also aimed against other national and religious minorities, even though it is not expressed publicly and openly for fear of losing popularity and supporters.

The main actors of the nationalist movement in Australia are Nationalist Alternative, the National Democratic Party of Australia, Christian Identity and Patriot Blue.

United Patriots Front and Australian Defence League are among organisations that maintain international relations of any kind.

United Patriots Front expressed solidarity with the Greek far-right nationalist Golden Dawn Party. According to the organization's website, in 2017, it was restructured and renamed Lads Society, with no information on international ties.

Australian Defence League was founded in Sydney in 2009 and is a branch of English Defence League operating in Great Britain.

The most radical right-wing views in the Australian society are expressed by a racist movement, which believes that it is the Caucasian race that determines identity. Australian racists support the idea of social Darwinism, a concept that divides people of different races and ethnicities into different grades within an established hierarchical chain based on their moral, physical and psychological compatibility. Australian racists are hostile to all non-European immigrants. Jewish community is considered the main threat. At the same time, unlike the previous two groups, racists are not always negative towards Muslims, which reflects the historical fact that Nazi Germany collaborated with some Islamic State leaders during World War II. This political group in Australia includes mostly neo-Nazis who share the ideas of anti-Semitism and white supremacy, as well as the concept of "the white genocide."

Battalion 88, Club Nation, Expel the Parasites, Australians Resistance Network, National Socialist Network represent this movement.

The following racist movement groups maintain international relations of varying intensity: Blood&Honour, Soldiers of Odin, Women for Aryan Unity, Right Wing Resistance.

Blood&Honour is a low-activity Australian branch of the namesake British organization.

Soldiers of Odin was registered as a NPO in Victoria in 2016. It is an Australian branch of a similar structure established in northern Finland in 2015, which is also present in Belgium, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Estonia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Portugal, and Spain. Open sources claim that the Australian Soldiers of Odin have been inactive since 2016.

Women for Aryan Unity is a group established in the U.S. in 1990 with branches in Australia, Argentina, Italy and Spain.

Right Wing Resistance is a New Zealand-based organization operating in

Australia.

Recently, Antipodean Resistance has been the key racist group in Australia. It is the only movement in the country that publicly displays Nazi symbols and calls to "legalise the execution of Jews." The group was established in 2016 and is inspired by the actions of the well-known right-wing radical groups, such as the English National Action, the Scandinavian Nordic Resistance Movement, and the U.S. Atomwaffen Division. It is unclear whether it maintains any direct ties with them.

The far-right movement in Australia is neither large, nor consolidated. The vast majority of organisations that identify themselves as patriots, nationalists or racists include at most a few hundred supporters. Besides, these groups do not have sufficient administrative and financial resources. Therefore, their main activity is represented by sporadic protests, which are mainly verbal in nature without active violent or other illegal actions. In most cases, right-wing extremist behaviour is manifested in the media, social networks and specialized nationalist forums engaged in the active dissemination of right-wing views and ideas.

Over the last few years, nationalist sentiments in the Australian society have been given new impetus. The 2014 hostage-taking at the Lindt Café in Sydney by Haron Moniz, an Iranian-born refugee, was one of the triggers. The situation was further aggravated by Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 Presidential election whose campaign was characterized by right-wing views. Another upswing of nationalism in Australia was associated with the August 2017 racist rallies in Charlottesville, USA, and a terrorist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, committed by Australian national Brenton Tarrant in 2019.

International human rights monitoring bodies reported on the expressions of racial discrimination and xenophobia being on the rise in both everyday life and public sphere. In particular, this was mentioned by experts from the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)⁵ in November 2017 and the

⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Australia. November 2017.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fAUS%2fCO

Human Rights Committee (HRC)⁶ in October 2017. Migrants, especially Arabs, Muslims, people of African descent, and indigenous peoples were identified as the most frequent targets of intolerance.

The Australian Security Intelligence Service (ASIO) has also reported on an increase in extremist sentiments motivated by racial and religious hatred. According to ASIO, investigations into ideologically motivated violent extremism increased by more than a third in 2021.

Earlier, in February 2020, the media covered a gathering of the National Socialist Network members held in a park near Melbourne during the Australia Day celebrations. About 40 people in paramilitary uniforms displayed Third Reich symbols and greeted passers-by with the Nazi salute. Later this month, the leader of the organization in question, Thomas Sewell, picked a fight at the newsroom of a TV channel that had previously shown his associates in a news program. In November 2020, Phillip Galea was sentenced to 12 years in prison for preparing a terrorist attack against left-wing NGOs in Melbourne. In March 2021, unknown people put pro-White Australia campaign posters at the Australian National University. In October 2021 in Brisbane, the flag of Nazi Germany was hung out of a window in a house adjacent to a synagogue. In April 2022, unknown individuals drew the swastika symbols on the election posters of some candidates.

These activities are a matter of concern for the country's authorities. In February 2020, Director-General of ASIO Michael Burgess said that far-right extremism is a growing threat to Australia's security. According to the agency, about a half of its counter-terrorist efforts are targeting right-wing radical activities (in 2016, such measures accounted for only 10 to 15 per cent). This position was supported by Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police Reece Kirshaw in July 2020.

In March 2021, Australian Minister of Home Affairs Peter Dutton

[%2f18-19&Lang=en](#)

⁶ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the sixth periodic report of Australia. October 2017. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fAUS%2fCO%2f18-19&Lang=en

announced that the British neo-Nazi group, "Sonnenkrieg Division," was included in the national list of terrorist organizations becoming the first radical right-wing group to be put on the list. The Australian Home Affairs Department website specifies that Australians have not been directly involved in its activities and it does not pose a direct threat to the country. However, its ideology, which is hostile to multicultural societies, can incite local extremists, and terrorist attacks are potentially dangerous for Australian citizens abroad. Becoming its member, affiliating with it or providing financial support to the organisation would constitute a criminal offense punishable by up to 25 years in prison. The expert community and the opposition Australian Labor Party welcomed this step, but pointed to the need to add to the list of banned organisations those groups that are active in Australia.

The following terrorist organisation is the U.S. Base group, which was involved in recruitment among local nationalist associations between 2019 and 2020. In 2022, the National Socialist Order group (former Atomwaffen Division) was included in the list.

Neo-Nazi actions (e.g., in November 2022, a banner saying "Hitler was right" was hung over a highway in a suburb of Gold Coast) trigger public protests and force regional authorities to take appropriate measures.

Far-right sentiments have also been noted among the states leadership. Thus, NSW Premier Dominic Perrotte had to publicly apologize for wearing Nazi uniform as a joke to his 21st birthday party in 2003. The Jewish community accepted the apology declaring the incident closed. However, the Premier's attempts to justify himself with youth and ignorance evoked much skepticism: Dominic Perrottet, the son of the World Bank's employee, received a top-notch education and, therefore, should have understood the meaning of Nazi symbols.

The Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council, the leading organisation for the Australian Jewish community, reports a 35 per cent rise in antisemitism as compared with the 2020-2021 years. New player of the North Melbourne Football Club Harry Sheezel being subjected to anti-Semitic comments on social media has

become a vivid example of the public's intolerance of Jewish Australians. In early March 2023, a final Federal court hearing was held in Melbourne on a complaint against Brighton secondary school and the Victorian Department of Education for inciting the bullying of five Jewish students between 2013 and 2020. At the time of writing, the court was still to decide on the matter.

Right-wing nationalist associations of the Ukrainian community are engaged in justifying the crimes of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) committed during World War II. An example of such association is the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO) headed by Stefan Romaniw who also holds the position of the leader of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (Banderites) and NGO Ukrainian Democracy Initiative (UDI).

At the national level, Australia keeps a blind eye on Kiev's regime relying on neo-Nazi groups. None of them are considered extremist. That's why the police does not stop displaying the Right Sector symbols during anti-Russian rallies.

Some Australian place names refer to Nazi accomplices. A street in South Penrith⁷, a suburb in the state of New South Wales, was named after Stefan Bandera. According to archive records, the initiative was sponsored by Ukrainian-born businessman George Borec (UPA veteran) who made considerable investments in the development of the suburb.

In these circumstances, it can hardly be surprising that Australia voted against the annual draft resolution co-sponsored by Russia and a number of other States and titled "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" at the UN General Assembly meeting in December 2022.

Social integration of Aborigines, who are subjected to racial profiling, remains a great challenge. In 2022, native Australians (3.2 per cent of the country's population) accounted for about 32 per cent of inmates of penitentiary institutions

⁷ The Secret of Bandera Road. Bandera Lobby Blog. 19 April 2021.
<https://banderalobby.substack.com/p/the-secret-of-bandera-road>

and about a quarter of all deaths in custody (according to the Committee against Torture (CAT), as of December 2022, they represented approximately 30 per cent of the total prisoner population, while constituting 3.8 per cent of the total population). In addition to that, CAT noted further increase in the rate of pretrial detention of indigenous peoples. The monitoring body named mandatory sentencing and imprisonment for petty crimes, such as fine defaults, among the factors that make the already deplorable situation even worse.⁸

Legal assistance centres have documented numerous cases of biased and cruel treatment of Aborigines in penitentiary facilities. In particular, the Aborigines are disproportionately subjected to prolonged and indefinite solitary confinement. In addition, due to their special cultural needs, including the need for interpretation and translation services, this group lacks full access to legal assistance.⁹

Authorities in Canberra do not deny the challenges posed by the overrepresentation of First Nations Australians in places of detention and the crisis regarding the deaths of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in custody. The country's leadership has even taken certain steps to address the issue. For this purpose, it adopted the Justice Policy Partnership in 2021. Nevertheless, to achieve meaningful progress in this area, transformational change is required, including transformational legislative and policy reforms.¹⁰

Indigenous populations continue to face bias on the part of law enforcement officials. The trial of police officer Zachary Rolfe, who shot dead 19 year old Kumanjayi Walker from the Aboriginal community of Yuendumu in November 2019, came to be a high-profile case. The teenager had a criminal record and was wanted by the police; during his first attempted arrest, he had threatened officers with an axe; he had stabbed Rolfe in the shoulder with a pair of scissors before the officer shot him. Wounded Walker was brought to the police station where he

⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the sixth periodic report of Australia. December 2022.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2FC%2FAUS%2FCO%2F6&Lang=en

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

received first aid. But the local health clinic was closed, and the nearest city of Alice Springs is 300 km away. The boy died about an hour later. The incident sparked protests of the Aboriginal community demanding that those guilty of the death of their member be punished; the murder charges were filed within a few days. Chief Minister of the Northern Territory Michael Gunner promised that "consequences would flow". In March 2022, the police officer was acquitted by the jury.¹¹

The information provided by The Guardian reveals the true scope of the problem. It cited the data of the Australian Institute of Criminology and several other line agencies, and reported 500 indigenous deaths over the last 30 years (1991 – 2021) at police stations and in similar circumstances.¹²

June 2022 saw another storm of massive protests against abuse of firearms by the police against Aborigines in Sydney, Melbourne and other major Australian cities. Furthermore, in November 2022, the country was shaken by a wave of rallies after a cruel assault on the grounds of racial hatred, which was committed in October 2022 in Perth and led to the death of Noongar-Yamatji teenager Cassius Turvey.

Another high-profile case of abuse of law-enforcement officials against the First Nations peoples took place in September 2019 in Geraldton. Member of Aboriginal community Joyce Clarke was shot by a police officer as she walked down a street outside her home holding a kitchen knife in her hand. The woman had mental issues and had been released from hospital a few days before, after a suicide attempt. The police officers called by her relatives (who were concerned over Clarke's condition and asked to help them take her to hospital) confirm that the woman stood almost still and there were no sudden movements or threats on her part. The jury found the police officer who shot the woman (his identity remains suppressed due to safety concerns) not guilty after the argument presented

¹¹ Police officer Zachary Rolfe acquitted over death of Kumanjaya Walker. The Sydney Morning Herald. 11 March 2022. <https://amp.smh.com.au/national/police-officer-zachary-rolfe-acquitted-over-death-of-kumanjaya-walker-20220311-p5a3sf.html>

¹² Indigenous investigation. 'Beyond heartbreaking': 500 Indigenous deaths in custody since 1991 royal commission: <https://www.google.co.uk/amp/s/amp.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/dec/06/beyond-heartbreaking-500-indigenous-deaths-in-custody-since-1991-royal-commission>

by lawyer Linda Black. The lawyer called the Aboriginal woman "a walking time bomb", quick-tempered and aggressive, and qualified the shooter's action as self-defense.¹³

The said incident also highlighted the persisting problem of prejudice towards the First Nations population on the part of medical staff (Joyce Clarke was released from hospital despite her clearly psychotic state). Other high-profile cases include the death of Naomi Williams, a six months' pregnant 27-year-old woman. She had presented to hospital 18 times in the six months before her death with pain and vomiting, but had been given no proper treatment or sent to a specialist. She and her unborn child died of sepsis. The infection proved treatable with a course of antibiotics. Following an inquest (that took three years) the state coroner merely issued recommendations, leaving their implementation to the discretion of the hospital administration. Those guilty remained unpunished¹⁴.

CAT has also received reports of discrimination of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons with disabilities by fellow patients and staff of psychiatric institutions and forensic disability closed centres. On top of that, such facilities lack effective, independent, confidential and accessible channels for lodging complaints.¹⁵

In October 2019, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities noted that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are expressing suicidal ideation due to the lack of support, poverty and isolation of this group of Australian society.¹⁶

¹³ All cases of Aboriginal deaths in custody or resulting from the actions of law enforcement officers since 2008 can be found in a database maintained by The Guardian (last updated on 5 April 2021 and including a total of 200 cases). <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/ng-interactive/2018/aug/28/deaths-inside-indigenous-australian-deaths-in-custody>

¹⁴ Naomi Williams inquest concludes, with coroner calling for change at NSW hospital. ABC. 29 July 2019 <https://amp.abc.net.au/article/11355244>

¹⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the sixth periodic report of Australia. December 2022. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2FC%2FAUS%2FCO%2F6&Lang=en

¹⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the combined second and third periodic reports of Australia. October 2019. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2FC%2fAUS%2fCO%2f2-3&Lang=en

In addition to persons with disabilities, women and minors are in the most vulnerable situation. CAT is concerned over reports of high levels of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, which disproportionately affects indigenous women and has significantly increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁷

In November 2019, the Australian government was criticized by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which noted that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children disproportionately more often became victims or witnesses of family and domestic violence, including sexual violence.¹⁸

In September 2022, the HRC found that Australia had failed to adequately protect Torres Strait Islanders against "the effects of climate change." The Committee arrived at this conclusion upon examination of a complaint filed by representatives of eight Australian islands. The plaintiffs claimed that the state's failure to adequately protect their territories against extreme weather conditions had resulted in the indigenous peoples' inability to engage in farming, traditional crafts, and many ceremonies inherent in their culture. The Committee called on the Australian government to compensate the indigenous Islanders for the harm suffered and engage in meaningful consultations with communities to develop measures to secure their safe existence on the islands.¹⁹

The Closing the Gap Initiative launched by the government in 2008 and designed to ensure that the Aboriginal population enjoys the same opportunities to exercise their rights as Australians of European ancestry, has also proven insufficiently effective. Many indigenous peoples live in remote and hard-to-reach

¹⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the sixth periodic report of Australia. December 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2FC%2FAUS%2FCO%2F6&Lang=en

¹⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Australia. November 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FAUS%2FCO%2F5-6&Lang=en

¹⁹ Human Rights Committee. Views adopted by the Committee under article 5 (4) of the Optional Protocol, concerning communication No. 3624/2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2F135%2FD%2F3624%2F2019&Lang=en

areas, which severely limits their access to medical, educational, legal and other services and reduces their financial opportunities.

Australian laws on Aboriginal cultural heritage need to be reformed because mining companies still manage to find loopholes in laws to obtain consent for the destruction of indigenous artefacts when conducting extractive activities. Causing destruction or alterations to Aboriginal territories is a crime under Australian law. Yet regulations may be more flexible at the state level. Thus, in Western Australia, consent by the Aboriginal Affairs Minister is enough to avoid criminal liability. Furthermore, most agreements between companies and tribal elders include a clause prohibiting the latter to seek advice from third parties, including in order to protect their cultural heritage, without prior consultation with company administration. Aboriginal people complain that in fact, all these contracts are signed only on conditions set forth by mining companies.²⁰

In May 2017, experts of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern over Australia's non-compliance with the principle of free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples while developing policies with regard to extractive activities on the lands traditionally used by them.²¹

In order to smooth over the impression of the total failure of state policies in this field, the Australian government seeks to demonstrate its concern over and full involvement in the issue. Hence, a tolerant attitude towards ideas promoted by some civic associations to change the date of Australia Day, the flag and the anthem. All official events must now be opened with reference to "traditional owners of the land." In 2020, governments of states and the Coalition of Peaks comprising representatives of 55 Aboriginal organizations and associations signed an agreement on the renewed Closing the Gap Programme stipulating that governments of states are to establish their own mechanisms to engage with

²⁰ Traditional owners in WA's north demand removal of gag clauses to help them protect ancient rock art. ABC. Thursday, March 24, 2022

<https://amp.abc.net.au/article/100935592>

²¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fifth periodic report of Australia. May 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fAUS%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en

Aboriginal organizations. They should build on a new practice of framing decisions pertaining to the interests of Australia's First Nations as a document bearing a signature of a local Aboriginal community elder. However, since the recommendations are not binding, those who are to follow them approach them in a formal way, do not seek to achieve results and sometimes ignore them altogether or delay their implementation as much as possible.

Some political activists believe that a referendum should be held on the issue of establishing a new advisory body within the Australian parliament – the so-called "First Nations Voice to Parliament" referred to in the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart. Experts hope that the Labor party which came to power in 2022 will achieve progress in this area. The Albanese government announced a referendum on the constitutional recognition of the indigenous populations, including the creation of the "Voice," to be held no later than 30 July 2024.

The plight of Indigenous people in Australia, including political participation issues, lack of protection of their land rights, discrimination in the socio-economic field, disproportionate violence against indigenous women, and the level of Aboriginal over-representation in the criminal system, especially children, was also noted by the CERD.²²

After the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation commenced the special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, a surge of Russophobia was registered in Australia, with Russians residing in Australia and the members of Russian representations in the country receiving threats and suffering insults.

Major country's media (first and foremost the ABC broadcasting corporation) issue anti-Russian content on a daily basis. There have been cases of self-censorship, when members of the media voluntarily abstain from publicly expressing opinions that do not coincide with the government's official position. In March 2022, Stan Grant, the host of a popular talk show Q+A virtually expelled a young audience of Russian descent from the studio for his attempt to voice an

22 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Australia. November 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fAUS%2fCO%2f18-19&Lang=ru

opinion in support of Russia's actions, when the programme was live on TV, and the National Press Club of Australia withdrew its invitation to the Russian Ambassador to speak at its headquarters in Canberra.

In January 2023, the hosts of the Australian Open tennis tournament prohibited the demonstration of the Russian flag and checked the spectators' personal belongings in order to prevent them from bringing national and historical emblems of Russia (e.g., Russian Imperial Standard) to the tournament venue.

The Australia Day Council of South Australia (a regional not-for-profit organization managing preparations to the major national holiday) used an invented security pretext in order to banish the members of the Russian community from the celebrations on 26 January 2023.

It should also be noted that Australian competent authorities have always closely followed the efforts of pro-Russian activists in Australia. In particular, the ataman of the Australian branch of the Union of Cossack Warriors of Russia and Abroad Semyon Boykov was interrogated as to whether he had contacts with members of armed formations in Donbass. Later on, he was sentenced to ten months in prison for publicly stating that local authorities had limited themselves to imposing but nominal pre-trial restrictions on a person accused of child molestation. Boykov is being accused of breaching a court order not to disclose confidential information. This tough step can be explained by our fellow citizen's public activity, which has for a long time run counter to the Russophobic line pursued by official authorities in Canberra.

Australian media outlets have occasionally shown a biased attitude towards the Russian diaspora amid their generally lopsided presentation of the Russia-related news. In August 2020, the Inside Story online magazine published an article by Kyle Wilson (a retired intelligence officer who specializes in Russia and is currently an Australian National University staff member) calling our compatriots who openly support Russia's policy "Putin's fifth column in Australia." In January 2021, Australia's central television channel, ABC, broadcasted a so-called documentary "Putin's Patriots: Russian Money and Influence in Australia,"

depicting a number of civic associations of Russian nationals (including local branches of the Union of Cossack Warriors in Russia and Abroad, the Night Wolves Motorcycle Club, and others) as agents of Russia's allegedly malicious influence.

Numerous complaints from our compatriots to the Russian Embassy are indicative of the fact that the Russophobic policy adopted by the country's leadership and its state-controlled media has spread hatred towards people of Russian descent across various spheres of public life. It should be noted, however, that Australian authorities take certain measures to prevent possible conflicts in public places. The police are taking preventive measures to protect the Russian Orthodox churches in Sydney and Melbourne.

Finally, there have been cases of undue infringement of our compatriots' rights not related to their political views or activism. The local police often fail to pay due attention to reports of victims of domestic violence. The story of Olga Edwards (Serebryanskaya) was extensively covered in Australian media. On 5 July 2018, her former husband came to her house, shot dead their children and committed suicide. In September 2020, the Coroner's Court in Lidcombe, Sydney, initiated a check for possible gross negligence on the part of police officers. Olga Edwards had repeatedly reported instances of domestic abuse on the part of her husband, but complaints of the Russian woman had not been given due consideration. Her written statement of December 2016 bears a note made by the law enforcement officers, which reads as follows: "may be a premeditated attempt to influence some future family court and divorce proceedings".²³

²³ John Edwards, who shot dead two children, should not have had gun license, coroner finds. ABC. Wednesday, 7 April 2021
<https://amp.abc.net.au/article/100052238>

Austria

For historical reasons, Austria has been paying particular attention to countering manifestations neo-Nazism and attempts to rehabilitate Nazism.

Vienna's international legal obligations to combat Nazism derive from the provisions of the State Treaty for the Re-establishment of an Independent and Democratic Austria of 15 May 1955, Articles 9 and 10 of which obliged the state to erase all traces of Nazism from Austrian political, economic and cultural life, to ensure that the above-mentioned organizations were not revived in any form, and to prevent all Nazi and militarist activities and propaganda on Austrian territory.

After the end of the World War II, Austria, liberated from Nazi occupation, was faced with the urgent task of establishing effective legal mechanisms to prevent the resurgence of fascism. The primary objective was to prevent the re-emergence of fascist, Nazi or neo-Nazi associations and parties or other forms of Nazism in the country.

At the legislative level, the issues of countering neo-Nazism and attempts to rehabilitate Nazism are regulated by special laws.

The Provisional Government of the Republic of Austria, in its first statement upon its establishment in April 1945, introduced the criminal prosecution of the crimes of the Nazi regime.

To this end, the Law on the Prohibition of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) (the Prohibition Act – Verbotsgesetz) was passed on 8 May 1945, followed by the Law on War Crimes and Other Atrocities of the National Socialists (the War Crimes Act) of 26 June 1945. These laws remain in force, with some amendments introduced as the post-war national legislation evolved.

The Prohibition Act, which has the highest rank (constitutional law), provides for the alienation of the property of National Socialist organizations in favour of the state and other measures to denazify Austrian social, political and everyday life, including the prosecution of Nazi criminals and collaborators and the removal from public space of manifestations that in any way whitewash

Nazism and its adherents. This includes the prosecution of Nazi criminals and collaborators and the removal from public space of manifestations that in any way whitewash Nazism and its adherents. The law prohibits Nazi ideology, the establishment of parties, the use of fascist symbols and any statements that justify the criminal activities of the NSDAP or deny the Holocaust.

Thus, paragraph 3 of the aforementioned law stipulates that all activities in the name of the NSDAP are prohibited, even if they are actually carried out outside the organization. Anyone who continues to be a member of the party or supports its aims is declared guilty of a crime punishable by death and confiscation of all property. If there are serious mitigating circumstances, the death penalty may be commuted to 10 to 20 years' imprisonment and confiscation of all property.

In 1992, the Prohibition Act was amended to increase criminal liability for any attempt to revive or support the activities of banned Nazi organizations. The threshold for punishment was lowered. The amendments increased the penalties for propagating Nazi ideology through the distribution of publications or works of art and criminalized a new offence – denying Nazi genocide and crimes against humanity or adhering to the ideas of National Socialism.

The applicability of the Prohibition Act provisions is at the centre of public and political debates that arise from time to time regarding the removal or reuse of monuments and architectural structures, and the interpretation of certain historical events.

Among the most resonant examples of this kind in recent times are the disputes over the format of "commemorative events" organized by the Croatian and Slovenian diasporas on the anniversary of the so-called Bleiburg massacre of 1945 (the mass executions by Yugoslav partisans, led by Josip Broz Tito, of the Croatian Ustashas and Slovenian collaborators who had fled to Austria), the debate on the permissibility of preserving a monument on a Viennese square to Bürgermeister Karl Lüger (1844-1910), known for his anti-Semitic views, and the issue of nationalizing of the so-called Hitler house in Braunau am Inn (federal state of Upper Austria), which is nearing its final resolution.

Thus, in 2016, the Republic of Austria passed a special law nationalizing the building where Adolf Hitler was born, in order to prevent it from becoming a "place of worship" for neo-Nazis (before that, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior had rented it for 5,000 euros a month since 1972). The woman who had owned the building was awarded compensation of 812,000 euros. In 2020, after a long public debate involving politicians, civil society, historians and building experts, it was decided to reconstruct the building to house a police station. The work, estimated to cost 6.5 million euros, is expected to start in autumn 2022 and be completed in the second quarter of 2023.

From time to time, the press and the general public raise the issue of the appropriateness of street and square names with Nazi references in Austrian cities. The work on erecting explanatory signs at the beginning and end of such streets in Graz (federal state of Styria) has been started as a follow-up to the studies carried out in 2016-2019 by a special commission headed by Professor Stefan Carner (co-chairman of the Russian-Austrian Commission of Historians).

The provisions of the War Crimes Act can also be applied to Nazi criminals. According to Austrian sources, there have been 13,607 convictions under the Act in the post-war period, 43 of which provided for the death penalty and 29 – life imprisonment. However, Jewish associations in Austria claim that the law is ineffective and criticize the authorities for not having punished a single Nazi criminal in the past 30 years.

Right-wing extremism, racism and neo-Nazi manifestations are still an important topic of media and public debate in Austria.

Despite this, Austrian legislation does not contain specific provisions to combat extremist manifestations. National legal practice does not clearly define the term "extremism". Therefore, offences that could fall under this definition are regulated by the aforementioned Prohibition Act, as well as by the Insignia Act, the Penal Code and the Administrative Penal Code.

The most common right-wing extremist activities in Austria are covered by the 1960 Insignia Act. This law prohibits the public use of symbols (badges,

emblems, uniforms, etc.) of banned fascist and Nazi organizations, including similar symbols that can be used as substitutes. This is a misdemeanour punishable by a fine of up to 4,000 euros or imprisonment for up to one month with the exception of theatrical performances and works of art, as well as exhibits and printed matter, provided that the use of such symbols is not an essential element thereof and is not intended to propagate or encourage Nazism.

Since March 2019, the symbols of 13 organizations recognized by Vienna as extremist have been banned in Austria, including the Croatian fascists, the Ustasha, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Hezbollah organization and political party, Hamas, the Kurdistan Workers' Party and the Grey Wolves, a Turkish nationalist organization. The offence is punishable by a fine of 4,000 euros, and up to 10,000 euros in the case of a repeat offence.

Article 283 of the Austrian Penal Code criminalizes extremist acts (incitement to violence, causing injury, threatening life or health, etc.) and other acts (e.g. damage to property) against persons, a group of persons, a religious or ecclesiastical association on the grounds of race, language, nationality, religion, ideology, state affiliation, ethnicity, gender, age or sexual identity.

Under Article 33 of the Penal Code, racist manifestations (mainly those referred to in Article 283) are considered an aggravating circumstance in the commission of unlawful acts.

If certain extremist acts are not criminalized due to the lack of serious negative consequences for society or the insignificance of the damage caused, the provisions of the Administrative Penal Code apply. In particular, paragraph 4 of Article 1 (section III) provides for a fine for the dissemination of National Socialist ideas.

The Austrian authorities have made considerable efforts to monitor, prevent and suppress the activities of destructive right-wing forces. Since 2013, the country has been implementing the National Action Plan to Combat Right Wing Extremism, which provides for a comprehensive approach to countering various right-wing extremist and neo-Nazi manifestations.

Islamophobic and anti-Semitic excesses, as well as cases involving attempts to rehabilitate symbols and narratives from the National Socialist era, tend to resonate most strongly. A key role in monitoring the situation in this area is played by NGOs such as "Civil Courage and Work Against Racism" (ZARA), the Dokustelle Österreich (which focuses on anti-Islamic incidents), the Antisemitismus Meldestelle reporting office of the Jewish Community of Vienna, etc., which publish annual reports on the number and nature of recorded incidents.

According to the report by the Antisemitismus Meldestelle, the number of anti-Semitic manifestations in 2022 decreased to 719 cases compared to the record year of 2021 (965 cases). Nevertheless, according to the reporting office, the problem remains serious, with an average of two cases of anti-Semitism reported in Austria every day. The Jewish community is particularly sensitive to the increasing instrumentalisation of Holocaust facts and symbols by certain political forces in the country in order to pursue their line on unrelated issues (the so-called Holocaust relativisation). The most striking example is the use of the Jewish star and the phrase "vaccination sets you free" (Impfung macht frei) during demonstrations against anti-Holocaust measures in various Austrian cities in 2020-2022 (historical references to the discriminatory stamps on the clothing of Jews during National Socialism and the cynical "Arbeit macht frei" (Work sets you free) inscriptions at the entrances to Nazi concentration camps).

The Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance and the Austrian Mauthausen Committee (MKÖ) NGO make an important contribution to the monitoring of neo-Nazi activities in Austria through their research and awareness-raising work and the publication of relevant thematic material on their online resources. The MKÖ regularly updates its brochure "Right Wing Extremism", which is primarily intended to inform publishers about banned Nazi symbols and insignia. The Commission's official website offers the possibility to report cases of right-wing extremism anonymously.

The Mauthausen Memorial Federal Institution, established in January 2017 on the territory of the former Mauthausen concentration camp, plays an important

role in educational activities, especially among young people, on the prevention of neo-Nazism.

The Mauthausen Memorial, the International Mauthausen Committee (IMC) NGO and the MKÖ jointly organize annual commemorative events (in May) to mark the anniversary of the liberation of the camp, with the participation of Austrian authorities, the general public, foreign guests and the Vienna diplomatic corps – the so-called Festival of Joy in Vienna, as well as a procession of national delegations to lay wreaths at Mauthausen itself.

In general, incidents and trends of a neo-Nazi nature recorded in Austria, including at the domestic level, are thoroughly analysed, discussed and, in the vast majority of cases, condemned by Austrian law enforcement officials, political circles, the public and the media. A recent example is the 10-month suspended sentence handed down in early July 2022 to a non-commissioned officer of the Austrian army for distributing Nazi symbols in his unit (a search of the house also revealed numerous household items with swastikas and other Nazi paraphernalia).

Nevertheless, neo-Nazism and racial intolerance persist in some areas. Thus, despite protests from Austrian anti-fascist organizations, annual "commemorative events" are organized in Austria by church institutions or local NGOs linked to right-wing radicals.

The already mentioned Bleiburg massacre of 1945 is still a matter of public debate. For example, in March 2022, after the Internal Affairs Committee of the Austrian National Council (the lower house of parliament) had reviewed the Ministry of the Interior's expert opinion on these commemorative events, the authorities publicly declared their intention not to allow the events to take place in the future. From the 1950s until 2019, the event was held every year (May) at the Loibach field in Bleiburg (federal state of Carinthia); it was not held in 2020 and 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic. It has occasionally been attended by high-ranking Croatian politicians, clergymen and prominent public figures (e.g. Prime Minister Ivica Račan in 2002 and his successor Ivo Sanader in 2004).

On several occasions, organized groups arrived in Bleiburg wearing Ustasha insignia and shouting fascist salutes. After the police took strong action, the number of radical participants dropped sharply and such incidents became rare. In the spring of 2022, after the publication of the above-mentioned expert report, the event was reduced to a memorial service in a local church and the laying of individual wreaths at the main monument, and the organizers (church institutions and local NGOs) were forced to remove the Croatian Ustasha coat of arms with the symbols of the 13th Waffen-SS Division from the memorial stone on the Loibach field.

Beyond the context of special military operation in Ukraine, the topic of the so-called Lienz tragedy remains the bottleneck in dealing with the issue of whitewashing of World War II Nazi collaborators in Austria. Every year (end of May/beginning of June) commemorative events are held in Lienz (federal state of Tyrol) to mark the events of 1 June 1945, when the British occupation authorities extradited Cossacks who had served in the 15th SS Cavalry Cossack Corps to the Soviet Union. The event was attended by city authorities, the Austrian Black Cross NGO and clergy from the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR). In 2020, the requiem was cancelled due to the pandemic, but an online commemorative exhibition, organized by two professors from the University of Innsbruck, was displayed at www.dolomitenbank.at, describing the "dire plight of those who strived for freedom".

The various manifestations of right-wing extremism in everyday life remain a prominent social problem in Austria. According to a report by the aforementioned ZARA human rights NGO, 1479 racist human rights violations were recorded in 2022, a decrease of 25% compared to the number of 1977 in 2021 (3,039 cases in 2020; 1950 in 2019; 1920 in 2018; 1162 in 2017), with more than 68% of them occurring online and 32% in public places.²⁴ There were 85 cases of discrimination by public officials, 59 by law enforcement officials and 84 by politicians and the media. In 76% of cases, the incidents (including online) were

²⁴ Austria, ZARA (2023), Racism report 2022, Vienna, ZARA.

reported by eyewitnesses or other third parties, and only 24% were reported by the victims themselves.

The right-wing extremist environment in the country is very heterogeneous and varies in terms of number of participants, composition, resource base and ideological focus (anti-democratic, racist, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic and revisionist movements). The 2022 Report of the Directorate of State Security and Intelligence of the Austrian Ministry of the Interior, which is responsible, among other things, for combating manifestations of extremism and neo-Nazism, states that the activities of right-wing radical groups pose a potential threat to public order and national security.

In terms of organizational structure, right-wing forces are usually grouped into so-called "ideological" parties, unions, "clubs of like-minded people" or "fellowships", and may include individual revisionist activists who deny Germany's responsibility for the outbreak of World War II and the Holocaust, and seek to play down other crimes of the Nazi regime. To this end, the "works" of pseudo-historical revisionists from Germany, the United States, Canada and Great Britain are used as an "ideological basis". Since such campaigns are prohibited by national legislation, they are carried out from abroad, including through the active use of the Internet.

The other segment of the right-wing extremist spectrum is represented by (mainly regional) youth "subcultural" groups, neo-Nazi "associations" (including virtual ones), the skinhead movement, individual activists from marginal social groups and well-organized associations of sports fans. The ideological component plays a secondary role in these structures, but they have a high mobilization potential and a pronounced propensity to violence.

Right-wing extremist associations in Austria include the Austrian Identitarian Movement (Identitäre Bewegung Österreich) – part of the European movement that originated in France and opposes the unification of traditional 'indigenous' cultures, multicultural policies and globalization processes, as well as capitalism and American dominance. The Austrian branch, which is close to the

right-wing populist Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), has been organizing annual anti-migration campaigns since 2014, including protests and internet propaganda, calling for the abandonment of integration policies, the repatriation of migrants and refugees, the enshrinement of the "dominant culture" notion. It has close links with 'partner' organizations in Germany, France and Italy.

After it was discovered in 2019 that Brenton Tarrant, the terrorist responsible for the shootings at the Christchurch mosques in New Zealand, had channelled donations to this Austrian movement, Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz authorized an investigation into the legal grounds for its ban. In 2020, major social networks blocked Identitarians from posting their content. The Identitarians' symbols were banned as part of tougher measures against terrorism and religious extremism following the terrorist attack in Vienna in November 2020. Against this background, an attempt was made to transform the movement in early 2021: its leader Martin Sellner founded a conservative patriotic civic platform "Die Österreicher – DO5" (a reference to the Austrian resistance movement against Nazism called O5), whose agenda mirrors that of the Identitarians.

Another far-right association, the "Working Community for Democratic Politics" (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für demokratische Politik/AFP), is registered as a political party, although it does not participate in elections. It consists of a small number of activists and is seen as a platform for establishing contacts between activists on the Austrian far-right scene and their supporters abroad.

The Workers' Community has a youth wing called "Free Youth Union"/"Youth Action" (Bund freier Jugend/Junge Aktion), which operates clandestinely in the federal state of Upper Austria. It also brings together people with nationalist views, especially National Socialists, who hate foreigners on the grounds of nationality and race.

The sentiments against the coronavirus restrictions brought into existence such movements as Querdenken, Bewegung 2020, and Platform Respekt to oppose harsh anti-COVID measures and demand respect for basic constitutional rights and freedoms. Although these groups claim to be politically unengaged and committed

to democratic values, they in fact serve as a magnet for other far-right actors. A case in point is a mass anti-government rally held on 16 January 2021 (according to the Austrian Ministry of the Interior, over 10,000 people took part in it) involving many right-wing extremists, from the Identitarians and AFP to soccer ultras, members of neo-Nazi groups, and former members of the National Democratic Party banned in Austria.

Right-wing student unions (Olimpia, Arminia Chernivits, etc.), which are considered to be far-right by local NGOs, enjoy certain influence in Austria. Their membership includes federal and regional political figures from the AFP. There also exist a few regional right-wing radical cells: the German-Austrian Blood Brotherhood (Kameradschaft Deutsch-Österreichische Blutsbrüder), Braunau Resistance (Widerstand Braunau), Object 21 (Objekt 21, illegal since 2013), and Free Fellowships (Freie Kameradschaften). Members of these associations hold 20 out of the 51 AFP seats in the National Council. According to the Austrian Resistance Documentary Archive, this is "a record figure in the history of the Second Austrian Republic."²⁵

To propagate their ideas, right-wing extremists hold rallies, protests and street marches, often not sanctioned by the authorities. They use print media outlets, such as The Assembly Hall, Phoenix, New Order, Heute, Ekkart, etc., as a media platform for disseminating their right-wing radical narratives. Internet and social networks are increasingly utilized by right-wing extremist groups to promote their "ideas." Local NGOs consider such "alternative" Internet portals as "unzensuriert.at" and "alles roger?" to be right-wing radical. Neo-Nazi musical records available on the Internet are actively used to indoctrinate the target audience, especially the youth.

The Austrian right-wing extremist community maintains ties with the far-right forces in Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Norway, Sweden, and Belgium. Organized groups and individual

²⁵ "Identity and Democracy": The Far Right in the European Parliament/translation from English by A.Kolgashkin; ed. by V.Krasheninnikova. – Moscow: Institute for Foreign Policy Research and Initiatives.

activists regularly participate in demonstrations and marches in other countries, especially in Germany.

Nevertheless, the Austrian right-wing radicals have no real political prospects under the current conditions. The number of their active supporters is small, and the opposition *Freedom Party of Austria* (FPO) traditionally focuses on the major problems ("the invasion of migrants", "Islamisation", etc.).

At the same time, experts note the growing aggressiveness and "militarisation" of extremist groups in recent years. In December 2020, Austrian law enforcement agencies, during a joint special operation with their German colleagues, discovered a warehouse with weapons belonging to local neo-Nazi groups and intended for the creation of illegal armed groups in Germany.

Human rights NGOs criticised mainly the insufficient efforts of the official authorities to counter racism, which was becoming systemic. In particular, in the area of migration, the need for equal treatment of all refugees, regardless of their nationality, has been emphasised.

Experts note that certain actions of law enforcement agencies, in particular, the counter-terrorist operation "Luxor" to catch adherents of radical Islamic movements, carried out after the terrorist attack in Vienna in November 2020, contributed to a noticeable aggravation of inter-ethnic contradictions and aggravation of the already generally negative public mood towards Muslims living in Austria. Against this background, human rights activists insistently urge the government to develop a comprehensive national strategy against racism, similar to the "anti-Semitic" strategy, including measures to combat its Islamophobic manifestations (in 2021 there were 1,061 cases, in 2020 – 1,402).

As part of the fight against "online hatred", a package of legislative measures came into force in Austria on 1 January 2021, significantly restricting the posting of relevant content on the Internet.

The level of integration of foreigners in general and refugees in particular remains an extremely important indicator for the Austrian authorities and local society. In the wake of persistent migrantophobia, the police have also recorded an

increase in the number of offences committed by the local population, primarily against temporary migrant detention facilities (damage to property, arson, etc.).

International human rights monitoring bodies have also highlighted these problems related to the migrant situation. For example, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)²⁶ has expressed concern about hate crimes and attacks against refugees and asylum-seekers, including women and girls.

The Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), in its 2020 report, noted that in recent years, Austrian politicians have taken on a highly controversial and antagonistic tone, especially with regard to refugees and Muslims, reflecting the high level of Islamophobia in the country.²⁷

On 12 May 2022, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights published a report²⁸ following her visit to Austria in December 2021 with recommendations to improve the reception and integration of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants, as well as to foment women's rights and gender equality. The document identifies a deterioration of attitudes (even hostile) in Austria towards the reception of migrants. The report reiterates the above-mentioned concerns raised by the HRC and ECRI, and refers to an increase in racist speech and hate crimes. According to the report, during the visit, a number of NGOs drew the Commissioner's attention to the increase in racist incidents targeting people of Asian origin since the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commissioner also notes a sharp increase in right-wing extremist offences in 2021 (1,053) compared to 2020 (895).

²⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 9th periodic report of Austria.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fAUT%2fCO%2f9&Lang=ru

²⁷ European Commission on Combating Racism and Intolerance Report on Austria (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted 7 April 2020, published 2 June 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/report-on-austria-6th-monitoring-cycle-/16809e826f>

²⁸ Report of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights on her visit to Austria. Published on 12 May 2022. <https://rm.coe.int/commdh-2022-10-report-on-the-visit-to-austria-en/1680a6679a>

In May 2021, the state-funded "Documentation Centre for Political Islam" (established to combat anti-Semitism, especially among migrants), together with the Ministry of Integration and the University of Vienna, produced an interactive "Map of Islam"²⁹, which contains information on the location of 623 mosques and other Muslim religious associations in Austria. This caused a negative reaction from the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on Combating Anti-Semitism, Hatred against Muslims and Hate Crimes, who stated that the Austrian Map of Islam was perceived by many Muslim believers as a manifestation of a general bias against Islam, could foster anti-Muslim sentiment and endangered the security of Muslims. According to a statement issued by the Council of Europe on 31 May 2021, the map is counterproductive, exacerbates discrimination against a religious group and should be withdrawn.

Muslim human rights activists saw the "Map of Islam" as a demonstration of the government's open intention to stigmatise all Muslims as a potential threat.³⁰

According to a study commissioned by the Austrian National Council on the spread of anti-Semitism in the country, about 10 per cent of the population supports anti-Semitic sentiments. The Austrian Institute for Empirical Social Research estimates that anti-Semitism is more prevalent among Turkish- and Arabic-speaking people. 14 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement "if the state of Israel disappears, there will be peace in the Middle East", while more than 70 per cent of the Arabic-speaking population and 50 per cent of the Turkish-speaking population agreed with this statement. According to a survey by the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights (FRA), 24 per cent of Jewish respondents consider anti-Semitism a very serious problem in Austria, while 49 per cent consider it relatively serious.³¹

The results of a joint study by the NGO Forum Against Anti-Semitism and the Jewish Community of Vienna showed that the number of incidents with anti-

²⁹ [https:// islamnews.ru/natsionalnaya-karta-islama-obespokoila-musulman-astrii](https://islamnews.ru/natsionalnaya-karta-islama-obespokoila-musulman-astrii)

³⁰ [https:// islamnews.ru/natsionalnaya-karta-islama-obespokoila-musulman-astrii](https://islamnews.ru/natsionalnaya-karta-islama-obespokoila-musulman-astrii)

³¹ European Commission on Combating Racism and Intolerance Report on Austria (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted 7 April 2020, published 2 June 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/report-on-austria-6th-monitoring-cycle-/16809e826f>

Semitic connotation increases every year. A notable increase in the number of incidents was recorded at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, when allegations of COVID-19 dissemination were made against the Jewish population. The predominant incidents were: abuse, primarily online (239 cases), damage to property (78), and assaults (6), usually perpetrated by right-wing radicals or members of the Islamic world.

In August 2020, a few days apart, unknown persons attacked the president of the Jewish community of Graz, E. Rosen, and also graffitied the walls and broke the windows of the city synagogue.

During a working meeting between Austrian Minister for European Union and Constitutional Affairs K. Edtstadler and E. Rosen following the incidents, they discussed a draft road map for combating anti-Semitism. They agreed to establish a special unit within the Federal Chancellor's Office to monitor such offences and to coordinate more closely with the country's Jewish communities.

In accordance with the decision of the Austrian government, from 1 September 2020, Jews deported from the territory of Austria during the Second World War (more than 100,000 people) and their descendants can apply for Austrian citizenship without having to renounce their existing citizenship (in Austria, dual citizenship is granted only in exceptional cases). According to the authorities' estimates, more than 50,000 applications are expected at the first stage. The head of Austria's Jewish community, O. Deutsch, called the decision "not a gift, but a formal elimination of injustice".

According to the "integration barometer" of the Austrian Integration Fund, the attitude of Austrian citizens towards the Muslim part of the population is deteriorating every year. According to 62 per cent of 1,000 respondents, living together with Muslims can be characterised as "bad". This attitude is confirmed by the conclusions of the next report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Austria, according to which in the state "there is a high degree of

Islamophobia and the public discourse is becoming increasingly xenophobic, especially against Muslims and refugees".³²

According to CEDAW, the decision of the authorities to prohibit the wearing of face-covering clothing in public places has a discriminatory effect on Muslim women and migrant women and girls living in Austria. This legal provision, according to the experts, limits the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion of members of this population, who wear such clothing because of their religious beliefs, and also contributes to their social exclusion.³³

The reason for the criticism was a series of incidents since the beginning of the 2019/2020 school year in schools in Vienna. Since the ban on the wearing of Muslim headscarves-niqabs in primary schools came into force in May 2019, 8 cases of violations have been recorded until the end of November 2019. In all cases, parents had to accept the decision of the authorities after receiving legal advice (if they refused, they faced fines of up to 440 euros). In January 2020 the Islamic Community of Austria filed a complaint with the Austrian Constitutional Court against this restrictive measure, considering that it violates basic human rights such as freedom of religion and the right to be raised by parents.

It is noteworthy that the ban itself is formulated in general terms in the Law on School Education: pupils under the age of 10 must not wear head-covering clothing that reflects religious or ideological beliefs. However, the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Education subsequently issued a commentary on the matter, clarifying that only head coverings that conceal either all or most of the hair are covered by the restriction. Thus, the wearing of yarmulkes and patkas, the Sikh children's headgear, was exempted from the law. This makes the targeting of Muslim girls even more obvious, which, according to ECRI experts, could

³² Ibid.

³³ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 9th periodic report of Austria. July 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fAUT%2fCO%2f9&Lang=ru

marginalise this group of students and negatively affect their enjoyment of the right to education.³⁴

On 11 December 2020 the Constitutional Court of Austria has ruled that the ban on hijabs in primary schools is illegal.

There have been cases of racial profiling by police officers against certain individuals because of their appearance, skin colour and ethnicity.³⁵ For example, in January 2019, during a routine document check in the neighbourhood of Favoriten (Vienna), two police officers beat a 28-year-old Chechen man. Six nearby law enforcement officers watched these unlawful acts with indifference. It was only after the victim provided video evidence of the incident that the police officers were investigated and temporarily relieved of their posts.

According to ECRI, despite Austria's legal prohibition of racial profiling, only two cases in which the issue had been raised had been resolved in court to date. There is also no data on the handling of such complaints by the Office of the Ombudsman in Austria, despite the fact that racial profiling falls within its competence.³⁶

According to statistics from the SORA Institute, people with a migration background or Islamic religious affiliation experience discrimination twice as often (62 per cent and 78 per cent) as people with no migration background (37 per cent) or Christianity (39 per cent). According to a sociological survey cited in the AOHR report, 45 per cent of respondents in Austria believe that Muslims should not have the same rights as all other inhabitants of the country.³⁷

The complexity and fragmented nature of anti-discrimination legislation remains a problem specific to the Austrian legal system. The reason for this lies in

³⁴ European Commission on Combating Racism and Intolerance Report on Austria (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted 7 April 2020, published 2 June 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/report-on-austria-6th-monitoring-cycle-/16809e826f>

³⁵ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 5th periodic report of Austria.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fAUT%2fCO%2f5&Lang=ru

³⁶ European Commission on Combating Racism and Intolerance Report on Austria (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted 7 April 2020, published 2 June 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/report-on-austria-6th-monitoring-cycle-/16809e826f>

³⁷ EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights 2020 Report.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-report-2020_en.pdf

the division of competences between the federal government and the Länder. The differences between the Equal Treatment Act and the laws of each of the Länder, which provide different degrees of protection depending on the grounds of discrimination, lead to legal uncertainty and confusion in the application of the regulations.³⁸

In March 2020 the Committee on the Rights of the Child welcomed Austria's measures to combat hate speech and manifestations of neo-Nazism, racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, such as the establishment of special units in prosecutors' offices to investigate incitement to hatred and the inclusion of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance in the curricula of Austrian schools.³⁹

In general, it should be noted that a significant number of right-wing groups are a result of the country's Nazi past, but their real influence on Austria's domestic political agenda is small. At the same time, forms of intolerance such as racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and migrantophobia persist in the State. There had been no progress in resolving those problems in recent years, despite repeated comments and recommendations in that regard by international monitoring bodies.

Austria generally fulfils its obligations to care for Soviet war graves in good faith, most of which are in good condition. The Federal Ministry of the Interior, in co-operation with the provincial authorities, continues, subject to budgetary possibilities, the rehabilitation of Red Army memorials in need of repair. This work is based on annual notes from the Russian Embassy to the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a list of cemeteries in need of restoration, prepared on the basis of regular inspections of Red Army burial grounds.

On 10 August 2021 – the 75th anniversary of the opening – the Embassy held a ceremony at the restored Soviet section of Vienna's Central Cemetery. On 3 December 2021, a wreath-laying ceremony was held at a rehabilitated burial site

³⁸ European Commission on Combating Racism and Intolerance Report on Austria (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted 7 April 2020, published 2 June 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/report-on-austria-6th-monitoring-cycle-/16809e826f>

³⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Austria. March 2020.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fAUT%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=ru

in Vienna's Aspern district. Similar events crowned the completion of the renovation work at the Soviet memorials in the Lower Austrian towns of St. Pölten and Mistelbach (February and June 2022, respectively).

However, with the start of Russia's special military operation to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine (SMO), anti-Russian hysteria fuelled by the political establishment, "progressive" public, biased media and Ukrainian nationalists settled in Austria had a negative impact on cooperation with the Austrians in the military-memorial sphere.

Thus, the practice of withdrawing invitations to representatives of the Russian Embassy and the Russian Centre for Science and Culture (RCSC) to significant events commemorating the victims of the Second World War is becoming widespread. In 2022 and 2023 the International Mauthausen Committee, contrary to the opinion of a significant number of members, "asked" Russian representatives not to attend the celebrations organised to mark the anniversary of the liberation of the Mauthausen concentration camp – the "Festival of Joy" in Vienna on 8 May and the annual commemorative event on the territory of the former concentration camp on 15 May.

In 2022, the Austrian Black Cross, the leading Austrian organisation for the care of war graves, under pressure from its sponsors and the Ministry of the Interior, cancelled the traditional invitation already sent to the Russian Ambassador to the annual meeting of its Board of Trustees on 20 May.

The educational and memorial centre "Hartheim Castle" (former Nazi euthanasia centre) did a similar thing – the Russian Embassy in 2022 did not receive an invitation to attend the annual (1 October) commemorative event as usual, and the invited director of the RCSC was informed that his presence at the memorial evening was undesirable.

In addition, there is a disturbing tendency to "divide" the victory over fascism along national lines, "distributing" it among the republics of the former USSR – now independent states. For example, despite the obvious absurdity of this approach, the Austrian authorities are blocking permission to install (at the expense

of the Russian budget) at the Soviet war grave of Mannswerth-Schwechat (Lower Austria) memorial steles with the names of the Red Army soldiers buried there, which became known in the course of large-scale archival and survey work carried out in 2022 with the participation of the Russian Embassy. The Austrian Ministry of the Interior gives the green light to the project by inscribing the names of the soldiers "in their non-Russian national languages". The response to the note of the Embassy (30 November 2022) to the Austrian Foreign Ministry with the demand to remove politically biased obstacles to the implementation of this project has not yet been received.

In the same vein are the initiatives of Austrian historians to publish "national memory books" (Ukrainian, Moldovan, Georgian) on Red Army soldiers fallen and buried on Austrian territory, in which the birthplace of the fallen soldier would serve as the criterion for classifying him or her as one or another "nationality".

Against the background of hysteria about the special military operation, there are even calls to refuse to fulfil Austria's obligations to obligations to care for Soviet memorials, as stipulated in Article 19 of the State Treaty on the Restoration of Independent and Democratic Austria of 1955, blaming the Russian Federation as the alleged principal violator of international law in post-war history.

Thus, in December 2022, the municipal council of Amstetten (Lower Austria) refused to participate in the restoration of the monument to the fallen Red Army soldiers in the city park and proposed to "desovietise" it by repurposing the stele in the spirit of "universal pacifism". On 9 February 2023, a collective appeal was sent to the Mayor of Amstetten by the ambassadors of Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. At the same time, the Lower Austrian administration, which already has the necessary financial means at its disposal, is working on a mechanism to rehabilitate the monument without involving the local authorities in any form.

Unfortunately, there are incidents of desecration of Soviet war memorial sites located on Austrian territory.

However, such incidents are duly responded to by Austrian law enforcement officials, who are generally prompt and professional in dealing with excesses associated with attempts, primarily by Ukrainian nationalists, to indicate neo-Nazi narratives in the public space.

For example, two cases of vandalism at Red Army memorials were recorded in the spring of 2022 – in April, "anti-war" inscriptions condemning the special military operation were used to desecrate the gates of a Soviet war grave (at the same time, the entrance to the Orthodox Church of St. Michael the Archangel). In May, unknown persons painted the symbols of the Ukrainian national battalion Azov (a mirror image of the World War II emblem of the SS Reich tank division) on the wall behind the monument to the Soviet liberator in Vienna's Schwarzenbergplatz, which had been provocatively painted in the colours of the Ukrainian flag. Following a protest by the Russian Embassy, the symbol was promptly removed.

However, there are disturbing and blatant exceptions in this respect as well. On 1 January 2023, a procession (about 100 people) took place once again in the centre of Vienna to mark the birthday of S. Bandera, a "hero" of Ukraine and one of the leaders of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), infamous for his bloody deeds and complicity with the Nazis during the Great Patriotic War.

The column moved under UPA flags with posters, "rebel" songs and slogans glorifying and whitewashing Nazi collaborators. The Austrian authorities coordinated the event and provided police protection for the participants.

In response to the note of protest from the Embassy condemning the attempt to rehabilitate Nazism and its accomplices, the Austrian Foreign Ministry responded with a formal reply that there were no "allegations of violations of the Law on the Prohibition of the NSDAP committed during the demonstration", and ignored our appeal for an appropriate assessment of the action.

A blatantly xenophobic incident with the hanging in August 2022 on the facade of the Vienna University of Applied Sciences of a banner "Russia is a terrorist state" also failed to receive a proper official response from the Austrian

authorities. In the course of correspondence, the head of the protocol service of the Austrian Foreign Ministry referred to the "freedom of creative expression" of the students.

In the international arena, Austria has been following in the EU's footsteps when it comes to combating neo-Nazism. Until 2022, the Austrians regularly abstained from adopting the annual UN General Assembly resolution initiated by Russia on "Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to the escalation of contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance". The vote on the document, which took place on 15 December 2022, was a "breakthrough" for Vienna: Austria, along with other former Axis States, was for the first time among the countries (50 in 2022) that had voted against the resolution.

The generally calm situation with Russian citizens in Austria has changed since the start of the special military operation. The country maintains a "cancel culture" of everything Russian and associated with Russia.

The anti-Russian rhetoric of the Austrian authorities continues unabated, and the "hunt" for Russian assets continues.

The situation with Russian compatriots in Austria, who have been subjected to pressure for their pro-Russian statements, has somewhat stabilised.

Albania

During World War II, Albania was occupied by Italian fascist and then German Nazi troops, from which Albanians liberated their national territory in 1944 without direct external assistance. This was followed by more than 40 years of communist dictatorship in the country. Today's socialist government, seeking to prove to its Western allies and the Albanian society that it has nothing to do with its predecessors, has been increasingly voicing the need to revise the history of the Albanian people's struggle against fascism.

A governmental commission was set up to develop a new version of the Albanian history for educational institutions, with German experts responsible for editing the section dedicated to the 1940s-1950s events. Publications issued in the country contain a biased pro-Western interpretation of the war time events.

Anti-fascist veterans have a negative attitude to such hidden propaganda of the authorities and regard it as an attempt by reactionary forces to belittle the merits of patriots in the liberation of the country, erase communist guerrilla fighters from history and whitewash the Albanian collaborators of the Nazis.

The democratic party, which was in power in 2005 – 2013, sought to promote the idea of "the equal responsibility of totalitarian regimes" for the beginning of World War II. One striking example of the revisionist efforts was the renaming of topographic sites named after communist fighters against fascism.

In late 2018, the remains of "a national hero" Midhat Frasheri, leader of the collaborationist anti-communist organization "Balli Kombëtar," or "The National Front," which was in power during the occupation of Albania during the war, were reburied in the centre of Tirana. The authorities disregarded the fact that this act was condemned by the members of the Organization of Veterans of the Antifascist National Liberation War of the Albanian People and the Organization of Families of Patriots who had given their lives for their Homeland.

No distinct manifestations of Nazism or neo-Nazism have been reported in Albania in 2022-2023. There have been no neo-Nazi marches and rallies or attempts to glorify Italian fascists and German Nazis who had occupied Albania from April

1939 till late November 1944 (about 28 thousand Albanians had perished in the struggle for the liberation of the country).

Thus, while the ideas of Nazism, fascism or neo-Nazism lack wide support among the population, the Albanian authorities (socialists and democrats alike) consistently pursue a policy aimed at re-evaluating the events of World War II and revising its outcomes.

Against this background, the position of the Albanian delegation when considering the draft resolution on "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" annually submitted by Russia and other co-sponsors to the UN General Assembly is not surprising. As a candidate country for European Union membership, and in line with its guidelines, Albania has consistently abstained during the vote and voted against the resolution in 2022.

There has been no substantial shift regarding the spread of far-right ideologies or discriminatory practices in 2022-2023.

The Red-Black Alliance, a public association comprising members of several groups of football fans used to be the only relatively big far-right alliance. In 2012, it was transformed into a political party, with its ideology primarily building on Greekophobia and calls to creating a "Great Albania" by annexing lands of neighbouring countries inhabited by Albanians. Since this aspiration has always resonated with a significant part of the population, the leadership of the Alliance decided to use it for electoral purposes. However, the party failed in the 2013 parliamentary elections, gaining 0.59% of the votes⁴⁰ (while according to a survey, 14% of voters were ready to support the party in December 2012). The Red-Black Alliance significantly reduced its activities, including on the Internet.

However, on 2 June 2014, the party held an action against a representative of the Serbian Orthodox Church who was attended the opening of an Orthodox

⁴⁰ https://civic-nation.org/albania/society/incitement_of_hatred/.

Church in Tirana.⁴¹ The protesters hung placards reading: "Serbian Patriarch is against Albania". The demonstration was dispersed by the police.⁴² Moreover, nationalist appeals were voiced at an event organized by the party in the capital to commemorate Prince Skanderbeg, the leader of the anti-Ottoman uprising, who had united Albanians in the 15th century.⁴³ In 2017⁴⁴ and 2021, the party did not participate in parliamentary elections.

The Albanian nationalist and anti-communist organization, "Balli Kombëtar" (or "National Front", founded in 1939, currently not represented in Parliament), continues to operate in the country. Initially, it had stood for struggle against Italian and German troops, but in 1943 chose to collaborate with the occupiers. Members of "Balli Kombëtar" participated in the occupation of Greece and Yugoslavia by the Axis countries, they served, in particular, in German military units, such as the 21st SS Skanderbeg division, Lyuboten battalion and Kosovo regiment.

In 2022-2023, local newspapers published information materials explaining the ideology to which "Balli Kombëtar" stuck to during World War II and reasons behind their disagreements with Albanian communists led by Enver Hoxha in their anti-fascist struggle.

Recently there have been no attempts to "glorify" the Balli supporters. At the same time, the Albanian public is being offered 'historical' facts and circumstances justifying the local population's joining "Balli Kombëtar" nationalist units and fighting against communists led by Enver Hoxha.

Occasional manifestations of neo-Nazism have been reported among the fans of the Tirana football club, in particular among members of the Tirana Fanatics and Capital Crew associations. Both openly express their hatred of communists, especially during matches of "Tirana" against the Partizan (Tirana) football club. In 2014, Albanian Deputy Prime Minister Erion Brace called the

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² https://www.ru.civic-nation.org/albaniya/vlast/zakonodatelstvo/zakonodatelstvo_prepayatstvuyushchee_borbe_s_diskriminatsiyey_i_natsional-radikalizmom/.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

fans, who had shouted anti-communist chants and put up a poster addressed to the opposing team reading: "We will reopen Auschwitz for you," fascists. Their act was largely condemned by the Albanian society. However, some Internet users, in comments on articles covering these events, expressed the view that Germany had in fact always been an ally of the Albanian state, and the 21st SS mountain division formed by Albanian collaborators and bearing the name of the national hero Skanderbeg, had fought for ethnic Albania.⁴⁵

Moreover, the Capital Crew association regularly displays Nazi or fascist symbols on its Facebook page. One of the images shows two people with tattooed swastikas and Celtic crosses beating a man with a hammer-and-sickle tattoo. Fans on photos are often depicted giving the Roman salute. They also use the image of the eagle symbolizing the Third Reich as a print on T-shirts. Members of Tirana Fanatics use the flag with a white double-headed eagle against black background, which is barely different from that of the SS Skanderbeg division.⁴⁶

According to the 2022 report by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), a number of reports⁴⁷ issued by public authorities in Albania in 2021 show an increase in hate speech on the Internet⁴⁸.

According to the experts of the Civic Nation Internet platform⁴⁹, which is studying xenophobia, radicalism and problems of intercultural communication, the radicalization of citizens, primarily young adults, via Internet (the physical presence of radical Islamist groups in Albania has not been registered so far) in 2012 – 2019 led to young Albanians leaving for Syria to join Islamist groups.⁵⁰ Among the reasons why people opt for radicalization and extremism are poverty, unemployment, lack of access to the blessings of civilization in rural and remote areas of the country, as well as corruption, which has permeated the society to the

⁴⁵ <https://modern diplomacy.eu/2020/01/03/do-albanians-like-fascism-an-iconographical-investigation-on-social-media-material/>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Bogdani, M., Faloppa, F. and Karaj, X. (2021), Beyond definitions. A call for action against hate speech in Albania, Tirana, Council of Europe.

⁴⁸ The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

⁴⁹ Internet project by the European Centre for Democracy Development (expert body registered in Latvia as a non-governmental organization) aimed at creating and consolidating civic nation in European countries.

⁵⁰ https://civic-nation.org/albania/society/incitement_of_hatred/.

point where people openly talk of a "price tag" to get a certain job. All this, according to Civic Nation experts, pushes the youth to seek truth in Islam, including its most radical forms, and encourages interest in the "Islamic State." However, due to both police action and ISIS's failures in the Middle East, the number of potential fighters had dropped to nearly zero by 2019.⁵¹

While the problem of the far-right movement in Albania is not that pressing at the moment, the existing legal and regulatory framework does not allow to remove it completely. It does not outlaw racist organizations and does not establish criminal liability for participation in them. This was pointed out, in particular, by the profile Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) established in accordance with the International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in December 2018.⁵²

At the same time, Article 9, paragraph 2 of the country's Constitution prohibits the establishment of parties whose activities incite racial, religious, regional or ethnic hatred. According to Article 3 of the Constitution, the state undertakes to respect and protect national equality, religious co-existence, co-existence and mutual understanding between Albanians and national minorities. The equality of all religions is further enshrined in Article 10. Article 20 addresses the rights of national minorities, establishing the right of representatives of non-titular nations to express their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity, to teach and study in their native language, to unite in organizations and societies to protect their interests and their identity.

Article 18 of Albania's Fundamental Law prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, religion, nationality and other similar grounds. However, Section 3 of this Article contains a reservation according to which this prohibition is only effective if "there are no legitimate and objective reasons" for non-compliance therewith.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fALB%2fCO%2f9-12&Lang=ru.

Albania's Criminal Code also contains a number of provisions against discrimination and intolerance. For example, it criminalizes discrimination by government officials on the grounds of origin, gender, health status, religious or political values, trade union activities, or because of belonging to a particular ethnic group, country or religion. In accordance with Article 253 of the Criminal Code, such behaviour is punishable by a fine or imprisonment for up to five years.

Furthermore, xenophobic crimes are addressed in Article 265 ("Incitement to hatred or enmity") and Article 266 ("Calls to incite ethnic hatred"). Pursuant to paragraph j, Article 50, committing a crime based on racial hatred, as well as intolerance to people of a certain skin colour, ethnicity or other similar grounds, is an aggravating circumstance.

Besides, in 2010, Albania adopted the Law on Protection against Discrimination. The legal act includes a detailed list of potential grounds for qualifying discriminatory treatment, including, in addition to nationality, race, skin colour and other traditional characteristics, pregnancy, marital status, health status, genetic predisposition, etc.

Albania has pursued a policy of deliberately withholding statistics related to hate crimes. CERD drew attention to this fact, expressing concern over the lack of reliable information on the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions in cases concerning acts of racial discrimination. The Committee also voiced criticism over the continued use of hate speech by state officials and public figures in their public statements.⁵³

As far as racial, national and religious discrimination is concerned, Albania, according to international experts, remains a very tolerant country. No instances of infringement of the rights of believers of any denominations represented in the country have been recorded. The level of cultural and religious tolerance remains high. Bodies authorized to monitor the compliance with these principles include the Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination, as well as the State

⁵³ Ibid.

Committee on Cults (operational since 1999) and Interreligious Council of Albania (established in 2007).

According to the 2022 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, in the run-up to the 2021 National Parliamentary Elections in Albania the No Hate Alliance together with the Central Electoral Commission developed a code of conduct to prevent incitement to hatred.⁵⁴ All the political parties that participated in the elections undertook to abide by that document.⁵⁵

Despite this, according to the NGO Amnesty International, female candidates faced hate speech during the March 2021 campaign.⁵⁶

Albania is faced with certain problems related to manifestations of hatred on ethnic ground. Discrimination against national minorities remains one of the biggest challenges on Albania's human rights agenda.

The most vulnerable group is the Roma, who face discrimination in access to employment, education, health care, housing and various services.

The report of Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatovic following her visit to Albania from 21 to 25 May 2018 notes that obstacles to access to justice for vulnerable groups persist.⁵⁷ A survey of the UN Development Programme on the issue revealed a high level of legal illiteracy, especially among Roma, and lack of confidence in the system of justice among Albanians. According to the survey, for Roma, the poor, people with a low level of education, with disabilities, as well as victims of domestic violence and children from residential institutions it is much more difficult to seek justice than for an average Albanian citizen. Many of them are victims of multiple discrimination and face financial difficulties, which makes it impossible for them to get better services. As a result, some of them abandon attempts to resolve their legal issues.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

⁵⁵ Albania, 'Kodi i Sjelljes së Partive Politike në Shqipëri', 12 April 2021.

⁵⁶ https://civic-nation.org/albania/society/hate_crime_violence_and_terrorist_attacks/attacks/.

⁵⁷ <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-albania-from-21-to-25-may-2018-by-dunja-mijatov/16808d2e22>.

⁵⁸ Report on the results of D. Mijatovic's visit to Albania, May 21-25, 2018

<https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-albania-from-21-to-25-may-2018-by-dunja-mijatov/16808d2e22>.

According to the Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (AC-FCNM), the Law of Albania 96/2017 on the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania contains declarative provisions aimed at protecting, preserving and developing the cultural identity and languages of national minorities. It sets out its own scope of application by categories of persons and the rights of those belonging to national minorities. As noted by the AC-FCNM, this legal act is very general and programmatic in nature. In many important areas, it delegates the resolution of specific issues to the Council of Ministers. However, for the legislative provisions to become effective, it is necessary that by-laws be adopted by the Council of Ministers' decisions. No such decisions were taken within the six-month period established by law, which prevented the persons belonging to national minorities from exercising their rights. Moreover, the Council of Ministers' decisions have a subordinate legal status, which results in a lower degree of protection of rights.⁵⁹

In 2018, the said law was amended as follows: for national minorities, a quota of 20 per cent of the population living in municipalities to receive school education in their native languages was finally determined.

However, the AC-FCNM, in its opinion on Albania, noted the lack of progress in providing education in or teaching of national minority languages. Greek-language schools continue to operate in Gjirokastra, Saranda, Delvina and Korca, and Macedonian-language education is only offered in Korca. Except for the limited teaching of the Romani language, teaching in or of other national minority languages has not been introduced. The new law on national minorities provides opportunities for teaching in the languages of all national minorities in Albanian schools. At the same time, draft decisions of the Council of Ministers set out restrictive criteria for forming relevant classes in educational institutions.⁶⁰

In her report on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Ombudsperson of Albania

⁵⁹ <https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-albania-en-/168093903b>.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

stressed the importance of the above-mentioned law on the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania aimed at removing distinctions between national and language minorities and recognizing nine minority groups.⁶¹

Many members of minorities – Roma and Balkan Egyptians – are subjected to forced eviction as part of major infrastructure projects, such as the construction of a ring-road around the capital. While welcoming a number of measures to ensure the right to housing, including the adoption of the Law of Albania on Social Housing, CERD noted with concern the need to fully implement the guarantees introduced by this new law in the context of planned evictions.⁶²

In its Report on Albania (sixth monitoring cycle) for 2020 the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) operating under the Council of Europe recommended that the authorities assist local authorities in finding workable solutions to address the segregation of Roma and Egyptian pupils in schools as well as expand vocational training activities and employment programmes for Roma and Egyptians, including those who only completed primary education or have no education at all.⁶³

During its visit to Albania in 2020, ECRI pointed out the housing crisis in Kabash (Pogradec) and Guri i Kuq (one of the mountains of the North Albanian Alps), which has greatly affected the Roma and Egyptian communities. ECRI also acknowledged that, despite the administrative procedures for the registration of ownership for certain buildings put in place by the Albanian authorities, nine residents of a house in Guri i Kuq had to go to court to seek recognition as owners. Since the claim was accepted by the court of Korca, ECRI concluded that its recommendation of 20 September 2022 had been partly implemented.

⁶¹ <https://albania.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/12/alternative-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-cesdaw-convention-in-albania>

⁶² https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fALB%2fC0%2f9-12&Lang=en

⁶³ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Albania (sixth monitoring cycle) adopted on Tuesday, April 07, 2020, and published on Tuesday, June 02, 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-albania-6th-monitoring-cycle-/16809e8241>.

According to the European Roma Rights Center, in February 2020, two Egyptians were insulted by Roma and physically assaulted by police officers.⁶⁴

Women and children from the Roma community constitute a disproportionately large share of victims of human trafficking, especially for the purposes of sexual and labour exploitation, as well as forced begging.⁶⁵ In addition, Roma and Ashkali women still have limited access to primary health care and services related to sexual and reproductive health, and are often unaware that such services exist. They also face obstacles to participation in political and public life, including the exercise of their right to vote. Access to the official labour market for such women is also limited. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women pointed out these facts.⁶⁶ The experts further noted with concern the limited access to education for girls from the Roma and Ashkali communities due to the poor quality of school infrastructure and lack of teachers.⁶⁷

The Ombudsperson of Albania in her report on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women expressed concern over the situation with Roma women in terms of access to safe housing, stressing that such situation could be a risk to life and health, especially for elderly women, women with disabilities or children that are part of the community.⁶⁸

In its Evaluation Report on Albania at the end of the third monitoring round (Access to justice and effective remedies for victims of human trafficking) published on 15 December 2020, the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), a monitoring structure under the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, stated that

⁶⁴ https://civic-nation.org/albania/society/hate_crime_violence_and_terrorist_attacks/attacks/

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fALB%2fCO%2f4&Lang=en

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ <https://albania.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/12/alternative-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-cedaw-convention-in-albania>

children from Roma and Egyptian communities face a greater risk of becoming victims of trafficking in human beings and exploitation.⁶⁹

The fact that the country's authorities are making efforts to remedy the situation should be taken positively. In Albania, there are institutions of the public defender and the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination.

A number of measures to ban discrimination in education against national minorities, including Roma⁷⁰, in particular the recommendation to ensure equity and integration of Roma for 2021-2025 were adopted.⁷¹

Following the entry into force of the Albanian Law on the Protection of National Minorities, the State Committee for Minorities was given a new mandate and is undergoing restructuring, and a fund for national minorities is being established.⁷²

The 2022 FRA report states that in late 2021 within the framework of the implementation of the EU strategy on Roma for the period up to 2023 (launched by the European Commission in October 2020⁷³) Albania, as a member candidate to the European Union, together with its Member States submitted to the European Commission a revised national Roma strategy.⁷⁴

The above-mentioned GRETA Evaluation Report states that the Albanian authorities regularly engage in outreach activities for children and vulnerable groups of population.⁷⁵ For instance, on 14-16 June 2017, the Ministry of the Interior together with the Association for the Social Support of Youth (ARSIS)

⁶⁹ <https://rm.coe.int/greta-2020-09-fgr-alb-en/1680a0b84f>.

⁷⁰ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FALB%2FRQ%2F5-6&Lang=en Committee on the Rights of the Child, Ninety-third session, 8–26 May 2023, Item 4 of the provisional agenda. Consideration of reports of States parties. Replies of Albania to the list of issues in relation to its combined fifth and sixth periodic reports. Date received: 15 February 2023.

⁷¹ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FALB%2FRQ%2F5-6&Lang=en Committee on the Rights of the Child, Ninety-third session, 8–26 May 2023, Item 4 of the provisional agenda. Consideration of reports of States parties. Replies of Albania to the list of issues in relation to its combined fifth and sixth periodic reports. Date received: 15 February 2023.

⁷² Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 9th to 12th periodic reports of Albania. January 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fALB%2fCO%2f9-12&Lang=ru.

⁷³ European Commission (2020), A union of equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation, COM(2020)620 final, Brussels, 7 October 2020.

⁷⁴ The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

⁷⁵ <https://rm.coe.int/greta-2020-09-fgr-alb-en/1680a0b84f>.

NGO and the Child Protection Unit of the Municipality of Tirana organized two awareness-raising meetings with the representatives of the Roma and Egyptian communities in the areas of Selita and Yzberisht in Tirana with a view to enhancing understanding of the phenomenon and forms of human trafficking, ways and criteria to identify potential victims of trafficking, assistance, and reporting avenues such as national helpline 116006 and a free Raporto! Shpëto! (Report! Save!) smartphone application.⁷⁶

There are approximately 4,900 stateless persons or persons at risk of statelessness in Albania, many of whom are Roma with no identity documents, as well as Roma children or children born abroad and lacking birth registration. Another group at risk of statelessness are Albanian emigrants who have gone abroad and voluntarily renounced their citizenship and/or did not obtain citizenship of the destination country.⁷⁷ The revised Law on the Status of Citizens precluded the possibility for children to obtain a non-citizen status.

After the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation launched the Special Military Operation (SMO) to demilitarize and de-Nazify Ukraine and protect the peaceful population of Donbass, the Albanian authorities expressed their full solidarity with the collective West in the assessments of Russia's actions, qualifying them as "an unlawful and unjustified aggression" against Ukraine; this was accompanied by an upsurge of anti-Russian sentiments in the country.

The Albanian authorities joined anti-Russia sanctions, but refrained from adopting any legislation or bylaw aimed at restricting the rights of Russians or Russian-speaking citizens of the country or Russian citizens.

At the same time the Albanian authorities demonstrate full support for the activities of Ukraine's Embassy in Tirana, which has organized with the participation of the representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora a number of anti-Russia rallies and meetings in front of the building of the Russian diplomatic mission. The events were attended by the students of the Tirana State University;

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Report of Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights following her visit to Albania from 21 to 25 May 2018 <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-albania-from-21-to-25-may-2018-by-dunja-mijatov/16808d2e22>.

noteworthy is that and notably, as is known, that university professors coming from Ukraine were involved in agitation campaigns. All these rallies received broad coverage in local media. Numerous anti-Russian remarks by the Albanian authorities and information materials containing harsh criticism of Russia in the media can also be regarded as manifestations of Russophobia in Albania.

Albania deliberately chooses to ignore apparent Nazi and fascist manifestations in Ukraine. Information materials forwarded by the Russian Embassy in Tirana are swept under the carpet by media outlets. Local journalists encouraged by the West tend to label Russian troops in Ukraine as "fascists".

Belgium

According to Belgian State Security Service periodic reports, since the middle of 2010s there is a rise in popularity of far-right forces. The reduction of the average age of their supporters is also noted, as well as growing radicalization of the youth,⁷⁸ a problem that enters in the focus of attention, inter alia, of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.⁷⁹ According to the special service, another recent trend is the expansion of the range of themes and persons targeted by the far-right. Traditional “irritating factors” like mosques, synagogues and refugees reception centres have been complemented with the media, the scientific community, in particular virologists, as well as the government and politicians in general. The catalyst for this process was the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictive measures.⁸⁰

Belgian State Security Service metaphorically characterizes the totality of ideological attitudes of modern Belgian radicals as an “ideological salad bar” that includes numerous elements, from anti-government extremism and misogyny to conspiracy theories.⁸¹ It’s these diverse theories that often underlie new trends. For example, the survivalist movement is based on the concept of the imminent end of the world. Its followers are actively preparing for it, creating shelters for themselves and their families, stockpiling not only food and gasoline, but also weapons.

During a series of searches conducted by law enforcement bodies in late September 2022 in some localities of the Flemish region, hundreds of pieces of weapons and military equipment were seized. They belonged to a group of people who had been preparing a terrorist act and, according to the Belgian Prosecutor's office, were “close to the far-right”. Some of them regarded themselves as survivalists. In particular, Yannick Verdyck, killed in exchanges of fire with

78 Intelligence report. 2021-2022. VSSE. <https://www.vsse.be/sites/default/files/ra-vsse-2022-uk-web.pdf>

79 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Belgium. February 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fBEL%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=ru

80 Intelligence report. 2021-2022. VSSE. <https://www.vsse.be/sites/default/files/ra-vsse-2022-uk-web.pdf>

81 Ibid.

security forces, considered himself as such. On his pages in social networks, he regularly expressed attachment to far-right ideology and hatred towards immigrants, Jews and the State, called for establishing military dictatorship in the country. In his last message dated 26 September 2022 he admired the victory of the far-right party "The Brothers of Italy" (Fratelli d'Italia) in the parliamentary elections in Italia.⁸²

Currently a number of neo-Nazi groups are active in the country. Among them are Blood and Honour, Flemish Resistance, the Shield and Friends movement. A criminal case was instituted against its founder, member of the Federal Parliament Dries Van Langenhove, on suspicion of violating the legislation on weapons possession and fight against racism. In early 2023, there was a new charge of denying Holocaust.⁸³ On 18 March 2021, his parliamentary immunity was lost, and in February 2023 he gave up his mandate.⁸⁴

Dries Van Langenhove explained his departure by the desire to return to social activism, which would allow him to communicate his position to the general public more efficiently than in the parliament. In this regard we should expect only further radicalization of already racist and xenophobic rhetoric of the former deputy. Thus, in August 2022, commenting on the situation with the far-right music festival in Ypres (later cancelled), Dries Van Langenhove proposed to implement the idea of creating a city with a population composed only of native Flemings. He returned to this idea in January 2023 after there was shooting in Antwerp on a residential building during setting of scores between drug traffickers; an 11-year-old girl was killed. Speaking of the tragedy, the far-right activist stated that that would be impossible in Orania (town in South Africa inhabited only by descendants of colonizers) where a child could safely "buy themselves an ice-

⁸² See e.g.: Un projet d'attentat d'extrême droite déjoué en Belgique. Le monde. 28 September, 2022. https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2022/09/28/en-belgique-un-projet-d-attentat-d-extreme-droite-dejoue_6143593_3210.html

⁸³ Schild & Vrienden : l'ex-député Dries Van Langenhove renvoyé devant le tribunal correctionnel pour négationnisme. Rtbef.be. 23 February 2023. <https://www.rtbef.be/article/schild-vrienden-l-ex-depute-dries-van-langenhove-renvoye-devant-le-tribunal-correctionnel-pour-negationnisme-11157244>

⁸⁴ Dries Van Langenhove démissionne de son poste de député: «Plus activiste que politicien». 7 sur 7. 4 February 2023. <https://www.7sur7.be/belgique/dries-van-langenhove-demissionne-de-son-poste-de-depute-plus-activiste-que-politicien~a6b6a9d0/?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>

cream”⁸⁵.

As for glorification of Nazism, this topic is not an acute problem in Belgium actually. Nevertheless, several such cases took place recently. In particular, in September 2018 a monument in memory of Latvian Waffen-SS members was installed in Zedelgem (West-Flanders). That act was made possible with the cooperation with the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia. In response to the request of the volunteers from the Belgium Federation of Russian-speaking organizations addressed to the municipality authorities burgemeester Annemieke Vermeulen said that the monument had been installed taking into account the "historical ties" between this Belgian town and Latvia in order to remember the former SS members from a purely human viewpoint and popularize modern art. The campaign launched to remove the monument under the leadership of the Belgians Remember Them non-profit organization and deputy of the Chamber of Representatives of Belgium, former Belgian Defence Minister André Flahaut led to the monument being disassembled in May 2022 by the decision of the municipal authorities.

An alarming symptom is that flea markets in Belgium sell military paraphernalia with Nazi symbols. Minister of the Interior Jan Jambon, back in 2014-2018, acknowledged in this regard that the Belgian Criminal Code did not contain provisions prohibiting such practices. The prosecution, including criminal, was only envisaged for active expression of adherence to the ideas of Nazism, denial of the Holocaust, and propaganda of unlawful discrimination.

At the same time, Belgium shows respect to the veterans, preserves the memory of Resistance fighters and victims of Nazism, and duly tends to memorials in their honour and cemeteries where, among others, Soviet soldiers and officers died in Belgium during World War II are buried. The largest memorials are the Breendonk Fort, a former Nazi concentration camp near Mechelen, where thousands of prisoners were held before being deported to Auschwitz, and the Holocaust Museum at the Dossin barracks.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

In March 2019, a plaque commemorating Major Evgeny Dotsenko, a Belgian resistance hero, was put up in Comblain-au-Pont at the suggestion of the local military history club. In October 2019, in Rebecq, a national memorial by the grave of Vladimir Talda, a Red Army member of the Resistance movement, was inaugurated in honour of all Soviet fighters who fought in the ranks of the Belgian partisans. The ceremony was attended by Belgian officials, including the governor of the Walloon Brabant province, Gilles Mahieu.

There are events organized in the country to mark the end of the World War II and liberation of the country from Nazi. The biggest acts are organized in Brussels, Liège and Antwerp with the participation of the city administrations, officials from regional and federal authorities, as well as the Royal Palace.

Veteran and antifascist organizations closely cooperate with the Russian Embassy in Brussels on a wide range of issues, including preserving historical truth. They include the Interregional Association of Patriotic Organizations, the International Federation of Resistance Fighters and the Action Committee of Resistance Fighters.

In 2023, an important element of the celebration of the end of the World War II was a wide discussion of the idea to make this day a holiday again. The supporters of this initiative underline that it would help to draw youth's attention to the history of Nazism and modern challenges related to manifestations of Nazism, as well as allow honouring more widely the memory of heroes who had given their lives in the fight against this evil, including Belgian Resistance fighters.

Civil society has expressed disagreement with the EU-wide course towards diluting the role of the Red Army and the USSR in the victory over Nazism. Prominent Belgian historians and publicists in major newspapers criticized the text of the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 19 September 2019 "On the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe", pointing to obvious distortions of facts, attempts to rehabilitate the Nazi regime and the imposition of a revisionist interpretation of history.

Meanwhile, the official Brussels follows the line of the EU and, jointly with

its EU and NATO partners, for the first time voted in the UN General Assembly against the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", annually adopted at the initiative of Russia and its other co-sponsors (having abstained from voting before).

The Law on the Prevention of Acts Motivated by Racism and Xenophobia (1981), Law on the Prevention of Denial, Minimization or Justification of Genocide Perpetrated by the German Regime during World War II (1995), and Law on Combating Certain Forms of Discrimination (2007) provide the legal basis for countering manifestations of neo-Nazism, racism and xenophobia.

A positive step was the approval by the Belgian Council of Ministers of legislative amendments according to which any form of discrimination, including on ethnic or racial grounds, is treated as aggravating circumstances for all offences.⁸⁶

However, Belgian law still does not contain provisions on declaring illegal all organizations inciting to racial discrimination. Neither does it contain norms allowing prohibiting parties that are "disastrous for freedom" or actually-existing organizations promoting racial discrimination.⁸⁷

In May 2021, Belgian authorities rejected the recommendation made within the Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations Human Rights Council to incorporate in the national law an outright ban of racial profiling. At the same time, the existence of this problem was repeatedly confirmed by sociological research. In particular, in June 2019 scientists from the Antwerp University published data, according to which young people with an ethnic minority background are three times more likely to be stopped by the police than other citizens. The study

86 2020 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-report-2020_en.pdf

87 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 20th to 22nd periodic reports of Belgium. May 2021. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fBEL%2fCO%2f20-22&Lang=ru

concludes that this practice undermines trust in law enforcement among this population group.⁸⁸

In 2021, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination also expressed concern in connection with the reports of death of migrants, asylum-seekers and persons belonging to ethnic minorities at the hands of law enforcement officers. Reference was made to an increased frequency of such cases in the context of ensuring respect for self-isolation measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The arrest of a Congolese migrant woman in Liège in March 2021 sparked another wave of public discontent and resulted in a demonstration in defence of persons of African descent under the slogan "Black Lives Matter". The woman accused the police of racism and violence. A spontaneous protest that began peacefully ended in clashes with the police.⁸⁹

Earlier that year, in January 2021, a similar situation took place in Brussels, where riots broke out after a 23-year-old man of Guinean origin was killed in a police station. He was arrested after he refused to produce documents to the police and attempted to flee. At the station, he felt unwell, lost consciousness and died.⁹⁰

On 11-12 April 2020, mass demonstrations also took place in Andrélecht, migrant neighbourhood of Brussels. The riot was provoked by the death of a young man killed in a collision with a car while trying to escape from a police patrol. Clashes with the police ended with the use of water cannons and mass arrests.

In September 2020, the Apache Internet edition discovered in Facebook a closed racist community of active and former law enforcement officers. Head of the Belgian Federal Police Marc de Mesmaeker threatened the officers of the police with an official investigation unless the group was removed.

It is worth noticing that cases of police violence caused by racist ideas are investigated separately. There is no unified coherent and systematic approach for

88 2020 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-report-2020_en.pdf

89 Noise and Fury in Liège. Rossiyskaya Gazeta. 14 March 2021. <https://rg.ru/2021/03/14/v-lezhe-demonstraciia-v-zashchitu-prav-temnokozhih-vylilas-v-pogromy.html>

90 Protesters set a police station on fire in Brussels. Rossiyskaya Gazeta. 14 January 2021. <https://rg.ru/2021/01/14/v-stolice-belgii-protestuiushchie-podozhgli-policejskij-uchastok.html>

overcoming this problem, which, according to the CERD experts, may be indicative of the existence of structural discrimination in Belgium.⁹¹

In the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement a special parliamentary commission on colonial past was established in Belgium in 2020. In December 2022, after two and a half years of study how the metropolis treated its three colonies (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi) and after preparing 128 recommendations for the Chamber of Deputies, the experts had to stop their work. The failure was due to the lack of consensus on wording expressing the attitude of official Belgium towards its own actions in the past: while, according to socialists and ecologists, Brussels should “apologize” for them, liberals supported the expression of “deepest regret”, following the example of Belgium's King Philippe. In the absence of agreement on this issue, the results of the work of the commission were never put to the vote, and the recommendations prepared were never submitted to the parliament.⁹²

In practical terms, the coordination of activities of the law enforcement agencies for combatting discrimination and intolerance is carried out based on the circular dated 17 June 2013 of the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior and College of Public Prosecutors. It provides for, in particular, that a contact magistrate is to be designated in each court district to investigate such type of crimes as a priority matter.

The Committee P that operates under, and is responsible to the Belgian Chamber of Representatives, exercises control over the police activities. This body examines complaints and appeals from citizens about violations of the law by law enforcement officers (e.g., in case of abuse of power, racial profiling or unfair investigation of intolerance).

After years of delays, in July 2022, the Belgian government approved the national plan of actions to combat racism in accordance with the decisions of the

91 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 20th to 22nd periodic reports of Belgium. May 2021.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fBEL%2fCO%2f20-22&Lang=ru

92 La Belgique échoue à présenter des «excuses» pour son passé colonial. Le Temps. 19 December 2022.
<https://www.letemps.ch/monde/belgique-echoue-presenter-excuses-passe-colonial>

World Conference against Racism held in Durban (SAR) in 2001. The document contains 70 measures aimed at combating racial discrimination in employment, services, public governance, shelter, migration, justice, law enforcement and other areas. It is proposed to integrate issues of countering racism in training programmes for police officers and representatives of migration authorities, including for prevention of racial profiling. Federal bodies will test their employees for tendency to discrimination, in order to detect potential incidences of bias in interaction with the applicants depending on their ethnic origins.

Monitoring over the racial discrimination is the responsibility of the interregional Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (UNIA). In 2022, the Centre had pending 735 cases related to racism, 897 in 2021, and 956 in 2020. The total number of requests to UNIA related to biased treatment on the basis of “racial criteria” (the term covers skin colour, origin, ethnic identity, etc.) was 1647 in 2022, 1839 in 2021, and 3684 in 2020. The cases touched on mainly the racial discrimination in the areas of labour and employment, provision of services, as well as human hatred rhetoric in the Internet.⁹³

In 2023, Flanders exited from UNIA. The body will not have competencies to assist those suffered from discrimination in the areas of regional responsibility of that body (for example, residential and educational). From March 2023, these functions are assigned to the Flemish Institute. At the same time, federal-level cases of discrimination concerning discrimination at work, hateful communications, etc., will remain under the responsibility of UNIA.⁹⁴

Meanwhile, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance functioning within the framework of the Council of Europe criticized the absence of an independent authority whose competence would include issues of linguistic discrimination, though its establishment is envisaged by legislation.⁹⁵

Law enforcement agencies are working to detect and delete illegal content

93 <https://www.unia.be/fr/publications-et-statistiques/chiffres-dunia>

94 2023 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

95 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Belgium (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 12 December 2019 and published on 18 March 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-sixth-report-on-belgium-/16809ce9f0>

on the Internet. These tasks are assigned to the Federal Police Cybercrime Department whose officers have the right to issue orders to operators or providers of servers where illegal information is found to block it.

Considerable attention is paid to information campaigns addressed mainly to young people and aimed at preventing domestic discrimination in all areas of life, excluding hate speech, debunking racial prejudices and stereotypes. Relevant programmes are realized as well at the federal level as by regions.

From the beginning of the special military operation (SMO) for the denazification and demilitarisation of Ukraine by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation there is an increase in hostile attitudes in Belgium towards Russian citizens and immigrants. Thus, some private entrepreneurs refuse without explanation to cooperate with Russian legal entities and individuals. There have been cases when enterprises establish self-restrictions on contacts with Russians because of the fear of falling under sanctions.

Belgian banks block transfers from Russia, thus limiting possibility to receive Russian pensions and subsidies. As the seat of the structure “Euroclear”, Belgium became the leader of frozen Russian assets and transactions. The volume of frozen funds as of August 2023 reached 250.6 billion euros. In this regard, individuals and legal entities not included in “sanction lists” submitted about a thousand applications to unblock funds. In most cases, decisions are negative. The bank account of the Alexander Pushkin International Charity Fund had been blocked. The restrictions were lifted only in December 2022 after reiterated requests.

From April 2022, Belgian authorities suspended issuing tourist visas to Russian citizens.

In Belgium, similarly to other EU member states, in violation of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, access to Russian state portals was blocked, as well as to news resources of RIA Novosti and VGTRK channel, satellite broadcast of Russian TV channels went off.

Discriminatory acts towards Russian citizens are also undertaken by

governments of separate Belgian regions. In particular, such a decision has been taken by the Flemish government, which closed to Russian applicants the opportunity to take part in the Mastermind programme providing for the provision of grants (up to 8,400 euro per study year) to foreign bachelor students wishing to upgrade their professional level within the Master units of Flemish universities. At the same time, young people already staying in Flanders will be able to continue their studies. But relevant authorities will not consider new applications for scholarships “until the end of hostilities in Ukraine”. It was posted by Flemish Minister of Education Ben Weyts (representing the New Flemish Alliance party) on his Twitter account.

Meanwhile the Council of Rectors of Belgian Universities decided to suspend all forms of cooperation with Russian universities.

In 1977, Belgium launched the programme “Discovering Languages and Cultures” providing for organization of free elective courses in Francophonic primary and secondary schools for studying languages and cultures of other peoples (generally those whose diasporas are particularly numerous in Belgium). To date, the “Belgian Association of Russian Schools” is participating in the programme. In 2022, four teachers from the association were taking part in the project (seven in 2021), teaching Russian to about 200 children from six schools. At state level, ten countries are participating in the programme. Elaboration of the issue concerning signing an agreement between Rossotrudnichestvo and Belgian Ministry of Education that would provide for official participation of Russia is suspended due to complication of bilateral relations.

According to UNIA, in 2022 this institution received about 40 complaints from Russians. They concerned mostly refusal of several bank services, scholarships, and persecutions on ethnic grounds in schools.

It is worth noting that migrants from Ukraine also sent around ten allegations of discrimination from Belgians. Most applications came from third-country nationals informing of unfair treatment against the background of Ukrainian refugees who are in privileged position.

The information and legal support centre for Russian compatriots in Brussels recorded more than 300 applications in 2022 (six a week on average). At the same time the centre noted the increase of application related to the absence of direct air traffic with the Russian Federation and to “sanctions restrictions” concerning Russian societies and banks.

At the end of 2022, the parish of the Holy Prince Alexander Nevsky and Saint Seraphim of Sarov in Liege had been vandalized; the parish belongs to the Archdiocese of Western European Parishes of Russian Tradition within the Moscow Patriarchate. It had been covered with insulting inscriptions made with paint. This parish supports peaceful agenda and lists among its parishioners many Ukrainian refugees. Regional Belgian media condemned the said acts.

Overall, the right of the compatriots to freedom of religion is not infringed in Belgium. Most of them belong to the Orthodox faith recognized as official in 1985. At the same time, during the reporting period the number of parishioners attending the churches of the Russian Orthodox Church increased significantly, including due to refugees from Ukraine.

Before February 2022, cases of discrimination of Russian compatriots were rare but particularly unprecedented. This is especially true of discrimination concerning Ms. E. Tynyanskaya, former national of Ukraine. She was a native of Sevastopol and had been living in Belgium since 2007. After she was recognized as Russian citizen and received Russian international passport in 2005, E. Tynyanskaya was deported.

With the COVID-19 pandemic there are cases of hatred in Belgium occurring more often against Asian-origin persons in particular. There are more cases of hate speech, in particular of anti-Semitic and Islamophobic nature, as well as tougher rhetoric towards migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in the Internet and social networks.⁹⁶ The report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (AOHR) records a case when the leadership of one of political parties made

96 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 20th to 22nd periodic reports of Belgium. May 2021.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fBEL%2fCO%2f20-22&Lang=ru

accusations against adherents of Islam in connection with rising cases of coronavirus in Antwerp.⁹⁷ The annual report on the activity of UNIA for 2020 specifies that it was Tom Van Grieken, head of the party “Flemish Interest” (“Vlaams Belang”).⁹⁸

The Jewish community found itself under attack in relation to the emergence of coronavirus infection; a part of the population blamed it for the spread of the disease. During mass actions against using documents to confirm immunity to COVID-19, Nazi symbols were openly demonstrated alongside with the Star of David.⁹⁹

In general, there has been an increase in manifestations of anti-Semitism before the beginning of the pandemic. Most cases are reported in Brussels and Antwerp. The most frequent are insults of Jews in public places, vandalism (exposing of the swastika, nationalist stickers on buildings of the Jewish Museum and the Documentation Centre on the Holocaust and Human Rights), written and verbal threats, and anti-Semitic rhetoric on the Internet. In 2018, Belgium saw at least one judicial sentence for denying the Holocaust.

In March 2019, proceedings concerning a high-profile crime against members of the Jewish community in Belgium were brought to a close (4 people were killed in the attack on 24 May 2014 at the Jewish Museum in Brussels; the crime caused a wave of indignation, outrage and sympathy for the country's Jewish community both among the Belgian population and throughout Europe). The jury sentenced the perpetrator to life imprisonment. In its decision, the court also noted the anti-Semitic nature of the attack.¹⁰⁰

The carnival in the Flemish Aalst in February 2020 turned into a scandal because of some participants' making a mockery of the Jewish community. The incident raised the tide of public discontent over the obvious signs of anti-

97 2022 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

98 Annual report of 2020. Human rights vulnerability in crisis times.

https://www.unia.be/files/Documenten/Jaarrapport/Unia_rapport_%C3%A9galit%C3%A9_2020_FR_AS.pdf

99 2023 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

100 European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Belgium (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 12 December 2019 and published on 18 March 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-sixth-report-on-belgium-/16809ce9f0>

Semitism. The Belgian authorities condemned the trick. The UNIA acted as a mediator between Aalst administration and Jewish communities on the matter. In view of the incident UNESCO excluded the carnival in Aalst from the List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for anti-Semitism.

There is a trend towards deterioration of relations between various ethnic and religious groups of the Belgian population. The debates over wearing headscarves are a visual illustration of the existing tensions. Despite the fact that the State Council reversed the decision to completely ban them in higher education institutions, no fundamental changes in practice followed. The internal regulations that forbid the wearing of religious symbols have been kept in force by universities, regardless of the special situation in a particular institution.

In their report (2019), experts of the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recommend that the Belgian authorities ensure that decisions taken by schools and higher education establishments regarding the wearing of religious symbols or clothing respect the principle of lawfulness and are free of any form of discrimination.¹⁰¹

From its part, the Human Rights Committee subjected to criticism the legislation on wearing full veils in public places. According to the experts, the fact that it imposed sanctions in the form of a fine or imprisonment constituted a disproportionate infringement on the freedom to manifest one's religion or belief. The Committee was concerned about the prohibition on wearing religious symbols at work, in certain public bodies and by teachers and students at public schools, which could result in discrimination and marginalization of certain persons belonging to religious minorities.¹⁰²

Migration crisis consequences are deeply felt. The primary grievance of human rights defenders to the Belgian authorities in this area is the inadequate detention conditions for asylum seekers, illegal immigrants and their families.

101 Ibid.

102 Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 6th periodic report of Belgium. December 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fBEL%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

Often potential refugees have to be housed on the street.

Unsatisfactory migration policy of the Belgian government is strongly criticized at the national level as well. In December 2022, deputies and supporters of the opposition party “Les Engagés” held an action before the headquarters of the ruling party “Open VLD”: they stayed all night on the street, having previously pitched a tent like migrants do. This was due to the lack of progress in addressing the issue of accommodation of the asylum-seekers (with their number, according to different evaluations, between 2,000 and 3,000), while the temperature outside fell below zero.¹⁰³ According to Anadolu agency, the number of children among those who lacked warm housing was at least 21.¹⁰⁴

The ECRI also stated the complication of the already adverse situation of the migrants of African and Asian origin due to arrival of an important flux of people from Ukraine. The accelerated procedure for granting Ukrainians residence and labours permits, accommodation, and access to social security system has impeded resolution of these issues for those in need of other nationalities.¹⁰⁵

At the same time, underground business for illegal transportation of migrants from Middle East and North African countries to Europe establishes transit channels through the territory of Ukraine. This, in particular, was pointed out by the representative of the far-right party “Flemish Interest” Dries Van Langenhove who stated in the debates at the Chamber of Representatives on 16 March 2022 that, for example, in France one of three asylum-seekers pretending to be of Ukrainian origin has nothing to do with it.¹⁰⁶

International human rights bodies are particularly concerned by the difficult situation of representatives of the Roma minority. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights noted in March 2020 the shortcomings in the

103 Des députés Engagés ont dormi devant le siège de l’Open VLD: ils dénoncent le manque de place pour les demandeurs d’asile. RTL INFO. 19 December 2022. <https://www.rtl.be/info/belgique/politique/crise-de-l-accueil-les-engages-plantent-leur-tente-devant-le-siege-de-l-open-vld-1421957.aspx>

104 Asylum seekers sleep rough on the streets of Brussels. Anadolu Agency. 28 October 2022. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/asylum-seekers-sleep-rough-on-the-streets-of-brussels/273205>

105 Ibid.

106 Compte Rendu Analytique. Commission de l’Intérieur, de la Sécurité, de la Migration et des Matières Administratives. Chambre des Représentants de Belgique. 16 March 2022. <https://www.lachambre.be/doc/CCRA/pdf/55/ac727.pdf>

implementation of the national strategy for the integration of Roma people and the absence of specific measures to combat discrimination against members of this community. Experts were critical of the increase in forced evictions and the simultaneous absence of relevant aggregated data at the federal level, as well as the lack of adequate protection of caravans as a place of residence¹⁰⁷.

Earlier, UNIA experts also expressed their concerns about a large-scale operation "Strike" on 7 May 2019, as part of an investigation into a large car fraud scheme. It involved a raid on parking lots with 90 caravans seized. As a result, the people living there were left homeless. According to representatives of the centre, the measures taken by law enforcement officers were excessive and had a negative impact on families with children, older persons and people with health problems.¹⁰⁸

In its report on Belgium within the sixth monitoring cycle, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) under the Council of Europe noted a trend toward the increasing marginalization and impoverishment of Travellers. The document also notes the insufficient numbers of transit and long-term sites in the country.¹⁰⁹

In May 2021, the CERD also noted that poverty and social exclusion of Roma people, especially children, remained a pressing problem.¹¹⁰ In addition, child and/or forced marriages persist in Roma communities.¹¹¹

This group has a high unemployment rate compared to the rest of the population. Few of them have health insurance. CERD also stressed that the COVID-19 pandemic had had an extremely negative impact on the already

107 Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fifth periodic report of Belgium. March 2020.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fBEL%2fCO%2f5&Lang=ru

108 <https://www.unia.be/nl/artikels/ook-mensenrechten-in-beslag-genomen>

109 European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Belgium (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 12 December 2019 and published on 18 March 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-sixth-report-on-belgium-/16809ce9f0>

110 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 20th to 22nd periodic reports of Belgium. May 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fBEL%2fCO%2f20-22&Lang=ru

111 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the combined 20th to 22nd periodic reports of Belgium. May 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fBEL%2fCO%2f20-22&Lang=ru

precarious enjoyment of economic, social, and cultural rights by Roma and Travellers.¹¹²

At the same time, the creation of the institution of “neighbourhood stewards” in cities where important Roma communities live (in particular, Ghent, Sint-Niklaas, Antwerp, Brussels) can be cited as a positive practice. The objective of the institution is establishing ties between Roma, city administration and social services. Active work is carried out also with school with a high rate of Roma children.¹¹³

The Flemish authorities also continue to oppose the ratification of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities¹¹⁴ for reasons of unwillingness to recognize special rights of French-speaking people residing in its territory. Belgium has not signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. At the same time, the situation in this area is far from perfect. The Association for the Francophonie in Flanders NGO points out that the Walloons residing in the north of the country are discriminated. In particular, they have limited access to social housing; French-speaking cultural associations cannot apply for funds from the region, document flow at the level of local authorities in the vast majority of communes is in Dutch, which contravenes constitutional provisions on linguistic freedom.

The lack of access by the French-speaking minority to French-language education is also noted in the Brussels-Capital region.¹¹⁵

The AOHR report for 2022 presents the results of a study carried out in Antwerp on the level of discriminatory attitudes among local employers. Within this study, 2880 job applications were sent to employers in response to

112 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the 8th periodic report of Belgium. November 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fBEL%2fCO%2f20-22&Lang=ru

113 2022 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

114 Signed by Belgium in 2001.

115 Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fifth periodic report of Belgium. March 2020.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fBEL%2fCO%2f5&Lang=ru

1440 vacancy announcements. The result was that candidates whose names have a non-Flemish origin have 17 per cent less chances to obtain the desired position than those who have “Flemish-like names”.¹¹⁶

In July 2022, the scandalous case on involving in forced labour more than 150 people, mostly Filipinos and Bangladeshis, during the construction of the Borealis plant in Antwerp was widely covered in the media.

The AOHR report for 2023 contains a reference to a similar study analysing discriminatory attitudes in the housing market. The so-called discrimination tests were held in several Belgian cities and showed that people with Congolese names are less often invited to view the property than people with names that sound French or Flemish. In addition, discrimination level is slightly higher for women than for men (18 and 14 per cent respectively).¹¹⁷

Another study whose territory was limited to Bruges showed that there are prejudices also concerning peoples with Polish and Syrian names.¹¹⁸

The CERD criticized Belgian authorities for the fact that the existing system for data collection on hate speech and hate crimes does not allow to identify which of them are manifestations of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, anti-gipsyism, Afrophobia or hatred towards people of Asian origin. It also lacks credibility as for specific problems faced by different groups of victims.¹¹⁹

In 2022, UNIA tried to analyse the number and the nature of complaints coming from people of African origin. In its report “Discrimination against people of African origin” (similar studies had been published in 2011 and 2017) it compares data for ten years: from 2010 to 2020. It is noted that from 2015 the number of complaints from this category of people increased by 20.8 per cent. The main themes of the complaints were difficulties with employment and with access to goods and services. It is noted that, in Belgium, the employment rate of people

116 2022 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

117 2023 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

118 Ibid.

119 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Belgium (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 12 December 2019 and published on 18 March 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-sixth-report-on-belgium-/16809ce9f0>

of sub-Saharan origin with higher education degrees is close to that of Belgians with a lower secondary education diploma. Their salaries are also far less than those of the majority of population.¹²⁰

CERD experts also note the high rate of unemployment and employment in lower-status jobs among people of African descent. This category of the population is subject to racial discrimination not only in employment, but also in education and housing; besides, it is underrepresented in administration, the media, cultural settings, the scientific community and academia¹²¹.

The situation regarding the protection of the rights of children is far from satisfactory. Lack of access of the francophone minority to education in French in the Brussels-Capital Region; danger of school drop-outs due to the prohibition on wearing religious symbols in state schools; irregular preschool attendance and disproportions between regions and social and economic groups; lack of data on Roma children, in particular to evaluate the efficiency of measures aimed to facilitate their access to education; actual segregation of children on the basis of their social origin and difficulties faced by disabled children in school¹²² – this is far from being a complete list of problems raising concern of monitoring bodies.

Thus, the Committee on the Rights of the Child noted a growing tendency for radicalization of children and incitement to hatred. Cases of bullying and violence in schools, both from pupils and teachers, are still widespread in the country. Due to prejudices and discrimination, minor migrants are facing difficulties in getting education.¹²³

120 Discrimination concerning persons of African origin. UNIA. 2022. <https://www.unia.be/fr/publications-et-statistiques/publications/discriminations-a-lencontre-des-personnes-afrodescendantes-2022>

121 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 20th to 22nd periodic reports of Belgium. May 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fBEL%2fCO%2f20-22&Lang=ru

122 Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fifth periodic report of Belgium. March 2020.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fBEL%2fCO%2f5&Lang=ru

123 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Belgium. February 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fBEL%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=ru

Bulgaria

Extreme nationalism, neo-Nazism and xenophobia remain common in Bulgaria. There are several far-right organizations in Bulgaria which promote ideas of National Socialism and incite hatred towards national minorities, e.g. ethnic Roma, Turks, and Jews. Those include the "Bulgarian National Union" (BNU, the leading neo-Nazi movement in Bulgaria established in 2001 and registered as an NGO, which positions itself as the successor of the Union of Bulgarian National Legions), the Bulgarian branch of the "Blood and Honour" (an international neo-Nazi organization founded in the UK in 1987) in Plovdiv, "National Resistance" (a far-right organization founded in 2008) and the Nationalist Party of Bulgaria (founded in 2013). On 21 April 2019, Sofia hosted the founding congress of the "Fortress Europe", attended by members of far-right European NGOs. At the same time, the representatives of Bulgarian nationalist organizations have no chances of entering the legislative or executive bodies.

The most prominent neo-Nazi structure is the BNU, which holds the "Lukov March" torch procession in Sofia. This event is held in memory of General Hristo Lukov (1887-1943), a theorist of Bulgarian Nazism during World War II, a supporter of the alliance with the Third Reich, and the leader of the Union of Bulgarian National Legions.¹²⁴ The BNU and "Lukov March" websites are the major leading voices of neo-Nazi in Bulgaria. Participants in the march wear military uniforms, nationalist symbols, and voice slogans with relevant content. In 2005, a commemorative plaque was placed at their initiative on the facade of the building where Hristo Lukov had lived.

The Sofia's authorities have taken measures to limit the scale of this event in recent years. The mayor of Sofia, Yordanka Fandakova, has repeatedly issued orders banning the torch procession in the city centre, giving those wishing to "honour", if one can put it that way, the memory of the collaborator only the opportunity to gather at the place where he was shot in February 1943. However, such a decision of the local authorities was regularly overturned in court with

¹²⁴ A fascist organization active in Bulgaria from 1932-1944.

references to the provisions contained in the Law of the Republic of Bulgaria "on Meetings, Assemblies and Manifestations".

In this respect, the Lukov March in 2023, originally scheduled for 25 February, was no exception. In November 2022, the Sofia City Administrative Court overturned the mayor's order banning the march, while allowing for an appeal. The higher Supreme Administrative Court was to hear the case on 20 February 2023, but the decision was postponed for a week on procedural grounds. For this reason, on the day chosen for the march, a dispute arose between the local authorities and the organizers of the march over its legality. The Bulgarian Prosecutor General also supported the opinion that the march was unlawful. A few hours before the supposed start of the march, neo-Nazis held a protest called "Illegal March" in the centre of Sofia in reacting to his voiced position.¹²⁵ Despite all the efforts of the participants of the event in honour of the Bulgarian Nazi collaborator general, the event did not take place: The police did not allow those gathered to leave the original gathering place and march through the city.¹²⁶

On 10 February 2020, Sophia's Municipal Prosecutor's Office filed a legal claim to Sophia's Municipal Court asking to cancel BNU's registration. The Bulgarian justice rejected the claim with reference to the absence of anti-constitutional statements, incitement of hatred or violence on behalf of the Bulgarian National Union. That judgment was further (on 13 April 2022) also supported by the Court of Appeals. The latter emphasized, in its turn, that the organization shared the idea of Bulgarian nationalism, which per se did not lead to incitement of hatred or hostility.¹²⁷ By July 2022, the nationalists provided themselves with a spacious central office located in the centre of Sofia.

Torchlight processions are held to honour another Nazi collaborator, the

¹²⁵ Neo-Nazi Lukov March in Bulgaria: Prosecutors call for public order to be protected. Sofia Globe. 25 February 2023

<https://sofiaglobe.com/2023/02/25/neo-nazi-lukov-march-in-bulgaria-prosecutors-call-for-public-order-to-be-protected/>

¹²⁶ Bulgarian police thwart neo-Nazi Lukov March. Sofia Globe. 25 February 2023

<https://sofiaglobe.com/2023/02/25/bulgarian-police-thwart-neo-nazi-lukov-march/>

¹²⁷ Bulgarian court refuses to ban neo-Nazi march. The Balkanist Project. 14 April 2022

<https://balkanist.ru/lukov-marsh/>

Bulgarian military pilot Dimitar Spisarevski. They take place annually on 20 December in the village of Dolni-Pasarel, Sofia region.

Every year on 30 April 2019 (the day of Hitler's death), flyers praising the Nazi leader are disseminated in the streets of Sofia and across the region. Graffiti with swastikas and SS insignia often appear on buildings. Souvenirs with Nazi insignia, Hitler's "Mein Kampf" and works of foreign and Bulgarian Holocaust deniers, such as R.Stankov as well as R.Harwood, A.Panayotov, etc., are freely available in market.

The use of far-right symbols has been regularly recorded at stadiums during matches between football clubs. Some fans do not deny their affiliation with neo-Nazi movements. For example, in October 2019, during the Euro 2020 qualifier match between Bulgaria and England, Bulgarian fans were chanting racist slogans and defiantly extending their arms, imitating a Nazi salute. The incident sparked a massive outcry in Europe. The president of the Bulgarian Football Union was forced to resign after public pressure and harsh criticism from the country's leadership,

It is remarkable that the local legislation places the "dissemination of the fascist ideologies" under the same article with the overthrow of the constitutional order (Article 108 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Bulgaria). However, there were no cases of criminal prosecution on this ground.

Despite all the above, the government in Sofia never hesitates to accuse the Russian Federation of "falsifying historical events" of the war period. In particular, in 2020, on the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II Bulgaria joined the declaration of the US and a number of Eastern European States which assigned a shared responsibility to the USSR and Hitler's Germany for unleashing the conflict. Later that year, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ekaterina Zakhariyeva, when discussing the issue of borders and reparations to Bulgaria, tried to downplay the efforts of Soviet diplomacy at the 1946 Paris Peace Conference.

The situation with the maintenance of Soviet memorial places is of concern. Since the beginning of the special military operation for demilitarization and

denazification of Ukraine by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, cases of the desecration of memorial places have become much more frequent. More than 20 acts of vandalism have been recorded since February 2022. In Sofia, the Monument to the Soviet Army was sprayed with blue and yellow paint with the use of a drone. Moreover, anti-Russian slogans have been repeatedly painted on it as well as on the sculptures of the mass grave. The stele dedicated to the Bulgarian anti-fascists was smeared with paint. The "Alyosha" monument in Plovdiv was also smeared with paint. The soldier burials in Dobrich were exposed to disruptive practices twice. Shortly before the Victory Day 2022 the ceramic portraits on the monument to the marine officers in Pomorie were broken; the memorial in Radomir was soiled; funeral wreaths on the burials in Pernik were burnt, and the plate on the Zhukov statue in Strelcha damaged.

Consequences of desecrations are promptly addressed by Russophile organizations, anti-Fascist non-profit organizations and the Embassy of Russia in Bulgaria. Vandals manage to avoid punishment as a rule. The police actions towards the perpetrators are often recognized as contradicting the legislation. Therefore, Sophia District Court released the fringe group of people arrested on 25 February 2022 while attempting to write "Save Ukraine" on the monument to the Soviet Army, having stipulated that this act was a form of protest against "Russia's aggression in Ukraine" and the group's arrest was illegal.

Right before the Victory Day in 2022, starting from 4 May 2022, a group of individuals with anti-Russian sentiments tried to wrap the monument to the Soviet Army with Ukrainian flags and to soil and smear it with paint again. A 24-hour guard was arranged by Russophiles to save the monument from being desecrated.

Vandals have repeatedly desecrated major Soviet military memorials in Bulgaria before as well. For example, on the night of 13 January 2020, the police thwarted an attempt by two schoolgirls to put drawings on the monument to the Soviet Army, and on the night of 30 January 2020, the side part of the Alyosha monument and the exposition with a bas-relief in front of it were stained with red

paint and daubed with the words "We have not forgotten" and "We will not forgive".

On 13 February 2020, another act of vandalism was reported after a routine inspection of the mass grave of Soviet soldiers in Sofia's Lozenets: The noses of two warriors in the bas-relief were chipped and their heads damaged. In May 2020, on the eve of Victory Day, head of the local administration K.Pavlov suggested that the memorial be removed from the site altogether.

On the night of 9 April 2020, an act of vandalism was committed against the monument on the mass grave of 45 Soviet officers and soldiers in the city park of Dobrich. Vandals daubed in blue the words "Death to USSR", "Death to Russia", "Bulgaria on its own", "Death to invaders", "Death to Alyoshas", "Death to Communism" and "Enough with self-abasement" on the 7-meter sculpture and 12-meter pylon.

On the night of 11 August 2020, the monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia was desecrated again: The words "Boyko, Lukashenko out" were sprayed across the central plaque reading "For the liberator Soviet Army from the grateful Bulgarian people". Two months later, on 13 October, the SS double zig rune and the number 700 under it, which stands for the SS anti-tank brigade comprised of 700 Bulgarian volunteers, were written in black on the same plaque. On 17 February 2021, the mass grave in Lozenets was once again desecrated and painted with various symbols.

In 2022, in view of the risk of possible provocations the representative of Bulgarian special services addressed the Immortal Regiment organizers to ask them not to hold the event. However, the march was successfully conducted in Sofia, Burgos, Varna, Plodiv, and other Bulgarian cities. Organizers gave special attention to ensuring safety of the participants to the events.

From 22 to 23 February 2023, a memorial plaque with the inscription "To the Soviet Army-Liberator from the grateful Bulgarian people" on the facade of the Soviet Army monument in Sofia was damaged. The vandal waited on the spot for the Interior Ministry police patrols, where he was detained. The "activist" said that

with these actions he protested against "the war in Ukraine unleashed by Vladimir Putin".

On 3 March 2023, the bust of Niklai Ignatiev installed in Varna was smeared with white paint.

On 31 March 2023, the Monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia was desecrated. Unknown persons poured red paint on a part of the facade and wrote the inscription "dismantling" in the afternoon.

On 25 April 2023, a swastika was sprayed with black paint on the star decorating the facade of the monument to the Soviet liberator in Ruse ("Alesha in Ruse"). The monument was promptly cleaned up by Russian compatriots. The city administration abstained from this process. The surveillance cameras installed near the site "did not record anyone".

On 12 May 2023, the facade of the monument to the warrior-liberator in Burgas ("Burgas Alyosha") was desecrated with inscriptions "we want Bulgarian monument" and "decommunization".

On 13 May 2023, paint was poured on a slab at the burial place of Soviet servicemen killed during the Great Patriotic War in the town of Bankya (Sofia region).

On 14 May 2023, the sculptures of the mass grave of Red Army soldiers in the capital's Lozenets quarter were vandalized with the signs "Z", "X", sickle and hammer being crossed out, as well as the inscription "Death to the occupier".

On 2 August 2023, the Bulgarian government decided to change the legal status of the Soviet Army monument in Sofia, transferring the memorial complex from public to private state ownership. After managing formalities, the government plans to hand the object to the City Hall, which will proceed with the implementation of the resolution of the City Council on the dismantling and relocation of the monument (approved on 9 March 2023).

On 18 August 2023, fans of the Levski football club attacked a tent camp set up by Bulgarian citizens to protect the monument from demolition. The vandals smashed part of the marble slab with the inscription "To the Soviet Army-Liberator from the grateful Bulgarian people". During the action, smoke bombs and torches were used and a banner reading "Dismantling" was stretched. The inscription "We want a Bulgarian monument" was painted on the facade of the monument in black paint.

In this context it is not surprising that Bulgaria, in line with the EU, abstained from voting in December 2022 on the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", submitted annually to the UN General Assembly by Russia and other co-sponsors. Previously, the delegation of Bulgaria had traditionally abstained from voting on this document.

The Petkov-headed Bulgarian government misused the beginning of the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine as grounds to inflate Russophobia. The Bulgarian government actively engaged into the aggressive campaign unleashed by the West. Broadcasting of Russia Today, Sputnik news agency and their associated resources was ceased. There were cases of blocking access to the news Internet resources and Russian bank applications. Staff of Russian foreign missions in Bulgaria was provocatively expelled in a large scale.

At the same time there were almost no visible cases of discrimination against Russians or Russian-speaking persons on behalf of the Bulgarian population.

However, there have been cases of detention of Russian citizens in Bulgaria. A high-profile case was that of S.Zonenko and his family members (October 2021) suspected of passing on secret information to the "Arsenal" arms factory (Kazanluk). The Russian scientist and his relatives were released on bail in December 2021.

A Russian citizen (who also has Bulgarian citizenship) was arrested in Sofia in March 2021 as part of a group of Bulgarian citizens accused of intelligence activities in favour of the Russian Federation. She was released from custody on bail of 1,000 euros by the Sofia Military Court of Appeal on 22 March 2022.

In June 2022, Interpol-wanted computer programmer, D.Emeljantsev (Kloster), was detained in the city of Bansko on charges of interfering in the US presidential election. On 19 September, a Bulgarian court authorized his extradition to the US. Our fellow countrymen himself did not object to the extradition and expressed his readiness to prove his innocence in the face of US justice.

International monitoring bodies, in particular the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination¹²⁸ and the Human Rights Committee¹²⁹, have raised concerns about reports of an increase in hate speech and hate crimes against Turks, Roma, Muslims, Jews, people of African descent, migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Verbal expressions of hostility towards national minorities living on the territory of the country occur mainly at the domestic level. At the same time, the 2023 EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report noted that Bulgarian politicians tend to use hate speech against ethnic and religious minorities, as well as migrants and asylum seekers more frequently.¹³⁰ Nationalist speeches voiced by certain public figures concerning the increase in crime and illiteracy among Roma have become the subject of close media attention. Such sentiments in Bulgaria are attributed to the difficult demographic situation and the progressive imbalance between the birth rates of the Bulgarian and Roma (as well as Turkish)

128 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 20th to 22th periodic reports of Bulgaria. May 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fBGR%2fCO%2f20-22&Lang=ru

129 Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 4th periodic report of Bulgaria. November 2018

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fBGR%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru

¹³⁰ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2023

http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

populations.

Experts point to insufficient efforts by the authorities to integrate the Roma minority. In 2019, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stated that representatives of this group of population continued to face discrimination in employment, housing, health care and education and that such discrimination got deeper as prejudice were getting stronger in relation to them.¹³¹

There have been some attempts to improve the situation in this area at the state level. For example, the state employment agency is working to bring the most vulnerable groups into the labour market. In 2020, about 30,000 Roma used its services.¹³² Nevertheless, this measure has not solved the problem of systemic discrimination against this group of the population.

The situation of Roma, particularly in the field of education, has been repeatedly criticized by the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). In 2022, its experts once again pointed out that Roma children often do not attend pre-schools, do not attend classes regularly, and do not receive full secondary education. Another aspect is the segregation which de facto exists in kindergartens and schools.¹³³ As a result, Roma minors are confined exclusively to their social group.

According to the FRA, about two thirds of Roma children (64%) study in segregated primary and secondary education institutions in Bulgaria.¹³⁴

The widespread Roma stigmatization and discrimination was pointed out by the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.¹³⁵ Experts think that this situation results in corresponding violence and hate speech.

¹³¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 6th periodic report of Bulgaria. March 2019

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/086/16/PDF/G1908616.pdf?OpenElement>

¹³² Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Bulgaria, adopted on 28 June 2022, published on 4 October 2022.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-sixth-report-on-bulgaria/1680a83581>

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2023

http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

¹³⁵ Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Bulgaria – adopted on May 26, 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-albania-en-/168093903b>

During the sixth cycle of monitoring of racist and intolerant manifestations in Bulgaria, ECRI experts recorded two cases when Roma were targeted and threatened by protests organized by representatives of other ethnic groups living in their neighbourhoods.¹³⁶

After such events, Roma are often forced to change their place of residence without being able to return. The reason for this is not least the inaction of the authorities, as confirmed by the October 2022 judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Paketova and Others v. Bulgaria*.¹³⁷

Biased attitude towards this group of population has been revealed in its every colour during the coronavirus pandemic. The Roma communities found themselves disproportionately affected by the restrictions introduced by the Bulgarian authorities during the first wave of coronavirus.¹³⁸ In particular, one of the reasons for this was the fact that members of this group are often employed in the informal economy and their jobs are not stable.¹³⁹

According to the experts of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Roma-girls are in the most vulnerable situation. Although there is a law prohibiting marriages before 16, they often become victims of the persisting practice of forced marriages.¹⁴⁰[87]

Given the many difficulties which Roma have to face in Bulgaria because of their ethnicity, it is not surprising that the census conducted by the Bulgarian National Institute of Statistics in 2022 found that a significantly smaller number of people identified themselves as Roma compared 2011.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Bulgaria, adopted on 28 June 2022, published on 4 October 2022.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-sixth-report-on-bulgaria/1680a83581>

¹³⁷ <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/fre?i=001-219776>

¹³⁸ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2022

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

¹³⁹ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Bulgaria, adopted on 28 June 2022, published on 4 October 2022.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-sixth-report-on-bulgaria/1680a83581>

¹⁴⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 8th periodic report of Bulgaria. March 2020

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/062/21/PDF/N2006221.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁴¹ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2023

http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

The Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities also concluded that with regard to the right of national minorities to participation in public affairs the situation had unfortunately deteriorated during the monitoring period. Many organizations working with Roma as well as organizations representing the Turkish minority either left the National Council or deliberately did not reapply for such status, expressing their discontent with its work.¹⁴²

It is deplorable that persons belonging to national minorities have not been granted the right to use their native language when interacting with the executive authorities and that no measures have been taken to assess the demand for its use in such situations.

The ACFC also noted that traditional local topographical indications in Bulgaria were not duplicated in minority languages. Moreover, in 2018, the Stara Zagora local council decided to replace local toponyms of Turkish-Arab origin with Bulgarian translations or neologisms. According to experts, these facts show that there is a lack of appreciation for the significant symbolic value which such names have for the population as affirmation of the long-standing presence of national minorities as a valued part of society in a particular territory.¹⁴³

At the same time, aids for teaching Turkish as a mother tongue in grades 1-7 were introduced in schools in Bulgaria in 2019. Such teaching materials for the mother-tongue teaching of Armenian, Hebrew and Romani are now being elaborated on. As regards the media, some news bulletins are published in minority languages with the support of the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues. Bulgarian National Television continues to broadcast daily ten-minute news programmes in Turkish. In 2015, the first national Roma television channel in Bulgaria was launched.¹⁴⁴

142 Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Bulgaria – adopted on May 26, 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-albania-en-/168093903b>

143 Ibid.

144 Ibid.

At the same time, 100 hours of Bulgarian language lessons were introduced in pre-school institutions in 2016 for those children whose mother tongue was not Bulgarian. According to ECRI information, the vast majority of pupils are Roma.¹⁴⁵

The official authorities refuse to enter into dialog with persons identifying themselves as Macedonians and requesting recognition as a national minority. A 2019 judgment by the Sofia Court of Appeal confirmed once again the position adopted by Bulgaria 20 years ago that there is no "Macedonian ethnos" in its territory.¹⁴⁶ Of course, this circumstance cannot but affect the relations of Bulgaria with the countries where this ethnos represents the majority or a significant part of the population.

There are known difficulties in the functioning of religious institutions. Spiritual leaders of Islam are reported to feel their rights being infringed. Initiatives to build religious schools in order to educate children about Islam and to publish Muslim literature have been ignored at the local level. Amendments to the Act on Religions have significantly limited the sources of foreign funding for religious organizations. Another approved regulation prohibits wearing all kinds of "thick or semitransparent fabric that covers or conceals the face", including scarves, masks, and other garments in public places. An exception is made only for those who cover their faces due to their profession or health issues. Everyone else is allowed to wear the burqa and niqab only in religious institutions and at home.

There have also been cases of vandalism against places of worship. Investigations of such cases rarely lead to identification and prosecution of those responsible.

¹⁴⁵ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Bulgaria, adopted on 28 June 2022, published on 4 October 2022.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-sixth-report-on-bulgaria/1680a83581>

¹⁴⁶ Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Bulgaria – adopted on May 26, 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-albania-en-/168093903b>

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Compared to previous reporting periods, the situation regarding the dissemination of neo-Nazi ideology and various forms of intolerance in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has not changed fundamentally. No monuments or memorials to Nazis or their accomplices have been erected. There have been no public demonstrations and events in honour of the Nazi past, neo-Nazism or collaborationist organizations in the country. No cases of illegal exhumation or transfer of the remains of anti-fascist warriors, or persecution of anti-fascist veterans have been reported.

Organized activity of nationalist or far-right groups is not registered in BiH. Some of them operate via Internet, through social media profiles, such as the so-called Bosnian National Pride Movement¹⁴⁷ formed back in 2010, which remains largely inactive to this day.

At the same time, BiH's official approaches to combating the glorification of Nazism and countering various forms of intolerance are negatively affected by the persisting deep-rooted contradictions between the country's three constituent peoples (Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and Croats). The existence of ethnic tensions and divisions that hinder the legal, institutional and policy advancement towards a more integrated society and reconciliation was noted by experts of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in 2018.¹⁴⁸ These tensions include the assessment of the role of each nation in World War II and their contribution to the liberation of the world from the "brown plague". This "fragmentation" of historical memory comes as a consequence of the 1992-1995 armed conflict in BiH.

Thus, representatives of the Bosniak political elite promote the narrative of fighting against the invaders and "external aggression" both during the war and in the 1990s, noting that in both cases the Bosniaks managed to keep Bosnia and

¹⁴⁷ <https://m.facebook.com/people/Bosanski-Pokret-Nacionalnog-Ponosa/100002699140242/>

¹⁴⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 12th and 13th periodic reports of Bosnia and Herzegovina. August 2018.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fBIH%2fCO%2f12-13&Lang=ru

Herzegovina "united and indivisible." Local Serbs remember the victims of the Independent State of Croatia (ISC) concentration camps (1941-1945)¹⁴⁹ and emphasize the decisive contribution of the Serbian people to the fight against Nazism¹⁵⁰. In turn, the Croats tend to underestimate the number of Serbian and Jewish casualties during the war, while underlining the need to remember all Croats who lost their lives, both partisan fighters and the ISC supporters. In doing so, they fiercely criticize the "bloodthirsty regime of Josip Broz Tito" for the reprisal against the latter at the end of the war.

The Croatian ruling elite take part in relevant commemorative events. For example, in May 2020, upon the initiative of the Head of the Catholic Church in BiH, the Archbishop of Vrhbosna cardinal Vinko Puljić, a mass was held in Sarajevo's Sacred Heart Cathedral to commemorate the executed members of the Ustasha. This caused a backlash from representatives of other nations in the country and veteran organizations. The President of the Jewish Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jakob Finci¹⁵¹, condemned the glorification of war criminals. Metropolitan Hrizostom of Dabro-Bosnia, in his turn, announced the end of cooperation with cardinal Puljić.¹⁵²

There have been attempts in the Muslim-Croatian Federation of BiH (FBiH) to "whitewash" Nazi collaborators, with the connivance of the local political elite. In the aftermath of the 1992-1995 armed conflict, a number of streets in towns with predominantly Bosniak population were renamed in honour of Nazi henchmen. In Sarajevo, for example, 152 street names were changed. When the city was part of the SFRY, all these streets were named after Yugoslav partisans and anti-

¹⁴⁹ By various estimates, between 600,000 and 800,000 people, mostly Serbs, but also Roma, Jews and people of other ethnicities who took part in the anti-fascist movement, were exterminated in Jasenovac, the most terrible "death camp."

¹⁵⁰ For example, the statement of the Director of the Institute for the Study of the Suffering of the Serbian People (Belgrade) M. Ivanišević; Drugi svjetski rat u BiH je odnio 904.000 zivota. RTV BN. 4 February 2015. <https://www.rtvbn.com/332446/Drugi-svjetski-rat-u-BiH-je-odnio-904000-zivota>

¹⁵¹ Sarajevska misa za «bleiburške zločince». Deutsche Welle. 13 May 2020.

<https://www.dw.com/bs/sarajevska-misa-za-bleibur%C5%A1ke-zlo%C4%8Dince/a-53422443>

¹⁵² Mitropolit Hrizostom: Zbog mise za Blajburg prestaje saradnja Mitropolije dabrobosanske i Vrhbosanske. Oslobođenje. 11 May 2020.

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/mitriopolit-hrizostom-zbog-mise-za-blajburg-prestaje-saradnja-mitropolije-dabrobosanske-i-vrhbosanske-nadbiskupije-555699>

fascists¹⁵³. At the same time, a number of streets were named after ideologues of the Young Muslims pan-Islamic movement Mustafa Busuladžić¹⁵⁴, Asaf Serdarević¹⁵⁵ and Fuad Čurčić, commander of the ISC units during the occupation of Sarajevo Sulejman Pačariž¹⁵⁶, chairman of the Merhamet Muslim Charitable Society and later commander of the Muslim unit Muhamed Pandža¹⁵⁷, and director of the Croatian National Theatre during the ISC period Alija Nametak.¹⁵⁸ In June 2016, a secondary school in Goražde (FBiH) was named in honour of Imam Husein Efendi Đozo¹⁵⁹, a member of the Waffen-SS Division Handschar, which was comprised mainly of Bosnian Muslims and was infamous for its punitive raids in the Balkans during World War II. In 2018, a school in Sarajevo was named after Mustafa Busuladžić, which attracted widespread media coverage. All of the above were sentenced to death by Yugoslav military tribunals after the war.

For a long time, streets in Mostar were named after prominent Croatian figures of the Nazi Ustasha regime during World War II (Mile Budak, Ante Vokić, Mladen Lorković, Đuro Spužević, Ivo Zelenika and Rafael Boban). On 14 July 2022, by a two-thirds majority, the City Assembly adopted a decision to rename them after famous cultural figures from BiH¹⁶⁰. However, a similar decision has not yet been adopted for Sarajevo.

In late 2020, Damir Arnaut, an MP of the Naša Stranka (Our Party), put forward an initiative to rename streets and sites named after Nazi collaborators.¹⁶¹

¹⁵³ Uklanjajte s tabli protivnike antifašizma. Oslobođenje. 6 April 2021.

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/uklanjajte-s-tabli-protivnike-antifasizma-644952>

¹⁵⁴ Nije samo Mustafa problem, i Fuad je. Oslobođenje. 18 January 2021.

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/dosjei/kolumne/nije-samo-mustafa-problem-i-fuad-je-621370>

¹⁵⁵ Strijeljali ga partizani 1944. u Vitezu: Da li je to dovoljno da se ulica po njemu zove? Oslobođenje. 3 February 2021. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/strijeljali-ga-partizani-1944-u-vitezu-da-li-je-to-dovoljno-da-se-ulica-po-njemu-zove-626411>

¹⁵⁶ Pukovnik NDH u Sarajevu: Ko je bio Sulejman Pačariž? Oslobođenje. 26 January 2021.

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/pukovnik-ndh-u-sarajevu-ko-je-bio-sulejman-pacariz-623855>

¹⁵⁷ I on ima svoju ulicu... / Slijedio je put Hitlera i Pavelića. Oslobođenje. 2 February 2021.

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/i-on-ima-svoju-ulicu-slijedio-je-put-hitlera-i-pavelica-626097>

¹⁵⁸ Alija Nametak je djelovao u periodu NDH: Bio je sluga okupatora. Oslobođenje. 29 January 2021.

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/alija-nametak-je-djelovao-u-periodu-ndh-bio-je-sluga-okupatora-625032>

¹⁵⁹ Ulica Huseina Ef. Đoze. Oslobođenje. 16 February 2021.

<https://bhdani.oslobodjenje.ba/bhdani/kolumne/ulica-huseina-ef-doze-617675>

¹⁶⁰ Sattler i Schmidt čestitali Kordiću i Vijeću. Top portal. 14 July 2022.

<https://topportal.info/sattler-i-schmidt-cestitali-kordicu-i-vijecu/>

¹⁶¹ Uklanjajte s tabli protivnike antifašizma. Oslobođenje. 6 April 2021.

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/uklanjajte-s-tabli-protivnike-antifasizma-644952>

The Bosniak newspaper *Oslobođenje*, which positions itself as a guardian of "anti-fascist traditions", supported the initiative, dedicating a series of articles to the crimes committed by the collaborators during World War II, and accused the Canton of Sarajevo authorities of bogging the initiative down.

Against this background, for the first time, BiH voted against the draft resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", introduced by the Russian Federation and a large number of States, at the 77th session of the UN General Assembly in December 2022. At the same time, the country had previously not only supported the adoption of the document, but was also one of its co-authors. This decision was taken under the influence of the Bosniak head of the BiH Foreign Ministry, without consulting the representatives of the other constituent peoples in the country's leadership, as required by law.

On 12 February 2023, on the occasion of the 78th anniversary of the liberation of Mostar from the Nazis, the Union of Societies of Veterans of the People's Liberation War of BiH regretted that "the supporters of neo-fascist ideas are coming to power in the city", and that more than half a year after all 700 tombstones of fallen soldiers-liberators in the Partisan Cemetery were damaged on the night of 14-15 June 2022, not only have the perpetrators not been found, but there are also no funds to restore the memorial.¹⁶² The Union of Veterans also stated that the city authorities refused to hold an anti-fascist march through the city under the pretext of security problems, justifying the refusal by the "controversial symbols" of anti-fascists (flags of Yugoslavia), which are associated with "the most vile totalitarian state"¹⁶³.

Neither the government nor the population of Republika Srpska nor the Serbian population of BiH show tendency toward revisionism or revision of the

¹⁶² Više od 1.000 antifašista na Partizanskom groblju u Mostaru pod jakom policijskom pratnjom. Dnevni avaz. 11 February 2023. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/808380/vise-od-1-000-antifasista-na-partizanskom-groblju-u-mostaru-pod-jakom-policijskom-pratnjom>

¹⁶³ Kordić osuo paljbu po antifasistima, stigla brza reakcija SDP-a. Dnevni avaz. 11 February 2023. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/808466/kordic-osuo-paljbu-po-antifasistima-stigla-brza-reakcija-sdp-a>

results of World War II; they actively promote the ideas of anti-fascism. At the initiative of the Republika Srpska Government, since the 2018/2019 academic year, the educational programmes of the entity include extended lectures on crimes and genocide against Serbs and the Holocaust in the ISC. In 2019, on the initiative of Serbian entity authorities, the 7 February 1942 Society was established, the purpose of which is to gather information about the Ustasha's crimes against the civilian Serbian population in the villages of Drakulić, Šargovac and the Rakovac mine, where more than 2.3 thousand people were killed with particular cruelty in a single day.

At the same time, local Serbs have a special perception of the role of Serbia in World War II and particularly that of the government in exile and its armed forces in the Balkans. In June 2019, a monument was erected in Bileća to the leader of the Chetnik movement, Draža Mihailović, who fought not only against the Nazis but also against partisans of the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia. A similar monument is expected to appear in Bijeljina (Republika Srpska). The Bosniaks viewed this initiative as "a provocation in a city that has a 30-thousand [Bosniak population]". In addition, every year, on the day of Mihailović's arrest (10 March 1946), supporters of the Chetnik movement organize commemorative events in Višegrad.

The general atmosphere of tension between the constituent peoples of BiH results in certain groups of the population becoming victims of intolerance on the part of the rest of society. The Serbs are the most affected in this regard.

For example, on 6 December 2022, unknown assailants robbed the Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Mostar, which had been rebuilt from the ruins after being destroyed during the Bosnian conflict in the 1990s. The thieves stole more than 90 metres of expensive electric cables, which are used to control the exterior lighting, the belfry and the main clock. According to the rector of the cathedral, Duško Kojić, this incident is only the most striking example of a series of acts of vandalism committed against the cathedral in recent years.¹⁶⁴ The crime

¹⁶⁴ Девастирана Саборна црква у Мостару - свештенство у сузама, страхује за безбједност. РТРС. 7 December

was condemned by the Republika Srpska leadership as a gesture of intolerance towards the Serb population and their residence in Mostar.¹⁶⁵ Despite public condemnation of the incident by the country's leadership and the Islamic community of BiH, the authorities have not provided the Cathedral with security guarantees. Investigations are ongoing and the perpetrators have not been identified.

On 13 January 2023, on the Serbian New Year holiday, during the Sarajevo International Youth Football Tournament (for young people born between 2008 and 2015), in which players from the Serbian football club Zvezdara were participating, a group of underage Croatian fans from Split chanted the slogan "Kill the Serb". At the end of the competition in the evening, a delegation of young Serbian footballers and their parents were attacked in a hotel in Sarajevo's district of Ilidža by unidentified masked men who shouted anti-Serb slogans, pepper-sprayed the children and threw burning objects at them. One of the parents was stabbed while trying to protect the children.¹⁶⁶ After the incident, police identified only eight attackers born between 1995 and 2003. All were of Bosnian Muslim ethnicity. The father of one of them was the head of the FBiH police department's unit for cooperation with Europol and Interpol. The crime was strongly condemned by the leadership of both Serbia and Republika Srpska.

On 27 January 2023, St Sava's Day¹⁶⁷, the Chief Imam of the Majlis of the Islamic Community in Kozarac, Prijedor Municipality (Republika Srpska), Amir ef. Mahić, delivered a sermon to the congregation of the town's mosque, in which he described St. Sava as the founder of a "Serbian Orthodox sect", referring to the Serbian Orthodox Church. He also said that the saint's teachings were "based on nationalism and fascism" and that he himself was allegedly the founder of an ideology of "hatred of other people".¹⁶⁸ The video of the speech was published in

2022. <https://www.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=495973>

¹⁶⁵ Додик најоштрије осудио вандалски напад на Саборну цркву Свете тројице у Мостару. РТРС. 7 December 2022. <https://www.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=496012>

¹⁶⁶ Родитељи: приредили су нам пакао, рекли су «само вас србе смо чекали». СРНА. 14 January 2023.

<http://89.111.245.19/novosti/1067389/roditelji-priredili-su-nam-pakao--rekli-su-samo-vas-srbe-smo-cekali.htm>

¹⁶⁷ St Sava's Day is a Serbian Orthodox holiday in honour of the founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

¹⁶⁸ Приједор: Имам Амир Махић приписао Светом Сави фашизам, а СПЦ секташтво. РТРС. 2 February 2023.

the local media and provoked a negative reaction at the level of the Republika Srpska leadership, while the Prijedor Prosecutor's Office opened a criminal case against Mahić for "public incitement to violence and instigation of inter-religious and inter-ethnic hatred". The leadership of the Islamic Community of BiH distanced itself¹⁶⁹ from Mahić's statements, describing him as "a reputable imam without a single complaint about his activities". The OSCE Mission in Sarajevo did not mention Mahić's name or religious affiliation in its statement, which called on "religious leaders to exercise restraint"¹⁷⁰. Despite the appeal to the Islamic Community of BiH by all four Orthodox bishops of the country, led by Metropolitan Hrizostom of Dabro-Bosnia, its head, Husein Kavazović, criticised the decision of the Prijedor City Assembly to condemn the imam's statements.¹⁷¹ The Bosniak stressed that Bosnian Serbs "have no right to take such steps in a town where genocide was committed against the Bosniaks", leaving unanswered the question of inciting inter-religious discord. The statement provoked a sharp reaction from the President of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska, Nenad Stevandić, and the Chairman of the BiH Presidency, Željka Cvijanović, who stated¹⁷² that "Kavazović is not defending the imam, but his judgements about Serbs", while the others considered the imam's statements as an insult to the entire Serbian people.¹⁷³ There was no reaction from the representative offices of international human rights organizations.

In addition, the Serbian Orthodox Church is still unable to return property lost during the World War II, as the authorities have not yet implemented the Terezin Declaration of the European Parliament calling for a solution to the

<https://www.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=501795>

¹⁶⁹ Имам Махић ће се изјаснити пред дисциплинском комисијом Ријасета. Катера. 3 February 2023.

<https://katera.news/imam-mahic-ce-se-izjasniti-pred-disciplinskom-komisjom-rijaseta>

¹⁷⁰ Poziv vjerskim liderima da se uzdrže uvredljivih komentara. Козарски вјесник. 3 February 2023.

<https://kozarski.com/poziv-vjerskim-liderima-da-se-uzdrze-uvredljivih-komentara/>

¹⁷¹ Kavazović: Zaključak Skupštine Grada Prijedora je sramotan. Dnevni avaz. 16 February 2023.

<https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/809646/kavazovic-zakljucak-skupstine-grada-prijedora-je-sramotan>

¹⁷² Cvijanović: Kavazović ne brani imama iz Kozarca, već ono što je imam rekao. ATV. 17 February 2023.

<https://www.atvbl.rs/republika-srpska/cvijanovic-kavazovic-ne-brani-imama-iz-kozarca-vec-ono-sto-je-imam-rekao-17-2-2023>

¹⁷³ Dodik: Imam iz Kozarca povrijedio sve Srbe. ATV. 2 February 2023.

<https://www.atvbl.rs/republika-srpska/dodik-imam-iz-kozarca-povrijedio-sve-srbe-2-2-2023>

restitution problem. The Roman Catholic Church, the Islamic and Jewish communities (the latter estimates the value of lost property at 3 billion euros) are also interested in adoption of the law.

On 18 February 2023, the Committee for the Protection of Serb Rights in FBiH stated that Orthodox cemeteries in the Muslim-Croatian entity of BiH were desecrated on average once a month, and that the perpetrators almost always went unidentified and unpunished.¹⁷⁴ In the last five years, vandalism, destruction of tombstones and desecration of graves have occurred in 36 cemeteries throughout FBiH, including in Mostar and Livno.

Comprehensive statistics on such cases cannot be provided due to the lack of uniform standards and recording of such incidents in BiH.

The activities of the High Representatives, who to this day exercise an "external protectorate" over BiH, also do not contribute to the reconciliation of the constituent peoples. For example, in response to the refusal of Bosnian Serbs to accept the validity of "genocide" verdicts returned by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, including in view of attempts to use them to promote the idea of "collective responsibility" of Serbs, the High Representative, bypassing parliamentary procedure, amended in July 2021 the Criminal Code to criminalize "genocide denial"¹⁷⁵, essentially allowing for the prosecution of Serb activists.

This happens against the background of the fact that the judicial system in BiH is highly politicised and ethnocentric.¹⁷⁶ In particular, the Serbian people see 70-80 per cent of all war crimes cases from the period of the armed conflict filed against them.¹⁷⁷ However, atrocities committed by other ethnic groups are often

¹⁷⁴ Системско рушење православних гробља у ФБиХ. Катера. 18 February 2023. <https://katera.news/sistemsko-rusenje-pravoslavnih-grobalja-u-fbih>

¹⁷⁵ High Representative's Decision on Enacting the Law on Amendment to the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina. <http://www.ohr.int/hrs-decision-on-enacting-the-law-on-amendment-to-the-criminal-code-of-bosnia-and-herzegovina/>

¹⁷⁶ Čubrilović: Ustavni sud BiH odavno je instrument samo jedne politike i samo jednog naroda u BiH. ATV. 15 July 2022. <https://www.atvbl.rs/republika-srpska/cubriloVIC-ustavni-sud-bih-odavno-je-instrument-samo-jedne-politike-i-samo-jednog-naroda-u-bih-15-7-2022>

¹⁷⁷ Većina osuđenih ratnih zločinaca – Srbi? Deutsche Welle. 13 November 2010. <https://www.dw.com/sr/ve%C4%87ina-osu%C4%91enih-ratnih-zlo%C4%8Dinaca-srbi/a-6226266-0>

dismissed.¹⁷⁸ Depending on which ethnic group is being prosecuted, courts arbitrarily apply the law of a particular period (former Yugoslavia or modern BiH) against the defendant, giving Serbs a harsher sentence.¹⁷⁹

Among other factors contributing to the disunity of the Bosnian population is the unresolved problem of ethnic segregation in the educational sphere. The practice of "two schools under one roof", where children of different nationalities (Bosnian Muslims and Croats) study not only under different programmes but also on different shifts, is still common in certain areas of the FBiH with a mixed population.

This issue, which undermines reconciliation efforts, was highlighted by many UN human rights treaty bodies – the Human Rights Committee (HRCttee) in March 2017¹⁸⁰, CERD in August 2018 (situation in some areas of Central Bosnia and Herzegovina-Neretva cantons was of particular concern to the committees)¹⁸¹, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in September 2019¹⁸² and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in November 2021.¹⁸³

The Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) once again pointed out to the national authorities in December 2019 that their efforts in this area are insufficient. ECRI's representatives took note

¹⁷⁸ За међународну заједницу Срби нису жртве: Убијено 35.042 Срба, у Хагу пресуда од само 45 година. Републички центар за истраживање рата, ратних злочина и тражење несталих лица. 2 December 2022. <https://www.rcirz.org/za-medjunarodnu-zajednicu-srbi-nisu-zrtve-ubijeno-35-042-srba-u-hagu-presuda-od-samo-45-godina/>

¹⁷⁹ Ćedomir Antić za Glas Srpske: Srebrenica postala temelj bošnjačkog nacionalnog mita. Balkanska slobodna reč. <https://balkanskapravila.com/cedomir-antic-za-glas-srpske-srebrenica-postala-temelj-bosnjackog-nacionalnog-mita>

¹⁸⁰ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 3rd periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina. March 2017. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fBIH%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

¹⁸¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 12th and 13th periodic reports of Bosnia and Herzegovina. August 2018. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fBIH%2fCO%2f12-13&Lang=ru

¹⁸² Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Children on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Bosnia and Herzegovina. September 2019. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fBIH%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=ru

¹⁸³ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 3rd periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina. November 2021. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fBIH%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=ru

of the data made available to it about the activities implemented in a number of the FBiH cantons related to a common core curriculum for all students. However, these activities have mainly consisted of pilot projects so far. Moreover, the ECRI also strongly recommended the removal in all schools of any symbols that represent an ethnic or religious bias.¹⁸⁴

Despite criticism of BiH by international human rights monitoring bodies, it is noteworthy, that since 2002, there have been no new cases of opening "two schools under one roof," and there is currently a trend towards a further reduction in their number.

The controversy over the name and teaching of the Bosnian Muslim national language in schools of Republika Srpska is of the same rank. The wording used to name the subject in educational institutions of the entity – "the language of the Bosniak people" – is stipulated in the Constitution of Republika Srpska and dissatisfies the parents of the students who defend the right to study "the Bosnian language". In other cases, the debate is heated by the choice of the adjective "Bosniak" instead of "Bosnian", which is also seen by repatriated refugees as an act of infringement of their rights. Such a position has not been so far spread to some of the cantons of the FBiH itself. In May 2018, the Constitutional Court of the entity changed the spelling of "Bosniak" to "Bosnian" in official documents and formally restored the constitutional rights of Serbs, the Serbian language, and the Serbian Cyrillic alphabet.

CESCR experts reported in their concluding observations that the three official languages and two alphabets were not recognized by certain cantons of the FBiH, which has led to a high incidence of discrimination based on language and disruption of education.¹⁸⁵

Human rights organizations note difficulties in ensuring the rights of a large (about 35 thousand persons) Roma community in the country. This segment of the population remains under-integrated in the educational process. Only 1.5 per cent

¹⁸⁴ ECRI conclusions on the implementation of the recommendations in respect of Bosnia and Herzegovina subject to interim follow-up. Adopted on 10 December 2019. Published on 19 March 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/16809cde0e>

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

of Roma children attend preschool institutions, 69 per cent attend elementary school and only 22.6 per cent – secondary school. Roma remain the most marginalized group in BiH, effective mechanisms for the social integration of Roma have yet to be found. The rights of this group on freedom of national self-determination, on creation of organizations and convening assemblies to express and protect their cultural, religious and other rights are not being implemented in practice, as it is guaranteed by the legislation. For example, Roma do not have a right de facto to use their mother tongue, including in socio-legal relations, in those areas where they account for over one third of the population or a right to secondary education in their mother tongue in those municipal communities where the national minority accounts for over one third of the population (if it accounts for more than one fifth of the population, education in the mother tongue is allowed as an option). Even if there are enough children to attend school in their mother tongue in a particular locality, the educational institutions fail to provide teachers.

The situation of the Roma population in the country, in particular the persistent marginalization of the Roma, obstacles to their integration into society, high levels of unemployment, lack of adequate housing and identity documents, difficulties in accessing health care, as well as low school attendance of Roma children and discriminatory attitudes of teachers towards such students, were emphasized by HRCttee¹⁸⁶, CERD¹⁸⁷ and CRC.¹⁸⁸

A significant number of Roma families live in illegal dwellings or in informal settlements without security of tenure, and do not have access to basic services or utilities. Other problems include the persistent and rampant

¹⁸⁶ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 3rd periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina. March 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fBIH%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

¹⁸⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 12th and 13th periodic reports of Bosnia and Herzegovina. August 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fBIH%2fCO%2f12-13&Lang=ru

¹⁸⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Children on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Bosnia and Herzegovina. September 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fBIH%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=ru

stigmatization of Roma, heightened hate speech and hate crime targeted at them. In its concluding observations, CESCR noted that other ethnic minority groups of BiH also faced such problems.¹⁸⁹

According to OSCE reports, 134 hate crimes were recorded in BiH between June 2022 and May 2023, the vast majority of which were based on intolerance against persons belonging to a different ethnic or religious group. Only a small number of these incidents were publicly condemned by the authorities. The number of ongoing trials remains low¹⁹⁰, which has been repeatedly criticized by the UN human rights treaty bodies.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 3rd periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina. November 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fBIH%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=ru

¹⁹⁰ The Hate Monitor, OSCE. <https://www.osce.org/hatemonitorbih>

¹⁹¹ See, e.g.: Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 3rd periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina. March 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fBIH%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru;

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 12th and 13th periodic reports of Bosnia and Herzegovina. August 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fBIH%2fCO%2f12-13&Lang=ru

United Kingdom

The roots of the nationalist movement in Britain lie deep in the nation's past. The development of fascist ideology in the UK reached its peak in the 1930s, when first organisations with extreme right-wing views – including those of an anti-Semitic nature – appeared in the country. The most prominent was the British Union of Fascists, founded in 1932 and led by Oswald Mosley. All such groups were banned at the start of WWII, but new organisations soon sprang up. In 1947, Oswald Mosley founded the Union Movement, which brought together more than 50 smaller far-right groups. The right-wing leader argued for the unification of Western European countries, which he said was necessary to thwart the USSR's aggressive ambitions in Europe.

Some British monarchs have also been known for their far-right leanings (including links to the Nazis). For example, Duke Edward of Windsor (King Edward VIII, who abdicated in 1936) visited Adolf Hitler in 1937. A photograph of him giving the Nazi salute is known.

The collapse of the colonial system, resulting in the rapid growth of the migrant population, was a defining moment in the formation of British nationalist ideology. It was at this time that far-right groups focused on the idea of preserving the traditional British way of life, which has remained an important aspect of this ideology ever since. In addition, the far right, who often call themselves 'the true conservatives', continue to advocate the unity of the United Kingdom as the territorial, cultural and racial successor to the British Empire, which appeals to a significant proportion of Britons.

Nationalist ideology has got a certain boost in recent years, as Scotland has considered leaving the UK and the nation exited the EU in 2020.

Modern political correctness largely prefers to overlook the inconvenient fact that neo-Nazi groups are active in Britain. Despite similar doctrinal foundations, the far-right flank of the British political landscape is hardly united. Most local far-right and nationalist organisations are deeply marginalised and have no significant influence on the country's social and political processes. Their

membership is usually no more than a few hundred people. They focus mainly on online activities, but also organise high-profile public events in major cities such as London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Belfast. Striving to find a way into the political establishment, some of these groups have tried to abandon their most radical slogans. Instead of increasing their membership, however, they have faced an exodus of radicalised supporters.

The most prominent far-right organisation until recently, the British National Party (BNP) was founded in 1982 by neo-Nazi leader John Tyndall. Throughout its history, the party has opposed mass immigration and strongly criticised the emergence of a "federal superstate in Europe", referring to the European Union. For a long time, the BNP's stated aims included the unification of the global, mainly European, far right, the preservation of 'white British family' values, the complete closure of borders to migrants and the return of those who had already entered the country. It was not uncommon for its members to make anti-Semitic statements, including calling the Holocaust a historical mystification.

Despite vying for leadership of the local far right, the BNP's registered membership fell from 13.5 thousand in 2009 to 600 in 2021 due to internal disagreements. Based on the party's 2021 accounts filed with the UK Electoral Commission (the 2022 accounts have not been published at the time of writing), and taking into account the approximate annual fee, this figure may be accurate. However, according to the BNP, the number of its supporters exceeded 3,000 people in 2020-2021.

Since its inception, the BNP has never been elected to parliament. In the 2019 general election, its sole candidate received just 510 votes. Its most notable electoral success was winning two seats in the European Parliament in 2009. However, these were lost in the 2014 general election.

Another noteworthy neo-Nazi group, which also functioned as a political party for some time, is Britain First. It was founded in 2011 by Jim Dowson and other former members of the BNP to oppose 'Islamisation' and mass migration to the UK. It proclaims as its primary purpose the protection of the traditional British

way of life, ethno-cultural heritage and Christian faith. Its members argued for a speedy Brexit to 'save their society from the prevailing political correctness and multiculturalism madness'. Britain First has a 'combat wing' in its structure, which calls itself the 'party defence force'.

The party made headlines in 2014 with a series of provocative actions against Muslims in London, Glasgow and Luton: attacks on mosques, distribution of anti-Muslim propaganda leaflets and protesting near the homes of Muslim community leaders. 'Christian patrols' of up to 12 activists have also been set up in London to 'counter Islamic extremism' (their actions have been condemned by clergy representing both the Muslim community and the Anglican Church).

In 2016, the organisation was accused of involvement in the murder of Labour MP Jo Cox. Thomas Mair, 52, a former psychiatric patient, was reported to have shouted 'Put Britain first' at the time of the attack. The right-wing group itself issued a statement denying involvement in the murder.

On several occasions, BNP leaders have been prosecuted for nationalist statements and insulting religious groups.

The English Defence League is another influential far-right group. It emerged spontaneously in the form of a street demonstration in March 2009 against marches by Al Muhajiroun, an Islamic group, against Luton parades of British soldiers returning from Afghanistan. The group is led by Tim Ablitt, a far-right activist. It is an informal movement made up mainly of young people who openly oppose the 'Islamisation' of the nation. Its main form of activity is to hold marches and demonstrations, organising public protests against the building of new mosques and against any attributes of Islamic culture being 'imposed' on the British.

Researchers of far-right movements in the UK note that since around 2020, traditional far-right groups have been losing ground, giving way to groups with more flexible ideologies that are able to adapt to changing circumstances. The deaths of the most influential neo-Nazi figures, former BNP deputy leader Richard Edmonds and neo-Nazi political activist Eddy Morrison, are arguably the main

reason for this. With their departure, the National Front, Blood and Honour and Combat 18, once a serious threat to the country's security, have all but ceased to operate in the UK.

Since 2020, the Patriotic Alternative, founded by former BNP functionary Mark Collett, has gained in popularity. Experts say it has become a major player in the world of far-right organisations.¹⁹² It primarily targets teenagers and young adults and uses the Internet and modern technology: members communicate via social networks and messengers, computer games promoting violence are also used to recruit new members. Experts believe that minors were particularly vulnerable to such negative influences when schools switched to distance learning during the COVID pandemic.

In one case in 2020, the content posted on social networks by Scottish supporters of the Patriot Alternative inspired a series of attacks on people of Asian descent. Among other things, radicals vandalised Asian-owned shops by drawing Nazi symbols and writing racist slogans.¹⁹³

The Patriotic Alternative opposes 'leniency' towards Black people. In particular, members of the organisation have held unauthorised 'White Lives Matter' rallies in response to Black Lives Matter marches. In June 2020, more than 100 far-right protesters turned up at an anti-racism rally in London with Nazi flags, rioted and assaulted several police officers.¹⁹⁴

The same tactic was used by the Democratic Football Lads Alliance, which held 26 protest rallies against Black Lives Matter.¹⁹⁵

In May 2020, Stand Up X (SUX), a far-right movement, was founded. It brought together far-right activists (such as Jeff Wyatt from Wales), anti-Semites (such as David Icke, who popularised the anti-Zionist idea that 5G masts contributed to the spread of the coronavirus) and conspiracy theorists (such as

192 State of Hate 2021. Backlash, Conspiracies & Confrontation. Hope not Hate. March 2021.

<https://hopenothate.org.uk/2021/02/20/state-of-hate-2021-backlash-conspiracies-and-confrontation/>

193 Neo-nazis active in Scotland use Instagram and Telegram to recruit youngsters. The Ferret. 21 March 2021.

<https://theferret.scot/neo-mazis-instagram-telegram-recruit-scotland/>

194 Over 100 arrested as UK far-right groups clash with police. Deutsche Welle. 13 June 2021.

<https://www.dw.com/en/over-100-arrested-as-uk-far-right-groups-clash-with-police/a-53796903>

195 State of Hate 2021. Backlash, Conspiracies & Confrontation. Hope not Hate. March 2021.

<https://hopenothate.org.uk/2021/02/20/state-of-hate-2021-backlash-conspiracies-and-confrontation/>

Piers Corbin). SUX saw a growing number of supporters after a series of public disinformation campaigns during the pandemic, marked by unauthorised protest rallies across the UK. At the time when its Facebook page was blocked, the movement had 40,000 online followers. According to human rights organisation Hope Not Hate, the group is expected to remain active in the coming years, holding street rallies and attracting new supporters and public figures to its ranks.¹⁹⁶

The British Movement, a neo-Nazi organisation founded in 1968 (a political party until 1983), has maintained its position. This group also focuses on online activity, recruiting new members on Facebook, Instagram and Telegram and using them to spread disinformation. It is one of the few national socialist groups still openly active in the UK. The movement has active units in London, Kent, South Wales, the East Midlands, Yorkshire, Humberside, as well as in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Its members maintain close links with the notorious Northern Resistance Movement. Among other things, the group is known for publishing its own regular newsletter containing information designed to undermine the credibility of the national government.¹⁹⁷

In the UK, some far-right organisations¹⁹⁸ are listed as proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000.¹⁹⁹

One of the most notorious of these is National Action, which the authorities classified as a "racist neo-Nazi group", founded in 2013 and banned in December 2016. Its ideology is based on the idea of an imminent "race war" in Great Britain and the use of violence against ethnic minorities and perceived "white race traitors". National Action's online propaganda material, distributed via social media, condones and glorifies terrorism and the crimes of the extreme right.

196 Ibid.

197 Ibid.

198 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/901434/20200717_Proscription.pdf

199 Terrorism Act 2000

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/contents>

The Home Office considers that Scottish Dawn, NS131 National Socialist Anti-Capitalist Action and System Resistance Network are to be regarded as front groups for National Action (and their activities are therefore also banned).

In April 2021, a 22-year-old Met Police officer was found guilty on charges of terrorism. The young man had been a member of National Action for several years, possessed information that could be used to prepare terrorist acts and failed to declare this when he joined the police. At the same time, it was noted that the corresponding job application form only mentioned the legalised BNP. According to a spokesman for the Metropolitan Police Counter Terrorism Office, this is the first time a police officer has been officially recognised as a follower of such an ideology.²⁰⁰ The case prompted a discussion among members of the UK law enforcement community about a possible review of national security vetting procedures.

In December 2021, Ben Raymond, a co-founder of National Action, was sentenced to eight years in prison with the right to parole two years before the end of his sentence. In addition to his active involvement in the development of the neo-Nazi group, the court found that he had kept Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik's manifesto and instructions for making explosives in his home. Ben Raymond became the 17th member of National Action to be prosecuted for being a member of this outlawed organisation.²⁰¹

According to the NGO Hope Not Hate, a total of 20 supporters of extreme right-wing ideology (9 of them juveniles) were convicted of terrorist offences in 2022, and another person committed suicide after attempting to carry out a terrorist attack. Furthermore, 49 per cent of all people arrested on suspicion of involvement in terrorist activity in the year to September 2022 are believed to be associated with the far right²⁰².

200 London Police Officer Convicted of Membership in Neo-Nazi Group. The New York Times. Thursday, April 01, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/01/world/europe/london-metropolitan-police-neo-nazi.html>

201 National Action: Ben Raymond jailed for eight years. BBC News. Friday, December 03, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-wiltshire-59519211>

202 State of Hate 2023: Rhetoric, Racism and Resentment. Hope not Hate. 26 February 2023. <https://hopenothate.org.uk/2023/02/26/state-of-hate-2023-rhetoric-racism-and-resentment/>

Sonnenkrieg Division (SKD), a white supremacist group with the characteristically German-sounding name, a splinter group and largely a successor to National Action, was banned in February 2020. In 2019, several members of the group were convicted of terrorism and possession of material that could be used to prepare terrorist attacks.

In July 2020, Feuerkrieg Division (FKD) was banned. Based on a similar ideology, FKD is a group operating in several countries.

In 2021, in addition to the political wing of the Palestinian HAMAS movement and 14 groups from Northern Ireland, the Atomwaffen Division (AWD, also known as the National Socialist Order), a white supremacist group based in the US and emulated by the British far right, was added to the list of proscribed organisations. In 2022, the list of terrorist organisations proscribed in the UK was not updated.²⁰³

One of the most striking manifestations of neo-Nazism in recent years was the scandalous use of Nazi symbols by the Royal Marines in June 2019. During an initiation, they drew a swastika on the chest of one of their fellow officers and then posted photos of him on social media. Notably, this is not the first time members of the British Armed Forces have displayed Nazi symbols: in 2013, two British soldiers serving in Afghanistan were photographed posing with their hands raised in a Nazi salute against the backdrop of their country's flag.

British law does not criminalise the activities of far-right organisations. Their activities can only be forcibly terminated if they are recognised as terrorist groups under the Terrorism Act. This may be done if the authorities believe that such an organisation is “involved in terrorist activities”, namely, “commits or participates in terrorist acts, prepares for the commission of a terrorist act, promotes and encourages terrorist sentiments (including illegal glorification of terrorism) or is otherwise associated with terrorist activities”. From the moment an organisation is recognized as prohibited, belonging to it (or admitting such

²⁰³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2/proscribed-terrorist-groups-or-organisations-accessible-version>

affiliation), providing assistance (making a call for assistance), as well as displaying the symbols of such an organisation (including clothing) are crimes and are punishable by imprisonment for a period of 6 months to 10 years and/or a fine.

In its policy paper *Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*²⁰⁴, published in March 2021, the UK government recognised far-right ideology as a serious terrorist threat. Home Office statistics show that as of 30 September 2022, there were 239 people in custody in the UK for terrorism-related offences; of those in custody, 66 were classified as having an extreme right-wing ideology. By comparison, 155 prisoners were classified as holding radical Islamic views. White people accounted for the highest number of terrorism-related arrests – 91 out of 190.²⁰⁵

The UK has sought to extend responsibility for extremism to actions that do not involve physical violence. On 7 October 2019, the UK Government's Commission for Countering Extremism published a report titled *Challenging Hateful Extremism*, which defined a new category of extremist behaviour – hateful extremism – alongside terrorism and violent extremism. Hateful extremism refers to behaviours that can incite and amplify hate, or engage in persistent hatred, or equivocate about and make the moral case for violence; and that draw on hateful, hostile or supremacist beliefs directed at an out-group who are perceived as a threat to the wellbeing, survival or success of an in-group; and that cause, or are likely to cause, harm to individuals, communities or wider society.²⁰⁶

Symptomatically, young Britons account for most of the growing support for radical ideologies. In this context, the following high-profile case deserves special mention. In March 2021, a 16-year-old boy was given a two-year rehabilitation order for possessing and distributing "right-wing material"; he was the suspected

204 *Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*. Policy Paper.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-britain-in-a-competitive-age-the-integrated-review-of-security-defence-development-and-foreign-policy/global-britain-in-a-competitive-age-the-integrated-review-of-security-defence-development-and-foreign-policy>

205 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/operation-of-police-powers-under-the-terrorism-act-2000-quarterly-update-to-september-2022>

206 *Xenophobia, Radicalism, and Hate Crimes across the OSCE: 2018-2020*. Moscow, 2021. 188 pp.

leader of the British branch of the aforementioned Feuerkrieg Division (it was established that he had been involved in the illegal activity since the age of 13). The judge's decision to spare the boy from jail was explained by the fact that he had expressed a desire to follow a better path, causing a backlash from members of the Muslim community, who said that a Muslim in a similar situation would have been imprisoned.

The far right also remains active online, despite the efforts of national regulators to block their access to the most popular social platforms. Radicals seek out alternative, unregulated platforms to promote their ideas and views. For example, Stephen Lennon (better known as Tommy Robinson), the most famous apologist for the ideology (57% of Britons know his name), has 180,000 subscribers on GETTR, 155,000 on Telegram and 28,000 on the video-sharing platform BitChute.

A key aspect of far-right activity has been the promotion of healthy lifestyle and fitness. By presenting fascism as a path to personal growth these groups and movements have grown in popularity and attracted new members.²⁰⁷

Another distinctive feature of the far-right landscape has been the spread of so-called 'green nationalism'. Its followers, the ecofascists, essentially justify traditional neo-Nazi attitudes through environmentalist causes. In particular, they advocate the reduction of the world's population on the basis of race and nationality in order to preserve humanity and prevent a shortage of natural resources. This approach to environmental problems is particularly consistent with the ideology of Sonnenkrieg Division, which sees refugee flows as the 'great replacement' of the White race.²⁰⁸

In general, the British nation cherishes the memory of its alliance with Russia during WWII, recognises but does not promote the decisive contribution of the Soviet people to the defeat of Nazism. In recent years, the ideas of an 'equal responsibility of Germany and the USSR for unleashing the war' and 'an

207 State of Hate 2022: On The March Again. Hope not Hate. March 2022.

<https://hopenohate.org.uk/2022/02/09/state-of-hate-2022-on-the-march-again/>

208 Over 100 arrested as UK far-right groups clash with police. Deutsche Welle. 13 June 2021.

<https://www.dw.com/en/over-100-arrested-as-uk-far-right-groups-clash-with-police/a-53796903>

agreement to divide Poland' have spread. This is usually done in anticipation of the next anniversary of the beginning and end of WWII, Remembrance Day, Holocaust Remembrance Day and other "generally accepted" dates of remembrance. At the same time, an overwhelming majority of local professors prefer not to engage in public revision of historical events associated with WWII or revise the outcomes of the war.

In December 2022, the UK delegation voted against the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" proposed every year by the Russian Federation and other co-authors to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Since the beginning of the Special Military Operation to denazify Ukraine, the Ukrainian national-patriotic greeting "Glory to Ukraine" has often been heard from representatives of the British political elite as they expressed their support for Kiev. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has used it on a number of occasions, including in a Twitter post on 25 February, in his address to the Ukrainian Parliament on 3 May and during his visit to Kiev on 17 June.

The slogan "Glory to Ukraine" was also used by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Twitter on 19 July 2022 and 8 February 2023, by the UK Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dame Barbara Woodward in her closing remarks at the UN General Assembly on 28 February 2022; by the UK Permanent Representative to the UN Simon Manley in his speech on 12 May 2022, by the Senior Military Advisor to the UK Delegation to the OSCE Ian Stubbs in his speech on 6 April 2022, and by the Secretary of State for Defence Ben Wallace in a tweet on 15 May 2022.

In May 2022, the Soviet War Memorial Foundation in London cancelled the traditional wreath-laying ceremony at the Soviet War Memorial on Victory Day.

On 24 February 2022, Glasgow suspended its town twinning agreement with Rostov-on-Don in solidarity with Ukraine.

On 22 March, Coventry City Council suspended its twinning relationship with Volgograd to explore options for twinning with Mariupol.

Finally, in 2022, all UK councils suspended all twinning activities with Russian cities as part of the government's overall support for Kiev.

On 18 January 2023, representatives of Manchester City Council refused to take part in commemorative events organised by the Embassy and Russian compatriots to mark the 80th anniversary of the breaking of the siege of Leningrad, despite the fact that Manchester and St Petersburg have been twin cities since 1962.

On 24 February 2022, Tom Tugendhat, a Conservative MP and then chair of the Foreign Affairs Parliamentary Committee, suggested that the UK could expel all Russians (including the Russian Ambassador) to protect the interests of the British people and international partners. His position was supported by Roger Gale, another Conservative MP, who on 28 February called for all Russians living in the UK to be "sent home". Labour leader Keir Starmer made similar statements. The British law enforcement authorities, on the other hand, condone this kind of vociferousness at pro-Ukraine rallies held outside Russian diplomatic missions and other official institutions in the country.

The mainstream British media regularly whitewash and rehabilitate Ukrainian neo-Nazis, including members of the Azov Battalion, in their publications, describing them as defenders and patriots of Ukraine. Since the start of Russia's Special Military Operation in Ukraine, the following materials have been published. BBC, 18 May 2022: "Mariupol's Azovstal fighters: What next for Ukraine's captured soldiers"²⁰⁹; "Mariupol: Wife of fighter still inside Azovstal steel plant speaks to BBC"²¹⁰; 27 February 2022: "Ukraine: Azov Battalion fighters defend Mariupol"²¹¹ The Times, 30 May 2022, "Azov Battalion drops neo-Nazi symbol exploited by Russian propagandists"; 30 March 2022, "Azov

209 Mariupol's Azovstal fighters: What next for Ukraine's captured soldiers. BBC News, 18 May 2022.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61493182>

210 Mariupol: Wife of fighter still inside Azovstal steelplant speaks to BBC. BBC News.18 May 2022.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-61485135>

211 Ukraine: Azov Battalion fighters defend Mariupol. BBC News. 27 February 2022.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-31657354>

Battalion: "Azov Battalion drops neo-Nazi symbol exploited by Russian propagandists"²¹² "We are patriots – we're fighting the real Nazis of the 21st century"²¹³; 30 June 2022, "Heroes of Azovstal freed as Russian missiles rain down".²¹⁴ The Telegraph, 18 March 2022, "Inside Azov, the far-Right brigade killing Russian generals and playing a PR game in the Ukraine war"²¹⁵; 15 May, "Azov wives: 'Every goodbye could be the last goodbye – we are always ready to learn that they are dead'"²¹⁶

The situation being what it is, it is not surprising that coverage of Russia's special military operation to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine should, according to Ofcom, be exclusively pro-Western. The refusal to describe the events as an 'invasion of a sovereign state' cost RT its broadcasting licence in the United Kingdom. In order to justify its decision, Ofcom cited 29 simultaneous investigations into the media company in order to verify the 'due impartiality' of its coverage of the events in Ukraine.²¹⁷

However, Russian journalists and media workers have faced persecution for years.

In July 2015, due to the EU's introduction of personal sanctions against the international news agency Russia Today Dmitry Kiselev, the British bank Barclays froze the account of RIA Novosti's London office. Explanations (including from lawyers) that Mr Kiselev was not the owner of this media outlet were ignored. Currently, RIA Novosti representatives in the UK still do not have access to their

212 Azov Battalion drops neo-Nazi symbol exploited by Russian propagandists. The Times. 30 May 2022. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/azov-battalion-drops-neo-nazi-symbol-exploited-by-russian-propagandists-lpisp7qg>

213 Azov Battalion: 'We are patriots – we're fighting the real Nazis of the 21st century'. The Times. 30 March 2022.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/azov-battalion-we-are-patriots-were-fighting-the-real-nazis-of-the-21st-century-sdccc0w9t>

214 Heroes of Azovstal freed as Russian missiles rain down. The Times. 30 June 2022.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/heroes-of-azovstal-freed-as-russian-missiles-rain-down-8sz28pt7m#^~^text=Ukraine%20says%20144%20of%20its.start%20of%20the%20Russian%20invasion>

215 Inside Azov, the far-Right brigade killing Russian generals and playing a PR game in the Ukraine war. The Telegraph. 18 March 2022.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/03/18/inside-azov-neo-nazi-brigade-killing-russian-generals-playing/>

216 Azov wives: 'Every goodbye could be the last goodbye – we are always ready to learn that they are dead'. The Telegraph. 15 May 2022.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/05/15/azov-wives-husbands-betrayed-ukrainian-traitors/>

217 Ofcom revokes RT's broadcast licence. Ofcom. 18 March 2022.

<https://www.ofcom.gov.uk/news-centre/2022/ofcom-revokes-rt-broadcast-licence>

corporate account, which prevents the correspondent bureau from functioning properly.

Since February 2016, Channel One correspondent Timur Siraziev has been unable to open an account with NatWest Bank or any other bank when he arrived in the UK. He was not given any reason for the refusal. The problem has still not been resolved, making the correspondent's work in the country very difficult.

In February 2016, without any explanation, HSBC closed the corporate account of the UK office of the Rossiya 1 TV channel, as well as the personal account of chief correspondent Alexander Khabarov.

Since December 2018, Ofcom has launched legal proceedings into the work of the RT news channel, citing an alleged breach of the Broadcasting Code's principle of 'impartiality'. The investigation is looking at seven programmes broadcast between 17 March and 26 April 2018 (two of which were dedicated to the Salisbury incident, the others to the glorification of Nazism in Ukraine and military operations in Syria).

Without waiting for the decision of the High Court in London, Ofcom published the results of its investigation into the RT material and imposed an outrageously high fine of £200,000. In an appeal prepared with the help of British lawyers against the actions of the media regulator, RT presented extensive arguments refuting Ofcom's accusations. In its appeal, RT argued that the UK media regulator had failed to fulfil its obligations under Section 3 of the UK Human Rights Act 1998, which requires Ofcom to interpret and apply the principle of "due impartiality" in full accordance with Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, in particular to ensure the freedom of citizens and the media "to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authorities and independently of any public authority or national borders". Furthermore, RT pointed out that Ofcom failed to take into account the fact that in its coverage of the Salisbury incident, the British media acted in line with the dominant narrative, which initially assumed that the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal was carried out "on the order of the Kremlin". In this regard, RT did not

consider it necessary to further explain the position of the British authorities on the Salisbury incident in its newscasts, and focused on explaining the position of the Russian side on the case.

After considering the appeal in June 2019, the High Court in London found that RT's lawyers had presented "a provable set of arguments that should be fully analysed" and allowed RT to challenge the regulator's decision in further proceedings. However, in late March 2020, the same court rejected RT's claim that the GBP 200,000 penalty imposed by Ofcom was unlawful. Lord Justice Dingemans, a Court of Appeal judge, called RT's argument about the "dominant media narrative" "vague". The court also dismissed the broadcaster's argument that the impartiality requirement interfered with its right to freedom of expression. The judge mentioned that "the only requirement was that, in the programme as broadcast, RT provided balance to ensure that there was 'due impartiality'".

In April 2020, RT filed a second appeal with the High Court of London in an attempt to overturn Ofcom's decision, further clarifying its position, which was dismissed at the end of 2021. At present, RT's management plans to continue to challenge the ruling and is preparing to file a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

Sputnik News, a news agency, also faces restrictions in the UK. Sputnik News, like RT's correspondents, has been denied accreditation to cover the Global Conference for Media Freedom in July 2019. The Foreign Office, citing Ofcom's allegations, explained the decision by pointing to the "active role of RT and Sputnik News in spreading misinformation". The then Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt publicly supported the ban of RT and Sputnik from joining the event, calling them 'not free media, but mouthpieces of the Russian state'.

A similar situation occurred in December 2019, when an RT employee was accredited but subsequently not allowed to attend the NATO summit. Upon arrival at the media centre, an RT representative was detained by the local security service, after which police officers searched the journalist, checked his documents and equipment, and said that his accreditation had been cancelled. To justify their

actions, the police cited the Terrorism Act. RT's inquiries with the organising committee of the NATO summit and the organisation itself went unanswered.

Russian media in the UK continue to face difficulties, mainly due to a constant pressure from the country's authorities. Our correspondents find it difficult to obtain information and make contacts. There have been cases where Russian journalists have had to wait for long periods for the British authorities to renew their work visas, effectively tying them to one place and preventing them from doing normal journalistic work. In addition, Russian media representatives face difficulties in obtaining UK visas for the first time.

Since February 2022, cases of harassment of Russian and Russian-speaking citizens have been registered across the country. Owners of public places have widely used posters with the slogan "GOOD Russian = DEAD Russian", which is clearly borrowed from the 19th-century American general Philip Sheridan, who tarnished himself as an advocate of ruthless warfare against native Indian population in North America. Social networks are flooded with Russophobic comments with threats against both the Russian leadership and ordinary ethnic Russians, and even people with indirect ties to Russia or the territory of the former Soviet Union.

The Consular Section of the Russian Embassy was attacked, when 'activists' threw eggs at it and broke windows in the visitors' hall. In breach of the UK's international legal obligations, the rights of Russian diplomats to work, to fair and favourable working conditions, to access to any place or service intended for the use of the general public, and to security of person and protection by the State have been compromised. These include, in particular, restrictions on access to the Embassy's bank account, the decision by BMW not to renew the contract for servicing the Embassy's fleet of cars, the deactivation of the so-called alarm button in the Embassy and the Russian Ambassador's residence, as well as intrusion into the premises of the Embassy's country house and damage to its property.

The anti-Russian hysteria has not escaped the spheres of culture and sport. For example, the British auction houses Christie's, Sotheby's and Bonhams refuse

to hold auctions of Russian art.²¹⁸ The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire has banned a Russian graduate from taking part in a music competition in Dubai.²¹⁹ The Cardiff Philharmonic Orchestra refused to host a recital dedicated to the work of Pyotr I. Tchaikovsky. The Cardiff Philharmonic Orchestra announced on their website that they “feel the previously advertised programme including the 1812 Overture to be inappropriate at this time”.²²⁰ The Royal Opera House has cancelled the Bolshoi Ballet's London tour.²²¹ London's National Gallery has decided to rename Edgar Degas's Russian Dancers as Ukrainian Dancers at the request of Ukrainian artist Mariam Nayyem.²²²

Russian teams and individual racers were banned from competing in the UK. Russian Formula One driver Nikita Mazepin has been banned from competing in the British Grand Prix.²²³ Russian tennis players were also threatened with suspension from tournaments. Daniil Medvedev was asked to publicly condemn the Russian special operation if he wanted to play at Wimbledon.²²⁴ All representatives from Russia and Belarus were ultimately banned from the competitions claiming that that "was in line with the UK government's efforts to "limit Russia's global influence". The decision by the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club (AELTC) drew the ire of leading tennis players and major sports associations.

218 Sotheby's, Christie's and Bonhams call off Russian art auctions in response to war in Ukraine. The Art Newspaper. 16 March 2022.

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2022/03/15/sothebys-christies-call-off-russian-art-auctions-ukraine-war>

219 Controversy as young Russian pianists banned from international music competitions. Classic FM. 10 March 2022.

<https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/instruments/piano/young-russians-banned-international-competitions/>

220 Cardiff Philharmonic removes Tchaikovsky performance over Ukraine conflict. The Guardian. 9 March 2022.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/09/cardiff-philharmonic-orchestra-removes-tchaikovsky-over-ukraine-conflict>

221 Bolshoi Ballet run cancelled by Royal Opera House. The Times. 26 February 2022.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/bolshoi-ballet-run-cancelled-by-royal-opera-house-mk5vstqh>

222 London National Gallery renames Russian Dancers. Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 5 April 2022.

https://rg.ru/2022/04/05/londonskaia-nacionalnaia-galereia-pereimenovala-russkih-tancovshchic.html?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop

223 Motorsport UK announces actions in response to the situation in Ukraine. Motorsport UK. 2 March 2022.

<https://www.motorsportuk.org/news/motorsport-uk-announces-actions-in-response-to-the-situation-in-ukraine/>

224 Daniil Medvedev could be banned from Wimbledon unless he denounces Vladimir Putin. Independent. 16 August 2022.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/daniil-medvedev-putin-russia-wimbledon-b2037376.html>

As a result, the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) and the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) decided to strip Wimbledon of ranking points for suspending Russian and Belarusian players. The ATP also imposed a fine of USD 1mn on AELTC for this decision.²²⁵

In February 2023, the UK opposed allowing Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete in the Olympic Games in a neutral status if they did not support the Special Military Operation by the Russian Armed Forces to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine when the proposal was considered by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). In addition, the British authorities formed a coalition of 35 "like-minded countries" which issued a joint statement calling on the IOC to ban athletes from Russia and Belarus from competing in France in 2024. The petition also cited the "close relationship" between politics and sport in the two countries, including the fact that "athletes are directly funded and supported by their governments".

In May 2022, looters ransacked the Church of St Nicholas the Wonderworker in Oxford. The altar was vandalised, holy relics, altar vessels and the crucifix were stolen. The church bookshop and donations collected by the congregation for refugees from Ukraine were taken. The Police was informed and opened an investigation into the case.²²⁶

In March 2022, the authorities in Warrington attempted to close a Russian school that educated children from Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine and other countries. However, a petition to save the school, also signed by members of the Russian Embassy in London, helped to prevent its closure.²²⁷

Restrictions have been imposed to cut off wealthy Russians' access to UK banks, including a GBP 50,000 limit on bank accounts.²²⁸

225 Lawn Tennis Association fined for its ban on Russian and Belarusian players. Independent. 7 December 2022. <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/lawn-tennis-association-atp-nottingham-surbiton-eastbourne-b2240591.html>

226 <https://www.facebook.com/StNOrthodox/posts/4911983808877140>

227 https://www.change.org/p/stop-closing-schools-for-teaching-russian-to-children?recruiter=870918672&recruited_by_id=d00a7980-40f6-11e8-b3e5-a7d7d17dbdf4&utm_source=share_petition&utm_campaign=share_petition&utm_term=psf_combo_share_initial&utm_medium=copylink&utm_content=cl_sharecopy_32672193_en-GB%3A6

228 Foreign Secretary imposes UK's most punishing sanctions to inflict maximum and lasting pain on Russia.

In March 2023, the results of a Sky News investigation were published, revealing an increase in discrimination against Russian expatriates since February 2022. The report found that the attacks were unrelated to the individual's opinion on the Special Military Operation, and were based solely on nationality.²²⁹

As documented by British law enforcement officials, in the most egregious cases the offenders went as far as causing bodily harm, making death threats, vandalising and damaging property, sending "white powder" and engaging in "telephone terrorism". It is shocking that, according to the report, the discrimination and attacks on ethnic and national grounds often targeted primary school children. What is more, these attacks are just "the tip of the iceberg," said one of the experts interviewed. In reality, such incidents have been much more common— from the demand that business people sever all relations with Russia to the imposition of restrictions on the parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in the UK.²³⁰

The fight against racial discrimination and xenophobia in the UK is based on the Public Order Act 1986. It prohibits incitement to racial hatred and provides for imprisonment from 6 months to 7 years and/or a fine for intentionally doing so against a racial group, distributing racist material, making inflammatory speeches, creating racist websites on the internet or distributing information against a person or ethnic group with the intention of spreading racial resentment.

The Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 introduced into British law the concept of offences related to incitement of hatred for religious reasons (punishable by up to 7 years of imprisonment and/or a fine). The provisions of this law apply if verbal language, behaviour, written materials, video and audio recordings, or programs “pose a threat” or “are aimed to incite religious hatred”.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/nes/foreign-secretary-imposes-uks-most-punishing-sanctions-to-inflict-maximum-and-lasting-pain-on-russia>

229 Russians assaulted, threatened and abused in UK as hate crimes linked to Ukraine war surge. Sky News. 3 March 2023.

<https://news.sky.com/story/russians-assaulted-threatened-and-abused-in-uk-as-hate-crimes-linked-to-ukraine-war-surge-12821923>

230 Ibid.

Discriminatory actions based on religious beliefs in the workplace may also constitute an offence under this act in certain circumstances.

Another legal instrument aimed at combating discrimination is the 2010 Equality Act. It prohibits insults, harassment, and any form of discrimination in the workplace, including that on the grounds of race or religious belief.

Of particular interest in this regard are the results of an Opinion survey of members of ethnic minorities, published by the Guardian in May 2019. It found that 71 per cent of respondents had experienced racial discrimination (58 per cent in January 2016). In addition, one in four employees of African, Asian or other ethnic origin experienced racial harassment or bullying by a manager in the previous two years.²³¹

According to a study by the Fawcett Society and the Runnymede Trust, three quarters of women of non-European descent (around 2,000 women of this group took part in the study along with 1,000 women of European descent) have experienced racism in the workplace and just over a quarter have experienced racist hate speech. More than 60 per cent of non-white respondents said they had to hide their ethnicity by changing their hairstyle, clothing, eating habits and way of speaking. Women of Indian origin also reported changing their names. Forty-two per cent of non-British women say that their superiors favour white employees when making promotion decisions. One third of women of Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi ancestry say their promotion was not only discouraged, but also prevented. By comparison, only 20 per cent of British women of European descent reported such negative experiences. More than half of the women in the first group also experienced discrimination in hiring.²³²

In February 2021 the Government's Commission for Countering Extremism published a report titled Operating with impunity. Hateful extremism: the need for a legal framework,²³³ which stated that the current legal framework is not sufficient

231 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Report 2019

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-fundamental-rights-report-2019_en.pdf

232 Broken Ladders: the Muth of Meritocracy for Women of Colour in the Workplace

<https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/broken-ladders>

233 Operating with Impunity. Hateful extremism: The need for a legal framework.

for combatting hate crime effectively (including that inspired by far-right ideology). The report acknowledges that full protection against hateful extremism is impossible due to the "risks of over-reach" that would result in potential restrictions on free speech. However, the paper makes a case for updating and tightening the rules in this area (not least due to the development of the digital space).

At the supranational level, the United Kingdom is a member of the 1995 CoE Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) (ratified in 1998). Officially, London states that it 'respects the rights of ethnic minorities living in the country', speaks of its 'constant efforts to eradicate discrimination, support the development of ethnic culture and identity' and emphasises 'government guarantees of their rights and freedoms, including access to education and the media, protection of minority languages and participation of minorities in public life'.

However, contrary to official statements, people from African and Asian countries, ethnic minorities and Roma face racial discrimination in the exercise of their rights to health care, employment, education, social security, during arrest and searches, and in the administration of criminal justice. These population groups face a high level of unemployment and occupational segregation, when they are restricted to mainly unsafe and low-paid jobs.

Strong anti-Gypsy sentiment continues to permeate British society, according to the latest opinion of the FCNM Advisory Committee, published in May 2023. At the same time, the number of crimes committed against members of other ethnic and religious minorities, particularly Jews and Muslims, has increased significantly. At the same time, experts have found that government policies not only fail to address the stereotypes about vulnerable groups, but in some cases make the situation worse by fuelling indirect discrimination against them.²³⁴

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963156/CCE_Operating_with_Impunity_Accessible.pdf

234 Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (fourth cycle). Adopted on 08 December 2022 and published on 25 May 2023.

The Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities notes that the situation for people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds and Irish Travellers (a nomadic ethnic community, own name Pavees) is particularly alarming.²³⁵ Northern Ireland has the highest rates of hate crime in the UK per capita. Furthermore, Travellers do not have adequate representation and participation in political life. The lack of equality data in Northern Ireland prevents concrete solutions being elaborated.²³⁶

The Committee was also concerned that the change in the definition of Gypsy or Traveller in the planning policy for Traveller sites in England, adopted in August 2015, might adversely impact the enjoyment of rights by those who had stopped travelling permanently (due to factors such as illness or old age). Another unresolved issue is the systematic lack of available stopping sites, either due to the reluctance of local authorities to allocate land for this purpose or to opposition from local residents. In addition, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act criminalises trespass (crossing the boundaries of a territory or other immovable property without permission) using a vehicle. UK legislation and law enforcement practices have placed Travellers in an untenable position, unable to live a nomadic lifestyle without being persecuted.²³⁷

In August 2016, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, CERD, highlighted that these communities continue to face exclusion and are subject to negative stereotypes and stigmatisation in the media. The Committee noted continued discrimination against persons belonging to ethnic minorities in terms of access to health services and the quality of medical care provided. It was also noted that the mentioned categories of the population continue to be “disproportionately targeted throughout the criminal justice system”. Furthermore, the ethnic composition of the majority of the police forces in the State party is not

<https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-uk-en/1680ab55b4>

235 Irish Travellers (own name Pavees) is a peripatetic ethnic group of Irish extraction.

236 Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (fourth cycle). Adopted on 08 December 2022 and published on 25 May 2023.

<https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-uk-en/1680ab55b4>

237 Ibid.

representative of the communities that they serve, particularly in Scotland. In addition, CERD was concerned with "continued reports of racist bullying and harassment in schools across the State".²³⁸

In October 2020, the UK Office for National Statistics published figures showing that people of African descent were 18 times more likely to be racially profiled. What is more, the UK has become the first European country to face the issue of institutionalised racial profiling by the police as a result of trials of facial recognition technology.²³⁹

A 2023 INQUEST report on discrimination²⁴⁰ documented a disproportionate number of deaths of people of African descent "in or following police custody" in recent years. In absolute terms, the number of deaths of people of African descent is much lower than that of white British people (23 to 86 between 2012 and 2021), but they are still far more likely to die than the proportion of the population they represent. The report concluded that Black people were seven times more likely to die than White people when restraint was involved. None of the deaths of Black people led to officers being disciplined for racism, at a conduct or criminal level, it was noted.

UN experts have given a critical assessment of efforts to tackle racism in the UK in 2023. The UN Human Rights Council (HRC) Working Group on People of African Descent visited the UK in January 2023. The panel's final report is still being prepared, but the experts' preliminary observations point to the "structural, institutional and systemic" nature of racism in British society. It has been noted that Black people in the UK continue to face racial discrimination on a regular basis. Despite the government's stated efforts, the situation in both the public and

238 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 21st to 23rd periodic reports of the United Kingdom. August

2016. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fGBR%2fCO%2f21-23&Lang=ru

239 Xenophobia, Radicalism, and Hate Crimes across the OSCE: 2018-2020. Moscow, 2021. 188 pp.

240 NEW REPORT: Black men seven times more likely to die following police restraint but racism not being addressed. Inquest. 20 February 2023.

<https://www.inquest.org.uk/police-racism-report-2023>

private sectors has deteriorated over the last 10 years (since the last visit to the UK).²⁴¹

The debate about race and the nation's colonial legacy has become particularly heated since 2020. The rise of the Black Lives Matter movement has much to do with this, although the debate itself has much deeper roots. It is noteworthy that the discussion happens in the spirit of uncompromising criticism of any (even purported) manifestations of "White supremacy" and in the form of mass manifestations, protests, and demolitions of monuments to historical figures suspected of having links with the slave trade. Some institutions (primarily educational) and place names are being changed if they carry the names of such figures. University professors and schoolteachers have been removed where hints of racism were found in their speech (in a number of high-profile cases, it happened specifically on suspicions of anti-Semitism). In general, disciplinary measures (dismissal, suspension from work) against persons who have allegedly made racist or other offensive statements that due to their insignificance cannot be considered as offenses, have become more common in the UK.

In this context, on 16 March 2021, the final report of an independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities²⁴² was presented. The commission was made up of prominent figures from fields spanning education, science, business, healthcare and law enforcement; on the recommendation of Prime Minister Boris Johnson, 9 out of 10 contributors, including the chairperson, represented ethnic minorities.

In contrast to the report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities prepared on the request of the UK government in 2016, which painted a bleak picture as regards ethnic and racial disparities, the new document offers a more optimistic view. It concludes that, although a post-racial society is yet to be

241 End of mission statement by the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent following its country visit to the UK (18-27 January 2023), containing its preliminary findings and recommendations. 27 January 2023.

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/racism/wgeapd/statements/2023-01-27/eom-statement-UK-WGEPAD-2023-01-27.pdf>

242 Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities: The Report.

March 2021. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru

achieved, the UK has become a beacon to other predominantly White countries in minority rights issues due to a significant progress in reducing inequality in education and economy. The authors conclude that they "no longer see a Britain where the system is deliberately rigged against ethnic minorities". The remaining disparity in many spheres is explained not by racial bias but rather by geography, family composition, socio-economic status, culture and religion.

The document recognizes that outright racism still exists in the UK, which has migrated to the internet. It is noted that members of ethnic minorities are hardly ever found at top jobs in some sectors. At the same time, the report sends a message that non-White British people should strive to play an active role in ensuring their participation in all the social spheres. What is more, the authors drew attention to "an increasingly strident form of anti-racism thinking" that seeks to explain all minority disadvantage through the prism of racism, and noted that the BLM movement might have pushed away the less political public from dialogue.

The conclusions implying a decrease in the significance of racist sentiments in the life of the nation caused an extremely negative reaction in some circles, above all ethnic minorities' organisations.

The UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent and the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism E. Tendayi Achiume failed to agree with the report's conclusions. The experts were outraged by the Commission's failure to acknowledge "the pervasive role that the social construction of race was designed to play in society, particularly in normalizing atrocity".²⁴³

The official data, indeed, does suggest certain contradictions. For example, according to an official Home Office statistics (with numbers provided for England and Wales as a whole, then Scotland, and Northern Ireland separately) from April 2021 to March 2022, the rate of hate crime increased. A total of 155,841 such offences were recorded during this period (for comparison, the number was 131.4 thousand in 2020-2021, 111.9 thousand in 2019-2020 and 103.7 thousand in 2018-

²⁴³<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27004&LangID=E>

2019). The overwhelming majority of them – 109,843 – were committed on the grounds of racial hatred, a 19 per cent increase over the reporting period. At the same time, the observed increase in registered crimes may not necessarily be related to a growing number of such actions. This may be due to a greater willingness of victims to report crimes committed against them than before, as well as the readiness of the police to register such reports.

Diminished health outcomes among ethnic minority groups have been another aspect of racial and ethnic disparity that became especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Office for National Statistics²⁴⁴, certain ethnic minority groups (of African, South Asian and Caribbean descent) were 1.5–2 times more likely to die from coronavirus than White Britons. In addition, the highest infection rates were recorded in the predominantly black London boroughs of Brent, Barnet and Harrow. These people are usually underpaid for their work and do not have adequate access to health care. A number of high-profile political figures called on the UK government to immediately launch an independent inquiry into the causes of the "abnormally high mortality" from coronavirus among ethnic minorities. The imbalance was greatest in the male population - men of Black African ethnicity were 2.7 times more likely to die from COVID-19-related causes than white men. A similar trend was seen among people of African-Caribbean and Bangladeshi descent. Females of Black Caribbean ethnic background were the most vulnerable in this regard (twice as likely to die as White females) followed by females of Black African and Pakistani ethnic background. After adjustment for geography, socio-economic status (income level, education) and other factors, the statistical difference in mortality rates remains, although it decreases. Analysts have offered various explanations, including racial discrimination.

244 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/updatingethnicontrastsindeathsinvolvingthecoronaviruscovid19englandandwales/deathsoccurring2marchto28july2020>

On 5 April 2020, it emerged that the London police's counter-terrorism unit was investigating attempts by British far-right groups to exploit the critical coronavirus situation in the country to incite hatred against the Muslim population.

For example, the founder and former leader of the English Defence League, Tommy Robinson, posted a video on social media showing a group of Muslims leaving a 'secret mosque' in Birmingham at the height of the epidemic, despite calls from the British authorities not to gather in groups. The video quickly garnered more than 10,000 views and critical comments. Police later said the footage was taken before the lockdown.

However, not all incidents of xenophobia during the coronavirus pandemic were the result of organised activity by radical groups. In many cases, the racially and ethnically motivated offences were driven by panic and the desire to hold certain social groups responsible for what was happening.

With the arrival of irregular migrants in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, protests have become a prominent phenomenon in the places of their compact settlement with a significant racial component due to the origins of these people (mostly from the Middle East, North Africa, South and Southeast Asia). While the protests reflect to some extent the dissatisfaction of Britons with the lawlessness in their neighbourhoods (especially in the face of the deepening socio-economic crisis in Britain itself), experts suggest that the protests are also inspired by the provocative activities of the far right.

In some cases, anti-immigrant activism is accompanied by the use of violence. On 30 October 2022, a British man launched a Molotov cocktail attack on a migrant reception centre in Dover, south-east England (he subsequently committed suicide; the investigation concluded that the attacker was motivated by far-right ideology). On 7 February 2023, a group of far-right activists assaulted and racially abused foreigners during an anti-migrant protest outside a hotel housing asylum seekers in Knowsley, north-west England. On 19 February 2023, a similar incident took place in a hotel in Rotherham, northern England.

Overall, according to the NGO Hope But Not Hate, the 'hunt for migrants' increased by 102 per cent in 2022 compared to the previous year. In 2022 alone, far-right activists visited accommodation housing migrants and asylum seekers at least 253 times.²⁴⁵

In some cases, racist incidents occur independently of the anti-immigrant sentiment. On 8 February 2023, an 11-year-old black girl was attacked in London. She was not a migrant. On 11 February 2023, racially aggravated comments towards a police officer outside were made during a protest outside Tate Britain art gallery.

Despite active public condemnation and widespread media coverage of anti-Semitism in the UK, human rights activists assess the situation in this area as extremely negative. According to a report by the Community Security Trust, the record for the number of anti-Semitic incidents was broken in 2018. A total of 1,652 anti-Semitic incidents were recorded during the period – 16 per cent more than in 2017. The majority of incidents took place in London and Manchester, which are home to the largest Jewish communities in the country.²⁴⁶

A report by Labour against Anti-Semitism, a human rights NGO, submitted to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, is made an overview of anti-Semitic incidents caused by members of the Labour party.²⁴⁷

However, it should be noted that the Labour leadership has been clear in its condemnation of anti-Semitism. On 27 January 2020, in his Holocaust Memorial Day statement published on Facebook, the then Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said that "the loss of social unity today allows racist political movements to turn some social groups against others". He stressed that the Holocaust Memorial Day is an

245 State of Hate 2023: Rhetoric, Racism and Resentment. Hope not Hate. 26 February 2023.

<https://hopenothate.org.uk/2023/02/26/state-of-hate-2023-rhetoric-racism-and-resentment/>

246 Anti-Semitic incidents report 2018 (2019).

<https://cst.org.uk/publications/cst-publications/antisemitic-incident-reports>

247 UK Labour Party now facing 15,000 page dossier on antisemitism claims. The European Jewish Congress. 6 May 2019.

<https://eurojewcong.org/news/communities-news/united-kingdom/uk-labour-party-now-facing-15000-page-dossier-on-antisemitism-claims/>

occasion to "reflect on the horrors of the past, the evils of Nazism, genocide and anti-Semitism".²⁴⁸

The scale of the problem of anti-Semitism in the country was highlighted by the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, E. Tendayi Achiume, in her report to the 74th session of the UN General Assembly on contemporary manifestations of racism and the fight against the glorification of Nazism, prepared in accordance with UN General Assembly resolution 73/157.²⁴⁹

Ms Siobhán Mullally, HRC Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, has expressed concern about the United Kingdom's policy towards asylum seekers. For example, in June, she criticized the arrangement made in April 2022 to transfer asylum-seekers to Rwanda. Special Rapporteur Mullally said that such a practice violates the international law principle of non-refoulement and does nothing to prevent or combat human trafficking. UN human rights expert urged the United Kingdom to halt plans to forcibly transfer asylum seekers to third countries.²⁵⁰

Not only human rights defenders condemned this decision as inhumane, but also Theresa May, former Prime Minister (2016-2019) and Home Secretary (2010-2016). She expressed her displeasure with the new migration policy, questioning its "legality and efficacy". The Anglican hierarchs were among the critics, as was the Prince of Wales, who commented on the new policy in a private conversation.

Practical implementation of the agreement has so far been prevented by the proactive position of the asylum-seekers to be deported to Kigali, Rwanda, as well as human rights defenders who have undertaken to file the necessary complaints with the judicial authorities. The first "deportation" flight to Kigali was scheduled for June 2022, but was cancelled shortly before departure following the decision by

248 <https://www.facebook.com/JeremyCorbynMP/posts/10157068378103872>

249 Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, E. Tendayi Achiume, A/74/253, pursuant to Assembly resolution 73/157 October 2019. <https://undocs.org/ru/A/74/253>

250 UN expert urges UK to halt transfer of asylum seekers to Rwanda 17 June 2022.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/06/un-expert-urges-uk-halt-transfer-asylum-seekers-rwanda>

the European Court of Human Rights to take interim measures against one of the passengers on board. However, the British authorities have not given up trying to bring the agreement into force.

In January 2022, Ms Siobhán Mullally also raised concerns about the Nationality and Borders Bill, the provisions of which she said would encourage discrimination and serious human rights abuses. In particular, the document does not oblige the state to ensure the protection of migrants and asylum-seeking children, while certain provisions risk increasing the number of people without nationality.²⁵¹ Despite criticism, including from domestic experts, the bill was passed by the British Parliament in April 2022. The act essentially took away the right of foreigners to seek asylum from the British authorities if they had entered the UK illegally and not directly from the state where their "life and freedom were threatened". The measure is aimed at illegal migrants arriving in the UK in small boats across the English Channel (28.5 thousand people in 2021, more than 10 thousand in the first half of 2022), who, after travelling through France and other continental European countries, do not meet the criteria of having arrived directly from a "dangerous" country.

In general, British society embraces diversity. It should be noted that national minorities are widely represented in government offices: Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak is of Indian origin, as is Home Secretary Suella Braverman, while former Home Secretary Priti Patel comes from a family of Indian migrants from Uganda, Secretary of State for Business Kemi Badenoch has Nigerian parents, and Mayor of London Sadiq Khan was born into a family of Pakistani immigrants.

The public sector in the UK has a policy of recruiting ethnic minorities. Since 1999, the British police have been trying to hire more people from ethnic minority backgrounds so that the ethnic composition of law enforcement agencies is representative of the population they serve. Although ethnic minorities make up

251 UK Borders Bill increases risks of discrimination, human rights violations 14 January 2022. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/01/1109792>

14 per cent of the UK population, only 8.1 per cent of police officers were from an ethnic minority background in March 2022 (0.5 per cent more than in 2021). However, this indicator has generally been increasing year on year.²⁵² The greatest disparity was found in London, where minorities make up 15.5 per cent of the Met Police workforce and 40 per cent of the population.

Members of the law enforcement agencies have complained that the progress has been extremely slow. According to the Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council, Sara Thornton, progress on this issue will not be seen until 2052 at the earliest.²⁵³

In 2022, the UK Police launched the Police Race Action Plan to tackle racism and xenophobia in law enforcement and discrimination against ethnic minorities. In particular, the document sets out measures to address the disproportionate use of stop and search against members of ethnic minority groups. Special attention has also been given to supporting the career development of ethnic minorities in law enforcement.²⁵⁴

The legal status of the media is regulated by a number of acts, the most important of which is the 2003 Communications Act. It prohibits the use of the media, as well as social networks owned by the media, for the dissemination of hate speech, propaganda of racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. The main regulator of local TV and radio is the formally independent Office of Communications (Ofcom), headed by Melanie Dawes. Most print media are regulated by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) and the Independent Monitor for the Press (IMPRESS).

At the government level, media activities fall within the remit of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Secretary of State The Rt Hon Lucy Frazer KC MP). In government, relations with the media are the

252 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2022/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2022>

253 Police leader calls for laws to allow positive race discrimination. The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/feb/22/police-leader-calls-for-laws-to-allow-positive-race-discrimination>

254 <https://www.college.police.uk/support-forces/diversity-and-inclusion/action-plan>

responsibility of the Downing Street Director of Communications (Nerissa Chesterfield from September 2023).

At the same time, as mentioned above, social media, messengers and the internet have become the most active environment used by far-right organisations and individuals to spread their ideology. The above-mentioned 2021 report of the Commission for Countering Extremism²⁵⁵ recognises that the nature and extent of extremist material (racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Islamic) in the UK's digital space is "shocking" and that it is impossible to tackle its spread in the absence of relevant legislation. In this context, the Commission recommends that the Government develop the UK regulatory framework accordingly.

In recent years there have also been manifestations of what can be described as reverse discrimination. The most glaring example is a series of cases where investigations into serious crimes committed by ethnic minority criminal gangs remained incomplete because of the reluctance of law enforcement agencies and local authorities to cooperate with the investigation. The findings of an investigation launched by Telford Borough Council, Shropshire, and published in June 2022, into a series of decades-long crimes involving the sexual exploitation of minors in the area, attracted considerable publicity. The investigation revealed that around 1,000 adolescent girls had been victims of a sex trafficking scheme, but authorities and law enforcement agencies in the town had long refrained from prosecuting the accused, who were from the Pakistani diaspora. Moreover, even after the crimes were made public, local authorities apparently tried to divert public attention away from the origins of the perpetrators, fearing that 'racial tensions' would escalate.

The UK should therefore be seen as one of the nations with deep xenophobic sentiments. Prejudice against certain ethnic and religious groups and the tendency to promote the idea of white supremacy are firmly embedded in the public consciousness, partly due to the country's historical – largely colonial (as a parent

255 Operating with Impunity. Hateful extremism: The need for a legal framework. Commission for Countering Extremism.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963156/CCE_Operating_with_Impunity_Accessible.pdf

state) – past. Despite the fact that British far-right groups have no real political power due to their weak organisational structure and fragmentation, the number of their supporters is growing exponentially today. This is due to their high level of social activity in the form of rallies and campaigns, misinformation and recruitment through social networks. Yet official London prefers to gloss over the problems rather than find effective solutions.

Hungary

Hungary's conservative leadership has consistently taken a hard line against any form of xenophobia, including the spread of Nazi ideology, anti-Semitism and any other form of religious intolerance. Neo-Nazi organisations and the use of their symbols, such as the SS lightning bolt logo or the Arrow Cross, are banned by law.²⁵⁶

Torch marches or rallies of former Waffen-SS soldiers have not been observed in Hungary. The ruling conservative Fidesz–KDNP Party Alliance has generally been effective in its efforts to prevent racially motivated intolerance.

In recent years, the Hungarian authorities have also blocked attempts by local neo-Nazi associations to hold annual rallies on the “Day of Honour” commemorating the liberation of Budapest from the Nazis in 1945, an event they interpret as a heroic deed by Hungarian soldiers who defended the city from the Soviet Army.²⁵⁷

Groups such as Blood and Honour, Betyársereg (Army of the Outlaws), the National Guard of the Carpathian Homeland, the National Self-Defence Movement, the Hungarian National Guard, the Movement for a Better Future and other smaller groups have been dissolved by court order.

At the same time, some elements of neo-Nazi ideology can still be found in Hungary's social and political life, not only in clearly marginalised communities, but also in political circles, where the far-right Our Homeland party, represented in the National Assembly, is the main promoter of such ideology. In September 2022, its members installed a bust of Miklós Horthy, the Hungarian dictator and an ally of Hitler, in their parliamentary office. They had originally intended to place it in the main building of the National Assembly, but the Speaker of Parliament, László Kövér, sharply rejected their idea.

Our Homeland's supporters are often seen at neo-Nazi rallies, while the party's leader, László Toroczkai, was previously the head of a far-right

256 Article 335 of the Criminal Code of Hungary.

257 The Supreme Court of Hungary deems such actions to violate certain provisions of national legislation that forbid commemorations of inhumane crimes committed during the National Socialist dictatorship.

organisation, the Sixty-Four Counties Movement (referring to the number of regions that made up the Kingdom of Hungary before 1918). Despite the fact that the party had once faced a real threat of dissolution, promptly changed its charter, got rid of its legally banned symbols and currently positions itself as a “sports and patriotic movement for the preservation of traditions”, it is the Sixty-Four Counties Movement that has absorbed the bulk of the neo-Nazi youth who have become the backbone of the existing neo-Nazi movement in Hungary.

Their ideological allies include members of the Hungarian Legion, a radical organisation mainly made up of various groups of football fans who unabashedly flaunt the Nazi ethos of their group.²⁵⁸ In protest against the Government’s decision to ban last year’s “Day of Honour” celebrations, which would have involved representatives from other European far-right and neo-Nazi groups²⁵⁹, members of the Hungarian Legion organised their own unsanctioned gathering, where they reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to the ideas of radical Hungarian nationalism and expressed support for the Ukrainian nationalist Carpathian Sich Battalion (in 2019, members of this association participated in a series of events held by the Hungarian Legion in Budapest to commemorate the events of 1956).²⁶⁰

Currently, Hungary’s far-right also includes supporters of the Blood and Honour network²⁶¹, which hosted a private concert in the Hungarian capital on 11 February 2023 to mark the “Day of Honour”. This day commemorates the events that took place on 11 February 1945, when Hitler’s troops and their Hungarian collaborators attempted to break out of Budapest surrounded by the Red Army. Every second week of February since 1997, far-right groups have organised the commemorative event with the participation of representatives from Eastern

258 In October 2019, a group of around 50 members of the association attacked representatives of an NGO operating under the auspices of the Jewish Youth Union. Local human rights groups have indicated that the investigation into the case was closed without charges being brought.

259 The Skins4Skins group, the Nordic Resistance Movement, a Swedish neo-Nazi organisation, and Die Rechte, a German extremist party.

260 Budapest utcáin vonult a Karpatszka Szics. Kárpát Hír. 31 October 2019.

г. <https://karpathir.com/2019/10/31/budapest-utcain-vonult-a-karpatszka-szics/>

261 A neo-Nazi network based in the UK. The activities of its Hungarian branch were banned by a court decision in 2005.

European countries.

Every year, Hungarian anti-fascists rally against neo-Nazi events. In February 2023, the Antifa movement took the lead in organising a demonstration. It took place at the Buda fortress, which houses the residences of the Hungarian President and Prime Minister. The anti-fascist rally was attended by several hundred people. They were holding placards and banners calling for a policy of zero tolerance towards the glorification of Nazism. Police officers blocked the streets near the Buda fortress to prevent neo-Nazis from entering the rally and clashing with the demonstrators. Right-wing media reported clashes between the neo-Nazi demonstrators and the members of the anti-fascist movement (such rallies had never been recorded in Hungary before)²⁶². It was noted that the Antifa acted as instigators provoking a violent response from the neo-Nazis. The leaders of Our Homeland demanded that the anti-fascist movement be recognised as a terrorist organisation.²⁶³

The celebration of the “Day of Honour” was banned by the Budapest Police Department in 2022 citing fears of extremism and a threat to public order. The Supreme Court of Hungary upheld the decision. Far-right organisations themselves noted that in previous years, beginning in 2017, the city authorities had banned the celebrations, but those bans were not validated by the Supreme Court.²⁶⁴

In September 2022, right-wing extremists and Roma advocates held their rallies simultaneously. On 11 September, about 1,000 activists, mostly from the Roma community, protested in Nyíregyháza against a rally of about 400 far-right extremists from Our Homeland and Betjársereg. The rally against ‘gypsy crime’ followed the murder in August of Gergely Juhász, one of the regional leaders of Betjársereg, outside a nightclub where he had worked as a security guard. Far-right groups not only blamed the Roma collectively for the murder, but were also

262 Anti-fascists protest annual neo-Nazi gathering in Budapest. Peoples Dispatch. 14 February 2023. <https://peoplesdispatch.org/2023/02/14/anti-fascists-protest-annual-neo-nazi-gathering-in-budapest/>; 12 February 2023. <https://360tv.ru/news/mir/zhiteli-budapeshty-vystupili-protiv-shodki-neonatsistov/>

263 Rendkívüli: Antifa terror Magyarországon! Mi Hazánk. 12 February 2023. <https://mihazank.hu/koveteljuk-hogy-minositsek-terrorszervezette-az-antifat/>

264 Hungary Bans Annual Neo-Nazi Gathering in Budapest. Balkan Insight, 2 February 2022. <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/02/02/hungary-bans-annual-neo-nazi-gathering-in-budapest/>

outraged that the alleged perpetrator had not been charged.²⁶⁵

Information about the activities of Hungarian extremist and neo-Nazi groups, their events and demonstrations is disseminated on social media. Their leaders often use Telegram and Facebook (the platform is banned in Russia). Their social media accounts often have far more followers than those of local mainstream politicians.

As far as the promotion of false interpretations of war history is concerned, it should be noted that, the Hungarian Constitution contains the thesis that the self-determination of the state was lost on 19 March 1944 and restored on 2 May 1990 (from the invasion of Hitler's troops as part of Operation Margarita and the establishment of the Niláshist regime led by Ferenc Szalasi to the formation of the first government after the change of system), i.e. the idea of a 'double occupation' of the country by Nazi Germany and then by the USSR. Budapest officially promotes the message that the Communist state and the Nazi regime are equally "guilty of crimes against humanity".²⁶⁶ Along with the swastika, the SS insignia and the Arrow Crosses, the "red five-pointed star" and the "sickle and hammer"²⁶⁷ are among the symbols banned in Hungary. At the same time, the Fidesz-KDNP government has refrained from emphasising this idea and usually plays down any differences between the Russian and the Hungarian assessments of wartime and post-war history.

At the same time, the Hungarian authorities do not restrict the commemoration of World War II Victory Day and other events related to the liberation of the country from the Nazi invaders. No attempts to persecute Red Army veterans have been recorded in Hungary.

The integrity of Russian war memorials in Hungary remains protected. Their legal status is currently governed by the inter-governmental Agreement on the remembrance of fallen soldiers and civilian victims of wars and the status of burial

265 Hungary: Roma counter-demonstrators outnumber neo-Nazis in Nyíregyháza. European Roma Rights Center. 12 September 2022. <http://www.errc.org/news/hungary-roma-counter-demonstrators-outnumber-neo-nazis-in-nyiregyhaza>

266 Hungarian Act LV of 2018 on the right of assembly, Article 14.

267 2012 Criminal Code of Hungary, Art. 334.

sites dated 6 March 1995. Incidents of vandalism against Soviet war memorials are rare and appear to be mainly linked to the actions of Ukrainian extremists, whose numbers in Hungary have increased significantly since 24 February. Local authorities, for their part, act constructively and in accordance with national legislation and the above-mentioned bilateral agreement.

Hungary's ruling conservative Fidesz-KDNP party alliance has consistently pursued a policy of zero tolerance for xenophobia, including the spread of Nazi ideology, anti-Semitism and other forms of religious intolerance. However, Hungarian criminal law does not recognise the motive of racial and religious hatred as an aggravating circumstance in criminal offences.²⁶⁸ Local think tanks specialising in this matter estimate that xenophobic incidents in Hungary are rare and incidental, and do not involve physical violence by right-wing extremist groups.²⁶⁹ Proponents of an opposite view, on the other hand, see Hungary as a country with widespread xenophobia, usually citing the Hungarian Government's hard-line policy against refugees and irregular migrants, especially at the height of the European migration crisis in 2015.

According to ECRI, the Hungarian police recorded 100 hate crimes in 2020, 132 in 2019, 194 in 2018, 233 in 2017 and 33 in 2016.²⁷⁰

International human rights bodies have challenged the Hungarian authorities in relation to the situation of the Roma population in Hungary. This group appears to suffer from various forms of discrimination due to their low social status, leading to concerns about manifestations of racism and racial discrimination. Reports by international human rights organisations, the Hungarian Ombudsman, and human rights NGOs have repeatedly highlighted challenging living conditions experienced by Roma, limited access to education for children of Roma origin,

268 Report by Valerii Engel, European Centre for the Development of Democracy. Problems of xenophobia, discrimination and aggressive nationalism in Europe (January 2014 - June 2015), 2015.
<https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/d/188606.pdf>

269 Xenofóbia vizsgálati eredmények és ajánlások Magyarországon a humán migráció kezelésének rendszeti feladatait ellátók között. (Xenophobia research results and recommendations in Hungary). among those responsible for the management of human migration). *Belügyi Szemle. № 2021/6.*
<https://ojs.mtak.hu/index.php/belugyiszemle/article/view/6560/5185>

270 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Hungary (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 6 December 2022, published on 9 March 2023.
<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-6th-report-on-hungary-translation-in-hungarian-/1680aa687b>

high dropout rates among school students, and called on the Government to take practical measures to address the situation.²⁷¹ In recent decades, human rights organisations have drawn attention to the fact that about 100 ghettos have formed in different parts of Hungary, mostly in the north-east of the country. These ghettos are not under full control of the authorities, and their existence does not serve to improve the standard of living or the social adaptation of the Roma. The issues pertaining to the Roma community have been presented to various bodies, including the Committee on the Rights of the Child²⁷², the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination²⁷³, the Human Rights Committee²⁷⁴, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women²⁷⁵, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance²⁷⁶, as well as the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.²⁷⁷

In its 2022 report, The EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights highlighted the disadvantaged situation of the Roma community in Hungary. Specifically, the report noted the restricted access to education for Roma children, forced evictions of Roma, and pandemic-related restrictions that significantly impacted this community.²⁷⁸ The AOHR has raised similar concerns in its 2023

271 Beszámoló az alapvető jogok biztosának és helyetteseinek tevékenységéről. 2021. B/18284.

<https://www.ajbh.hu/documents/10180/7431400/AJBH+besz%C3%A1mol%C3%B3+2021.pdf/bf73947f-a224-3e34-ca23-32efe207423b?version=1.0&t=1667998470775>

272 Concluding observations Committee on the Rights of the Child on the sixth periodic report of Hungary. February 2020.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC/C/HUN/CO/6&Lang=en

273 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 18th to 25th periodic reports of Hungary. June 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fHUN%2fCO%2f18-25&lang=ru

274 Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 6th periodic report of Hungary. March 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fHUN%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

275 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 9th periodic report of Hungary, 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCEDAW%2fCO%2f9HUN%2f51815&Lang=ru

276 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Hungary (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted on 6 December 2022, published on 9 March 2023. <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-6th-report-on-hungary-translation-hungarian-/1680aa687b>

277 Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Hungary (fifth cycle), adopted on 26 May 2020, published on 12 October 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-hungary-en/16809eb484>

278 Fundamental Rights Report 2022, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

report noting that the European Commission had opened an investigation into the Hungarian authorities' violation of EU rules due to the segregation of Roma children in educational institutions.²⁷⁹

As for anti-Semitic incidents in Hungary, the general attitude towards the local Jewish community has improved. However, ADL, an American non-governmental human rights organisation, has found that the number of Hungarians with negative opinions of Jews has been rising consistently since 2012. According to a 2023 report by ADL, around 2.9 million out of 8 million Hungarians hold anti-Semitic beliefs. Moreover, the watchdog claims that Hungary is one of the most anti-Semitic countries in Eastern Europe, with manifestations of anti-Semitism more common among young people under the age of 35.²⁸⁰

According to a 2021 survey conducted by the Action and Defence Foundation, Hungary ranks third among a total of 16 countries in terms of the level of anti-Semitic attitudes in society (following Greece and Poland). The survey reveals that 42% of the Hungarian population holds strongly or moderately prejudiced opinions towards Jews. Specifically, 24% of Hungarians are openly anti-Semitic and 18% hold moderately anti-Semitic views. In terms of party preferences, the Our Homeland party leads with 45% of its supporters harbouring anti-Semitic views, followed by the Jobbik party with 40%, the Hungarian Socialist Party with 31%, and the activists of the Fidesz-KDNP alliance with 28%. The liberal Democratic Coalition stands at 18%, while For Alternative Politics and Momentum stand at 14% each. At the same time, the Hungarian government has upheld a zero-tolerance approach to any forms of anti-Semitism over recent decades.

Mazsihisz, a federation of Hungarian Jewish communities, documented 20 incidents of anti-Semitism in 2019 and 31 in 2020.²⁸¹

The human rights NGOs' concerted campaign of criticism against the ruling

279 Fundamental Rights Report 2023, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

280 Anti-Semitism Incidence in Hungary, ADL. <https://global100.adl.org/country/hungary>

281 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Hungary (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted on 6 December 2022, published on 9 March 2023.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-6th-report-on-hungary-translation-in-hungarian-/1680aa687b>

conservative alliance has become a fixture of the human rights landscape in Hungary, with Budapest, in turn, accusing them of interfering in domestic politics in an effort to influence the country's leadership.

International human rights organisations, at the urging of Brussels, have met with criticism Hungary's tough measures to curb the influx of refugees via the "Balkan" route. Among other issues, Hungary's reluctance to accept any migrants has unnerved EU leaders.²⁸² Many human rights organisations, however, have acknowledged the significant number of refugees and asylum seekers coming to Hungary and the fact that it had led to a crisis situation in the country.

For instance, in its report, Amnesty International criticised the sweeping measures introduced in 2016, which the watchdog said had flouted Hungary's obligations to ensure effective access to international protection for asylum seekers.

The Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants of the UN Human Rights Council, Felipe González Morales, conveyed his apprehension about the unfavourable condition of migrants in Hungary following his visit to the country in July 2019.²⁸³ Among the areas of concern, he mentioned the automatic detention of asylum-seekers in transit zones, the poor living conditions in such zones, the limited access to medical care, the great difficulty for asylum-seekers to challenge detention decisions in court, and the denial of access to transit zones for civil society organisations (with the exception of lawyers working on behalf of human rights organisations). Furthermore, although the Special Rapporteur maintained a critical stance on Hungary's governance of migration, he praised the programme funded by the Government to educate students from 70 countries in Hungarian universities, which aimed to promote development through education and address the root causes of migration.

²⁸² In recent years, however, Budapest has come under pressure from EU bodies for its independent policies. Along with Poland, Hungary has been scrutinised for its compliance with EU law. Furthermore, in July 2021, the European Commission challenged Budapest over a law passed a month earlier banning the propaganda of homosexuality among minors, calling it discriminatory.

²⁸³ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants. Visit to Hungary, May 2020. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G20/111/59/PDF/G2011159.pdf?OpenElement>

Following her visit in November 2021, the UN Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression Irene Khan emphasized the increasing incidence of hate speech towards migrants and refugees, along with the human rights activists who support them.²⁸⁴

According to ECRI, the Hungarian public discourse has become increasingly xenophobic in recent years, and political speech has taken on highly divisive and antagonistic overtones particularly targeting refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and Muslims. These concepts are often being conflated, with migrants being described as 'Muslim invaders'. However, the Commission acknowledges that the arrival of the substantial amount of asylum seekers in 2015 was perceived as a threat to Hungarian security, national identity and culture, leading to an exacerbation of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiments. Additionally, ECRI has documented cases when refugees were prevented from seeking asylum. It is worth mentioning that the Commission indirectly acknowledged that Hungarian authorities and society have distinct attitudes towards refugees from the Middle East and Europe when, as it noted the significant influx of refugees from Ukraine in 2022, it also stressed that NGOs and volunteers had been rather overburdened with the provision of services.²⁸⁵

In its 2023 report the AOHR notes that Hungary has reinforced its 'border hunters', a newly set-up special unit within the police, who do not have to undergo the same training and obtain the same qualifications as ordinary police personnel. They are charged with patrolling the border, apprehending people and escorting them back. As of December 2022, they had apprehended 3,776 migrants who had attempted to cross, or crossed, the fenced Hungarian-Serbian border in an irregular manner.²⁸⁶

284 Hungary: Government's stranglehold on media poses serious risks to human rights - UN expert. OHCHR Press release. 22 November 2021. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/11/hungary-governments-stranglehold-media-poses-serious-risks-human-rights-un>

285 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Hungary (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted on 6 December 2022, published on 9 March 2023.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-6th-report-on-hungary-translation-in-hungarian-/1680aa687b>

286 Fundamental Rights Report 2023, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has highlighted that Hungary is a frequent source and transit country for victims of human trafficking. Migrant females are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking.²⁸⁷

European bodies have also linked Budapest's steps to regulate the activities of NGOs in the country to the government's opposition to migration. The authorities have been criticised for an alleged suppression of civil society groups, who are seen as playing a key role in alleviating the difficulties experienced by asylum seekers and irregular migrants and in protecting their rights under international and EU law.

In February 2018, the European Commission launched proceedings with the European Court of Justice (ECJ) to establish whether the Hungarian legislation was in line with EU regulations. The catalyst was the Law on Non-Governmental Organisations from June 2017 obligating relevant NGOs to disclose in all their publications, printed materials and websites that they were "foreign-supported organisations". This became a mandatory requirement for NGOs who received foreign financial assistance exceeding HUF 7.2 million (approximately USD 29,000 at the time of the trial). As expected, in June 2020, the European Court of Justice identified that the regulations of the legislation were in conflict with EU law. In response, Prime Minister Victor Orbán sharply criticised the EU for gross interference into the Hungary's internal affairs.

These laws are being considered in the European bodies together with a package of initiatives adopted by Hungary in 2018, known as "Stop Soros", which also criminalise the provision of assistance to irregular migrants. They have also been ruled by the EU Court of Justice to be in breach of EU law.

Irene Hahn, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression at the UN Human Rights Council, added her

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf
287 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 9th periodic report of Hungary. February 2023.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCEDAW%2FCOC%2FHUN%2F51815&Lang=ru

voice to the criticism of Hungary's actions in this area. During her visit, she noted the detrimental impact of the Law on Non-Governmental Organisations and urged Budapest to re-evaluate its stance on civil society groups in light of the EU Court of Justice decision.

In the 2023 report, AOHR notes that Hungary is mentioned in the European Commission's Rule of Law reports as a country that restricts the activities of non-governmental organisations.²⁸⁸

Budapest's refusal to adhere to the 'pan-European norms' of tolerance, which in reality amount to the propaganda of non-traditional relationships and the artificial imposition of other similar neoliberal values in society, remains another irritant for the European Union. In 2021, the European Commission presented a legal case before the EU Court of Justice concerning Hungary's enactment of a legislation restricting the dissemination of information about homosexuality and gender reassignment to minors. In a statement, the European Commission cynically called the protection of minors a legitimate public interest of the Hungarian authorities that the EU shares and aspires to. However, EU officials noted that the information provided by the Hungarian authorities on the adopted laws did not explain why introducing children to LGBT content might be detrimental to their well-being or not in their best interests, displaying a glaring double standard on the matter.²⁸⁹ In its report for 2023, the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights criticised Budapest for banning self-identification and the promotion of a gender identity other than the sex at birth, as well as gender reassignment.

The report also accuses the Hungarian authorities of being reluctant to incorporate the concept of gender, as defined by the Istanbul Convention, into their legal system. The report highlights that the convention defines "gender" as roles, behaviours, actions and attributes that are socially constructed, and includes a

288 Fundamental Rights Report 2023, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

289 EU founding values: Commission starts legal action against Hungary and Poland for violations of fundamental rights of LGBTIQ people. European Commission press release. 15 July 2021.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_3668

definition that opposes the concept of biological sex.²⁹⁰ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has also criticized the authorities' imposition of "stereotypical attitudes" about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society. The Committee claims that this practice impedes the achievement of gender equality.²⁹¹

290 Fundamental Rights Report 2023, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

291 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 9th periodic report of Hungary. February 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCEDAW%2FCOC%2FHUN%2F51815&Lang=ru

Greece

In Greece, no cases of glorification of Nazism, distortion or rewriting of the history of the Second World War and its results by the official authorities have been reported.

The Greek society has a relatively high level of immunity to far-right rhetoric, more than 65% of Greeks reject attempts to revise history and whitewash the Nazis and their proxies. This attitude stems from the living memory of the occupation of Greece by the 'Axis' powers in 1941-1944, which took many lives and caused enormous material damage, prompting Athens to keep raising the issue of compensations with Berlin.

However, in December 2022, when the Resolution on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance introduced annually by Russia and other co-sponsors was considered by the UN General Assembly, the Greek delegation for the first time voted against it (while it had always abstained before), as it followed the consolidated position of the European Union member states²⁹².

Greece sees as a landmark event in its fight against the spread of hate ideology the completion in October 2020 of the trial of the leaders of the Golden Dawn nationalist party and its protagonists (60 in total), charged with, inter alia, murders and illegal possession of weapons, which had lasted since 2013. The organization was found to be a criminal group and prohibited, and its leaders were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. According to experts, the law enforcement agencies' successful action against the Golden Dawn contributed to a 17 per cent drop in antisemitism in the country.²⁹³

The desecration of a memorial to Thessaloniki Jews killed in WWII, which located in the territory of the Thessaloniki University built on the spot of an old Jewish cemetery destroyed by the Nazi occupational authorities in 1942, sparked a

²⁹²<https://www.facebook.com/MIDRussia/posts/pfbid022KDqkuKkz3VpJ54tX9Bno59GCC7qFD3caiCR9nkrJv2tMaePq1nxQdzZCXc1DVfl>

²⁹³ Xenophobia, Radicalism, and Hate Crimes across the OSCE: 2018-2020. Moscow, 2021. - 188 p.

great resonance within the Greek society.²⁹⁴ The act of vandalism was condemned by the Greek Foreign Ministry.²⁹⁵ –

A long-term project to create a Holocaust Memorial Museum and Human Rights Education Centre is underway in Thessaloniki, which aim, inter alia, to help tackle racism and religious discrimination in Greece.²⁹⁶

There still exist a number of right-wing radical parties and organizations, which, with the collapse of the Golden Dawn, have been given a chance to gain a foothold on the Greek political scene. These include, among others:

The Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) – a nationalist party established in 2000. Its members advocate forced deportation of refugees who are not needed for the Greek economy;

The Popular Greek Patriotic Union (LEPEN) – a party founded in 2016 by former Golden Dawn members. It actively promotes anti-migrant and anti-Islamic ideas going as far as organizing mass rallies against refugees;

The Patriotic Radical Union (PAT.R.I.E.) – an ultra-nationalist party founded in 2018. In 2019, they officially formed a union with the LAOS party.

The New Right - a far-right nationalist party. It also openly stands against Islam, immigrants and refugees. The party leader positions himself and his organization as fighters against the 'Islamic colonization' of Greece and Europe.

The Greek Socialist Resistance (ESA) – a neo-Nazi organization. It adopted the emblem of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF).²⁹⁷

The National Party - Greeks (formerly Greeks for the Fatherland) – a far-right party established in April 2020. It was founded by one of the main leaders of the Golden Dawn, former member of parliament Ilias P. Kasidiaris (was condemned in 2020 and is currently in prison).

The Spartans - a far-right nationalist party founded in 2017. The party calls for maximally tough migration legislation. The party made it through to parliament

294 https://www.avgi.gr/koinonia/435149_sto-eleos-ton-fasiston-ta-ebraika-mnimeia

295 <https://www.mfa.gr/en/current-affairs/statements-speeches/statement-by-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-regarding-the-desecration-of-the-monument-dedicated-to-the-old-jewish-cemetery-of-thessaloniki-30122022.html>

296 <http://www.holocausteducenter.gr/executive-summary/>

297 Xenophobia, Radicalism, and Hate Crimes across the OSCE: 2018-2020. Moscow, 2021. - 188 p.

at the last parliamentary election on 25 June 2023, gaining 12 seats out of 300. Former Golden Dawn supporters accounted for more than a half of the party's votes.

Greece has in force Law 4285/2014 on Combating Certain Forms and Expressions of Racism and Xenophobia by means of Criminal Law, which lists the relevant offenses under a separate category of crimes. This act introduced stricter punishment for fuelling hatred and inciting to violence against certain groups of the population, providing for imprisonment for up to three years and a fine of EUR 20,000.²⁹⁸

In accordance with the Recommendations of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), in December 2020, Greece adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) against Racism and Intolerance, which seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination based on race, skin colour, religion, belief, national or ethnic origin, etc. The NAP is implemented in four major areas: awareness-raising, education, social integration and justice.²⁹⁹

Greece consistently implements the Recommendations of the UN Human Rights Committee, but has not ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990), the European Convention on Nationality (1992) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995). Nor has it signed or ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992).

No discriminatory prohibitions with regard to the participation of national minorities in the political life and administration of the state, to which representatives of non-titular ethnic groups enjoy free access.

No infringements on the freedom of assembly or belief have been reported in Greece. Human rights defenders point to challenges in ensuring the rights to ethnic, cultural and linguistic self-identification of the Muslim population of the region of Thrace in the North-East of the country on the border with Turkey, as

²⁹⁸ <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-anthropina-dikaiomata/n-4285-2014.html>

²⁹⁹ <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-first-report-on-greece-adopted-on-28-june-2022-published-on-22-se/1680a818bf>

well as a number of islands in the Aegean Sea. The only officially recognized minority (Greek legislation lacks the definition of 'national minority') in Greece is the 'Muslim' minority, which incorporates all representatives of non-titular ethnic groups living in Thrace: Turks, Pomaks, Gypsies, totalling more than 120 thousand people. Athens continues to legislatively restrict the possibility to add the term 'Turkish' to the names of public, political, sports, cultural and any other associations. Faith leaders of the Thrace Muslims - the muftis - are appointed by the Greek authorities; at the same time, there also exist 'alternative' muftis chosen by the population.

In June 2022, with the support of the Ministry of Education and Religion, a house of worship for the Alevi community (2,800 members) was opened in Thrace; it became the first institution of this sort in Greece, and third in Europe (after Austria and Germany).³⁰⁰

Manifestations of xenophobia have increased due to a growing rate of immigration from the Middle East and North Africa.

Human rights defenders are concerned about conditions in reception centres – overcrowding, low sanitary standards, limited access to qualified medical care, as well as violations of rules regarding detention time limits, separation of children and adults, provision of qualified interpreters, etc.

EU authorities and human rights NGOs increasingly accuse Athens of illegally expelling potential asylum seekers back into the Turkish territory/sea area when they attempt to cross the border.

In 2022, Greece decided on the deportation to Turkey of 540 immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa. At the same time, by July 2023, Greece had provided refuge to 23.8 thousand Ukrainians.³⁰¹ In view of the 'easier' entry conditions, fast-track procedure for granting temporary protection and highly tolerant attitude to Ukrainian migrants on the part of Greek authorities, many humanitarian organizations and human rights NGOs have accused the Greek

300 <https://www.protothema.gr/greece/article/1255976/egainiastike-to-pto-tzem-evi-stin-ellada-gia-tous-alevites/>

301 Estimated number of refugees from Ukraine recorded in Europe and Asia as of July 2023 – Statista; Greece softens “tough” migration policy for Ukrainians – France 24

leadership of discriminatory policies towards other refugees, including from the MENA region.

The Report of the EU Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)³⁰² on the violation of migrants' rights by Greek law enforcement officers published on 15 February 2022 shows that the practice of pushing back migrants is systemic, and the EU Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) deliberately covers up abuses.

According to Amnesty International's 2022 final report on Greece, mortality rates among refugees increased more than twice as compared to 2021. In June 2023, an Italy-bound fishing vessel carrying more than 700 irregular migrants from Tobruk sank in the Greek waters; only 104 people were rescued.

The 2023 Press Freedom Index contained in the annual report by Reporters Without Borders places Greece 107th out of 180 countries (the country ranked 70th in 2021). It notes that the police often resort to violence, while journalists are regularly prevented from covering migration-related issues and rallies in the capital.³⁰³

According to the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) 2022 Fundamental Rights Report, in October 2021, a 20-year-old Roma man was shot dead by police officers during a chase. This prompted the authorities to adopt a number of measures to reform the police rapid response system, including training for law enforcement officers.³⁰⁴

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in its concluding observations of 28 June 2022³⁰⁵ pointed to discrimination against Roma children, calling Greece to establish legal safeguards to prevent statelessness of children born to foreign parents and facilitate their access to Greek citizenship.

Since the beginning of the Special Military Operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civil population of Donbass, the Greek authorities have been turning a blind eye to the abundance of right-wing radicals in

302 <https://fragdenstaat.de/dokumente/233972-olaf-final-report-on-frontex/>

303 <https://rsf.org/en/country/greece>

304 Greece (2021), 'Takis Theodorikakos: Reforms in the Greek Police'

('Τάκης Θεοδωρικάκος: Μεταρρυθμίσεις στην Ελληνική Αστυνομία'), 1 November 2021.

305 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FGRC%2FCO%2F4-6&Lang=en

Kiev's armed formations. Furthermore, in April 2022, on the initiative of the New Democracy ruling party, Greek parliament streamed V.Zelensky's video address that included messages by two neo-Nazi Azov battalion fighters.³⁰⁶ This caused an uproar both in parliament and mass media, and the government had to acknowledge that the participation of Azov fighters in Zelensky's address had been both 'incorrect and inappropriate.'³⁰⁷

In March 2022, acts of vandalism and desecration of monuments related to our country were reported. The name and symbols of the Ukrainian Azov national battalion were painted by unknown individuals on a monument to Soviet soldiers in Athens, a monument to Admiral Fyodor Ushakov on the island of Corfu was sprayed with paint, and the Russian flag was torn off the composition. The offenders also took down the information plate on the monument to Alexey Orlov's navy squadron on the island of Lemnos and stole the Russian flag from the flag-post.³⁰⁸ There have been no official reports on the outcomes of the investigation into these incidents.

The Greek authorities have declared a policy of winding down bilateral cooperation, including in the cultural and humanitarian areas. In March 2022, the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sport announced the decision to "postpone all events involving Russian cultural organizations, cooperation with them and discussion of any joint plans".³⁰⁹ The Russia-Greece Cross Year of History under the patronage of President of the Russian Federation and Prime Minister of Greece was terminated. A number of cultural events were cancelled, including performances by the Moscow Soloists chamber ensemble led by Yuri Bashmet in Athens and Thessaloniki in late March 2022. Recently, however, the ban imposed by the Ministry of Culture has become more lenient. In February 2023, Megaro

306 <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/en/Enimerosi/Grafeio-Typou/Deltia-Typou?press=eb620db9-1bc3-4b96-8ab0-ae70011f2170>

307 <https://www.kathimerini.gr/politics/561798445/antidruseis-gia-tin-paroysia-meloys-toy-tagmatos-toy-azof-stin-omilia-zelenski/>

308 <https://ria.ru/20220326/pamyatnik-1780239271.html>

309 <https://www.facebook.com/culturegr/posts/pfbid0obQ5XgLNvFC4i3GVTRV8Je6KqHDPjddfeGdyKmfedVxmW8hRjclZxNGrUnb639pl>

Mousikis concert hall in Athens organized performances of violinist Vadim Repin and pianist Mikhail Pletnev.

An unprecedented campaign to discredit Russia fuelled by anti-Russian statements of officials was launched in the Greek media. The access of the Greek public to objective information about the events in Ukraine and Russia's approaches has been seriously impeded, and the media space is dominated by a fierce Russophobic way of information coverage. The outreach work of the Russian Embassy in Athens and the Consulate General in Thessaloniki is under attack. Access to the Sputnik Greece news website,³¹⁰ Rossiya 24 TV channel and other Russian information resources³¹¹ was cut off in the country. At the same time, pro-government media have more than once offered a platform to Kiev-controlled diaspora organizations in Greece, which promoted a distorted picture of the situation near Mariupol and other liberated territories.

There has been an increase of manifestations of russophobia in everyday life. Incidents involving immigrants with nationalist attitudes have been reported. In April 2022, a group of Ukrainians attacked participants in the motor rally "For Peace! For Russia! For Greece!" held in the Greek capital. A seven-year-old girl from Russia was injured. On 24 April 2022, a woman from Russia was beaten on a beach in Athens.³¹² A six-grader from a mixed Russian-Greek family was sent to hospital after being beaten by her classmates based on hatred.³¹³ In December 2022 and in February 2023, Ukrainian nationals tore the Russian flag off the building of the Honorary Consulate of the Russian Federation in Rethymno (Crete).

Ukrainians continue with the anti-Russian propaganda online, calling to violence on national grounds, engage in glorification of neo-Nazi fighters in the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and national battalions. The Greek Bandera community is raising funds in support of the Armed Forces of Ukraine via Facebook. Greek authorities do not respond to such activities in any way.

310 <https://www.in.gr/2022/03/03/greece/sputnik-anakoinosi-eksedosan-oi-ergazomenoi-gia-mayro-sto-sait-kai-stin-ellada/>

311 <https://rua.gr/news/obschestvo/48592-v-gretsii-otklyuchili-rossijskie-telekanaly.html>

312 <https://ria.ru/20220426/paskha-1785484413.html>

313 <http://www.holocausteducenter.gr/executive-summary/>.

In spring 2022, there were instances of discrimination against Russians living in Greece on the part of local banks, which blocked our compatriots' personal accounts without explanation.³¹⁴

314 <https://ria.ru/20220323/banki-1779646928.html>

Denmark

In Denmark, there have been no cases of glorification of the Nazi movement, the former members of the Nazi SS organization and its branches in 2022 – early 2023. There have been no incidences when monuments honouring those who have fought against Nazism during World War II would have been demolished; as well as no exhumations of remains of fighters against Nazism and no prosecution of the Red Army or Allied forces veterans.

The Danish authorities do not oppose holding of events related to the celebration of Victory Day and other anniversaries, providing assistance in the maintenance of graves of the Soviet soldiers located in municipal cemeteries.

However, when voting at the UN General Assembly on the draft resolution "Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" submitted annually by the Russian Federation and other sponsors, the Danish delegation abstains or votes against it (in 2011 and 2022), in solidarity with other European Union member States.

There is no direct ban on organizations promoting racial discrimination in the Danish Penal Code, as well as on participation in such organizations.³¹⁵

There are a number of neo-Nazi organizations active in Denmark (Danish National Front, Danish Defence League, White Pride, and Danish National Socialist Movement). Their level of activity is low, mainly due to a lack of funding and small membership. Practically, they focus on the distribution of propaganda materials through the Internet and social networks, mainly reflecting the attitude of these organizations towards the government's migration policy, as well as calls for intolerance against the followers of Judaism living in the country.

The right-wing neo-Nazi group Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM) (active in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland) traditionally stands out. Unlike other similar organizations, the Nordic Resistance Movement has a clear

315 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 22nd to 22th periodic reports of Denmark. 3 December 2021
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fDNK%2fCO%2f22-24&Lang=ru.

political program (creation of a national-socialist republic, consisting of the countries of Scandinavia, Finland and possibly, the Baltic states, subsequently spreading the national-socialist ideology around the world), as well as a "combat wing" engaging in violent actions. Among the latter we should note the destruction of the Jewish cemetery in Randers in November 2019, which marked the anniversary of 1938's Kristallnacht. As a result, the radicals damaged and desecrated 84 tombstones. In October 2020, two NRM members were prosecuted for these acts; they were sentenced to one year in prison.

In January 2023, Danish media reported that Danish law enforcement authorities had filed charges against a 16-year-old in a case involving participation in the international neo-Nazi terrorist group Feuerkrieg Division (FKD). According to police, between December 2021 and April 2022, he led the movement, recruited, and distributed extremist materials and instructions for making explosive devices and weapons.³¹⁶

According to local experts, the neo-Nazi FKD movement, which mainly operates via messengers and social networks, has no deep links in the Kingdom. Nevertheless, the experts unanimously assessed the charge as extremely serious. The criminal case against the teenager was brought under § 114c, i.3 of the Danish Penal Code (participation in a terrorist organization – up to 8 years imprisonment), § 114c, i.1 (recruitment to a terrorist organization – up to 12 years imprisonment) and § 114e, i.1 (assistance in promoting a terrorist organization - up to 8 years imprisonment).

On the basis of the messages sent via Telegram messenger and other investigative materials discovered by the police, the prosecution demanded to imprison him up to 4 years. In addition to this, a proposal has been made to ban the defendant from contact with persons previously convicted of violating the provisions on terrorism of the Danish Penal Code. The first hearing in the case took place at Holbæk Court on 14 March 2023.

316 <https://pet.dk/pet/nyhedsliste/ung-mand-tiltales-for-at-lade-sig-hverve-til-og-fremme-virksomheden-for-en-terrorsammenslutning/2023/01/26>

According to Article 27 para 266 of the Danish Penal Code, a fine or imprisonment for up to two years can be imposed for statements and messages which are public or intended for subsequent distribution and which threaten or insult a group of people on the basis of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, religion, or sexual orientation. An aggravating factor is the propagandistic nature of such acts. In practice, however, Article 77 of the Denmark's Constitution, which guarantees the right of citizens to freedom of expression, takes precedence in such cases.

Taking into account this conflict, the Danish Institute for Human Rights expressed concern on 2 February 2023 that the crime registration system in Denmark generally does not take into account the motive of religious and racial hatred.³¹⁷ Human rights activists point out that law enforcement agencies recorded 635 crimes of such a nature in 2020, but according to a survey by the Danish Ministry of Justice, some 12,000 people experienced hate-motivated violence during the same time period. Experts urge police to record all cases as potential hate crimes if the victim considers the hate motive to be at all significant.

At the same time, there were examples where Danish courts clearly indicated that certain claims and statements of political figures do not fall under the protection of freedom of expression. As an example, the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights (FRA) cites the decision of the Eastern High Court (Østre Landsret) in case S1099 on 4 July 2019, which named as discriminatory separate video addresses by the founder of the extreme right-wing Hard-Line party, recorded in front of the house where the human rights activist of African descent was living.³¹⁸

National and international human rights structures criticize Danish authorities also for other shortcomings in countering discrimination.

317 <https://menneskeret.dk/nyheder/politiets-registrering-hadforbrydelser-boer-styrkes>

318 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-report-2020_en.pdf.

On 19 March 2022, the Danish Institute for Human Rights published the report titled "Ethnic Profiling",³¹⁹ which analyses how often Danish law enforcement officers use the factor related to ethnicity in control, surveillance or investigation activities with no objective justification. The report was based on data from on charges (2.5 million preliminary cases) and arrests (270,000 cases) of permanent residents over 14 years old collected in Denmark in 2009-2019.

The main conclusion of the report is that people from non-Western countries, especially those from the Middle East and North Africa, raise more suspicions among the law enforcement agencies and are thus much more likely to be wrongly detained and convicted and then pardoned than ethnic Danes. The direct consequences of ethnic profiling in Denmark are distrust and antipathy towards the Danish police on the part of non-Westerners, as well as sense of insecurity and inequality. The authors of the report compiled a "stereotypical profile of an immigrant male" (dark skin colour, sportswear, beard and short-cropped hair), the coincidence with which, even in some points, makes a citizen "a target of police attention".

The ECRI report was published on 9 June 2022³²⁰, documenting several "worrying trends" in recent years with regard to the treatment of people of non-Western origin. One trend is that Muslims in Denmark have been increasingly depicted (including in political circles) as a threat to Danish values and culture. The Commission recommended that the Folketing (the Danish parliament) develop a legal framework for cutting the State funding of and disbanding "racist organizations, including political parties" if their programs are based on religious or racial hatred.

The report also notes that the Danish Government has still not adopted a national action plan against racism, with a particular emphasis on preventing anti-Muslim discrimination (in January 2022, the majority in Folketing decided to elaborate on the said action plan).

319 <https://menneskeret.dk/udgivelser/etnisk-profilering>

320 <https://rm.coe.int/6th-ecri-report-on-denmark-/1680a6d5e4>

According to the data published by structures for equality in 2021, the number of cases due to racial or ethnic discrimination increased in 2020 in Denmark.³²¹

According to the 2023 FRA report, the Danish Institute for Human Rights stated in its report published in 2021³²² that there was a simplified procedure for obtaining Danish citizenship for young people from Scandinavian countries, noting the need for equal opportunities for all those who wish to gain Danish citizenship without exceptions.³²³ This report³²⁴ also noted that parents with Danish names are more likely to send their children to school (25 per cent)³²⁵ than those with names that sound like Muslim ones (15 per cent).³²⁶

In February 2020, the Danish Institute for Human Rights noted in its report to the special-purpose Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), created under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the lack of progress in incorporating the dispositions of the Convention in the national law.³²⁷

According to the information in the 2022 FRA report,³²⁸ Denmark is one of the EU countries which have incorporated the provisions of the EU Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia in their internal law.³²⁹ In particular, the Danish Penal Code has been amended to protect minorities which have become victims of hate crimes.³³⁰

321 Denmark, The Board of Equal Treatment (Ligebehandlingsnævnet) (2021), Annual report 2020 (Ligebehandlingsnævnets årsberetning 2020), pp. 3, 36 and 38.

322 Danish Institute for Human Rights (2021), Stranger in your own country? Access to citizenship for children and youth who were born and/or have grown up in Denmark (Fremmed i eget land? Adgang til statsborgerskab for børn og unge, der er født og/eller opvokset i Danmark), February 2021.

323 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

324 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

325 Olsen, A. L., Kyhse-Andersen, J. H. and Moynihan D. (2020), 'The unequal distribution of opportunity: A national audit study of bureaucratic discrimination in primary school access', 29 December 2020.

326 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

327 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/DNK/INT_CERD_IFN_DNK_41240_E.pdf.

328 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

329 Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, OJ 2008 L 328.

330 Denmark, Government, Proposal on amending the Act on prohibition against differential treatment with in the labour market (Forslag til lov om ændring af lov om ligestilling af kvinder og mænd, lov om forbud mod

According to the National Integration Barometer, more than half of Danish ethnic minorities face discrimination in their daily lives. The Danish authorities are particularly concerned about the situation in Muslim communities. For that reason, they are closely supervised in order to make sure that Islam stays an integral and harmonious part of society, not allowing religion to become an instrument of any kind of manipulation and pressure.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights draws attention to the fact that the article in the Danish Penal Code on combating radical Islamic preachers (the so-called "Imams Act", which provides for revocation of citizenship for expressing ideas contrary to the kingdom's "core values"), which has been expanded in 2021 and stays in force permanently since January 2022, restricts freedom of religion and freedom of expression. Human rights activists point out that Danish law does not clearly distinguish between "legal" and "illegal" statements, and applies not only to statements made, for example, in mosques, but also to conversations "in private".

As for Jews living in Denmark, according to a December 2018 study by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), 80 per cent of them constantly (9 per cent), often (32 per cent) or sometimes (39 per cent) have to avoid wearing or displaying things and objects that would identify them as Jews. 85 per cent of respondents consider anti-Semitism to be a very serious or a fairly serious problem (36 per cent and 49 per cent, respectively).³³¹ Thus, the Danish Jewish Society traditionally warns against public display of identifying accessories or clothing.

According to statistics from the report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Denmark (sixth monitoring cycle), in 2019 Danish police recorded 51 anti-Semitic crimes. The number of such crimes has increased

forskelsbehandling på arbejdsmarkedet m.v., straffeloven og forskellige andre love).

331 European Union agency for fundamental rights. Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism — Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-experiences-and-perceptions-of-antisemitism-survey_en.pdf.

compared to 2018 (26 cases) and 2017 (38 cases).³³²

There are shortcomings in ensuring the rights of the inhabitants of Greenland (Danish autonomy) in Denmark. The Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Francisco Cali Tzay, following his visit to Greenland in February 2023, indicated in his report that some 17,000 Inuit living in Denmark faced racism and discrimination, as well as various restrictions, including access to health care, education and housing despite having Danish citizenship. Persons with disabilities were among the most vulnerable groups. In addition, he drew attention to the lack of statistics on Inuit children living in Denmark and the denial of mother-tongue education.

The report also addressed the forced removal of children in Greenland and their placement in foster care in Denmark. A special study had found that Inuit children were seven times more likely to be removed from their families than Danish children.

The involvement of extremist nationalist parties, racist and xenophobic movements and groups in Danish political life remains limited. For example, the right-wing political Hard-Line party, which had gained notoriety by conducting provocative actions, including burning the Quran,³³³ does not have broad support among the Danish population (it received 63537 votes (1.8 per cent) in the June 2019 parliamentary elections and only 379 votes in 2022).

At the same time, there is an increase in hate crime in Denmark. According to information published by Danish law enforcement agencies, only in the first quarter of 2022 there had been 263 hate crimes, an increase of 32 per cent from the same period of 2021. Muslims and Jews are among the most vulnerable religious groups (56 per cent and 23 per cent of the total number of such crimes, respectively).

332 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Denmark. Adopted on 29 March 2022, published on 9 June 2022.

<https://rm.coe.int/6th-ecri-report-on-denmark-/1680a6d5e4>.

333 On 27 January 2023, the leader of the Hard-Line party Rasmus Paludan committed another anti-Islamic provocation by burning the Quran in three places in Copenhagen: near the mosque on Dorteavai Street, as well as near the buildings of the Turkish Embassy and the Consular Section of the Embassy of the Russian Federation. !! The Danish authorities refrained from directly criticizing the actions.

According to the 2022 FRA report,³³⁴ in the first half of 2021 the number of recorded hate crimes, many of which were related to the COVID-19 pandemic, increased by 12 per cent compared to the previous year.³³⁵

As follows from the answer provided in the Denmark's Government reply to the sixth questionnaire (2021) of the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), Danish national police reported 100 cases of hate speech in 2019 (there were 68 such cases in 2018, 48 in 2017, and 56 in 2016).³³⁶

According to a number of human rights organizations, there has been an increase in anti-migrant sentiment in Denmark in recent years. Legislatively, this is reflected by the fact that second and third generation migrants have very limited grounds for obtaining Danish citizenship. This category of people, and especially women, has little involvement in the labour market.³³⁷ Public opinion polls have also confirmed the discriminatory attitude towards migrants and their descendants as well as representatives of ethnic minorities. The FRA particularly stressed this.³³⁸

As follows from the report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Denmark published in 2022, as of 1 January 2021, 617,770 unregistered immigrants lived in the country. 260,304 of them were from Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand ("Western", mostly white immigrants), and 357,466 from other 157 countries ("non-Western" immigrants who, according to the Danish Office of Statistics, are considered as ethnic and religious minorities).³³⁹ In March 2021, 34,494 people were registered as

334 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

335 Denmark, National Police (Rigspolitiet) (2021), Report on hate crimes (Hadforbrydelser i 2020 – Rigspolitiets årsrapport vedrørende hadforbrydelser).

336 Denmark's Government reply to ECRI's 2021 6th questionnaire, page 11.

337 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 9th periodic report of Denmark. March 2021

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT/CEDAW/COC/DNK/44503&Lang=En.

338 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2021.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-fundamental-rights-report-2021_en.pdf.

339 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Denmark (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted on 29 March 2022, published on 9 June 2022.

"Western" and 165,174 as "non-Western" immigrants.³⁴⁰ The report also emphasizes that it has become increasingly difficult for refugees and migrants to acquire citizenship which is granted after eight years of residence in the country and depends on meeting a number of criteria. In addition, temporary residence permits of all categories of refugees are verified every one or two years.³⁴¹

The FRA also found in its 2021 report that both the far-right extremists and radical Islamists residing in Denmark misused the spread of the coronavirus infection and related restrictive measures as a pretext to incite hatred.³⁴²

The situation is such that there is a "parallel society" in Denmark – a social phenomenon where a large proportion of migrants from the Middle East and North Africa live secluded lives and remain outside the Danish linguistic, cultural, and legal environment. They tend to reside in disadvantaged urban areas which had been almost entirely populated by migrants.

Moreover, the concept of a "ghetto" has been officially in effect at the Danish legislative level since 2011. In addition to the discriminatory nature of this term, the criteria included in it also raise questions. In particular, one of the possible grounds for classifying an area as a ghetto is that at least 2.7 per cent of the population should have a criminal record.

In March 2018, the Danish government, led by Lars Løkke Rasmussen, presented a package of measures aimed at putting an end to this "parallel society". The program dubbed "One Denmark without Parallel Societies – No Ghettos in 2030", includes a number of restrictive measures to adjust the national composition of the inhabitants. At the same time, the document solidified the concept of a "ghetto".

Since the beginning of the aforementioned program, the Danish law enforcement authorities were given powers to establish "sharp penalty zones" in

<https://rm.coe.int/6th-ecri-report-on-denmark-/1680a6d5e4>.

³⁴⁰ Data from the website of Statistics Denmark, available at Immigrants and their descendants – Statistics Denmark (dst.dk).

³⁴¹ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Denmark. Adopted on 29 March 2022, published on 9 June 2022.

<https://rm.coe.int/6th-ecri-report-on-denmark-/1680a6d5e4>.

³⁴² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Report 2021.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-fundamental-rights-report-2021_en.pdf.

ghettos. If an offense is committed in such zones, the perpetrator may face a penalty twice the maximum sentence presupposed for that category of offense in the Danish Penal Code. If the maximum penalty for a crime is a fine, it could be replaced by imprisonment. As additional policing measures, the Danish government has also proposed increasing the police presence in ghettos, including through deploying mobile police units. In addition, a mechanism has been approved to identify and subsequently expel repeat offenders and the most "influential" members of the criminal environment from the ghetto.

In 2019, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) took notice of the situation and expressed deep concern about provisions in the Government program adopted "in contravention of Danish Constitution and its international obligations" which "impose differential treatment on grounds such as national origin, social status and residence." In particular, the CESCR viewed as discriminatory the categorization of specific areas as "ghettos" based on nationality of those living in them (the classification of areas as "ghettos" is determined by the proportion of residents from "non-Western" countries), also pointing to the violation of migrants' right to freely choose their place of residence and educational institutions for their children. The combination of such measures, according to the Committee, not only results in discrimination based on ethnic origin and nationality, but also further marginalizes residents of disadvantaged areas.³⁴³

Furthermore, the CESCR noted that the authorities had recently taken numerous measures directly or indirectly affecting the economic, social, and cultural rights of refugees and migrants. Among these measures, the Committee pointed to the introduction of a number of preconditions for family reunification, the launch of the temporary stay procedure for refugees, under which local authorities are not required to provide refugees with permanent housing, and the limitation of free interpreter services when visiting medical facilities.

343 Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 6th periodic report of Denmark. October 2019
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/DNK/CO/6&Lang=En

In December 2021, Denmark adopted a law aiming at reducing the number of "non-Western" people living in social housing to less than 30 per cent within 10 years. In this regard, three judicial proceedings were opened in 2021, raising the issue of the discriminatory nature of this law.³⁴⁴

In addition, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in its concluding observations on twenty-second – twenty-fourth periodic reports of Denmark recommended the Danish government to refrain from applying more severe laws and measures to immigrants and their descendants from "non-Western" countries, as well as from using the terms "Western" and "non-Western" in its policy and laws to avoid stigmatization, marginalization or indirect discrimination of any group of people.³⁴⁵

The Danish authorities take a noticeably discriminatory approach towards the Danish nationals who participated in terrorist structures. For example, 2019 amendments by the Danish Parliament allow for the in absentia administrative stripping of Danish citizenship from persons whose actions caused "serious damage to the vital interests of Denmark" (adopted due to the reluctance of Danes to repatriate and prosecute their foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) in the territory of Denmark). In addition, under these novel laws, the children of Danish FTFs are stripped of the right to automatically obtain Danish citizenship by virtue of the citizenship of their parents. This provision runs contrary to the obligations of Copenhagen to reduce statelessness (according to the open data of the Danish counterintelligence service, 40 Danish FTFs' children remain in the regions of Syria and Iraq formerly controlled by the Islamic State terrorist organization, banned in Russia). In addition, Danish citizens who remain abroad and have participated in terrorist organizations may be completely denied consular assistance in Danish foreign missions.

From the beginning of the special military operation for the denazification

344 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

345 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 22nd to 24th periodic reports of Denmark. 3 December 2021

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fDNK%2fCO%2f22-24&Lang=ru

and demilitarisation of Ukraine and the protection of the civilians in the Donbass by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (SMO) the Danish authorities have taken an extremely anti-Russian position. Despite media reports about the use of Danish territory to carry out cyber attacks against Russian institutions, the participants in these actions have not yet been brought to justice.

As for the situation of the Russian compatriots living in Denmark, many of them have complained about an "unfavorable information background" and psychological pressure since the beginning of the SMO. Some Russian citizens claim that they have occasionally become victims of Russophobic campaigns.

When talking to representatives of Russian compatriot organizations living in Denmark, a number of Russian citizens confirmed that they periodically become victims of the policy of "cleansing" everything Russian, including the mention of the word "Russian" in the names of non-profit organizations.

Vandalism was recorded against the Russian Embassy buildings, the Russian Center for Science and Culture, the St. Nevsky Church in Copenhagen, and memorials to Soviet servicemen in Copenhagen, Aarhus and Allinge (Bornholm Island).

There were cases of delayed informing of the Russian Embassy by the Danish authorities about incidents concerning arrests of our citizens, as well as about private clinics refusing medical assistance. Though the Danish law enforcement authorities formally provide consular access to the detained Russians; however, the periods for approval of such visits are dragged on by them from time to time.

As a result, despite the fact that the Danish authorities have not undertaken legislative steps leading to discrimination of Russians and representatives of Russian-speaking community, our compatriots do face infringement of their rights and psychological pressure in daily life.

At the same time, the Danish authorities do not impede overt recruitment of Danish subjects and citizens of other countries by Ukrainian embassy in Denmark for participation in hostilities in the SMO zone at the side of Ukraine. The

aggressive activities of the Ukrainian Embassy, violating the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, are not limited to recruitment of mercenaries. Information resources of the diplomatic mission are also used for distribution of photographic and video materials on torture, ill-treatment, and brutal murders of Russian military in Ukraine. The Danish authorities prefer to ignore illegal activities of the Ukrainian diplomatic mission.

Denmark adopted a "special law" for Ukrainian refugees on 16 March 2022, which gave them the right to obtain a temporary residence permit under a simplified scheme for a period of two years. This category is not subject to the requirement to take Danish language courses and a number of other integration programs. In this regard, the Danish Institute for Human Rights warned the authorities of the risk of discrimination, as the "special law" guarantees Ukrainian refugees better conditions than other refugees.

Ireland

Ireland has no record of attempts to glorify the Nazi movement or former members of the Nazi SS and its branches, including the Waffen-SS (including by constructing monuments and memorials dedicated to such personalities and organizations, holding public demonstrations in their honour, declaring members of such organizations and those who collaborated with the Nazi regime as participants in national liberation movements).

Due to the beginning of the special military operation (SMO) for the denazification and demilitarisation of Ukraine by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, Ireland's foreign policy course in 2022 was significantly reoriented towards the US and EU-dictated task of collective confrontation between Russia and the West. They prevailed over the traditional priorities of Irish diplomacy: commitment to "multilateralism", international law (within the framework of the concept of "rules-based world order"), peace-making, international aid and humanitarian assistance. In its endeavour to join the vanguard of the Western anti-Russian front, Dublin continued to lose its autonomy in international affairs, voluntarily deepening its dependence on decisions taken in Washington and Brussels.

Seeking to demonstrate its frontline role in orchestrating sanctions pressure on Russia, and advocating a "maximalist approach" in this regard, Dublin has fully supported all eleven EU anti-Russian restriction packages, enthusiastically advocating their further expansion in order to strangle the Russian economy and defeat the rights of Russian individuals and entities.

Dublin took a number of unfriendly actions against Russia on a bilateral basis, including the expulsion of four Russian Embassy staff and a campaign to reduce the Russian diplomatic presence in Ireland. At the same time, the retaliatory measures, in particular Russia's placing 52 Irish politicians on the list of persons barred from entering our country in November 2022, provoked almost hysterical reactions in the Irish political establishment and mainstream media. However, reciprocal measures, in particular, Russia's inclusion in November 2022 of 52 Irish

politicians on the list of persons barred from entering Russia, provoked almost hysterical reactions in the Irish political establishment and mainstream media.

Preparation and holding of the events related to Victory Day took place in a hostile atmosphere from a part of the Ukrainian diaspora and some representatives of the Irish society. Irish media widely broadcasted statements of a number of Irish politicians on the inappropriateness of celebrating Victory Day in relation with the situation in Ukraine.

In 2022, the administration of the Phoenix Park in Dublin, where the most massive rally of the "Immortal Regiment" has traditionally taken place, refused to provide a site.

Despite constant monitoring by the government, the Irish parliament and human rights NGOs, the authorities admit, including at a high political level, that the complete eradication of racial discrimination is yet to be achieved.

In addition, between the summer of 2022 and March 2023, racism, xenophobia and various types of extremist offences, which until recently had been considered latent phenomena in Irish society, manifested themselves as a pressing social problem.

The unprecedented and continuing influx into Ireland of Ukrainian refugees (already over 90,000) and asylum seekers from other countries (some 20,000), combined with a significant rise in the cost of living and the housing crisis, has provoked an increase in anti-migrant protests and manifestations of far-right ideology in Irish society.

In many cities, including Dublin, demonstrations by local residents (among whom extreme right-wing radicals are the most active) against immigrants moving into their municipalities have become a regular occurrence.

According to local media and relevant human rights organizations, such as the Irish Network Against Racism (INAR; website: www.inar.ie), there has been an increase in incidents of violence against newcomers. Although official statistics on such offences have not yet been disclosed by the authorities, the Irish

government openly acknowledges the deteriorating situation in this area and speaks of the need for stricter preventive measures.

Recently, the most high-profile incident reported by all major Irish media outlets (television and radio broadcaster, RTI, Irish Times, Irish Examiner, etc.) was when a makeshift immigrant tent camp in the Ashtown area of north-west Dublin was attacked on 28 January 2023. According to published information, a group of unknown persons armed with baseball bats and iron bars, with dogs, including fighting breeds, attempted, by intimidation, to evict homeless foreigners (mostly from Eastern Europe, but also from India, Portugal and Great Britain) who had spontaneously settled there since August 2022 in 15 dome tents. There were no casualties. A criminal case has been initiated into the attack.

A number of smaller incidents officially recorded by the police in January-February 2023 are related to anti-migrant protests in Dublin. Occasionally, law enforcement agencies detain the organizers and most violent activists of the rallies for questioning on suspicion of spreading extremist propaganda. However, currently there is no information that any of these individuals would be arrested for subsequent judicial inquiry.

Anti-migrant protests provoke a response in Irish society in the form of demonstrations against xenophobia and in support of migrant inclusion. The largest protest under such slogans took place in Dublin on 18 February 2023. According to its organizers, the number of participants reached an impressive, by local standards, figure of 50,000 people.

Amid anti-racist demonstrations in the United States in the summer of 2020, Irish President Michael D. Higgins noted, for example, that sentiments against migrants and people of colour were also gaining ground in Ireland, and that nationalism was beginning to threaten Ireland's democratic foundations.

Ireland's political leadership and general public have come to recognize that refugees, migrants and other minority groups are increasingly seen in some parts of society as a threat to the "rights of the majority". Under this pretext, certain groups of local extremists have turned to active racist and anti-Semitic criminal behaviour.

According to online racist incident reporting system iReport.ie, launched by the Irish Network Against Racism, there were 700 racist incidents in 2020 (530 in 2019), including 159 criminal offences. There was also the largest increase in reports of racism on the Internet – 334 (174 in 2019), including in social networks and in Facebook accounts of reputable radio and print media, with Facebook featuring the highest number of such publications (119 incidents). It was noted that this all contributes to an increase in far-right-themed content.³⁴⁶

According to a number of non-governmental organizations, 51 cases of violence on grounds of racial hatred were registered in Ireland in 2020. According to information published in 2021, the number of cases of inciting hatred on the Internet increased significantly³⁴⁷, as well as the number of complaints of discrimination on racial and ethnic grounds.³⁴⁸

Moreover, according to NGO experts, domestic racism remains a serious problem for Irish society, given the virtual absence of effective legislation and law enforcement measures to curb it (the relevant laws are outdated and practically not applied).

Official Dublin has been criticized by the local and international human rights community for being too liberal in its attitude toward certain organizations and individuals who freely distribute extremist and racist publications in the digital media. Human rights activists point out that the Irish authorities refuse to take action against those who disseminate extremist ideas (including the blocking of content), citing the right to free speech on any subject except for direct calls to violence. Lawyers use this specificity of Irish law to refute accusations of spreading extremist ideas in court.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), established under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, pointed out in December 2019 that there is a record of

³⁴⁶ <https://inar.ie/inars-2020-ireport-ie-reports-of-racism-in-ireland-published/>

³⁴⁷ Michael, L. (2021), Reports of racism in Ireland: Data from iReport.ie – 2020, Dublin, Irish Network Against Racism

³⁴⁸ Ireland, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2021), ‘Developing a national action plan against racism – IHREC submission to the Anti-Racism Committee’, 6 September 2021.

manifestations of racism in Irish society. This is evidenced by the high incidence of racial profiling on the part of the Irish police ("Garda"), as well as an increase in incidents of hate speech. An increase in racist rhetoric and its frequent use by Irish politicians, particularly during election campaigns, was highlighted. The CERD noted in this regard that the 1989 Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act had proven ineffective in combating hate speech, especially hate speech on the Internet.³⁴⁹

The Committee noted with concern the considerable number of racially motivated hate crimes against representatives of ethnic minorities, noting that other grounds of discrimination, such as gender and religious affiliation, were often also present in such cases. It was highlighted that existing Irish criminal law did not feature offence categories in which racial hatred was a primary motive, nor was it specified as an aggravating circumstance. According to CERD experts, this leads to misreporting of such crimes, as racist motives behind their commitment are systematically not taken into account in criminal proceedings. Amid an increase in far-right rhetoric and hate crimes against ethnic minority groups, the Committee also highlighted the absence of laws banning racist organizations in the country.³⁵⁰

The Irish people have become more willing to report hate speech incidents in recent years. The aforementioned NGO, the Irish Network against Racism, notes an exponential increase in the number of complaints about hateful offensive publications on the Irish segment of the Internet. By comparison, in 2014, there were 108 complaints over relevant illegal publications online, in 2019 – 174; in 2020 their number reached 334.

To remedy the existing situation, human rights activists emphasize the importance of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission's recommendations regarding the need to improve the 1989 Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act and to develop a comprehensive state-level regulatory framework to combat hate speech on the Internet, with an independent State body

³⁴⁹https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/IRL/CO/5-9&Lang=Ru.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

to monitor its compliance. The experts also point out the urgency for the authorities to take measures to raise public awareness of the issue of combating racial discrimination.

It is worth noting that the authorities are taking certain steps in this direction. In April 2021, under public pressure, the Department of Justice of Ireland began drafting the Hate Crime Bill. Its main purpose is to increase the penalties for public insults and aggressive attacks, including on the Internet, on the grounds of nationality, race, colour, ethnicity, or a number of other distinctions.

Human rights activists are still alarmed about the situation with the steadily growing Muslim community in Ireland (numbering in more than 70,000 people).

According to the Report of the Commission on Human Rights and Equality as of 2019 and the Immigrant Council of Ireland's report of the same year, the number of incidents of racism generally directed against Muslims generally remains at the same, rather elevated level – about 40 per cent of Muslims in Ireland officially stated that they had experienced violence (verbal or physical aggression) at work, in educational institutions, in everyday life because of their faith. However, experts with these human rights bodies note that in reality the real figure is much higher – about 80 per cent.

Inadequate living conditions for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers remain a significant problem for Ireland. Amnesty International Ireland pointed to the shortage and poor quality of state-provided housing for this category of citizens, which allegedly negatively affects their "mental state", and also leads to "infringement of dignity" and inability to ensure a normal "private life".

Migrants and refugees from Asia and Africa are among the most vulnerable members of society. Those arriving in the country are housed in temporary accommodation centres, where they wait for all the necessary documents to be processed in order to stay in Ireland. However, the unreasonably lengthy legalization process has resulted in the vast majority of refugees having to reside in these centres for extended periods of time, which causes discontent among the local population as well.

In 2019-2020, some of these facilities were set on fire, which led in some cases to casualties among refugees. There was a wave of protests across the country, demanding that the authorities reconsider the existing refugee reception process. Ireland's new coalition government, formed in June 2020, pledged to dismantle the centres and develop new procedures for the reception and accommodation of refugees.

The problematic situation of migrants in Ireland was highlighted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination³⁵¹ and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance functioning within the Council of Europe.³⁵² In this context, they mentioned lengthy processing of applications for international protection, unreasonably lengthy process of obtaining a work permit, the long periods of inadequate accommodation of migrants in reception centres, and the concealment of deaths in these centres. They also noted that the media, including the mainstream Irish media, spread anti-migrant publications.

ECRI, citing a conducted study, noted with concern that 40 percent of migrants working on Irish trawlers reported encountering racially motivated insults and humiliation at workplace. They also quoted the EU MIDIS II survey, which showed that Ireland had one of the highest levels of hate-related harassment experienced by migrants and descendants of sub-Saharan African migrants.³⁵³

There are also questions about the situation of such a category of persons as "travellers", a term that includes the Roma and homeless persons in Ireland.

According to estimates by Irish human rights activists, the official recognition of these people as an ethnic minority in 2017 has not fundamentally changed the overall situation.

At present, over 25,000 of these people (about half of the total number) still live in poverty. Between 30 and 50 percent of prisoners of both sexes in Irish prisons belong to this group. The Irish public and human rights activists recognize that an effective solution to the problem of "travellers" has yet to be found, due in

351 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/IRL/CO/5-9&Lang=Ru

352 <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-ireland>

353 <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-ireland>

no small part to their culture, which is to some extent incompatible with a sedentary lifestyle and socially useful work.

This problem also came to the attention of international universal and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms, primarily CERD and ECRI. It was noted, for example, that "travellers" and the Roma, along with people of African descent, are disproportionately becoming victims of racial profiling on the part of the police and make up the majority of the penitentiary system population. It is these vulnerable groups that racist rhetoric in the media and on the Internet is directed against.

These ethnic minorities are extremely under-represented in the Irish public sector and in political positions at all levels. They have limited access to social housing, face serious discrimination and inequality in renting in the private housing sector, and as a result are disproportionately at risk of becoming homeless.

It has been noted that local authorities have been using the 2002 Housing Act to justify forced eviction of "travellers". In addition, local authorities demonstrate a reluctance to fully use the budgeted allocations for providing housing to such persons. Unemployment is extremely high among the "travellers" and the Roma, and children in these communities are very rarely enrolled in schools. All members of these groups are in a very poor state of health.

Taking into account the issue of Traveller accommodation, ECRI made recommendations to Ireland following its fifth monitoring cycle in 2019. However, according to ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in Respect of Ireland subject to Interim Follow-up (Interim Report of 3 March 2022), the Irish authorities failed to take measures to improve the situation with regard to travellers.³⁵⁴ The Traveller-specific accommodation budget of 14.5 million euros was used to cope with the aftermath of Covid-19. Furthermore, as of July 2021, just 2.5 million out of the budget of 15.5 million euros was spent and 17 out of 31 local authorities had not drawn any budget in this area.

³⁵⁴ Conclusions of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on the Implementation of the Recommendations subject to Interim Follow-up.
<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a59aec>

Therefore, ECRI proposed to introduce liability measures against officials for misuse of the funds allocated to address the problem.

Racism was also observed in education (despite new legislation banning the practice of discriminatory admission of children to schools on the basis of their parents' religion) and in the adoption process.

This was highlighted, inter alia, by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination that pointed to abuses based on race in Irish mother and baby homes, as well as physical, emotional and sexual abuse mostly experienced by those children who self-identify as mixed-race Irish.³⁵⁵

In its Concluding observations of 28 February 2023, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) also highlighted a number of problems related to the rights of the child.³⁵⁶

CPC observed, for example, persistent discrimination against children of minority groups and those in disadvantaged situations.

The Committee also noted the barriers faced by some groups of children in accessing birth registration. According to CPC, there is also restrictive legislative framework for obtaining Irish nationality.

There is high prevalence of violence against children, including sexual exploitation, online violence and bullying. The rates of reporting, prosecution and conviction in cases of violence against children remain low; and there are severe delays and inconsistencies in related investigations.

According to the Fundamental Rights Report 2022 of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), research findings across the EU provide evidence of discrimination against ethnic minorities and migrants in education.³⁵⁷ More than a third (35 percent) of staff from minority ethnic groups have been

³⁵⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 5th to 9th reports of Ireland. December 2019.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/IRL/CO/5-9&Lang=Ru.

³⁵⁶ Concluding observations on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Ireland. 28 February 2023.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FIRL%2FCO%2F5-6&Lang=en

³⁵⁷ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

subject to racial and/or ethnic discrimination on campus or online in the course of their work, compared with 16 percent of "white other" respondents and 3 percent of "white Irish" respondents, according to a survey that the Higher Education Authority in Ireland conducted with 3,323 respondents.³⁵⁸

In the view of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, human rights concerns in Ireland may well be exacerbated by the introduction of the Legacy and Reconciliation Act (the so-called Northern Ireland Troubles Act).

The Commissioner notes, for example, that further steps to enact this law must be given careful consideration³⁵⁹. The Act suggests establishing an Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery, limiting criminal investigations, somewhat narrowing the procedural rights of parties and, most importantly, granting amnesty to criminals who killed and/or injured persons during the conflict in Northern Ireland, which lasted until 1998.

Joanna Cherry, MP for the Scottish National Party, believes the bill contravenes Article 2 of *the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)*, which enshrines the human right to life.

Ireland follows the common position of the European Union on the issue of countering neo-Nazism. Until last year, for example, following the line of the "collective West", Dublin annually abstained during the UN General Assembly vote on Resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", initiated by Russia together with other co-sponsors.

When the document was approved in December 2022, Ireland voted against it for the first time, also following the EU-wide guidelines.

The generally stable legal status of Russian compatriots in Ireland with no serious violations of their rights and freedoms (there were only isolated reports about some signs of everyday nationalism on the part of local population, which

³⁵⁸ Kempny, M. and Michael, L. (2021), Race equality in the higher education sector: Analysis commissioned by the Higher Education Authority, Dublin, Higher Education Authority, p.33.

³⁵⁹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/united-kingdom-commissioner-warns-against-regression-on-human-rights-calls-for-concrete-steps-to-protect-children-s-rights-and-to-tackle-human-rights-issues-in-northern-ireland>

affected, along with people of Russian origin, representatives of other diasporas residing in the country) has deteriorated markedly since the start of the special military operation.

Many Russian-speaking people, including Russian nationals, have faced harassment at work, at school, in public organizations, as well as fuelled Russophobic campaign in Irish media. Amongst other measures, we can mention the decision of Irish broadcaster Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTE) to rename the popular weekly programme about Russian culture "Russian Hour" on Dublin City 103.2 FM to "Kaleidoscope."

In this connection, the Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots in Ireland took steps to record such cases and inform thereof the Embassy of the Russian Federation; and also helped the victims to draw up appeals to local security services or members of the Irish representative body. The Coordinating Council also drafted a petition to the Irish Parliament demanding that measures be taken to protect Russian diaspora and the Russian language from discrimination. The document paid special attention to the prevention of harassment of Russian-speaking pupils and students.

Russophobic sentiments also affected the Russian diplomatic mission in Ireland. On 7 March 2022, an unknown person drove their truck through the gates of the Russian embassy in Dublin. The police watched what was happening but did nothing to prevent this.

Despite the Russophobic campaign in the media, associations of Russian compatriots in Ireland organized a mass motor rally on 8 May 2022. The column of 100 vehicles, mostly driven by nationals of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltic States, transited through the territories of several counties of Ireland without incident. There were Irish law enforcement patrols placed along the route of the rally at the request of the organizers. The event culminated in the traditional Immortal Regiment procession.

Iceland

As of August 2023, Iceland has seen no public attempts to distort history, to glorify the Nazi movement and neo-Nazism at the State level, to erect monuments to former members of the Nazi SS and its elements, to desecrate memorials to anti-fascists, or manifestations of racism and xenophobia. Anti-fascists, veterans and their organizations are not persecuted. There are no neo-Nazi demonstrations.

Despite the open anti-Russian rhetoric of the local official circles, the authorities did not impede war memorial actions held by the Russian Embassy and compatriots living in the country in honour of the Victory Day and the anniversary of the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, and police escorts were provided for the events.

For example, on 9 May the *Immortal Regiment* actions are held in Reykjavik. The municipal authorities of the city freely granted permission for the event, and no ban on the display of St George's ribbons was imposed. The actions are widely covered by local media.

In particular, in 2022, the central newspaper *Morgunblaðið* published an interview with the organizer of the Immortal Regiment, A. Valdimarsdóttir, emphasizing the decisive contribution of the Soviet Union to the victory over Nazism.³⁶⁰

Before the special military operation of Russia aiming at denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine President of Iceland Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson, in part due to his professional historical education, regularly participated in commemorative events dedicated to memorable dates in the War history.

Iceland preserves the memory of its contribution to the formation and maintenance of polar convoys during the Second World War.

Icelanders maintain in proper condition the war memorial objects (the monument to the sailors participating in the Arctic Convoys *Hope* in Reykjavik, monuments in Isafjordur, Bolungarvik, and on the Whale Fjord), as well as the

³⁶⁰ Article in the central newspaper *Morgunblaðið*, 9 May 2022, https://www.mbl.is/frettir/innlent/2022/05/09/oll_strid_enda_med_fridi/.

burial place of the participant in the Great Patriotic War, sailor A. Malley, who died in hospital in Reykjavik in August 1942.

At the same time, at the international arena, in terms of combating neo-Nazism, the situation is different. In December 2022, for the first time the delegation of Iceland voted against the Russian draft resolution “Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance” in the General Assembly (previously Reykjavik had traditionally abstained, motivating its position by the need to include provisions guaranteeing freedom of speech and assembly in the text of the resolution).

According to the *Iceland Monitor*³⁶¹ newspaper, in March 2021 the Icelandic Government agreed to allocate about 20,000 Euros to raise in Djúpvogur a monument to Hans Jónatan, believed to be the first black settler in Iceland.

At the same time, on 31 March 2022, Minister of Infrastructure and Head of the Progressive Party Sigurður Ingi Jóhannsson made a racist remark (as assessed by local media) concerning CEO of the Icelandic Farmers' Association Vigdís Häsler, of Indonesian origin, saying literally that he would not take photos with this black woman. The conflict was settled after the politician's public apologies.

Human rights organizations have at times expressed concern that the measures taken by the Icelandic authorities to counter racism are insufficient. Furthermore, under Icelandic law, penalties are only imposed for serious and repeated offences, and this rarely happens. As a result, the effective prosecution and punishment of those responsible for spreading hate speech and ideas faces difficulties.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) created under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination recommended in its concluding observations on twenty-first to twenty-third periodic reports of Iceland adopted in August 2019 to take measures

³⁶¹ [https://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/news/2021/03/06/memorial to rise of first black settler in iceland/](https://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/news/2021/03/06/memorial%20to%20rise%20of%20first%20black%20settler%20in%20iceland/).

to ensure full and effective implementation of existing legal provisions prohibiting racial discrimination, take firm measures to combat hate speech, including by political and public figures, and to ensure that all racist hate crimes are reported and investigated, that those responsible are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished appropriately, and that remedies are provided to victims.

The CERD also recommended that Iceland record racist hate crimes and provide the Committee with statistics on reported hate crimes, the outcome of investigations and the punishments imposed.³⁶²

This problem was also previously highlighted by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, which emphasized that anti-Muslim rhetoric is prevalent in political discourse. Accusations of Muslims (as well as migrants) of having links with terrorists, committing acts of aggression and violence have often been used in political debates.³⁶³

Icelandic society is attempting to analyse the situation, the causes of racist and white supremacy ideas and their impact on people's minds. In part, such processes have been inspired by the *Black Lives Matter* movement in the United States following the murder of George Floyd, Afro-American, by police officers in May 2020.

There are also cases of “positive racism” where companies and organizations invite people with migrant backgrounds to events. This is done to demonstrate the participation of non-Icelanders.³⁶⁴ In particular, racism in Iceland was the subject of an online conference organized in February 2021 at the University of Iceland by the NGO *Amnesty International*. The event also involved non-European students who personally experienced individual racism.³⁶⁵

In Iceland, there are no registered far-right organizations, including extremist and radical political parties, and racist and xenophobic movements and groups.

³⁶² <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/275/65/PDF/G1927565.pdf?OpenElement>

³⁶³ <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-iceland/16808b581c>

³⁶⁴ <https://www.ruv.is/frett/2021/02/04/open-online-meeting-about-racism-in-iceland>

³⁶⁵ https://english.hi.is/events/the_reality_of_racism

Typically, efforts to spread racism and neo-Nazism in the country were conducted and coordinated from other States.

In 2018-2019, Swedish neo-Nazis from the *Nordic Resistance Movement* (NRM) attempted to recruit Icelanders into their ranks by launching a campaign on social media and handing out leaflets in the centre of Reykjavik.³⁶⁶ There was information in the media about the opening of the Icelandic branch of the NRM with its own website <https://nordurvigi.is>.

The reaction of the Icelandic public was very negative. Residents of Reykjavik held an anti-Nazi rally with several hundred participants. The activity of the *Movement* was stopped shortly thereafter.

In September 2019, police interfered in a manifestation in Akranes, where neo-Nazis were standing at the entrance to a shopping centre with flags and leaflets.³⁶⁷ The head of the aforementioned organization, a Swede by the name of Simon Lindberg, was in the country at the same time.

In 2020, Icelandic neo-Nazis attacked members of the Jewish community living in the country: anti-Semitic posters denying the Holocaust and accusing Jews of abuse of women and paedophilia were distributed near synagogues and Jewish institutions. The action was organized by the NRM not only in Iceland, but also in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. These actions, organized by right-wing radicals during the Jewish community's celebration of Yom Kippur, sparked outrage from international Jewish organizations.

In October 2020, Simon Wiesenthal Centre for International Affairs director Shimon Samuels sent a letter to Icelandic Prime Minister Katrín Jakobsdóttir expressing concern about these events (letters were also sent to the leaders of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden). The letter noted that, given the total population of the country, neo-Nazis could hardly remain unknown to the authorities. Reykjavik was called on to follow the example of Finland, which banned the NRM

³⁶⁶ <https://stundin.is/grein/9597/>

³⁶⁷ <https://www.ruv.is/frett/norraenir-thjodernissinnar-ferdast-um-landid>

in September 2020, and to take action against the instigators of this anti-Semitic campaign.³⁶⁸

In September 2022, the Reykjavik police reported the arrest of two Icelanders in early 30s who had been planning to carry out a terrorist attack against members of the Althingi (Parliament) and law enforcement officers using 3D-printed weapons.

According to the police, the suspects were supporters of far-right Norwegian nationalist Breivik. In particular, a search of their homes yielded swastika flags and books on Nazi ideology.³⁶⁹

In February 2023, the Reykjavik District Court ruled that the Prosecutor's Office did not have sufficient grounds to charge the detainees with terrorism, thus the offence should be reclassified under another article of the Criminal Code.³⁷⁰

There is no evidence of right-wing radical and neo-Nazi views among law enforcement officers in Iceland. However, according to local media reports, the father of the National Police Commissioner Sigríður Björk Guðjónsdóttir was somehow involved in the planned terrorist attack in September 2022, and she was therefore removed from the investigation.³⁷¹

The above facts along with other problems related to the police activities speak about certain drawbacks in ensuring human rights in Iceland.

In Iceland, there are also challenges linked to the stay of refugees and migrants.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted in its concluding observations on twenty-first to twenty-third periodic reports of Iceland adopted in August 2019 that the number of foreign nationals living in the State party continued to increase substantially. The CERD welcomed the measures taken by the country to facilitate their integration, including the establishment of the

³⁶⁸ <https://www.wiesenthal.com/about/news/wiesenthal-centre-breaking.html>.

³⁶⁹ Article in the English version of the central newspaper *Morgunblaðið*, 15 December 2022, https://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/news/2022/12/15/talked_about_becoming_members_of_a_death_squad/

³⁷⁰ Article in the central newspaper *Morgunblaðið*, 9 February 2023, https://www.mbl.is/frettir/innlent/2023/02/09/kaera_fravisun_i_hrydjuverkamalinu/

³⁷¹ Article in the central newspaper *Morgunblaðið*, 29 September 2022, https://www.mbl.is/frettir/innlent/2022/09/29/husleit_hja_fodur_rikislogreglustjora/

Multicultural Information Centre in Reykjavik, which offers a full range of services in multiple languages and runs awareness- raising campaigns to celebrate diversity.³⁷²

At the same time, the Committee expressed concern that unemployment rate among persons belonging to ethnic minorities or with migrant backgrounds remains high, at 7.4 per cent, which is more than twice as high as that among the general population.³⁷³

Increased number of migrants and refugees affected general public sentiment. For example, the media have at times reported public protests against the construction of a mosque in the suburbs of Reykjavik, accompanied by acts of vandalism. According to experts, this expression of discontent was related to Icelanders' fears that this religious site would contribute to the spread of Islamic radicalism in the country.

According to the results of studies conducted by the University of Iceland, children of foreigners and of mixed marriages are often vulnerable to bullying. These children have more difficulties to establish contacts with their peers, even if they have grown in Iceland and Icelandic is their native language.³⁷⁴

Human rights mechanisms have also noted cases of human trafficking (this has been pointed out by another UN human rights treaty body, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women).³⁷⁵ It is stressed that the victims of these crimes mostly originate from East Asia and South America.

Between June 2020 and April 2021, the Icelandic police opened 13 investigations into human trafficking. The victims were mostly women under 40. Most frequently, the perpetrators were African and Asian nationals with residency permits in Iceland.

³⁷² <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/275/63/PDF/G1927563.pdf?OpenElement>

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ <https://rus.is/bulling-ili-travly-a-cto-eto-takoe/>

³⁷⁵ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fISL%2fCO%2f7-8&Lang=en

Migrant-phobia is usually spread by the far-right. Against the backdrop of the growing activity of such structures, there were a number of rallies in support of refugees on the verge of expulsion from the country at the beginning of 2020.

In its concluding observations of 31 May 2023, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women also noted a number of challenges in the field of women's rights.³⁷⁶ In particular, the body expressed concern about reports of sexist and misogynist speech, including on social media, against women in political life and women belonging to disadvantaged groups (women with disabilities and migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women).

Forced sterilization is not explicitly criminalized in the General Penal Code, but is covered by provisions on bodily harm (article 218). There is practice of forced sterilization of women with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.

The country lacks a comprehensive law specifically criminalizing all forms of violence, including domestic violence, and the inadequate protection from violence of women and girls facing intersecting forms of discrimination. A study by the University of Iceland in 2021 indicated that 40 per cent of the 32,811 female respondents were victims of physical and/or sexual violence and nearly 25 per cent were survivors of rape or attempted rape.

There has been no reported cases of harassment of people from ethnic, linguistic, or religious minorities in Iceland in 2022 – early 2023.

Even though there is a small Jewish community residing in the country,³⁷⁷ in 2021 Judaism was for the first time registered as an official State religion in Iceland.³⁷⁸

Since the beginning of the special military operation of Russia aimed at denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine, Reykjavik has taken an extremely anti-Russian position, and provides political, military and financial support the neo-Nazi Kiev regime. Rallies have been held in front of the consular department

³⁷⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 9th periodic report of Iceland. 31 May 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FISL%2FCO%2F9&Lang=en

³⁷⁷ <https://isroe.co.il/islandiya-prinyala-iudaizm/>

³⁷⁸ <https://stmegi.com/posts/88177/9-maloizvestnykh-faktov-o-evreyakh-i-islandii/>

of the Russian Embassy. On 28 February 2022, it was attacked: one person with mental disorder broke down the gates and tried to knock down the camera³⁷⁹ The offender was arrested and brought to the police. Diplomats constantly receive insults and threats by e-mail and telephone.³⁸⁰

According to our compatriots, since the beginning of the special operation some members of the Russian diaspora have experienced insults and threats on Facebook from Icelanders, as well as from Balts and Poles residing in the country. At the same time, there were no relevant appeals from Russian citizens to the Embassy hotline.

According to the information of 28 February 2022 on the news portal RUS.IS, there has been a rise of Russophobia in Icelandic society, incited by national media, statements by Government members and restricted access to unbiased and comprehensive information.³⁸¹ The fact that, in early March 2022, vandals desecrated the chapel at the construction site of the Russian orthodox church in Reykjavik, drawing two swastikas on it, only supports such observations.³⁸²

Since the end of February 2022, Icelandic media have published a huge amount of blatantly biased and emotionally charged materials, professionally fuelling xenophobic sentiments among ordinary citizens, showing developments in Ukraine only from a negative side for Russia, without citing alternative information sources, and without any analysis of situation and impartial coverage of events.³⁸³ It is not surprising given the leading Russian news website 1tv.ru is blocked in the territory of Iceland from 27 February 2022.

By coincidence, the same day, the Prime Minister of Iceland announced on TV the intention to cancel all visas issued to Russian citizens. The Ministry of

³⁷⁹ <https://russian.rt.com/world/news/969364-islandiya-napadenie-rossiya>.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ <https://rus.is/ot-redakcii/>

³⁸² <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/974510-russkie-emigranty-travlya-specoperaciya>.

³⁸³ Ibid.

Foreign Affairs of Iceland “corrected” her words and informed that only visas of specified categories would be revoked.³⁸⁴

³⁸⁴ <https://rus.is/ot-redakcii/>

Spain

The Spanish leadership, irrespective of its party affiliation, has traditionally paid increased attention to combating neo-Nazism and contemporary forms of racism, xenophobia and intolerance, both in domestic policy and on the international arena. It is taking consistent steps to counter impunity and strengthen accountability for relevant offences, and generally building upon the recommendations of multilateral universal and regional structures and relevant international NGOs.

At the same time, following the general confrontational line of the EU, on 15 December 2022 Spain voted for the first time against the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", adopted annually at the initiative of Russia and other co-sponsors within the framework of the UN General Assembly, which condemns various manifestations of the rehabilitation of Nazism and its henchmen.

In Spain in recent years there have been no notable manifestations of glorification of the Nazi movement and its members. The Spanish right-wing nationalism appeals mainly to the period of Francoism (1939–1975). At the same time, despite the differences in the approaches of political forces to the assessment of this period in the country's history, controversial manifestations of Francoism are discussed mainly within the framework of historical scientific discourse.

A landmark event was the adoption on 19 October 2022 of the "Law on democratic memory" one of the key points in the programme of the ruling coalition of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party and the extreme left-wing Unidas Podemos bloc. The law provides for strong measures to counter the apologetics of Francoism, including the abolition of all associations dedicated to the memory of the dictator, the revision of court verdicts and assignments of aristocratic titles and awards of the period, and the imposition of fines for damaging places of memory of victims of the regime or praising Franco.

Even the patriotic party "Vox", which opponents and critics try to label as "neo-Francist", tries to disown any accusations of sympathy for Francoism.

At the same time, there are numerous cases of racism, xenophobia, religious, ethnic and ideological intolerance, which are regularly highlighted by the media and local NGOs.

For example, the Spanish Movement against Intolerance ("Movimiento contra la intolerancia")³⁸⁵ registers an average of over 5,000 such incidents per year, including attacks on Muslims in the streets, insults against them on the Internet and the desecration of mosques. It was also noted that the vast majority of victims of racist behaviour (primarily Roma and migrants) did not report it to the police. There was also an increase in racist behaviour at sporting events and among fans. According to the NGO, Spanish segment of the Internet has about 1,000 websites promoting neo-Nazism and xenophobia.

According to figures released by the Spanish Interior Ministry³⁸⁶, the number of hate crimes has been on a steady upward trend since 2014. Thus, in 2021 there were 1,802 cases (3.8 per 100,000 citizens), 28.6% more than in 2020 (1,401 cases) and increased by 5.6 per cent in 2021 compared to "pre-pandemic" 2019 (1,706). Of these, 639 cases were related to racism and xenophobia and 326 to ideology. There was a 266.6% increase in the number of manifestations of anti-Semitism (11). The number of cybercrimes (232) in this area (threats/insults on the Internet and social networks) increased by 22.7 per cent. The detection rate for such offences was 63%, 743 people were detained or under investigation, and more than 80% of offenders were Spanish.

These statistics take into account only officially investigated cases. According to law enforcement officials themselves, only 20-25 per cent of victims turn to the police. In order to prevent crimes, since April 2022, the Spanish Ministry of Internal Affairs has been implementing the Second Hate Crime Action

³⁸⁵ The NGO Movement Against Intolerance (<http://www.movimientocontralaintolerancia.com/>) published a case study for 2022 "In Defence of Coexistence, Tolerance and Harmony. Against xenophobia and violence" (http://www.infomeraxen.es/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/RAX_ESP_2022-1.pdf).

³⁸⁶ As of May 2023, data for 2022 has not been published. Spanish Interior Ministry report for 2021: <https://www.interior.gob.es/opencms/pdf/servicios-al-ciudadano/delitos-de-odio/estadisticas/INFORME-EVOLUCION-DELITOS-DE-ODIO-VDEF.pdf>

Plan for 2022-2024 aimed at coordinating the efforts on the national and regional levels and providing for 86 concrete measures, including the creation of specialised units within the National Police and the Guardia Civil. On 12 July 2022, Spain adopted the "Equal Treatment and Non-Discrimination Act" and on 31 January 2023 approved the National Plan for the Implementation of the EU Strategy to Combat Anti-Semitism (2023-2030).

There have been cases of various forms of neo-Nazism. For example, since 2007 the members of far-right organizations have held annually in February a procession through Madrid (last time on 11 February 2023) in memory of the fallen soldiers of the "Blue division", (which fought as part of the German forces on the territory of the USSR in 1941-1943), displaying fascist symbols. Previously, local residents have repeatedly protested and demanded to ban such events (in 2022, the procession was not authorised by the authorities for the first time, and participants were subjected to administrative fines).

On 4 February 2023, the annual closed meeting of the Spanish movement "Becoming Europe" ("Devenir Europeo"; registered in the Ministry of Interior's register as a cultural association), which openly adheres to neo-Nazi views, was held in Madrid. The event was attended by about 80 people, the main guest "star" being the Swedish right-wing extremist, leader of the "Nordic Resistance Movement" S. Lindberg. This fact once again confirms that there is a worrying trend in Europe towards increasing international links and internationalisation of the activities of such organisations.

On 24 April 2023, some 200 Francoist supporters shouting various fascist slogans gathered near the San Isidro cemetery in Madrid, where the exhumed remains of J.A. Primo de Rivera (1903-1936), founder of the nationalist far-right Spanish Phalanx party, had been moved. As a result of clashes with the police, three of them were arrested for disturbing public order.

Various manifestations of racial discrimination had been recorded in Spain. According to a study entitled "Youth and racism"³⁸⁷, about 25 per cent of young

³⁸⁷ The study "Jóvenes y racismo. Estudio sobre percepciones y actitudes racistas y xenófobas entre la población

Spaniards have racist and xenophobic attitudes (the majority are male), and they do not hide their intolerance towards Roma, Moroccans and sub-Saharan Africans. The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children, N. Maalla M'jid³⁸⁸, also points to the aggravation of this problem.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in May 2023 noted with concern that legislative measures adopted by the Spanish authorities targeting vulnerable categories of the population have not been effective in practice. In particular, the Committee, although referring to the adoption of the National Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation in Public Life for Roma in Spain (2021-2030), nevertheless expressed concern at the lack of specific legislation and the persistent gap in various areas of life (such as education, employment, health, social protection and participation in public life) between Roma and non-Roma women in all areas of the country³⁸⁹.

The EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights noted last year a serious problem regarding public confidence in the actions of law enforcement officials. In particular, it indicated that in Spain, only one in ten victims of hate crimes reports them to law enforcement authorities. Such a high level of distrust in the police can be explained by people's lack of confidence that their reports will be properly handled or fear of retaliation³⁹⁰.

For its part, the Spanish Ministry of Social Protection, Integration and Migration Policy recognises the "structural problem of racism in social, financial and political bodies" and is therefore developing a long-term "Framework for a Civic Inclusive Strategy against Racism and Xenophobia". The project includes,

joven de España" (November 2022), conducted by the Queen Sofia Centre for Adolescents and Youth: <https://www.adolescenciayjuventud.org/publicacion/jovenes-y-racismo/>.

³⁸⁸ Interview with the newspaper El País, 20.11.2022: <https://elpais.com/planeta-futuro/2022-11-20/la-representante-de-la-onu-para-la-infancia-en-espana-hay-un-creciente-problema-de-xenofobia-y-racismo.html>

³⁸⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the consideration of the 9th periodic report of Spain. May 2023. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FESP%2FCO%2F9&Lang=ru

³⁹⁰ European Union Agency for fundamental rights. Fundamental rights report 2022. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

inter alia, the creation of an "anti-racist administrative brigade" that will monitor information published in the media and on the Internet for intolerance³⁹¹.

Human rights defenders pay special attention to the problems of migrants. For example, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in May 2023 pointed out that a significant number of migrant women are victims of trafficking, the main areas of which are forced labour, especially in the agricultural sector, and sexual exploitation³⁹². Victims of trafficking are rarely detected by border officials. In addition, they often face obstacles in accessing justice. Separately, the Committee noted the low level of education among women and girls from migrant and Roma communities and the problems faced by refugee women in accessing education.

The same problems were highlighted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights in its 2023 progress report³⁹³.

Such NGOs as Amnesty International³⁹⁴ and SOS Racismo³⁹⁵ regularly draw attention to the practice of nationality-based discrimination when the Spanish authorities process asylum applications by refugees, as well as bias and disproportionate use of force by Spanish law enforcement officers against migrants from Africa and the Middle East, especially at the borders of the Spanish semi-exclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on the North African coast.

Of serious concern to human rights defenders is the harsh practice of immediately deporting migrants, even if they have physically crossed the Spanish-Moroccan border without following the prescribed procedures. For example, the tragic attempt of about 2,000 African migrants to break through the Melilla border crossing (24 June 2022), which, according to official figures, resulted in 23 deaths

³⁹¹ Article in the ABC newspaper of 26.09.2022: <https://www.abc.es/espana/gobierno-sopesa-crear-brigada-antirracismo-vigile-medios-20220926201650-nt.html>

³⁹² Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the consideration of the 9th periodic report of Spain. May 2023. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FESP%2FCO%2F9&Lang=ru

³⁹³ European Union Agency for fundamental rights. Fundamental rights report 2023. http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

³⁹⁴ Included by the Russian Ministry of Justice in the list of undesirable organisations, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/>

³⁹⁵ <https://sosracismo.eu/>

(some NGOs raise this figure to 80) and hundreds of people injured (including Spanish and Moroccan police officers), caused a loud public and political resonance in Spain and EU Brussels. According to human rights defenders, the reason was the severe misconduct of Moroccan border guards "with the 'connivance of the Spanish'". In this regard, the International Organisation for Migration and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees once again called on all authorities to give priority attention to the safety of migrants and refugees, to refrain from the excessive use of force and to protect their rights³⁹⁶. The head of the Spanish Interior Ministry had to report to the European Parliament, several internal investigations were opened, but in the end the authorities managed to put the story "on the brakes"³⁹⁷.

Human rights structures are still concerned about the situation in overcrowded migrant accommodation centres. Experts, in particular, pointed to inadequate living conditions in migrant centres in the Canary Islands.

The following irregularities have been noted in the administrative expulsion from Spain of persons who have arrived illegally: failure to conduct a proper medical examination to confirm readiness to travel, unjustified use of handcuffs, organisation of air travel without prior warning to those being removed. Experts draw attention to outdated and inaccurate methods of forced medical age verification of underage migrants.

After the start of the special military operation to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine, Spanish officials began to openly pursue an aggressive anti-Russian line. Their unconcealed Russophobic rhetoric (for example, Madrid Mayor J.L. Martinez-Almeida in a conversation with pranksters in June 2022 agreed with the need to "punish the Russian bastards"³⁹⁸), the unprecedented propaganda campaign unleashed in the local media to "cancel Russia" and make everything Russian "toxic", the massive influx of refugees from Ukraine into Spain (as of

³⁹⁶ IOM and UNHCR Deplore Loss of Life at Nador-Melilla Crossing. 25 июня 2022 г. <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-and-unhcr-deplore-loss-life-nador-melilla-crossing>

³⁹⁷ European Union Agency for fundamental rights. Fundamental rights report 2022. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

³⁹⁸ <https://ria.ru/20220810/madrid-1808614871.html>

April 2023, over 174,000 people received EU temporary protection), as well as the activities of a number of Ukrainian nationalist organisations, have had a negative impact on the living conditions of Russian citizens in the country, especially in the spring of 2022, and cases of discrimination against them have been recorded.

In addition, the spread of Russophobic rhetoric in social networks is intensifying. Russian-language chat rooms in Spain received messages on countering "propagandists of the Russian world" with incitements to collect information about Russians and their personal data on a specially created website. It was suggested to publish these materials in the media and to send them to Spanish authorities (at the Immigration Office in Madrid). This "database" of Russians is reminiscent of the infamous Ukrainian website "Peacemaker".

The most high-profile manifestation of discrimination on nationality grounds has been the blocking by some Spanish banks of bank accounts and cards, including those belonging to employees of Russian foreign missions. Cases of bullying of Russian-speaking children in Spanish schools have been recorded. Thanks to the co-ordinated efforts of the Russian Embassy in Madrid, associations of compatriots and a number of local lawyers, work has been organised to provide assistance to the affected compatriots. In particular, they are being provided with legal and social protection free of charge through the Legal Assistance Centre of the Union of Russian Compatriots' Organisations.

In addition, the Madrid authorities, having ignored numerous appeals from the Russian Embassy, continue to condone the holding on a daily basis in front of the main entrance to the diplomatic mission of an aggressive anti-Russian picket, whose participants use Ukrainian Nazi symbols, insults and threats of violence on ethnic grounds.

Nevertheless, in such unfavourable conditions, in May 2023, associations of compatriots, with the support of friendly Spanish organisations, managed to hold a number of events to mark Victory Day in the Great Patriotic War. The central events were the "Immortal Regiment" processions and "St. George's Ribbon" actions, which took place with the permission of the local authorities in Madrid

(over 1,000 people participated), Barcelona (about 120 people), Almeria (over 600 people) and Vigo (about 70 people). They took place despite threats to the organisers from Ukrainian nationalists and calls by some Ukrainian officials to ban them in Spain³⁹⁹. The above-mentioned events took place in a generally calm atmosphere, the Spanish authorities ensured an adequate level of security, and law enforcement officers foiled some attempts by Ukrainian activists to disrupt the marches.

³⁹⁹ The adviser to the Ukrainian interior minister and former deputy minister, Aleksandr Gerashchenko, expressed regret in his Twitter account that the Madrid authorities did not cancel the Immortal Regiment procession: <https://www.vozpopuli.com/espana/ucrania-denuncia-manifestacion-pro-rusa-madrid-nazis.html>

Italy

Italy possesses a substantial legal framework to counteract contemporary manifestations of fascism and efforts to revive it. Article 48 of the Italian Republic's Constitution prohibits the re-establishment of any fascist party that had been dissolved following Italy's defeat in the World War II.

In 1952, the Shelby Law was enacted, making it a crime to organise groups, associations, or movements that exhibit characteristics of the Fascist Party and aim to restore it. Publicly lauding "the figures, principles, acts, and methods of the fascist regime or its anti-democratic objectives" was a criminal offence. In 1957, the Constitutional Court made changes to the Shelby Law, penalizing only those fascist apologetics which could result in the resurgence of a fascist party.

In 1993, the Mancino Law was passed as a sequel to the Shelby Law, which criminalized "the dissemination of ideas founded on racial superiority, racial and ethnic animosity, and the praise of figures, principles, acts, and methods of the fascist government or its anti-democratic objectives."

At the close of 2017, the Chamber of Deputies (the lower house of the Italian parliament) sanctioned the initial passage of the Fiano Law, condemning "the production, marketing, distribution, sale of objects with images and portraits of fascist figures, symbols, propaganda in public space of symbols and attributes of the fascist party, including gestures". The use of the Internet for these purposes was deemed an intensifying factor. However, this law was not adopted due to the termination of Parliament's powers.

Nevertheless, Italy's legislation still contains remnants of the Fascist regime. Sergio Rizzo and Alessandro Campi, authors of "The Long Shadow of Fascism" (2022), reveal that there are currently 249 legal norms (regulations, decrees and laws) in Italy which make mention of the concept of "race".

In December 2022, Italy, together with its former Nazi Axis allies of World War II (Germany, Japan, etc.), cast their vote for the first time opposing the draft annual UN General Assembly resolution on "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of

racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance". The resolution was proposed by Russia and other co-sponsors. This marks the inaugural occasion in which former Axis members from the World War II have openly dissented against a document condemning the glorification of Nazism and various forms of racial discrimination. In prior instances, the Italian delegation had followed the EU's collective stance by abstaining from voting.

It should be noted that the Italian authorities, irrespective of the political inclination of the governing cabinet, exhibit leniency towards the ideological adherents of Benito Mussolini. They appear to neither perceive nor acknowledge a significant threat to public order or state security emanating from these peripheral political groups. The case of Ignazio La Russa, the President of the Italian Senate and co-founder of the Brothers of Italy party, which secured the largest number of votes in the parliamentary elections held in September, serves as an illustration in this regard. The politician is known for his loud statements on his unwillingness to commemorate the day of Italy's liberation from fascism (25 April) and his intentions to maintain a collection of fascist memorabilia at his residence, which includes photographs, medals, and a bust of Mussolini.

Fascism is not a taboo subject in Italian social and political life. In public, however, representatives of the executive and legislative branches of government are generally careful not to incriminate themselves with nostalgia for the "iron hand of the Duce", lest the predominantly left-liberal Italian media, at the instigation of political rivals, label them as such and force them to justify their statements.

Italy has a number of far-right organisations with nationalist and near neo-fascist views, the largest of which are the national far-right parties Casa Pound⁴⁰⁰, Forza Nuova⁴⁰¹ and Movimento Fascismo e Libertà – Partito Socialista Nazionale. They have traditionally received no more than 1 per cent of the vote in

⁴⁰⁰ This political movement, founded in 2003, owns its own publishing house, Altaforte.

⁴⁰¹ As a political party, it was founded in 1997.

parliamentary and European elections. There are also a number of small radical associations at regional and local level.⁴⁰²

Italian law enforcement officers monitor the activities of underground neo-Nazi groups. In October 2021, the media reported the discovery of cells operating within an extensive network of the "Hagala Order" association in major Italian cities, including Rome, Naples, Turin and Siena. As a result of the arrests, 26 suspects were detained, under the suspicion of being linked to the organisation. Italian law enforcers have reported that the organisation focused on promoting a hateful ideology, recruiting and providing military training to its adherents. Additionally, there were indications of potential connections between the group and Ukrainian neo-Nazis, such as Azov, Right Sector, and Centuria.

On 15 November 2022, a law enforcement operation in Naples, Caserta, and Avellino (Campania) led to the detention of four individuals belonging to the Ordine di Hagal group. It has been reported that members of this group were involved in the circulation of prohibited literature online and received training for knife and hand-to-hand fighting. Further enquiries exposed that the group had communication with Ukrainian neo-Nazis belonging to the Azov Battalion and Right Sector⁴⁰³.

In October 2022, Italian law enforcement apprehended individuals linked to a neo-Nazi organization associated with "The Base" from the United States in Bari (Puglia). During the detention, propaganda assets and objects featuring swastikas were seized. The cell members are under suspicion of planning terrorist attacks⁴⁰⁴.

Experts note that alongside legally established socio-political associations, there also exist covert groups of extremists and individuals who may possess an array of firearms, explosives, and extremist literature.

Extremists often hold events in "sacred" places, such as the Maggiore Cemetery in Milan, where figures associated with fascism are buried, and they also

⁴⁰² For example, Lealtà Azione (Lombardy region), Skin4Skin (Milan), Hammerskin (Milan), Generazione Identitaria (Milan), Manipolo d'Avanguardia (Bergamo), Do.Ra. (Varese), Militia (Rome), Avanguardia Nazionale (Rome), Rivolta Nazionale (Rome), Fortezza Europa (Verona), Veneto Fronte Skinheads (Vicenza) and others.

⁴⁰³ <https://tg24.sky.it/napoli/2022/11/15/terrorismo-neonazisti-arresti-oggi/>

⁴⁰⁴ <https://www.rainews.it/articoli/2022/10/terrorismo-internazionale-arrestato-neonazista-a-bari-propaganda-per-discriminazione-razziale--97e52bf6-b029-449f-893f-9be30db94f43.html>

occasionally coordinate public demonstrations in commemoration of events of importance to the fascist movement, with varying degrees of success (23 March 1919 – establishment of the Italian Fighting Leagues, 29 July 1883 – birthday of Benito Mussolini, 27-30 October 1922 – march of the Blackshirts on Rome, 20 April 1889 – birthday of Adolf Hitler, 28 April 1945 – death of Mussolini). In many Italian cities, including the capital, there are still monuments and memorial plaques dedicated to the Italian fascists and to the participants in the colonial wars. Most municipalities do not take any measures to combat this "architectural heritage". In a number of towns (usually of provincial importance), Mussolini retains the title of "honorary citizen", mainly due to the reluctance of the local authorities to repeal the municipal regulations adopted in the 1920s. Examples include the following towns: Pietrasanta (Region of Tuscany), Carpi (Region of Emilia-Romagna).

On 30 October 2022, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the March on Rome by the militants of the National Fascist Party, a commemorative procession was held in Predappio (Emilia-Romagna), where Mussolini was born. Fascist slogans and symbols were used (easily available in Italy on the Internet). Participants in the "march" included direct descendants of the dictator. According to the organisers, the event attracted approximately 4,000 individuals (official sources state closer to 2,000), with a minimal number of 8 arrests made by law enforcement. This gathering, known for its regularity, generally draws a few thousand radical attendees annually.

According to a 2020 public report by Italian intelligence agencies⁴⁰⁵, the Italian far-right has intensified its activities in the virtual space in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, using the available social media tools to promote racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, civil disobedience, and to spread conspiracy theories and disinformation. They actively used the themes of deterioration in the socio-economic situation in the country amid the spread of coronavirus. In their rhetoric, the ultra-right use the traditional slogans about the protection of national identity,

⁴⁰⁵ <https://www.sicurezzanazionale.gov.it/sisr.nsf/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/RELAZIONE-ANNUALE-2020.pdf>

traditional family, countering migration, multiculturalism, Islamization, globalization, pan-European institutions, and NATO that are understandable to the population.

Respectful treatment is also noted in Italy for memorials and monuments erected in honour of those who fought against Nazism and Fascism. New graves of our citizens who died in the Apennines during the war are being detected, and new memorial sites are being installed. In November 2020, another monument to the Soviet partisan Vladimir Tulisko was unveiled in Caldiero (Province of Verona).⁴⁰⁶

Nevertheless, instances of desecration of memorials to victims of fascism have occurred. On 25 April 2022, such an incident transpired in Gallarate (Lombardy), while on 19 February 2023, radical individuals constructed a swastika-shaped object in a Milan municipal park adjacent to a monument dedicated to victims of deportation. The perpetrators responsible for these actions have yet to be identified.⁴⁰⁷

Furthermore, there are direct instances of history being rewritten, including the glorification of Italian fascists in historiographical and journalistic works. On January 26, 2023, a book was presented at Centre for Contemporary Art "Luigi Pecci" in Prato (Tuscany) that portrayed fascist naval officer Salvatore Todaro (1908-1942) in a positive light. A feature film is being planned based on the book's plot.

It should be noted that anti-fascist organizations are also active in the country. The National Association of Italian Partisans (ANPI) serves as the primary organisation in Italy countering manifestations of neo-fascism, racism, and xenophobia. Catholic and international human rights organisations also actively work in this field. Anti-fascists arrange rallies, marches, and concerts to encourage tolerance and oppose racism, involving migrant communities actively. For instance, a demonstration against fascism was held in Florence on 21 February 2023, with a reported attendance of over 3,000 individuals.

⁴⁰⁶ Vladimir Tulisko was amongst the prisoners in forced labours in Trento region in summer 1944. He managed to escape. Mr Tulisko joined the Italian partisan division "Pasubio" that acted near Verona. He perished in the fight with the Nazis retreating to the north from Italy near the city of Caldiero.

⁴⁰⁷ https://milano.repubblica.it/cronaca/2023/02/19/news/svastica_parco_nord_milano_neofascisti_anpi-388555972/

Manifestations of xenophobia and racial discrimination in Italy are not solely related to the activities of neo-fascists, as per experts. It's noted that a significant number of such incidents are manifestations of racism that occur in everyday situations. Several reasons for the growth of xenophobic attitudes in Italy have been suggested by experts, including the deterioration of the socio-economic situation of the population, the high level of youth unemployment, and the influx of migrants from Africa and Asia. The media, both local and national, cover the most prominent cases.

In February 2022, the primary Italian press featured excerpts from the report of the National Office against Racial Discrimination, part of the Italian Council of Ministers. The data shows that only registered complaints identify 1,379 incidents of racial and ethnic discrimination in Italy in 2021 (913 in 2020), with 82 per cent related to online aggression.

Intolerance has been documented by human rights organisations in the country. The Italian Observatory for Security against Acts of Discrimination NGO has been running the "Intolerance Map" project for several years, which analyses discriminatory content on social media and its geolocation data. The study states that Muslims were the target of 19.6 per cent of negative content, with Jews and migrants accounting for 7.6 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively. The Northern region of Italy showed the highest concentration of negative publications targeting Jews and Muslims.⁴⁰⁸

International organizations have brought attention to the rise of racism and xenophobia in Italy. Thus, the rise in racial discrimination, specifically demonstrated through the incitement of racial hatred, was highlighted by the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, in her speech on 22 January 2022 at the meeting of the Italian Senate's Extraordinary Commission against intolerance, racism, anti-Semitism and incitement to hatred and violence.⁴⁰⁹ It should be noted that, alongside the problems, the efforts made

⁴⁰⁸ https://www-voxdiritti-it.translate.google.com/translate?x_tr_sl=auto&x_tr_tl=en&x_tr_hl=de

⁴⁰⁹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2022/01/hearing-italian-senates-extraordinary-commission->

by the Italian authorities to combat manifestations of hatred were also highlighted. These include the establishment of the above-mentioned Commission in 2019⁴¹⁰, as well as the launch by Italian civil society organizations of the Map of Tolerance project⁴¹¹, which aims to examine discriminatory publications on social networks and the Internet.

In August 2023, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted with concern the persistent and increasing use and normalization of racist hate speech against ethnic groups in the public space of Italy, media and on the Internet. Politicians, including members of government and other high-level public officials, have resorted to such discourse against ethnic minorities, particularly Roma, persons of African descent, as well as migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. CERD considers that this is leading to a proliferation of racist hate incidents. This is confirmed by the increasing number of reports of racist hate crimes, including verbal and physical violence against ethnic minorities, resulting sometimes in death. The prevalence of negative stereotypes of Roma, people of African and Arab descent and migrants in Italy was also noted. In addition, the Committee had raised the issue of the widespread use of racial profiling by Italian law enforcement officials. This is accompanied by a high number of cases of racist abuses and ill-treatment, including excessive use of force against ethnic minorities, in particular Roma, people of African descent as well as migrants. CERD called on the Italian authorities to take measures to combat these negative practices, to amend the algorithms and actions of police officials, and to establish an effective mechanism to monitor disaggregated data relating to racial profiling, racial discrimination and instances of racist violence by law enforcement officials, including in the context of identity checks, traffic stops, border searches.⁴¹²

[against](#)

⁴¹⁰ <https://moked.it/international/2019/11/04/news-italian-senate-approves-committee-antisemitism-hatred/>

⁴¹¹ The project is run by the VOX – Osservatorio italiano sui Diritti (Human Rights Observatory) NGO

<http://www.voxdiritti.it>.

⁴¹² Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the 21st periodic report of Italy, August 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FITA%2FCO%2F21-22&Lang=ru

The EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights, in a 2023 report referencing the National Office against Racial Discrimination, highlighted a substantial volume of complaints regarding racial and ethnic discrimination. Specifically, out of the 1,379 cases of discrimination recorded by the national equality body in 2021, 709 (51 per cent) were connected to racial and ethnic discrimination.⁴¹³

As practice shows, anti-Semitism is not over in the Apennines. According to a report published in January 2021 by the Eurispes Institute of Social and Political Studies⁴¹⁴, there was an increase in the number of people in Italy in 2020 who deny the mass extermination of Jews by the Nazis – 15.6 per cent (by comparison, in 2005 there were only 2.7 per cent). 16.1 per cent of respondents say that the persecution of Jews resulted in "not many casualties." 61.7 per cent of respondents believe that cases of anti-Semitism in Italy "are isolated and do not indicate the existence of a problem." 19.8 per cent of respondents believe that "Benito Mussolini was a great leader who made a few mistakes."

These data correlate with numbers provided by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. In its overview of anti-Semitic incidents recorded in the European Union in 2011-2021 the FRA cites statistics of the Italian Observatory for Security against Acts of Discrimination (Osservatorio per la Sicurezza Contro gli Atti Discriminatori – OSCAD), which also show a rise in detected anti-Semitic incidents in Italy: 91 in 2019, as well as 101 in 2020 and 2021 each. The most common offences were incitement to violence (79 cases in 2021) and vandalism directed against Jewish sites (22 cases in 2021). It is also worth noting that notable differences in the number of such incidents for 2010-2018 and 2019-2021 are attributed to different methods of counting. But this difference does not affect the overall trend of anti-Semitic incidents in Italy: even for the first period there is a

⁴¹³ The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Rights Report 2023, https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

⁴¹⁴ <https://eurispes.eu/news/eurispes-risultati-del-rapporto-italia-2020/>

growth in number of anti-Semitic cases from 16 in 2010 to 56 in 2018, with a maximum value of 64 in 2014.⁴¹⁵

The Map of Tolerance study, which analyses social media posts, also points to an increase in manifestations of anti-Semitism.⁴¹⁶

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has reported the prevalence of hate speech in Italian political discourse and media. The committee expressed concern that expressions of hatred against individuals based on their religious affiliation frequently overlap with those based on their ethnic origin. Notably, out of the 224 anti-Semitic incidents that were recorded in 2020, 117 were linked to hate speech disseminated over internet or social media platforms. An additional portion of incidents comprised of derogatory posters, graffiti and inscriptions. The report also stated hate speech and hate crimes targeting Muslim communities, encompassing activities by right-wing radical groups and affiliated movements during protests against temporary facilities accommodating Muslim worshippers (often migrants) or politicians criticizing Islam. Furthermore, there exists an inclination to underreport hate crimes against Muslims. Furthermore, the AC FCNM highlighted that there have been instances, notably between 2018 and 2019, where migration centres have been subject to verbal and physical abuse propagated by political remarks aimed at migrants and refugees.⁴¹⁷

As for the manifestations of xenophobia in Italy, according to experts, most of them are not related to the activities of neo-fascists and are of a domestic nature. The main reasons for the growth of xenophobic attitudes in recent years include the deterioration of the socio-economic situation of the population, high unemployment among young people and the presence of migrants from Africa and

⁴¹⁵ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Antisemitism. Overview of antisemitic incidents recorded in the European Union, 2011-2021. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-antisemitism-overview-2011-2021_en.pdf

⁴¹⁶ <http://www.voxdiritti.it/nuovi-dati-della-mappa-dellintolleranza-in-4-mesi-cresce-lantisemitismo/>

⁴¹⁷ Fifth opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Italy. Adopted on 5 October 2022. Published on 13 February 2023 <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-italy-en/1680aa21a7>

Asia, as the country has actually become one of the main "transshipment points" on its way from Africa to the rest of Europe.

The increase of the number of migrants caused a growth of anti-immigrant rhetoric in political discussions, which was noted with concern by the ECRI.⁴¹⁸ Experts stated the inefficiency and the lack of financial, organizational, and regulatory tools in Italy to counter this phenomenon.

The UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies have a rather balanced approach to dealing with the migration situation in Italy. At the same time, the need is constantly pointed out to ensure the rights of migrants and asylum seekers, improve living conditions in migrant primarily registration centres, migrant reception centres, as well as specialized "crisis centres" and centres for unaccompanied children, and to stop the practice of holding migrants in detention for more than 48 hours. The Human Rights Committee⁴¹⁹, the Committee on the Rights of the Child⁴²⁰, the Committee against Torture⁴²¹, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (in 2016⁴²² and 2023⁴²³) and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in 2015⁴²⁴ and 2022⁴²⁵) have highlighted

⁴¹⁸ The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, Report on Italy (fifth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 18 March 2016, published on 7 June 2016. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-italy/16808b5837>

⁴¹⁹ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the sixth periodic report of Italy, March 2017 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

⁴²⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Italy. February 2019 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=ru

⁴²¹ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Italy. November 2017 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=ru

⁴²² Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined nineteenth and twentieth periodic reports of Italy. December 2016 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f19-20&Lang=ru

⁴²³ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the 21st periodic report of Italy, August 2023. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fITA%2fCO%2f21-22&Lang=ru

⁴²⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fifth periodic report of Italy. September 2015 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fITA%2fCO%2f5&Lang=ru

⁴²⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the sixth periodic report of Italy. October 2022 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCESCR%2fCOC%2

this. In particular, in its concluding observations of October 2022, the CESCR expressed concern that Act No. 132 of 1 December 2018, on immigration and citizenship, had contributed to a rise in the number of irregular migrants in the country, which in turn had increased their risk of exploitation. In addition, the Committee pointed out that there were attacks on journalists and human rights defenders advocating for or supporting migrants.

The problems faced by migrants in Italy were also highlighted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2022.⁴²⁶ Among other things, its experts noted the inadequate conditions in the initial-reception facilities for migrants (inter alia, on the island of Pantelleria), the lack of information on the possibility of lodging an asylum application, the use of immigration detention, as well as cases of *push-backs* in violation of the principle of *non-refoulement*.⁴²⁷

In 2023, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concern about Law 132/2018 of 1 December 2018 on immigration and security and the recently adopted Law 50/2023 of 6 May 2023 (Cutro Law), which in its view made it difficult for migrants and refugees to obtain the necessary protection from the Italian authorities. These included the difficulties faced by migrants and asylum-seekers in the refugee status determination procedure, and abuses by the Italian police and border control authorities. CERD also noted the deplorable living conditions in migrant reception centres and the continuing reduction in the provision of psychological, legal and counselling services to migrants. The sharp decline in the granting of "special protection status" to migrants by authorised bodies and cases of collective expulsions of migrants were highlighted. Particular attention was also paid to the widespread practice of detaining migrants in special centres for prolonged periods, including prohibiting migrants from leaving the centres. In addition, CERD expressed concern about the legal restrictions imposed by the Italian authorities on search and rescue operations

[f1TA%2f50522&Lang=en](#)

⁴²⁶ The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Rights Report 2022,

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

⁴²⁷ The term denotes a situation when a person is apprehended after an irregular border crossing and summarily returned to a neighbouring country without assessing their individual circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

at sea and the pressure, including criminal prosecution, exerted on human rights defenders and civil society organisations for assisting migrants at sea.⁴²⁸

The EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights also highlighted the limitations of NGOs' work in assisting migrants in its 2023 report, noting that only 16 per cent of all migrants are brought to the country's ports as a result of these rescue operations. At the end of 2022, only three NGO-owned vessels and one aircraft were carrying out search and rescue operations, while five vessels were blocked pending legal proceedings and several others were temporarily in port for maintenance. An example is also given of two ships, the Ocean Viking and Humanity 1, which in October 2022 were refused permission by the Italian authorities to disembark migrants rescued at sea in Italian ports for an extended period of time. After a three-week wait, the Ocean Viking was diverted to the French port of Toulon, while the Humanity 1 was allowed to dock at the port of Catania after a two-week wait.⁴²⁹

It is telling that the Committee paid considerable attention to the protection of migrants' rights in Italy. In its follow-up letter, following the examination of the information provided by the Italian authorities on this issue after the penultimate round of examination of the Italian file in 2018. The Committee specifically requested that Italy's next periodic report include information on measures taken to protect the rights of migrants, as well as on the situation of the Roma population.⁴³⁰

Concerns were raised in February 2023 by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk during the consideration of draft legislative amendments that aim to restrict search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea. The proposed amendments include mandatory ports of disembarkation for people rescued at sea, which can sometimes be days away from the original rescue

⁴²⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the 21st periodic report of Italy, August 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FITA%2FCO%2F21-22&Lang=ru

⁴²⁹ The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Rights Report 2023,

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

⁴³⁰ Follow-up letter from the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on Italy's report under the follow-up procedure dated 17 May 2018. CERD/95thsession/FU/AR/ks

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/ITA/INT_CERD_FUL_ITA_31253_E.pdf

site. Humanitarian rescue vessels will also be required to return to port immediately after each rescue, forgoing additional rescue operations. Türk called the proposed document a "fatal disaster at sea". "He stated that the document could potentially impose penalties on both migrants and those who offer them assistance. Moreover, the document may result in a rise in fatalities in maritime disaster incidents."⁴³¹

Experts from the UN Human Rights Council Working Group on Business and Human Rights highlighted the challenges faced by migrants from African and Asian countries working in Italy's commercial sector. Agriculture, clothing, and logistics are among the problematic industries. This was noted during their recent visit in late September and early October 2021." In this context, numerous migrant workers were reported to be experiencing brutal working and living conditions, alongside grave health and safety issues.⁴³² The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights highlighted the same issue in October 2022. They noted that the migration problem is worsened by the significant informal economy, which hires numerous workers without labour and social security entitlements. Italian authorities adopt a punitive stance towards these workers. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination highlighted this issue in August 2023. It was reported that a considerable amount of migrants, primarily seasonal workers in the agricultural sector, are victims of violence and exploitation in Italy.⁴³³

In September 2023, the migration situation was sharply exacerbated by the arrival of thousands of irregular migrants on Italian territory, particularly on the island of Lampedusa off the coast of Tunisia. The number of illegal migrants there outnumbered the local population. Massive clashes broke out between the migrants over the distribution of food. There are reports of casualties among those who arrived on the island. The head of the Italian government, Giorgia Meloni,

⁴³¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/02/italy-proposed-new-sea-rescue-law-puts-more-lives-risk-turk>

⁴³² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2021/10/statement-end-visit-italy-united-nations-working-group-business-and-human-rights?LangID=E&NewsID=27607>

⁴³³ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the 21st periodic report of Italy, August 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FITA%2FCO%2F21-22&Lang=ru

appealed to the EU to help stem the flow of illegal migrants arriving by sea. She noted that since the beginning of the year Italy has been faced with a significant increase in migratory flows. Stressing that neither Italy nor Europe could absorb such a large number of migrants, the Prime Minister announced that Italy would take "extraordinary measures" to combat illegal migration. According to her, "the help of an EU mission is needed to prevent boats with illegal migrants from reaching Europe".⁴³⁴

A number of problems remain unresolved with regard to the existence of Roma settlements in Italy (this group includes Roma and Sinti communities, as well as the Camminanti, an ethnic group living mainly in southern Sicily). It is generally referred to illegal buildings on the outskirts of settlements. These areas are criminalized, and drug trafficking often flourishes there. Law enforcement agencies regularly raid places where Roma live, and illegal buildings are periodically demolished. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (September 2015 and 2022), the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (December 2016 and August 2023), the Human Rights Committee (March 2017) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (January 2019) drew attention to the importance of addressing the situation of the Roma, including in housing, access to social services and education, and the labour market. In October 2022, the CESCR noted that Roma continue to face segregation, with most living in settlements without any infrastructure, and discrimination against Roma children in education. In August 2023, CERD referred to the segregation of Roma children in educational institutions and, more generally, to discrimination against Roma in the provision of health services.

The latest survey by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights on the situation of Roma in the European Union shows that anti-Romani sentiment in Italy is quite high: 40 per cent of those surveyed had experienced hate-motivated aggression in

⁴³⁴<https://www.interfax.ru/world/921194>, <https://ria.ru/20230916/italiya-1896649724.html>
<https://news.ru/europe/bsporyadki-i-zhertvy-sredi-detej-kadry-migracionnogo-krizisa-na-lampeduze/>

the past year, and one in ten members of the Roma community had been physically attacked for the same reasons.⁴³⁵

Discrimination against Roma, including the use of offensive language and names in relation to them, was also highlighted by the AC FCNM.⁴³⁶

A manifestation of xenophobia with a political (and in the context of relevant international documents – racist) background is alarming – large-scale discrimination against Russian citizens and compatriots, which became widespread in the first half of 2012 against the backdrop of the Ukrainian crisis.

In early 2022, Russophobia manifested itself sharply in Italy amid the special military operation in Ukraine for denazification and demilitarization conducted by the Russian Federation. This mass hysteria had a significant impact on Russian citizens and Russian-speaking people from the former Soviet republics living in the Apennines. From February to April 2022, the situation in Italy was characterized by a particularly strong escalation of anti-Russian sentiments. The Russian Embassy and consular offices regularly receive messages from compatriots on threats against them. Aggression towards representatives of Russia and Russian diaspora come mostly from representatives of the numerous Ukrainian diaspora in Italy, one of the largest in Europe.

Since the end of February, Russian citizens have been discriminated against by major banks refusing to service cards and open new accounts. There have also been problems related to limited access to healthcare for Russian citizens. This includes Russophobia towards Russian diplomatic missions. Students undertaking an education in Italy (as a rule, they have come here in the framework of exchange programmes), found themselves under serious pressure; observers estimate that by the end of February 2022 they were about 350 in the Apennines. After blocking of Russian bank services and freezing of accounts they were virtually deprived of

⁴³⁵ Roma in 10 European countries. Main results. European Union Fundamental Rights Agency survey 2021. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-roma-survey-2021-main-results_en.pdf

⁴³⁶ Fifth opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Italy. Adopted on 5 October 2022. Published on 13 February 2023 <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-italy-en/1680aa21a7>

their means of subsistence and had either to prematurely terminate their studies and return to Russia or to look for other ways to earn money.

The campaign against Russian culture and its representatives, launched in Italia, led to a number of ignominious incidents. Thus, on 28 February 2022, mayor of Milan Giuseppe Sala, also head of La Scala Theatre, demanded to the world famous conductor Valery Gergiev to publicly condemn Russia's actions in Ukraine under the threat to end cooperation and, in particular, to ban him from participation in the performance of the opera "Queen of Spades" by Piotr Tchaikovsky.⁴³⁷ Receiving no reply to this ultimatum, the authorities of Milan announced that La Scala theatre "refuses further cooperation with the Russian conductor".

In 2023, Russian diplomatic missions in Italy recorded individual cases of discrimination against Russian citizens and compatriots, mainly in the field of banking services.

There are also problems with ensuring media freedom in Italy, in particular as regards the Russian media. According to a decision adopted by the Council of the European Union, the Russian media outlets RT and Sputnik are banned on the territory of the EU starting from 27 February 2022. This very fact has affected the access of Italian citizens to accurate information. The editorial policy of most major national media is to publish anti-Russian content.

⁴³⁷ <https://www.classicalmusicnews.ru/news/la-scala-removed-valery-gergiev-from-queen-of-spades/>

Canada

Canada has been at the vanguard of countries that have not stopped attempting to misrepresent the history of World War II. There is no Ottawa law that forbids the glorification of Nazi perpetrators. In Canada, the memorials to those who fought for Hitler's Germany are given special consideration and respect.

The acronyms of the Sechevoy Sagittarians' various units are written on plaques on a monument obelisk in the shape of a cross at St. Michael's Cemetery in Edmonton, Alberta, with the inscription "To the Fighters for the Will of Ukraine": the West Ukrainian People's Republic's Galician Army, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN-UPA), and the 1st Division of the Ukrainian National Army (created from former units of the Waffen-SS "Galicia") A bust of the founder of the Organization of Ukraine Nationals and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (OUN-UPA) is located in Edmonton's Centre for Ukrainian Youth Unity. Roman Shukhevych, the commander of the 201st SS Schutzmannschaft unit and the deputy commander of the unit "Nachtigal," planned the systematic killing of millions of Belarusians, Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians during the Second World War. Another location is Oakville (Ontario), which has two memorials in the Ukrainian cemetery of St. Volodymyr, one honouring OUN-UPA members and the other honouring those from the punishing division "Galicia" who died in combat with the Red Army for Brody on July 13–22, 1944.⁴³⁸

Many Canadian media sites quote pro-Banderite lobbyists who openly assert that "fighting on the side of the Germans does not mean you are a Nazi," especially if the Ukrainians who served under Hitler "fought communism," to support the maintenance of such memorials.⁴³⁹

438 Why deny the Ukrainian Nazi connection? Ottawa Citizen. October 27, 2017.

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/why-deny-the-ukrainian-nazi-connection/>;

Nazi monuments uncomfortable Canadian truth. Winnipeg Free Press. November 2, 2017.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/nazi-monuments-uncomfortable-canadian-truth-454627783.html>

439 Ukrainian-Canadian community urged to confront WWII past amid controversy over monuments. National Post. December 23, 2017.

<https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/ukrainian-canadian-community-urged-to-confront-past-amid-controversy-over-monuments-to-nazi-collaborators>

Numerous Nazi criminals and accomplices sought asylum in Canada at the end of World War II. According to the Globe and Mail, up to 30,000 Nazi collaborators were transferred to Canada via Britain.⁴⁴⁰ As of 2022, 16 former Latvian SS legionnaires may have participated in World War II war crimes and crimes against humanity, according to the Historical Memory Foundation in partnership with the Foundation for the Support and Development of Jewish Culture, Traditions, Education, and Science. Additionally, a local chapter of the group “Daugava Hawks” was present when President Edgar Rinkevics, then the foreign minister of Latvia, visited Canada on business in 2017.⁴⁴¹

Even after the previous report’s publication in 2020, the Canadian side continued to be interested in this matter and requested that the Russian Federation provide details about the legionnaires so that they could be verified in accordance with the program for investigating crimes against humanity and war crimes. The Canadian Department of Justice has pledged that it will cooperate with border, immigration, and law enforcement authorities to prevent anyone who has personally committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide from being given asylum in Canada.⁴⁴²

However, the established practice of Canadian officials sanctioning those responsible for the wholesale slaughter of civilians on USSR soil attests to the contrary. Members of Nazi organizations are carefully shielded from prosecution, allowing them to spend their lives in peace. Consider the situation of Vladimir Katryuk, a former member of the 118th SS Punitive Schutzmannschaft Battalion who was responsible for the Khatyn massacre in a Belorussian village. On May 22,

440 Veteran who helped bring 30,000 Ukrainian refugees to Canada to be honored in the UK. Globe and Mail. May 8, 2020

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-veteran-who-helped-bring-30000-ukrainian-refugees-to-canada-to-be/>

441 Information on 154 active Latvian SS legionnaires has been made public by the Historical Memory Foundation. The Historical Memory Foundation. March 24, 2022.

<http://historyfoundation.ru/2022/03/24/fond-istoricheskaja-pamjat-obnarodoval-dannye-o-154-zhivyh-latyshskih-legionerah-ss/>

442 The names of Latvian SS legionnaires are wanted by Canada; war criminals won’t be granted asylum. Sputnik. March 18, 2020.

<https://lv.sputniknews.ru/Russia/20200318/13397788/Kanada-khochet-znat-imena-latyshskikh-legionerov-SS-voennym-prestupnikam-otkazhut-v-ubezhische.htm>

2015, he died in his apiary in the province of Quebec.⁴⁴³

Helmut Oberlander, a member of the SS-10 “a” Sonderkommando and directly involved in the 1942 extermination of 214 Soviet children in an orphanage in Yeisk, as well as other civilians in the Krasnodar Territory and Rostov Region, was never brought to justice because he died in September 2021. The ponderous Canadian court system, which had sought simply the deportation of this Hitler henchman and war criminal rather than conviction for genocide and crimes against humanity for two decades, was unable—or unwilling—to enforce even such an elementary task.

Only one of the 19 cases brought by Jewish organizations to strip Nazi criminals of their citizenship was successful: Two criminals escaped, 11 died, and the court sided with the former Nazis in the remaining cases.

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) and the numerous Ukrainian-Banderite organizations operating under it actively contribute to the demonization of the Nazis while promoting ideas of aggressive nationalism, anti-Semitism, and the exaltation of collaborators who fought for the so-called Ukraine. In addition, it is denied that the Banderites actively organized major pogroms against the Jewish community, particularly in Lviv in June 1941, and against Poles at the “Volyn massacre.”

Canada officially equates communism and Nazism under pressure from the UCC, portraying the “Holodomor” tragedy as a genocide against the Ukrainian people without mentioning that other citizens of the Soviet Union also perished in the 1930s famine. The crimes of the current Nazi sympathizers in Ukraine are hushed up, and the reality is purposefully painted in a way that benefits the Kiev government.

Canadian politicians openly show their support for Nazi ideology. Chrystia Freeland, the deputy prime minister of Canada, shared a picture on Twitter on February 27, 2022, of herself carrying a scarf with the UPA slogan “Glory to

443 Vladimir Katriuk, alleged Nazi war criminal, dies in Quebec. CBC News. May 29, 2015. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/vladimir-katriuk-alleged-nazi-war-criminal-dies-in-quebec-1.3091770>

Ukraine” on it. A few hours after social media users started actively commenting on the post, Freeland replaced the image with a new one without the slogan.

In October 2021, supporters of the Simon Wiesenthal Center urged the Department of National Defence of Canada to conduct an investigation after far-right extremists from Ukrainian armed groups asserted on social media that they had received training from Canadian military personnel as part of a Unifire training mission. The pertinent details were made public in a report created by the George Washington University’s Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies in Washington, DC. Experts have verified that Ukrainian military soldiers claiming to be affiliated with the Canadian Armed Forces are in fact members of the radical Right Sector, Centuria, and Azov organizations. nor promote members of the SS, give the Nazi salute, or engage in white nationalist propaganda.⁴⁴⁴

In response to the accusations, Canada stated that Ukraine was to blame for the military’s ties to extremist movements and that it did not perform background checks on the foreign soldiers it trains.⁴⁴⁵

A striking example of honoring the Nazis in the country is the public praise of 98-year old Bandera member Yaroslav Gunko who was member of the 14th SS Grenadier Division Galicia, arranged on September 22, 2023 in the Parliament of Canada. The 14th SS Volunteer Division Galicia was formed in 1943 from among the Ukrainian ultranationalists of the UPA, engaged in the extermination of civilians, mainly Russian, Polish and Jewish. The division is notoriously known for its punitive actions against the partisans who fought the Nazi occupation in Ukraine. The speech of the war criminal was accompanied by an ovation from Prime Minister J.Trudeau, the speaker of Parliament, members of the House of Commons, as well as invited Western diplomatic corps. This fact once again confirms the purposeful course of Canada and the West to rewrite history for the sake of political conjuncture.

444 Far-Right Group Made Its Home in Ukraine’s Major Western Military Training Hub. Report. September 2021.

<https://www.illiberalism.org/far-right-group-made-its-home-in-ukraines-major-western-military-training-hub/>
445 FSWC Calls for Investigation After Ukrainian Neo-Nazis Brag About Receiving Training from Canada’s Military. FSWC. October 18, 2021.

<https://www.friendsofsimonwiesenthalcenter.com/news/fswc-calls-for-investigation-after-ukrainian-neo-nazis-brag-about-receiving-training-from-canadas-military>

An Ottawa monument to those who perished under communism is nevertheless being built. Tribute to Liberty's Pathways to Liberty "brick-buying" campaign is helping to pay for the memorial's construction in part. It consists primarily of the sale of virtual "bricks" that display on the organization's website and newsletter. Each is dedicated to a certain alleged victim and includes biographical information about that individual. In July 2021, the General Committee of United Croats of Canada purchased "bricks" and dedicated them to Ustaše (Croatian fascists) Anti Paveli and Mile Budak. Anti Paveli was described as a doctor of jurisprudence, while Mile Budak was described as a poet in the biographical part. Following that, both names were removed off the Tribute to Liberty website. At the same time, this Internet resource retains a mention of another Ustaše, Ivan Oršanić.

Another five "bricks" were purchased by the Knightly Order of Vitéz, a group whose members were involved in the persecution, plundering, and deportation of Hungarian Jews in 1944. Finally, the League of Ukrainian Canadians in Edmonton purchased five "bricks" in remembrance of R. Shukhevych.⁴⁴⁶

Gabriel Chaput, a resident of Montreal, was charged with using hate speech, which sparked widespread public protest, particularly among Jewish community leaders. He published a post on the neo-Nazi website Daily Stormer, which set off the events. It was packed with racist pictures and derogatory references to Jews, as did the resource itself, which included multiple images of Hitler. The defendant claimed in his defense that the Daily Stormer was a "parody site" and that the piece was intended to criticize too much political correctness. However, the prosecution interpreted his remarks on the necessity of perpetual Nazism as an actual call for a massacre of Jews. The judge, considering the case, reached the judgment that state prosecutors had failed to credibly establish a connection between Nazism and the Holocaust in July 2022 after hearing the prosecution's claims. He was of the

446 The victims of communism memorial received donations honoring fascists and Nazi collaborators, according to the website. CBC News. July 23, 2021.
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/victims-communism-memorial-fascists-1.6112809>

opinion that an expert historian should have been heard in the courtroom for this purpose. In reply, the defense side attempted to emphasize the absence of such a link, claiming that the elimination of death camp captives was motivated exclusively by economic need rather than ideology. The country's Jewish population is understandably outraged at such a sacrilegious position in the Canadian legal system. As a result, the Canadian chapter of the international Jewish group B'nai Brith (B'nai Brith, Sons of the Covenant) released a statement on its website on July 11, 2022, denouncing the court's judgment and asserting that Canadian justice should neither reject the Holocaust or alter its history.⁴⁴⁷

The lack of historical knowledge demonstrated by the legal community in this case has spurred a discussion in Canadian society regarding the country's history education system and, specifically, the need to preserve the memory of the Second World War era. According to statistics from a poll provided by CBC News and cited by the reputable research and analytical firm Leger, one in four Canadians (and one in three Quebecers) believe their understanding of the Holocaust is insufficient.⁴⁴⁸

References to the suffering of the Jewish population during the actions opposing the introduction of measures by the state to fight the spread of coronavirus infection provide convincing evidence of the glorification of the tragic events of the war years. For instance, a Quebec anti-vaccination group boldly wore yellow stars to signify the violation of the rights of its members. Only until its leader, François Bitondo, met with Daniel Amar, the executive director of the Montreal Holocaust Museum, did the anti-vaccination movement decline to display this sign.⁴⁴⁹ Another instance is the April 2023 gathering at the National Holocaust Memorial in Ottawa, when participants also drew comparisons between the forced limitations Canadians who were not immunized had to endure during

447 A Quebec judge should recognize that Nazism led to the Holocaust, a legal expert and a Jewish group said. The Globe and Mail. July 13, 2022.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-quebec-judge-should-recognize-nazism-led-to-holocaust-legal-expert-and/>

448 Jewish groups in Montreal demand better education after trial of alleged neo-Nazi. CBC News. July 18, 2022.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/gabriel-sohier-chaput-holocaust-education-1.6522318>

449 Ibid.

the pandemic and Hitler's trampling on Jewish rights. Representatives of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center commented on the incident, saying that while the parallel is repulsive, it is not unexpected.⁴⁵⁰

In light of this, the nation is seeing a rise in the popularity of extremist ideologies and neo-Nazi group activities. La Meute (The Swarm), located in Quebec, the Northern Guard, the Canadian Coalition of Concerned Citizens, Soldiers of Odin, and PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West) regional chapters are among the organizations that fall under this category. As a defense group against anti-Semitic residents of African and Latin American areas in Canadian cities, the extremist group the Jewish Defense League of Canada (also known as the "Canadian Jewish Defense League") arose.

At the same time, over the past few years, the operations of Storm Alliance and Blood and Honour Canada have become less frequent.

In 2021, 16 entities and one individual (James Mason) were added to the list of terrorist organizations. Extremist organizations like the Proud Boys, Atomwaffen Division, The Base, Three Percenters, and Aryan Strikeforce were among the 77 people now on the list.⁴⁵¹ At the same time, in May 2021, The Proud Boys split up. Members of the group said in a statement, which was circulated on Telegram, that they were not connected to either white nationalist or terrorist organizations.⁴⁵²

One of the brightest inspirers and promoters of "brown plague" ideas in Canada for many years is Paul Fromm, who heads the Canadian Association for Free Expression and Citizens for Foreign Aid Reform. He is known as one of the country's most notorious neo-Nazis, utilizing "free speech" to cover up and justify the extremist activities of North American right-wing militants. In the month of December 2020. According to the online journal VICE, the federal Internal Revenue Service has approved salary subsidies to Paul Fromm's organizations as

⁴⁵⁰ The anti-vaccine gathering at the Holocaust monument is disgusting, says a human rights group. CBC News. April 8, 2023.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/holocaust-memorial-protest-ottawa-conspiracy-theories-1.6802958>

⁴⁵¹ Currently listed entities. Public Safety Canada.

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrtr/cntr-trrrsm/lstd-ntts/crrnt-lstd-ntts-en.aspx#63>

⁴⁵² Proud Boys Canada dissolves itself and says it was never a 'white supremacy' group. Reuters. May 2, 2011.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/proud-boys-canada-dissolves-itself-says-it-was-never-white-supremacy-group-2021-05-02/>

part of the COVID-19 pandemic citizen support program.⁴⁵³

Young people are actively recruited as new supporters of far-right movements. Propaganda work is done on social media, the internet, and blogs.

On June 19, 2020, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue in the United Kingdom released a report commissioned by the Canadian Department of Public Safety titled “Monitoring the Right-Wing Extremism Online Environment in Canada.” The researchers discovered 6,660 right-wing Internet resources, including 6,352 Twitter profiles and 32 YouTube video channels. Experts estimate that the number of local users on these virtual sites is in the millions, second only to the United States and the United Kingdom.⁴⁵⁴

Aside from the Internet, sports clubs are utilized to recruit and rally supporters of neo-Nazism and white supremacy ideas. The Canadian Active Club network today has numerous branches throughout British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, the Atlantic provinces, and even in Ottawa. According to a Canadian Network Against Hate study, these businesses are owned and operated by Vinland Hammerskins members and are only permitted to be visited by people of color. This is a basic requirement, but it is not the only one. Forming a “client base” requires the use of special recruiters whose responsibilities include completing multi-stage background checks on potential recruits. Members of the club get together once a week to train and practice martial arts. The Active Club network itself is a reimagining of the American Rise Above Movement, which began with training to recruit “racially conscious” citizens.⁴⁵⁵

The federal police are continuously on the lookout for far-right and neo-Nazi activity. In 2022, its officers carried out multiple raids to apprehend Atomwaffen Division adherents. Law enforcement officers searched the house of a prominent

453 Group Run by Canadian Neo-Nazi Received Federal COVID Relief Funds. VICE News. December 22, 2020. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/qjzpm7/group-run-by-paul-fromm-canadian-neo-nazi-received-federal-covid-relief-funds>

454 An Online Environmental Scan of Right-wing Extremism in Canada. Institute for Strategic Dialogue. June 19, 2020.

<https://www.isdglobal.org/isd-publications/canada-online/>

455 Cult Recruiter, Neo-Nazi, Personal Trainer: Meet Ottawa’s Ben Mockler. Canadian Anti-Hate Network. January 16, 2023.

https://www.antihate.ca/cult_recruiter_neo_nazi_personal_trainer_meet_ottawa_ben_mockler

activist of the group, Patrick Gordon MacDonald, in Ottawa in March, and arrested a 19-year-old member of the organization in Windsor in May. Another operation was carried out near Quebec City in June of that year. In conclusion, there were no detentions or arrests.⁴⁵⁶

Patrick Macdonald became the first adherent of far-right ideology in Canada's history to be charged with both terrorism and hate propaganda in July 2023. Investigators claim that the radical activist was engaged in the production and dissemination of three videos that promoted the Atomwaffen Division, attracted new followers, and encouraged participation in terrorist acts. Another member of the group was detained at Kingsey Falls concurrently with Patrick MacDonald's detention in the nation's capital. As of the time of publishing, his identity and the charges brought against him were kept a secret.⁴⁵⁷

According to media reports, the detention of a senior propagandist for the Atomwaffen Division is expected to spark a number of fresh inquiries and arrests, both domestically in Canada and internationally, particularly in the United Kingdom. Patrick MacDonald, among other things, flew across the Atlantic in order to expand the network of neo-Nazi terrorist organizations and build relationships with "colleagues."⁴⁵⁸

The US intelligence agencies are also monitoring the actions of the Canadian far-right because certain members of the aforementioned organizations participated in riots in a number of American cities.

In August 2019, it was made public that Reserve Corporal Patrik Matthews, an explosives-trained engineer corporal, had persuaded other soldiers in Bosejour, Manitoba, to join the right-wing extremist group The Base. Matthews was later compelled to flee to the US, where the FBI detained him and his American

456 RCMP conduct raids in central Quebec targeting Atomwaffen Division neo-Nazi group. CBC News. June 16, 2022.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-raid-atomwaffen-division-neo-nazi-group-1.6491005>

457 Individual associated with Atomwaffen Division charged with terrorism and hate propaganda. Royal Canadian Mounted Police. July 5, 2023.

<https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/news/2023/individual-associated-atomwaffen-division-charged-terrorism-and-hate-propaganda>

458 Canadian Police Just Arrested Influential Neo-Nazi 'Dark Foreigner'. VICE News. July 5, 2023.

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/z3m383/dark-foreigner-arrested-canada-terrorism>

associates.⁴⁵⁹

In April 2022, a report on systemic racism and discrimination in the Canadian military, commissioned by the Department of National Defense, was released. The study's experts determined that the number of supporters of extreme ideologies in the military department is increasing. A growing number of Canadian military members are secretly joining groups that advocate white supremacy and ultra-nationalist views. Technological improvements that have created potential for recruiting new members via the darknet and encrypted chat rooms have hampered timely identification of radicalized components. The ministry's various counter-action options were determined to be ineffective.⁴⁶⁰

The House of Commons Committee on Public and National Security published a report on the emergence of violent extremism driven by ideology in Canada in June 2022. The number of radical groups in the nation has significantly increased, say the experts who were interviewed. At least 300 such organizations have appeared since 2015. They are primarily based in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec. Islamophobia, animosity against immigrants and women, and the idea of re-establishing power by revolution are all part of the radicals' goal. To some extent, tight limitations on persons who have not been immunized against COVID-19 have contributed to an upsurge in societal radicalism. Extremists use little-known social networks to disseminate their ideologies because they lack the technology to screen illegal online content.⁴⁶¹

It is significant that the Canadian delegation to the United Nations General Assembly voted on the draft resolution titled "Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism, and other practices that combat the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism, and other practices that contribute to it" in December 2022, despite

459 Military, RCMP investigating Winnipeg neo-Nazi army reserves leader. Winnipeg Free Press. August 19, 2019. <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/military-rcmp-investigating-winnipeg-neo-nazi-army-reserves-leader-554974742.html>

460 Canadian military not doing enough to detect, prevent extremism in the ranks: report. CBC News. April 25, 2022. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/military-report-racism-1.6429794#:~:text=A%20new%20report%20found%20Canada's,isn't%20part%20of%20it>

461 The Rise of Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremism in Canada. Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. June 2022. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/SECU/Reports/RP11868343/securp06/securp06-e.pdf>

the proliferation of right-wing radical right groups and the popularity of neo-Nazi views in Canada. When voting on the draft resolution of the United Nations General Assembly titled “Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism, and other practices that contribute to the escalation of contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance,” presented each year by Russia along with a wide range of co-sponsors, the delegation of that nation opposed its adoption. As a result, Ottawa has in fact returned to its previous method of operation.

In Canada, the total rate of hate crimes continues to be high. A 7% rise in 2022 compared to 2021 (3,576 cases versus 3,355 in 2021) was noted in the Police Recorded Crime Statistics report released on July 27, 2023. After a considerable increase (72%) between 2019 and 2021, the overall trend has significantly slowed down. Meanwhile, from 2021 to 1,950 cases, there were 12% more criminal crimes motivated by racial or ethnic hatred. The number of hate crimes driven by religious affiliation also fell by 15% during the same time. Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan were “record-breakers” for intolerance among Canadian provinces and territories in 2022.⁴⁶²

Because not all incidents are reported to Canadian law enforcement agencies, experts from the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) have raised concern that the actual number of racially motivated hate crimes in the nation may be significantly greater than statistical figures. The Committee noted that the number of reported racially motivated hate crimes against Muslims increased by 61%.⁴⁶³

There are no indications that Canada’s official authorities would reverse their rabid Russophobic stance. They continue to be critical of and even repressive of the patriotic endeavours of the Russian-speaking diaspora. This nation’s citizens with Russian ancestry may be subject to administrative checks and perhaps

462 Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2022, August 27, 2023

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/230727/dq230727b-eng.htm>

463 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in its consideration of the combined 21st to 23rd Periodic Reports of Canada. August 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f21-23&Lang=ru

questioning by law the law enforcement. The Canadian security services were specifically searching for participants of the next World Congress of Compatriots in October 2021 who belonged to the Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots (CCRC) upon their return from Moscow. The officers of the pertinent agencies were curious as to why they were attending this event and what their “plans for the future” were.

Russian citizens are working to maintain their sense of national identity, particularly through preserving future generations’ memories of the Great Patriotic War’s events, despite the strongly biased attitude of their government. They plan memorial events to honour the anniversary of the defeat of Nazism each year in strict accordance with Canadian legislation. The history of recent years amply demonstrates the growing hardening of attitudes toward such activities, notably as a result of pressure from the UCC.

Up until 2018, the T-34 tank at the Canadian War Museum served as the site of Victory Day celebrations for Ottawa’s Russian-speaking community. However, after the neighbourhood UCC branch sent an open letter to the institution’s director, J. Fleck, the Russian diaspora was forbidden from hosting gatherings there. It voiced displeasure at the Canadian state museum organization’s backing of Canada’s “glorification of the Soviet regime.” A week prior to the aforementioned incidents, a member of this organization made an effort to sabotage a gathering of fellow countrymen by entering the stage while waving the Ukrainian flag and yelling anti-Russian chants.

In 2020, activists from Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver held online concerts and performances to commemorate May 9 in the midst of restrictive measures due to the spread of the coronavirus.

On May 8, 2021, a patriotic car rally was organized in Ottawa from the Museum of Military History to the Russian Embassy in Canada and beyond, and on May 9, a mini-reception for Soviet veterans and representatives of the Russian-speaking diaspora was held on the Embassy grounds at the monument to the heroes and victims of the Great Patriotic War, in accordance with all coronavirus

restrictions.

On May 8, 2022, Russian community activists in Calgary conducted a vehicle rally, concert, and Immortal Regiment march, which they documented online. One of the event's organizers was hit by a car flying Ukrainian flags but no registration plates. No search for the attackers is underway. The operations of pro-Banderite structures that circulated death threats on social media against anyone spotted wearing a St. George's ribbon in the run-up to Victory Day were likewise neither controlled nor suppressed by Canadian law enforcement officials.

On May 7, 2023, Russian compatriots in Toronto organized a themed picnic in Earl Bales Park to commemorate Victory Day.

In light of this, on May 8, 2023, the UCC leadership released a statement that wildly misrepresented the truth regarding World War II. It claims that the Soviet Union occupied Eastern Europe and subjected its people to oppression while Canada and its Western allies rescued Europe from the Nazis. In particular, it accuses the USSR of invading Poland. The post-war period up to the collapse of socialism has been called "Soviet communist colonialism." The statement is also permeated with the notion that the world is currently dealing with Russian tyranny and military aggression, which are attempting to "destroy the Ukrainian people and destroy Ukrainian statehood."

Ottawa's official efforts were likewise focused at downplaying the significance of Victory Day. The Government of Canada observed Europe Day on May 9, 2023, in contrast to previous customs of simultaneously recognizing those who had overthrown Nazi Germany. In order to combat "Russian aggression," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has argued in support of increasing arms shipments to the neo-Nazi government in Kiev. The Victory Day celebrations in Moscow, according to Global Affairs of Canada, were an effort to deflect attention from the difficulties the Russian special operation was having achieving its objectives.

Canadian immigration authorities have a discriminatory approach toward Russian individuals who were residents of Crimea. The Russians who were already in the country were suggested - under the threat of cancellation of their visas and

deportation - to urgently exchange at the Embassy their passports issued by divisions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Crimea.

The commencement of a special military campaign to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine by the Russian Federation's Armed Forces in February 2022 exacerbated anti-Russian sentiment in Canada.

Russian diplomatic missions in Canada regularly receive complaints from compatriots about insults, threats, and damage to property from the odious part of the Ukrainian diaspora. The most challenging circumstances exist in areas densely populated by Russian and Ukrainian natives, such as Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver. Citizens with Russian ancestry frequently get emails and personal threats of physical violence as a result of their involvement with or connections to Russia. Bullying is occurring among Russian schoolchildren and university students in Canada. Private Russian-language schools in Canada have been forced to switch to a distance learning approach as of March 2022.

Previously, the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the Russian-language educational environment. There were active private schools that taught Russian history, language, literature, and geography, employed teachers who were Russian compatriots, and used Russian educational resources in addition to the mandatory subjects required by the Canadian educational system, in many major Canadian cities, including Winnipeg, Vancouver, Halifax, Calgary, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and Edmonton. However, in order to combat the coronavirus, the Canadian government has reduced class numbers and maintained social distance, which has led a number of Canadian educational institutions to unilaterally cancel their leasing agreements with Russian schools that had been housed on their property.

There have been cases of physical violence. For example, in March–April 2022, multiple incidents of physical attack against Russian-speaking citizens were reported in Toronto. Three of these occurred outside Russian grocery stores, while the other two occurred in Russian restaurants. The five attackers have been apprehended.

Regardless of the speaker's nationality, the simple use of the Russian language can result in aggression. A prime example of such a case is the attack by three minors on a Moldovan citizen. When they overheard the woman speaking in Russian on the phone, the adolescents shoved her to the ground.

Neo-Nazis from Ukraine are writing to Canadian companies in Montreal to demand that Russian staff be fired. At least one instance of discrimination against a member of the Russian-speaking community included the right to work. A Russian citizen from Calgary indicated that numerous IT companies had turned him down for employment because of his citizenship and nationality.

Radicalized Ukrainians are also generating lists of renowned American lawyers who speak Russian.

There is noticed serious administrative and public pressure on business connected with Russia. Aggression against all things Russian forces private company owners to remove all references to Russia and the Russians. For instance, threats forced the Russian Spoon Bakery in Vancouver to drop the word "Russian" from its name on March 10, 2022.

Following a federal appeal, the Canadian media watchdog officially decided to prevent RT and RT France from broadcasting in the nation on March 16, 2022. Local cable TV providers also made the decision to remove all Russian stations from their networks at the same time. As a result, the Canadian authorities have continued their policy of clearing Canada's information field and depriving its residents and Russian compatriots living in the country of access to alternative information, in violation of democratic principles and media freedom values.

The sphere of culture fell under the restrictions. The Canadian side cancelled the concerts of the young Russian virtuoso pianist Alexander Malofeev in Vancouver and Montreal. The Canadian Council for the Arts has refused to sponsor creative projects involving Russian or Belarusian cultural leaders until the Russian military has left Ukraine's borders.

A showing of the Russian movie Cheburashka that was slated for screening in Ottawa from February 11–12, 2023, was abruptly cancelled due to pressure from

the UCC, whose representatives wrote a number of letters to the organizers alleging that the movie celebrates “Russian fascism.”

Canadian officials and the Ukrainian diaspora criticized Archbishop Gabriel of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia and Archbishop of Montreal and Canada in August 2022 for speaking out in favour of the special operation and denouncing the actions of Ukrainian militants and neo-Nazis. In an interview with the portal “Pravoslavie.RU,” Vladyka Gabriel also said that he had received threats against him. That is why, during the celebration of Easter, about 30 police officers provided security near the temple in Montreal.

In Canada, there is a significant problem with the prevalent hatred toward Jews and those of Jewish origin. In April 2023, the human rights organization B'nai Brith (Sons of the Covenant) published its 2022 report on anti-Semitism in Canada. A total of 2,769 events were recorded (about 8 incidences each day). In addition, the report indicates that they have exceeded 2,000 for five years running. In terms of the 2,799 cases of anti-Semitic expressions, 2021 set a “record” for the organization’s 40 years of keeping relevant statistics. 2,056 instances Online activities accounted for 74.3% of the total. The other cases accounted for 85% of hostile actions. Of particular importance was the dramatic increase in hate crimes in Ontario, which increased by 64.8%.⁴⁶⁴

Instances of antisemitism have been documented at York, McGill, Ryerson, and Toronto universities, among others.⁴⁶⁵ The Edmonton Journal (Alberta) was convicted of intentional hate propaganda in connection with the publication of an offensive cartoon.⁴⁶⁶ There have been calls on social media for a boycott of small and medium-sized businesses owned by Israelis.⁴⁶⁷ Statements by Quebec politician Gillett recognized by the leadership of the Liberal Party as a

464 Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2022. B'nai Brith Canada. 2023.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yH2kfi672WVvmpHpUIYS9IOyC-F5M-PJ/view>

465 Antisemitism on Canadian campuses. The Jerusalem Post. December 10, 2019.

<https://www.jpost.com/opinion/antisemitism-on-canadian-campuses-610537>

466 Edmonton newspaper under fire for ‘anti-semitic’ cartoon. The Canadian Jewish News. August 8, 2019.

<https://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/edmonton-newspaper-under-fire-for-anti-semitic-cartoon>

467 BDS campaign targeting Toronto businesses backfires. The Canadian Jewish News. September 6, 2019.

<https://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/bds-campaign-targeting-toronto-businesses-backfires>

manifestation of intolerance towards an ethnic group.⁴⁶⁸

Racist graffiti was sprayed on election posters of members of the Jewish community⁴⁶⁹. People were attacked, anti-Semitic slurs were made repeatedly,⁴⁷⁰ and there were multiple acts of damage,⁴⁷¹ including the display of Nazi emblems.⁴⁷²

In November 2020, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, recognizing that anti-Semitism was on the rise in Canada and the world, appointed a Special Representative for Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Anti-Semitism.⁴⁷³ However, crimes in this area have not ceased. For example, in January 2021, an act of vandalism to a synagogue in Westmount, Quebec Province, garnered widespread condemnation after a young man painted a Nazi swastika on the walls.⁴⁷⁴

On the proposal of the federal government, the Parliament of Canada amended the Criminal Code of Canada in June 2022, providing for prison penalties of up to two years for public denial of the Holocaust or downplaying the role of the Nazi regime in the mass murder of Jews. The federal budget also allocated C\$70 million to support the Jewish community. 20 million for the renovation of

468 Montreal Liberal candidate turfed following anti-Semitism allegations. Global News. August 30, 2019.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/5838086/montreal-liberal-antisemitism-allegations/>

469 Campaign signs across Canada are being defaced with hateful graffiti. The Hill Times. September 23, 2019.

<https://www.hilltimes.com/2019/09/23/campaign-signs-across-canada-are-being-defaced-with-hateful-graffiti/215779>

470 Taxi company fires driver behind alleged anti-Semitic assault. CTV News. August 1, 2019.

<https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/taxi-company-fires-driver-behind-alleged-anti-semitic-assault-1.4533089>

471 Montsion defence requests additional security after men yelled anti-Semitic slurs in courthouse confrontation. Ottawa Citizen. March 13, 2019.

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/montsion-defence-requests-additional-security-after-men-yelled-anti-semitic-slurs-in-courthouse-confrontation/>

472 Police looking for suspects after 6 hate crimes, some anti-Semitic, reported in Burlington. Global News. June 5, 2019.

[https://globalnews.ca/news/5354368/six-hate-crimes-burlington-halton-police/;](https://globalnews.ca/news/5354368/six-hate-crimes-burlington-halton-police/)

Two charged in relation to anti-Semitic graffiti at Beth Jacob Synagogue. The Hamilton Spectator. October 11, 2019.

<https://www.thespec.com/news/crime/2019/10/11/two-charged-in-relation-to-anti-semitic-graffiti-at-beth-jacob-synagogue.html>

London police investigate swastika vandalism at Muslim newcomer home. CBC News. March 22, 2019.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/london/london-ontario-swastika-vandalism-1.5066841>

473 Prime Minister announces Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism. Office of Prime Minister of Canada. November 25, 2020.

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/11/25/prime-minister-announces-special-envoy-preserving-holocaust>

474 SPVM's hate crime unit investigating after Westmount, Que., synagogue defaced by swastikas. Global News. January 13, 2021.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7574646/spvm-hate-crime-unit-westmount-synagogue-swastikas/>

Montreal's Holocaust Museum and 2.5 million to support a Toronto educational center.⁴⁷⁵

July 2020. Statistics Canada revealed information on the sharp rise of racist comments from the start of the COVID-19 outbreak.⁴⁷⁶ According to a survey of 43,000 people, one in every five (21%) "coloured" Canadians has faced discrimination. People of African descent (26 percent), Koreans (26 percent), Chinese (22 percent), and Filipinos (22 percent) were the most frequent victims.

Approximately 1,150 people reported anti-Asian racism from March 10, 2020, to February 28, 2021, according to a report released in March 2021 by the Chinese Canadian National Council and other partner groups.⁴⁷⁷ Attacks were mainly against vulnerable segments of the population (the elderly, young people, the poor). The incidents most often occurred in public places. Sixty percent of the victims were women. On March 23, 2021, initiated by the opposition New Democratic Party, the House of Commons unanimously approved a resolution condemning racism against people of Asian descent.

Vandals attacked Vietnamese Buddhist temples in Montreal. Several statues and cult objects were destroyed. It was described as hate crime by city police.⁴⁷⁸

In Vancouver, Canadian entrepreneurs of Chinese origin were forced to reduce business activity by 50-70%.⁴⁷⁹ In the Greater Toronto Area, Chinese restaurant sales are down 30-80%.⁴⁸⁰

475 Ottawa to outlaw Holocaust denial, playing down the Nazis' murder of Jews. Globe and Mail. April 8, 2022. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-ottawa-to-outlaw-holocaust-denial-downplaying-the-nazis-murder-of-jews/>

476 Perceptions of personal safety among population groups designated as visible minorities in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. Statistics Canada. July 8, 2020. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00046-eng.htm>

477 A Year Of Racist Attacks: Anti-Asian Racism Across Canada. One Year Into The Covid-19 Pandemic. Report. March 23, 2021.

https://mcusercontent.com/9fbfd2cf7b2a8256f770fc35c/files/35c9daca-3fd4-46f4-a883-c09b8c12bbca/covidracism_final_report.pdf

478 Montreal police suspect hate-crimes after vandals hit Buddhist temples, Chinatown. CBC News. March 4, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/vandalism-temples-1.5485151>

479 Vancouver's Chinese-Canadian businesses report up to 70 % business drop amid virus fears. Global News. February 17, 2020.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/6560530/vancouver-chinatown-business-drop-coronavirus/>

480 Chinese restaurants in GTA see large drop in sales in weeks after coronavirus outbreak. The Globe and Mail. February 11, 2020.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/toronto/article-chinese-restaurants-in-gta-see-large-drop-in-sales-in-weeks-after/>

According to a social poll of ethnic Chinese people performed on June 15-18, 2020, one in every six people adjusted their daily routine to avoid contentious situations on the street. Survey respondents reported being threatened 43% of the time and insulted 50% of the time throughout the outbreak.⁴⁸¹

On April 8, 2020, Canadian Human Rights Commissioner Marie-Claude Landry expressed concern about the “outbreak of racism” that occurred in the aftermath of COVID-19.⁴⁸²

Canadian politicians also indulged in fomenting nationalist sentiment. In April 2020, Conservative Party member of the House of Commons Derek Sloan, expressing dissatisfaction with the actions of Canada’s Chief Medical Officer Theresa Tam to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, accused her of aiding and abetting the PRC. Despite the outrage of the Chinese diaspora, who condemned the incident as racist, the MP refused to apologize to the official.

According to the most recent sociological survey statistics available at the time of writing, prejudice against people of Asian heritage is on the rise in the country, with 20% of this group reporting routine racially motivated attacks.⁴⁸³

When Canada went through the Universal Periodic Review procedure at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, citing the Canadian Human Rights Commission, noted little progress in addressing the long-standing problem of indigenous peoples’ disadvantage.⁴⁸⁴ For many decades now, Native Americans, Métis and Inuit have been among the most oppressed and marginalized members of Canadian society.

The greatest moral, psychological, and social damage to First Nations was

481 Blame, bullying and disrespect: Chinese Canadians reveal their experiences with racism during COVID-19. Angus Reid Institute. June 22, 2020.

<https://angusreid.org/racism-chinese-canadians-covid19/>

482 Racism in response to COVID-19 harms us all. Statement of Marie-Claude Landry, Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

<https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/statement-racism-response-covid-19-harms-us-all>

483 Anti-Asian hate on the rise in Canada: survey. CTV News. July 13, 2023.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/political-tensions-sustain-hate-racism-towards-asian-canadians-after-surge-of-discrimination-from-covid-19-1.6478278>

484 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights A summary of stakeholders’ submissions on Canada was prepared as part of the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review procedure. March 2018.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/059/71/PDF/G1805971.pdf?OpenElement>

caused by the boarding schools for Indigenous children that existed from 1883 to 1996.

E. Tendayi Achiume, the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, stated that the goal of establishing such educational institutions was to assimilate indigenous children by denying them the opportunity to adopt their own people's traditions, customs, values, and languages. Deliberate and often brutal strategies "have been used to break family and community ties." Furthermore, one out of every three children has been physically, sexually, or emotionally abused.⁴⁸⁵

Because of this, boarding schools were known for having a shockingly high student fatality rate. When a child died, neither the reason of death nor the child's name were recorded. As a result, it is impossible to accurately estimate the precise number of individuals who have died or gone missing so far.

However, not everyone in positions of authority in Canada agreed that the system was cruel. Former Ontario senator Lynn Beyak was twice expelled for refusing to take down letters from people praising her comments on Indigenous residential schools from her official page. It was only on her third attempt, after taking another course on anti-racism in June 2020, that the Ethics Committee of the upper house of the Senate recommended her reinstatement.⁴⁸⁶

Following the discovery of 215 unmarked graves in May 2021 on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, British Columbia, indigenous communities began a search for new burials that continues to this day. More than 1,900 remains were found between 2021 and 2023.

In total there are presently 4,037 Indigenous children within Canada's national student memorial register. From 2007 through 2020, the federal

485 Report of the Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council on contemporary forms of racism, E. Tendayi Achiume, prepared pursuant to UN General Assembly resolution 73/262 on reparations for racial discrimination originating in the era of slavery and colonialism (A/74/321).

<https://undocs.org/ru/A/74/321>

486 Independent senators push to suspend Beyak again, despite apology. National Post. February 26, 2020.

<https://nationalpost.com/pmnl/news-pmn/canada-news-pmn/independent-senators-push-to-suspend-beyak-again-despite-apology>

government provided compensation to 28,000 victims of violence in the amount of C\$3.23 billion. (1 Canadian dollar is equal to 0.75 US dollar).⁴⁸⁷

325 indigenous tribes will receive C\$2.8 billion from the federal government in January 2023 as compensation “for loss of language and culture” during the boarding school period.⁴⁸⁸

In June 2022, an indigenous woman, Kimberly Murray, was appointed to the position of special coordinator for the search for unmarked graves of Indian children for a mandate until 2024. In her interim reports (November 2022, June 2023) she complained about the lack of sufficient, long-term funding, issues with getting access to and destruction of records, and an increase in denialism of violence against children of the First Nations.⁴⁸⁹

The Jesuit Order of Canada issued a list of 27 names of priests (most of whom were deceased) who were determined to have sexually molested minors in the mid-twentieth century in March 2023.⁴⁹⁰

A formal apology was made on behalf of the Canadian government for the crimes committed in Indian schools. by Stephen Harper, who was prime minister at that time in June 2008. Following that, federal officials supported Indian chiefs’ calls for the Catholic Church to oversee up to 60% of schools regarding the need for penance. The Pope apologized to First Nations twice, the first on April 1, 2022, at the Vatican during a meeting with a group of Native Americans, Métis, and Inuit, and the second time on July 25, 2022, in Edmonton during an apostolic tour to Canada, officially labelled a “pilgrimage of penance.” The Pontiff declared the program of forced assimilation practiced in residential schools and the elimination of Indigenous people’s traditional identities to be acts of genocide.

487 More than \$3 B paid to 28,000 victims of residential schools abuse: report. CBC News. March 13, 2021.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/iap-final-report-residential-schools-1.5946103>

488 A \$2.8 billion settlement was reached in a class action lawsuit over residential schools. CBC News. January 21, 2023.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/residential-school-band-class-action-settlement-1.6722014>

489 Independent report details 48 findings about challenges of searches for unmarked graves. CBC News. June 16, 2023.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/canada-interim-report-special-interlocutor-residential-school-unmarked-graves-1.6879187>

490 Survivors applaud move by the Jesuits to publish names of abusers. The Globe and Mail. March 14, 2023.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-survivors-applaud-move-by-the-jesuits-to-publish-names-of-abusers/>

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (2008-2015) final report also referred to these practices as "cultural genocide." The House of Commons passed a resolution on October 27, 2022, urging Ottawa to classify residential violence as genocide.

International human rights watchdogs have also given First Nations people's murders and disappearances, especially of women, a great deal of attention. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),⁴⁹¹ the Human Rights Committee (HR Committee),⁴⁹² the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR),⁴⁹³ CERD, and the Committee against Torture (CAT)⁴⁹⁴ have all addressed the importance of investigating such cases and the need to establish a national body to do so in their concluding observations.⁴⁹⁵ It is important to note that a CEDAW inquiry into the disappearances and murders of women from such a group took place in 2013, and a separate report on the matter was released in March 2015.⁴⁹⁶

The Canadian government created the National Commission of Inquiry into the Disappearance and Murder of Indigenous Women and Girls, often known as the National Commission, in response to pressure from international human rights organizations. The National Commission finished its work in early June 2019. In

491 The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women's conclusions following its review of Canada's combined 8th and 9th periodic reports November 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FCAN%2FCO%2F8-9&Lang=ru

492 Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the consideration of Canada's 6th Periodic Report. July 2015.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FCAN%2FCO%2F6&Lang=ru

493 Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights upon consideration of Canada's 6th Periodic Report. February 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FCAN%2FCO%2F6&Lang=ru

494 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in its consideration of the combined 21st to 23rd Periodic Reports of Canada. September 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FCAN%2FCO%2F21-23&Lang=ru

495 Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the consideration of Canada's seventh periodic report. November 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2FCAN%2FCO%2F7&Lang=ru

496 Report of the inquiry concerning Canada of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women under article 8 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. CEDAW/C/OP.8/CAN/1. March 30, 2015.

<https://undocs.org/CEDAW/C/OP.8/CAN/1>

instance, the Commission's findings discovered that girls of indigenous heritage had a six-fold higher homicide rate than white girls. The fundamental finding of the experts was that colonial, ethnocentric, and racist ideas deeply embedded in Canadian society had been used for generations by Canadian authorities to subject indigenous people to systematic socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic discrimination. In this regard, it was suggested to the government that it take immediate action to address the development of new social foundations free of colonial ideology.⁴⁹⁷

Following her visit to Canada in June 2019, Michelle Bachelet, who was then the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, emphasized the significance of crafting such an analysis that reveals the truth and gives victims a voice.⁴⁹⁸ It also urged the government to take quick action to address current injustices.

The National Commission asked for a closer examination of Ottawa's international crimes, including crimes against humanity, and described Canada's treatment of its indigenous peoples as colonial genocide.

Notably, Prime Minister Trudeau officially referred to the government's treatment of indigenous people in Canada as "Canadian genocide" in response to public pressure.⁴⁹⁹ The head of the cabinet and some of his ministers, however, preferred to use in public softer language characterizing the events in question as "sociocultural oppression" because they were worried about the international legal ramifications of such a hasty "candid confession" (especially in light of the call by OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro to establish an independent body under the auspices of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to conduct an

497 Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

<https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>

498 Canada is "a welcome ally" in advancing human rights around the world, says Bachelet. United Nations. June 20, 2019.

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24714&LangID=E>

499 Trudeau accepts Indigenous inquiry's finding of genocide. The Globe and Mail. June 4, 2019.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-trudeau-accepts-indigenous-inquirys-finding-of-genocide>

Trudeau says deaths and disappearances of Indigenous women and girls amount to genocide, CBC News,

4 June 2019. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-mmiwg-genocide-1.5161681>

Trudeau accepts inquiry finding of genocide but says focus must be on response, The Canadian Press, June 5, 2019. <https://youtu.be/k81aqStX-vg>

investigation). preferred to use in public softer language characterizing the events in question as “sociocultural oppression.”

However, in reality, the issue of abductions and murders of indigenous women and girls has not been fixed. The results of a Manitoba police investigation into the unsolved murders of three Indigenous women were made public in December 2022. Linda Mary Beardie, a 33-year-old indigenous woman and mother of four children, was discovered dead in a Winnipeg dump on April 3, 2023. Leaders of indigenous organizations demanded that the authorities take steps to better protect the rights of Indian women.⁵⁰⁰ The House of Commons passed a motion on May 2, 2023, urging the administration to declare the continuous killings and disappearances a national emergency.⁵⁰¹

Official Ottawa continues to be unable to provide Indigenous people with safe drinking water. As of July 2023, 27 distant communities (29 ordinances) had implemented drinking water restrictions.⁵⁰² The federal government made an agreement with First Nations to pay C\$8 billion in compensation for the benefit of 142,000 people in July 2021 after previously acknowledging its inability to properly resolve the water access issue by its deadline of March 2021.⁵⁰³

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) expressed deep concern over the status of Anishinaabe Native American children in northwest Ontario in June 2022. The water in the area is poisoned with mercury, creating chronic and highly serious physical and mental health problems among the residents. The Committee specifically mentions that youngsters have speech and learning problems and are prone to convulsions.⁵⁰⁴

500 First Nations woman’s body found at Winnipeg landfill. The Globe and Mail. April 4, 2023.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-first-nations-womans-body-found-at-winnipeg-landfill/>

501 The House calls it a national emergency, but will there be action? The Hill Times. May 15, 2023

<https://www.hilltimes.com/story/2023/05/15/the-house-calls-for-a-national-emergency-declaration-but-will-there-be-action/386856/>

502 Ending long-term drinking water advisories. Indigenous Services Canada. July 2023.

<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1506514143353/1533317130660>

503 First Nations and Ottawa agree to an \$8 billion settlement on drinking water advisories. CBC News. July 30, 2021.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/drinking-water-class-action-proposed-settlement-1.6123251>

504 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Canada. June 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO

A review by the Canadian Auditor General of Canada in February 2021 revealed that federal funding levels for the upkeep of some remote towns' wastewater treatment systems had not altered for 30 years.⁵⁰⁵

At the locations of two tribes, Attawapiskat and Aamjiwnaang, abnormally high concentrations of dangerous chemicals that can cause cancer were discovered in the water source in June 2019.

Early in April 2019, it was revealed that the North Caribou Lake settlement's leadership had requested funding from the federal government to fix a sewer through which sewage was contaminating a nearby lake, the settlement's residents' primary source of drinking water. 265,000 Canadian dollars had already been promised for this purpose, but no money had in fact arrived.

Without their free, prior, and informed agreement, decisions on the environmentally harmful resource development that affects the lives and territory of First Nations continue to be made. Although Ottawa has taken steps in recent years to legislate the necessity of consulting with indigenous peoples on significant economic projects (Impact Assessment Act 2019, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act 2021), in practice, the federal government frequently sides with business and disregards the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples. As a result, tense situations develop, which occasionally result in court cases or encounters with the police.

The widespread demonstrations in British Columbia in February 2020 against the construction of the C\$6.6 billion Coastal GasLink Pipeline are among the most prominent examples. Hereditary Wet'suwet'en tribal leaders had cut down and felled 100 trees on a forest road, preventing workers from a contracting company from accessing a construction site. This action led to the provincial Superior Court's December 31, 2019 ruling on the legality of police dispersing Indians obstructing work, which served as the catalyst for the escalation. Indigenous rights advocates have spoken out in favour of indigenous people,

[%2f5-6&Lang=en](#)

505 Too many First Nations lack clean drinking water and it's Ottawa's fault, says auditor general. CBC News. February 25, 2021.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/auditor-general-reports-2021-1.5927572>

holding protests around the nation and erecting barriers on major thoroughfares, such as those that link western and eastern Canada. The situation, which posed a significant threat to the economy, had to be resolved by force along with negotiations with the native American leaders. Following contacts with them, the then Minister of Indigenous Relations, Carolyn Bennett, announced that Ottawa recognized the right to administer historic tribal lands. But a few days later, construction on the site resumed.

Indian “land protectors” are still fighting the big project today, placing themselves in danger of being arrested by the police. For example, five of them were apprehended in March 2023.⁵⁰⁶ Amnesty International reports that police have detained 74 protestors calling for the cancellation of development in total since 2019.⁵⁰⁷

The monumental building of the Trans Mountain oil pipeline’s second phase in western Canada is yet another example of the ongoing skepticism that indigenous people have for the Canadian government when it comes to the execution of their rights. Indigenous people in the communities where the pipe was to be laid started organizing frequent protests demanding an end to the work as soon as the project got underway in 2013.

In response to unrest in the public, the Trudeau administration purchased the project from Kinder Morgan of the United States on August 30, 2018. The Federal Court of Appeal (FCA) of Canada revoked Trans Mountain’s license on the same day, citing a lack of engagement with Indigenous people and a failure to do the necessary evaluation of the potential environmental effects of an oil leak. Natural Resources Canada undertook meetings with 117 indigenous groups affected by the project in accordance with the advice of the legal authorities. Additionally, a positive environmental risk statement was drawn up. The project was reapproved

506 Why I won’t be blowing out candles on the RCMP’s birthday cake. The Globe and Mail. May 25, 2023 <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-why-i-wont-be-blowing-out-candles-on-the-rcmps-birthday-cake/>

507 Canada: Indigenous land defenders were criminalized, surveilled, and harassed as pipeline construction continued on Wet’suwet’en territory. Amnesty International NGO January 6, 2023. <https://amnesty.ca/blog/canada-indigenous-land-defenders-criminalized/#:~:text=Wet’suwet’en%20land%20defenders,unceded%2C%20ancestral%20and%20traditional%20lands>

by the Trudeau administration on June 18, 2019. on February 4, 2020 In addition to declaring that the consultation requirement does not give Indian organizations the power to oppose the project by holding up negotiations, the Federal Court dismissed the lawsuit brought against the cabinet's decision. August 2020. The Federal Court's decision was acknowledged as legal by the Supreme Court of Canada.

In a letter to Canada's Permanent Representative in Geneva dated May 20, 2022, CERD expressed its displeasure with the Canadian government's handling of Indian protests in British Columbia in February 2020 and demanded that it stop using force to disperse the demonstrators and halt the construction of the Coastal GasLink and Trans Mountain pipelines.

CERD provided the example of the construction of the Site C dam, which was opposed by indigenous peoples territories, including sacred lands and burial sites affected by the project. Work on the plant has continued despite a joint study by the federal and provincial governments of Canada of its adverse environmental impact and permanent impacts on First Nations.

Another example is the Mount Polley development project, which received approval without conducting an environmental impact assessment or consulting with indigenous peoples. The CERD highlighted that the start of operations in the field has led to a decline in the water quality, fisheries resources, and traditional remedies used by the local tribes.⁵⁰⁸

Indian communities in Ontario are attempting to stop the Ring of Fire mining and transportation project under the Doug Ford administration. A delegation of Native Americans visited Toronto in March 2023 with the intention of protesting and meeting the Premier in person. However, the protest was cut short, and the attendees had to be removed from the local legislative assembly building.⁵⁰⁹

508 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 21st to 23rd periodic reports of Canada. August 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f21-23&Lang=ru

509 Two First Nation leaders were escorted out of the legislature after protesting Ontario's accelerated mining

Indigenous people in British Columbia demand that Ottawa look into the Elk Valley coal mines' impact on the water quality.⁵¹⁰

An accident at the Kearn oil field in Alberta in February 2023 led to the release of 5.3 million litres of industrial waste water. Tribal elders in the area accused Imperial Oil and the state energy regulator of the province of hiding information about the disaster.⁵¹¹

At the same time, the issue of indigenous peoples' rights to their native lands remains unsolved. In February 2023, Ontario's Native American communities filed a lawsuit seeking reparations ranging from C\$8 billion to C\$100 billion for violating the conditions of the 1850 treaty.⁵¹² Indian groups in northern Ontario accused federal and provincial officials of illegally exploiting their territories in April 2023.⁵¹³

People in Canada's far north are being subjected to experiments with questionable motives. In May 2019, details regarding a puzzling study carried out in Igloolik Township, Nunavut Territory, in the early 1970s came to light in the media. Witnesses claim that at the time, the "International Biological Program" was gathering DNA samples from 30 locals in order to examine how vaccinations affect isolated civilizations' health by scraping a thin layer of skin from the subject's palm of the hand. Prof. John Dossetor, the study's author, the Ministries of Health and Indigenous Services, declined to provide any information available to the general public.

development plans. The Globe and Mail. March 29, 2023.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/article-ontario-first-nations-doug-ford-mining/>

510 The fight against toxic mining runoff from Canada persists, say US Indigenous leaders. The Globe and Mail. March 29, 2023.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-fight-against-toxic-mining-runoff-from-canada-persists-say-us/>

511 First Nations call on Ottawa to oversee investigation on Imperial Oil industrial leak. The Globe and Mail. April 17, 2023.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-first-nations-call-on-ottawa-to-oversee-investigation-on-imperial-oil/>

512 Morning Update: First Nations seek billions for a broken treaty, but Ontario says it owes no money. The Globe and Mail. February 2, 2023.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-morning-update-first-nations-seek-billions-for-broken-treaty-but/#:~:text=Indigenous%20communities%20are%20in%20court,or%20at%20most%20%2434%2Dmillion.>

513 Indigenous groups file lawsuits, saying they have a say over what happens on their lands, including resource projects. The Globe and Mail. April 26, 2023.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-indigenous-groups-file-lawsuit-saying-they-have-a-say-over-what/>

With 1,772 cases per year, Canada has one of the lowest yearly incidence rates of TB in the world. However, the number of patients with the infection is 300 times higher in the northern regions, where the Inuit make up a large part of the population, compared to the rest of the country. To date, the federal government has fallen short of its commitment to eradicate tuberculosis in Inuit villages by the year 2030. Authorities in the Nunavut Territory reported a TB outbreak in the hamlet of Pangnirtung in November 2021—it was the greatest in the previous five years. In a settlement of 1,600 people in August 2022, there were 161 cases, 22 more than three months earlier.⁵¹⁴ The disease persisted in spreading throughout Nunavut in 2023.⁵¹⁵

Access to healthcare is a problem that all Canadian indigenous people face frequently. Indian tribe chiefs in isolated parts of Manitoba and Ontario requested in April 2023 that authorities take swift action to fill staffing gaps in healthcare institutions, accusing them of carelessness and prejudice. They said that in the previous nine months, two persons have passed away, one of them was a mother of five children who did not obtain professional medical attention.⁵¹⁶ More than 130 infants have gone missing or perished in hospitals in Quebec since the 1950s, according to an expert panel.⁵¹⁷

People in the Canadian North struggle severely with suicide. Northwest Territories Chief Coroner Garth Eggenberger reported in October 2022 that the territory has seen a record rise in suicides for the first time in ten years. In the first nine months of 2022, 18 individuals died of suicide; in the same period in 2021, 11

514 Nunavut's tuberculosis outbreak continues after more than 20 new cases were identified in Pangnirtung. The Globe and Mail. August 26, 2022.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-nunavuts-tuberculosis-outbreak-continues-after-more-than-20-new-cases/>

515 Spread of tuberculosis in Baffin Island hamlet the largest reported in Nunavut since 2018. The Globe and Mail. February 27, 2023.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-spread-of-tuberculosis-in-baffin-island-hamlet-the-largest-reported-in/>

516 First Nations leaders demand an end to short-staffing at nursing stations in remote communities. The Globe and Mail. April 3, 2023.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-first-nations-leaders-demand-an-end-to-short-staffing-at-nursing/>
517 'It's horrible': Quebec is now searching for over 130 missing Indigenous children. APTN News. April 28, 2023.
<https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/ghost-babies-report-quebec-indigenous-children-missing/>

people died of suicide, with 45% of the males who committed suicide being between the ages of 20 and 29.⁵¹⁸

On July 14, 2022, the Canadian Senate Human Rights Committee released the second part of the report of the 2019 inquiry into forced sterilization.⁵¹⁹ The first part was released a year earlier, on June 3, 2021.⁵²⁰ Nine indigenous victims were among the 19 witnesses questioned during four sessions held to draft the report. All of the affected women complained to the lawmakers that they had not been given a free, prior, and informed choice regarding whether to have the surgery. Patients were intimidated by medical staff and misinformed about the need for and effects of the operation. Fallopian tube ligation has occasionally been carried out in institutions with no patient permission. It was discovered that 1,150 people underwent operations in facilities for native people between 1960 and 1970, with the last cases recorded in 2019. The senators demanded that the government create a new provision in the penal code that would punish forced sterilization, create a victim compensation scheme, make an official apology, and enhance financing for healthcare in indigenous areas.

CAT in November 2018 cited the filing of a class action lawsuit by at least 55 Indigenous women against doctors and health care providers at Saskatoon Public Hospital for using a fallopian tube ligation procedure without obtaining proper consent.⁵²¹

The CRC urged the Canadian government to revise the law to guarantee that men and women have an equal opportunity to carry on their native status to their grandchildren. The Committee's experts also recommended taking steps to restore names on birth certificates that had been wrongfully changed or removed, adopt

518 Decade-high suicide statistics in N.W.T. 'devastating': health minister. *Globe and Mail*. October 4 2022 <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-decade-high-suicide-statistics-in-nwt-devastating-health-minister/>

519 *The Scars that We Carry: Forced and Coerced Sterilization of Persons in Canada Part II*. Report. Senate Committee on Human Rights. July 2022. https://senCanada.ca/content/sen/committee/441/RIDR/reports/2022-07-14_ForcedSterilization_E.pdf

520 *Forced and Coerced Sterilization of Persons in Canada Part I*. Report. Senate Committee on Human Rights. June 2021.

https://senCanada.ca/content/sen/committee/432/RIDR/reports/2021-06-03_ForcedSterilization_E.pdf

521 Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the consideration of Canada's seventh periodic report. November 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f7&Lang=ru

laws and administrative policies that protect children's right to name, preserve their native languages and cultures, and give them the chance to explore their cultural identities.⁵²²

The CRC made notice of the challenge faced by indigenous parents in accessing the birth registration process.⁵²³

The institutional basis of prejudice against children of indigenous and Afro-descendant origin was condemned by CRC. According to experts, the most difficult areas to address are education, health care, and ensuring an adequate standard of living.⁵²⁴

CERD was concerned about reports of unequal distribution of educational resources and insufficient funding for mother-tongue education programs, which resulted in unequal access to quality education for some groups of children, particularly African and aboriginal Canadians, resulting in socioeconomic disparities between these groups.⁵²⁵ CEDAW was also concerned about the disproportionately large number of indigenous girls who continue to face barriers to proper education.⁵²⁶

Inuit in Nunavut have few opportunities to be educated in their native Inuktitut language. Most schools teach in English, with 94% of students being Inuit. Inuktitut is studied electively through grade 3 in 10 of the 43 schools. Local governments presented data in 2016 suggesting that the number of Inuktitut speakers had decreased by 12% over a decade. According to analysts, if current trends continue, the proportion of persons speaking this language in the region will fall to

522 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Canada. June 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en

523 Ibid.

524 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Canada. June 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en

525 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 21st to 23rd periodic reports of Canada. September 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f21-23&Lang=ru

526 Ibid.

4% by 2050.⁵²⁷

Housing for Inuit and First Nations communities has reached crisis proportions. A state of emergency was declared on Ontario's Cat Lake Reservation in January 2019 owing to a housing crisis. Even when heated by birch stoves, the decaying cardboard houses of the inhabitants were incapable of remaining warm for long. As a result, disease outbreaks among indigenous peoples have occurred, including the development of lung infection. The municipal council requested that the provincial and federal governments intervene and consider evacuations (CAD 200,000 was approved in December 2018 for the inspection of 110 residences).

Indigenous people are overrepresented in penitentiary facilities. Official data show that their percentage of federal prisons will approach 32% in 2021⁵²⁸ (up from 25% in 2016) and 54% in the western provinces (Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan).⁵²⁹ Since 2010, the proportion of First Nations individuals in federal prisons has climbed by 43%, while the proportion of other groups has fallen by 14%. The number of Native women in incarceration has reached a historic high of 50%. Between 2008 and 2018, the percentage of Indians in provincial prisons climbed from 21% to 30%. Indigenous people are primarily housed in high-security colonies, have longer sentences, and are frequently held in solitary confinement. The recidivism rate among natives in the western provinces can reach 70%.⁵³⁰ Native Americans make up 44% of individuals confined in solitary confinement in federal prisons, according to 2022 data (of whom 63% spend more than 15 days there). The great majority of women (96%) are indigenous people.⁵³¹

527 Nunavut's government must do more to reclaim Inuktitut for Inuit. The Globe and Mail. March 3, 2023.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-nunavuts-government-must-do-more-to-reclaim-inuktitut-for-inuit/>
528 Nearly half of federally incarcerated women are Indigenous, evidence of 'public policy failures'. The Globe and Mail. December 17, 2021.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-rate-of-federally-incarcerated-indigenous-women-nears-sad-milestone/>

529 The Indigenous people killed by Canada's police. Al Jazeera. March 24, 2021.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/3/24/the-indigenous-people-killed-by-canadas-police>

530 Indigenous People in Federal Custody Surpasses 30%. Office of the Correctional Investigator. January 21, 2020. <https://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/comm/press/press20200121-eng.aspx>

531 Isolation cells in women's prisons used almost exclusively for Indigenous prisoners, panel finds. The Globe and Mail. May 28, 2023

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-isolation-cells-in-womens-prisons-used-almost-exclusively-for/>

C. Hogan, Canada's Auditor General, reported that the federal Correctional Service had unfairly placed people of colour and Indigenous people in high-security cells under long-standing criteria that had not been updated in May 2022. As a result, offenders are forced to stay in prison for longer than their court term. According to K. Hogan, the practice is clear proof of institutional racism. At the same time, auditors have already drawn attention to this issue in past years of 2015, 2016, and 2017.

Following an examination of the province's correctional institutions in February 2023, the BC Auditor criticized the system for delivering health treatment to jailed indigenous persons with mental health and substance use disorders.⁵³² Following the deaths of First Nations people in Nova Scotia jails, human rights groups have advocated for justice reform in the Atlantic region.⁵³³

Justice Minister D. Lametti acknowledged the government's failure to find a solution. He thought that by incorporating the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into national legislation and passing the C-5 law, which would abolish minimum jail sentences for more than 20 crimes, progress would be made.⁵³⁴

The overrepresentation of Indigenous and African Canadians at all levels of justice, from arrest to jail, was noticed in September 2017. CERD. The main causes of this condition, according to the human rights organization, are the group's widespread poverty and the poor quality of social services offered to its members.⁵³⁵ CRC has also critiqued the fact that Canadians of African heritage and

532 Gap in services for Indigenous people in B.C. correctional centers: audit. The Globe and Mail. February 9, 2023.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-gap-in-services-for-indigenous-people-in-bc-correctional-centres-audit/>

533 Deaths of Indigenous people in Atlantic Canadian jails spark calls for review, change. The Globe and Mail. May 19, 2023

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-deaths-of-indigenous-people-in-atlantic-canadian-jails-spark-calls-for/>

534 Ottawa will implement legislation to decrease Indigenous incarceration, Canada's Justice Minister says. Globe and Mail. May 16, 2022

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-justice-minister-adamant-high-rate-of-indigenous-incarceration-will/>

535 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 21st to 23rd periodic reports of Canada. September 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO

Indigenous peoples are significantly more likely to experience poverty than the general population.⁵³⁶

Adolescent poverty and vagrancy among Indigenous peoples has become widespread in Canada. British Columbia, one of the most economically advanced provinces, has drastically declined during the past ten years. In Kamloops and its surrounding areas, where there are 84 thousand Indians and a population of around 300 thousand, the poverty rate for those under the age of 18 is 30%. Experts estimate that there are 7.7 socially disadvantaged children for every 1,000 individuals, which is double the national average and 78% of them are indigenous children.⁵³⁷

Child welfare professionals are four times more likely to open an inquiry into parents who are unable to financially support their families and twelve times more likely to take children away from them. First Nations children are more likely to be separated from their families, communities, and culture and placed in child care, according to the HRC and CERD.⁵³⁸

According to CRC experts, to today, indigenous and Afro-descendent children continue to numerically dominate alternative care, even in the form of foster care. They frequently become estranged from people of their own ethnicity as a result. These kids are more prone than others to experience abuse and violence as well as a lack of attention from adults.⁵³⁹

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en

536 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Canada. June 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en

537 In Manitoba, which topped the list, 90% of the 11,143 children receiving subsidies as of January 2019 were Indigenous children.

538 Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the consideration of Canada's 6th Periodic Report. July 2015.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 21st to 23rd periodic reports of Canada. August 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f21-23&Lang=ru

539 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Canada. June 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en

Indigenous people have suffered under Canada's child welfare system on Indian reserves for countless generations. More than 300,000 people were its victims. The federal government and organizations representing indigenous peoples established a preliminary understanding in January 2022 to pay C\$40 billion in compensation to anyone harmed between April 1, 1991, and March 31, 2022.⁵⁴⁰ The parties signed the first portion of the C\$20 billion payment agreement in July 2022.⁵⁴¹ The compensation was raised to C\$23.3 billion in April 2023.⁵⁴² The compensation was raised to C\$23.3 billion in April 2023, but the Federal Court and Canadian Human Rights Tribunal must also approve it. Ottawa intends to audit the delivery of Indigenous services by the ministry as part of the second clause of the agreement.

A commission of inquiry investigating juvenile mortality in the child welfare system was established in Newfoundland and Labrador in February 2023 at the request of an Innu chief who pushed for an end to the forcible removal of juveniles from their families⁵⁴³. Karen Hogan, Canada's Auditor General, urged Nunavut authorities to act quickly to safeguard children in foster care in May 2023. The audit found that the controlling authorities had committed serious infractions⁵⁴⁴.

According to studies, indigenous women and girls in the foster care and child welfare systems are especially at danger of being trafficked for sexual exploitation. This concern was raised by CEDAW.⁵⁴⁵

According to the National Association of Indigenous People Against

540 Ottawa releases early details of landmark \$40B First Nations child welfare agreement. CBC. January 4, 2022. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/first-nations-child-welfare-agreements-in-principle-1.6302636>

541 Final settlement agreement on compensation signed for First Nations children and families. Indigenous Services Canada. July 4, 2022.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/news/2022/07/final-settlement-agreement-on-compensation-signed-for-first-nations-children-and-families.html>

542 \$23B deal with First Nations revised. National Post. April 6, 2023.

543 Inquiry into Innu children in care begins in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Globe and Mail. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-inquiry-into-innu-children-in-care-begins-in-newfoundland-and-labrador/#:~:text=Nearly%20six%20years%20after%20it,were%20in%20custody%2C%20and%20how>

544 Auditor general calls for immediate action to protect children and youth in Nunavut. The Globe and Mail. May 30, 2023

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-auditor-general-calls-for-immediate-action-to-protect-children-and/>

545 The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women's conclusions following its review of Canada's combined 8th and 9th periodic reports November 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FCAN%2FCO%2F8-9&Lang=ru

Domestic Violence, the majority of Canadian communities get funding for social service delivery through their respective territorial or provincial governments. The federal government, which in many cases provides much less per capita financing for similar programs and services than provincial and territorial governments, often funds these services on First Nations reserves.⁵⁴⁶

The decline in the already minimal funds given to indigenous peoples living on and off reserves was also observed with concern by CESCR in its closing findings. Experts also pointed out that disagreements over authority over funding for indigenous peoples between the federal and provincial governments had a negative impact on this scenario.⁵⁴⁷

The murder of African-American George Floyd in the United States on May 25, 2020, set off a powerful wave of protest in Canadian society. Major cities around the country hosted numerous “Black Lives Matter” anti-racism protests. The demonstration in Ottawa on June 6, 2020 was attended by Justin Trudeau, who knelt in solidarity with the participants. Furthermore, the Prime Minister openly admitted the presence of “systemic racial discrimination” in the country in June 2020. However, some of Canada’s senior officials disagreed with this interpretation. The Premier of Quebec, François Legault, refused to accept the thesis that there are structural problems of racism in his province. RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki also initially questioned the need to use such harsh language in relation to law enforcement, but after criticism of her and calls for her to leave her post she changed her viewpoint to the diametrically opposite.

A Canadian Broadcasting Corporation survey found that a black person is three times more likely than a white Canadian to be killed by a police officer. Nearly half of all reported homicide victims are of the Caucasian ethnicity, which is the largest racial group in Canada. However, when one examines the country’s

546 Summary of stakeholder inputs on Canada from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ report for the third cycle of the universal periodic review process. March 2018.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/059/71/PDF/G1805971.pdf?OpenElement>

547 Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 6th periodic report of Canada. February 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fCAN%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

overall racial and ethnic diversity, the numbers are biased toward Afro-Canadians and Indigenous people⁵⁴⁸.

In the debate about systemic prejudice that took place in May and June 2020, the Canadian media extensively covered incidents in which police killed or brutalized Aboriginal people and people of colour. On May 27, 2020, Reggie Korczynski Packett, 29, who suffered from mental illness, fell from the balcony of her own apartment on the 24th floor in Toronto during a police raid. A 20-year-old Inuit who was under the influence of alcohol was struck and killed by a police car on June 1, 2020 in Kingait Township, Nunavut Territory. He was assaulted at the detention centre by a fellow inmate and had to be hospitalized⁵⁴⁹ On June 4, 2020, in Edmundston, New Brunswick, law enforcement officers shot and killed 26-year-old Chantel Moore (according to the investigation, she attacked a police officer with a knife) during an operational check. On June 12, 2020, an indigenous man named Rodney Levy was killed by police in New Brunswick. In June 2020, video surfaced of the March police beating of Athabasca Chippewan tribal chief Allan Adam in Fort McMurray, Alberta, for expired license plates on his car. A 62-year-old Pakistani man with schizophrenia was shot and killed by a police officer in Peel, Ontario on June 20, 2020. Journalists estimate that since April 2020, six indigenous people in Winnipeg, New Brunswick and Nunavut have been killed in Canada.

Since 2017, the five police officers charged with D. Culver's death, a 35-year-old Native American man, during an arrest, have been on trial. Indigenous person Debbie Baptiste, the mother of Saskatchewan murder victim Colten Boushie, was racially discriminated against by federal police officers who illegally searched her home and forced her to submit to a breathalyzer test.⁵⁵⁰

Cases of openly barbaric treatment of the indigenous population, and not

548 Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent to the 74th session of the UN General Assembly. A/74/274

<https://undocs.org/ru/A/74/274>

549 The death rate in police stations in Nunavut is higher than in other provinces. Since February 2020, there have been three cases of police officers using guns.

550 Why I won't be blowing out candles on the RCMP's birthday cake. The Globe and Mail. May 25, 2023

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-why-i-wont-be-blowing-out-candles-on-the-rcmps-birthday-cake/>

only by law enforcement officials, have also been recorded. On December 20, 2019, police in Vancouver used force while detaining an Indigenous man at a bank who was trying to open an account for his 12-year-old granddaughter. The two policemen were asked to apologize to M. Johnston, a Native American, for the abuse, but they declined.⁵⁵¹ In February 2020, Inuit women in Nunavut who were victims of domestic violence were arrested for drinking alcohol. In June 2020, the Métis of British Columbia asked authorities to verify information about emergency room employees who, they said, were playing guessing blood-alcohol levels in “First Nations” patients.

Racial profiling is a common practice among Canadian law enforcement officials. It has been especially harmful to indigenous peoples, as well as Muslims, African Canadians, and other ethnic minority groups.⁵⁵²

The UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent reported the frequency of racial profiling in Canada. In particular, in their report to the 74th session of the UN General Assembly, citing the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s report “Under Suspicion: A Report on Research and Consultation on Racial Profiling in Ontario,” the experts noted that some 1,500 residents of the province had been subjected to racial profiling by police in the workplace, educational institutions, hospitals, shopping centres, and at the airport.⁵⁵³

According to another report, people of African ancestry face curfews and are five times more likely to be stopped on the street for identity checks than other ethnic groups. In the 12 years before to the study (March 2019), police officers have subjected about a third (28%) of the black population in Halifax, the

551 Indigenous apology ceremony cancelled after no-show by arresting police officers. The Globe and Mail. October 24, 2022.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-apology-ceremony-allows-vancouver-police-to-express-regret-to-heiltsuk/>

552 Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the 7th periodic report of Canada. November 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f7&Lang=ru;

Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on its mission to Canada to the Human Rights Council. August 2017.

<https://undocs.org/ru/A/HRC/36/60/Add.1>

553 Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent to the 74th session of the UN General Assembly. A/74/274.

<https://undocs.org/ru/A/74/274>

provincial capital of Nova Scotia, to weekly interrogation without probable cause and unjustified detention by police (the rate among whites is around 4%). The situation is complicated by the fact that decisions to initiate cases of abuse of power are made by the law enforcement agencies themselves, which reduces the victims' hopes for an objective investigation.⁵⁵⁴

Black-skinned and Middle Eastern drivers were stopped more frequently than other drivers, regardless of their gender or age, according to a York University research team from Canada that investigated traffic stops by Ottawa police by race. Despite representing less than 4% of drivers in Ottawa, people of African origin were stopped 7,238 times over the course of two years, accounting for 8.8% of all motorists stopped during that time⁵⁵⁵.

A team of independent experts who looked into cases involving Montreal police detaining residents between 2014 and 2017 also came to the conclusion that particular racial groups were routinely targeted by law enforcement. Thus, natives and black-skinned people are stopped in the street four times each, and Arab people are stopped twice as often as white people⁵⁵⁶. The NGO Black Coalition of Quebec filed a class action complaint in a Montreal court in August 2019 about arbitrary police arrests and interrogations of people of non-European appearance⁵⁵⁷.

In addition, there is a problem with law enforcement personnel's overly formalistic views regarding indigenous matters and their hesitation to look into crimes perpetrated against this community. The facts of the questionable quality of law enforcement officers' work on First Nation Indian reserves were confirmed in the pages of the report prepared by the Council of Canadian Academies, an NGO at the request of Public Safety Canada. The research cited police officers' basic

554 Halifax, Nova Scotia: Street Checks Report.

https://humanrights.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/editor-uploads/halifax_street_checks_report_march_2019_0.pdf

555 Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent to the 74th session of the UN General Assembly. A/74/274.

<https://undocs.org/ru/A/74/274>

556 Les interpellations policières à la lumière des identités racisées des personnes interpellées/ le Centre de recherché interdisciplinaire sur la diversité et la démocratie (CRIDAQ).

https://cridaq.uqam.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Rapport_Armony-Hassaoui-Mulone-1.pdf

557 Lawsuit coming to examine Montreal police racial discrimination. CTV Montreal. August 13, 2019.

<https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/lawsuit-coming-to-examine-montreal-police-racial-discrimination-1.4547602>

ignorance of local laws and tribal customs as the primary source of difficulties. Furthermore, the authors contend that a lack of conversation between government officials and local residents leads to misunderstanding and outright hatred by the white majority against members of other racial and ethnic groups⁵⁵⁸.

After two years of work, Montreal's Office of Public Consultation presented a report on June 15, 2020, arguing that the metropolitan police force has a culture of impunity, accompanied by apathy to allegations of racial violence and prejudice. Furthermore, just 7.7% of the city's police enforcement organizations are made up of people of colour, and less than 1% of management officers (35% of Montreal's total) are made up of people of colour⁵⁵⁹.

Public Safety Canada reports that between 2004 and 2018, crime climbed by 31.9% on Indian reservations while it declined by 15.5% countrywide.⁵⁶⁰ Federal police personnel failed to stop the murder of 11 people (with 18 more injured) in a tiny Saskatchewan village in September 2022. Native American tribes who uphold law using their own resources are supported by the federal centre through grants and temporary agreements, but they lament the continuously diminishing resources.⁵⁶¹

It has been reported that in the territories where indigenous peoples live, they have no representatives in Canadian local authorities. For example, the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, pointed out in a report to the 74th session of the UN General Assembly that the Inuit are underrepresented in the Nunavut administration, preventing this body from adequately considering and

558 Toward Peace, Harmony, and Well-Being: Policing in Indigenous Communities. Council of Canadian Academies.

<https://www.scienceadvice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/FullReport-Toward-Peace-Harmonyv-and-WellBeing.pdf>

559 Summary Report: Public Consultation on Systemic Racism and Discrimination within the Jurisdiction of the City of Montréal. Office de consultation publique de Montréal. June 15, 2020

https://ocpm.qc.ca/sites/ocpm.qc.ca/files/pdf/P99/resume-reds_english.pdf

560 Who pays for First Nations policing, and who benefits? Saskatchewan's struggles point to problems with funding models. The Globe and Mail. March 24, 2023.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-who-pays-for-first-nations-policing-and-who-benefits-saskatchewan/>

561 First Nations police forces sue Ottawa over stalled funding talks. The Globe and Mail. May 4, 2023

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-first-nations-police-forces-sue-ottawa-over-stalled-funding-talks/>

implementing their traditional knowledge.⁵⁶²

In July 2022, only 106 years later, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau formally apologized for “blatant racism” to descendants and relatives of members of the Construction Battalion No. 2 who served in France during World War I. The unit was formed in 1916 in Nova Scotia. Black Canadians who were members of the Construction Battalion No. 2 faced discrimination, including confinement in concentration camps and denial of basic medical care, food, and equipment⁵⁶³.

Notably, Justin Trudeau was accused of racism during the September 2019 campaign after archive images of him wearing blackface makeup were published. Later, the politician admitted to “unconscious racism” and apologized to Canadian minorities⁵⁶⁴.

The results of the 2019 Stats Survey, published in February 2022, revealed that one in every five Canadians (19%) experienced prejudice between 2014 and 2019. And black citizens are harassed far more often than others. Almost half of African Canadians (46%) reported violations of their rights. In 2014, this figure was much lower - 28%. Among the indigenous population, one in three (33%) experienced discrimination. Specifically, Indians 44%, Métis 24%, and Inuit 29%⁵⁶⁵.

Regardless of their social level, Indigenous people in Canada frequently endure insults and racial slurs. For example, in February 2023, the Governor General of Canada, M. Simon (Inuit), disabled the ability to leave comments on her official accounts due to an increase in the number of messages from social media users with insults and racist remarks against her⁵⁶⁶.

562 Report of the Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council on the rights of indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, pursuant to HRC resolution 33/12. A/74/149.

<https://undocs.org/ru/A/74/149>

563 Prime minister apologizes for anti-Black racism experienced by No. 2 Construction Battalion. CBC News. July 9, 2022.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/canadian-government-apologizes-to-relatives-of-no-2-construction-battalion-1.6513861>

564 ‘Deep disappointment’: Trudeau revisits blackface in Black History Month reception. Canadian Press. February 25, 2020.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/6591552/trudeau-blackface-black-history-month/amp/>

565 Discrimination experiences among Canada’s Black and Indigenous people, 2019. Statistics Canada. February 16, 2022

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00002-eng.htm>

566 Governor General wants to campaign against vile, abusive online behaviour. CBC News. March 10, 2023.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/mary-simon-abuse-interview-1.6774882>

In conclusion, neither the issue of systematic racism nor the issue of far-right ideas will soon be resolved in Canada. The main cause of this is what appears to be a lack of desire on the part of local and national authorities to implement truly effective countermeasures.

Because of this, not all Canadian provinces and territories in this state have framework laws against racism, notwithstanding the observations of CERD issued by this monitoring agency in August 2017.⁵⁶⁷

Another barrier to resolving racial prejudice is that Canada does not routinely gather statistics “by skin colour” to measure socioeconomic disparities in society. Despite this, the Alberta government declared on June 15, 2020, that it did not see the benefit of enacting such a procedure.

For more than five years, Ottawa has done nothing to put the recommendations in the 2017 report of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on its mission to Canada into effect. The document’s writers urged authorities to apologize to people of colour for slavery and compensate their representatives⁵⁶⁸.

H.-F. Kali Tsai, the Special Rapporteur of the HRC on the status of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, visited Canada from March 1 to 10, 2023 (he will deliver his final report at the HRC’s 54th session in September 2023). Following the visit, the expert noted that nothing has changed since 2013 regarding the protection of indigenous peoples’ economic, social, and cultural rights.⁵⁶⁹

567 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 21st to 23rd periodic reports of Canada. August 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f21-23&Lang=ru

568 Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on its mission to Canada. August 16, 2017.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/239/62/PDF/G1723962.pdf>

569 Statement made at the conclusion of Mr. José Francisco Cali Tzay’s visit to Canada (1–10 March 2023) as the UN Human Rights Council’s Special Rapporteur on the situation of indigenous peoples’ human rights and fundamental freedoms

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/indigenouspeoples/sr/statements/eom-statement-canada-sr-indigenous-2023-03-10.pdf>

Cyprus

The authorities of the Republic of Cyprus make no attempt to justify or revive Nazi ideology. There were no cases of counteraction to the activities of veterans' organizations and anti-fascist NGOs, as well as the introduction of bans on the symbols of the Red Army and the USSR. At the same time, while the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation are conducting a special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, the country's leadership is complying with the EU's anti-Russian sanctions, supporting the Kyiv regime and not condemning the war crimes it is committing. At the same time, in December 2022, within the framework of the UN General Assembly, the delegation of Cyprus, in line with the common position of the EU member states, for the first time voted against the draft resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" prepared by the Russian Federation and other co-sponsors.

There are a number of right-wing radical right-wing organisations operating in Cyprus. In particular, there is a fan movement based on the APOEL football club (Nicosia), whose members use Nazi symbols in their paraphernalia.

The United National Front-ELAM political party is also gaining popularity. Its leader H. Hristo received 6% of the vote in the first round of the presidential election on 5 February 2023 and came fourth after the top three candidates. The association makes no secret of its ties with the Greek far-right party Golden Dawn whose leaders were sentenced to long-term imprisonment as organizers of an organized criminal group in 2020.

The situation with the reception and accommodation of asylum seekers and irregular migrants on the island, whose share in the population, according to the Ministry of Interior of Cyprus as of February 2023, reached 6% (the highest in the EU) remains difficult. In 2022, more than 22.3 thousand asylum applications were registered.

Profile NGOs record cases of xenophobia, ethnic violence and discrimination on racial grounds, disregard for the rights of women and children. There is also overcrowding and insufficient material and technical support of the penitentiary system facilities. The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in its 2022 report noted "significant difficulties" in ensuring adequate reception conditions for asylum seekers in Cyprus⁵⁷⁰.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) noted the limited number of reception centres for refugees⁵⁷¹.

In July 2023, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), operating within the Council of Europe, published a monitoring report on an operation involving Cyprus on 8 November 2022 to deport a number of persons to the Democratic Republic of the Congo under the auspices of the EU Border and Coast Guard Agency FRONTEX. The document notes complaints of ill-treatment suffered by migrants after failed deportation attempts. The Cypriot authorities are encouraged to take more active measures to detect and prevent such cases, including systematic medical examinations of foreign nationals in detention centres, as well as medical documentation of ill-treatment. The CPT calls for foreigners to be notified of their expulsion in a timely manner, for their access to lawyers to be ensured, and for medical information to be treated confidentially⁵⁷².

The Committee against Torture, another UN treaty body, in December 2019 drew attention to the fact of criminalization and routine detention of irregular migrants, the extended periods of detention of such migrants and the work of migration detention facilities throughout the country⁵⁷³.

⁵⁷⁰ EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

⁵⁷¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 23rd and 24th periodic reports of the Republic of Cyprus. May 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCYP%2fCO%2f23-24&Lang=ru

⁵⁷² Report to the Government of Cyprus on the visit to Cyprus carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 7 to 9 November 2022, dated 13 July 2023.

<https://rm.coe.int/1680abeddb>

⁵⁷³ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the 5th periodic report of the Republic of Cyprus.

The violation of the rights of refugee and migrant children is a matter of concern for the experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. In June 2022, they once again pointed out to the Cypriot authorities that this category of minors is deprived of access to health and social services due to their nationality, place of residence and the legal status of their parents. Problems of access to education also persist⁵⁷⁴

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) noted with concern the difficulty of access to justice for foreign domestic workers, because of their possible detention and subsequent deportation pending trial⁵⁷⁵.

The CERD also criticized the spread in society of racially motivated verbal abuse and physical attacks by far-right extremist and neo-Nazi groups against people of foreign origin, including people of African descent, as well as against human rights activists and Turkish Cypriots. The CERD experts also expressed concern about existing racist stereotypes and hate speech against members of certain ethnic minority groups, as well as Roma who are Muslims. The CERD pointed to the lack of legal provisions to hold such acts accountable, as well as insufficient efforts of law enforcement agencies.⁵⁷⁶

The FCNM Advisory Committee functioning within the Council of Europe has acknowledged the lack of interaction between the state and religious and ethnic communities without a constitutional status. For instance, the Roma living in Cyprus are officially regarded by authorities as belonging to the Turkish

December 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2FC%2FCYP%2FCO%2F5&Lang=ru

⁵⁷⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of the Republic of Cyprus. June 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FCYP%2FCO%2F5-6&Lang=en

⁵⁷⁵ Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the consideration of the 8th Periodic Report of the Republic of Cyprus. July 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FCYP%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru

⁵⁷⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 23rd and 24th periodic reports of the Republic of Cyprus. May 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FCYP%2FCO%2F23-24&Lang=ru

community of Cyprus. This hinders their access to certain rights and their possible enjoyment, given that the Roma community remains marginalized in economic and social terms. In this regard, one of the main recommendations of the Nicosia FCNM Committee was the development of a detailed action plan for the social integration of Roma and their participation in socio-economic life in general, to be carried out in close cooperation with representatives of this population group.

Furthermore, the Committee encouraged the authorities to consider the establishment of a State institution with a mandate to address the problems of national minorities, Roma communities and other groups whose status is not enshrined in the Constitution, as well as interaction with relevant structures⁵⁷⁷.

With the launch by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation of a special military operation to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine, Russian citizens living in Cyprus have faced discrimination in living conditions and offensive rhetoric on the Internet. There have been Russophobic remarks and threats against participants in pro-Russian rallies, mainly by nationalist members of the Ukrainian diaspora and refugees from Ukraine. (After the start of the special operation, more than 17,000 migrants from that country arrived in Cyprus. Unlike migrants from the Middle East and North Africa, Ukrainians have been given ample opportunities to live, study, work and receive medical care).

Attempts to force Russians to publicly criticise the special operation have also been recorded, including episodes of psychological pressure in schools on Russian-speaking children, including children from mixed families. There have also been cases of blocking money transfers from Russian banks that are not under European sanctions. March 2022, the Russian flag was torn from the flagpole in front of the Honorary Consulate of Russia in Limassol. In August 2022, an egregious incident was the attack by a Ukrainian citizen, I. Krivous, armed with a knife on a Russian compatriot activist, L. Chuikova, in Larnaca. After the embassy appealed to the country's leadership and local law enforcement agencies, the

⁵⁷⁷ Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Cyprus, adopted on 7 November 2019.
<https://rm.coe.int/interim-follow-up-conclusions-on-cyprus-5th-monitoring-cycle-/168094ce05>

authorities strengthened control over the prevention of such incidents. The Ukrainian woman was found guilty (including incitement to racial hostility and hatred) and sentenced to six months' imprisonment in March 2023 (she was released early at the end of July 2023 by the Court of Appeal of Cyprus).

Latvia

Latvia pursues a policy of deliberate falsification of history, justifying former Waffen-SS legionnaires and Nazi collaborators who are elevated to the rank of participants in "national liberation movements". The Latvian authorities are making a deliberate effort to forcibly revise historical events and glorify Latvian legionnaires under the false pretext of their alleged participation in a "national liberation movement". What is more, their policy is to exclude everything Russian from the country's public life and to disenfranchise the Russian-speaking inhabitants of this Baltic country.

In practice, this means that efforts are being made to cultivate nationalist and Russophobic sentiments with the general public. One of the pillars of this policy is the declaration adopted by the Latvian Saeima on 29 October 1998 "On Latvian Legionnaires in World War II", which states, contrary to the facts, that "the aim of the warriors who were conscripted or voluntarily joined the Legion was to protect Latvia from the restoration of the Stalinist regime" and that they "never participated in Hitler's punitive actions against the civilian population". In 2000, a memorial complex dedicated to the members of the group was revealed in the village of Lestene with the support of the state. It was built with donations from the "Daugava Hawks" organisation, founded by veterans of the Latvian Legion.⁵⁷⁸

Public efforts to distort and falsify history and to justify collaborators are made not only by representatives of radical right-wing forces, but also by the Latvian authorities, including the country's leaders, who share these sentiments. Among other things, there are known instances when the leaders of three Baltic states made coordinated efforts to that effect. These include the joint declaration by the presidents of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on 7 May 2020 on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe (in which the liberation of the Baltic states from the Nazis is referred to as "occupation"), and the video message of the leaders of the three Baltic states released in June 2021 on the

⁵⁷⁸ Accomplices of Nazi crimes. 96 SS Latvian Legion veterans who are still alive. Joint Report of the Historical Memory Foundation and the Foundation for the support and development of Jewish culture, traditions, education and science. Moscow, 2020. http://historyfoundation.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Легионеры_4_light.pdf

occasion of the 80th anniversary of the deportation from these countries (14 June 1941) dedicated to the idea of the equal responsibility of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union for starting the Second World War.⁵⁷⁹

In the same spirit, in 2022 Latvia openly opposed the fight against the glorification of Nazism by voting against the annual UN General Assembly resolution "Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", introduced by Russia together with many other co-sponsors.

There have also been attempts to whitewash Latvian accomplices of the Nazis from a legal standpoint. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the decision of the General Prosecutor of Latvia in February 2019 to close the criminal case on the possible involvement of Herberts Cukurs, a Latvian pilot (who was a member of the Arajs Kommando – a unit of the Latvian Auxiliary SD Police – and was nicknamed "The Butcher of Riga"), in the extermination of the Jewish population of Latvia during World War II. The investigation was opened in 2006 on charges of genocide – Article 71 of the Latvian Criminal law. The case was closed because the Latvian prosecutor's office did not find in Herberts Cukurs' actions the *corpus delicti* required by Article 71. The court's decision was only reviewed and the investigation reopened following the demands of the public, Latvian and international Jewish organisations, as well as an appeal by the Council of Jewish Communities of Latvia to the Prosecutor General on this issue in May 2019.

In order to promote their ideas, advocates of the "occupation doctrine" publish various pseudo-scientific works on the "occupation" (e.g. Crimes of the USSR Occupation Army in Latvia. 1940-1991 by Jānis Riekstiņš). In addition, books designed to create a positive image of the Nazis and their accomplices are used as supplementary history books in schools.

Every year on 2 March, near the Stompaku bogs in the Viljaku region, a

⁵⁷⁹ The Baltic presidents again came out with lies about Soviet deportations. Remembrance, Research & Justice: Heritage of WWII in the 21st century, website of the project, June 15, 2021. <https://remembrance.ru/2021/06/15/pribaltijskie-prezidenty-vnov-vystupili-s-lozhju-o-sovetskih-deportacijah/>

commemorative event is held in honour of the Forest brothers with the participation of state officials. During the Great Patriotic War, the area was the scene of battles between the Soviet state security services and the Forest Brothers. The gang of about 300 nationalist partisans was led by Pēteris Supe, who arrived in Latvia on 2 October 1944 as a member of the German intelligence unit Lapland, having previously trained with the Abwehr's Group 212 of frontline intelligence officers in Eastern Prussia. As part of the Lapland unit that had been deployed specifically for this purpose, Pēteris Supe consolidated the scattered anti-Soviet groups and units in the areas of Abrene, Viļaka, Balvi, Alūksne, Gulbene, Valka, Cēsis and Madona. The 2nd of March has also been declared the "Day of Commemoration of the National Guerrilla Armed Resistance".

On 2 March 2023, a traditional gathering was held in Stompaku in honour of the Forest Brothers. The President of the Republic, Egils Levits, made another revisionist speech during his visit to the bunker church and the graves of Latvian collaborators, where he called for honouring the memory of the Latgalian who, in March 1945, "won the greatest battle in the history of the Latvian national partisans" and "did not submit to the Soviet occupation regime".

The Forest Brothers theme is promoted in Latvia is promoted in particular through the creation of tourist routes through the places of "military glory" of the partisans. For example, there is a guided tourist route near the Stompaku marshes. It includes "various tasks and historical information". In general, the Baltic States are implementing a number of measures to integrate sites related to the Forest Brothers into a network of tourist facilities. In May 2021, Latvia and Estonia produced a map and brochure of military and historical tourist sites related to the Forest Brothers (over 150 well-maintained former military sites with exhibitions, as well as natural sites such as battlefields, trenches and bunkers).

Moreover, the Forest Brothers, many of whom are former Waffen-SS legionnaires, are in a more privileged position, especially when compared to World War II veterans who fought with the Nazis. For example, veterans who fought against fascism are not entitled to pension supplements and social security benefits

in Latvia. Also in January 2018, the law "On the status of participants in the Second World War" was adopted, promoted by the then president of the country, which effectively equalised Soviet soldiers and national partisans who fought on the side of the Nazis.

In February 2023, the Latvian Ministry of Culture announced the transfer of 300,000 euros to the State Cultural Capital Fund for the shooting of the film "Invisible Fortress" about the collaborator Ernests Laumanis, who took part in the siege of Leningrad as a member of the 21st Liepaja Police Battalion.

On 17 March 2023, the Latvian "Museum of Occupation" announced a fundraising campaign of 75,000 euros to build a monument "Against Alien Rules" in memory of the Forest Brothers.

On the same day, employees of the country's defence companies took part in an event dedicated to the 74th anniversary of the last battle of the "national partisans" in the Ile bunker in the Dobel district.

In 2021-2022, Latvian efforts to glorify Nazism and justify the crimes of Nazi collaborators took on unprecedented forms and proportions. Latvia has cynically decided to focus on dismantling monuments to the soldiers who liberated the country from Nazism and banning 9 May celebrations.

The longstanding revanchist aspirations of the Latvian establishment culminated in Riga's efforts to rewrite history by passing legislation prohibiting the celebration of 9 May (in effect outlawing Victory Day), the public display of symbols of victory over Nazism and the holding of public events near Soviet war memorials.

On 11 November 2021, the Latvian Saeima passed several amendments to the Laws on the Safety of Public Entertainment and Festivities and Law on Holidays, Remembrance Days, and Celebrating Days, which banned the use of the St George's Ribbon.⁵⁸⁰

On 31 March 2021, the Latvian Saeima adopted a series of amendments to

⁵⁸⁰ Website of the Latvian Saeima <https://www.saeima.lv/lv/aktualitates/saeimas-zinas/30326-aiizliedz-georga-lensu-izmantosanu-publiskos-pasakumos>

the Law on the Safety of Public Entertainment and Festivities, the most radical of which banned the holding of events within 200 metres of any memorial "glorifying the victory and memory of the Soviet Army or its soldiers in Latvia".⁵⁸¹

On 7 April 2022, the Saeima declared 9 May as a day of remembrance for those killed in Ukraine in a new law banning public events and celebrations on that day. The law had limited application and ceased to apply on 11 May 2022.⁵⁸²

On 20 April 2023 (coincidentally, Hitler's birthday), the Latvian Saeima passed the law "On the ban on holding certain public events on 9 May", which introduced restrictions on mass gatherings (marches, meetings, pickets) and the use of pyrotechnic products on that day. The only exceptions are the events dedicated to Europe Day. The law was approved by the Latvian President on 26 April.

An overwhelming majority of MPs voted in favour of adopting the bill proposed by the head of the Saeima Commission for Human Rights and Public Affairs, Ieva Brante (United List party). At the same time, none of the political forces represented in parliament dared to question the adoption of this legislative norm, including the representatives of the Russian-speaking electorate from the "For Stability!" party, who cowardly withdrew from the vote, claiming that they had not had "time and opportunity" to familiarise themselves with the text of the bill.

Even though the statutory bans were in place, Riga authorities also made practical steps to prevent people from laying flowers to the Monument to Liberator Soldiers in city's Victory Park on 9 May 2022: overnight into Sunday 8 May 2022, the State Police fenced off the Monument without warning and closed the nearest public transport stops, thereby blocking access to the Monument for the general public. Nevertheless, thousands of concerned citizens came to honour the memory of the fallen Soviet heroes.

Without hiding their annoyance at the failed attempt to cloud May 9 celebrations, law enforcement authorities detained 35 persons and initiated

⁵⁸¹ Website of the Latvian Saeima <https://www.saeima.lv/lv/aktualitates/saeimas-zinas/30860-publikos-pasakumos-aiizliedz-izmantot-militaru-agresiju-un-kara-noziegumus-identificjosa-stilistika-izmantotus-simbolus>

⁵⁸² Website of the Latvian Saeima: <https://www.saeima.lv/lv/aktualitates/saeimas-zinas/30909-sogad-9-maija-latvija-piemines-krievijas-agresijas-ukraina-upurus>

49 administrative cases, mostly related to the "use of symbols that glorify military aggression and war crimes", implying the use of St. George's Ribbon.⁵⁸³ On the morning of 10 May 2022, the authorities used an excavator to barbarically remove the flowers that had been placed in the square by the monument.

These blasphemous actions by the authorities against the memory of the fallen liberators were met with the justifiable indignation of many Riga residents, who continued to lay flowers at the monument on 10 May 2022. Later in the evening, Latvian patriotic nationalists, with the help of the state police, forced all visitors out of Victory Park and blocked access to the monument until 31 August 2022.

The most high-profile case in this context was the arrest of Alexander Dubyago, a Latvian citizen who came to the monument carrying a Russian flag to honour the memory of Soviet soldiers. Although the young man did not chant any political slogans, the police charged him under Article 74.1 of the Penal Code - Justification of Genocide and Military Crimes - which carries a prison sentence of up to five years.

As a preventive measure, the Latvian authorities also took steps in 2023 to prevent the Russian Embassy from organising public events to mark the 78th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War.

Specifically, on 24 April 2023, in response to an embassy note on the laying of flowers and wreaths at fraternal war graves on Victory Day, the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs cynically informed the diplomatic mission that "in the Republic of Latvia, the Day of the Defeat of Nazism and the Day of Commemoration of the Victims of World War II are celebrated on 8 May" and, referring to a law adopted by parliament, cited the ban on holding festive events on 9 and 10 May.

In response to the Russian Embassy's note requesting further clarification regarding the possibility of laying flowers at Soviet war memorials on Victory Day

⁵⁸³ <https://lv.sputmknews.ru/20220510/v-latvii-9-maya-byli-zaderzhany-35-chelovek-i-nachato-49-ugolovnykh-protsessov-21757072.html>

without hindrance, representatives of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs invited the Russian Charge d'Affaires for a "conversation", where they presented their note, warning that any "collective public events" held by the mission would be considered in violation of the law "On the ban on holding certain public events on 9 May" and calling on the Latvian diplomatic mission to "comply with Latvian legislation".

Not content enough with these anti-Russian measures, the Latvian authorities took further steps to restrict any possibility of mass gatherings of Russian compatriots as the date approached. On 26 April 2023, the Latvian State Security Service issued a statement urging people to report "provocations" planned for 9 May, referring to attempts by local residents to organise the laying of flowers at the dismantled memorial

In addition to the restrictions, the Latvian authorities took steps to prevent public commemoration of 9 May and the laying of flowers at the site of destroyed Soviet memorials, including in the area of Victory Park. Overnight from 8 to 9 May, Latvian police officers fenced off the monument, preventing city dwellers from accessing the site. On 10th May, police officers covered with wilted flowers a wreath in the colours of the Russian flag laid by the staff of the Russian Embassy in Riga's Pokrovskoe cemetery. An embassy representative who tried to clear the flowers was threatened by the police with administrative charges.

The Latvian authorities resorted to all means available to prevent the commemoration of 9 May in any form. For example, on Victory Day, law enforcement personnel stationed outside the Russian Embassy detained a Great Patriotic War veteran who was leaving the diplomatic mission after attending a Victory Day reception "for displaying Soviet symbols".

Latvian law enforcement authorities also prosecuted local residents for attempting to mark 9 May online. On 19 July 2023, the Latvian police, citing Articles 13 and 131 of the Law on Administrative Penalties for Offences in the Field of Administration, Public Order and Use of the Official Language, launched a massive administrative case against Latvian citizens who had posted Victory Day

greetings on their social media pages.

Since 2022, the Latvian authorities, riding a wave of ultra-nationalist enthusiasm, have intensified their efforts to destroy Soviet monuments and falsify history. On 12 May 2022, Latvian policymakers urgently legitimised the demolition of the Monument to the Soldiers Liberators in Victory Park, suspending Article 13 of the 1994 Russian-Latvian Intergovernmental Agreement on the Social Protection of War Pensioners, under which Latvia pledged to protect Soviet monuments.⁵⁸⁴ Members of the Saeima's Foreign Affairs Committee, the authors of the amendments, supported this cynical decision by openly stating that 'Latvia's obligations under Article 13 of the Agreement no longer extend to such structures as monuments'.

In order to implement this decision, Riga City Council, at an extraordinary meeting on 13 May 2022, voted by a majority (39 votes against 13) to demolish the Monument to Soldiers Liberators.⁵⁸⁵

Having prepared the necessary legal framework, local radicals began a massive campaign to demolish Soviet monuments, concentrating their efforts on the main symbol of the victory over Nazism - the monument to the Soldiers - Liberators of Riga and Latvia from the Nazi invaders.

Latvian leaders resorted to offensive rhetoric when the monument was demolished. In particular, Latvian President Egils Levits publicly described the memorial as a "thorn in the soul of Latvians"⁵⁸⁶, while former President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga called it a "shameful pillory from the era of forced labour".⁵⁸⁷ For his part, Latvian Prime Minister Krišjānis Kariņš said that "thanks to the demolition of the monument, the Latvian people have finally freed themselves from the consequences of the occupation and from the feeling that they are not the

⁵⁸⁴ <https://www.saeima.lv/lv/aktualitates/saeimas-zinas/31022-saeima-aptur-latvijas-un-krievijas-divpuseja-liguma-darbibu-attieciba-uz-memorialajam-buvem-un-pieminekliem>

⁵⁸⁵ <https://www.riga.lv/lv/jaunums/rigas-dome-uzdod-demontet-padomju-pieminekli-uzvaras-parka>

⁵⁸⁶ <https://mixnews.lv/latviya/2022/05/03/eto-zanoza-v-dushe-latshey-levits-vyskazalsya-za-snos-pamyatnika-v-pardugave/>

⁵⁸⁷ <https://rus.tvnet.lv/7591608/vike-feyberga-tak-nazyvaemy-pamyatnik-pobedy-vsegda-byl-pozornym-stolbom>

masters of their own land".⁵⁸⁸

Edgars Rinkevics, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, warned against participation in protests against the imminent demolition of the monument, and directly threatened to expel from the country any foreigners, regardless of nationality, found guilty of 'illegal and unauthorised actions' during the demolition.⁵⁸⁹

The Latvian authorities began demolishing the monument on 23 August 2022, the 33rd anniversary of the Baltic Way, and on 25 August 2022 the last element of the monument, a 79-metre high stele, was dismantled.

Repeated requests from the Russian side to the Riga authorities to help evacuate the Monument to Russia and prevent its destruction were uncompromisingly rejected.

It is also telling that in the nationalist frenzy of their campaign to demolish the Monument to the Liberators of Riga, the Latvian authorities completely ignored the opinion of international human rights mechanisms and their obligations under international treaties. On 26 August 2022, the Human Rights Committee appealed to the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in connection with complaints of violations of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (an attempt by public activists to halt the dismantling of the Monument to the Liberators of Riga and Latvia). The Committee's appeal failed to prevent the demolition, but the Latvian government was asked to provide explanations to HRCttee experts by 26 February 2023. Commenting on the Human Rights Council's appeal to the Latvian authorities, Diāna Eglīte, press secretary of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said: "The committee is not a court of law and its findings are not legally binding on the country."

The Monument to Soldiers Liberators in Riga has long angered right-wing

⁵⁸⁸ <https://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/karinsh-demontazh-pamyatnika-sovetskoj-armii-zasluga-vseh-zhitelej.d?id=54676918>

⁵⁸⁹ Twitter account of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia Edgars Rinkevics https://twitter.com/edgarsrinkevics/status/1561758450819932162?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetemb ed%7Ctwterm%5E1561758450819932162%7Ctwgr%5Ed4ee205f51e54b8cf1869317465444b78207c4cl%7Ctwcon %5Esl_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fbb.lv%2Fstatja%2Fpolitika%2F2022%2F08%2F22%2Fsnos-pamyatnika-osvoboditelyam-glava-mid-latvii-predupredil-inostrancev

nationalists. It has been suggested that the memorial should be renamed or rebuilt to reflect its 'true meaning'. An initiative to demolish it has been discussed in a working group formed in the Saeima of Latvia. Online resources were also used to push the agenda. Google Maps displayed a false "translation" into Latvian - Okupācijas piemineklis ("Monument to the Occupation") - next to the Russian name of the Victory Monument. Website administrators did not respond to complaints.

The Monument to the Liberators of Riga was one of the first victims of vandalism against monuments to the Red Army soldiers who liberated the country from Nazism during the Second World War, which has spread across Latvia since the beginning of the Special Military Operation to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine. On 24 February 2022, vandals threw paint over the monument. A vandal then tried to hit the monument with a hammer. The offender was arrested by the police. In response, Latvian Justice Minister Jānis Bordāns called for the monument's demolition, describing it as a threat to national security and encouraging the Latvian authorities to find loopholes to circumvent the provisions of the treaty with Russia that protects the monument.

In 2022, the Latvian authorities stepped up efforts to remove monuments honouring Red Army soldiers by introducing a legal framework for such actions. On 16 June 2022, the Saeima fast-tracked the adoption of the Law on the Prohibition of Exhibiting in the Republic of Latvia of Items Glorifying the Soviet and Nazi Occupation Regimes,⁵⁹⁰ which obliges municipalities to demolish Soviet memorials, including the monument in Riga, by 15 November 2022. Roughly 300 Soviet memorials to Red Army soldiers who liberated Latvia from Nazism are covered under this law.

President Levits, who spent most of his conscious life in Germany until 1991, publicly supported this act, noting that it was dictated by a desire to prevent "any glorification of Russia's imperial ideology in the public sphere".

⁵⁹⁰ <https://www.saeima.lv/lv/aktaalitates/saeimas-zinas/31190-saeima-pienem-likumu-padomju-un-nacistisko-rezimu-slavinosu-objektu-demontazai>

On 14 July 2022, the Latvian government approved a list of 69 Soviet monuments that must be removed by 15 November.⁵⁹¹

2022 saw a sharp increase in incidents of desecration of Soviet military monuments in Latvia.

While in 2021 the Russian Embassy in Latvia registered four acts of vandalism against Soviet monuments on the territory of Latvia, in 2023, as of 1 July, 22 Soviet monuments and 5 communal cemeteries were desecrated, more than 120 monuments and 4 communal cemeteries were illegally destroyed.

In several cases, these blasphemous actions were approved by local legislative authorities. In particular, it is known that such acts were approved by regional councils of Ogre and Jelgava.

It is remarkable that several Latvian municipalities have been proactive in demolishing Soviet memorials and did not wait for legislative amendments to come into force. For example, on 31 May 2022, Sigulda authorities announced their plans to demolish three monuments: a Panfilov Division memorial in the village of Mālpils, a Young Communist League memorial and a Soviet prisoners of war memorial stone in Sigulda.

On 14 June 2022, in violation of Latvia's international legal obligations, the authorities of Jēkabpils began implementing in practice the illegal decision of the regional council to eliminate the mass military burial at Rīgas street, 205, in close vicinity of the memorial complex. Heavy machinery demolished the pedestal of the monument to Soviet artillerymen, the remains of three Soviet officers buried underneath were exhumed. On the same day, the adjacent memorial complex to the heroes of the Soviet Union who had been killed in the Krustpils operation was demolished. Thus, the head of Jēkabpils local council Raivis Ragainis allowed himself to publicly call the dismantled monuments from the mass military burial and the adjacent memorial "pieces of concrete without any historical value".

The monument in Jēkabpils has previously been attacked by vandals as well.

⁵⁹¹ List of sites glorifying the Soviet and Nazi regimes to be dismantled on the territory of the Republic of Latvia: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/334177-latvijas-republikas-teritorija-esoso-demontejamo-padomju-un-nacistisko-rezimu-slavinoso-objektu-saraksts>

On 24 February 2021, the 76 mm gun was stolen from the monument's pedestal. Despite the fact that Latvian law enforcement agencies initiated a criminal case on the matter, the perpetrators have not been prosecuted.

On 25 October 2022, the Liepaja authorities demolished the monument to the Defenders of the City, erected in 1960 on the bank of the Liepaja Canal to commemorate the defence of the city against Nazi troops on 22-29 June 1941.⁵⁹²

At the end of October 2022, part of the Friendship Hill monument near the border between Latvia, Russia and Belarus was damaged by heavy machinery.⁵⁹³ The memorial was built in 1959. It is a symbol of the heroic struggle of Russian, Belorussian and Latvian partisans during the Great Patriotic War. A month later, at the end of November, the Latvian authorities destroyed a footbridge over the Sinuha River near the monument.⁵⁹⁴

On 31 October, two monuments to Soviet soldiers were demolished in Daugavpils - a stele on Glory Square and a monument on 18 November Street, opposite the Fraternal Cemeteries. Notably, the mayor of the city and local residents opposed the dismantling of monuments. On the day of the demolition, the police cordoned off the monument and arrested 37 people, filing charges against them for, among other things, singing songs that allegedly glorified combat.⁵⁹⁵

On 4 November 2022, a monument dedicated to the soldiers of the Second Baltic Front, who liberated Latvia from the Nazis in July 1944, was demolished in Ludza with the permission of the city council.⁵⁹⁶

On 6 November 2022, a monument to Soviet partisans, memorial plates and a tombstone with the names of buried Red Army soldiers (about 30 people) were demolished in the village of Šķaune. The monument was razed to the ground by heavy construction equipment. As far as is known, the remains have not been exhumed.

⁵⁹² <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/25102022-v-liepae-snosyat-pamyatnik-zashchitnikam-goroda/>

⁵⁹³ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/29102022-v-latvii-razrushili-chast-memoriala-kurgan-druzhby-na-granitse-s-rossii-i-belarusyu-video/>

⁵⁹⁴ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/24112022-latviya-razrushila-peshekhodnyy-most-u-kurgana-druzhby-na-styke-granits-rossii-i-belarusi/>

⁵⁹⁵ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/31102022-v-latvii-snesli-dva-pamyatnika-sovetskim-voinam-vopreki-protestam-zhiteley/>

⁵⁹⁶ <https://www.ntv.ru/novosti/2731241/?ysclid=lmt4gka9hk843892631>

On 9 November 2022, the last of the large monuments to Soviet soldiers in the country was demolished – a monument in the city of Rezekne, known as "Alyosha". Mayor of the city Aleksandrs Bartaševičs said that the demolition of "Alyosha" is a desecration of memorials and an act of vandalism. But the central authorities failed to listen to him.⁵⁹⁷ In an address to the townspeople on 8 November, the mayor stated that the options he proposed, involving transfer of the monument to the territory of a city cemetery, were rejected by Riga. Latvia also ignored the opinion of the Human Rights Committee who urged that the monument be preserved.

In 2022 and 2023, the Latvian authorities several times reburied the remains of Soviet soldiers without consulting the Russian side, in violation of the 2007 Russian-Latvian agreement "On the Status of Burial Sites". For example, not only were the remains of Soviet soldiers arbitrarily exhumed in Jekabpils, but similar unlawful actions occurred in relation to mass graves in Rudbārži settlement and Jaunsātu parish, as well as in Shkiaune settlement, where the grave was simply destroyed. In July 2023, the Balva Regional Council announced its decision to exhume the remains of Soviet partisans buried in Viljaka. The monument of the same name erected on the burial site is to be demolished.

Even the monuments erected in honour of Latvian Red Army soldiers were demolished. Thus, on 9 May 2022 the monument to the famous Latvian intelligence officer Arvīds Roze and the reconnaissance group Baikāls headed by him was demolished in the village of Tome in Ogre Municipality. During the Great Patriotic War, Roze and his group sent important information to the headquarters of the 1st Baltic Front about the movement of Nazi troops and the construction of fortifications near Riga.⁵⁹⁸

The Latvian authorities have gone so far as to publish regular official statistics on their efforts to destroy monuments to those who fought against Nazism. As of 14 November 2022, 124 monuments to Red Army soldiers have

⁵⁹⁷ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221125-potomki-kollaborantov-prodolzhayut-perepisyvat-istoriyu-pribaltiki/>

⁵⁹⁸ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220511/v-poslke-tome-snesli-pamyatnik-legendarnomu-latyshskomu-razvedchiku-21766017.html>

been dismantled in Latvia. This was stated by Ms. L.Kokale, head of the public relations department of the Ministry of Culture. According to her, self-governments of the Baltic Republic reported to have demolished 69 sites to be dismantled by a Cabinet of Ministers decree by 15 November. Municipalities demolished another 55 objects on their own initiative.⁵⁹⁹

In 2023, before Victory Day, some of the remaining monuments to Soviet soldiers were also vandalised. War graves in Riga's Bergi neighbourhood, Jaunpiebalgi settlement and Valmiera were vandalised.

In light of the ongoing criminal investigation by the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation into the demolition of Soviet monuments in the Baltic States, the Latvian Foreign Ministry published on 6 December recommendations for Latvian officials travelling abroad, warning them against visiting countries with which Russia has "close legal cooperation".⁶⁰⁰ In September, the Russian Investigative Committee reported that it was investigating 16 criminal cases involving 143 cases of desecration, destruction or damage to war graves, monuments and memorials of Soviet soldiers. A total of 173 foreign nationals, including citizens of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland and Ukraine, were prosecuted in absentia for the offences in question.⁶⁰¹

In addition, Riga uses repression against those who oppose its policy of demolishing monuments. Latvian special services launch investigations and disciplinary checks against those mayors who try to oppose or "sabotage" (delay) the demolition of Red Army monuments. In particular, on 9 November 2022, Daugavpils Mayor Andrejs Elksniņš was summoned to the Latvian State Security Service for explanations in relation his interview to a local TV channel where he condemned the dismantling of Soviet memorials in Latvia and called Crimea part of Russia.

It is regrettable to note that a similar negative tendency has developed in

⁵⁹⁹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/14112022-v-minkultury-latvii-nazvali-chislo-snesennykh-sovetskikh-pamyatnikov/>

⁶⁰⁰ On recommendations to officials on travelling outside Latvia in connection with activities initiated by the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation: <https://www.mfa.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/par-rekomendacijam-amatpersonam-celosanai-arpus-latvijas-saistiba-ar-krievijas-izmeklesanas-komisijas-uzsaktajam-darbibam>

⁶⁰¹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/12092023-sk-rossii-zaochno-obvinil-grazhdan-stran-baltii-i-polshi-v-oskvernienii-sovetskikh-pamyatnikov/>

Latvia as a whole. Numerous notes sent by the Embassy to the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs demanding that international commitments in the field of war memorials be implemented in good faith and that unilateral unlawful actions by local governments be suppressed, are invariably left unnoticed by the Latvian authorities. The consequences of acts of vandalism have until recently been eliminated solely thanks to proactive local residents, despite the fact that responsibility for the maintenance and preservation of memorial sites is vested in local governments. Now the authorities intend to prevent such initiatives by local residents.

It is notable that the representatives of the Latvian authorities of different levels not only justify the destruction of monuments in honour of Red Army soldiers who liberated Latvia from the Nazis, but also make blasphemous statements about these monuments, comparing them with garbage and promising to properly destroy them. Thus, the head of Jēkabpils local council Raivis Ragainis allowed himself to publicly call the dismantled monuments from the mass military burial and the adjacent memorial "pieces of concrete without any historical value". The head of Ogre Municipality Council Egils Helmanis who actively supported the demolition of four monuments in honour of the Soviet soldiers and officers fallen during the liberation of Latvia from the Nazis and the monument to diplomatic courier Theodor Nette, cynically stated that the monument in Madliena will be used in road construction works.⁶⁰² The mayor of Riga, Mārtiņš Staķis, also 'rose to the occasion' by declaring that no parts of the Liberators' Monument would be preserved after its demolition and promising to recycle the monument completely, claiming that it had no artistic value.⁶⁰³ As the media aptly pointed out, the Riga City Council turned its press conference on the demolition of the monument into a TV series to satisfy the vindictive urges of Russophobes.⁶⁰⁴

Moreover, the Latvian authorities are deliberately distorting the facts and

⁶⁰² <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220511/v-poslke-tome-snesli-pamyatnik-legendarnomu-latyshskomu-razvedchiku-21766017.html>

⁶⁰³ <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/08/03/monument/>

⁶⁰⁴ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220804/ne-razbirat-po-chastyam-no-i-ne-vzryvat-kak-budut-snosit-pamyatnik-osvoboditelyam-22415313.html>

interpreting history in order to justify their own unseemly actions. Now a similar approach is being used to justify Latvia's apparent glorification of Latvian SS legionaries, Nazi accomplices, and an open struggle against the memory of the Red Army soldiers who liberated Latvia from Nazism.

On 14 October 2022, a month and a half after the demolition of the monument to the Liberators of Riga, the Latvian Foreign Ministry responded to Russia's protests sent on 24 August. Parallels were drawn between modern Russia and the USSR, which 'occupied' Latvia after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. It was then concluded that the exploits of the Soviet army were cultivated by Russia to justify its own "aggressive geopolitical ambitions". On these grounds, the Foreign Ministry rejected Russia's note of protest and allegations of violation of Article 13 of the bilateral agreement, pointing out that Latvia had "honestly" fulfilled the said agreement for 30 years.

This was then followed by a conclusion that with the "Russian aggression in Ukraine", the Liberators of Riga monument turned into a "symbol of violence and threat", standing no chance to exist in a "democratic Latvia". Then came the conclusion that "aggression" was forcing the world community to reconsider its attitude to symbols associated with the Soviet Army.

It is necessary to note that all above-mentioned acts, as well as the Latvian policy as a whole on the demolition of monuments to fighters against Nazism and anti-fascists contradict the provisions of the above-mentioned resolution of the UN General Assembly devoted to the fight against the glorification of Nazism.

While waging a fierce battle against Soviet monuments and historical heritage, the Latvian authorities continued their efforts to glorify the Latvian Waffen-SS legionnaires and shelter surviving collaborators from the court.

In September 2021, the competent authorities of the country refused Belarus legal assistance in the criminal case of genocide during the Great Patriotic War and did not allow the interrogation of 22 members of the Latvian SS Legion, citing possible "damage to the sovereignty of the Republic of Latvia".

The Prosecutor General's Office of Belarus made the request in June 2021⁶⁰⁵, after the Historical Memory Foundation and the Foundation for the Support and Development of Jewish Culture, Traditions, Education, and Science published a report titled "Accomplices of Nazi Crimes. Ninety-six living veterans of the SS Latvian Legion". It contained information on almost a quarter of the approximately 400 former Latvian SS legionnaires living in Latvia and abroad, at least some of whom may have been involved in serious crimes during WWII. It identified 22 former members of the SS Legion in Latvia, as well as 19 in Australia, 2 in Argentina, 3 in Brazil, 4 in the United Kingdom, 16 in Canada, and 33 in the United States.⁶⁰⁶

As noted in the report, between 1991 and 2020, no Nazi collaborators from the Latvian SD Auxiliary Security Police, Latvian police battalions or other units of the Latvian SS Legion were convicted of war crimes or crimes against humanity. The only exception was the case of Konrāds Kalējs, the commander of the Salaspils camp guard who was involved in mass murders of Jews. After revealing the details of Konrāds Kalējs's biography during the Second World War and the withdrawal of his U.S. citizenship in 1994, Latvian authorities belatedly sent a request to Australia for his extradition as late as 2000, a year before his death. Due to bureaucratic delays by the authorities of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia, as well as delays in the request from Latvia, the war criminal, who had left many obvious traces, was never brought to justice.⁶⁰⁷

Continuing its work to identify Nazi collaborators, in 2021 the Historical Memory Foundation published a report entitled "Retired Butchers. Latvian Nazi criminals working for the CIA". The study establishes the identities of 23 Latvian nationals who collaborated with American intelligence in the late 1940s to 1960s.

⁶⁰⁵ The General Prosecutor's Office of Belarus to summon the living veterans of the Latvian SS Legion for questioning. History Foundation 24 June 2021. <http://historyfoundation.ru/2021/06/24/genprokuratura-belarusi-vyzovet-na-dopros-nyne-zhivyh-veteranov-latyshskogo-legiona-ss/>

⁶⁰⁶ Accomplices of Nazi crimes. 96 living veterans of the SS Latvian Legion. Joint Report of the Historical Memory Foundation and the Foundation for the support and development of Jewish culture, traditions, education and science. Moscow, 2020. http://historyfoundation.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Легионеры_4_light.pdf

⁶⁰⁷ Accomplices of Nazi crimes. 96 living veterans of the SS Latvian Legion. Joint Report of the Historical Memory Foundation and the Foundation for the support and development of Jewish culture, traditions, education and science. Moscow, 2020. http://historyfoundation.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Легионеры_4_light.pdf

The report clearly shows that most Latvian CIA agents during WWII served the Nazis, and many of them were directly involved in crimes against humanity, including the Holocaust, punitive operations against civilians in Soviet republics, and the blockade of Leningrad. Among these criminals was Jānis Cīrulis, who as part of a special unit of the Security Police and the SD took part in the mass murder of civilians in Latvia and the USSR, including near the village of Zhestyanaya Gorka (Novgorod Region).

The violent reaction of Latvian ultra-patriots to the Belgian authorities' decision to demolish the monument to Latvian legionnaires in Zedelgem, erected in 2018 (dismantled on 31 May 2022), is also noteworthy.

In December 2021, the Latvian Minister of Culture Nauris Puntulis (of the National Alliance party) spoke in defence of the monument, calling for "respect for the monument", and the official representative of the aforementioned political party, Laima Melkina, stated that "attempts to accuse Latvian Legionnaires of Nazi war crimes and the Holocaust clearly contradict the decisions of the Nuremberg Tribunal". The Latvian Embassy in Belgium sent a note on the matter to the Belgian Foreign Ministry, and Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkēvičs sent a letter to the Flemish leadership.

The practice of honouring former Waffen-SS legionnaires continued.

On 16 November 2021 the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia officially approved the establishment of the National Partisans Armed Resistance Remembrance Day on March 2 to commemorate the fight of the Forest Brothers near the Stompaku bog in the Viljak region.⁶⁰⁸

In 2022, for the first time, events dedicated to this day were held under the auspices of the official State Day of Remembrance, during which the President of Latvia, Egils Levits, opened a memorial to the "national partisans" - in fact, open Nazi collaborators - buried in Stompaku.

On 16 March 2022, the Day of Remembrance of Latvian Waffen-SS

⁶⁰⁸ The Saeima introduces several new days of remembrance: <https://www.saeima.lv/lv/aktualitates/saeimas-zinas/29929-saeima-nosaka-vairakas-jaunas-atceres-dienas>

Legionnaires, the traditional procession of sympathisers of "national heroes" took place, with members of the nationalist Daugava Hawks organisation dressed in uniforms with Nazi chevrons. Once again, representatives of the National Alliance - advisors to the prime minister of Latvia Imants Parādnieks and Jānis Iesalnieks, leader of the party Raivis Dzintars and deputy of the Saeima Jānis Dombrova – took part in the procession to the sound of the songs of the Waffen-SS legion. Many participants of the march wore military uniforms with nationalist chevrons. Igor Shishkin, a well-known Latvian extremist and a former member of the banned Pērkonkrusts movement (an anti-Semitic nationalist group), was also present there.

Riga City Council rejected the application of the Latvian Anti-Nazi Committee to hold at the same time an event against the justification of crimes of the Latvian punitive division. On the same day, Saeima Speaker Ināra Mūrniece "honoured" the legionnaires' cemetery in the village of Lestene with her presence, where she laid flowers and gave another revisionist speech. In particular, she said, it "honours the memory of the fallen, missing and forgotten Legionnaires who were destined to fight in the Second World War with German insignia on their uniforms".⁶⁰⁹

Before 16 March 2023, the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a brochure on the "significance" of this day "for the history of the republic", claiming that the events taking place on this occasion are dedicated to the memory of those who, were "forcibly" and "against their will" mobilised into Wehrmacht units and became "martyrs" as they were caught between the millstones of two totalitarian regimes. At the same time, the Latvian Foreign Ministry said in a press release that the procession 'does not include top state officials and members of the government' and 'does not use symbols of Nazi Germany, which are banned in Latvia'. Years of practice show exactly the opposite.

On 16 March 2023, under the auspices of the "Daugava Hawks" organisation, the traditional procession in memory of the Latvian SS legionnaires

⁶⁰⁹ <https://www.saeima.lv/lv/aktualitates/saeimas-zinas/30762-inara-murniece-lestene-godinam-un-pieminam-ikvienu-latviesu-karaviru-kurs-cinijes-par-brivu-latviju>

took place once again. The procession was led by priest Guntis Kalme, mayor of Ogre municipality Egils Helmanis, chairman of the national-conservative National Alliance party Raivis Dzintars and some members of the party: Chairman of the Saeima's National Security Commission Jānis Dombrova, Advisor to the Minister of Communications Jānis Iesalnieks, Imants Parādnieks and Edvīns Šnore. Some marchers wore uniforms with Nazi chevrons, and the Waffen-SS anthem was played during the demonstration.

The Latvian Foreign Ministry's attempt to conceal the participation of high-ranking members of the government in the Waffen-SS commemoration did not prevent Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Ināra Mūrniece from once again visiting the legionnaires' cemetery in Lestene. In particular, in her new revisionist speech, the politician called the Latvian Nazis "part of the nation's history" and promised "not to forget their memory".

The meeting of 'national patriots' in Riga was not without incidents: Andrei Pagor, a member of Jelgava City Council and co-chairman of the Latvian Anti-Fascist Committee, was arrested for displaying a poster commemorating the crimes of Latvian collaborators.

"The "Latvian Anti-Fascist Committee", which in previous years had organised its own events to demonstrate the true nature of Latvian SS legionnaires, did not apply for a permit to hold a counter-demonstration in 2023, apparently understanding that such a permit would not be facilitated by the Riga City Council (in 2022, the application to hold a demonstration against the justification of Waffen-SS crimes was rejected on the basis of a "law enforcement opinion on a possible threat to public safety").

The marches of Waffen-SS veterans have been heavily criticized by the international community. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), which operates within the Council of Europe, has repeatedly expressed concern in its reports about the annual commemoration of Latvian legionnaires of the Waffen-SS on 16 March. ECRI has pointed to the fact that parliamentarians from the National Alliance party, which is part of the ruling

coalition, had been seen attending the ceremonies. The Commission has repeatedly recommended that the Latvian authorities condemn all attempts to commemorate persons who fought in the Waffen-SS and collaborated with the Nazis, and that they call on MPs to abstain from attending such commemorations.⁶¹⁰

The Latvian authorities look after the graves of former SS men. On 13 October 2022, a draft law on the Lesten Lutheran Church, in whose cemetery Latvian Waffen-SS legionnaires are buried, was adopted in the first reading. This memorial is a mecca for nationalists from the Latvian political establishment. The Speaker of the Saeima, Ināra Murniece, is a regular visitor to the annual events held there in honour of the SS.

Nazi symbols are also used in everyday life. The town of Lielvārde in Latvia attracted attention from social media after images and video of its Christmas tree – decorated with swastikas – were posted online in late November 2022.⁶¹¹ Basically, such incidents are not new in Latvia. Back in 2017, one of the buildings in Saldus was decorated for the holiday with a Nazi swastika, dubbed the "fiery cross" by local authorities.⁶¹²

By contrast, any attempt to paint over the Nazi symbol is prosecuted by the authorities. For example, in April 2022, Latvian police arrested three Russian sailors who tried to paint over the swastika on the Russian state flag in downtown Riga.⁶¹³

Meanwhile, Latvia continues its practice of holding mass events aimed at denying the Soviet Union's contribution to the country's liberation from Nazi invaders.

On 20 May 2022, several thousand people marched from Freedom Square to Victory Park in Riga under the slogan "For liberation from the Soviet legacy"! The organisers of the event, along with their demands to demolish Soviet monuments

⁶¹⁰ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Latvia (fifth monitoring cycle) adopted on December 4, 2018, and published on March 5, 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-latvia/1680934a9f>

⁶¹¹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/29112022-v-latvii-gorodskuyu-novogodnyuyu-yelku-ukrasili-svastikami/>

⁶¹² <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/14122017-zhiteli-latvii-v-preddverii-prazdnikov-pozhalovalis-na-svastiki/>

⁶¹³ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/18042022-v-rige-arestovali-russkikh-moryakov-za-popytku-zakrasit-svastiku-na-flage-ri/>

in Latvia, called for the change of all placenames bearing the names of Soviet functionaries and the expulsion of people who were "disloyal" to the state. Symptomatically, the police did not prevent the presence among the demonstrators of people wearing symbols of the Ukrainian Nazi battalion Azov (recognised as a terrorist organisation in the Russian Federation).

On 23 September 2022, Salaspils City Council banned the Latvian Society of Prisoners of the Nazi Regime "Remembrance for the Future" from holding its annual commemoration at the Salaspils concentration camp memorial, citing the unacceptability of glorifying the "Soviet occupation regime".

The efforts of the Russian-speaking community to preserve the memory of the heroic deeds of the Red Army that liberated Latvia from Nazism were met with a harsh reaction from the authorities who are already constantly persecuting community activists by putting pressure on them and conducting demonstrative punitive actions. As a rule, our fellow citizens are accused of "anti-state activities", "assistance to a foreign state in its activities against Latvia", "organization of mass disturbances", "espionage".

On 17 December 2020, the Latvian court found Alexander Gaponenko, a well-known human rights activist and public figure, Co-Chairman of the United Congress of Russian Communities and the head of civic organization Non-Citizens' Congress, guilty of "stirring up enmity and hatred based on racial, ethnic and national origin", and sentenced him to one year of suspended imprisonment for saying that in the 1930s-1940s many Latvian residents voluntarily agreed to cooperate with the Nazi Germany. On 8 February 2022, Alexander Gaponenko was convicted to one and a half years of suspended deprivation of liberty. The case is currently under appeal.

Criminal proceedings against Alexander Filey, member of the Board of the Russian Union of Latvia and permanent author of the Russian analytical portal Rubaltic.ru (for glorification of the "Soviet occupation") and against a number of other fellow citizens have been initiated. EMP Tatyana Zhdanok, a well-known human rights activist, has been subject o serious pressure by the government

(proceedings initiated in August 2020 against her and a number of other Russian community activists in connection with the organisation in 2018 of the All-Latvian Parents' Meeting were terminated; later on, the trial against Vladimir Linderman, a well-known public figure in Latvia, was resumed). There has been no progress in the Oleg Burak case. His complaints and appeals to all kinds of authorities about his torture in prison remain unaddressed. It is still not known what exactly was charged against the veteran of the Latvian Interior Ministry and what evidence was gathered against him. After exhausting all possible legal avenues and means of defence in Latvia, Oleg Burak and his lawyers began to prepare an application to the ECHR. However, he immediately faced serious opposition and sabotage from the prison authorities, who tried to prevent him from filing a complaint with the court within the prescribed time limit.⁶¹⁴

On 29 October 2021, Yuri Alekseev, Latvian publicist and public figure, was sentenced to 14 months of imprisonment based on falsified charges of inciting ethnic hatred. On 30 January, 2023 the Latvian Court of Appeal dropped one of the charges (possession of cartridges) following an appeal against the verdict, but the sentence was reduced by only one month.⁶¹⁵

In connection with this biased verdict, the Russian community in Latvia issued a statement saying that the verdict, as well as the Latvian Constitutional Court's decision justifying the abolition of education in the Russian language, which is historically traditional in Latvia, the whipped-up hysteria about "Russian spies" and the prosecution of Russian-speaking journalists, point to the Latvian government's intention to take political reprisals against the Russian-speaking community. It was stated that the Latvian judicial system had long ago lost the trust of Russian-speaking Latvian residents. The case is currently under appeal.

Among the defendants were such public figures and journalists who openly promote alternative opinions contrary to Riga's Russophobic policy, such as Alexander Yakovlev, Ruslan Pankratov, Vladimir Dorofeev, Lyudmila

⁶¹⁴ <https://baltija.eu/2023/09/14/alla-berezovskaya-proshlo-pyat-let-so-dnya-aresta-pensionera-eks-polkovnika-mvd-latvii-olega-buraka/?ysclid=imt468e4bl916931588>

⁶¹⁵ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/30012023-apellyatsionnyy-sud-latvii-vynes-prigovor-zhurnalistu-yuriyu-alekseevu/>

Pribylskaya, Sergei Melkonov, Alexander Malnach, Andrei Solopenko, Alla Berezovskaya and others. Ruslan Pankratov and a few others, who have been persecuted for essentially political reasons, have had their social security numbers cancelled by the Latvian Ministry of the Interior, making it impossible for them to have a bank account, to register at their place of residence and to receive medical care, including emergency medical care.⁶¹⁶

The country's largest veteran organisation, the Republican Veterans Association of Latvia, came under considerable pressure from the authorities and was closed down by court order on a formal pretext (violation of accounting rules). On 6 October 2020, the chairman of this organization, Russian retired military serviceman Vladimir Norvind, was separated from his family and forcibly expelled from Latvia, in spite of the fact that he had suffered a heart attack. The Latvian authorities cancelled his residence permit.

The persecution of Russian-speaking activists in Latvia intensified after the Russian Armed Forces began the special military operation to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine and protect civilians in the Donbas.

Since the end of February 2022, the State Security Service and the State Police have essentially started a 'hunt' for dissenters. There has been an outbreak of summoning activists for "preventive conversations" to law enforcement bodies and special services all over Latvia. In particular, journalist Yuri Alekseev whom the Latvian intelligence services had threatened with new criminal proceedings for his active civic position, wrote on his social media page about being summoned this way. It is known that representatives of practically all Russian-language media of the country, including such large ones as Segodnya newspaper, Telegraph magazine, Latvian News weekly, Saturday, Seven Super Secrets, Baltcom radio as well as the websites mixnews.lv, pross.lv, bb.lv have been summoned to such "conversations".

⁶¹⁶ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230911-rusofoby-sdali-nazad-popytka-vydavit-grazhdan-rossii-iz-latvii-provalilas/>

As of 24 February 2023, the SSS had 40 criminal cases related to "glorification of genocide and war crimes", "inciting ethnic hatred", etc., mostly for comments or other online activities. The charges are mainly based on the notorious article of the Latvian Criminal Code on "justification of genocide, crimes against humanity, crimes against peace and war crimes" (meaning support in any form for Russia's special military operation). In July 2023, following the results of social media monitoring conducted by the security services, hundreds of Latvians received notices of administrative proceedings against them for posting about Victory Day celebrations and even for liking such posts.

In September 2023, the SSS reported the identification of 80 "politically unreliable" Russians who, despite passing the test, were deemed by the agency to be "a threat to national security" in Latvia. These "politically unreliable" individuals were denied permanent residency status by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) of the Latvian Ministry of Interior.

In addition to criminal prosecution, Russian residents of Latvia faced massive intimidation, insults and threats in everyday life. Basically, "politically unreliable" citizens (those who have, in whichever form, stated their support for Russia or who simply have a balanced position) are bullied on social media.

Since autumn 2021, a website similar to the notorious Ukrainian Myrotvorets website <https://myrotvorets.team>, has been active in the country. This media has published the personal data of Latvian Russian-speaking journalists, including those victimized by intelligence services for "cooperation" with the Russian media, as well as of Russian-speaking community activists, including Latvian Russian Union (LRU) members.

Notably, the Latvian government did not find this website unlawful. The State Data Inspection of Latvia did not find any violations and made a cynical remark that the data presented on the website had been processed in line with the right to freedom of expression.

The Latvian authorities adopted a set of legislative measures to criminalize any form of support of Russia and of its special military operation conducted in

Ukraine. Thus, there is an article in the Criminal Law of Latvia stipulating responsibility "for the justification and glorification of crimes" of Russia on the territory of Ukraine. On 31 March 2022, the Saeima adopted a law on amending the criminal legislation to criminalize the use of letters Z and V in public space, effected "with the aim to support the aggressor". The St. George ribbon, that had also been banned in Latvia, is deemed such symbol, too. All such acts are punishable by up to 5 years in prison.

In January 2023 Latvian special services detained editor-in-chief of the Sputnik Lithuania agency Marat Kasem, who arrived in the country to visit his grandmother Taisia Mefodieva, On January 5, the Riga court arrested the journalist on charges of violating Article 84 Part 1 of the Latvian Criminal Code "Non-Compliance with EU Sanctions". The Latvian authorities put pressure on the Russian journalist in order to compel a confession. A number of the journalist's chronic diseases worsened during his detention.⁶¹⁷ After months of arrest, the journalist was released on bail.

On 6 January 2023, Tatiana Andriets, a student of St. Petersburg State University and a former member of the Latvian Russian Union (LRU), was arrested and prosecuted by the Latvian authorities for her activities in defense of the rights of compatriots and the memorial heritage of the Great Patriotic War. She is still in custody. Her detention has been extended several times. In early July 2023, the charges against Tatiana were aggravated during the investigation. She now faces from 10 years to life imprisonment. The Latvian authorities used physical and psychological methods against Tatiana Andriets during her detention. Her health deteriorated due to the terrible conditions in the Latvian detention center.⁶¹⁸

Latvian law enforcement agencies are exerting brutal pressure on Russian citizens crossing the border. To enter Latvia, they are required to sign a statement of disagreement with the policy of the Russian Federation. In case of refusal, the

⁶¹⁷ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/03022023-stalo-izvestno-o-kriticheskom-sostoyanii-shefredaktora-sputnik-litva-marata-kasema/>

⁶¹⁸ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/04082023-sud-v-rige-prodlil-srok-soderzhaniya-pod-strazhey-aktivistke-tatyane-andriets/>, <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/05062023-arestovannoy-v-latvii-aktivistke-andriets-uzhestochili-obvinenie/>

Russians are denied entry under the pretext that they allegedly pose a threat to country's public order and internal security.

In December 2022 the State Security Service of Latvia addressed the residents of the republic with a "request" not to travel to Russia and Belarus during the Christmas and New Year holidays, recalling that special services of Russia and Belarus "recruit" Latvian residents in the territories of their countries⁶¹⁹.

Russophobic hysteria so consumed the Latvian authorities that in August 2022 the Latvian parliament declared Russia a "terrorist supporter state."

Under the contrived pretext of fighting "Russian propaganda", any dissent is being wiped out of Latvian media; as a result, representatives of Russian-language media are under serious systemic pressure. The persecution intensified since late February 2022, when rebroadcasting of all Russian channels gradually began to be banned in Latvia. On 24 February 2022 broadcasting of the channels Russia RTR, Russia 24 and TVC International was terminated. Starting from 2 March 2022 broadcasting of RBC TV channel was banned, Belarus 24 was suspended, and rebroadcasting licenses were withdrawn in respect of First Baltic Channel Estonia and First Baltic Channel Lithuania. On 7 March 2022, the Latvian National Council on Electronic Media decided to switch off 18 more Russian channels in the country: TNT – Comedy, TNT 4, TNT 4 International, TNT, TNT Music, ПЯТНИЦА (FRIDAY) International, KHL TV, Kinopremiera, Kinosvidanie, Men's Cinema, La-Minor TV, Auto Plus – Auto-Plus TV Channel, Nostalgia, Live!, Who is Who, Baby TV, Russian Night, Zee TV. In June 2022, the broadcasting of the remaining 80 TV channels was restricted. Today, Latvia bans all Russian TV channels and blocks hundreds of online news sources (including those of domestic government agencies).

The ban didn't affect the popularity of Russian TV channels. Latvian citizens continue to watch them through "illegal" means. The Latvian authorities have introduced administrative liability and a fine of up to 700 euros for watching

⁶¹⁹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/22122022-sluzhba-gosbezopasnosti-latvii-prizvala-zhiteley-vozderzhatsya-ot-poezdok-v-rossiyu-i-belarus/>

Russian TV programs through "illegal decoders" and satellite dishes. Criminal liability may also be imposed for the distribution of such equipment.

In early December 2022 it became known about the detention of a man in Riga by the state police on suspicion of installing "illegal television" in houses. He was accused of organizing unlicensed rebroadcasting of illegal television. It was also established that "the detainee has been providing television connection and service for almost 100 households in the Riga region for a long time"⁶²⁰.

The entire Russian-speaking population of Latvia faces pressure from the Latvian authorities. Russian residents of Latvia are viewed by the Latvian leadership as an alien and destabilizing element. As a consequence, the nationally oriented policy of the official authorities is aimed at stripping this part of society of its rights. In practice, this takes the form of numerous violations of the rights of this population category.

The Russian population in Latvia has a certain degree of difficulty with regard to the receipt of pension payments from Russia. Meanwhile, the level of pension coverage in Latvia is one of the lowest in the EU. According to the latest available information from the State Data Agency (SDA), in 2021, 40.5 per cent of people over 65 will be at the poverty line, and 22.5 per cent of the total population. According to Eurostat data, one in four Latvians will be at risk of poverty and social exclusion in 2022 (26 per cent). The media quotes even more shocking data: while the average old-age pension is 337 euros, 15% of Latvian pensioners receive only 183 euros a month.⁶²¹

The main remaining problem is the fact that a significant part of the Latvian population does not have Latvian citizenship. According to the SDA data as of January 2023, there are 175,400 "non-citizens" (9.3 per cent) in the country; according to OCMA information, there are 187,400.

As of today, "non-citizens" constitute about 200,000 residents of the country (11 per cent of the population), 65 per cent of them are ethnic Russians. The

⁶²⁰ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/10122022-v-latvii-muzhchinu-zaderzhali-za-ustanovku-rossiyskikh-telekanalov/>

⁶²¹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/19092023-v-latvii-zaderzhivayut-vyplatu-rossiyskikh-pensiy/>;
<https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230911-rusofoby-sdali-nazad-popytka-vydavit-grazhdan-rossii-iz-latvii-provalilas/>

Latvian authorities do not recognize "non-citizens" as belonging to the ethnic minorities and, consequently, have excluded them from the scope of application of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, ratified by Latvia in 2005 with significant reservations.

The rate of obtained citizenship declines every year (725 individuals "naturalized" in 2020, 419 in 2021, and just 518 as of April 2022). Since the "naturalization" process began on 1 February 1995 – the citizenship of the Republic of Latvia has been granted to 148,478 people, while the peak was in 2004-2006 in connection with the country's accession to the EU (51.6 thousand people). At the same time, the term "naturalization", its legal side apart, is largely artificial in nature, since people who are meant here in most cases are not migrants, but have always lived in this territory. The number of "non-citizens" is reducing now already due to the natural loss of this population category and its migration outflow only.

Eliminating mass statelessness is not currently on the Latvian authorities' agenda.

On 5 November 2019, Latvia adopted the law on automatic assignment of citizenship to children born in families of non-citizens. However, it concerns only a few dozens of new-born babies per year (in 2020, the "non-citizen" status was assigned to thirty-one babies in Latvia).

"Non-citizens" residing in the country are in a discriminatory position. They continue to be deprived of a range of social, economic and political rights. Currently, independent Latvian human rights activists count about 80 differences between citizens and "non-citizens". "Non-citizens", in particular, do not have the right to elect and be elected, hold positions in the civil and military service, be judges, etc. In this regard, the elections to the Saeima of Latvia took place on 1 October 2022 in the absence of a universal suffrage right and with the continued "long-term deficit of democracy" (as noted in PACE and OSCE reports back in 2002 and 2006 respectively).

The topic of "non-citizenship" in Latvia is given considerable attention by Latvian Russian-speaking NGOs, primarily the Latvian Human Rights Committee (LHRC). It works systematically with human rights institutions and other interested structures, prepares alternative reports on the human rights situation to relevant international organizations. This activity is traditionally criticized by local authorities being reflected in the SSS annual reports.

The Latvian authorities promote discriminatory initiatives against the citizens of the Russian Federation along with the denial of the rights of "non-citizens". According to the amendments to the Immigration Law adopted by the Saeima in 2022-2023, residents of the Republic of Latvia from among former "non-citizens" and Latvian citizens who received Russian citizenship after 2003, (about 17,000 people fall under this category) in order to retain permanent residence permits are required to undergo a test of knowledge of the state language within a short period of time (the majority of the certificates of knowledge issued by state authorities have been revoked), to prove that they have a monthly income of at least 600 euros, and to fill out questionnaires with provocative content, proposing to recognize the "annexation" of Crimea, to condemn Russia's "military invasion" of Ukraine, and to approve the dismantling of Soviet monuments in Latvia. In addition, the fee for taking the exam and submitting the commission's opinion was raised to 70 euros. This is five times higher than the usual fee for such actions. Considering that many of those who were forced to reconfirm their residence permits are elderly, usually receive small pensions, have no property, and have relatives in Russia, their future fate raises the most serious concerns.

Of particular concern is the threat announced by the OCMA to deport those who fail to pass all the "filtration" procedures (from 2 December 2023, those who failed to register for the exams; from 28 March 2024, those who failed after two attempts). From 2 September 2023, the OCMA has already started sending notices

to several thousand Russians to leave the country within three months, despite the authorities' rhetoric about their intention to "soften the regime".⁶²²

According to human rights activist Elizaveta Krivtsova (Social Democratic Party "Harmony"), more than 300 people have joined her class action lawsuit before the Constitutional Court of Latvia for invalidation of these radical amendments. The active phase of the trial will take place between September 2023 and March 2024. According to her forecasts, the probability of a decision in favor of the Russians exists, however, Russian citizens who refuse to pass the language test risk losing their permanent residency status, their minimum social package and access to free healthcare.

In January 2023, LRU members Yulia Sokhina and Vladimir Buzayev sent letters to several international organizations (OSCE, Council of Europe, UN) and major international NGOs, including Amnesty International, about the threatened expulsion of thousands of Russian citizens.

All these measures were not fruitless. In early September 2023, the Latvian Ministry of the Interior suggested postponing the implementation of the discriminatory immigration law for several years, allowing Russians to obtain a "temporary" residence permit until the necessary procedures were completed. On 14 September 2023, the Saeima approved the proposed amendments easing the requirements for persons with Russian citizenship. According to the document, Russian citizens who failed to pass the exam, as well as those who did not register for the exam "for a valid reason", would be able to apply for a temporary residence permit for a period of two years, while retaining access to the same social package and public services. During this time, they were required to pass the Latvian language test.⁶²³ This was allegedly done for fear of a strong international reaction to mass expulsions. The Latvian authorities appear to be lacking sufficient resources and officials to implement the discriminatory law, which has had a significant impact on the decision. Maira Roze, head of the Office of Citizenship

⁶²² <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/19092023-posolstvo-rossii-nablyudaet-za-situatsiyey-s-deportatsiyey-rossiyan-iz-latvii/>

⁶²³ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/14092023-seym-latvii-vvel-dvukhletnyuyu-otsrochku-dlya-ne-sdavshikh-yazykovoy-ekzamen-rossiyan/>

and Migration Affairs, admitted that the office only counts 46 employees. In order to individually consider the cases of Russians permanently residing in Latvia, who have not submitted documents to confirm residence permit (and as of September 2023 there are about six thousands of such people), giving each at least four working days (studying documents, collecting information from databases, composing a legal document with the opinion of the agency), all employees must set aside other duties and deal only with this two full working years.⁶²⁴

International universal and regional human rights mechanisms have published more than 50 recommendations on this serious problem, to include those related to a simplified naturalization procedure, grant of voting rights to "non-citizens", and the entire package of language rights of national minorities. However, the official Riga continues to ignore all numerous recommendations.

Latvia has never signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of November 5, 1992; it only ratified the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) in 2005 with two reservations that significantly limit the effect of Conventional provisions. Besides, an additional declaration adopted by the Latvian parliament on the ratified FCNM, separately stipulates that "non-citizens" are not subjects of the said Convention, meaning that only Latvian citizens can be recognized as representatives of national minorities.

The UN human rights treaty bodies have also been made aware of the issues of "non-citizens" in Latvia. Thus, the Committee against Torture, even though upon the whole in December 2019 it welcomed the progress Latvia achieved in addressing the issue of statelessness, at the same time expressed its concern about the fact that the law granting automatic citizenship to children of non-citizens does not cover all minor non-citizens⁶²⁵. In 2018, The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination also expressed its concerns over the education reform and

⁶²⁴ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230911-rusofoby-sdali-nazad-popytka-vydavit-grazhdan-rossii-iz-latvii-provalilas/>

⁶²⁵ Committee against Torture. Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Australia. December 2019 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fLVA%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

the remaining problem of non-citizens. Experts recommended that Latvian authorities take the necessary measures to ensure that its language policy and laws do not create direct or indirect discrimination of the population⁶²⁶. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has noted that in 2021 discrimination against non-citizens, persisted in the country; according to its data, that year, the number of non-citizens in Latvia was about 209 thousand⁶²⁷.

In the context of the compulsory derussification policy, it is becoming more notable that the authorities are actively narrowing the sphere of application of non-official languages. The Latvian language is being strenuously promoted as the only language allowed for communication with authorities, topographical signs and other inscriptions, as well as identity documents.

It should be noted that Russian is the second most common and used for communication language in Latvia after the state one. According to the latest population census (2011), Russian is the native language for 37.7 per cent of Latvia's population. According to the Central Statistical Bureau latest data (2017), about 78 per cent of Latvians speak Russian as a foreign language. Meanwhile, according to the surveys conducted in 2019 for the State of the Tongue in Latvia in 2016-2020 report, 96 per cent of Latvian respondents confirmed to have a command of the Russian language.

Despite all the efforts by the Latvian authorities, the share of Russian-speaking residents is declining just slowly: This trend is typical for all regions, except for Latgale (Latvia's south-east region with the highest proportion of Russian-speaking population), where Russian is native to 54.5 per cent of the population. The concentration of Russian speakers in Riga also remains significant – about 56 per cent of the inhabitants.

⁶²⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 19th to 21st periodic reports of Netherlands. September 2018
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLVA%2fCO%2f6-12&Lang=ru

⁶²⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 2nd periodic report of Czech Republic. March 2021
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/LVA/CO/2&Lang=Ru

The 2012 referendum on giving the Russian language the status of a second state language can be considered the most recent attempt to legitimize it in the country. 273,347 people (24.88 per cent of the participants) voted "in favour". The opinion of the 15 per cent of (then) "non-citizens" who were deprived of the right to vote even on such a significant issue still remained "outside the scope" of the survey. The Russian language expectedly received significant support in Latgale – 55.6 per cent (in Daugavpils, region's capital – 85.2 per cent, in the Zilupe region bordering on Russia – 90.3 per cent). Thus, Russian still has the legal status of a foreign language in the country.

The discriminatory language policy of the official Riga is built around the exclusive need to preserve the Latvian language and culture as the basis of the Latvian nation. The use of the Latvian language is handled by the State Language Center (SLC), whose inspections were dubbed the "language inquisition" in the Russian-speaking environment. According to the latest SLC report, 2,255 inspections were carried out in 2021 (2061 inspections in 2020), 531 proceedings were initiated on administrative offenses (530 proceedings in 2020), 517 people were fined. Over 60 per cent of all cases on this issue are related to the state language underuse in the discharge of professional or official duties. Through the Friend of the Language app, in operation since 2018 and actively promoted by the local authorities, only 58 reports of language violations were submitted (136 reports in 2020).

The Latvian authorities position the Russian language as the main threat to the development and even the very existence of the state language. The State Language Policy Guidelines for 2021-2027 approved on 25 August 2021 cites addressing the consequences of the "Soviet occupation" in the societal linguistic behaviour, including the allegedly unreasonable demand for knowledge of the Russian language on the labor market, among the main tasks. In addition, it is noted that children must be given an opportunity to study one of the EU official languages as a second foreign language at school (English is the first, as a rule). It is noteworthy that due to a lack of teachers, some educational institutions may

offer only Russian to study as a foreign language, and there is still sufficient demand for such lessons among the youth.

Since the launch of the Russian special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine, abandoning the use of the Russian language has occupied a central place in the rhetoric of the country's leadership. It has been repeatedly emphasized that "Latvian core value – the state language – needs to be fostered more than ever" in the current geopolitical conditions. It is no surprise that this is supposed to be done at the expense of the oppressed Russian language. In fact, upright propaganda of discrimination on the linguistic grounds has been launched in the country.

On this basis, the Latvian government is systematically working to force the Russian language out of all spheres of public life in the country. In June 2023, the Saeima adopted amendments to the law on election campaigns conducted only in the state language. At the same time, the draft law on restricting bilingualism announced by the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Latvia Jānis Bordāns (The Conservatives party) in August 2022, which provided for restrictions on the use of the Russian language at work and in public places, was perceived by the public as a populist step and remained at the approval stage. This was followed by another initiative from the same party, proposing that Latvian should be the sole state language. The initiative also proposed to completely opt out of the Russian language, including in the private sector (the bill ensuring status of Latvian as only state language in Latvia).

In May 2022, the public association for the Latvian language launched the campaign of derusification of Latvia under the leadership of poet Liāna Langa, the chairwoman of the organization's board. In July 2023, she reported on the results of her activities: every regional government and municipality of Latvia's major cities had eliminated the Russian versions of their web pages. The Russian-language version of the President's website has also been blocked since 24 August 2022. In addition, a number of ministries of (Culture, Agriculture, Economics, Justice, Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Education and

Science, and Welfare) also refused to communicate with the public in Russian, citing the special military operation as a reason for doing so.

The Latvian authorities actually eliminated the Russian-speaking educational space through a comprehensive education reform (transfer of schools and kindergartens to the Latvian language of instruction, development and implementation of new educational content, streamlined school network, a ban on teaching in Russian in private universities).

The initiatives to finally eliminate Russian-language education were promoted at an accelerated pace in 2021, considering that 1 September 2021 was the end date of the school reform transitional period. This implies almost complete teaching in the state language in all basic and secondary schools starting from the 2021/2022 academic year already: grades 10-12 were taught only in Latvian, for grades 7-9 a new language proportion is introduced of 80% to 20%. Grades 10-12 were taught exclusively in Latvian. In grades 7-9, a new language ratio of 80% to 20% was introduced.

The discriminatory actions of the Latvian authorities for the "derussification" of the educational space have the support of the judiciary. For example, in 2019 and 2020, the Constitutional Court of Latvia recognized as constitutional the provisions on the derussification of education and the introduction of compulsory instruction in the Latvian language at various levels of education.

As a result, Russian-speaking residents were forced to turn to international bodies, as they had no way of defending their interests within the country. The complaints of parents of schoolchildren of national minorities concerning this reform are currently being considered by the European Court of Human Rights. With the help of the LRU, about 350 individual complaints of parents of schoolchildren and preschoolers concerning linguistic discrimination of children within the framework of the above-mentioned reform have been sent to this body. A collective complaint filed by compatriots about the threatened abolition of education in minority languages has also been submitted to the Human Rights

Committee. According to human rights defenders, the above-mentioned complaints were already in the final stage of consideration in May 2023.

In September 2022, the United Nations Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on minority issues Fernand de Warenne, Special Rapporteur on the right to education Farida Shaheed and Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights Alexandra Xanthaki sent a request to the Latvian government criticizing the conversion of all schools to Latvian and requesting comments on the process of discussing this decision and plans for its implementation. According to the Special Rapporteurs, the amendments adopted in Latvia "severely restrict education in minority languages" (the appeal lists Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Hebrew, Lithuanian and Estonian) and "contradict international human rights standards, including the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of language and the Convention on the Rights of the Child". The experts also criticized the Latvian authorities for the way the process of reviewing and discussing the draft law on switching school education to Latvian was conducted. In particular, they were concerned that discussion of the initiative "lacked effective and meaningful participation of affected minorities". Calls to wait for the consideration of complaints against the draft law by the European Court of Human Rights and the Committee on Human Rights were also ignored.⁶²⁸

In 2022, under the pretext of the Ukrainian crisis, the Latvian ruling circles decided to force the conversion of educational institutions to the state language, accelerating the progress of initiatives aimed at the final elimination of Russian-language education. Amendments to the Education Law providing for a full transition to teaching in Latvian in kindergartens from 1 September 2023 and in schools from 1 September 2025, were approved in the final reading on 29 September 2022. Grades 1, 4 and 7 will also begin to study in the state language exclusively from 1 September 2023. The language and culture of national

⁶²⁸ Press release of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the request of the Special Rapporteurs on minority issues, on the right to education and on cultural rights. 8 February 2023, <https://web.dev.ohchr.un-icc.cloud/en/press-releases/2023/02/latvia-un-experts-concerned-about-severe-curtailement-minority-language>

minorities will be only available as interest education programs subsidized by the government or a specific local government.

In addition, in July 2023, Latvian Minister for Education Anda Čakša called on Latvian law enforcement authorities to thoroughly look into the actions of public activists spreading information about Russian distance school programs in the Internet space, citing that this could pose a threat to national security.

The overall situation with regard to education in the Russian language is extremely unfavorable. The proportion of the Latvian language in kindergartens has been increased since 1 September 2019 already, for children of five years and older it is the main means of communication. On 14 May 2020, The Saeima of Latvia adopted amendments to the Education Law, according to which all municipal preschool educational institutions are required to provide educational programs in the Latvian language.

Higher education in the Russian language is currently unavailable in Latvia's public universities as well. Russian Philology programs at the Latvian and Daugavpils universities where certain disciplines are taught in Russian, is the only exception. Russian-language streams in private universities have been stopped since 1 January 2019, studying is only possible in the EU official languages.

The ban on admission of students to Russian-language programs in private higher education institutions, enacted as of 1 January 2019, remains in force despite the fact that on 28 June 2023, the Constitutional Court of Latvia declared the amendments to the Law on Higher Education, which prohibit the teaching of foreign languages in private educational institutions, except for certain programs in EU languages, inconsistent with the country's Constitution and ordered the Saeima to revise them by 1 July 2024.

On 21 November 2022, the Ministry of Education and Science, in order to achieve the goal of "fostering Latvian core value – the national language – and a strong Latvia in the common family of the European Union", announced plans to require EU language only to be studied as the second foreign language in all educational institutions starting from the 2026/2027 academic year. It would be

impossible to study Russian as a second foreign language⁶²⁹. This initiative was documented in September 2023, when the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia submitted for public consultation amendments to the government regulations on the gradual abolition of teaching of Russian as a second foreign language in schools. As expected, the amendments would require schools to offer students one of the official languages of the European Union or the European Economic Area as a second foreign language from the 2026/27 school year. The Russian language is not included in this list.⁶³⁰

At the same time, according to the Ministry of Education of Latvia, Russian is taught as a second foreign language in almost half of Latvian schools.⁶³¹

Russian-speaking teachers found themselves in dire straits. Subject teachers of national minority schools have to undergo constant checks for compliance with the top level of Latvian language proficiency which became more stringent after the start of the Ukrainian crisis and decision to eliminate Russian-language education. For 2018-2022 The SLC identified 396 teachers (114 for the period from January to April 2022 only) who do not speak the state language at a proper level.

Despite the shortage of Latvian-speaking teachers, the Latvian authorities are carrying out the "derusification" of educational institutions and their conversion to the Latvian language. In May 2023, Ivars Balamovskis, the head of the Ministry of Education, stated that the lack of teachers endangers the transition to Latvian in Latvian schools. In this regard, the example of Riga is illustrative. Here, educational institutions are adapting their schedules and teaching staff to the changes adopted in 2022, which stipulate education in the Latvian language as of 1 September 2023. Twelve schools of national minorities in the capital city pointed out the need to hire a teacher of the Latvian language, and 14 - a teacher of mathematics. There was also the lack of music teachers. At the same time, only 68 per cent of the schools in the capital city said that they had found a teacher for the

⁶²⁹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/21112022-v-ministerstve-obrazovaniya-latvii-nazvali-sroki-otkaza-ot-izucheniya-russkogo-yazyka/>

⁶³⁰ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/14092023-v-latvii-predlozhili-zapretit-russkiy-yazyk-v-shkolakh/>

⁶³¹ Ibid.

first grade. In Riga, programs for the education of national minorities are implemented in 51 schools. There are 17 schools in which only basic education programs for national minorities are implemented.⁶³²

In August 2023, the Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees also noted the difficulties with the transition of education to Latvian language. According to Inga Vanaga, the head of the union, there is a serious shortage of teachers in Latvia. There is also a big problem with the transition of educational institutions to the state language. There are still almost 1.5 thousand vacant positions for teachers. She also states: “This issue is the result of other issues that have not been addressed over the years: teachers' rights, salaries, teaching materials, violence in the workplace. All of these have contributed to making teaching a discredited profession”. Inga Vanaga also pointed out that national minorities should have the opportunity to preserve their language and culture. This also applies to the Russian-speaking population. “People for whom this is a value cannot be disrespected We'll see how it works in practice. War in the neighborhood is absolutely unacceptable, but we must respect the native speakers of Russian, as well as of other languages.”⁶³³

On 31 August 2023, a protest took place in front of the Saeima building in Riga against the transition to Latvian-only education and the termination of general education programs for national minorities. The action was organized by the Latvian Association for Support of Schools with Russian Language of Instruction. The association stressed that Latvian authorities should ensure that children are educated in their native language.⁶³⁴

There have also been discriminatory public statements against Russian speakers in Latvia. Such open racist judgments cannot happen without the authorities' tacit consent. In early August 2023, for example, the journalist Elita Veidemane stated that teachers who were unable to learn Latvian "due to their

⁶³² <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/25052023-defitsit-uchiteley-postavil-pod-ugrozu-perekhod-obucheniya-na-gosyazyk-v-shkolakh-latvii/>

⁶³³ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/31082023-profsoyuz-latvii-prizval-dat-natsmeshinstvam-vozmozhnost-sokhranit-svoy-yazyk/>

⁶³⁴ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/31082023-v-rige-prokhorit-piket-protiv-perekhoda-na-obuchenie-na-latyshskom-yazyke/>

narrow-mindedness" should be fired. She described as "non-Soviet" or "mentally retarded"⁶³⁵ those who do not speak Latvian but have lived in the country for a long time. Given the Latvian authorities' policy of destroying the Russian language, it is not surprising that this discriminatory statement was never followed by the authorities' condemnation. Furthermore, there was no information about any actions taken against the person making racist remarks.

The trend to oust non-state languages (primarily Russian) has become quite noticeable in other spheres of public life in Latvia. A consistent policy to oust the Russian language from the media has been pursued. Over the years, regulations have been adopted to increase the proportion of broadcasts and publications in Latvian and EU official languages, while limiting radio and television broadcasts, as well as publications in Russian.

Pursuant to the new law on administrative punishments for offences in the sphere of management, public order and use of the official language, since 1 July 2020, liability has been introduced for demonstration of "serious disrespect to the official language", the conclusion of contracts with employees who do not know Latvian, and unwillingness to ensure the use of Latvian language at work. Printed promotional products must be circulated among Latvian citizens in Latvian only. An exception is possible if a citizen has agreed to receive materials in other languages.

In spite of the critical situation in healthcare system and significant problems with the organization of the vaccination campaign, this restriction had a great impact on the mass-scale vaccination in the country in 2021, especially among elderly people (this age group constitutes a significant part of Latvia's Russian-speaking population). The authorities did not even agree to temporarily suspend the force of the law, thereby limiting our compatriots' access to vital information.

On 16 June 2022, the Political Parties Law was also amended to make possible suspension of the activities of political associations for "denying crimes or

⁶³⁵ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/07082023-latviyskiy-publitsist-rekomendovala-uchitelyam-ne-vladeyushchim-gosyazykom-ukhazhivat-za-skotom/>

expressing support for undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of democratic governments." Despite absent country names in the wording, this innovation is clearly directed first and foremost against those political parties that represent the interests of Latvia's Russian-speaking inhabitants who are in favor of maintaining ties with Russia.

Meanwhile, a draft law on the financing of election campaigning in the state language only was adopted in the second reading.

The actions in the linguistic field by the Latvian authorities who take active measures to create a monolingual society, have been repeatedly criticized by international human rights mechanisms. According to an Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities opinion adopted back in 2018, the Latvian leadership's language policy leads to a limited space for the use of national minorities' languages⁶³⁶. In particular, the comprehensive education reform in the country actually serves to eliminate bilingual schools and abandon the use of the Russian language in educational institutions of all levels. Russian was named the second most spoken language among the population. According to the 2017 CBS study, it was spoken by 37.7% of the population (Latvian – 61.3%)⁶³⁷.

The AC FCCNM also pointed out that the Latvian authorities' educational reform puts national minority students in a certainly disadvantageous position in terms of academic achievements, which in turn may adversely affect their ability to successfully integrate into the socio-economic life of society⁶³⁸.

The opinion of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission of the Council of Europe) on educational reform in Latvia of June 2020 also pointed out problems in the field of education for national minorities. In the Commission's opinion, the issue of introducing Latvian as the main language in kindergartens should be reconsidered, since teaching in the

⁶³⁶ Third opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities for Latvia adopted on February 25, 2018. <https://rm.coe.int/3rd-op-latvia-en/16808d891d>

⁶³⁷ <https://www.csb.gov.lv/en/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/search-in-theme/2747-latvian-mother-tongue-608-population-latvia>

⁶³⁸ Third opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities for Latvia adopted on February 25, 2018. <https://rm.coe.int/3rd-op-latvia-en/16808d891d>

native language is important for preserving identity and linguistic diversity in society. It was also noted that private schools should have the right to implement programs in minority languages, which is prohibited by the Latvian authorities' legislative innovations.

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights also expressed concern over the measures taken by the official Riga to Latvianize education. In particular, it noted that this language policy adopted by the authorities may have a discriminatory impact on persons belonging to minorities, especially in the fields of education, employment, and access to services. It was also noted that the Committee remained concerned that the amendments to the Education Law and Cabinet Decree No. 716 of 21 November 2018 had a discriminatory effect on minority groups and created unreasonable restrictions on the teaching and learning in minority languages, both in public and private schools of the pre-school and primary education system⁶³⁹.

The resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Latvia of 3 March 2021 also draws attention to discrimination against national minorities in Latvia⁶⁴⁰. The document states that "cases of inflammatory statements by public figures have not led to the authorities taking sufficient action, creating an impression of impunity and ambivalence, thus affecting negatively the interethnic climate. Restrictive policies and other pressures driven by a political agenda... are particularly evident in the education system, the media, and with regard to the use of national minority languages." It was also noted that the extensive application of language requirements in Latvia adversely affects the possibility for non-native speakers of Latvian of accessing many positions within the public service.

⁶³⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 2nd periodic report of Czech Republic. March 2021

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/LVA/CO/2&Lang=Ru

⁶⁴⁰ Resolution CM/ResCMN(2021)9 on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Latvia. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 March 2021 at the 1397th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies. https://search.coe.int/cm/pages/result_details.aspx?objectid=0900001680a14111

In July 2022, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Kairat Abdrakhmanov sent a letter to the Saeima of Latvia regarding a new government proposal to completely transfer schools to the Latvian language of instruction from 2025. He pointed out to possible violations of international law in the implementation of this initiative and recalled the importance for children to receive education in their mother tongue, as well as need to take into account the opinion of national minority members in implementing reforms. The response of the RL Ministry of Justice, illustrative in this regard, mentions that there is supposedly no evidence that the Russians in Latvia are a national minority (they are supposedly a group of "Soviet era migrants"), also noting insufficient dominance of the state language in the country.

Although there are no formal restrictions in Latvia on participation in political life and public administration (with the exception of "non-citizens"), nevertheless, the current version of the Elections to the Saeima Law prohibits persons who were members of certain Soviet organizations (State Security Committee, Latvian Communist Party, International Front of Workers of the Latvian SSR, etc.) after 13 January 1991, to participate in them. This makes possible to put pressure on the radical left forces (for this reason, for example, cochairman of the Russian Union of Latvia party (RUL) Tatjana Ždanoka cannot participate in the elections). Also, since 2013, there has been a procedure of deputy mandate divestment for insufficient knowledge of the state language (it was applied to mayors of the cities of Zilupe and Daugavpils, as well as several deputies from predominantly "Russian" self-governments).

The Latvian authorities took advantage of the Russian special military operation to begin the widespread introduction of the culture of "cancelling Russia". In June 2022, a request approved by the State Language Center was submitted to Riga City Council to rename the streets in Riga named after Russian scientists and artists. There is no doubt that this initiative will be implemented, particularly due to the fact that Latvian authorities are sympathetic to the "civic activism" of nationalist forces that present such ideas. In July 2022, Public

Memory Center society collected 78 names "glorifying" the USSR and Russia which should be changed. Most of them are in Riga (16 names), in Daugavpils (9 names) and in Jūrmala (6 names). In addition to names of Russian personalities and names connected with Russia, the list also includes many names of Soviet-era Latvian writers and public figures⁶⁴¹

On 19 June 2023, President Egils Levits published an address to the Seimas, in which he called for the adoption of a law on renaming toponyms introduced by the communist totalitarian regime and in the course of the Russification policy. As of September 2023, this initiative has not yet been put into practice.

Russophobia is deeply rooted among Latvian politicians, who have allowed themselves to make discriminatory statements about Russians. Inter-ethnic confrontation was often aggravated by such statements. Thus, on 26 May 2022 Seima member (National Bloc) Janis Iesalnieks noted at a parliamentary session that "there are two societies in Latvia – Latvians and occupiers", and "as long as the occupiers walk on our land and bless their monuments, our children will live in hate." In July 2022, Inese Vaidere, member of the European Parliament from the National Alliance party, in her post on social networking site expressed her indignation about the fact that flight announcements at Riga airport are made in three languages – Latvian, English and Russian, and the website of the airport has a Russian version. Andrejs Faibuševičs, a deputy of the National Alliance, banned speaking Russian in his bar in the Russian-speaking city of Daugavpils. In addition, he published a racist post about Latvian boxer Mairis Briedis, who speaks Russian. The deputy wrote in the publication that if Mairis Briedis did not know Russian, "he would have remained a normal Latvian, not turned into a vatnik. The problem is the ability to consume Russian information. Figuratively speaking, walking through a pigsty, it's quite difficult not to get your feet dirty"⁶⁴². On 24 August 2022 President of Latvia Egils Levits mentioned the rise of "a part of Russian society disloyal to the state" as a negative impact of the "war in

⁶⁴¹ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220715/issledovateli-sostavili-spisok-ulits-proslavlyayuschikh-sssr-22248323.html>

⁶⁴² <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220724/kult-otmeny-izobreli-v-latvii-latviya-davno-otmenila-svoikh-russkikh-22310354.html>

Ukraine" and hence, "the task is to subdue and isolate it." On 16 December 2022 A.Kiršteins, a Saeima member, proposed deporting 250,000 Russian-speaking residents from the country. Earlier, on his social network page, he spoke out that the Russian nation does not exist, and "the Russian language arose as a dialect when the Mongol-Tatars tried to speak Ukrainian."⁶⁴³

Such Russophobic manifestations (as well as rampant ignorance, as in the case of Alexander Kirshteins and others) did not arise out of the blue. Data gathered by international universal and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms have repeatedly revealed the spread of intolerance against several groups in Latvia. Thus, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, referring to a Latvian Center for Human Rights 2016 survey among NGO employees, migrants and foreign students, indicated that almost 68% of respondents either became victims and 33 per cent witnesses of hate incidents or discriminatory manifestations, or heard of such cases. 13 per cent of respondents were victims, or heard about other victims of attacks. According to respondents, hate incidents were motivated by race (36 per cent), ethnicity/xenophobia (25 per cent), language (22 per cent), religion (6 per cent). Over 40 per cent of thirdcountry nationals reported to have been discriminated against, for example, when contacting government bodies, police, medical institutions, when passing through border checkpoints, as well as in the street and public transport⁶⁴⁴.

ECRI also pointed out to gaps in Latvian legislation concerning the prohibition of racial discrimination, as well as the public expression or incitement of hatred, insults based on race, language, religion or ethnic origin. The Commission noted that Islamophobic rhetoric strengthened in socio-political discussions in Latvia⁶⁴⁵.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted that "unofficial data show a higher number of hate crimes and hate speech than are

⁶⁴³ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/16122022-v-posolstve-rossii-v-latvii-raskritikovali-initsiativu-deputata-deportirovat-russkoyazychnykh/>

⁶⁴⁴ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Latvia (fifth monitoring cycle) adopted on December 4, 2018, and published on March 5, 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-latvia/1680934a9f>

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid.

officially reported" and was concerned "at reports that victims of hate crimes are unwilling to report crimes to the authorities." It also pointed out to the use of hate speech by politicians in relation to the upcoming election, as well as on the Internet⁶⁴⁶. Latvian authorities regularly prove in practice this observation made by the CERD. The statement by Minister of Defense of Latvia A.Pabriks is an example hereto. Amid the coronavirus infection, instead of treating those who came to the Liberators of Riga monument on May 9, 2020 to pay tribute to the Red Army soldiers, he proposed to oblige them to pay for the treatment of "those whom they surrounded".

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about the absence of a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and policy framework aimed at ensuring equality and non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural domains. The CESCR also noted the reported prevalence of prejudice and discrimination based on colour, language, religion, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation and gender identity that hinder disadvantaged and marginalized groups' access to economic, social and cultural rights⁶⁴⁷.

Discriminatory attitude towards migrants is reported in Latvia as well. Many international human rights mechanisms noted this problem. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees representation for the Nordic and Baltic countries has repeatedly drawn attention to the need to review Latvia's refugee policy on the border with Belarus. On 9 August 2022 the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights sent a letter to the RL Ministry of the Interior where she called on the Latvian authorities to "ensure the access of representatives of civil society, international organizations and the media to the border areas in order to provide adequate humanitarian assistance to people in need", as well as "protect borders in a manner consistent with the country's obligations under the

⁶⁴⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 6th to 12th periodic reports of Latvia. August https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLVA%2fCO%2f6-12&Lang=ru

⁶⁴⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 2nd periodic report of Czech Republic. March 2021 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/LVA/CO/2&Lang=Ru

European Convention on Human Rights." The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights pointed out that there were repeated cases of push-backs of illegal migrants beyond the borders in Latvia. At the same time, it is noted that Latvian legislation allows border guards to expel illegal migrants from the country to the countries from which they have entered the territory of Latvia. Moreover, it was noted that one migrant died at the Belarusian-Latvian border due to prolonged stay in the cold in winter, referring to the data of the International Organization for Migration.⁶⁴⁸

In July 2022 Amnesty International also expressed concern about the intention of Latvian authorities to extend the state of emergency in areas near the eastern border, which allows denying asylum to refugees and migrants. Experts reproached the Latvian authorities for the fact that people trying to enter the country from the territory of Belarus (mainly Afghani and Iraqi citizens) faced stiff resistance from law enforcement agencies of the Baltic state.

In August 2021, the ECHR ruled that the Latvian authorities had an obligation to respect the basic human rights of refugees, namely to provide them with food, temporary shelter and medical care, in response to the migrants' complaints. On 6 February 2023, the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights sent a letter to the Latvian Ministry of the Interior calling for ensuring respect for the human rights of refugees seeking protection at the border with Belarus and putting an end to repressions.

Notably, the discriminatory actions of the Latvian authorities are confirmed by real examples. In mid-December 2022 Belarusian border guards found a refugee who was forcefully expelled out of the Latvian territory. According to the foreigner, he was on the Latvian territory and wanted to get to Germany. After being detained by the Latvian police, he was taken to a forest and left on the border with Belarus. According to the Belarusian Border Committee, the refugee said that

⁶⁴⁸ Fundamental Rights Report 2023 http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

he had stayed in Latvia with his brother. However, his relative died in a Latvian hospital, where he was taken after being beaten by local police officers⁶⁴⁹.

All of the above indicates that Latvian authorities deliberately indulge radical manifestations of neo-Nazism; by continuing violent revision of historical events and the glorification of Latvian legionnaires under false pretexts of their alleged participation in the "national liberation movement", Latvian authorities have actually set a course to put Nazi ideology into practice. In addition, it is clear that the Russian and Russian-speaking population of Latvia, primarily "non-citizens", are discriminated against on the grounds of race.

⁶⁴⁹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/14122022-belorusskie-pogranichniki-nashli-bezhentsy-na-granitse-s-latviy/>

Lithuania

Official Vilnius explicitly pursues a policy of falsifying the history of World War II and equating Nazi collaborators with national heroes, which contradicts the conclusions of the Nuremberg Tribunal. The Lithuanian state policy of falsifying the history of the Second World War is based on the idea that the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany are equally responsible for unleashing the Second World War. The authorities are making efforts to openly justify the crimes of Nazi collaborators known as Forest Brothers. In the last two years, this line has been supplemented by hatred of Russians and everything associated with the USSR and Russia, including monuments in honour of Soviet soldiers who died liberating Lithuania from fascism.

Until 2022, the country's representatives abstained from voting on the UN General Assembly resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" every year (with the exception of 2011, when Lithuania openly voted "against"), following the EU's foreign policy guidelines. In the December 2022 vote on the next draft resolution on this issue, introduced by Russia together with a group of co-sponsors, Lithuania, again in line with Brussels and Washington, voted against the document condemning efforts to glorify Nazism, thus publicly confirming its support for Nazism.

The Lithuanian authorities at the highest level are regularly expressing revisionist assessments and falsifying the historical facts. Thus, for example, on 7 May 2020, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe, the presidents of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, Gitanas Nausėda, Egils Levits and Kersti Kaljulaid, adopted a joint statement in which they described the liberation of the Baltic states from the Nazis by the Red Army as an "occupation", "because one totalitarian regime was replaced by another". A video message published in June 2021 by the leaders of the three Baltic states on the 80th anniversary of the deportations from these countries (14 June 1941) is another example. The message also attempts to develop the idea of the equal responsibility

of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.⁶⁵⁰

Along with parades that have been traditionally held by Lithuanian neo-Nazi organizations and right-wing forces on the occasion of national holidays on February 16 ("Lithuanian Statehood Restoration Day") and March 11 ("Lithuania's Independence Restoration Day"), following an impulse of historical revisionism, in 2022 the Republic of Lithuania set a course to demolish all the monuments to Soviet soldiers located at the burial sites of Red Army soldiers throughout the country. This policy is motivated by the desire to get rid of the "totalitarian legacy". The legal framework has been prepared accordingly: Soviet symbols are forbidden by law in Lithuania. Once the communist period of the country's history had been officially recognized as an "occupation" akin to the Nazi occupation, all objects reminiscent of that period, especially monuments, fell prey to the destructive efforts of the authorities at all levels.

On 13 December 2022, the Lithuanian Seimas majority passed a Law on De-Sovietization of Public Spaces in Lithuania, which came into force on 1 May 2023. The propaganda of "totalitarian and authoritarian regimes and their ideologies" is currently banned in the country.⁶⁵¹ The law creates an environment for the dismantling of unwanted monuments, memorial sites, as well as the renaming of street names and other toponyms.

In fact, the Lithuanian authorities used the Russian Federation's special operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilian population of Donbass as a pretext for such actions. After the beginning of the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine, a wave of vandalism swept over Lithuania, resulting in desecration of dozens of monuments, memorials and obelisks located mainly in the places of military burials. Nevertheless, none of the vandals were ever punished, although law enforcement officials reported opening investigations into the incidents.

650 The Baltic presidents came out once again with lies about Soviet deportations. The website of the project "Memory, research, justice: the legacy of the Second World War in the 21st century". June 15, 2021 <https://remembrance.ru/2021/06/15/pribaltijskie-prezidenty-vnov-vystupili-s-lozhju-o-sovetskih-deportacijah/>
651 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221227-pravitelstvo-nedoveriya-v-litve-pravyashchaya-koalitsiya-stremitelno-teryat-populyarnost/>

Apparently, the Lithuanian authorities are not interested in investigating such crimes and are ready to turn a blind eye to them since such actions are fully in line with their own political course. One example is the case of the monument to a Soviet soldier in Kurkliai, Anykščiai district, which was desecrated by vandals on 10 April 2022. On 18 May 2022, the Utena district prosecutor's office made a decision to stop the pretrial investigation "due to the lack of corpus delicti". This was facilitated by the fact that the monument had already been dismantled on May 5, as decided by the local government.⁶⁵²

In addition, in April 2022, the Seimas of Lithuania approved amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences prohibiting the public display of the St. George ribbon, which was considered to be a symbol of the "totalitarian regime" that "promoted military aggression".⁶⁵³

Vandalism against the Soviet monuments is condoned and even encouraged by the leaders of the Lithuanian state. For example, President of the country Gitanas Nausėda (who lived almost half of his life in the USSR, more precisely in the Lithuanian SSR as a part of the Soviet Union) unequivocally made it clear that he was not going to "put up with vestiges of Soviet propaganda".⁶⁵⁴ Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė, who in her distant childhood also studied at a Soviet school, declared that she did not understand "why monuments were considered to be some kind of heritage and what kind of heritage it was".⁶⁵⁵ Simonas Kairys, Lithuanian Minister of Culture (the 16th Minister of Culture in about 30 years of the country's independence) also made his mark along these lines. On 19 April 2022, he signed an order that allowed local governments to determine the future of

652 <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220519/v-litve-zakryli-delo-ob-oskvernenii-pamyatnika-sovetskomu-soldatu-23254639.html>

653 www.lt.sputniknews.ru/20220419/seym-litvy-zapretil-publichnoe-ispolzovanie-georgievskoy-lenty-22788067.html

654 <https://ru.respublika.lt/ru/naujienos/ru/politika/ne-miritsja-s-perezitkami-propagandi-i-razziganija-vojni-gnayseda-o-sovetskix-pamjatnikax/>

655 [https://www.lrt.lt/ru/novosti/17/1660229/evrei-litvy-osuzhdaiut-oskvernenie-memoriala-pamiati-zhertv-kholokosta#:~:text=%D0%95%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B9%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F%20%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%9B%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B2%D1%8B%20\(%D0%95%D0%9E%D0%9B\)%20%D0%B2,%D0%BC%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%20%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%B2%D1%8B%D1%85%20%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%B8%D0%B9%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%20%D0%B2%20%D0%9F%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%80%D1%8F%D0%B9](https://www.lrt.lt/ru/novosti/17/1660229/evrei-litvy-osuzhdaiut-oskvernenie-memoriala-pamiati-zhertv-kholokosta#:~:text=%D0%95%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B9%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F%20%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%9B%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B2%D1%8B%20(%D0%95%D0%9E%D0%9B)%20%D0%B2,%D0%BC%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%20%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%B2%D1%8B%D1%85%20%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%B8%D0%B9%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%20%D0%B2%20%D0%9F%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%80%D1%8F%D0%B9)

Soviet monuments in cemeteries that "give off aggression and symbolize war".⁶⁵⁶ At the same time Lithuanians make a formal reservation that the graves of the fallen and the tombstones will remain untouched, because, they say, Vilnius undertakes to fulfil the relevant provisions of the relevant Geneva Conventions. In practice, however, this is not always the case.

In May 2022, the Lithuanian authorities demolished a monument to Soviet soldiers in Palanga, whose mayor Ėdarūnas Vaitkus grandly called this abominable act "a new page in the history of the city". The obelisk stood on the grave of the Red Army soldiers, but that did not stop its destruction. The municipal authorities explained their actions by the fact that the hammer and sickle on the monument made a bad combination with the nearby church building. However, the most likely reason is that in the immediate vicinity of the monument is a monument to Jonas Žemaitis, who served in the Nazi punitive unit "the Lithuanian Territorial Defense Force" during World War II, and later led nationalist gangs – for all these crimes he was executed in 1954.

As a result, by July 2022, the municipal authorities of Lithuania decided to dismantle 20 monuments, memorials, obelisks and tombstones, including in the largest cities.⁶⁵⁷ It has already happened in Kaunas, where the local authorities in April demolished a monument depicting a Soviet soldier at the Aukštieji Šančiai military cemetery. The cemetery contains the graves of 5,065 soldiers and officers of several rifle corps of the 3rd Byelorussian Front's 5th Army who died in July 1944 in the battles in the area, including 12 Heroes of the Soviet Union.⁶⁵⁸ On July 4-6, 2022, the dismantling of the monument to three soldiers, the sword, as well as the red star and the eternal flame effectively destroyed the memorial to Red Army soldiers in Klaipėda.⁶⁵⁹

The campaign against the memory of the heroic deed of Lithuania's

656 <https://lrm.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/parengtos-rekomendacijos-savivaldybems-del-sovietiniu-paminklu-nukelimo>

657 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/26042022-v-kaunase-snesli-pamyatnik-na-zakhoronenii-sovetskikh-voinov/>,
<https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20221021/na-severe-litvy-snesli-sovetskie-pamyatniki-na-kladbische-u-sobora-24989599.html>

658 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/26042022-v-kaunase-snesli-pamyatnik-na-zakhoronenii-sovetskikh-voinov/>

659 <https://www.1tv.ru/news/2022-07-05/432684->

v_klaypede_nachalsya_snos_monumenta_sovetskim_voinam_kotorye_pogibli_osvobodzhdaya_litvu_ot_fashizma

liberation from the Nazis culminated in the demolition of six steles depicting Soviet soldiers from various branches of the armed forces, which were the centerpiece of the memorial at the Antakalnis Cemetery in Vilnius, the largest Red Army graveyard in Lithuania.⁶⁶⁰ Vilnius authorities decided to demolish the monument in June 2022. At a meeting of the city council, mayor Remigijus Šimašius called the monument "a militaristic monstrosity not fitting the graves".⁶⁶¹ For decades, this particular monument has been the main venue of wreath-laying ceremonies by the Russian Embassy on memorable days of World War II. On such days Russian compatriots gathered there as well. At the end of November 2022, demolition of the steles⁶⁶² began and was completed on 9 December. A call by the Human Rights Committee to the Lithuanian authorities not to destroy the memorial did not prevent its destruction. This appeal on the need to impose temporary protection measures on the memorial steles was sent to Vilnius following a complaint received by the Committee from a group of concerned Lithuanian citizens about the authorities' actions.⁶⁶³

Commenting on the actions of Vilnius authorities, who ignored the appeal of the international body, mayor Remigijus Šimašius called this act of vandalism a response to "Russian aggression" and even said that "the UN was not an institution that had the right to tell Lithuania or Vilnius whether or not the symbols of totalitarianism could be there".

In October 2022, a monument at the burial place of Soviet soldiers, representing a sculpture of a soldier with a flag in his hands, was demolished in the town of Raudone, Jurbarkas district. The remains of 190 Red Army soldiers and officers, who liberated the city from the Nazis and their henchmen in October 1944, are buried in this military cemetery.

The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation is investigating the destruction of monuments erected in memory of Red Army soldiers who died

660 <https://www.lrt.lt/ru/novosti/17/1840837/na-antakal-nissskom-kladbishche-vil-niusa-demontirovany-skul-ptury-sovetskim-voinam>

661 <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/06/08/pamyatnik/>

662 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/30112022-v-vilnyuse-nachali-demontirovat-memorial-sovetskim-voinam/>

663 <https://www.delfi.lt/ru/news/live/komitet-oon-ne-razreshil-ubrat-stely-s-antakalnissskogo-kladbischa-v-samoupravlenii-ot-planov-ne-otkazyvayutsya.d?id=91815411>

fighting the Nazis. In September 2023, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation reported that 16 criminal cases are being investigated for 143 cases of desecration, destruction or damage to war graves, monuments and memorials to Soviet soldiers. A total of 173 foreigners - citizens of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland and Ukraine - have been charged in absentia with committing these crimes.⁶⁶⁴

The consolidation of the idea of "Soviet occupation" of the Baltic states, developed within the framework of the Lithuanian state policy of falsifying the history of the Second World War, is manifested both in school curricula and in the glorification of the local postwar criminal underground. Thus, in 2022, the school administration, with the consent of the relevant authorities, took radical measures: teachers who showed "dissent" on historical issues and on the current political agenda, especially on the subject of Russia's special military operation, were dismissed⁶⁶⁵.

The policy of whitewashing and glorifying the Forest Brothers ("partisans", according to the Lithuanian interpretation) as alleged "heroes of the national liberation movement" and "fighters against the Soviet regime" continues. Groups of these "activists", numbering up to 30 thousand people, acting on the territory of Lithuania from 1944 to 1956, are responsible for killing over 25 thousand civilians, including children, women and elderly people. Most of the victims were ethnic Lithuanians. Many of the band members actively collaborated with the occupation administration of the Third Reich and were part of it, were directly involved in the Holocaust in Lithuania during World War II, when about 220 thousand Jews were killed (96% of the Jewish population living in the country at that time). Witnesses say that the Forest Brothers came from the very villages whose residents they murdered and robbed.⁶⁶⁶ After the war, the Forest Brothers continued their terrorist activities, killing not only the representatives of the Soviet government, but also

⁶⁶⁴ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/12092023-sk-rossii-zaochno-obvinil-grazhdan-stran-baltii-i-polshi-v-oskvernenii-sovetskikh-pamyatnikov/>

⁶⁶⁵ <https://news.rambler.ru/world/48627304-nashi-v-litve-apogey-rusofobii-borba-s-pisatelyami-i-vzvinchennye-tseny/>

⁶⁶⁶ <https://iz.ru/1137992/andrei-razumovskii/banditskii-fors-v-litve-proslavliaiut-lesnykh-bratev>

people who had saved Jews from Nazis during the war.⁶⁶⁷

Celebrations in honour of the Forest Brothers take place in Lithuania annually. "Scientific" papers are published, and various related memorial events are held: monuments and memorials to the Forest Brothers are installed, their remains are looked for and re-buried, memoirs of collaborators are published and disseminated, etc.

In May 2021, a monument to another Forest Brother Antanas Kraujelis, nicknamed "Siaubūnas" (meaning "beast" in Russian) was opened in one of the cemeteries of the Lithuanian capital in the presence of members of parliament and representatives of the executive branch, including Deputy Defense Minister Žilvinas Tomkus, Lieutenant General Valdemaras Rupšys, commander of the Lithuanian army, and Arūnas Bubnys, director of the LGGRTC.⁶⁶⁸ The tombstone was consecrated personally by Catholic Archbishop Gintaras Grušas.⁶⁶⁹

The director of the LGGRTC, Arūnas Bubnys, is also worth mentioning, since he is a historian with very peculiar "scientific" interests. In particular, his research on World War II was sharply criticized by Jewish Holocaust experts in Lithuania.⁶⁷⁰

In December 2021, Vilnius authorities opened a new square in the capital and named it in honour of "hero" Juozas Lukša, one of the most well-known leaders of the Lithuanian anti-Soviet movement, a member of the Lithuanian Activist Front, and also the agent of Western intelligence agencies, who was sent to Lithuania to fight against the Soviet regime after the Great Patriotic War. At the same time, the official Vilnius conceals the fact that Juozas Lukša was an active participant in the Holocaust in Lithuania. The event was preceded by the decision of the Lithuanian parliament to declare 2021 the year of Lukša. The demand by Faina Kukliansky, chair of the Lithuanian Jewish Community (LJC) to the

667 https://lt.baltnews.com/freedom_of_speech/20220411/1021506655/Litovskiy-sindrom-mezhdu-geroizatsiey-natsizma-i-istoricheskoy-pravdoy.html

668 This structure is financed by the state. Its task is to investigate the "crimes of the Soviet occupation" and the "resistance" of the local population to it, i.e. the activities of the Forest brothers.

669 https://lt.baltnews.com/vnutri_Lithuania_politika_novosti/20210520/1020805098/Litovskiy-standart-vozyshenie-prestupnikov-stanovitsya-gosudarstvennoy-normoy.html

670 https://baltnews.lt/vnutri_Lithuania_politika_novosti/20210501/1020769520/Istoricheskij-sgovor-V-Tsentre-genotsida-Litvy-novy-obelitel-Kholokosta.html

parliament to cancel the relevant decision caused indignation of the right-wing forces and provoked a scandal.⁶⁷¹ Earlier, on the day of Lukša's death, Lithuania honoured his "heroic deeds" in the fight against Soviet authorities. The event was attended by Lithuanian Defense Minister Arvydas Anušauskas, members of the Seimas of the Republic, mayors, and local residents. President Gitanas Nausėda recalled that Lukša's remains have not yet been found and called it the duty of Lithuanians to find them. He also called this Forest Brother an example of patriotism and courage for Lithuanian youth.⁶⁷²

Antisemitic manifestations continue to be recorded in Lithuania. This is also facilitated by controversial actions of the Lithuanian authorities. In 2020, the Lithuanian Seimas was considering a bill stipulating that neither the Lithuanian state nor its leaders were responsible for involvement in the Holocaust during World War II.

In late December 2022, the parliament approved a bill to allocate 37 million EUR to the Good Will Foundation, which is considered a tool for compensating surviving members of the Jewish community and their family members for property taken from them during the war. The fund also finances other projects to support the Lithuanian Jewish community.⁶⁷³

At the same time, the local establishment shamefully conceals the facts of the direct participation of ethnic Lithuanians in the mass murder of Jews on the territory of this Baltic republic during the war. The country is still not ready to be honest about Lithuanian responsibility for the genocide of the Jews in Lithuania. Some attempts to tell the truth face fierce resistance from the authorities (one such example is the book "Our People" by journalist Ruta Vanagaite, published in 2016).

The Lithuanian authorities are trying to glorify members of the Nazi Waffen-SS and hide surviving collaborators from justice in parallel with the

671 <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/politics/20200716/12640637/V-Litve-razgorelsya-skandal-vokrug-zayavleniya-glavy-EOL-o-partizane.html>

672 https://lt.baltnews.com/vnutri_Lithuania_politika_novosti/20210906/1021036996/Agent-s-Zapada-Kak-posobnik-natsistov-zasluzhil-zvanie-geroya-Litvy.html

673 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/lithuania-passes-law-allocating-38-million-in-restitution-for-holocaust-survivors/>

intensified struggle against Soviet memorials and historical heritage. In early January 2022 it became known that the Lithuanian authorities, as well as Latvia, officially refused to assist Belarus in investigating the criminal case of genocide committed against the Belarusian people during the Great Patriotic War, as stated by the head of the investigation team of the General Prosecutor's Office of Belarus, Valery Tolkachev. Vilnius and Riga refused to provide Belarus with legal assistance in the investigation of the mass murder of civilians. The reason given was that such cooperation could affect the national security of these states.⁶⁷⁴ In fact, these states confirmed the importance they attach to Nazi ideology and those who put it into practice by equating the issue of bringing Nazis guilty of serious crimes to justice with national security.

The determination of the Lithuanian and Latvian authorities to whitewash the Nazis and prevent their prosecution was also confirmed by the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Belarus, which reported on 11 September 2023 that during the investigation of the criminal case on genocide the names of the executioners of the Belarusian people during the Great Patriotic War and the post-war period were found among the Lithuanian and Latvian torturers. "The 2nd Battalion, later renamed the 12th Battalion, arrived in the BSSR in October 1941. It participated in the extermination of death camp prisoners, massacres of civilians, destruction and looting of settlements. As a result of the criminal activities of the 2nd (12th) Lithuanian Battalion in the period from June 1941 to July 1944, more than 31 thousand civilians were killed on the territory of the present-day Republic of Belarus and at least 28 settlements were destroyed," the report says. It has been established and documented that the Nazis and their accomplices also actively created Latvian military-police formations, including the Latvian SS Volunteer Legion of the 1st and 2nd Brigades, Latvian Auxiliary Police, the 19th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS, and Latvian Legion. A list of Nazi criminals among the Latvians and Lithuanians, as well as the crimes they committed, has been

⁶⁷⁴ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/10012022-litva-i-latviya-otkazalis-pomogat-minsku-v-rassledovanii-dela-o-genotside-belorusov/>, <https://ctv.by/genprokuratura-o-novyh-faktah-genocida-masshtaby-tragedii-namnogo-bolshe-chem-ob-etom-bylo-izvestno>

compiled and will be supplemented with new information. The statement of the General Procurator's Office of Belarus also notes: "After studying this list, there is no doubt that the political elites of Lithuania and Latvia, under the pretext of "harming the sovereignty or security of these countries, the rights and legitimate interests of citizens", refuse to provide legal assistance in the investigation of the criminal case of genocide against the Belarusian people. This attitude is an open complicity in the concealment of war criminals, basic denial of the value of human life, avoidance of the principle of the indispensability of responsibility and disregard for international obligations."⁶⁷⁵

Vandalism at Jewish cemeteries has been a regular occurrence for many years, and as a rule, the perpetrators are not found. Most of the time, the perpetrators are never found. For example, in the spring of 2022, unknown persons desecrated the memorial to Holocaust victims and World War II victims in Paneriai near Vilnius four times. In a statement condemning these incidents, the LJC noted the "apathy of the responsible agencies and public tolerance of such attacks".⁶⁷⁶ Another incident of vandalism at the Paneriai Memorial was reported in September 2022.

In May 2022, a memorial to the victims of the Holocaust that had been erected in a forest near Darbėnai in the Klaipėda district was destroyed.⁶⁷⁷ In November, there was a desecration of the site of the murder of 11,000 Jews in the Ukmergė District.⁶⁷⁸

In November 2021, Lithuanian authorities in Šiauliai were forced to halt the construction of a bicycle route because it was discovered that it passed through a mass grave of Holocaust victims. The city's leaders did not make the decision

⁶⁷⁵ <https://prokuratura.gov.by/ru/media/novosti/zashchita-sotsialnykh-prav-grazhdan/v-inykh-sferakh/ustanovleny-imena-na/>, <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/11092023-v-minske-ustanovili-imena-litovtsev-i-latyshey-unichtozhavshikh-belorusov-v-gody-voyny/>

⁶⁷⁶ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220401/v-litve-oskvernili-pamyatnik-zhertvam-kholokosta-v-paneryae-22451502.html>

⁶⁷⁷ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220512/na-zapade-litvy-razorili-pamyatnik-zhertvam-kholokosta-23151466.html>

⁶⁷⁸ <https://www.lzb.lt/ru/2022/11/29/%D0%BC%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE-%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%81%D0%B£%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE-%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%B8%D0%B9%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%B0-%D0%B5%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B5%D0%B2-%D1%83%D0%BA%D0%BC%D0%B5/>

immediately, but only after the Jewish community expressed their concern.⁶⁷⁹

In September 2021, an act of vandalism took place at the old Jewish cemetery Pīramontas (Šnipiškės) in Vilnius.⁶⁸⁰ Nazi swastika was painted on a plaque calling for respect for the final resting place of the Jewish people.

The official statistics published by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights⁶⁸¹ do not provide data on anti-Semitic manifestations in Lithuania for 2021. In 2020 there were three such cases, in 2019 there were five. However, these officially recorded data do not allow us to fully assess the manifestation of anti-Semitism.

Anyone who publicly alleges Lithuanian involvement in the Holocaust and mass murder of civilians is harassed and repressed by nationalist circles, the State Security Department (Lithuania's main intelligence agency), and the country's law enforcement agencies. Vilnius is making active efforts in this direction, despite the fact that these unsightly facts have historical evidence. In particular, the fact that Lithuanians themselves also took part in the Holocaust was pointed out to the Lithuanian authorities by Faina Kukliansky, chair of the LJC.⁶⁸²

In February 2023, the LJC expressed its outrage at the anti-Semitic statement made by Remigijus Laugalis, a local Conservative, head of the village of Nemakščiai in the Raseiniai district, who said at a meeting with voters: "if you do not vote for me, you can bury yourself in a Jewish cemetery".⁶⁸³

In early May 2023, an anti-Semitic post by Seimas deputy Remigijus Žemaitaitis was published on social networks in connection with the demolition by Israeli authorities of a Palestinian school built with EU money. He wrote that "apart from Putin, there is another animal in the world - Israel" and cited proverbs about Jews calling for their murder ("A Jew was climbing the stairs and

679 https://baltnews.lt/vnutri_Lithuania_politika_novosti/20211118/1021198979/Snova-skandal-Litva-zakhotela-krutit-pedali-na-kostyakh.html

680 https://baltnews.lt/vnutri_Lithuania_politika_novosti/20210909/1021046743/Vandalizm-po-raspisaniyu-v-Litve-khudozhniki-izobrazili-svastiku.html

⁶⁸¹ https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-antisemitism-overview-2011-2021_en.pdf

682 https://lt.baltnews.com/freedom_of_speech/20210617/1020869575/Strelyali-v-zhenschin-i-detey-Litva-sluchayno-umolchala-ob-unichtozhenii-evreev.html,

https://baltnews.lt/freedom_of_speech/20210617/1020869575/Strelyali-v-zhenschin-i-detey-Litva-sluchayno-umolchala-ob-unichtozhenii-evreev.html

683 <https://obzor.lt/news/n88278.html>

accidentally fell. Children, take a stick and kill this Jew"). Having been criticized by the highest officials of the country, Mr. Žemaitaitis unhesitatingly declared that he felt not guilty. Following the words of the Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė, who visited Israel in June 2023, about the historical ties between the Lithuanians and the Jews, the Seimas deputy called these theses "nonsense" and declared that the Jews, together with the Russians, participated in the "Lithuanian Holocaust".⁶⁸⁴

It is worth mentioning that there are regular and official condemnations, including from Israel, which claims that Lithuania is promoting "false narratives" about the history of the Holocaust, of Vilnius' official policy of "rehabilitating" the Forest brothers, who were the most active participants in the extermination of the Jews.⁶⁸⁵

Even Washington has criticized Vilnius. On December 12, the U.S. State Department's Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues, Ellen Germain, called on the Lithuanian authorities to recognize the fact that those people "who are praised, commemorated with monuments and considered national heroes because they fought against the Soviets, were at the same time Nazi collaborators and participated in the crimes of Nazism, in genocide".⁶⁸⁶

Names associated with the Nazis are still used in Lithuania. In some cases, the use of such names creates direct references to Nazism. For example, in May 2022, another international military exercise Iron Wolf with the participation of NATO units was held at the Gaižiūnai training ground. The May 2023 exercise involved about 4,000 troops from 11 NATO countries and more than 1,000 pieces of military equipment.⁶⁸⁷ The name Iron Wolf (Geležinis Vilkas) was the name of the Lithuanian nationalist antisemitic and Nazi movement (also known as the Iron Wolf Association) founded in 1927 that called for the creation of a powerful state following the example of the European Nazi movements. Its members actively participated in the slaughter of Poles and Jews. Later, after the organization was

35 <https://iz.ru/1533429/viktor-nedelin/opravdanie-ubiitc-v-litve-vnov-podnimaet-golovu-antisemitizm>

685 <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/lithuania-promotes-a-false-holocaust-narrative-opinion-655487>

686 <https://iz.ru/1439643/2022-12-12/ssha-prizvali-vilnius-priznat-prichastnost-geroev-litvy-k-kholokostu>

687 <https://gazeta.ru/armynews/2023/05/08/20389670.shtml>

dissolved, its members joined the Lithuanian collaborators and together continued to participate in the extermination of the Baltic Jews. In 2021, there was a high-profile scandal during these exercises, when German soldiers stationed in Lithuania as part of the NATO contingent celebrated Hitler's birthday, all the while singing Nazi marches and anti-Semitic songs, bullying and beating up fellow soldiers.

Besides, denial of Lithuania's characterization of the period when the country was part of the Soviet Union as "occupation" entails criminal persecution under Article 170 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania for "denial of Soviet occupation" that could lead up to two years in prison. In addition to the above-mentioned policies, breaches of the prohibition on retroactive application of the law, the principle of presumption of innocence, and the right to a fair trial persist in the Lithuanian legal sphere. These legal provisions are used by Lithuanian special services and law enforcement agencies, as well as nationalist circles to persecute and harass anyone who expresses alternative views on Lithuanian domestic and foreign policy and history, much less publicly admits the involvement of Forest Brothers in the Holocaust and mass murders of civilians. In the opinion of a number of human rights activists, Lithuania has built up an entire system of measures and methods of putting pressure on those who disagree. A significant place within this system is occupied by the crimes introduced by Article 170-2 of the Lithuanian Criminal Code.

A vivid example is the years-long trial of a trumped-up and politically motivated criminal case concerning the well-known events at the Vilnius TV tower in January 1991. On 31 March 2021, the Court of Appeal of Lithuania partially upheld a prosecutorial protest against the decision of the Vilnius District Court of 27 March 2019, under which 67 former Soviet party and state figures, special forces fighters and military personnel, most of whom were Russian nationals, were sentenced to long prison terms for allegedly committing "war crimes and crimes against humanity". As a result, a Russian citizen, officer of the Russian Army Yuri Mel, who has been in custody in Lithuania since March 2014, had his term of

imprisonment extended by 3 years to a total of 10 years (on 30 June 2022, the Supreme Court of Lithuania reduced the term to 9 years). Gennady Ivanov, who had previously been subjected to a restriction in the form of recognizance not to leave, was sentenced to five years imprisonment as a cumulative punishment.

The media also reported that in this case the Lithuanian judicial system demonstrated double standards. Russian citizens were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. At the same time, exceptions were made for some. Alexander Radkevich, a citizen of Ukraine, who served in the Soviet army and also took part in the events at the TV tower, was first sentenced to four years imprisonment. But in November 2022 the term was reduced to a year and a half. The reason may be the fact that he is a veteran of the Ukrainian counter-terrorism operation and may currently be back in the AFU ranks.⁶⁸⁸

This issue is not ignored by the Russian side. On September 6, the Basmany court in Moscow ordered the arrest in absentia from the moment of their arrest on the territory of Russia or the deportation to the territory of Russia of the Lithuanian judges who deliberately convicted tens of innocent people in the politically motivated "January 13 case".⁶⁸⁹

Vivid evidence of discrimination of Russian citizens by the Lithuanian authorities is contained in the case of the former member of Riga special operation troops (OMON) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR K.Nikulin; on 11 May 2011, Vilnius District Court found him guilty of premeditated murder of seven persons and attempted murder of one person at the Medininkai control point in July 1991. He was initially charged with "murder of two and more persons" (the limitation period established in respect of such crimes had expired by the date of the trial, so the charge was changed). No clear evidence was produced concerning K.Nikulin's involvement in the crime ascribed to him, however the Russian was sentenced to life imprisonment and a 650,000 euro fine. Even though in 2021 the Russian citizen was recognized as group 3 disabled person, the prison

688 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230113-svoi-strelyali-v-svoikh-cto-stoit-za-gosudarstvennym-mifom-litvy-o-borbe-za-nezavisimost/>

689 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230906-shag-k-spravedlivosti-litovskie-sudi-otvetyat-za-politicheskie-repressii/>

administration refused twice to transfer him from a detachment with strict detention conditions to a detachment with less severe detention conditions. In spite of the Russian Embassy's repeated motions, our citizen was denied medical diagnostic procedures which he has requested during several years because of the intensified pains in his stomach. In March 2020, having examined for two years K.Nikulin's petition seeking his transfer to Russia to serve punishment pursuant to the Russian-Lithuanian Agreement dated 25 June 2001, on transfer of persons sentenced to imprisonment for serving punishment, the Ministry of Justice of Lithuania stated that "the transfer of the convict does not appear possible".

Gross violations of the right to freedom of opinion and expression by the Lithuanian authorities can be seen in the activities of the country's main intelligence service, the State Security Department. The State Security Department is conducting a campaign of harassment and intimidation under a false accusation of spying for Russia against a group of Russian and Lithuanian citizens. The criminal prosecution of a well-known local politician Algirdas Paleckis,⁶⁹⁰ who visited Russian Crimea and has his own point of view, distinct from that of the official authorities, about the events in Vilnius in January 1991, is continuing. After Mr. Paleckis challenged the official version of events at the Vilnius television tower and press building in January 1991, Lithuanian authorities began to persecute him. Citing eyewitnesses, Algirdas Paleckis stated that the bloodshed was provoked by power-seeking radicals and that when the Vilnius television tower was taken, "people were shooting at their own people". This phrase served as a reason to initiate a criminal case under article which introduces the responsibility "for the denial of Soviet aggression and occupation".

It is alleged that Algirdas Paleckis and entrepreneur Deimantas Bertauskas were recruited by the Russian special services and tasked to gather information about the judges and prosecutors who handled the "13 January case". Algirdas Paleckis was held in custody from October 2018 until April 2020, after which the

⁶⁹⁰ https://lt.baltnews.com/vnutri_Lithuania_politika_novosti/20220511/1021570079/Nesoglasnykh--v-tyurmu-Algirdasa-Paletsisa-okonchatelno-lishili-svobody.html

Court of Appeal of Lithuania replaced the arrest with another preventive measure – intensive supervision with a bail of 50,000 EUR and seizure of personal documents. On 27 July 2021, the court found the politician guilty and sentenced him to six years' imprisonment.⁶⁹¹ His lawyer told the media that the disgraced politician was in solitary confinement, severely malnourished and suffering from health problems.⁶⁹² The Vilnius entrepreneur Deimantas Bertauskas, who pleaded guilty in this criminal case and testified, was exempted from criminal responsibility.

In the summer of 2022, it became known that the Lithuanian Prosecutor General's Office initiated a pre-trial investigation against the International Forum for Good Neighbourhood⁶⁹³ founded by Algirdas Paleckis under the Criminal Code article, which provides for responsibility for aiding another state in its actions against Lithuania. In February 2023, the Vilnius Regional District Court ordered the liquidation of the International Forum for Good Neighbourhood.⁶⁹⁴ The organization is suspected of illegal activities since its activists express an interpretation of recent Lithuanian history and current events in the country and in the world that differs from official Vilnius and advocate the normalization of relations between Lithuania and Russia and Belorussia. A widespread campaign to discredit the Forum was launched in the media with the involvement of all major media outlets and politicians in the country. In October 2022, Erika Švenčionienė, head of the Forum, was searched; law enforcement authorities initiated a criminal case for aiding another state in actions against Lithuania. It is also telling that during the court hearing that began in late December 2022 on the dissolution of the Forum, the court rejected the organization's request to postpone the hearing to finalize its agreement with a lawyer. Erika Švenčionienė said that the organization had little time to find a lawyer. According to her, other lawyers were afraid to

691 <https://www.lrt.lt/ru/novosti/17/1458028/za-shpionazh-v-pol-zu-rossii-paetskis-osuzhden-na-shest-let-lisheniia-svobody>, https://lt.baltnews.com/vnutri_Lithuania_politika_novosti/20220511/1021570079/Nesoglasnyk--v-tyurmu-Algirdasa-Paetskisa-okonchatelno-lishili-svobody.html

692 <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220506/sud-litvy-otlkonil-zhalobu-osuzhdennogo-za-shpionazh-v-polzu-rf-paetskisa-21726124.html>

693 <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220805/v-litve-protiv-foruma-paetskisa-nachato-esche-odno-rassledovanie-24098360.html>

694 <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/17096269>

defend the organization for fear of being disbarred.⁶⁹⁵

Such persecution of human rights defenders in Lithuania has occurred before. In June 2020, the Vilnius District Court convicted Valery Ivanov, who is a witness in the "Paleckis case", "for illegal possession of firearms" (a defective starter pistol was found during a search) – he was sentenced to a two-year ban on leaving Vilnius and his place of residence during night-time hours. On September 27, 2023, the Lithuanian Prosecutor's Office charged Valery Ivanov with publicly endorsing Soviet crimes against the Republic of Lithuania. As a measure of restraint, he was given a custodial sentence.⁶⁹⁶

In March 2020, the leader of the youth organization "Juvenus", the organizer of the "Immortal regiment" in Klaipėda, Alexey Greychus, faced repressions. For the 70th anniversary of the Victory, his organization published brochures on the liberation of Klaipėda and donated them to the city's school libraries. On 12 November 2021, the Klaipėda District Court found him guilty of "espionage in favor of the Russian Federation" and sentenced him to four years in prison. According to the case materials, the human rights defender was accused of collecting and transmitting to the "special services of the Russian Federation" information about the events he had organized, photographs of people who participated in these events, video materials and articles, a video report about the trial of Klaipėda politician V. Titov and information about the employees of the State Security Department. On 5 July 2022, the Lithuanian Court of Appeals upheld the verdict against the human rights activist.⁶⁹⁷ Another defendant in the case, Mindaugas Tunikaitis, was sentenced to a year and a half of imprisonment and pleaded guilty. The court noted that the information provided to Russia was not a secret, but the judges equated it as such, since it was allegedly of interest to "foreign secret services".⁶⁹⁸

695 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/28122022-v-litve-nachalsya-sudebnyy-protsess-o-likvidatsii-mezhdunarodnogo-foruma-dobrososedstva/>

696 <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20230925/v-litve-istoriku-ivanovu-vrucheno-podozrenie-v-odobrenii-prestupleniy-sssr-30496810.html>

697 <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220705/litovskomu-pravozaschitniku-ostavili-prezhnii-srok-zaklyucheniya-zashpionazh-23750586.html>

698 <https://delfi.lt/ru/news/article/php?id=88668731>

In late 2019, a harassment campaign was launched against the head of the Lithuanian Association of Teachers of Russian Schools, Ella Kanaite. As a result, she was fired from the school where she worked as a teacher and was not hired anywhere else. In 2019, a criminal case was initiated against Victor Orlov, head of the Forgotten Soldiers association, which searches for the remains of Soviet soldiers. The case was dropped after a year, but he was pressured for a long time, he received threats on the phone.⁶⁹⁹ In 2020, Tatyana Afanasieva-Kolomiets, organizer of the Immortal Regiment in Vilnius, was also searched and interrogated by officers of the State Security Department.

The Lithuanian authorities abolished the Lithuanian Russian Union. Its leader, Sergey Dmitriyev, is also constantly being attacked and threatened in all kinds of ways.

In this regard, a revealing event was the decision of the ECHR of 12 March 2019 in the case *Drėlingas v. Lithuania*, which upheld the sentence given by the Lithuanian court to Stanislovas Drėlingas, a former KGB officer who participated in the 1956 operation to apprehend Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas and his wife (later, the gang leader was executed by shooting). Official Vilnius interprets this ruling of the European Court as the alleged recognition of the struggle of the Soviet authorities against the "partisans who fought for the freedom of Lithuania" as "genocide of the Lithuanian people" (we should remind that these were the "partisans", who collaborated with the Nazis, and who continued to take part in the killing of civilians after the war).

In October 2020, the Main Electoral Commission of the Lithuanian Republic did not allow opposition politician V. Titov to participate in the elections to the Seimas, discarding part of the signatures collected by him that were required for registration. He accused the government of "bureaucratically blocking" a non-system politician. In 2019, V. Titov was fined for 10,000 euros for his criticism of perpetuation of the memory of one of the above-mentioned commanders of the Forest

⁶⁹⁹ https://news.rambler.ru/world/48627304/?utm_content=news_media&utm_medium=read_more&utm_source=copylink

Brothers, Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas.

Because of persecution by Lithuanian authorities, the Chairman of the Socialist People's Front, anti-fascist Giedrius Grabauskas, who also opposes the glorification of "Forest Brothers" and the promotion of Russophobia, has been forced to leave the country.

Since the beginning of the Russian special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civil population of Donbass, the Lithuanian authorities have taken on an unprecedented character in their efforts to denigrate everything related to Russia. As a result, there has been a dramatic increase in manifestations of Russophobia and discrimination against Russians and natives of Russia.⁷⁰⁰

The media was the first one to be subjected to restrictions. A large-scale attack on Russian mass media was launched. The Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (LRTC) first suspended the broadcasting of RBC and Mir-24 channels for five years and applied similar sanctions to six other Russian and Belarusian channels. In March 2022, the LRTC disconnected other programs of interstate TV and radio company Mir from the Lithuanian airwaves and blocked more than 50 news sites and some official portals of the Russian authorities. In April, the LRTC suspended re-broadcasting of 32 Russian-language channels (in particular, such channels as Kinokomedia, NTV Mir, Friday, Indian Cinema, TNT, Baby TV and others) controlled by Russian company Gazprom-Media. As indicated in the LRTC report, Gazprom-Media holding is owned by Gazprombank, which has been sanctioned by the US Office of Foreign Assets Control (not Lithuanian!). In addition, according to that body, the broadcasting or distribution on the Internet of television programmes owned by entities subject to anti-Russian sanctions contradicts the interests of Lithuania's "national security".⁷⁰¹ In September, the Seimas, on the pretext of the need to "protect its information space from the flow of disinformation, which is no less important than physical national

⁷⁰⁰ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220426/genotsid-pered-slavyanami-v-litve-rasskazali-o-sluchayakh-rusofobii-22888559.html>

⁷⁰¹ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220420/v-litve-zapretili-retranslyatsiyu-bolee-30-rossiyskikh-telekanalov-22816590.html>

security," decided to ban Russian and Belarusian channels from Lithuanian airwaves. The new ban will be in effect until 1 October 2024.⁷⁰²

The Lithuanian government has taken legislative measures aimed to prevent the spread of support for the Russian special military operation in Ukraine among the country residents. On 17 March 2022, the Seimas of Lithuania approved the amendments to the Criminal Code of Lithuania which, under the guise of war propaganda criminalization provide for criminal liability for its public support. At the same time, in mid-March, the Lithuanian Parliament approved legislative amendments regulating state procurement allowing excluding hostile States (meaning Russia and Belarus) from tenders and cancelling contracts that have been already concluded therewith.

On 19 April 2022, the Seimas of Lithuania adopted amendments to the laws on administrative offences and on meetings providing for ban on public demonstration of St. George ribbon and other symbols of "totalitarian and authoritarian regimes" used "for the aims of propaganda of the aggression effected by them, the committed crimes against humanity and war crimes" (including the letters Z and V). Penalties for individuals are fines from 300 to 700 euros, in case of repeated violations – up to 900 euros, fines for legal entities are higher – up to 1200 euros, and for repeated violations – up to 1500 euros.⁷⁰³

It should be noted that the Lithuanian authorities have previously taken steps to establish a legal basis for putting pressure on pro-Russian activists. In May 2021, the Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens that prohibited persons supporting or participating in the "aggressive" policy of a foreign state from entering Lithuania. These new amendments are aimed primarily at Russian citizens, including popular media figures, who openly express their civic position in support of the actions of the Russian leadership.

In September 2022, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, in violation of all international rules on the movement of citizens, reached an in-principle agreement

⁷⁰² <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/22092022-seym-litvy-zakryl-efir-dlya-rossiyskikh-i-beloruskikh-kanalov/>

⁷⁰³ www.lt.sputniknews.ru/20220419/seym-litvy-zapretil-publichnoe-ispolzovanie-georgievskoy-lenty-22788067.html

to restrict the movement of Russians across their borders with Russia and Belarus. In line with this policy, on 14 September 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers approved blatantly discriminatory entry criteria, including in terms of Vilnius international human rights obligations, for Russian citizens into the country. On this basis, Russian citizens entering the territory of the Republic of Lithuania through all border checkpoints will be subject to individual enhanced inspection during the state of emergency.⁷⁰⁴ A month later, on 22 November 2022, Agnė Bilotaitė, head of the Lithuanian Ministry of the Interior, signed amendments to decrees tightening the procedure for issuing documents to aliens wishing to enter and reside in the country. These measures resulted in a special mandatory questionnaire for citizens of Russia and Belarus applying for a visa or residence permit (as well as for extension of the latter). Some of the questions are about the attitude to what is happening in Ukraine. Applicants are also required to answer questions about education, former employment, service in the armed forces, ties in business circles, and contacts with governmental authorities of non-NATO and non-EU countries. Taking into account the overall policy pursued by official Vilnius to increase Russophobia, it is not surprising that the answers in this questionnaire serve as grounds to ban entry. In particular, refusals of entry on such grounds have been confirmed by Arnoldas Abramavičius, Deputy Head of the Lithuanian Ministry of the Interior.⁷⁰⁵ According to Evelina Gudzinskaitė, Head of the Migration Department, the document serves as 'an additional security filter that allows for faster identification of foreigners who may pose a threat to Lithuania's national security due to their previous activities for or links to undemocratic regimes'.⁷⁰⁶ This system appears to be actively used by the Lithuanian authorities. According to Giedrius Mišutis, representative of the State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of the Interior, from 19 September 2022 to 18 September 2023 Lithuania

⁷⁰⁴ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/14092022-pravitelstvo-litvy-utverdilo-kriterii-dopuska-grazhdan-rossii-v-stranu/>

⁷⁰⁵ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/09012023-v-litve-rasskazali-ob-otkaze-vo-vezde-belorusam-posle-voprosov-ob-otnoshenii-k-ukraine/>

⁷⁰⁶ <https://www.lrt.lt/ru/novosti/17/1837373/grazhdanam-rossii-i-belarusi-pri-poluchenii-vnzh-v-litve-nuzhno-zapolnit-anketu-sprashivaiut-i-o-voine-v-ukraine>

refused entry to 1,343 Russian citizens.⁷⁰⁷

The Lithuanian authorities, like other Baltic states, required the Russians staying in the country to condemn the Russian special operation. In March 2022, an active campaign was launched in Lithuania, with the support of the country's largest media outlets, calling on Russian-speaking residents of Lithuania to publicly condemn the policies pursued by the Russian Federation in Ukraine. In the same month, a plan to organize mass phone calls for psychological pressure on the Russian population was launched. To this end, huge posters titled "Call Russia" were installed in Lithuanian cities, inviting "all concerned" to make calls through the technological platform callrussia.org to Russian numbers and convince people to oppose the Russian special military operation. The organizers asserted that this resource had at its disposal a database containing forty million Russian private telephone numbers. Volunteers were assisted in organization of such calls by specialists in the field of technology, advertising and communications who instructed how to conduct the conversation. Moreover, the project organizers suggested that its participants call their friends and acquaintances in Russia for the same purposes.

The Lithuanian media placed a strong emphasis on the participation of the "intellectual" stratum of society in the "anti-war" movement. A special place was given to the publication of open letters by figures of culture and science in support of Ukraine, calling on Russian citizens to come out to protest, and on Russian-speaking Lithuanians not to trust "Kremlin propaganda". One of the first to publish such a statement were the employees of the Faculty of Philology at Vilnius University together with the staff of the Alexander Pushkin Literary Museum in Vilnius.⁷⁰⁸ In addition, the Lithuanian media actively published "repentant" interviews with Russian-speaking citizens of the country with calls for "anti-war" protests in Russia.⁷⁰⁹

Many figures of culture and art, who refused to publicly condemn Russia's

⁷⁰⁷ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/19092023-v-litve-rasskazali-skolko-rossiyan-ne-pustili-v-stranu-za-god/>

⁷⁰⁸ <https://www.delfi.lt/ru/news/live/kultura-protiv-vojn-russkaya-intelligenciya-litvy-osudila-dejstviya-kremlya-i-podderzhala-ukrainu.d?id=89570813>

⁷⁰⁹ <https://www.delfi.lt/ru/opinions/comments/obraschenie-k-fanatam-putina-v-litve.d?id=89639411>

actions, were also subjected to pressure. In late February 2022, Simonas Kairys, Minister of Culture of Lithuania, insisted on the dismissal of those employees of Lithuanian theatres, who also carry out their activities in Russia. On his Facebook page, he wrote, in particular, that "no performer from Russia will set foot in Lithuania". Furthermore, the Lithuanian authorities imposed a concert ban on a number of Russian performers, and local radio stations, following this unambiguous "signal," refused to broadcast Russian broadcasts and music as a gesture of support for Ukraine.⁷¹⁰

Given all the efforts made by the Lithuanian government for smearing and discrimination of everything that is connected to Russia, since February 2022, there have been manifestations of hatred and discrimination against Russian citizens and Russian-speaking residents of the country. The level of anti-Russian and Russophobic rhetoric in the country has risen sharply, and these sentiments are being actively promoted in society by efforts from upstairs.

According to human rights activist Giedrius Grabauskas, in 2022 threats to Russian-speaking residents became more frequent. It got to the point of smashing cars, attacking people on the streets.

In September 2022, Diversity Development Group NGO and Department of Ethnic Studies of the Sociological Institute at the Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences conducted a survey, which showed that hostility towards Russians is growing in the Republic. 74.6 per cent of respondents said that attitudes towards Russians living in Lithuania had significantly worsened or somewhat worsened over the past year.⁷¹¹ According to the survey, 23.1 per cent of Lithuanians do not want to rent accommodation to Russians (9.9 per cent in 2021), 13.6 per cent do not want to work together with Russians at the same workplace (4.5 per cent in 2021). Vida Montvydaitė, head of the Department of National Minorities, called such a trend "alarming and even dangerous".⁷¹²

⁷¹⁰ <https://www.delfi.lt/ru/news/live/klajpedskaya-radiostanciya-otkazyvaetsya-ot-translyacii-rossijskoj-produkcii.d?id=89559861>

⁷¹¹ <https://www.delfi.lt/ru/news/live/diskussiya-kak-vojna-v-ukraine-izmenila-otnoshenie-k-russkim-v-litve.d?id=92372495>

⁷¹² <https://www.lrt.lt/ru/novosti/17/1834276/glava-departamenta-natsmen-shinstv-montvidaite-tendentsii-kasatel-no>

Russophobic hysteria has also affected culture as well. Ingrida Šimonaitė, Prime Minister of Lithuania, said that Lithuanian society was "poisoned by Russian culture".⁷¹³ Simonas Kairys, Minister of Culture of Lithuania, called for a "mental quarantine" of Russian art.⁷¹⁴ Performances based on works by Russian authors were removed from the repertoires of theatres: the Old Theatre of Vilnius (until the summer of 2022 it was called the Lithuanian Russian Drama Theater) excluded from its programme productions based on works by Vasily Shukshin, Pavel Sanaev and others. Even the children's production "Cat's House", based on the fairy tale of the same name by Samuil Marshak, was cancelled.⁷¹⁵ A number of ballets were removed from the repertoire of the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre - Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker, Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet, Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring.⁷¹⁶ Books by Russian classics began to be removed from Lithuanian libraries.

Lithuanian publishers, including those that print Russian-language materials, are also subjected to persecution. For example, White Swans publishing house, which publishes books in both Lithuanian and Russian, is under pressure. The army of this Baltic country also joined the ranks of the most zealous censors. There is information that under the influence of the Department of Strategic Communications of the Lithuanian army, the books of the publishing house were withdrawn from libraries and stores.⁷¹⁷

Russophobic attitudes have also become pronounced at the local level. For example, Russian tourists are denied access to the largest Baltic Pakruojis manor.⁷¹⁸

The Russophobic hysteria correlates with the manifestations of xenophobia that international human rights monitoring mechanisms have detected in Lithuania.

[russkikh-litvy-trevozhny-i-dazhe-opasny](https://www.russkikh-litvy-trevozhny-i-dazhe-opasny)

⁷¹³ <https://www.lrt.lt/ru/novosti/17/1879425/shimonite-litovskoe-obshchestvo-otravleno-russkoi-kul-turoi>

⁷¹⁴ <https://www.lrt.lt/ru/novosti/17/1879258/ministr-kul-tury-mental-nyi-karantin-rossiiskikh-proizvedenii-byl-by-polezen-no-reshenie-ostaetsia-za-uchrezhdenijami>

⁷¹⁵ <https://www.delfi.lt/ru/news/live/vilnyusskij-staryj-teatr-prodolzhaet-obnovlyat-svoj-repertuar.d?id:=92483767>

⁷¹⁶ <https://tass.ru/kultura/16795857>

⁷¹⁷ https://news.rambler.ru/world/48627304/?utm_content=news_media&utm_medium=read_more&utm_source=copylink

⁷¹⁸ <https://ru.euronews.com/travel/2022/08/21/lt-tourist-site-bans-russians>

Specialized international organizations have repeatedly documented persisting violations of the rights of Roma, as well as other national minorities, and certain social groups. Thus, the specialized Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) pointed to the prevalence in the country of biased attitudes towards members of vulnerable and minority groups, especially migrants, Muslims and Roma, "hate speech" and insults against them, including antisemitic statements in the media and on the Internet.⁷¹⁹

The Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (AC-FCNM) operating within the Council of Europe has noted that the authorities' efforts to mitigate the negative effects of assimilation policies on minority language learners are insufficient, as well as the existence of problems regarding the use by linguistic minorities of their native languages.⁷²⁰

Among other human rights problems, international monitoring organizations note the existence in Lithuania of deeply rooted prejudices against vulnerable and minority groups, especially migrants, Muslims, Roma, and Jews. As noted by the Human Rights Committee (HRC), this has resulted in the widespread use of hate speech, particularly in the media, including Internet platforms, and in the political discourse.⁷²¹

The international community remains concerned about the anti-discrimination provisions in Lithuanian law. Even the European Commission, which has been generally lenient with respect to Vilnius's Russophobic attitudes,

⁷¹⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined ninth and tenth periodic reports of Lithuania. June 2019

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLTU%2fCO%2f9-10&Lang=ru

⁷²⁰ Fourth opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Lithuania. Adopted on 30 May 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-advisory-committee-opinion-on-lithuania-english-language-version/1680906d97>

⁷²¹ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the fourth periodic report of Lithuania. July 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fLTU%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined ninth and tenth periodic reports of Lithuania. June 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLTU%2fCO%2f9-10&Lang=ru

Fourth opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Lithuania. Adopted on 30 May 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-advisory-committee-opinion-on-lithuania-english-language-version/1680906d97>

has noted that provisions in Lithuanian law do not adequately integrate EU standards on criminal liability for certain forms of hate speech inciting violence or hatred. For example, there was only liability for publicly condoning, denying or grossly downplaying international crimes and the Holocaust in Lithuania when public order was violated and only if such actions were committed on Lithuanian territory or against Lithuanian citizens.⁷²²

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), citing national data for 2021, also indicated that Lithuania had increased the number of complaints of discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnicity to the relevant authorities.

The xenophobic nature of the Lithuanian regime is clearly evidenced by its policy towards migrants. Relevant international agencies and nongovernmental organizations have documented gross violations of the fundamental human rights of illegal migrants entering Lithuania.

Since April 2021, Vilnius has been taking measures to cope with the influx of refugees, illegal migrants and asylum seekers. In doing so, the authorities allow for discrimination by granting more favourable accommodations to some applicants, while others are subjected to violence and detention. The country experienced an influx of people, mostly from Asia and Africa, fleeing armed conflicts and dire living conditions at home. By August 2021, the number of migrants who entered Lithuania illegally was 4.2 thousand. The authorities announced a "crisis" and blamed it on the "Lukashenko regime," which is "supported by the Kremlin". Illegal immigrants were housed in tent camps, barracks, empty buildings, and former prisons. These temporary shelters were placed under armed guard to quell occasional riots (there have been repeated complaints of inhumane conditions: lack of food, lack of warm clothes, denial of medical care, prohibition to leave these "reservations").⁷²³

In July 2021, Lithuania passed a law⁷²⁴ limiting appeals against refusals to

⁷²² European Union's FRA Fundamental Rights Report 2022. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

⁷²³ https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20210726/zapretili-est-dazhe-detyam-na-yuge-litvy-migranty-ustroili-besporjadki-17769975.html?dc_data=3780234_ume-technologies-russia&ui=483455fb-235b-4448-bb8f-4d161b0e54aa

⁷²⁴ <https://www.lrt.lt/ru/novosti/17/1454930/nauseda-podpisal-popravki-k-zakonu-o-pravovom-polozhenii->

grant asylum and allowing for deportation in the appeal process. Even Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda had to admit that this expeditiously enacted law was "flawed" in terms of human rights. It is noted that the legislative amendments deprive asylum seekers of the right to appeal the decisions of the first instance court on appeal, although the Constitution does not allow for any legal regulation that denies opportunities to review the decisions of the first instance court and to remedy possible misjudgements of the court.

Since 1 August 2021, the Lithuanian authorities have legalised the practice of "pushbacks": migrants were simply forced to return to the territory of Belarus. The "pushback" principle is also enshrined in the Seimas State of Emergency Regulation, adopted on 13 September 2022.⁷²⁵

In January 2023, another step was taken in this regard: the Cabinet of Ministers of Lithuania approved amendments to the law on the state border, establishing a procedure for the expulsion of illegal migrants trying to enter the country. When presenting this draft law at the meeting, Agnė Bilotaitė, Minister of the Interior, emphasized that one should distinguish between natural migration and migration as a political tool and "apply different procedures for responding to them".⁷²⁶ Vilnius believes that the migration crisis of the last two years is "a consequence of the actions of the Belarusian authorities".

Lithuanian authorities reinforce legislative measures against migrants by building a "physical barrier". At the end of August 2022, Lithuania completed the construction of a fence on the border with Belarus.⁷²⁷ On 27 September, Agnė Bilotaitė, Minister of the Interior, announced Vilnius' intention to build a fence in marshlands on the border with Russia and Belarus. These additional measures are justified by the need to protect the border from migrants, as in 2023 alone, around 700 illegal migrants attempted to enter Lithuania from Belarus via the wetlands, and 13 cases of smuggling were also reported.⁷²⁸

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⁷²⁵ www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35403&p_k=1&p_t=282203

⁷²⁶ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/11012023-litva-uzakonila-vytesnenie-nelegalnykh-migrantov/>

⁷²⁷ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/29082022-litva-zavershila-stroitelstvo-zagrazhdeniya-na-granitse-s-belarusyu/>

⁷²⁸ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/27092023-litva-ustanovit-zagrazhdenie-na-zabolochnykh-uchastkakh-granitsy-s->

The media regularly published articles portraying the deplorable conditions in which foreigners were held: meager food, lack of medical care, overcrowding, etc. There were reports of repeated incidents of security abuse and even sexual violence by Lithuanian refugee workers.⁷²⁹ The process of "pushing back" migrants trying to sneak into the country was also often accompanied by the use of force against them and the hounding of dogs.⁷³⁰ There were occasional reports of refugees dying from beatings at the border or from hypothermia in the woods. Furthermore, there were reports of repeated attempts by local border guards to forcibly displace refugees from Lithuania, as well as Latvia and Poland into the territory of Belarus.

There is a case when Lithuanian soldiers forced an Afghan citizen to carry the corpse of a refugee across the border with Belarus. The State Border Committee of Belarus, in particular, reported a similar incident that occurred on the evening of 17 November 2022. A Belarusian ambulance crew on the scene recorded the death of one of the refugees, while the other was taken to a hospital with bruises, signs of frostbite and exhaustion. The Afghan man said that Lithuanian soldiers brought him together with the corpse to the border fence, and then "at gunpoint forced him to carry the body through the gate to the Belarusian side".⁷³¹

This state of affairs has been criticized both domestically (a report by the Lithuanian Seimas Ombudsman on inhumane conditions and degrading treatment of migrants⁷³²) and by numerous human rights organizations and structures (Amnesty International⁷³³, International Committee of the Red Cross⁷³⁴, Médecins

rossiey-i-belarusyu/

⁷²⁹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/30042022-v-litve-rassleduetsya-delo-ob-iznasilovanii-mestnymi-pogranichnikami-afrikanskikh-bezhenok/>

⁷³⁰ <https://vz.ru./news/2021/8/4/1112291.html>

⁷³¹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/18112022-belorusskie-pogranichniki-obvinili-litovskikh-voennykh-v-peremeshchenii-trupa-s-pomoshchyu-bezhentsa/>

⁷³² https://www.lrski.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Final_Ataskaita_Kybartai_2021.pdf

⁷³³ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/06/lithuania-pushbacks-illegal-detention-deception-and-abuses-against-refugees-and-migrants/>, www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/lithuania/report-lithuania/
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/06/lithuania-court-of-justice-of-the-eu-rejects-national-law-restricting-the-right-to-asylum-and-imposing-automatic-detention-on-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/>

⁷³⁴ <https://www.delfi.lt/ru/news/live/litovskij-krasnyj-krest-vidit-problemy-v-svyazi-s-razvorotom-migrantov-na-granice.d?id=87869519>

Sans Frontiers⁷³⁵, Frontex⁷³⁶, Report by the Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson⁷³⁷, Center for European Policy Studies⁷³⁸, Human Rights Monitoring Institute, Lithuanian Red Cross, Human Rights Center, Diversity Development Group⁷³⁹). Their reports pointed out that the Lithuanian practice of "pushing back" refugees ran counter to the EU legal system, and that such actions against migrants were illegal. It has been established that the forcible expulsion of migrants to the territory of Belarus traumatizes them emotionally and physically, and, most importantly, directly threatens their safety and lives.

The migration problem was also highlighted by Amnesty International NGO.⁷⁴⁰ Thus, it published a report in July 2022, accusing the authorities of racism and cruel treatment of refugees from Africa and the Middle East. It is noted that the Lithuanian authorities do not want to treat all asylum seekers equally – this difference is especially noticeable against the background of the "as friendly as possible" reception of Ukrainians in the country. The report also mentions torture, inhumane detention conditions, cases of sexual violence, denial of access to asylum procedures, and forcing refugees to "voluntarily" return to their home country.

The humanitarian situation of migrants on the Belarusian-Lithuanian border (as well as on the Belarusian-Polish and Belarusian-Latvian borders) was critical. It reported that as of the end of 2021 Poland had refused admittance to 28,000 migrants, while Lithuania and Latvia had refused admittance to 8,000 and 4,000 migrants respectively.⁷⁴¹ In the 2023 report, the FRA pointed out that Lithuanian legislation allows for the expulsion of irregular migrants to third countries without allowing them to enter the asylum procedure. It also noted that there had been

⁷³⁵ <https://www.msf.org/repeated-pushbacks-cause-mental-and-physical-suffering-people-crossing-lithuanian-border>; <https://www.msf.org/people-repelled-lithuania-border-face-increased-suffering>

⁷³⁶ <https://www.delfi.lt/ru/news/live/litva-poluchit-strogie-mezhdunarodnye-rekomendacii-nikakoj-politiki-razvorota-nelegalnyh-migrantov.d?id=89056983>

⁷³⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/johansson/announcements/commissioner-johanssons-speech-plenary-debate-pushbacks-eu-external-border_en

⁷³⁸ <https://euobserver.com/migration/153161>

⁷³⁹ www.delfi.lt/ru/news/article.php?id=87869519

⁷⁴⁰ www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/lithuania/report-lithuania/

⁷⁴¹ European Union's FRA Fundamental Rights Report 2022. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

cases of migrants being 'pushed back' at the Lithuanian border.⁷⁴²

In addition, the ECtHR, which has some 70 cases of expulsion of migrants pending before it, has ruled that the measures taken by the authorities following the declaration of a state of emergency due to a massive influx of migrants contravene the EU Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU) and that the detention of irregular migrants merely because they are illegally present on the territory of a Member State contravenes the EU Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU).⁷⁴³

In February 2023, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights also drew attention to the problem of migrants. In particular, the Committee expressed concern that Lithuania continues to expulse asylum-seekers and migrants, as well as to conduct the pushback operations. All this leads to migrants being forced to stay near the border in dire conditions, without access to emergency assistance, provision of food and water, let alone the possibility to go through the asylum procedure.⁷⁴⁴

The Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities⁷⁴⁵ and the CERD⁷⁴⁶ expressed concern about poor conditions at foreigners registration centres and unreasonably long periods of migrant detention (up to 18 months). The CERD emphasized, in particular, the lack of capacity to provide adequate housing for newly arrived asylum-seekers, especially families with children. The country also fails to take into account the special needs of applicants, particularly women and girls, who are not provided with safe places to stay.

⁷⁴² European Union's FRA Fundamental Rights Report 2023. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

⁷⁴³ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the third periodic report of Lithuania. February 2023. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FLTU%2FCO%2F3&Lang=ru

⁷⁴⁵ Fourth opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Lithuania. Adopted on 30 May 2018. <https://rm.coe.int/4th-advisory-committee-opinion-on-lithuania-english-language-version/1680906d97>

⁷⁴⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined ninth and tenth periodic reports of Lithuania. June 2019. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLTU%2fCO%2f9-10&Lang=ru

Lithuanian authorities are not going to abandon the measures applied to migrants. Minister of Interior Agnė Bilotaitė said that Lithuania considers the tactics of driving out illegal migrants as the main strategy in the fight against the migration crisis and does not intend to abandon its decisions, despite criticism by human rights organizations. Vilnius justifies its harsh actions against migrants by the need to protect against the influx of illegal migration.⁷⁴⁷ Belarusian border guards have repeatedly noted that Lithuanian and Polish law enforcers are forcibly pushing migrants into their territory. The maximum number of displaced people for 2022 was recorded on 18 July (80 people).⁷⁴⁸

The situation of migrants of African and Asian origin is in stark contrast to the reception of Ukrainians. From the first days of the Russian special operation, Lithuanian authorities at all levels expressed their readiness to accept thousands of Ukrainian refugees and urged their fellow citizens to place them in their own apartments. The rest were placed in vacant houses, hotels, holiday hotels, and, as a last resort, in school buildings. They were also assisted in finding and renting housing and in employment. Minors were immediately enrolled in public schools and universities. However, they were not required to know the state language, as was the case for other residents. Furthermore, they are granted a special status that even allows them to avoid such requirements from the employer (which is stipulated by Lithuanian law with respect to local minority representatives).

Violations of the rights of national minorities still persist in Lithuania, mainly in education. Since the repeal of the 1989 Law on National Minorities in 2010, efforts to draft new comprehensive legislation to protect minorities have not been successful. The Seimas did not reach the point of adopting them. This, in particular, was pointed out by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in its concluding observations in 2019.⁷⁴⁹

⁷⁴⁷ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220802/litva-prodolzhit-taktiku-vytesneniya-migrantov-zayavili-v-mvd-24065519.html>

⁷⁴⁸ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220718/v-litve-za-sutki-vytesnili-v-belorussiyu-rekordnoe-chislo-nelegalov-23899430.html>

⁷⁴⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined ninth and tenth periodic reports of Lithuania. June 2019
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLTU%2fCO

The Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities noted that efforts by the authorities to mitigate the negative effects of assimilation policies on students learning minority languages were insufficient. As noted, the 2011 Law on Education introduced a single Lithuanian language curriculum for all schools and a uniform state language exam at grades 10 or 12. This created significant difficulties for children belonging to national minorities, and a transition period of eight years was introduced in 2012. Students from minority language schools who sat this exam in 2013 had received 818 hours fewer of Lithuanian language lessons than their peers from Lithuanian language schools. The level of minority language proficiency in the final exams is not taken into account. Only examination results in Lithuanian, mathematics and one foreign language (usually English) are relevant, while Polish or Russian can be taken only as optional exams. Thus, representatives of national minorities, who scored the worst in the final exams, were more disadvantaged than Lithuanians with regard to access to higher education.⁷⁵⁰

The number of hours of courses in the Lithuanian language, as well as teaching aids and educational materials are still not sufficiently adapted to the needs of children of families speaking mostly minority languages. Many first graders start learning the national language almost as a foreign language and are overwhelmed by the requirements of a uniform curriculum.

The number of Russian-language schools in the country is decreasing, while the number of subjects taught in Lithuanian is increasing, and the requirements for passing the Lithuanian language matriculation exam for graduates of national minority schools and Lithuanian schoolchildren are being fully equalized. As a result, in 2020, one in five graduates of secondary schools with teaching in a language other than the title language failed the state exam in Lithuanian, which prevented them from accessing free higher education. In 2021, the Lithuanian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport increased the compulsory Lithuanian

[%2f9-10&Lang=ru](#)

⁷⁵⁰ Fourth opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Lithuania. Adopted on 30 May 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-advisory-committee-opinion-on-lithuania-english-language-version/1680906d97>

language instruction in preschool institutions for ethnic minorities to five hours and provided funding for teachers to improve their professional skills in teaching the Lithuanian language to preschoolers. The Ministry of Education outlined the long-standing goal of discontinuing the teaching of the Russian language.⁷⁵¹ For now, Russian language textbooks have been removed from circulation because they "glorify Russia". The publishers have also been instructed to review the contents of other manuals.⁷⁵²

In total, during the years of independence the number of Russian schools decreased from 85 to 27. In September 2022, the Alexander Pushkin Gymnasium in Kaunas was renamed the Kaunas International Gymnasium, because, according to the head of the institution, the new name "better corresponds to the list of services provided and its specifications". Russian compatriots living in Lithuania are deprived of the opportunity to receive a full-fledged higher education in their native language.

The negative political and informational background surrounding the issue of education in national minority languages in Lithuania has led to constant discussion of the topic of Russia's ideological influence on the population of Lithuania, questioning of Russian school teachers by employees of the State Security Department in connection with students' trips to Russian summer camps, as well as proposals by certain officials of the Republic of Lithuania to close these educational institutions.

National minorities in Lithuania, especially the Russian and Polish, also need their rights protected in matters of authentic spelling of names in documents, as well as geographical names in their native languages. The Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania specifies that names, family names and names of places in documents shall be written in accordance with the rules of the Lithuanian language. This is contrary to Article 11 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe. According to the

⁷⁵¹ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220829/v-litve-khotyat-otkazatsya-ot-prepodavaniya-russkogo-yazyka-v-shkolakh-24333577.html>

⁷⁵² <https://iz.ru.1396081/2022-09-15/v-litve-iziali-uchebnik-russkogo-iazyka-iz-za-proslavleniia-ri>

Council of Europe AC-FCNM, the right to use a personal name in a national minority language and to have it officially recognized is a central linguistic right closely linked to personal identity and dignity.⁷⁵³

In this regard, persons with foreign names face legal challenges and are forced to defend their rights in court. In January 2022, Vilnius still legitimized the spelling of names with letters that are not present in the Lithuanian alphabet, but the right to use diacritic symbols of foreign languages was not supported.⁷⁵⁴

Specialized international organizations have repeatedly documented persisting violations of the rights of Roma, as well as other national minorities, and certain social groups. The persistence of discrimination against Roma, particularly in the exercise of their rights to housing, health care, employment, and education, has been noted with concern by UN human rights treaty bodies such as the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, as well as the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. This included indications that the Roma community faces social exclusion and is disproportionately affected by poverty. In particular, the ECRI noted the issue related to the legalization of Roma buildings in the Kirtimai community in Vilnius.⁷⁵⁵ In May 2019, CERD noted the prevalence of prejudice against members of vulnerable and minority groups, in particular migrants, Muslims and Roma, "hate speech" and insults against them, including antisemitic language in the media and online.⁷⁵⁶

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights also noted unresolved housing issues for Roma, including in the mentioned community. In February 2023, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights also addressed the crisis

⁷⁵³ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁴ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/13456467>

⁷⁵⁵ ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in Respect of Lithuania Subject to Interim Follow-up. Adopted on 3 April 2019. Published on 6 June 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/interim-follow-up-conclusions-on-lithuania-5th-monitoring-cycle-/168094ce17>

⁷⁵⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined ninth and tenth periodic reports of Lithuania. June 2019 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLTU%2fCO%2f9-10&Lang=ru

situation of Roma in Lithuania. In particular, it expressed concern about the lack of meaningful progress and the persistent stigmatization and social exclusion of, and discrimination against, Roma, particularly in the areas of housing, health and employment. It was noted, inter alia, that the low educational attainment and high dropout rates of Roma children and their placement in special schools continue to persist. In addition, CESCR emphasized that because the buildings in the Kirtimai Settlement have been destroyed, the current housing and living conditions of the Roma residing there raise multiple questions.⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the third periodic report of Lithuania. February 2023.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FLTU%2FCO%2F3&Lang=ru

Luxembourg

The official authorities of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (hereinafter referred to as the GDL) are striving to prevent the rise of right-wing extremist movements in the country. However, law enforcement agencies do not exclude the presence of several elements in the country that sympathize with and share the ideas of neo-Nazism.

For example, in November 2021, police found weapons and right-wing extremist propaganda materials in the home of a Luxembourger in Schiffflange. The authorities were concerned about the large-scale (by local standards) uncoordinated protest actions of Covid dissidents that took place at the end of 2021, which in some cases took aggressive forms. Some of the demonstrators "stormed" Christmas markets, tried to enter the parliament building and deliberately staged rallies near the houses of Minister for Family Affairs Corinne Cahen and Prime Minister Xavier Bettel. At that time, the police did not rule out the participation of representatives of radical groups in organizing these protests.

We have recently seen a trend towards self-radicalization of individuals through access to extremist material and 'hate speech' on social media. Late 2021 saw the end of the first trial in Luxembourg's history of a young couple accused of having links to ISIS and distributing terrorist material on social media. The man was sentenced to 3.5 years, and the young woman - to 2 years.

The so-called "Steve Duarte case" remains relevant. The 35-year-old rap artist, a Portuguese national born in Luxembourg, left in 2014 to fight for Islamic State in Syria. He is currently alleged to be held in the Kurdish prison of Ghwayran in al-Hasakah, north-eastern Syria. Several years ago he expressed his desire to return to the Grand Duchy to face trial. But in Luxembourg he was accused of committing grave crimes in the ranks of ISIS (he appears on one of the videos published by Islamists during an execution). According to media reports, Luxembourg's Foreign Ministry is closely monitoring the situation, but there has been no talk of "repatriating" Steve Duarte back to the GDL yet. Possible negotiations between Luxembourg and Portugal over the "Duarte case" have also

been mentioned. In July 2022, the Prosecutor's Office of Luxembourg confirmed that the Luxembourg Portuguese was "still on trial".

In April 2023, three residents of the Grand Duchy were charged with financing terrorism. For two of them, preliminary detention was chosen as a measure of restraint, the third was placed under judicial control (a measure similar to giving a written undertaking not to leave). At the same time, law enforcement agencies disclosed neither the names of the accused, nor the name of the commune where they had been detained nor the date of the search by the Judicial Police Anti-Terrorism Department. It was only reported that this operation was carried out in the south of the country, and the person who received the funds considers himself an Islamic radicalism supporter⁷⁵⁸.

However in general, there is no open activity of neo-Nazi movements or organizations in the public space of GDL. There are no facts of public propaganda of the ideas of Nazism and racial superiority. In contrast to Baltic countries, the glorification of former members of the SS organization and its constituent parts, including the Waffen-SS, in any form is also uncommon in the GDL. No monuments or memorials are erected to the Nazis and their collaborators. No public demonstrations are held to glorify the Nazi past.

The ban on exhibiting the swastika and any other Nazi symbols is strictly observed. Recently, only one case of this kind was reported, when in late January 2020, a number of buildings, bus stops and road signs in the capital were painted with the image of swastika, but, as the police found, it was used rather for offensive purposes than to glorify Nazism.

The importance of preserving the memory of the tragic events of World War II is declared by the top authorities of Luxembourg. The country's leadership is making efforts to promote the thesis of its people's heroic resistance to Hitler supporters during World War II. In 1940, despite its neutral status, Luxembourg was occupied by the Nazi Germany. The policy of Germanization began, and

⁷⁵⁸ Des residents du Luxembourg arrêtés pour "financement du terrorisme". L'essentiel. 3 April 2023. <https://www.lesentiel.lu/fr/story/des-residents-du-luxembourg-arretes-pour-financement-du-terrorisme-126402354145>

citizens were forcibly conscripted into the Wehrmacht. Many Luxembourg soldiers, unwilling to fight on the side of the Third Reich, voluntarily surrendered to the Red Army or Allied forces. On the territory of Luxembourg itself, resistance to the occupation turned into a General strike by 1942⁷⁵⁹.

Events related to the struggle against the Nazi regime are solemnly celebrated at the state level. First of all, these are the General strike anniversary (31 August) and National Remembrance Day (10 October), when the Grand Duke takes part in the Eternal Flame lighting ceremony the Luxembourg Solidarity Monument.

In order to preserve historical evidence of Luxembourgers' participation in World War II, a special decree of 2005 established the Committee to commemorate forced conscription into the Wehrmacht and a corresponding documentation and Research Centre. In 2016, a World War II Memorial Committee was established to bring together members of veterans' organizations and representatives of a number of ministries. The Committee is tasked, among others, with protecting the rights and interests of Luxembourg citizens forcibly conscripted into the Wehrmacht and Holocaust victims. In addition, the Committee engages in organizing celebrations dedicated to World War II, the search and identification of historical and memorial places, as well as awareness-raising activities among young people.

On 27 January 2021⁷⁶⁰, an agreement was signed between the Government of Luxembourg and representatives of the local Jewish community, providing for an ambitious set of measures aimed at restoring historical justice. First of all, a landmark decision was made to compensate all Jews affected by Hitler's regime in the country for losses and confiscated property. To this end, a special restitution

⁷⁵⁹ The Luxembourg general strike began in protest against the decision to annex the country to the German Reich, introduction of universal conscription and mobilization of Luxembourgers into the Nazi army by the government of the Nazi Germany who invaded Luxembourg on 10 May 1940. On August 31, workers at the ARBED metallurgical plant in Esch and the Ideal tannery in Wiltz stopped working. On September 1, the strike became nationwide. The strike was led by communists who actively participated in the national Resistance Movement. The Nazis suppressed it by armed force on September 8. Despite this, it thwarted the plans of Nazi invaders to carry out mobilization, demonstrated the will of the people to fight for independence, and contributed to a stronger Resistance Movement in the country.

⁷⁶⁰ International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust is marked on the anniversary of liberation of the Nazi Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp by the Red Army.

fund is to be created, which would be receiving 120,000 euros annually from the State budget over a period of 30 years. Until then, compensation measures had applied only to nationals (about a thousand people), while refugees and stateless persons (3,000 or 4,000 people) were effectively left behind the legal framework. An additional 2 million euros is being allocated for various research and archival work, and a Holocaust memorial and educational centre is being installed in the former Luxembourg Abbey of Cinqfontaines.

The first payments of 5,000 euros reached Holocaust victims from 11 countries in November 2021. The deadline for applying to this program has been extended to 31 January 2022⁷⁶¹.

In 2019, a new monument to Holocaust victims was opened in the capital centre.

However, in general, the interpretation of the events of those years is ambiguous, which is also associated with the facts of collaboration.

Despite the fact that communal authorities maintain World War II monuments and memorials, as a rule, in exemplary condition, a 2022 wave of vandalism against Russian and Soviet memorial sites also reached Luxembourg. Thus, in October 2022, the administration of the commune of Buses reported the disappearance of a memorial plaque installed at the local cemetery on May 9, 2015 by compatriots living in the Grand Duchy, in memory of two Soviet prisoners of war shot by the Nazis during World War II. A crossed-out letter Z was drawn in its place. The GDL police opened an official investigation, all the leading Luxembourg media announced witness search.

Besides, on 25 February 2022, the Luxembourg side suspended the work on installing a monument to Soviet citizens forcibly taken to Luxembourg for forced labour during the Great Patriotic War. An agreement behind this which was reached during the official visit to the GDL of Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Dmitry A. Medvedev on 5-6 March 2019.

⁷⁶¹ Luxembourg pays €5,000 to Holocaust survivors. Delano. Luxembourg in English. 16 November 2022. <https://delano.lu/article/luxembourg-issues-5000-to-holo>.

When holding Victory Day commemoration events, the Russian Embassy in Luxembourg encountered no obstacles from the local authorities. At the same time, in 2022 representatives of municipal authorities refused to take part in commemoration events together with the Russian Embassy, but, nevertheless, independently laid wreaths at the monuments.

Officially declaring the condemnation of Nazi crimes, Luxembourg, along with other EU member states, has for many years abstained from voting on the annual UN General Assembly draft resolution “Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to the escalation of modern forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance” submitted by Russia and other co-sponsors, and in 2022 even voted against it for the first time in solidarity with EU and NATO partners.

The Luxembourg legislation contains no provisions for declaring illegal and prohibiting any organization that incites racial discrimination. Over the years, international human rights monitoring bodies have criticized the fact that the commission of a crime motivated by racial hatred is not defined as an aggravating circumstance⁷⁶² in the criminal law of the Duchy and not taken into account by the courts when deciding on penalties⁷⁶³. In June 2022 Minister of Justice of Luxembourg Sam Tanson submitted a bill stipulating racism as an aggravating circumstance of a crime in the country’s Criminal Code.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Human Rights Committee (HRC) and Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) also criticized draft constitutional reform in May, September and November 2022 respectively. The latter assumes the retention of

⁷⁶² Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 18th to 20th periodic reports of Luxembourg. May 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLUX%2fCO%2f18-20&Lang=ru

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Luxembourg (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted 6 December 2016, published 28 February 2017.

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-luxembourg/16808b589b>

⁷⁶³ European Union Fundamental Rights Agency 2022 Report.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

constitutional Article 10bis (1), the wording of which - "Luxembourgers are equal before the law" - implies inequality between citizens and stateless persons, and contradicts the practice of the Luxembourg Constitutional Court as well⁷⁶⁴.

Besides, human rights activists repeatedly brought to the attention of the authorities the need to implement measures to integrate foreigners who permanently reside in the country into its political life, in particular, by entitling them to vote. However, the 2015 referendum revealed that 78 per cent of Luxembourgers strongly opposed such an initiative. In 2022, the voting law was amended to drop the five-year residency requirement for EU or third-country nationals residing in Luxembourg to vote in municipal elections.

On 8 March 2017, the Luxembourg nationality act was adopted to facilitate the requirements and procedure of naturalization, however, it is impeded by the requirement to pass a Luxembourgish language exam.

In 2019, CoE's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance declared that Luxembourg had fulfilled its recommendations to enact a new national integration plan. The document was adopted by the Council of Government of Luxembourg on 13 July 2018. It covers two large areas of action – reception and social support of applicants for international protection, as well as integration of all “non-Luxembourgers” residing permanently in the country⁷⁶⁵.

Today, international human rights monitoring mechanisms face difficulties in assessing whether different population groups fully enjoy the rights provided for

⁷⁶⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 18th to 20th periodic reports of Luxembourg. May 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLUX%2fCO%2f18-20&Lang=ru

Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 4th periodic report of Luxembourg. November 2022.

tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fLUX%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru

⁷⁶⁵ Conclusions of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on the implementation of the recommendations in respect of Luxembourg subject to interim follow-up. Adopted 10 December 2019. Published 19 March 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/16809cde13>

in international human rights treaties. This is due to the fact that GDL does not collect statistical data, disaggregated by ethnicity⁷⁶⁶.

Human rights organizations point out to a differentiated approach in the local labour market, insufficient basic allowance granted to migrants, inadequate procedure and methods for registering their requests. The lack of objective statistics and excessively flexible labour legislation in terms of employer liability (extremely low fines and prison terms) hamper creating a complete picture. Neither does the GDL legislation provide for any remedies in case false data is submitted for employee's social insurance or an employment contract not declared, paving the way to the imposition of "crippling" work conditions (working week often exceeding the allowable 48 hour maximum up to 70 hours).

According to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)⁷⁶⁷, the HRC⁷⁶⁸ and ECRI⁷⁶⁹, anti-Semitic attitudes, Islamophobia and migrant phobia with discriminatory stereotypes in the media and cyberspace are widespread in Luxembourg, which contribute to the formation of prejudices against certain groups of the population.

In May 2022, CERD noted an increasing trend in racist hate speech against migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and people of African descent, including online. To counter this phenomenon, the BEE SECURE Stopline platform was launched. With its help, evidence of hate speech on the Internet is collected and sent to the police⁷⁷⁰.

⁷⁶⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 18th to 20th periodic reports of Luxembourg. May 2022.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLUX%2fCO%2f18-20&Lang=ru

⁷⁶⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Luxembourg. March 2018.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fLUX%2fCO%2f6-7&Lang=ru

⁷⁶⁸ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 4th periodic report of Luxembourg. September 2022.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fLUX%2fCO%2f4&Lang=en

⁷⁶⁹ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Luxembourg (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted 6 December 2016, published 28 February 2017.
<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-luxembourg/16808b589b>

⁷⁷⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 18th to 20th periodic reports of Luxembourg. May 2022.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLUX%2fCO

According to the 2022 Ministry of Justice report, 83 new cases of hate speech during this period were registered in the Luxembourg district (in 2021 - 198, in 2020 - 183), in the Diekirch district - 7 (in 2021 - 18, in 2020 - 25). There has been an increase in the use of hate speech on social media. In 36 cases (in the Luxembourg district) a preliminary investigation was initiated, in respect of the remaining cases, criminal proceedings were terminated for one reason or another, for example, due to the failure of offender identification or the absence of *corpus delicti*. In the Luxembourg district, 18 cases reached the stage of public hearings and convictions (2021 - 14; 2020 - 10). In the Diekirch district, as in the previous year, only one sentence was pronounced (none in 2020), and for the first time - a decision in the case of belittling the tragedy of Holocaust⁷⁷¹.

According to the statistics of complaints received by the Centre for Equal Treatment, which is the body responsible for combating discrimination in Luxembourg, in 2022 ethnicity was the reason for intolerant treatment in 48 pending cases (20%, or the second highest number of complaints in 2022 following the extensive category "other motives", in 2021 this group came out on top); in 13 cases (5%) the grounds for discrimination were religious affiliation⁷⁷².

Despite the absence of a direct legislative ban on ethnic and racial profiling⁷⁷³ in the GDL, it is generally not in practice among law enforcement officers.

At the same time, the very service in the ranks of the Grand Duchy police is conditioned by the obligatory presence of Luxembourgish citizenship. Meanwhile, there is no such requirement for volunteers in the ranks of the armed forces. Along with this, the GDL Labour Code, as well as Equal Treatment Law, General Status

[%2f18-20&Lang=ru](#)

⁷⁷¹ Rapport d'activité 2022 du ministère de la Justice.

<https://gouvernement.lu/dam-assets/fr/publications/rapport-activite/minist-justice/2022-rapport-activite-ministere-justice/rapport-dactivit-2022.pdf>

⁷⁷² Centre for Equal Treatment 2022 Activity Report. Published 3 May 2023.

<https://cet.lu/en/2023/05/03/rapport-dactivites-2022-2/>

⁷⁷³ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 18th to 20th periodic reports of Luxembourg. May 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLUX%2fCO%2f18-20&Lang=ru

of Civil Servants Law and General Status of Municipal Employees Law do not contain a direct prohibition of discrimination based on skin colour and origin⁷⁷⁴.

Opinion polls on anti-discrimination, including EU-wide surveys (e.g. the study "Being Black in the EU" carried out in 2019 among almost 6,000 respondents from 12 States by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), show that Luxembourg ranks among the bottom three countries on a number of indicators. For example, 47 per cent of people from the African continent experienced various forms of harassment in that country, mainly in employment. However, the average number was 39 per cent in the other countries surveyed⁷⁷⁵.

According to the study "Racism and ethno-racial discrimination in Luxembourg" published in March 2022, people of African descent suffer from racism and discrimination in employment, education and housing in much higher proportions than other population groups.

Another group identified by researchers is the Portuguese-speaking community of Luxembourg. It is subject to institutional discrimination in Luxembourg, which is especially noticeable by the ratio of people receiving the so-called classical (providing better opportunities for employment and earnings) and vocational education.

In total, 15% of the respondents who took part in the study feel discriminatory attitudes towards themselves due to their ethnic origin.

Moreover, according to the report, two thirds of the alleged victims of racism or discrimination fail to report incidents that happen to them, in particular due to ensuing significant financial costs, and problematic proof and access to full legal aid, which is usually limited, as well as for the fear of losing their jobs⁷⁷⁶.

International monitoring mechanisms also noted the poor refugee situation in the Grand Duchy. According to many human rights activists, the subsistence

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁵ Being Black in the EU. Second EU Minorities and Discrimination survey. 11 November 2019. <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2019/being-black-eu-summary#related>

⁷⁷⁶ Racism and ethno-racial discrimination in Luxembourg. The Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and the Greater Region, Centre for Intercultural and Social Studies and Training, Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research. 8 March 2022. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/le-racisme-et-les-discriminations-ethno-rationales-au-luxembourg_en

allowance granted to them is clearly insufficient and employment opportunities are limited. CEDAW expressed concerns over the situation where local language requirements are perceived as barriers for foreigners and migrants in the labour market and education⁷⁷⁷. The methodology of registering newly arrived refugee families also attracts criticism: spouses and children are added to a single file created for the head of the family, which leaves room for possible discriminatory attitudes.

A significant number of complaints are made about the treatment of children from migrant families: outdated, non-indicative and degrading methods such as bone test and genitalia shots are used to determine whether they fall into the category of minors. According to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, unaccompanied children may be transferred several times from one accommodation to another, at that sometimes they are placed with adults, which in some cases occurs without their prior consent, before they are sent to specialized reception centres for unaccompanied children. Under certain conditions and in certain circumstances, Luxembourg's immigration and asylum law allows for the placement of minors in detention. At the same time, the maximum detention term for families with children was increased from three to seven days.

In addition, according to CEDAW, migrant girls are the most exposed to bullying in educational institutions⁷⁷⁸.

In light of the influx of refugees from Ukraine (there are currently over 3,000) asylum seekers from other countries, primarily Afghanistan, Syria, Eritrea who have traditionally accounted for the majority of applications for refugee status in Luxembourg, complain about the bureaucratic difficulties. In mid-March 2022, mayor of Luxembourg Lydie Polfer demanded that rooms be vacated for arriving Ukrainians in a temporary ad hoc accommodation centre for refugees. Meanwhile, it is unclear, where the evicted refugees from the Middle East and African

⁷⁷⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Luxembourg. March 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fLUX%2fCO%2f6-7&Lang=ru

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid.

countries were sent to. This fact caused discontent, including among local human rights organizations.

Quite a number of institutions are involved in combating various forms of intolerance: Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and the Greater Region, Luxembourg Office of Reception and Integration, Ministry of Equal Opportunities, Centre for Equal Treatment, Committee of the Ombudsman for Children's Rights and Inspectorate for Labour and Mines. With regard to the fight against intolerance, the Government established a Centre to combat radicalization in 2017⁷⁷⁹.

However, CERD receives reports about the lack of coordination between these institutions and difficulties in choosing the most appropriate institution to contact that such multiplicity creates for victims. In addition, the Committee noted insufficient financial and human resources to fulfil their mandates in some of them⁷⁸⁰. CESCR experts spoke in an equally critical vein on this matter⁷⁸¹.

In order to promote cultural diversity and tolerance, as well as ideas of inter-ethnic and inter-religious interaction, festivals are held in Luxembourg both at the national and communal levels, the largest of which, *CultiMulti*, is organized on a regular basis.

Tolerant attitude towards ethnic minorities is also promoted in education, for example through *Life and Society* school program, which includes the teaching of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Luxembourg's Colonial Past exhibition was opened at the National Museum of History and Art in April 2022. However, CERD experts regretted that the history of colonialism and slavery is not covered at any school level⁷⁸².

⁷⁷⁹ Centre against radicalization website: www.respect.lu

⁷⁸⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 18th to 20th periodic reports of Luxembourg. May 2022.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fCO%2fLUX%2fCO%2f18-20&Lang=ru

⁷⁸¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 4th periodic report of Luxembourg. November 2022.
tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FLUX%2FCO%2F4&Lang=ru

⁷⁸² Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 18th to 20th periodic reports of Luxembourg. May 2022.

After the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation launched a special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, the Grand Duchy authorities, including country's Prime Minister Xavier Bettel and Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn, repeatedly publicly stated the inadmissibility of any discrimination against Russians living in Luxembourg and made it clear to local Ukrainian activists that if this condition was not met, the Government could reconsider its policy on accepting refugees. Thus, the country's authorities quickly extinguished the Russophobic surge that began to gain strength after 24 February 2022.

However, with the influx of Ukrainian refugees, who are extremely active in the media space, moral and psychological pressure on Russian compatriots has increased, including in social networks. A March 2022 attack by two Ukrainians against a girl speaking Russian over the mobile phone stirred up their community. The local press mentioned this in passing, but social networks actively circulated a photo of the blood stained face of the victim, who turned out to be Ukrainian too.

In January 2023, due to incoming threats and under pressure from Ukrainian activists, the management of local cinemas was forced to cancel private screenings of the Russian film *Cheburashka*, organized by Russian compatriots in the GDL.

The two main private schools teaching in Russian, *Kalinka* and *Sunflower*, continue to operate in the Grand Duchy. However, local authorities closed Russian language courses for children and adults in the Aline Mayrisch Luxembourg City Lyceum, Ettelbrück Lyceum, Robert Schumann Lyceum, as well as at evening courses at the city halls of Esch-sur-Alzette and Differdange in 2022 without explanation.

Malta

The Maltese authorities pursue a consistent policy of preventing the dissemination of Nazi ideology, the glorification of the Nazi movement, the erection of monuments dedicated to the Nazis and their accomplices, the holding of related public demonstrations, and the whitewashing of former members of Nazi organizations in the country. They also pay due attention to the conservation of monuments to the victims of World War II.

The historical journey that Malta has made in the 20th century is a factor that largely restrains the spread of fascist ideas in the country. During World War II, being a British colony, Malta was a member of the anti-Hitler coalition. The War has directly affected the islanders: the defence of Malta against the Italian and Nazi invaders was one of the most notable events in the Mediterranean theatre of war, when the island was subjected to heavy bombing.

Malta gained independence from Great Britain in 1964. In 1981, the country declared its neutrality and since then has sought to develop relations with both the United States and the USSR. Neutrality in foreign policy has allowed the Maltese to keep an open-minded attitude towards matters of history. Malta objectively assesses the historical significance of the Victory with the decisive contribution of the peoples of the Soviet Union, and recognizes the need to preserve the memory of the War and to draw lessons from it, primarily in terms of countering manifestations of extremism and neo-Nazism.

There are no bans on symbols of the Red Army or the USSR in Malta, and no cases of interference into the activities of veterans' organizations and relevant NGOs have been recorded.

On the whole, there are no public manifestations of Nazism and neo-Nazism, no cases of the erection of monuments dedicated to the Nazis and their accomplices, the holding of related public demonstrations, the whitewashing of former members of Nazi organizations, the desecration of memorials dedicated to fighters against Nazism, or the prosecution of anti-fascist soldiers in the island republic.

The local authorities pay due attention to the conservation of monuments to victims of the events of World War II.

Currently, there is a public consensus on the World War II; it tends to remain outside the realm of political speculation and is not used by the authorities or the opposition to achieve their political goals.

Despite constructive approaches to the preservation of historical memory, the Maltese fail to make concerted efforts to countering the attempts to revise the outcome of World War II or denying the Nazis' crimes against humanity. The Maltese media, which predominantly tries to avoid historical falsifications, distortions or revaluations in its material, allows itself to periodically reprint politically biased publications of Western information agencies (mainly Reuters and Associated Press) on "the role of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in the outbreak of war," "totalitarian post-war enslavement of the peoples of Europe, including the Baltics, by Stalin's regime," etc.

In April 2023, Malta Television (TVM) aired a programme with Ronald Bugeja, local non-professional historian, on his book titled "My Führer Adolf Hitler: History and Biography" ("Mein Führer Adolf Hitler, L-Istorja u l-Bijografija"), which is positioned in Malta as "the first biography of Hitler in the Maltese language." The author's motivation was the realization that "most people know absolutely nothing about the details of the life" of the Führer. The book has a revisionist orientation and is an attempt to justify Hitler and relieve him of personal responsibility for the inhuman crimes of Nazism under the pretext of introducing certain previously ignored historical sources (their reliability is highly questionable).

The information that appeared in the press that Ronald Bugeja had thanked the National Book Council of Malta for its help in working on the book added fuel to the fire.

Provocative statements by an amateur historian on the main local TV channel have stirred up the Maltese public. The organizations which reacted to scandalous remarks of Ronald Bugeja expressed outrage at the insult to the

memory of the victims of Nazi Germany, accused Maltese television of neglecting its functions of promoting the values of democracy and tolerance, and demanded an official investigation. A number of media outlets and NGOs sent requests to the national broadcasting service and the Ministry of Culture.

Officials of the relevant Maltese government authorities headed by Owen Bonnici, Minister of Culture, decisively distanced themselves from the figure of Ronald Bugeja and categorically condemned both the content of his statements and the fact of their appearance on the national television. The National Broadcasting Service reported that the scandalous programme had been cancelled and promised to conduct an investigation and take disciplinary action against those responsible.

Mark Camilleri, Chairman of the National Book Council of Malta, categorically denied any connection to the author, emphasizing that no financial or informational support was given to the publication. The book was withdrawn from sale.

In general, pro-Nazi sentiments are historically unpopular in Maltese society. Nevertheless, the dangerous manipulation of historical memory by the European political establishment for the sake of political climate leads to such situations. It is also worth noting that Maltese officials completely ignored the key liberating role of the Red Army in their statements on International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January 2023.

In line with the policy of EU Brussels, Malta abstained from voting in the UN General Assembly on the draft resolution titled "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" introduced annually by Russia and other co-sponsors, and voted against it in 2022.

In 2022, for the first time, the Maltese authorities did not authorize the Russian Embassy without explanation to hold the traditional ceremony of laying flowers and wreaths on the occasion of Victory Day at the main War Memorial in Floriana.

As an integral part of the Western community and a member of the

European Union, Malta has positioned itself as a consistent advocate of democratic freedoms and human rights. In its Constitution and a number of other legislative acts, Malta prohibits racial discrimination. For instance, the Criminal Code (art. 82A) provides for six to eighteen months of imprisonment as a punishment for acts aimed at inciting racial intolerance. Article 83 B qualifies manifestations of racism and xenophobia as an aggravating circumstance. These measures are considered by human rights defenders (in particular, the local branch of the European Law Students' Association) as generally adequate to prevent hate speech and incitement to violence.

However, there is no legal ban on organizations and movements that promote racial discrimination and glorify Nazi ideology in Malta. Imperium Europa, far-right party (locally referred to as neo-fascist), was officially registered in the country in 2019. Its leader, Norman Lowell, is an ultra-nationalist who openly denies the Holocaust.⁷⁸³ In his statements, he has repeatedly made positive comments about Hitler and has also repeatedly praised Carmelo Borga Pisani, fascist of Maltese origin, who worked for Italian intelligence during World War II. Today, Imperium Europa is the third largest party in Malta,⁷⁸⁴ but this does not mean it is popular within the population – the island Republic inherited the two-party system of the former metropolis, and the neo-fascists fail to gain the necessary votes to be elected to the House of Representatives or the European Parliament.

Despite the respect for history and the absence of significant forces promoting fascism in Maltese political space, domestic xenophobia and strong racist attitudes towards forced migrants from Africa and the Middle East, who regularly encounter various forms of racial discrimination and xenophobia on the part of the local population, remain a significant problem in local society.

According to an opinion poll conducted by The Times' journalists in

⁷⁸³ Imperium Europa approved as political party, Norman Lowell to contest MEP elections. https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/93455/imperium_europa_approved_as_political_party_norman_lowell_to_contest_mep_elections#.YtlCaxaOHDs

⁷⁸⁴ EP election: Imperium Europa now Malta's third largest party. <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2019-05-27/local-news/EP-election-imperium-Europa-now-Malta-s-third-largest-party-6736208703>

May 2019, more than 70 percent of the Maltese population recognize that racism is a problem in the country. At the same time, 46 percent of the respondents "feel threatened" by members of other cultures, and 45 percent believe that there are too many migrants living on the island.

According to a Maltese research, over 60 percent of Black Africans regularly experience intolerance in everyday life and tend to avoid interacting with locals as much as possible. Around 30 percent of them have been victims of racially motivated hate crimes in the past.

The existence of challenges in combating racism was confirmed by the outcomes of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Malta that took place at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in November 2018. The report, submitted by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, expresses, inter alia, "concern about reports of racism and xenophobia against migrants, including racially motivated violence and racial discrimination in access to employment, housing and services."⁷⁸⁵

The Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (CoE-ACFC) regularly notes cases of discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnic origin in access to housing, employment and health care in Malta. According to the Committee, circumstantial evidence indicates cases of racially motivated crimes, bullying in schools, treating persons with a different skin colour as perpetrators of a crime, rather than victims or innocent bystanders.⁷⁸⁶

Xenophobic rhetoric appears in Malta's online space and often in the media. According to a study by Eurobarometer, the country has the highest rate of the use of "hate speech" in the European Union.

According to the CoE-ACFC and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), which also operates within the Council of Europe, as

⁷⁸⁵ Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (Compilation on Malta provided by stakeholders), prepared within the framework of the third universal periodic review. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/259/84/pdf/G1825984.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁷⁸⁶ Fourth opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Malta <https://rm.coe.int/fourth-opinion-on-malta-adopted-on-14-october-2016/16807105e5>

confirmed by Eurobarometer research, social media in Malta continues to be a means of disseminating racist discourse, with an abundance of violent and offensive content towards migrants, while public opinion towards them is largely negative. In its interview (August 2021), Omar Rababah, prominent Maltese human rights defender of Syrian origin, characterized Malta as a "racist country."

In general, despite attempts by the Maltese leadership to bring its human rights record in line with modern European democratic standards, the current state of affairs in combating contemporary forms of racism and xenophobia remains far from perfect.

Discrimination against migrants in the provision of health services has recently been increasingly highlighted in the Maltese media. In December 2021, news broke of the death of a 22-year-old woman due to the negligence of staff at a public health centre. According to the report, such treatment of migrants is widespread: doctors often recommend that they take painkillers instead of providing proper medical care.⁷⁸⁷ Concerns about the frequent lack of necessary medical care were also expressed by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT).⁷⁸⁸

The local press periodically publishes reports of cases of bias against black migrants by law enforcement officials, including cases of excessive use of force. The most high-profile of these were the attacks on migrants by two servicemen of the Maltese Armed Forces (in February and April 2019) with firearms, which resulted in several people being injured, and one (a native Ivorian) killed. At the same time, one of the Maltese arrested in that case confessed to hating people of African descent.

The existence of serious problems in this State was confirmed by another similar case that took place in October 2022. Then three police officers brutally

⁷⁸⁷ Migrant woman turned away with Panadol prescription, dies in her sleep. <https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/114025/migrant-woman-turned-away-with-panadol-prescription-dies-in-her-sleep#.YtIPJRaOHDt>

⁷⁸⁸ Report to the Maltese Government on the visit to Malta carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 17 to 22 September 2020. Published on 10 March 2021. <https://rm.coe.int/0900001680a1b877>.

beat a black man from Somalia after arresting him. The law enforcement officers were suspended from duty, and an investigation was launched.

Dozens of local human rights defenders and migrants living in Malta called for thorough investigation, punishment for those responsible, as well as measures to eradicate racial inequality in the country when they gathered to protest in November 2022.

For the fourth year now (since 2019), the NGO Amnesty International has been working for dropping charges against three African teenage refugees detained in Malta who were wrongly accused of hijacking the El Hiblu ship, – a charge risking them with prison sentences, up to life in prison.

The Times of Malta published an interview with a Thai student who complained of racism not only in her daily life, but also in her dealings with Maltese officials.

The situation has not escaped the attention of relevant international organizations. The HRC Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrants recommended that Valletta fully implement its legislation to combat direct and indirect racial discrimination with regard to the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by immigrants, in particular refugees and asylum seekers, including access to private rental housing and the labour market.⁷⁸⁹ The Human Rights Committee recommended that Malta strengthen its efforts to eradicate stereotypes and discrimination against migrants, inter alia, by conducting public awareness campaigns to promote tolerance and respect for diversity,⁷⁹⁰ and ensure that cases of racially motivated violence are investigated.⁷⁹¹

ECRI Report on Malta (fifth monitoring cycle) says there is still no systematic data collection on the number of reported incidents of racist hate crime.⁷⁹² The CoE-ACFC called on Valletta to establish a publicly available data

⁷⁸⁹ https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/29/36/Add.3

⁷⁹⁰ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/MLT/CO/2&Lang=En

⁷⁹¹ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/MLT/CO/2&Lang=En

⁷⁹² Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Malta (fifth monitoring cycle) adopted on 21 March 2018 and published on 15 May 2018.

collection system on hate crime incidents in 2021.⁷⁹³

According to 2021 ECRI conclusions on the implementation of the recommendations in respect of Malta, the absence of the aforementioned system is due to the fact that the number of hate crimes is small enough, which is why the Malta Police Force records the number of hate crimes reports in general.⁷⁹⁴ According to the same document, the Hate Crime and Speech Unit, inaugurated in October 2019, which works closely with the Maltese Police Force, compiles statistics and processes cases of hate crime and hate speech. The unit also supports victims of such crimes through the provision of free therapeutic and legal services.⁷⁹⁵

By 19 January 2021, the Unit had received 249 reports, 193 of which were filed against individual alleged perpetrators.⁷⁹⁶

National authorities seek to limit the influx of migrants as much as possible. Sea-Eye Charity Organization reported that the Maltese coordination centre regularly ignores distress signals in the Maltese search and rescue zone from vessels carrying migrants (most recently, on 11-12 May 2022)⁷⁹⁷.

In 2019, Joseph Muscat, then Prime Minister of Malta, and Adrian Delia, then leader of the opposition, made public remarks about the "overwhelming dominance of migrants" in the Maltese labour market.

It is indicative that Malta positions itself as a mono-ethnic State. The fifth monitoring cycle of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities contains the position of the country's authorities that there are no

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-malta/16808b592b>.

⁷⁹³ Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Adopted on 5 October 2020 and published on 18 February 2021.

<https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-malta-en/1680a173fd>

⁷⁹⁴ ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in respect of Malta. Adopted on 30 March 2021 and published on 18 May 2021.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a27d87>

⁷⁹⁵ ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in respect of Malta. Adopted on 30 March 2021 and published on 18 May 2021.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a27d87>

⁷⁹⁶ ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in respect of Malta. Adopted on 30 March 2021 and published on 18 May 2021.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a27d87>

⁷⁹⁷ "Malta accused of violating fundamental human rights because of migrants"

<https://rossaprimavera.ru/news/a1567957>.

national minorities in its territory.⁷⁹⁸

Despite the targeted restriction of migration flow to Malta, the authorities of the island Republic listen to the opinion of relevant international organizations. A number of educational measures aimed at promoting a culture of tolerance and mutual respect, and combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance have been implemented in the country. In this respect, education for children and youth is aligned with the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024, as well as the framework programme "Respect for All" adopted in 2014. UNESCO Global Citizenship Education is being implemented in the country to provide relevant assistance to educational institutions.

In its report (May 2018), ECRI recommended that the Maltese authorities step up their efforts and place additional emphasis on training of law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges.⁷⁹⁹

In September 2018, SOS Malta NGO and the Times of Malta newspaper launched a year-long #stophate project aimed at countering the spread of hate speech by raising the awareness of this phenomenon, training volunteers to moderate online content, and conducting research in this area.

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality regularly conducts events aimed at raising awareness of non-discrimination. Other State and non-State actors also carry out activities with such a thematic focus. In November 2018 and February 2019, the Office of the President of Malta organized seminars on interfaith dialogue with the participation of representatives of 12 religious communities and organizations. These efforts resulted in the signing of the Malta Declaration on Interfaith Harmony on 8 February 2019.

In 2021, the CoE-ACFC noted that the Maltese authorities pursued their efforts to reinforce their integration policies, in particular by adopting the National Migrant Integration Strategy and its Action Plan.⁸⁰⁰

⁷⁹⁸ Report by Malta under the Fifth monitoring cycle of the Framework Convention on National Minorities. Received 24 May 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-sr-malta-en/168094b1cc>

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁰ Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Adopted on 5 October 2020 and published on 18 February 2021.

There is a traditionally large (7-8,000 people) Russian diaspora in Malta. It is mostly made up of Russian female citizens who are married to Maltese citizens. The Russian community is deeply integrated into the local society and actively engages in public life; it makes a noticeable contribution to the social and economic development of Malta, which is also noted by the Maltese authorities. There are no ethnic conflicts between our compatriots and local residents.

It should be noted that local politicians did not support Russophobic tendencies and used conciliatory language towards the large Russian community from the very beginning of the special military operation. In particular, in April 2022, Prime Minister Robert Abela publicly declared the "unacceptability of xenophobia towards Russians and Russian-speaking people living in the country."

At the same time, the media space in Malta has seen an increase in the presentation of materials from a Russophobic point of view since March 2022, the main part of which still consists of reprints of publications of Western news agencies (AFP, Reuters, etc.), as well as articles of representatives of the Polish political establishment.

In addition, the level of verbal aggression in local online communities has increased significantly. There are periodic reports of discrimination against Russian citizens by Maltese banks, as well as insults against Russians in everyday life, mostly, by members of the small Ukrainian diaspora.

There are reports about individual cases of inappropriate behaviour against Russian-speaking children in local schools. The Russian Embassy is working in a targeted way with compatriots and local authorities to resolve the problem. As a result of this work, the Ministry for Education of Malta brought recommendations on interaction with Russian-speaking students to the attention of the heads of educational institutions, which greatly improved the situation.

It is also worth noting that there were a number of small anti-Russian rallies in Malta (including near the Russian Embassy) between March and May 2022, held by local NGOs and members of the Ukrainian diaspora. The demonstrations

passed off without any incidents and in the presence of police.

Since March 2022, access to Russian satellite TV channels and the Internet resources of Russia's leading news agencies (RT, RIA Novosti, TASS, etc.) has been blocked in the country in accordance with the EU's unlawful sanctions measures and in violation of freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

Moldova

The invariable pro-European course of the Moldovan leadership headed by M. Sandu implies a complete break of historical and cultural ties with Russia. On the instructions of Western curators, the leadership of Chisinau copies in its policy the actions of nationalist regimes of Ukraine and the Baltic States based on Russophobia and anti-Sovietism. Such a course cultivates in society the idea that confrontation with Russia, either today or in the past, including the USSR, is absolutely the right thing to do, and the concepts "Russian-communist-fascist" become increasingly identical.

The Republic of Moldova (RM) continues to witness attacks against the historical memory of the Great Patriotic War, and revisionist pro-Western tendencies are getting stronger and stronger. Radicals from among the supporters of the liquidation of Moldovan statehood and accession to Romania have recently become much more active. Against this background, the Moldova's attempts to glorify Nazism and its accomplices in order to "whitewash" them in the public consciousness are becoming increasingly clear.

There is an open dissemination of ideas in the public space recognizing the "liberating" role of dictator I. Antonescu, Romania-born Nazi collaborator, whom the current Moldovan President M. Sandu (who has Romanian citizenship) considers "an outstanding historical figure".

The reconstruction and installation (often funded by external sponsors) of memorials in honour of "heroes of the Romanian army", that occupied the territory of present-day Moldova in 1941, have been put on a systematic basis with the assistance of the official Moldovan authorities and the leadership of Action and Solidarity party.⁸⁰¹ At that, the occupation of Moldovan territory by the troops of fascist Romania, as allies of Nazi Germany, and the regime of terror and mass murder established by them, when more than 300,000 Jewish and over 50,000 Roma nationals were killed, are presented as "liberation". Romania erects monuments to the Romanian military and maintains cemeteries of Romanian

⁸⁰¹ The party was headed by M. Sandu before her election as President in November 2020.

soldiers who fought on Hitler's side. There are also cases of changing the meaning of memorials. The media presents such history distortion as initiatives of local residents, often supported by grants from Romanian organizations. Romanian diplomats, clergymen of the Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia and representatives of Moldovan authorities at various levels invariably attend inauguration ceremonies of the memorials that have been erected or restored.

On 26 October 2021, for example, a monument was opened in the park "Valea Morilor", the centre of Chisinau, to the soldiers of the Romanian army who fought on the side of the Nazi forces during the Great Patriotic War. The unveiling ceremony was held with military honours and a military band, and was attended by representatives of the Romanian Embassy in Moldova. There used to stand a memorial entitled "General Pavel Ion Georgescu's Spring", erected in 1937 to commemorate the brotherhood of the Russian and Romanian armies during World War I, who fought side by side against the German forces at Marasti. The monument opened in October 2021 bears the inscription "To the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina by the Romanian Army".⁸⁰²

In 2019, a monument to 78 Romanian soldiers was unveiled in the village of Stoicani, Soroca district. A plaque on the monument says that the Romanian military buried there "shed blood for peace, freedom and national values" of their descendants. The Moldovan village is referred to as "Romanian land" at that. The monument was erected with the support of the authorities of the Romanian county of Buzau which is twinned with Moldova's Soroca district. The Romanian national anthem was played at the unveiling ceremony. It was attended by representatives of the clergy, headed by Bishop Antony of the Romanian Orthodox Church, as well as representatives of the Romanian county of Buzau and the military of Romania.⁸⁰³

⁸⁰² A monument to soldiers of the Romanian army was erected in Moldova, which caused an outrage among historians. Tsargrad. 26 October 2021. https://md.tsargrad.tv/news/v-moldove-ustanovili-pamjatnik-soldatam-rumynskoj-armii-437077?utm_referrer=https%3a%2f%2fyandex.ru%2f; "For that they spat in the direction of Russia": A monument to the Romanian occupiers-"liberators" of 1941 was unveiled in Moldova. Komsomolskaya Pravda. 26 October 2021. <https://www.kp.ru/daily/28348/4495374/>

⁸⁰³ "Spilled blood": Moldova honours Hitler's allies. Gazeta.RU. 9 July 2019. https://www.gazeta.ru/science/2019/07/09_a_12486949.shtml?updated; Executioners of the Moldovan people are

Moldovan NGOs arranged in 2020-2021 a "cemetery of Romanian soldiers", who fought on the side of the Nazi, in the territory of Pushkin's Theoretical Lyceum in Falesti, using grant funds from Romania. A monument in the shape of a cross was unveiled there on 17 September 2021. A local lawyer, Iulian Rusanovschi, who initiated the installation of the monument, pointed out that the cross would be a reminder of the "sacrifices of Romanian soldiers". The opening ceremony was attended by the Romanian Consul General in Balti, representatives of the city administration and the Moldovan Parliament.⁸⁰⁴

In the second half of 2022, memorials to "Romanian heroes" were opened or restored in the following localities: Slobozia-Horodiste village, Rezina district (August 2022)⁸⁰⁵, Novaci village, Calarasi district (September 2022)⁸⁰⁶, the town of Ocnita (October 2022).⁸⁰⁷ The materials published on Romanian-language information resources present dead soldiers of the Romanian army as "liberators who fought for the independence of Bessarabia". They promote an idea that the reconstructed memorials, once allegedly erected by local residents, were purposefully forgotten or destroyed during the Soviet period, and that their

now fighters "for peace and freedom on Romanian soil". Strategic Culture Foundation. 21 August 2021. <https://www.fondsk.ru/news/2022/08/21/palachi-moldavskogo-naroda-teper-borcy-za-mir-i-svobodu-na-rumynskoj-zemle.html>

⁸⁰⁴ Lesson for Russia: Moldovan authorities and Romanian consul unveil monument to the Nazi. REGUM. 17 September 2021. <https://regnum.ru/news/3372862> (saved copy <https://yandexwebcache.net/yandbmt?fmode=inject&tm=1691565731&tld=ru&lang=ru&la=1690877952&text=%D0%BC%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%8F+%D0%BF%D0%B0%D0%BC%D1%8F%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%BA+%D1%80%D1%83%D0%BC%D1%8B%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%BC+%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B4%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BC&url=https%3A//regnum.ru/news/3372862&110n=ru&mime=html&sign=f6b1f071d248354d00a2394fc9feb77e&keyno=0>)

⁸⁰⁵ [Moldova continues to erect monuments to the Nazi. News Front. 21 August 2022. https://news-front.info/2022/08/21/v-moldavii-prodolzhaetsja-vozvedenie-pamjatnikov-fashistam/](https://news-front.info/2022/08/21/v-moldavii-prodolzhaetsja-vozvedenie-pamjatnikov-fashistam/), [Moldova opened yet another monument to "Romanian heroes". Transnistria News. 1 August 2022. https://novostipmr.com/ru/news/22-08-01/v-moldove-otkryli-ocherednoy-pamyatnik-rumynskim-geroyam](https://novostipmr.com/ru/news/22-08-01/v-moldove-otkryli-ocherednoy-pamyatnik-rumynskim-geroyam), [Încă un monument în cinstea eroilor români, în raionul Rezina. TVR Moldova. 31 July 2022. https://tvr moldova.md/article/50b99070acd499a2/inca-un-monument-in-cinstea-eroilor-romani-in-raionul-rezin.html](https://tvr moldova.md/article/50b99070acd499a2/inca-un-monument-in-cinstea-eroilor-romani-in-raionul-rezin.html); Executioners of the Moldovan people are now fighters "for peace and freedom on Romanian soil". Strategic Culture Foundation. 21 August 2021. <https://www.fondsk.ru/news/2022/08/21/palachi-moldavskogo-naroda-teper-borcy-za-mir-i-svobodu-na-rumynskoj-zemle.html>

⁸⁰⁶ [FOTO. Ambasada României la Chișinău: „La 31 august au fost comemorați cei 59 eroi români, căzuți la datorie pentru eliberarea Basarabiei”. TVR Moldova. 1 September 2022. https://tvr moldova.md/article/9c5455e570ccb8e2/foto-ambasada-romaniei-la-chisinau-la-3-1-august-au-fost-comemorati-cei-59-eroi-romani-cazuti-la-datorie-pentru-eliberarea-basarabiei.html](https://tvr moldova.md/article/9c5455e570ccb8e2/foto-ambasada-romaniei-la-chisinau-la-3-1-august-au-fost-comemorati-cei-59-eroi-romani-cazuti-la-datorie-pentru-eliberarea-basarabiei.html), [FOTO | Încă un cimitir al eroilor români căzuți în luptele pentru eliberarea Basarabiei a fost reabilitat cu sprijinul României. Radio Chisinau. 1 September 2022. https://radiochisinau.md/foto-inca-un-cimitir-al-eroilor-romani-cazuti-in-lupte-a-fost-reabilitat-cu-sprijinul-romaniei---166260.html](https://radiochisinau.md/foto-inca-un-cimitir-al-eroilor-romani-cazuti-in-lupte-a-fost-reabilitat-cu-sprijinul-romaniei---166260.html)

⁸⁰⁷ [Un monument dedicat eroilor români căzuți la datorie a fost inaugurat la Ocnita \(VIDEO\). TRM MD. 9 October 2022. https://trm.md/ro/regional/un-monument-dedicat-eroilor-romani-cazuti-la-datorie-a-fost-inaugurat-la-ocnita](https://trm.md/ro/regional/un-monument-dedicat-eroilor-romani-cazuti-la-datorie-a-fost-inaugurat-la-ocnita)

restoration is an act of historical justice.

On the eve of the latest anniversary of Victory Day, a memorial dedicated to 81 Romanian soldiers killed in battles with the Red Army was opened on 28 April 2023, in the village of Lapusna, Hincesti district. The event was attended by the State Secretary of the Moldovan Ministry of Defense, Sergiu Plop, representatives of local authorities, as well as soldiers from the Honour Guard Company. The Romanian side was represented by the State Secretary of the Romanian Ministry of National Defense, Eduard Bachide, and representatives of the Romanian Embassy. The ceremony commemorating the Nazi soldiers was also attended by military attachés from several diplomatic missions accredited in Chisinau.⁸⁰⁸

The Simon Wiesenthal Centre, a non-governmental organization specializing in counter-terrorism, anti-Semitism and Holocaust studies, published in April 2023 an open message to M. Sandu on the website of The Jerusalem Post, urging her to remove the monuments erected in Chisinau in honour of "fanatic Romanian antisemites and Nazi collaborators", one of which is the bust of former Romanian Prime Minister Octavian Goga, placed in Chisinau in the Alley of Classics in Stephan the Great Central Park⁸⁰⁹ (according to media reports, his bust was demolished in Bucharest for his collaboration with the Nazis⁸¹⁰). The second monument, which the Simon Wiesenthal Centre called "extremely offensive and insulting," is located in the Valea Morilor Park in Chisinau. It is part of the aforementioned memorial dedicated to the "80th anniversary of the liberation of Bessarabia" by the Romanian army, in the process of which, according to the Centre, "150,000 of the 205,000 Jews of Bessarabia were murdered".

Over the past years, Moldova, which features more than two thousand monuments to Soviet soldiers-liberators, has faced a number of challenges with the preservation of these monuments. Due to financial reasons, for example, the local

⁸⁰⁸ Another monument to Romanian fascists unveiled in Moldova. EurAsia Daily. 28 April 2023. <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2023/04/28/v-kanun-dnya-pobedy-v-moldavii-otkryli-ocherednoy-pamyatnik-rumyno-fashistam>

⁸⁰⁹ An oppositionist calls on the Moldovan President to dismantle the bust of Octavian Goga. RIA Novosti. 18 April 2023. <https://ria.ru/20230418/kishinev-1866057283.html>

⁸¹⁰ Chisinau stories: Bucharest demolished the bust of Octavian Goga for his collaboration with the Nazis, while Chisinau installed one – how the Alley of Classics in Pushkin Park came to be created. Komsomolskaya Pravda. 29 December 2021. <https://www.kp.md/daily/28375/4525883/>

and central authorities do not maintain the monuments in proper condition, in particular, they fail to carry out scheduled repairs. There are also other occasions, however, when local authorities take decisive measures to make the memorials look properly, as was the case with the restoration of the monument to the Red Army soldiers in the village of Tomai in 2021. Given the Moldovan authorities' current policy of total falsification of history, it seems that such an attitude will not be encouraged.

As noted above, there have been repeated instances in recent years of soldiers from the Honour Guard Company taking part in opening ceremonies of monuments to Nazi collaborators. However, the Moldovan Ministry of Defense refused to pay military honours at the reburial ceremonies of the remains of Soviet soldiers discovered during search operations.

In addition, there have been registered cases of desecration of Soviet memorials. In 2019, for example, Moldova's Eternity Memorial Complex was attacked twice: a memorial plate was broken and elements of the entrance group stolen. News reports from the regions included similar cases when the memorial plate was destroyed at permanent fortification in the village of Cosnita, Dubasari district, which had been erected by civil activists, and the desecration of the pedestal of the T-34 tank in the village of Leuseni, Hincesti district.

In January 2021, a memorial to the heroes of the 161st Rifle Regiment of the 95th Rifle Division in the village of Rusca, Hincesti district, was desecrated.

In June 2021, vandals caused a serious damage to the memorial "Glory to Heroes" in Vulcanesti (ATU of Gagauzia). The star of the eternal flame was torn off the pedestal of the monument and thrown away nearby.

On 21 August 2021, a memorial plaque was smashed near the village of Corpaci, erected in honour of the Guards Uman Airborne Division, which had reached the State border of the USSR near the Prut river in March 1944.

A sign "Inspected. No mines" on one of the buildings, that the municipal authorities of the Moldovan capital had recognized as a historical monument, was

desecrated on 23 August 2021 in Chisinau.⁸¹¹

In March 2022, Ukrainian migrants and Moldovan pro-Romanian radicals from the "Party of National Unity" of M. Chelaru vandalized memorial complex "Victoria" near Leuseni village. The front part of the pedestal was painted yellow and blue, and the plaques with commemorative dates were covered in paint. Furthermore, in March vandals desecrated the T-34 tank monument on a pedestal in Balti (4 March); memorial plates on permanent fortification in the village of Cosnita, Dubasari district (27 March, the memorial had been attacked by vandals several times before), as well as the monument to V. Lenin in the city of Anenii Noi (9 March).

On 4 November 2022, vandals desecrated the Soviet memorial complex "Grieving Mother" in Edineț. Radicals painted swastikas on the monuments and bas-reliefs.⁸¹²

On 13 August 2023, a monument in honour of Soviet soldiers near the village of Corpaci, Edinet district, was desecrated: the monument was inscribed with the inscription in Romanian "here the occupants passed through". The next day, the monument was cleaned up by local activists.

Despite the existing relevant provisions in Moldovan legislation on punishment for vandalism, no one has ever been prosecuted for such offences.

In all such cases, the Russian Embassy took swift action by publicly expressing its tough position that such actions are inadmissible and calling on the local authorities to take steps to find and punish the perpetrators.

Within this series of incidents involving the desecration of monuments to Soviet soldiers, we should also mention the incident of 22 October 2022, when the Moldovan Ministry of Defense announced that it was forced to extinguish the Eternal Flame at Moldova's Eternity Memorial Complex due to low pressure in the gas transmission network. The Eternal flame was off for several hours. The

⁸¹¹ A monument to Romanians who fought on the side of Nazi Germany unveiled in Moldova. Izvestia. 26 October 2021. <https://iz.ru/1241365/2021-10-26/v-moldavii-otkryli-pamiatnik-voevavshim-na-storone-natsistkoi-germanii-rumynam>

⁸¹² Vandals in Moldova painted swastikas on monuments of the memorial to Soviet soldiers. Point. 5 November 2022. <https://point.md/ru/novosti/obschestvo/v-moldove-vandaly-nanesli-svastiku-na-pamiatniki-memoriala-sovetskim-voinam/>

authorities' decision sparked public outrage. Former Moldovan President, Igor Dodon, for example, called the incident a disgrace, and citizens and public figures began to gather with candles at the Eternity Memorial of Military Glory. After that, the authorities lit the Eternal Flame again. A number of experts, as well as Russian officials, described the incident as an attempt by the Moldovan authorities to put pressure on Russia in order to get discounts on gas supplies amid the latest negotiations on a new long-term contract for the supply of "blue fuel" to Moldova and the gas crisis that followed.⁸¹³

The Moldovan authorities' policy of opposing preservation in any form of memories of the Great Patriotic War has sharply intensified over 2022. This attitude took the most absurd forms when cases of singing songs of the war years caused a sharp reaction on their part, including at the highest level. On 16 December 2022, for example, President M. Sandu called on the Moldovan security services to investigate concerts in the city of Balti when children sang songs of Great Patriotic War wearing uniform of Soviet soldiers, in order to check whether they were a threat to national security.⁸¹⁴ This was done probably because the concerts, as well as the parallel exhibition entitled "Immortal Regiment", were organized with the assistance of the Russian Embassy in Moldova and the Moscow government.

In 2022, Moldova began to introduce restrictions on holding events on the occasion of 9 May and other commemorative dates of the Great Patriotic War. Traditionally, this holiday has been widely celebrated in the country. Earlier, its organizers included even the Presidential Administration of the RM, the "Party of Socialists" and Russian compatriots. In particular, on the eve of the 75th anniversary of the Great Victory, a plan of events was adopted at the governmental

⁸¹³ "For that they spat in the direction of Russia": A monument to the Romanian occupiers-"liberators" of 1941 unveiled in Moldova. Komsomolskaya Pravda. 26 October 2021. <https://www.kp.ru/daily/28348/4495374/>; Primakov views extinguished Eternal Flame in Chisinau as an attempt to put pressure on Russia. Izvestia. 23 October 2021. <https://iz.ru/1239794/2021-10-23/primakov-schel-potushennyi-v-kishineve-vechnyi-ogon-popytkoi-davleniia-na-rf>; The bottom line about energy crisis in Moldova: where does the 700 million dollar gas debt come from and why extinguish the Eternal Flame? Komsomolskaya Pravda. 23 October 2021. <https://www.kp.ru/daily/28347.5/4493983/>

⁸¹⁴ Moldovan President calls on special services to assess the performance of children in Soviet uniform at a concert. RuBaltic. 16 December 2022. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/16122022-glava-moldovy-prizvala-spetssluzhby-otsemit-vystuplenie-detey-v-sovetskoy-forme-na-kontserte/>

level and a working group was set up, which included the Prime Minister, the heads of Ministries, and social activists, including A. Petrovich, the Chairman of the Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots (CCRC). Orders and medals, military uniform from the Soviet times, the Red Flag, and St George's ribbons were freely used during festive events and were popular with the population.

However, since the Russian Federation launched the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine, attacks on the symbols of Victory in Moldova have intensified. In line with this approach, on 14 April 2022, the Moldovan Parliament approved amendments to the Contravention Code, which introduced fines or forced labour for the use of paraphernalia and symbols of "military aggression", which include the "black-orange two-colour ribbon", i.e. St George's ribbon, as well as "Z" and "V" symbols. On 19 April, the amendments were approved by President M. Sandu. The new provisions of the law came into force from the date of their publication, i.e. just before the 9 May celebrations.

These legislative changes provoked discontent among certain parts of Moldovan society. Among others, the ban was opposed by former Moldovan President I. Dodon, who called it unconstitutional. He took part in the celebrations dedicated to 9 May, ostentatiously wearing a St George's ribbon. The politician was subsequently fined, and expressed his intention to challenge the fine in Moldovan and, if necessary, international courts.

Despite persecution by the authorities, in 2022, some 37,000 people took part in events organized on the occasion of 9 May throughout Moldova.⁸¹⁵

Gagauzia opposed the ban on wearing St George's ribbon. On 16 April 2022, a car rally in support of this symbol of Victory was held in the regional capital, Comrat.⁸¹⁶ On 29 April 2022, deputies of the People's Assembly of the Autonomous Territorial Unit adopted the regional law "On the Use of the Symbols of Victory in the Territory of Gagauzia". Approved by head of the autonomy

⁸¹⁵ At least 37,000 people took part in events on 9 May in Moldova. Sputnik. 9 May 2022.

<https://md.sputniknews.ru/20220509/v-meropriyatiyakh-na-9-maya-v-moldove-prinyali-uchastie-ne-menee-37-tysyach-chelovek---50500181.html>

⁸¹⁶ A car rally in support of St George's ribbon was held in Comrat. Sputnik. 16 April 2022. <https://md.sputniknews.ru/20220416/komrat-proshel-avtoprobeg-v-podderzhku-georgievskoy-lenty-50189607.html>

I. Vlah on 3 May, the law stipulated that in the territory of Gagauzia it is allowed to produce, store and use St George's ribbon, Red Flags of Victory and other symbols related to the Victory in the Great Patriotic War. In addition, the law also stipulated that a number of events should be organized in the territory of Gagauzia in order to perpetuate the memory of the war participants and promote patriotism among the younger generation.

The law "On the Use of the Symbols of Victory in the Territory of Gagauzia" displeased the central Moldovan authorities, who appealed to the court to suspend its validity. Deputies of the People's Assembly of Gagauzia expressed their disagreement, noting that the law on the special legal status of Gagauzia allowed local authorities to adopt resolutions and bills even if they were at odds with the position of the central authorities. Deputies A. Toporash and L. Kios appealed against the fines issued to them for wearing St George's ribbons on Victory Day.⁸¹⁷

In 2023, M. Sandu's government continued its efforts to restrict the celebration of Victory Day. On 19 June 2023, the Moldovan government approved a bill by deputies of the ruling Action and Solidarity party to rename Victory Day "Victory over Nazism and Remembrance of the Fallen in World War II" and shift it from 9 to 8 May.⁸¹⁸ This was done despite the fact that the parliamentary opposition, extra-parliamentary parties and movements, as well as civil society representatives strongly condemned the proposal and initiated a parliamentary public hearing on the draft law on 7 June. In their statement, they noted that "President Maia Sandu and Action and Solidarity Party (PAS) are increasingly opposing themselves to the people, whose votes have helped them to gain power in the country. People believed when they promised to fight corruption and improve the living standards of the population. M. Sandu and PAS, however, promised not to touch upon topics that would cause conflict in society, in particular, the

⁸¹⁷ Gagauz deputies appealed in court against fines for wearing St George's ribbon. Sputnik. 29 June 2022. <https://md.sputniknews.ru/20220629/gagauzskie-deputaty-obzhalovali-sude-51360420.html>

⁸¹⁸ Moldovan government approves initiative of the ruling party to rename Victory Day. RuBaltic. 19 June 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/19062023-pravitelstvo-moldovy-odobrilo-initsiativu-pravyashchey-partii-o-pereimenovanii-dnya-pobedy/>

cancellation of Victory Day celebrations on 9 May".⁸¹⁹ On 3 June, hundreds of people rallied in central Chisinau against renaming Victor Day and shifting the date of the holiday.⁸²⁰

It is telling how Moldova votes in the UN General Assembly on the draft resolution "Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to the escalation of contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", introduced annually by Russia together with other co-sponsors. On 16 December 2022, at the 77th session of the General Assembly, the Moldovan delegation, acting "in unison" with the EU delegations, voted against the Russian resolution (in 2021, Moldovans abstained in the vote).

The ideology of racial or ethnic superiority is not yet widespread in Moldova. Nevertheless, a still small number of pro-Romanian radicals in the Moldovan information space act more decisively than supporters of Moldovan statehood and stronger relations with Russia. Unionists freely promote their ideals, demanding unification of Moldova with Romania and accusing Russia of occupying the country. However, in the context of the anti-Russian line pursued by the authorities, Russian-speaking residents, primarily Russian compatriots, in many cases feel constrained, fearing "to unnecessarily aggravate the situation". The groups themselves are few in number, yet their presence in the media space contributes to social tensions and is also used by the right-wing liberal opposition to destabilize and divide society. We can recall some of such events. At an anti-government rally on 1 March 2020, for example, leaders of some Unionist groups allowed themselves a number of xenophobic statements, i.e. "the Russian language brings us poverty and divides us", "Russians are a dead people". Under President I. Dodon, such rhetoric was condemned, yet no efforts were made to curtail the activities of the speakers at the legislative level. As a rule, xenophobic statements

⁸¹⁹ Party of Socialists in Moldova demands public discussion of the idea to cancel Victory Day. RuBaltic. 5 June 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/05062023-v-moldove-partiya-sotsialistov-potrebovala-publichnogo-obsuzhdeniya-idei-otmeny-dnya-pobedy/>

⁸²⁰ Moldovan residents march against the law on renaming Victory Day. RuBaltic. 3 June 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/03062023-zhiteli-moldovy-vyshli-na-marsh-protiv-zakona-o-pereimenovanii-dnya-pobedy/>

were not legally assessed either.

Experts are particularly alarmed by the actions of the authorities aimed at reviewing the language legislation, reducing the use of the Russian language, and restricting Russian-language broadcasting. According to expert estimates, more than a million people in the country regularly use Russian in everyday life (out of a population of about 2.6 million).

According to Article 13 of the Moldovan constitution, "The State shall acknowledge and protect the right to the preservation, development and usage of the Russian language and other languages spoken within the territory of the country". However, there was a Constitutional Court ruling in place of 4 June 2018 declaring the 1989 law "On the Functioning of Languages Spoken within the Territory of the Moldovan SSR" "obsolete and useless". This fundamental legislative act established Moldovan as the State language, while at the same time treating Russian as a means of interethnic communication.

The social-democratic coalition in power at the time (the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM) and the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM)) was in no hurry to raise the language issue. One of the reasons for the stalling was the PSRM's desire to avoid confrontation with its ad hoc partners, "pro-Europeans" from the PDM, in order not to jeopardize further existence of the ruling alliance in a difficult electoral period for Moldova. Basically, the Moldovan leadership limited itself to statements about "the priority of solving difficult economic problems, after which we can proceed to the issue of the Russian language, which, of course, has the status of a language of interethnic communication". In parallel, references were made to the above-mentioned Article 13 of the Moldovan constitution.

In December 2020, at the end of his term as president, I. Dodon signed the law "On the Functioning of Languages in the Republic of Moldova", which was drafted on his initiative after the Constitutional Court recognized the 1989 law of the same name as outdated. According to the law, Russian was assigned the status of the language of interethnic communication and all official documents and the

names of State institutions of the country were to be duplicated in Russian. At the same time, the President approved amendments to the legislation returning Russian news, analytical programs and talk shows to the Moldovan television (their broadcasting was also banned in 2018 under the pretext of combating propaganda; however, it was repeatedly noted that before the ban on the broadcasting of Russian TV channels, they were watched by the majority of Moldovans).

However, in January 2021, a month after the adoption of the Law on the Functioning of Languages in Moldova, the Constitutional Court of the country, at the request of deputies of Action and Solidarity party, declared it unconstitutional, thus depriving Russian of the status of a language of interethnic communication.

It should be noted that the attack on the Russian language in Moldova commenced in the first half of the 2010s. In the updated Education Code adopted in 2014, the Russian language was no longer mentioned as a language of instruction and was actually classified as a language of one of the national minorities of Moldova. Such transformation of the educational legislation further "spurs" the process of reducing the contingent of students in Russian-language schools (and, as a consequence, the gradual reduction of the share of such schools in accordance with the course of "optimization" of educational institutions that receive insufficient funding from the State, determined on the basis of the "per capita approach"). Over the period of the reform to "optimize" school education in the country, almost 200 Russian-language schools were closed, and the total number of educational institutions decreased by 221 units between 2012 and 2015. As a result, Moldova has only 23 university students and 6 students of secondary vocational education per thousand residents, which is lower than in any of the CIS countries, the EU and most developed and developing countries of the world.⁸²¹

The efforts of the Moldovan authorities have affected not only schooling but also higher education institutions. M. Sandu's government, considering there were too many universities in the country, announced another "reform" to unite them,

⁸²¹ Maia Sandu's regime deals a fatal blow to Moldova's education system. RuBaltic. 26 July 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230726-rezhim-mayi-sandu-dobivaet-sistemu-obrazovaniya-moldovy/>

which left 11 universities instead of 16. This activity has yet another dimension. Under the guise of the so-called "reform of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Moldova" the alienation of dozens of hectares of land from public property was started as well. Some of the property privatized by the government from the Academy of Sciences as a result of the so-called research reform was put up for sale.

Reform of the education system in Moldova has led to a decrease in the overall level of education of the population and contributed to the transformation of the younger Moldovan generation into migrants for the needs of the Western market, since lack of educational opportunities prompts young people to leave the country. According to expert estimates, by 2025 the number of young people in Moldova may almost halve compared to 2010 and will account for only 5 per cent of the population. Emigration of Moldovan youth abroad has taken on massive character: approximately 4,500 people leave every year. 35 per cent of students, out of the total number of those who had undertaken their studies at universities of Moldova in 2019, failed to complete them having decided to live abroad. This was reported by economist Veaceslav Ionita, who emphasized that over 4,000 students left the country in 3 years alone. The situation is aggravated by population decline in Moldova, including through migration.⁸²² According to the National Bureau of Statistics of Moldova, the number of population with usual place of residence, as of 1 January 2023, amounted to 2512.8 thousand people, which is 52,000 people less than in early 2022. In 2021, the number of Moldovan population was 2626.6 thousand residents. Population decline was largely attributed to net migration, which surged in 2021, when 45,400 people left the country. In 2022, this number reached 43,000 people.⁸²³

In addition, the National Bureau of Statistics of Moldova has gradually abandoned the publication of disaggregated data on the number of Russian schools in the country, citing general statistics on secondary educational institutions. This

⁸²² Ibid.

⁸²³ Major population decline reported in Moldova. RuBaltic. 7 July 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/07072023-v-moldove-zayavili-o-sushchestvennom-sokrashchenii-chislennosti-naseleniya/>

approach allows to distract attention from the problem of derusification of education.

Separate cases of manipulation with the minds of younger generation in Moldova's education institutions are being detected via Telegram channels. On 12 February 2023, "KP in Moldova" posted photos of an information stand that equalized the terms "communism" and "fascism" and drew comparisons between Joseph Stalin and Adolf Hitler in one of the secondary schools in Chisinau.

Against this background, it is not surprising that the Russian-speaking population of the country continues to face discrimination at the level of the state authorities. We have to note with regret that Russian compatriots residing in Moldova and Russian-speaking citizens in general often face difficulties with guarantees of their rights to access to the government service, choice of the language of education and upbringing, free access to information in native tongue. Over the recent years this tendency has aggravated due to Moldovan authorities' more and more diligent fulfilment of the instructions from their Western handlers. The experts are alarmed over the authorities' actions on revising the language legislation and reducing the use of Russian language, limiting the broadcasts in Russian.

The refusals of public officials to speak Russian or to receive written applications in Russian are common, language-based domestic conflicts take place. Public authorities charged with combating such phenomena, Agency for Inter-Ethnic Relations and Council on the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality, have distanced themselves from such functions, referring to a lack of authority.

An incident in Republican Clinical Hospital with a doctor who refused to treat a Russian-speaking patient and expressed desire to kill Russians caused a wide response. A video spread across the social media where audiologist Eduard Chernolev denied a Russian-speaking patient a surgery solely because she greeted him in Russian. On top of that, he said he wanted "to pull at a Kalashnikov rifle and shoot" the patient because she was "an enemy right away". Although the

hospital's management condemned the actions of the doctor who blatantly violated professional ethics and promised and take punitive measures against him, many officials in the country supported this manifestation of racism. For example, Health Minister Alla Nemerenco spoke in defence of the doctor, quoting another Nazi – Romanian Prime Minister in 1937-1938 Octavian Goga who promoted the right of “ethnically proper Romanians” to live in Romania and revoked the citizenship of quarter million Romanian Jews. Former Education Minister, current Rector of country's leading university – Moldova State University – Igor Sharov took a picture with Eduard Chernolev and posted it in his social media as a token of support⁸²⁴.

The media draw the attention to the fact that many resonant cases of Russophobia manifestation in Moldova are directly linked with the ruling Party of Action and Solidarity. For example, Oazu Nantoi, deputy from this party, during his intervention in early June 2023 on one of the pro-government TV channels said: “Russia is a state with numerous domestic problems, flawed genetic code and Russia will stop representing a threat only when...I'll stop here, so as not to cross borders”. Lidia Guzun, Councillor at the Mayor's Office of Măgdăcești Village and Criuleni District and representative of the ruling party, posted a text in her social media, entitled “Why don't we deport Russians?” where she noted that “we will not kill their children, just let them leave”. After a wide coverage in the media, the post was removed from the social media but the screenshots remain. In July 2021, Maia Sandu congratulated Moldovan writer Vladimir Beșleagă on his anniversary. He is widely known for his Russophobic views. In particular, in May 2015, at the meeting of Party of Action and Solidarity and “Platforma DA” party Beșleagă openly stated that Moldova needs to clean itself from “Russian dirt”.

Another resonant case took place in November 2012, when Viktor Kravchenko, a geography teacher in technical school in the city of Bălți (second largest in Moldova with half of its population being Russian speakers), during the

⁸²⁴ Russian students are called “bastards”: 5 cases of Blatant Russophobia in Moldova. RuBaltic. 31 July 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230731-russkikh-uchenikov-nazyvayut-skotami-5-vopiyushchikh-sluchaev-rusofobii-v-moldove/>

lesson insulted his students with Russian surnames by calling them “bastards” who turned the city into a piggery and called for “chasing the Russians away with a pigpen broom”. The Administrative Council of the school decided to fire the teacher for resorting to physical and psychological violence. Special Commission of the staff meeting also concluded that such a teacher has no moral right to work with children. However, after the involvement of officials of Education Ministry from Chisinau, Viktor Kravchenko wrote a letter of resignation at his own request⁸²⁵.

In June 2023, Vasile Șoimaru, deputy of Party of Action and Solidarity, during the report of Council on preventing discrimination and ensuring equality of chances suggested fining his deputy colleagues who speak Russian⁸²⁶.

It is noteworthy that inefficiency of Council on the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and public defender (ombudsman) in the field of combatting the manifestations of discrimination was noted with regret by the European Commission against Racism of the Council of Europe in its conclusion on implementing earlier recommendations in relation to Moldova of 2021. Complicated system of financing, low salaries and thus high staff turnover rate⁸²⁷ were indicated among the reasons of their inefficiency. Although it's obvious that the factors indicated by ECRI are more likely to be consequences, not causes, of the language policy chosen by the current authorities.

Concern over the situation of the Russian-speaking population was expressed in 2017 by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that noted that after the amendments introduced in 2012 into the legislation governing the issue of identity papers in Moldovan passport system, the names of

⁸²⁵ *ibid*

⁸²⁶ Deputy of the ruling party proposes to impose fines on Russian-speakers. RuBaltic. 23 June 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/23062023-deputat-pravyashchey-partii-v-moldove-predlozhit-shtrafovati-govoryashchikh-na-russkom-yazyke/>

⁸²⁷ ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in Respect of the Republic of Moldova Subject to Interim Follow-Up. Adopted on 30 March 2021. Published on 18 May 2021. <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a27d9c>

the people belonging to ethnic and linguistic minorities, in particular Russian minorities, are not recognized⁸²⁸.

The letters of the Russian-speaking citizens of the Republic that are addressed to the lawyers of compatriots organizations most frequently contain the complaints over violation of right to use Russian language while contacting the authorities, including courts, selling the medicine without instruction manuals in Russian, absence of information in Russian in healthcare institutions.

Russian Embassy in Chisinau also receive, via e-mail, letters of complaint from Russian-speaking citizens informing of discrimination in cases of addressing to state and municipal institutions, since the Moldovan public officials refuse to communicate in Russian or consider the written applications in Russian.

Russian language is being forced by Moldovan authorities not only from media field. On 1 December 2022, Moldova's Parliament adopted in the second reading the amendments to the Election Code that envisage the ballots will be arranged solely in the official language, as for Russian, they can be printed in this language only upon request of local election commissions. Along with exclusion of the Russian language from the ballots, the algorithm for appointing the members of Moldovan Central Election Commission. Their number was reduced from nine to seven and now they are appointed by the President, Parliament, Government and Supreme Council of Justice. Today all these bodies are controlled by the Party of Action and Solidarity. Such alterations were criticized by the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe⁸²⁹.

What speaks of Moldovan Government's true attitude towards the rights of not only Russian-speaking population but of other national minorities is the response of that country's Minister of Finance Dumitru Budianschi voiced during the parliamentary discussion of 12 December 2022 on the issue of financing the

⁸²⁸ Concluding observations on the third periodic report of the Republic of Moldova of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. October 2017.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/MDA/CO/3&Lang=En

⁸²⁹ To retain power at all costs: new Election Code adopted in Moldova. RuBaltic. 15 December 2022
<https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221215-uderzhat-vlast-lyuboy-tsenoy-v-moldove-prinyali-novyy-kodeks-o-vyborakh/>

schools with instruction in minority languages. He proposed to “solve the problem” of insufficient funding of such schools through their transfer to instruction in the official language. According to him, the workload on schools with different languages of instruction is easily reduced by transferring them to instruction in Romanian⁸³⁰.

Along with fight against Russian language the tendency to impose everything Romanian and discard own Moldovan identity is gaining significant momentum in Moldova. It began eleven years ago when Maia Sandu, the then Minister of Education, launched a reform to “optimize” the education system. In her opinion, the number of schools in Moldova was exceeding the required, so the education was receiving “extra” funds. The “optimization” resulted in closure of schools across the country en masse and transformation of Moldovan language and history courses into Romanian ones. The key objectives were the revision of the assessment of the events of 1918 when Bessarabia was occupied by the Kingdom of Romania and promotion of the need to return to that configuration, i.e. to discard the independence in favour of Moldova becoming a part of Romania. For exactly this purpose the native tongue for all Moldovans in all school programmes were labelled as Romanian and the school subject entitled “History of Moldova” was replaced with “History of Romanians” which is taught with Romanian textbooks⁸³¹.

Cession of the historic building of National library of Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia to Romanian Orthodox Church done by the authorities in March 2023 became another step towards forced Romanianization⁸³². The experts estimated that step of Maia Sandu’s government as deliberate strengthening of

⁸³⁰ Moldova's Finance Minister proposes to transfer the Russian-language schools to Romanian. RuBaltic. 13 December 2022. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/13122022-glava-minfina-moldovy-predlozhit-perevesti-russkoyazychnye-shkoly-na-rumynskiy-yazyk/>

⁸³¹ Maia Sandu's regime finishes off Moldova’s education system. RuBaltic. 26 July 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230726-rezhim-mayi-sandu-dobivaet-sistemu-obrazovaniya-moldovy/>

⁸³² Forced Romanianization of Moldovan culture is happening here and now. RuBaltic. 26 March 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/cifrobalt/20230326-nasilstvennaya-rumynizatsiya-moldavskoy-kultury-proiskhodit-zdes-i-seychas/>

Romanian Orthodox Church's influence in the country and fostering an ecclesiastical division.

Serious concerns of experts with regards to the concept of Romanian expansion in Moldova are also confirmed by the actions of state officials. For example, 24 March 2023 saw the entry of the law that renamed the official language in Moldova from Moldovan to Romanian into force. In accordance with this law, the wording "Moldovan language" in any grammatical form is to be replaced with "Romanian language". Moreover, such an amendment will be introduced into the Constitution as well, although usually this requires a referendum⁸³³.

Moldovan opposition believes that the ruling party directly violated the law. According to the Constitution, must be adopted by two-thirds (minimum of 67 of members of parliament). Besides, the Constitution may not be revised during public emergency while such a rule was imposed in Moldova in autumn 2021 has been extended regularly since then⁸³⁴.

It is also noteworthy that the authorities openly, including at the highest level, announced intentions to replace the term "Moldovan language" with "Romanian language" in Moldova's basic laws. Thus, in September 2022, President Maia Sandu publicly expressed regret over the fact that Moldovan, not Romanian, language was still titled as the official language in the Constitution of Moldova. In December 2022, that idea gained a more specific form. On 17 December, Speaker of Moldovan Parliament Igor Grosu said on air of "Moldova-1" TV channel that ruling Party of Action and Solidarity examines the possibility of replacing the wording "Moldovan language" in the Articles of the Moldovan Constitution with wording "Romanian language" Igor Grosu said this historic mistake will be corrected in the nearest future. In his words, this will happen by

⁸³³ Moldova officially renames its state language. RIA Novosti. 24 March 2023. <https://ria.ru/20230324/moldaviya-1860296278.html>

⁸³⁴ Romanian lessons: why does Moldova discard its language? Izvestia. 19 March 2023. <https://iz.ru/1484888/igor-karmazin/uroki-rumynskogo-pochemu-moldaviia-otkazyvaetsia-ot-svoego-iazyka>

Spring 2023 since the authorities fail to do so earlier and such an “event must take place in historically significant context”⁸³⁵.

Experts attract attention to the fact that such initiatives are to a large extent artificial because according to the population census conducted in Moldova in 2014, only 7% of population identified themselves as Romanian and 75% as Moldovan. 24% called Romanian language their native tongue, while 54% - Moldovan⁸³⁶.

Moldovan authorities pursue the policy of elimination of any forms of dissent in the country by clearing out the last alternative viewpoints from the national information landscape through totalitarian censorship. In keeping with the canons of “collective West”, the Government of Moldova in early 2022 commenced the “cleansing” of the country’s media landscape from Russian-language print media. Upon decision of Security and Intelligence Service of Moldova (SIS), on 26 February 2022 “Sputnik Moldova” information agency was shut down and access to its website was blocked. Later on the same restrictions were imposed against the sites of a number of Russian and Russian-language Moldovan media, including “Gagauznews” and “Region trend analytics”. Other information and analytical outlets (“RTR-Moldova” and “NTV-Moldova”) faced serious financial sanctions.

It is noteworthy that the Moldovan authorities have demonstrated resolve to take the most stringent measures to prevent the emergence of any viewpoints alternative to the official position. For example, the public emergency state, imposed on 24 February 2022 (initially for 60 days, later extended) provided for a number of limitations, including a ban on mass social and political events of any orientation. However, this did not prevent from happening any of the regular daily protests in March-April 2022 outside Embassy of Russia in Chisinau, which interfered with normal operation of Russian diplomatic mission.

⁸³⁵ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/17122022-vlasti-moldovy-namereny-pereimenovat-gosudarstvennyy-yazyk-v-konstitutsii-v-rumynskiy/>

⁸³⁶ Sandu plays West’s scenario of Romania absorbing Moldova. RuBaltic. 11 December 2022. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/cifrobalt/20221211-sandu-realizuet-stsenariy-zapada-po-pogloshcheniyu-moldovy-rumyniei/>

Since March 2022, Russian news and social and political TV programmes are banned in Moldova, Russian TV channels are fined on regular basis. Under the pretext of “limiting the disinformation” the Moldovan leadership imposes the pro-Western news agenda on country’s population, suspended the broadcasts from the states that hadn’t ratified the European Convention on Transfrontier Television. This measure “separated” the population of Moldova from a number of Russian TV channels. The authorities explain this anti-Russian approach with promotion by Russian information channels of Russia’s “aggression” in Ukraine and disinformation of Moldovan society. Such reasons as “fight against disinformation”, “one-sided coverage” of the special military operation, “inaccuracy of information” which might hinder the national security are named among the pretexts for limitation of freedom and freedom of expression.

In June 2022, in Moldova the law “On Protecting the Information Space” entered into force. It became another foundation for combatting the Russian media. Television and radio broadcasting development strategy which was approved later provided for an obligation to prioritize the content in the national language. At the same time, the authorities ignored the fact that 381 thousand residents of the country (over 11%) considers Russian as their native tongue and around 541 thousand people (16%), including 130 thousand ethnic Moldovans, use it as the first language in everyday life⁸³⁷.

This policy of Chisinau attracted the attention even of European human rights organizations. As stated by Swiss NGO “Solidaritätsnetz International”, European Union granted Moldova the candidate status for EU membership on certain conditions which the country’s authorities were to fulfil. However, it is hardly in evidence.

On top of that, Moldova’s draft budget for 2023 did not include the funds for “MIR” TV channel, in violation of Chisinau’s obligations under a corresponding intergovernmental agreement within the CIS. This became possible due to

⁸³⁷ Millions for “supporting the independent media”: a “correct” information space is being created in Moldova. RuBaltic. 25 February 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230225-milliony-na-podderzhku-nezavisimykh-smi-v-moldove-sozdayut-pravilnoe-infopole/>

Moldovan leadership launching of policy to exit CIS structures in 2023. The first step in this direction was the decision to quit from the international television and radio company “MIR” and shut down its bureau in the country. Meanwhile, under the pretext of a U-turn towards the West and “European integration” official Chisinau started denouncing the agreements that Moldova concluded within the framework of CIS one after the other. In view of the majority in the Parliament the ruling Party of Action and Solidarity adopted on an expedited basis the bill on denunciation of the Convention on the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States and voted for the bill on denunciation of Agreement on cooperation in the field of prevention and elimination of natural and manmade emergencies. The Agreement on cooperation of law enforcement agencies within CIS was dissolved just as swiftly. During the last meeting of the spring-summer session the MPs representing the ruling party voted for five more bills on denunciation of treaties concluded within CIS. These include Agreement on technical barriers in the free trade area (20 June 2000), Agreement on support and development of small businesses in the CIS member states (17 January 1997), Agreement on cooperation in the field of labour protection (9 December 1994), Agreement on carrying out coordinated policy in the field of standardization, metrology and certification (13 March 1992), Agreement on cooperation on forming of single (general) educational space of the CIS, including on reciprocal recognition of documents on higher education (17 January 1997). The Government prepares a whole new set of bills to denounce the CIS agreements for the next parliamentary session⁸³⁸.

It should be noted that the policy of Maia Sandu’s government contradicts the opinion of the majority of population. According to the results of a research conducted by Date Intelligence (iData) data collection and analysis company, more than half of the citizens of Moldova (52,6%) oppose the idea of leaving the CIS. At

⁸³⁸ A fad instead of wind of change: with a break from Russia, Maia Sandy destroys the economy of Moldova. RuBaltic. 7 August 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/ekonomika-i-biznes/20230807-povetrie-vmesto-vetra-peremen-mayya-sandu-razryvom-s-rossiey-unichtozhaet-ekonomiku-moldovy/>

the same time, the exit of the Republic from the Commonwealth received the support of 34,9% respondents⁸³⁹.

On 16 December 2022, the Emergency Commission decided to revoke the licenses of six Russian-language channels: “Orhei TV”, “NV6”, “NTV Moldova”, “Accent TV”, “RTR Moldova”, “Primul in Moldova”. This attack on media was based on “insufficiently correct coverage of the domestic events and conflict in Ukraine”. The said outlets were taken off air starting from 19 December, however some cable operators shut them down prior to that day.

By taking this step official Chisinau, under the guise of supposed concern for the protection of its people from “insufficiently correct” interpretation of the events in Moldova and worldwide, deliberately deprived the Russian-speaking residents of the country of the last sources of news content in their preferred language. Hundreds of journalists of those news outlets are losing their job at the will of politicians.

Such actions of the authorities caused public discontent. In particular, the opposition in the Parliament as well as the Gagauz autonomy have expressed their disagreement with the authorities’ actions. Deputy from the opposition Party of Socialists Bogdan Țirdea noted in his interview to “1tv.md” TV channel that president and the Government took six TV channels off air per the instruction of the Western handlers, calling the ban a political order from abroad⁸⁴⁰. The authorities of Gagauzia demanded to review the decision of Emergency Commission to suspending the broadcast of six TV channels and lift the state of emergency which, in their opinion, is “used to fight the opposition”. This is what the joint statement of Executive Committee and Presidency of the Parliament of Gagauz autonomy said⁸⁴¹, Parliament’s press-service reported. Moldova’s ombudsman Ceslav Panico also condemned the ban. He noted that the decision of

⁸³⁹ Over half of Moldovans oppose the country’s leaving the CIS. RuBaltic. 7 June 2023.

<https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/07062023-bolee-poloviny-zhiteley-moldovy-vystupayut-protiv-vykhoda-strany-iz-sng/>

⁸⁴⁰ In Parliament of Moldova they believe that the authorities close the opposition channel at the West’s order. RuBaltic. 18 December 2022. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/18122022-v-parlamente-moldovy-schitayut-cto-vlasti-zakryvayut-oppozitsionnye-kanaly-po-ukazke-zapada/>

⁸⁴¹ Joint Statement of Presidency of People’s Assembly and Executive Committee of Gagauzia Autonomy. 19 December 2022. <https://www.halktoplushu.md/index.php/novosti/4371-zayavlenie-o-priostanovlenii-litsenzij-na-veshchanie-shesti-telekanalov>

the Emergency Commission violated the fundamental rights to freedom of expression and property and thus this decision, taken while bypassing the court breaks the principle of separation of powers and the Constitution of the country⁸⁴².

At the same time, numerous projects on supporting the freedom of expression in Moldova and countering “disinformation” led by the US, several European countries and pro-Western NGOs are worth noting. In this regard, revelatory is the US State Department’s grant on creation of some sort of “rating” for Moldovan TV channels with “credible” information, declared by the ruling Party of Action and Solidarity together with US Embassy in Moldova. This step is fully in line with Moldovan authorities’ policy to strengthen the Western propaganda in social life since numerous projects on supporting the freedom of expression in Moldova and countering “disinformation” led by the US, several European countries and pro-Western NGOs have been implemented over the last years. Among them, the report by NGO “Independent Journalism Center” (receives foreign financial aid) published in early December 2021 which concluded that broadcasting of three Russian TV channels “First in Moldova”, “NTV Moldova” and “RTR Moldova” “does not contribute to shaping the correct opinions” and “threatens the information security of the country”. A few days later, on 8 December, President of Moldovan Parliament Igor Grosu said that foreign propaganda “comes from Russia”.

Experts are alarmed that this law will also be used primarily to limit any options to access the Russian information and analytic sources. They also repeatedly noted that due to popularity of “Telegram” and “TikTok” among the Russian-speaking population of Moldova the current government of the country will tend to restrict the access to them and control the messages in all Moldovan social networks. The representatives of the authorities stated their intentions openly. In particular, in February 2023, President of the parliamentary commission on media Liliana Nicolaescu-Onofrei said the following: “Although we do have

⁸⁴² Ombudsman Panico condemns the decision to ban the opposition channels. RT. 21 December 2022. <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/1089188-moldaviya-telekanaly-zapret>

some instruments to suppress the disinformation and audio and visual area, in online space we face problems related to combat against disinformation. We are searching for a solution but we know it is not easy”⁸⁴³.

These concerns were not unfounded. In early July 2023, Parliament of Moldova adopted the law on counter-information activities and foreign information activities. It empowers the special services to control the social media in the country. The law will let the Security and Intelligence Service to carry out the investigations⁸⁴⁴.

After Russia launched the special military operation on denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine changes for the worse for the Russian citizens and Russian speakers were observed in Moldova.

Due to the events in Ukraine the country received significant inflow of refugees. Seizing this complicated movie, the collective West continues its persistent attempts to draw Moldova into coalition of outspoken Russophobes. Alongside with condemning the Russian special operation and calling to stop all hostilities, the Moldovan authorities verbally declare commitment to European integration and constitutional neutrality. However, according to experts, in reality, the establishment of a totalitarian regime is under way.

Instead of fulfilling their election promises, the representatives of Party of Action and Solidarity headed by Maia Sandu that came to power started a fight against the opposition. The law enforcers, military and special services were especially active in 2022. Under far-fetched pretexts criminal investigations were initiated against Moldova’s ex-President Igor Dodon, ex-Prosecutor General Alexandr Stoianoglo, former President of Parliament Zinaida Greceanîi as well as Vice-President of ŞOR Party Marina Tauber and a number of deputies. In April 2023, Ilan Shor, leader of ŞOR Party was sentenced in absentia to 15 years of imprisonment with confiscation of property. In May 2023, trying to prevent

⁸⁴³ Millions for “supporting the independent media”: a “correct” information space is being created in Moldova. RuBaltic. 25 February 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230225-milliony-na-podderzhku-nezavisimyykh-smi-v-moldove-sozdayut-pravilnoe-infopole/>

⁸⁴⁴ Moldovan Parliament empowers the special services to control the social media. RuBaltic. 7 July 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/07072023-parlament-moldovy-dal-spetssluzhbam-polnomochiya-dlya-kontrolya-sotsialnykh-setey/>

Yevgenia Gutsul, allegedly “pro-Russian” candidate from ŞOR Party from winning the local elections in Gagauzia, Moldovan leadership initiated the verification of the constitutionality of this political organization. As the authorities claim, that party violates the principles of rule of law and opposes the sovereignty of Moldova.

On 19 June 2023, the Constitutional Court of Moldova satisfied the Government’s motion to declare ŞOR Party unconstitutional. This decision paves the way to ban the leading opposition political force in the Republic and annul its registration.

At the same time, the experts believe that ŞOR Party is not only “the party of the protest” which organized the civil protests against the catastrophic policy of Maia Sandu’s cabinet which led to multiple increase of prices and tariffs on gas, electricity, utilities and food, considerable rise of inflation to 34%, but the party is also represented in a number of regions of Moldova. For example, the Orhei District (one of the country’s largest) and Taraclia District (capital of the Bulgarian cultural autonomy) are headed by the representatives of this party. Today those regions are symbols of prosperity and examples of reasonable management in the interests of their citizens. Vice-President of ŞOR Party Marina Tauber has de-facto won the mayoral election of Moldova’s second largest city of Bălţi, gaining 48% of votes in the first round. However, she was illegally banned from the election after a criminal investigation was launched against her. Yevgenia Gutsul, candidate from ŞOR Party, won the election for the post of head of Gagauzia despite Maia Sandu’s attempts to prevent it. As a result of a campaign of pressure, searches in the party’s offices and apprehension of its activists became common⁸⁴⁵.

Marina Tauber also declared that Yevgenia Gutsul was blackmailed by the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office of Moldova. She requested to Security and Intelligence Service and National Anticorruption Center to carry out a polygraph test in relation to Veronica Dragalin, head of the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s

⁸⁴⁵ In Ukraine’s footsteps: Maia Sandu creates a totalitarian regime in Moldova. RuBaltic. 21 June 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230621-po-puti-ukrainy-mayya-sandu-ustanavlivaet-v-moldove-totalitarnyy-rezhim/>

Office of Moldova, who proposed Gutsul to resign from the post of head of Gagauzia in exchange for closure of the criminal investigation which she was the subject of⁸⁴⁶.

In line with this approach, the sources of alternative information, first and foremost the Russian ones, are being eliminated in the country. The Moldovan authorities suspended the broadcasts from the states that hadn't ratified the European Convention on Transfrontier Television. Because of this the television operators are barred from a number of Russian TV channels, including "Zvezda", "Mir", "Nashe Kino" and several others. In addition, fines are imposed on the rebroadcasters of Russian "NTV" "Channel One" and "RTR". Aside from the said restrictions, Soviet and Russian movies on the Great Patriotic War movies and military-themed TV programmes are banned in Moldova.

In late May 2023 Maia Sandu announced the plans to establish the National Centre for Information Defence and Counter-propaganda "Patriot". Head of State explained the need for its creation claiming that "Russia attacks Moldova in the information area to sow hatred and weaken the people's trust in our state". In her words, the Centre will coordinate and implement the Moldovan state policy in the field of information security and identification, prevention and combat against disinformation at the national level⁸⁴⁷.

All non-governmental organizations that uphold the contacts with Russia or are related to it are under pressure. There was information about threats in relation to Russian-speaking journalists in Moldova. Among them, the editor of the newspaper belonging to compatriotic movement "Russian Word" received such threats and insults. There are also recorded cases of pressure and intimidation of pro-Russian activists.

⁸⁴⁶ Moldovan deputy complains to Prosecutor General's Office over the pressure on the elected head of Gagauzia. RuBaltic. 17 July 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/17072023-moldavskiy-deputat-obratilas-v-genprokuraturu-izza-davleniya-na-izbrannogo-glavu-gagauzii/>

⁸⁴⁷ Counter-propaganda centre will be created in Moldova. Sputnik. 29 May 2023. https://md.sputniknews.ru/20230529/v-moldove-budet-sozdan-tsentr-po-borbe-s-propagandoy-57118786.html?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop;

It is decided to create a counter-propaganda centre in Moldova. Lenta.RU. 29 May 2023. https://lenta.ru/news/2023/05/29/no_propoganda/

Russian journalists and activists are persecuted by the Moldovan special services. This tendency surfaced even prior to 2022. For example, in October 2020, head of “TASS” news agency’s office in Moldova Valery Demidetsky received threats of prosecution from Party of Action and Solidarity on the charge of “interference in electoral campaign on the side of pro-Russian forces”. In July 2022, Olga Armyakova, journalist of Russian “Russia 24” TV channel sparked a “heightened interest” of certain Moldovan politicians because she interviewed Moldova’s ex-President Igor Dodon. With the filing of the Party of Action and Solidarity the Moldovan intelligence service initiated a check with regards to the journalists. As a result, the service concluded that “propagandist” from Russia has violated the provisions of a Government’s decree on foreign journalists accreditation.

The Moldovan authorities’ actions in relation to Russian citizens arriving at the Chisinau International Airport are particularly concerning. It is reported on regular basis that passengers with Russian passports are checked with particular intensity. There are cases of such passengers being denied the entry by the Moldovan border control service. As of 6 October 2022, 285 Russian citizens were denied entry into country under far-fetched pretexts. Among recent cases – ban on entry into Moldova imposed in mid-April 2023 on Head of the Republic of Tatarstan Rustam Minikhanov who intended to visit the Gagauz autonomy. He was declared *persona non-grata* and denied the possibility to disembark in the airport of Chisinau. Another similar occasion in a series of them took place in May 2023 when, under the pretext of “absence of grounds”, renowned Russian biologist Alexander Panchin, who had arrived with a series of scientific lectures, was denied entry into the country.

The Netherlands

Netherlands (the)

Neo-Nazism and antisemitism do not appear to be widespread or systematic at present in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, the issue remains outstanding, including due to the insufficient legislative bans on wrongful acts of such kind.

Although not regular, but the acts of vandalism in relation to the monuments to Soviet soldiers that exist in the country take place. They include the incident that happened not far from Amersfoort on the Soviet Field of Honour Memorial Complex, where 865 soldiers of the Red Army, died in German captivity in the territory of the Netherlands and Germany, are buried. Some strangers put on graffiti with nationalist slogans as well as mentions of the Ukrainian nationalists. The management of the Complex turned to the law enforcement authorities.⁸⁴⁸ At the same time, it should be noted that earlier some funds were allocated from the budget of the Netherlands to carry out works on this Complex. Besides, thanks to the efforts of the Soviet Field of Honour Foundation Dutch public organization, the activities on identifying the buried Soviet prisoners of war and searching for their relatives have been intensified.

Till recently, guided by the common position of the European Union, the delegation of the Netherlands abstained during the voting for the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices which contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", introduced annually by Russia and other co-sponsors for consideration in the General Assembly. However, in December 2022, abiding by the EU focus on falsification of history, it voted against this initiative that condemned the glorification of Nazism as well as any displays of neo-Nazism and other forms of discrimination.

⁸⁴⁸ Russian Embassy condemns the act of vandalism on the Soviet Field of Honour in the Netherlands. TASS. 1 December 2021 <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/13075611>

Over the last years, the Kingdom has taken a series of additional measures to resist displays of racial discrimination. Thus, the National Coordinator for Combatting Anti-Semitism⁸⁴⁹ started activities on 1 April 2021; a post of National Coordinator for Discrimination and Racism was introduced. In the Programme of Work for 2022-2025, a special emphasis is expected to be placed on establishing appropriate institutions, raising awareness, combatting the denial of the Holocaust, international cooperation, etc.⁸⁵⁰

At the legislative level, this matter is being handled primarily using the general provisions of the Dutch Penal Code (PC). Article 137 (c) of the PC criminalizes any public insult, – oral, written or visual, – of the groups of persons based on race, religion, belief, sexual identity, physical or psychological impairments, and its Article 137 (d) provides for the liability for "inciting hatred or discrimination" on a wide array of grounds.

In July 2023, abiding by its obligations within the European Union, the Cabinet of Ministers announced that it was introducing a criminal penalty for a public denial of the Holocaust for the period of up to one year of imprisonment.⁸⁵¹

The demonstration of the Nazi symbols as it is (including pins, accessories, uniform, recognitions, etc.) is not regarded as a separate crime but can be subject to criminal prosecution based on general anti-discrimination provisions. The criminal law of the Netherlands does not contain any separate elements that criminalize the denial of the historic facts, including the Holocaust (in September 2021, this matter grabbed the attention of the European Commission that initiated at that time the examination procedure of violations in relation to the Netherlands (along with Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland and Sweden) regarding the incomplete or wrong inclusion of provisions of the Framework Agreement of the Council on Combatting Racism and Xenophobia

⁸⁴⁹ National Coordinator for Combatting Anti-Semitism presents work plan to Dutch House of Representatives. Government of the Netherlands website. 6 October 2022

<https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2022/10/06/national-coordinator-for-combating-antisemitism-presents-work-plan-to-dutch-house-of-representatives>

⁸⁵⁰ Werkplan Antisemitismebestrijding 2022-2025. Rapport. Rijksoverheid. 6 October 2022

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2022/10/06/tk-bijlage-ncab-werkplan-definitieve-versie-ter-verzending-aan-tweede-kamer>

⁸⁵¹ www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2023/07/14/kabinet-verbiedt-ontkenning-holocaust

in the national legislation.⁸⁵² In particular, it was noted that the mentioned States interpreted incorrectly the criminal responsibility for certain forms of hatred instigating to violence or hatred as far as public toleration, denial or heavy underestimation of international crimes and Holocaust do not fall under the definition of national laws.⁸⁵³ The Commission suggested that the Hague would immediately provide for this ban in normative acts of the Kingdom in accordance with the obligations undertaken within the European Union).⁸⁵⁴

Therefore, in practice, every action is considered in court on a context basis. The Nazi greeting itself as a gesture is not subject to any obligatory criminal responsibility but can bring about a punishment, for example, in case if it is deliberately demonstrated in public or during funeral service, is accompanied by pronouncing Nazi slogans, etc. Moreover, the same Nazi greeting of a certain person and not of a group of persons will be more likely qualified based on Article 266 of the Penal Code (i.e. as an ordinary insult). Along with that, the falsifiers of history (as well as, for example, owners and administrators of websites where such materials are placed) may be prosecuted under the mentioned Articles of the Penal Code but in practice these provisions are rarely applied.

There are regular publications in the Dutch mass media on the alleged cases of demonstration by the Dutch military of their support to the Nazi ideology. In 2018, it went out in the open that the Dutch military men used messengers to exchange communications containing extremist assessments and speeches, sent swastika and other Fascist symbols to each other, and expressed interest to the ideas of Hitler and his fellows as well as to the corresponding literature.

At the same time, the questions related to the facts of cooperation of the Dutch authorities with the Nazis during the Second World War remain outstanding

⁸⁵² The document defines the general approach of the criminal law to racist and xenophobic speeches and crimes based on hatred.

⁸⁵³ Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights on the situation with human rights in the EU Member States for 2022

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

⁸⁵⁴ Antwoorden Kamervragen over het niet strafbaar stellen van ontkenning Holocaust. Rijksoverheid. 13 September 2021

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/09/13/antwoorden-kamervragen-inzake-het-niet-strafbaar-stellen-van-ontkenning-holocaust>

(the dispute on the issue of compensations to be paid to the Nazis victims, charged by the Dutch Railway for their delivery to the concentration camps, turned up among resonant issues).

There is a political party in the Netherlands that can be characterized as neo-Nazi, – the Dutch People's Union created in 1971. It is famous for a series of radical calls (it stands for introducing an amendment in the constitution concerning the fact the German and Christian culture should remain dominating in the Netherlands, for introducing "nationalism" into school curriculum, for tightening migration policy; it opposes the construction of new synagogues and mosques in the Netherlands, and uses the slogan "White lives matter" and others) but it does not have any real political power.

Besides, at the end 2020 – beginning 2021, fuss broke up several times around a popular Dutch party Forum for Democracy (it received 8 out of 150 seats in the House of Representatives at the outcome of the parliamentary elections on 17 March 2021). In particular, racist speeches about the "white supremacy" by party's leader Thierry Baudet came out in the open from the WhatsApp messenger.⁸⁵⁵ He also stated that he was considering the Nuremberg process illegitimate to the strong dissatisfaction of the Center for Information and Documentation Israel,⁸⁵⁶ and in December 2021, he compared the restrictions introduced due to the spread of coronavirus with the Holocaust to instigate thereby a court action.

It should be noted that in general the court practice related to combatting antisemitism in the Netherlands is quite poor. Guilty verdicts are very rare. Provocative speeches and actions result in punishment only if the goals they are designed for go far beyond the "open, based on the freedom of speech discussions in the democratic society".⁸⁵⁷ However, there are reverse situations – an illustrative

⁸⁵⁵ Thierry Baudet: "Je zus met een neger?" EW Magazine. 9 February 2021

<https://www.ewmagazine.nl/nederland/achtergrond/2021/02/thierry-baudet-je-zus-met-een-neger-804032/>

⁸⁵⁶ Geschokte reacties op Neurenberg-opmerking Baudet. Trouw. 23 February 2021

https://www.trouw.nl/politiek/geschokte-reacties-op-neurenberg-opmerking-baudet~b161b71b/?utm_source=link&utm_medium=app&utm_campaign=shared%20content&utm_content=free

⁸⁵⁷ Examples of such interpretation by the courts of existing legislation are, in particular, the decision of the District Court of 's-Hertogenbosch of 21 December 2004 (LJN:

AR7891) and the decision of the District Court of Utrecht of 22 April 2010. (LJN: BM1987).

example of application of non-discriminatory articles of the PC in relation to the use of Nazi symbols was a case that reached the Supreme Court of the Netherlands in 2012 about the import into the country of about 100 daggers with the image of swastika, symbols of the Waffen-SS units and slogans of the Third Reich with the aim of selling them to Dutch citizens (as a result, the defendant was found guilty under Article 137 (e) of PC).⁸⁵⁸

There are also "reverberating" precedents. For example, in early 2017, several Dutchmen were sentenced to community service and/or fines for shouting antisemitic slogans and displaying symbols of the "Combat 18" and "Defend Europe" right-wing radicals.⁸⁵⁹ In early 2020, a Dutch citizen was sentenced to community service for posting SS symbols on the Internet and calling for violence against representatives of the Jewish and Muslim communities.⁸⁶⁰ In February 2021, another Dutch citizen was also sentenced to community service for posting racist and antisemitic materials in the "VKontakte" social network.⁸⁶¹

One of the antisemitic moments that caused a massive public outcry in the Netherlands was the story associated with the naming of the world largest twin-hulled ship after Pieter Schelte Heerema, a famous Dutch Nazi being a member of Waffen SS during Hitler's occupation of the Netherlands. Driven by the negative feedback from the public and media, the ship owner re-named it to call the Pioneering Spirit, thus keeping the initial abbreviation.

In 2021, a mess blew out around the Dutch online market bol.com, for it was selling antisemitic books (in particular, denying the Holocaust). A number of profile NGOs made a complaint against the company to try to prosecute it. This incident provoked a discussion in the society on the absent relevant legislative regulation (also as far as censorship is concerned). The National Coordinator for

⁸⁵⁸ The corresponding decision by the Arnhem court of 8 November 2012 : <https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:GHARN:2012:BY2774>

⁸⁵⁹ The corresponding decision by the Amsterdam court of 12 January 2017 <https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:RBAMS:2017:146> и <https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:RBAMS:2017:144>

⁸⁶⁰ The corresponding decision by the Limburg court of 23 march 2020 <https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:RBLIM:2020:2349>

⁸⁶¹ The corresponding decision by the court of the Central Netherlands of 24 February 2021 <https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:RBMNE:2021:719>

Combatting Anti-Semitism called the situation unacceptable, requested to prosecute the company as well as tighten in general the legislation in this area. However, in December 2021, the Prosecutor's Office considered the continuation of the investigation unreasonable and ceased it.⁸⁶²

Considering the new facts of cooperation of the Dutch authorities with the Nazis during the Second World War that have been revealed recently (including the help the municipal authorities of certain cities provided by identifying unwanted persons and transportation of Jews, Gypsies and representatives of other "second-rate nations" to Nazi camps using the Dutch railways (Nederlandse Spoorwegen), the focus turns towards "findings" made by the experts of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). In particular, the HRC Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion Ahmed Shaheed identified a sceptical attitude on behalf of the representatives of the Jewish community to the readiness of the Dutch institutions to combatting antisemitism as well as to their actions related to the payment of compensations to the victims of Holocaust and their relatives. He also noted that many of the interviewed emphasized the inability of the Dutch police to recognize antisemitic insults and sometimes clearly define antisemitic incidents.

The Dutch media sometimes contain publications on the persistent problem of antisemitism in the society which is revealed among various age groups of the population. In view of this, it became public that 42 per cent of teachers faced antisemitic speeches from the students in 2022 school year (in 2013 – 35 per cent).⁸⁶³ Children are often incorrect in their statements concerning Islam or LGBT representatives.

The research conducted by a profile organization among the young Netherlanders (born after 1980) in December 2022 showed that almost one quarter of them (23 per cent) doubt the fact of the Holocaust (call it a myth) or consider

⁸⁶² Zaak tegen bol.com om antisemitische boekenverkoop geseponneerd. NRC. 2 December 2021 <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2021/12/02/zaak-tegen-bol-com-om-antisemitische-boekenverkoop-geseponneerd-a4067682>

⁸⁶³ See, for example, 42 % of secondary school teachers witnessed antisemitism in class. NL Times. 8 February 2023 <https://nltimes.nl/2023/02/08/42-secondary-school-teachers-witnessed-antisemitism-class>, Antisemitisme in klas 'hardnekkig probleem'. NOS. 8 February 2023 <https://nos.nl/artikel/2462940-antisemitisme-in-klas-hardnekkig-probleem>

"exaggerated" the number of persons of Jewish origin killed during the Holocaust. Besides, not many people in general are aware of what was going on during the Second World War: more than a half of the respondents could not say how many people were killed during the war and even did not name the Netherlands as a country where the Holocaust took place. Finally, 22 per cent of the Dutch younger than 42 see certain neo-Nazi slogans as "acceptable." Prime Minister of the Netherlands Mark Rutte found the results of the survey "shocking".⁸⁶⁴

The lack of awareness of the country's population on this issue leads to isolated illustrative incidents. Thus, at the end of 2022 – beginning of 2023, unknown people projected the slogan "White Lives Matter" with a laser onto several buildings in Rotterdam at once,⁸⁶⁵ and in early February 2023, the inscription "Anne Frank – inventor of the ballpoint pen" was similarly projected onto the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, thereby casting doubt on the authorship of the famous diary.⁸⁶⁶ The corresponding photographs appeared in the Telegram channel "The Lazer Nazi Bunker".

Various studies show that the number of antisemitic incidents in the Netherlands remains generally at about the same level.

According to the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, 627 criminal offences motivated by antisemitism were registered in 2021, with the majority – 463 cases – involving offensive rhetoric. There were also 63 incidents involving antisemitic threats, and another 41 – involving violence.⁸⁶⁷

As stated in the annual report by the Centre for Information and Documentation on Israel (Centrum Informatie en Documentatie Israel, CIDI), in 2021, the Netherlands recorded 183 antisemitic incidents (to compare, in 2020 – 135, and in 2019 – 182). The authors usually link the growth and fall of the

⁸⁶⁴ 23% of young Dutch have doubts that the Holocaust happened: study. NL Times. 25 January 2023 <https://nltimes.nl/2023/01/25/23-young-dutch-doubts-holocaust-happened-study>

⁸⁶⁵ "White Lives Matter" geprojecteerd op UWV-gebouw in Venlo, nog vóór die leus op de Erasmusbrug te zien was. AD. 5 January 2023 <https://www.ad.nl/limburg/white-lives-matter-geprojecteerd-op-uwv-gebouw-in-venlo-nog-voor-die-leus-op-de-erasmusbrug-te-zien-was~ade83f08/>

⁸⁶⁶ Politie onderzoekt projectie op Anne Frank Huis. NOS Nieuws. 10 February 2023 <https://nos.nl/artikel/2463199-politie-onderzoekt-projectie-op-anne-frank-huis>

⁸⁶⁷ Overview of Antisemitic Incidents recorded in the European Union, 2011-2021 http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-antisemitism-overview-2011-2021_en.pdf

indicators from year to year with Israel's military operations. There also numerous cases of antisemitism in the Internet. Dutch police and Prosecutor's Office register over 30 per cent of discrimination related cases filed and considered in 2021 concerning antisemitism.⁸⁶⁸

In general, the international community continue to register the displays of discrimination in the Netherlands as regards the representatives of ethnic, national and religious minorities and migrants, including legal and naturalized. It seems that the spread of such sentiments is facilitated by the activity of a number of right-wing politicians in the Netherlands. In addition, in 2018, the essentially xenophobic statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Stef Blok that there were no "peaceful multicultural societies" and that it was genetically determined that man cannot connect with "unknown people"⁸⁶⁹ caused a wide resonance.

Children of migrants and members of ethnic minorities are subject to noticeable discrimination in the field of education: because of their background and appearance, they receive lower marks when entering secondary school, as well as for academic performance during their studies. In addition, they are limited in their opportunities for internships, which negatively affects their future prospects in the labour market. The Committee on the Rights of the Child called for the Dutch authorities to provide such children with the possibilities to get normal education and do not use the practice of sending them to specialized schools.⁸⁷⁰ In addition to these problems, the persons with migrant background are subject to discrimination in the area of labour. Another area where migrants face limitations is healthcare.

Besides, the studies of the Dutch housing market show that the males with Moroccan names have 23 per cent lower chances to be invited to a housing viewing compared to those whose names sound Dutch. Similarly, the chances to be

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁹ Peaceful multicultural societies don't exist, Dutch FM says. NL Times. 18 July 2018 <https://nltimes.nl/2018/07/18/peaceful-multicultural-societies-dont-exist-dutch-fm-says>

⁸⁷⁰ Concluding observations by Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. February 2022 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G22/280/48/PDF/G2228048.pdf?OpenElement>

invited to viewing are 22 per cent lower as regards women with Moroccan names compared to women with Dutch names.⁸⁷¹

At the same time, children are forcibly instilled with neo-liberal values. The provisions of the new Civic Education Law oblige primary and secondary schools to teach children "respect for diversity, including religion, belief, ethnic origin, gender, disability and sexual orientation."⁸⁷²

Members of the Muslim community are subject to segregation in the society, feeling alienated and isolated due to the provisions of the law prohibiting the wearing of traditional Muslim women's clothing that covers the face. In the same series are amendments adopted to the Law on Citizenship (Law on Temporary Administrative Counter-Terrorism Measures), which provide for the possibility of deprivation of citizenship if there is suspicion of a person's involvement in terrorist activities – that is, based on assumptions, and not on the established fact of committing a crime. The prevalence of anti-Muslim sentiments in the Netherlands was also noted by the HRC Special Rapporteur on modern forms of racism E. Tendai Achiume, who pointed out with concern the significant tolerance in society towards Islamophobic sentiments, including among human rights activists.⁸⁷³

Residents of the Dutch overseas territories also face manifestations of discrimination in the spirit of neocolonial approaches. Experts note that Dutch legislatures and local authorities make a distinction between citizens of the Kingdom of the Netherlands who were born in the Netherlands and citizens who were born in or migrated from Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten. In addition, during the coronavirus pandemic, these territories received less economic support than the European part of the country. More than a quarter of Dutch Caribbean

⁸⁷¹ Study by A.B.Hoogenbosch, B.Tierolf, M.Sikkema, M.Kwakernaak, A.Mesic. Monitor of discrimination in the rental housing market 2022 (Monitor discriminatie bij woningverhuur 2022). Utrecht, Verwey-Jonker Instituut. 2022. Cit. ex. EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Rights Report 2023 http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

⁸⁷² EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Rights Report 2022 https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

⁸⁷³ Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, E. Tendayi Achiume, following her visit to the Netherlands on 30 September – 7 October 2019 <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/Download.aspx?SymbolNo=A/HRC/44/57/Add.2&Lang=ru>

(27 per cent) and Surinamese (26.2 per cent) respondents experienced discrimination based on race or skin colour in 2021, according to survey data.⁸⁷⁴ The results of another sociological study on people with a migrant background also confirmed the high degree of discrimination against people from the Dutch overseas territories. The highest prevalence of discrimination was observed among people of Surinamese (17 per cent) and Dutch Caribbean origin (16 per cent). Among all groups surveyed, second-generation migrants reported higher levels of discrimination. The figures were almost twice as high as for first-generation migrants among those of Turkish and Moroccan origin.⁸⁷⁵

The spread of discrimination, racist sentiments, and xenophobia in the Netherlands was indicated by various multilateral universal and regional human rights mechanisms. In 2019, The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has identified a number of unresolved problems in government policies to combat intolerance in society as a whole (strict requirements for the integration of foreigners, discriminatory and xenophobic statements by some politicians and journalists regarding Islam, Muslims, migrants, LGBT people, etc.).⁸⁷⁶ Moreover, it was noted that such ideology is used not only by ultra-right parties, but also by individual moderate politicians and officials who openly express their racist beliefs. Cases of implementation of such an ideology in practice have also been recorded (for example, launching sites for filing complaints against workers from Romania, Poland and Bulgaria and asylum seekers). The ECRI, among other things, called on the Netherlands to strengthen civil, administrative and criminal legislation and ensure full independence of the competent authorities in this area.

⁸⁷⁴ Study by M. Akkermans, R.Kloosterman. "Experienced discrimination? Statistical trends" ("*Gediscrimineerd gevoeld? Statistische trends*"). The Hague, Statistics Netherlands. 2022. Cit. ex. EU Agency for Fundamental Right, Fundamental Rights Report for 2023

http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

⁸⁷⁵ Study J.Dagevos, M.De Voogd-Hamelink, R.Damen, "Established in the Netherlands, but it's not home. Initial findings of the Survey on Migrant Integration (sim2020)" (Gevestigd, maar niet thuis. Eerste bevindingen uit de Survey integratie migranten (sim2020)). The Hague, The Netherlands Institute for Social Research. 2022. Cit. ex. EU Agency for Fundamental Right, Fundamental Rights Report for 2023

http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

⁸⁷⁶ ECRI Report on the Netherlands (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 2 April 2019, published on 4 June 2019 <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-the-netherlands/168094c577>

According to the ECRI conclusion of December 2021, its recommendations were not implemented by the Netherlands.⁸⁷⁷

As specified in the materials of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review within the framework of the UN Human Rights Council,⁸⁷⁸ in the Netherlands, problems in the field of combating discrimination at the legislative level have not been resolved. International human rights monitoring mechanisms have drawn attention to this. The Human Rights Committee has expressed concern at the chronic use in the Netherlands of racist hate speech against migrants, refugees, Muslims and ethnic and religious minorities on social media and at public events such as football matches. He also noted that hate speech not only caused significant harm to the rights and reputations of the individuals and groups targeted by it, but also contributed to the growing atmosphere of intolerance and hate crimes in the country. The Committee recommended that the Netherlands review its anti-discrimination legislation to ensure full and effective protection against discrimination on all prohibited grounds in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in all fields and areas and to prohibit direct, indirect and multiple discrimination.

In November 2021, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, highlighting the ongoing tensions with minorities in the Netherlands, pointed, in particular, to discrimination against Jewish and Muslim communities. It also expressed concern about racist themes pervasive in the media and the proliferation of racist statements and threats on the Internet. Separately, the Committee addressed the issue of the Dutch New Year's character "Black Pete", describing him as "reflecting the negative stereotypes experienced by people of African descent as a remnant of slavery." CERD also recommended that the Dutch

⁸⁷⁷ ECRI conclusion on the Netherlands concerning the implementation by the Netherlands of recommendations made earlier. Adopted on 7 December 2021, published in March 2022: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/netherlands>

⁸⁷⁸ Materials about the Netherlands passing the 5th cycle of the Universal Periodic Review in November 2022: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/nl-index>

authorities ensure, within their penal legislation, that the racist motivation is taken into account as an aggravating circumstance when committing criminal offences.⁸⁷⁹

The EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights, citing data from the first Dutch national study on discrimination in the housing market, notes that in the country, real estate agents and brokers often discriminate against people with Polish or Moroccan surnames.⁸⁸⁰ It also pointed to discrimination in education against people with migrant backgrounds.

As stated by the Agency, in 2020, out of 9,757 cases of discrimination in the country, 52 per cent were ethnically motivated⁸⁸¹. In its 2023 report, the Agency noted that the Anti-Discrimination Bureau and a number of other bodies reported a high level of complaints of ethnic discrimination in the Netherlands.⁸⁸²

In addition, according to the materials of the HRC Special Rapporteur on modern forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, E. Tendayi Achiume, dated July 2020,⁸⁸³ in the Netherlands, despite the presence of relevant laws, there are many problems with their practical application. The Special Rapporteur also emphasized the high degree of polarization in the political sphere of life in the Dutch society. She also noted that in the public consciousness there was a popular stereotype of perceiving a real citizen of the Netherlands as a person of European origin, while people from the African or Asian region, even if they had Dutch citizenship and lived in the country not in the first generation, were still perceived as an alien element. According to the Special Rapporteur, this was reflected in the fact that race, ethnicity, national origin, religion and other similar factors determined who was fully treated as a citizen. Racial and ethnic profiling occurs and counter-terrorism concerns are evident (due to citizenship revocation

⁸⁷⁹ Concluding observations on the combined twenty-second to twenty-fourth periodic reports of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. August 2021
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FNLD%2FCO%2F22-24&Lang=en

⁸⁸⁰ Report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights for 2022
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

⁸⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸⁸² Report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights for 2023
http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

⁸⁸³ Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, E. Tendayi Achiume, following her visit to the Netherlands on 30 September – 7 October 2019. July 2020 <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/Download.aspx?SymbolNo=A%2FHRC%2f44%2f57%2fAdd.2&Lang=en>

procedures). The government is recommended to "reduce social and economic differences between racial and ethnic minorities, on the one hand, and ethnic Dutch, on the other," as well as improve the education system. The expert also recommended that the Netherlands take the necessary special measures in the political, economic, social and cultural fields to ensure equality of racial and ethnic minorities and provide them with effective protection against racial discrimination and access to legal remedies.⁸⁸⁴

The high degree of polarization of the Dutch society and the stigmatization of certain religious communities in the country was also pointed out by the HRC Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief Shaheed following his visit to the Netherlands in 2019. In particular, pointing to the proliferation of ideas of a "superior" Dutch national identity in public discourse, he noted that the "Dutch values" were increasingly mentioned in public policy debates and often used to implicitly define behavioural norms. In this context, Islam and the "Dutch" or "Western European way of life" are usually characterized as incompatible. For example, calls from the political parties for Muslims to recognize the Dutch or European culture as dominant and to assimilate with it are not uncommon. In his opinion, this may contribute to further polarization of religious communities.

Racial discrimination also manifests itself in the treatment of the poor by the Dutch authorities. The scandal with children benefits caused a wide resonance – at the beginning of 2021, the government of the Netherlands led by Prime Minister Rutte resigned because of the fact that for several years in the country the tax authorities, due to minor errors in documents, accused low-income families, mainly of migrant origin, of fraud and deprived their social benefits. This problem was caused by the Dutch authorities using a social security fraud detection tool called the System Risk Indication based on an algorithmic risk assessment model. Based on this mechanism, authorities identify certain people as more likely to

⁸⁸⁴ End of Mission Statement of the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance at the Conclusion of Her Mission to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, The Hague, 7 October 2019
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2019/10/end-mission-statement-special-rapporteur-contemporary-forms-racism-racial?LangID=E&NewsID=25100>

commit benefit fraud. It is used mainly in areas with a high proportion of low-income residents, migrants and ethnic minorities. This problem was brought to the attention of the HRC Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston, who pointed out that the use of such tools by the authorities discriminates against the poorest members of society and undermines the right to privacy.⁸⁸⁵

In addition, the Dutch media, with reference to the competent authorities, published information that the Netherlands had become a "transshipment point" for people seeking to reach the UK through continental Europe. Experts cited the UK's exit from the EU as the reason for the intensification of such activities.

The situation with refugees and migrants has worsened amid the Ukrainian crisis. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 98,440 refugees from Ukraine are registered in the country's municipalities (as of September 2023).⁸⁸⁶ In summer 2022, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and various NGOs were critical of the Dutch refugee reception centres, highlighting poor living conditions and lack of sufficient food.

The system is overloaded, and the authorities forced the municipalities to assist in the reception and accommodation of refugees from Ukraine. The Parliamentarians who questioned the existence of legal grounds for such "coercion" were forced to intervene.

The report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus for 2022 "On the most resonant cases of human rights violations in individual countries of the world" notes that in March 2022, problems were identified related to the lack in general in the Netherlands of a sufficient number of places to accommodate refugees from various countries of the world, as well as discrimination against refugees from other countries compared to the Ukrainians. For example, 37 thousand refugees, including 15 thousand from Ukraine, are

⁸⁸⁵ The Netherlands is building a surveillance state for the poor, says UN rights expert. HRC special procedures press release. 16 October 2019

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2019/10/netherlands-building-surveillance-state-poor-says-un-rights-expert>

⁸⁸⁶ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/opvang-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraïne/cijfers-opvang-vluchtelingen-uit-oekraïne-in-nederland>

accommodated in the Ter Apel accommodation centre, as well as in a number of temporary shelters in various regions of the country. This centre is already overcrowded; there are not enough beds for the persons accommodated therein. Asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries at first actually live on chairs or on the floor.

The problems of illegal migrants and asylum seekers were once highlighted by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights in a report following his visit to the Netherlands.⁸⁸⁷

Human rights circles continue to be concerned about the inhumane attitude of the Dutch politics to asylum seekers and illegal migrants, in particular, excessive imprisonment of such persons, including minors, inefficient provision of the rights of foreigners in custody, missing necessary medical aid, low flexibility of the system of provision of residency permits, as well as weak system of the protection of rights of persons to be deported, which are refused asylum (especially from Afghanistan).

The Committee against Torture, in its concluding observations to the seventh periodic report of the Netherlands, pointed out such problematic aspects of the treatment of illegal migrants and asylum seekers as unfair processing of asylum applications, long periods and harsh conditions of detention in special centres.⁸⁸⁸ The discrimination of migrants was also indicated by the Special Rapporteurs of the HRC on freedom of religion or belief⁸⁸⁹ and on contemporary forms of racism.⁸⁹⁰ The Committee on the Rights of the Child also raised the issue of

⁸⁸⁷ Report by Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner for Human Right of the Council of Europe, following his visit to the Netherlands. May 2014 <https://rm.coe.int/16806db830>

⁸⁸⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the seventh periodic report of the Netherlands. December 2018

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2FCO%2FNL%2FCO%2F7&Lang=ru

⁸⁸⁹ Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ahmed Shaheed, following his visit to the Netherlands on 27 March - 5 April 2019. February 2020

<https://spinternet.ohchr.org/Download.aspx?SymbolNo=A/HRC/43/48/Add.1&Lang=ru>

⁸⁹⁰ Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance E. Tendayi Achiume, following her visit to the Netherlands on 30 September – 7 October 2019, July 2020 <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/Download.aspx?SymbolNo=A/HRC/44/57/Add.2&Lang=ru>

detention of migrant children in migration centres and problems with their reunification with families.⁸⁹¹

The human rights NGO Amnesty International emphasized that the regime in migrant detention centres was similar to the one in prison. The centres are overcrowded, there is a shortage of staff in the competent authorities to consider migrant applications, etc. The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights indicated that the processing time for asylum applications for all is limited to eight days, but is preceded by a waiting period of about 10 months. Due to the increase in the number of asylum seekers, the latter are placed not only in reception centres, but also in temporary shelters that are not suitable for this purpose. The coronavirus pandemic has only made this situation worse.

The Human Rights Committee has expressed concern that the number of people in migration detention centres has increased significantly in the country, and the duration of such detention is often extended and frequently exceeds the maximum period established in the EU Return Directive, which concerns common standards and procedures within Member States for the return of third-country nationals illegally staying there. He also pointed out that the Dutch authorities practically do not apply alternative measures to migrants that do not involve detention. Besides, there have been frequent cases of long delays in judicial review of decisions to place migrants in detention centres.⁸⁹²

Dutch human rights institutions also recognized the problems in the infrastructure for receiving migrants and refugees. According to the June 2023 report of the National Ombudsman and Children's Ombudsman, conditions for refugees, especially children, in the Netherlands are unsatisfactory. It is noted that

⁸⁹¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child after consideration of the fifth and sixth periodic reports of the Netherlands. February 2022

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G22/280/48/PDF/G2228048.pdf?OpenElement>

⁸⁹² Concluding observations by the Human Rights Committee on the fifth periodic report of the Netherlands. July 2019

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/NLD/CO/5&Lang=Ru

most places for receiving refugees do not meet the necessary standards, and you have to wait for a decision on granting asylum for many months, if not a year.⁸⁹³

A significant problem for the Netherlands, as well as for a number of other European countries, remains the issue of the return of the Dutch who joined the terrorist organization "Islamic State" in Iraq and Syria. According to the General Intelligence and Security Service of the Netherlands (AIVD), as of 31 August 2023, there are about 100 adult residents of the Kingdom in the region (a third of them are held in Syrian-Kurdish camps or detention centres in North-east Syria).⁸⁹⁴ There are about 25 Dutch citizens in jihadist groups. There are approximately 150 minors of Dutch origin living in the region (70 of them are members of jihadist groups in Northwest Syria). Previously, the government insisted on the impossibility of returning minors, guided by decisions of the Hague Court, which in 2019 overturned a lower court decision on the return of 23 women and 56 children from Syria and ruled that the government had no obligations to these individuals. According to the verdict, the final decision remained with the Cabinet of Ministers, and was not a matter of law, but of political expediency. In June 2020, the Dutch Supreme Court confirmed this decision. In November 2022, information appeared in the media about the return of 12 women suspected of terrorist activities and 28 children from the northern regions of Syria following the third special operation of the Ministry of Justice and Security and the Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands.⁸⁹⁵ Earlier in May 2022, a court in Rotterdam decided that all suspects must be returned to their homeland, otherwise the proceedings against them would be terminated.

Human rights structures pay special attention to the widespread practice of ethnic and racial profiling by law enforcement agencies. For example, two residents of the Kingdom in 2021 entered a corresponding complaint in Dutch court but the legal instance, in its ruling of 22 September 2021, recognized legal

⁸⁹³ Ombudsmannen: de crisisopvang is 'tragisch' en 'ontmenselijkend' – met name voor kinderen. NRC. 26 June 2023: <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2023/06/26/ombudsmannen-noemen-de-crisisopvang-ontmenselijkend-met-name-voor-kinderen-a4168274>

⁸⁹⁴ www.aivd.nl/onderwerpen/terrorisme/uitreizigers-en-terugkeerders

⁸⁹⁵ www.parool.nl/nederland/kabinet-haalt-derde-groep-op-uit-syrie-12-is-vrouwen-en-28-kinderen~b60ea0a3/

the ethnic profiling practised by the Dutch border service (the use of race or ethnicity is not discriminatory when there is an issue of whom to check in border-crossing), which caused sharp criticism from human rights NGOs.⁸⁹⁶ In February 2023, an appeal court in the Netherlands re-considered such conclusions and ruled that such actions were discriminatory.⁸⁹⁷

The demonstration of racial profiling within the Dutch police is confirmed in the report of the Senate's parliamentary committee containing the inquiry into the effectiveness of anti-discrimination law, which focused on the police this time. In particular, it was confirmed that the toughest to solve were the issues of ethnic profiling (physical and algorithmic) by the police and discrimination within the police work environment. Major reasons cited included lack of clear standards, discriminatory police culture and inadequate complaints procedures.⁸⁹⁸

In December 2022, a report was published on racism in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, which provoked wide discussions. It turned out that such a phenomenon was quite widespread within the foreign service.⁸⁹⁹ The head of the ministry Wopke Hoekstra and other Dutch officials expressed surprise at the results and announced their intention to fight the problem.

Amidst the beginning of the Russian special military operation to demilitarize and de-nazify Ukraine and protect civilians on Donbass, fuelled by the Dutch media and statements from the government, the Russophobic and Russians-oriented discriminatory attitudes started to manifest in the Netherlands. There were, *inter alia*, anti-Russian speeches and publications, and threats of physical harm. In particular, the employees of the Russian Embassy in the Netherlands were

⁸⁹⁶ Dutch Court allows racial profiling. Press release from a group of human rights NGOs on the website of the Dutch branch of Amnesty International. 22 September 2021
https://www.amnesty.nl/content/uploads/2021/09/Dutch-Court-allows-racial-profiling_September-22_2021_final.pdf?x88229

⁸⁹⁷ Border police ethnic profiling is discriminatory, appeal court rules. Dutch News. 14 February 2023
<https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2023/02/border-police-ethnic-profiling-is-discriminatory-appeal-court-rules/>

⁸⁹⁸ Fundamental Rights Report 2023 of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights
http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

⁸⁹⁹ Racism within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: "This is not who we want to be." Government of the Netherlands website. 13 December 2022
<https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2022/12/13/racism-within-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-interview-paul-huijts>

receiving through 2022 letters containing threats, including related to the members of their families.

The Coordination Council of Russian Compatriots in the Netherlands recorded numerous cases of anti-Russian statements and publications. They say that the information containing the "addresses of Russians in the Netherlands" usually accompanied by threats is propagated in social media. Representatives of the Ukrainian community seem to be involved in such activities.

At the same time the law enforcement, Dutch government and local media are quite loyal to the demonstration of Nazi ideology in Ukraine. For example, although recognizing certain Ukrainian structures (such as, for instance, the Azov battalion⁹⁰⁰) promoting openly the Nazi ideology and use the Nazi symbols, the Dutch media make every effort to avoid discussions on the ideological component of such acts. The Nieuwsuur (News Hour) programme showed a piece of news about the Azov Nazi battalion, in which the authors of the news were obliged to recognize that this structure promoted the Nazi ideology and used the Nazi symbols while leading the discussions all the time away from the ideological component. Having made an appearance in the MH17 investigation, a Bellingcat journalist who participated in the programme failed to neglect the Nazi substance of Azov, but justified neo-Nazis by saying that Ukraine supposedly had no other choice.

In 2022, amidst the worsening of the Russia-Netherlands relations, the Dutch side undertook a series of steps to prevent the representatives of the Russian Embassy from participating in the events dedicated to the Second World War (for, example, in early 2023, the local Jewish organization, under pressure from the Dutch authorities, revoke the invitation sent earlier to the Russian diplomatic mission to attend the Holocaust memory event). In May 2022, before the ceremonies on the occasion of the Victory Day, it was prohibited to use Russian flags and Georgian ribbons.

⁹⁰⁰ Recognized as a terrorist organisation by the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation

New Zealand

New Zealand

Neo-Nazism and the glorification of Nazism in New Zealand are sporadic. In general, they are met with strong public disapproval and are condemned in the media; and those involved are prosecuted.

There have been no cases of desecration or dismantling of monuments to anti-Nazis and victims of World War II during the reporting period. The government of New Zealand and the local authorities did not impede holding commemorative events in honour of the Victory Day and on the anniversary of the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. There were no incidents of intimidation and bullying of members of veterans' associations.

The Jewish community, in particular the New Zealand Jewish Council, the Holocaust Center of New Zealand, and the Zionist Federation of New Zealand make significant contribution to the fight against glorification of Nazism. They are active in keeping alive the memory of the victims of fascism, monitor and suppress the attempts to glorify Nazism within the New Zealand's society and in the Internet.

In August 2020, these associations managed to obtain the official ban on memorialization of the former member of Waffen-SS Willi Huber at the ski resort founded by him. In the area of Mount Hutt a ski slope and a cafe were named after him. There was also a corresponding commemorative plate.

During the anti-government demonstrations in Wellington in February and March 2022, the Jewish commune publicly condemned the references to the crimes of the Nazi regime, while criticizing the New Zealand authorities and the national COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

However, the New Zealand position on the draft UN General Assembly resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" co-sponsored annually by Russia and a number of other states became worse in 2022 and the New Zealand delegation in

solidarity with the other states of the collective West voted against this document (it has previously traditionally abstained from voting).

Against this background, the fact that there is no legal ban on demonstration and distribution of Nazi symbols in the country is alarming. Private companies may pursue their own policy on this issue. In July 2022, as an illustrative example, objects with Nazi paraphernalia were sold at the New Zealand TradeMe online auction despite the portal policy to prevent publication of advertisements about the objects produced after 1933 and containing swastikas or the objects propagating Nazism, fascism, racial hatred, and racial dominance. The Zionist Federation of New Zealand and veterans' associations strongly condemned publication on the website over hundred advertisements about selling of stamps, postcards, books and posters with swastikas, the Third Reich emblems and portraits of Adolf Hitler. Even after their joint complaint against TradeMe, these advertisements were not deleted due to the lack of violation of the legislation. The representatives of the service only pledged to assess functioning of algorithms of the portal guidance system in order to avoid unintentional distribution of information about such goods.

The continuing spread of extreme right-wing ideas remains an issue. The right-wing movement in New Zealand is mainly represented by supporters of the white race dominance theory and less by adherents of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. According to the annual reports of the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service, this fact is considered to be a challenge to national security. Meanwhile, according to the Service, major threat comes not from organized groups but from single radicals who are harder to be identified and neutralized.

At the same time, as the March 2019 terrorist attack in Christchurch demonstrated and the 2020 report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry confirmed, the domestic regulation of extremist organizations' activities in the country is insufficient. The list of organizations banned on the territory of New Zealand includes 22 foreign units besides the groups recognized as terrorist by the UN

Security Council resolutions.⁹⁰¹ And experts estimate that there are between 60 and 70 groups, including local ones, and up to 300 individual activists promoting right-wing and far-right ideas. According to the recent official figures, by the end of 2021, there were 216 radical supporters under surveillance by the authorities, 140 of whom on national and 76 on religious grounds.

The most prominent neo-Nazi groups are *Wargus Christi* and *Action Zealandia* promoting radical nationalist ideas about the need to perfect the white race in the interest of its survival given the predominance of migrant workers from third countries in the New Zealand society. According to the sociological survey⁹⁰², members of these associations prefer communicating online, in private chats and fora focusing on self-radicalization. However, they are known to be badly organized and rarely put their ideas into practice. Spreading of leaflets and posters, attempts by some representatives of these groups to purchase weapon, and individual attacks by their actual or former members against non-European people have been recorded. Reportedly, senior and experienced members of these groups have called on the rest to refrain from committing illegal acts in order to avoid unnecessary attention from the authorities.

Today, in New Zealand, the dissemination of right-wing ideas and incitement to hatred on national, religious and other grounds have been predominantly carried out online. According to a study commissioned by the government of New Zealand and conducted by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, extremist content from New Zealand's IP addresses is replicated on social networks, closed web forums and websites, including Twitter, Facebook, Parler, Gab, Youtube and 4Chan. There is no centralized platform for distributing right-wing content.

⁹⁰¹ Lists associated with Resolution 1373. New Zealand Police
<https://www.police.govt.nz/advice/personal-community/counterterrorism/designated-entities/lists-associated-with-resolution-1373>

⁹⁰² Neo-Nazi group Action Zealandia 'unfit, ill-disciplined', undercover researcher found. Stuff. 6 September 2022
<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/129693256/neonazi-group-action-zealandia-unfit-illdisciplined-undercover-researcher-finds>

In New Zealand, human rights activists are concerned about the increase of manifestations of racial intolerance in the country that the indigenous population of Maori as well as other persons of non-European origin face. The New Zealand Human Rights Commission has found that migrants become victims of overt or covert racism on a daily basis, in all spheres and at all levels of society (institutional, interpersonal, within their own ethnic group or race).⁹⁰³ Notably, the driving forces behind this are not only racial supremacy and white privilege, but also fear and ignorance, and general colonialist mindset. The similar situation is also developing in education: according to the Auckland University 2022 study, students and disciples who are perceived as 'white' are less likely to experience discrimination by teachers, healthcare providers and police.⁹⁰⁴

New Zealanders also perceive members of the Chinese diaspora as "eternal migrants", despite their presence in the country for more than 150 years.⁹⁰⁵ The already intolerant attitude toward them in society has been exacerbated by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chinese and other people of Asian descent were subjected to insults and accusations that they were allegedly responsible for the emergence and spread of the infection. According to the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 34 per cent of more than 250 complaints related to the coronavirus were on the topic of racial discrimination.

The issue of coexistence between descendants of colonizers and the Maori population remains a sensitive one. According to the 2018 census, the indigenous people make up 16.5 per cent of the country's population. According to the 2021 surveys, about 93 per cent of Maori respondents have experienced some form of intolerance and social injustice because of their race.⁹⁰⁶ The reports released by the

903 Racism against migrants prevalent in New Zealand, report finds. Radio New Zealand. 25 March 2021

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/439123/racism-against-migrants-prevalent-in-new-zealand-report-finds>

904 Racism disproportionately affects visibly indigenous and ethnic minorities. University of Auckland News. 30 September 2022

<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/news/2022/09/30/racism-disproportionally-affects-visibly-indigenous-and-ethnic-m.html>

905 Meng Foon: Covid-19 coronavirus fear no excuse for racism. NZ Human Rights Commission. 11 May 2020

<https://covid19.hrc.co.nz/meng-foon-covid-19-coronavirus-fear-no-excuse-for-racism>

906 Most Maori experience racism every day – new research. Radio New Zealand. 22 March 2021

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/ldr/438895/most-maori-experience-racism-every-day-new-research>

Human Rights Commission in February 2023 underline that⁹⁰⁷ 180 years of colonization in New Zealand have negatively affected the development of the indigenous population that resulted in a lower level of welfare and health of Maori and a lower life expectancy for this population.

This problem has been highlighted by the UN human rights treaty bodies, such as the Human Rights Committee (HRC)⁹⁰⁸, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)⁹⁰⁹, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)⁹¹⁰. The employment rate among Maori is 68 per cent that is lower than on average 70 per cent over the country. The unemployment rate among Maori and Pasifika, primarily among women and adolescents, is still the highest, i.e. 7.7 per cent compared to 3.9 per cent for New Zealanders of European descent (June 2021). In contrast, the life expectancy among the indigenous people is significantly lower, by an average of seven years. This problem has been highlighted namely by the HRC⁹¹¹, the CERD⁹¹², the CESCR⁹¹³, the CEDAW⁹¹⁴, and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with

⁹⁰⁷ Reports on racism raise challenges in election year. Newsroom. 5 February 2023
<https://www.newsroom.co.nz/reports-on-racism-raise-challenges-in-election-year>

⁹⁰⁸ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the sixth periodic report of New Zealand. March 2016
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en

⁹⁰⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fourth periodic report of New Zealand. March 2018
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fNZL%2fCO%2f4&Lang=en

⁹¹⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the eighth periodic report of New Zealand. July 2018
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f8&Lang=en

⁹¹¹ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the sixth periodic report of New Zealand. March 2016
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en

⁹¹² Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-first and twenty-second periodic reports of New Zealand. August 2017
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f21-22&Lang=en

⁹¹³ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fourth periodic report of New Zealand. March 2018
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fNZL%2fCO%2f4&Lang=en

⁹¹⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the eighth periodic report of New Zealand. July 2018
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fNZL%2f

Disabilities (CRPD)⁹¹⁵. Experts attribute this to the fact that Maori more often than other people face barriers in accessing basic health services. In addition, there is still a disparity in the salaries of indigenous health workers.⁹¹⁶ The CESCR also criticized the New Zealand authorities for having higher rates of chronic diseases and higher disability rates among the indigenous population, and they are also negatively overrepresented in suicide and mental health statistics.⁹¹⁷ Meanwhile, in psychiatric hospitals patients are usually subjected to isolation as a measure of punishment and discipline. Most frequently, this procedure is carried out on Maori people.⁹¹⁸

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) also noted a high percentage of suicide among children and youth – representatives of the indigenous population (aging from 10 to 24), having highlighted that this issue mostly concerns men and boys. In this regard, the monitoring body recommended the New Zealand authorities to include special measures aimed at Maori and Pasifika in the Suicide Prevention Strategy 2019–2029 and the Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2019–2024. As a follow-up, the CRC expressed concern about a high rate of violence, particularly domestic and sexual violence against children from the indigenous population, as well as about the limited access to psychological and physical rehabilitation and to reporting channels.⁹¹⁹

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⁹¹⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the combined second and third periodic reports of New Zealand. September 2022

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f2-3&Lang=en

⁹¹⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-first and twenty-second periodic reports of New Zealand. August 2017

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f21-22&Lang=en

⁹¹⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fourth periodic report of New Zealand. March 2018

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fNZL%2fCO%2f4&Lang=en

⁹¹⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-first and twenty-second periodic reports of New Zealand. August 2017

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f21-22&Lang=en

⁹¹⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the sixth periodic report of New Zealand. February 2023

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en

According to some experts, Maori and Pasifika minors in general cannot enjoy an adequate standard of living. Besides the abovementioned problems, these children as well as other children in situations of vulnerability are exposed to higher risks of school bullying, mental distress or homelessness.

Maori remain overrepresented in state care, where, according to the CRC, these children disproportionately experience harm. Therefore in 2023, the government of New Zealand was again recommended to take measures to prevent placement of minors in out-of-home care, limit removal to the shortest time possible, provide Maori with adequate support while in alternative care, and facilitate reintegration into their families and communities.⁹²⁰

Problems also emerge in the enjoyment of the right to education. The international monitoring bodies note in this context that Maori and Pasifika students, particularly at secondary school and university levels, achieve lower outcomes than those of European background and experience higher rates of stigma and disciplinary measures at schools.⁹²¹ There has been a decline in the level of native language proficiency among the indigenous population. This is mainly due to a small number of Maori-speaking teachers.⁹²² According to the CRC experts, strengthening efforts to promote and foster the use and teaching of the Maori language, their culture and history in schools should facilitate addressing racism, discrimination, stigma and bias experienced by the indigenous population.⁹²³

There is a notably high percentage of the indigenous population affected by incarceration. As of June 2021, indigenous persons comprised 53 per cent of the

⁹²⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the sixth periodic report of New Zealand. February 2023
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FNZL%2FCO%2F6&Lang=en

⁹²¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-first and twenty-second periodic reports of New Zealand. August 2017
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f21-22&Lang=en

⁹²² Ibid.

⁹²³ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the sixth periodic report of New Zealand. February 2023
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FNZL%2FCO%2F6&Lang=en

total prison population and 46.5 per cent of inmates serving community sentences. In July 2018, the CEDAW stated that 65 per cent of female inmates were Maori.⁹²⁴ In 2015, the Committee against Torture (CAT) condemned the practice of disproportionate use of incarceration against the indigenous people.⁹²⁵ The HRC⁹²⁶, the CERD⁹²⁷, and the CRC⁹²⁸ also expressed concern about the overrepresentation of Maori and Pasifika in the criminal justice system.

The Maori people are much more likely than white New Zealanders to be the subject of police interest. However, it is important to note that the proportion of the indigenous people in the judiciary and law enforcement systems is low: 10 per cent and 11 per cent respectively. The HRC also mentioned the practice of racial profiling involving Maori and persons of African descent.⁹²⁹

In connection with the above and due to the media criticism of cases of groundless questioning of minor Maori citizens and the entering of their photographs and contact data in the police files, in early 2021, the New Zealand police engaged with Te Puna Haumaruru New Zealand Institute for Security and Crime Science and the University of Waikato to launch a research project in order to ensure equal approach to citizens and suspects and identify possible unconscious biased attitude towards Maori on the part of law enforcement officials.

⁹²⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the eighth periodic report of New Zealand. July 2018
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f8&Lang=en

⁹²⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the sixth periodic report of New Zealand. April 2015
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en

⁹²⁶ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the sixth periodic report of New Zealand. March 2016
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en

⁹²⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-first and twenty-second periodic reports of New Zealand. August 2017
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f21-22&Lang=en

⁹²⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the sixth periodic report of New Zealand. February 2023
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en

⁹²⁹ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the sixth periodic report of New Zealand. March 2016
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en

According to the experts of the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, today, the increasing number of white people rejects the existence of systematic racism in the New Zealand society. To rectify the situation, the government is recommended to work closely on eradicating racial discrimination in the key spheres of life, solving the Maori land issues in accordance with the Treaty of Waitangi⁹³⁰, as well as reforming the Constitution within the framework of "establishing shared governance". At the same time, experts point out the need to improve the educational process by covering the colonization history and racism in New Zealand.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted in August 2017 the lack of progress in the implementation of the 2013 recommendations of the Constitutional Advisory Panel concerning the Treaty of Waitangi. Besides, an independent *Matike Mai Aotearoa* Maori-led initiative put forward other proposals for discussion on a range of constitutional models that have not been taken up by the New Zealand authorities either.⁹³¹ At the same time, the CESCR underlined in March 2018 the need to ensure meaningful participation of Maori in all decision-making processes affecting their rights.⁹³²

Matters of combating manifestations of intolerance in the New Zealand society fall within the competence of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, ministers and heads of state institutions for Maori development, Maori Crown relations, Pacific peoples, and the social policy regarding Maori. The Human Rights Commission continues to operate, and the Race Relations Commissioner has been appointed.

⁹³⁰ Te Tiriti o Waitangi (in Maori) (in English, the Treaty of Waitangi) is a treaty made in 1840 between the British authorities and 539 Maori chiefs. According to this treaty, Maori give up their sovereignty in favor of the British crown in exchange for the protection of their lands. The Treaty of Waitangi has not been ratified by Great Britain, but is one of the defining documents of the country's social structure. Since 1975, the spirit of the treaty as a constitutional act has been monitored by the Waitangi Tribunal, which makes recommendations on claims made by Maori for violations of the treaty.

⁹³¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-first and twenty-second periodic reports of New Zealand. August 2017
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f21-22&Lang=en

⁹³² Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fourth periodic report of New Zealand. March 2018
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fNZL%2fCO%2f4&Lang=en

Despite the above issues, the legislation of New Zealand does not consider crimes on the grounds of racism, intolerance, or adherence to Nazi ideology as separate crimes. There is only one known case in 1979 when the provision of the Human Rights Act 1993⁹³³ has been applied in practice. It criminalizes deliberate incitement of racial hatred by spreading materials or via relevant public speeches. Moreover, such cases never become subject of criminal proceedings and are examined by the Human Rights Commission instead. Committing a crime on the grounds of racial hatred is not considered an aggravating circumstance either. Nevertheless, under the Sentencing Act the judges are allowed to deem such illegal actions as a ground for harsher sentences.

In 2020, in order to promote tolerance in the New Zealand society the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch recommended the government to toughen penalties for the use of hate speech and make it a criminal offence. However, the labour cabinet in force did not succeed in adopting a corresponding draft law: "the final draft" submitted for consideration by the parliament in November 2022 was scraped in February 2023 "for refinement" because the initiative was rejected by public and considered to be an attempt to impose censorship.

Today, the legal framework on prevention of hate speech in New Zealand includes the Human Rights Act and the Harmful Digital Communications Act. These Acts criminalize the use of words which are insulting or threatening in public against a group of persons on the ground of colour, race, ethnic or national origins, when such words or threats are likely to excite hostility or ill-will against, or bring into contempt or ridicule, any such group of persons. The refusal to delete from social networks the messages aimed at bullying or containing personal humiliating information is also punishable. These acts are subject to a fine not exceeding 7,000 New Zealand dollars or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months.

⁹³³ Imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or a fine not exceeding 7,000 NZ dollars (one NZ dollar is equal to 0.64 US dollars)

In addition, during the research the members of the above-mentioned Commission actively engaged with the Muslim community members who spoke out about racism and discrimination in New Zealand as well as how they were frequently mistaken for terrorists and treated as such. They also reported fear of being subjected to a hate crime, being a victim of a terrorist attack, or being the target of hate speech. In this regard, representatives of the Royal Commission stressed the lack of social cohesion in the country and the need to develop it, in particular by stimulating public debate on the subject.⁹³⁴

Equally important in terms of combating hate speech was the recommendation that police reviews the way they record complaints of criminal behaviour in order to systematically record cases with a hate motive, and that law enforcement officers be trained to identify "indicators of bias" in order to identify potential hate crimes.

The UN human rights treaty bodies have criticized New Zealand's lack of statistical data on prosecutions and convictions for racist hate speech and racist violence. The HRC⁹³⁵ and the CERD⁹³⁶, in particular, have called attention to the lack of a coherent national strategy to address racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and other forms of intolerance, including racial and religious hatred.

The CERD also noted with concern a great number of complaints of discrimination on the basis of race, including over 400 complaints concerning discrimination in hiring and employment, human trafficking, and harassment filed with the Human Rights Commission in recent years.⁹³⁷

⁹³⁴ Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch on 15 March 2019. November 2020

<https://christchurchattack.royalcommission.nz/the-report/>

⁹³⁵ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the sixth periodic report of New Zealand. March 2016

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en

⁹³⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-first and twenty-second periodic reports of New Zealand. August 2017

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f21-22&Lang=en

⁹³⁷ Ibid.

The CRPD has criticized the fact that the provisions of the 2009 Immigration Act prevent people from lodging complaints related to immigration decisions with the New Zealand Human Rights Commission.⁹³⁸

Following the 2019 recommendations to New Zealand in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review within the UN Human Rights Council, in August 2021, the country began to develop a national action plan against racism under the aegis of the Ministry of Justice and in engagement with the ethnic communities of New Zealand.⁹³⁹

After the Russian Federation started the special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, there have been an increasing number of open manifestations of russophobia by New Zealanders and the local Ukrainian diaspora as a result of the global anti-Russian campaign unleashed by the Western media and projected in the local media. Cases of harassment against Russian children at schools in New Zealand were recorded.⁹⁴⁰ As a result of systematic attacks, the Russian Cultural Center in Christchurch and a school by the Center had to close down. In Oakland, two companies developing a network of Russian pre-school institutions closed; and the façade of the Russian Orthodox Church was attacked by vandals (red paint was poured over it). At the end of March 2022, an unknown person made an attempt to set on fire the Russian Embassy in Wellington. A few days earlier, the Russian diplomatic mission had received calls of threat.

However, after the first cases of harassment against Russian citizens the issue fell within the scope of attention of the New Zealand government. Today, the Ministry for Ethnic Minorities monitors the respect of civil rights of the Russian speaking population and holds regular meetings with the representatives of

⁹³⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the combined second and third periodic reports of New Zealand. September 2022
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f2-3&Lang=en

⁹³⁹ National Action Plan Against Racism. Ministry of Justice of New Zealand.

<https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/key-initiatives/national-action-plan-against-racism/>

⁹⁴⁰ Ukraine Invasion: Russians in New Zealand facing hostility, abuse and bullying at school. Newshub. 14 March 2022
<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2022/03/ukraine-invasion-russians-in-new-zealand-facing-hostility-abuse-and-bullying-at-school.html>

associations of compatriots to collect information about the situation of Russian speaking people in the country.

In general, one can conclude that structural discrimination against Maori and non-European people remains the thorniest and the most pressing issue in New Zealand. So far, the New Zealand authorities have failed to bring its solution closer.

Norway

Norway, a country oft-touted for its tolerance, hasn't legally banned neo-Nazism/Nazism as a political and social movement. For that reason, Oslo has been repeatedly blasted by special-purpose Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) which was established based on The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

However, almost all possible manifestations of Nazism and neo-Nazism are reflected in the nation's Criminal Code (§§ 77, 185, 186) and are punishable by law as "hate expression" or "discrimination" based on race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc. The same applies to showcasing of Nazi insignia (it is not prohibited in itself, but their use in the context of "hate expression" towards specific groups is punishable by a fine or a prison term of up to three years).

The rights of protection from discrimination, protection of the human identity, as well as provisions on equality and freedom of faith are cemented by a separate chapter of the 1814 Norwegian Constitution. Moreover, the 2017 Law On Equality and Prohibition of Discrimination and 1999 Law On Strengthening Human Rights Positions in Norwegian legislation of 1999 regulate additional guarantees for the human rights protection.

Norway has an extensive network of human rights institutions and a number of national ombudsmen that focus, among other things, on equality and discrimination prevention. Discrimination complaints filled out by citizens are processed by the Discrimination Commission. Since 2015, Stortinget (parliament) has affiliated Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (NIM) acting as an independent human rights organization.

Unlike many European nations that carry their own Nazi legacy, Norway, due to historical reasons, is not a fertile ground for fostering National Socialist ideology. Between 1940 and 1945, the nation was occupied by Nazis, with the collaborationist regime of Vidkun Quisling put in place. Human losses exceeded

10,000. Northern Norway was hit especially hard as Nazi forces relied on the scorched earth tactic while retreating.

The post-war crackdown on collaborators proves of how deeply the Norwegian people were hurt by the occupation. Up to 2% of the population were subjected to repressions in various form, one of the highest figures among the countries that went through the stage of post-war "purges". By various estimates, up to 7,000 of Norwegians fought on the Nazis' side. Up to 6,000 fought on the Soviet-German front as part of SS Viking and Norland divisions, including Norway regiment, SS Ski Jäger Battalion "Norway", and SS Norwegian legion, with losses amounted to about 900 people. After the war, Norwegian SS members were in large part sentenced to various terms of correctional labour and temporarily deprived of civil rights.

During the entire span of Norway's occupation, the pro-Nazi regime maintained a high employment rate. According to various sources, between 200,000 and 500,000 Norwegians worked at the jobs created by Germans. In the first post-war years, the active participation of Norwegians in meeting the Reich's economic needs was not really considered to be disgraceful, while those facts were being swept under the rug for a long time (including by destroying archives on the POWs engagement in the construction of key infrastructure facilities).

The Norwegian authorities were also ambiguous about the "unofficial" Resistance movement that acted as an alternative to the "official" *Milorg* underground organization, which was run by Norway's government in exile that had left the country together with the Royal family and settled down in London. One of the reason behind such sentiments was that the members of "unofficial" Resistance cooperated with the Soviet military. As a result, they were not only not adequately rewarded for their input in fighting against fascism, but were often regarded by the post-war authorities as "unreliable elements" and potential "Soviet spies" and persecuted, spied on, and restricted in upward mobility.

Only by the end of the Cold War the authorities started to gradually recognize their efforts. In 1983, King Olav V laid wreaths at the memorials in the

settlements of Kiberg and Berlevog (Northern Norway) in honour of the guerrillas. In 1992, the guerrillas were "rehabilitated" by King Harald V, who laid a wreath at the monument in Kiberg as he said, "I'm afraid we unfairly imposed significant personal burdens on individuals in the Cold War climate", I respectfully lay a wreath at the monument to the guerrillas." He never offered an apology for the previous persecutions while many Norwegians interpret these remarks exactly in this way.

At the same time, since the 1970s, according to law enforcement agencies⁹⁴¹, Norway have seen right-wing radical groups embracing the ideas of national and racial supremacy intermittently emerge. As a rule, those were short-lived and few in numbers. The most well-known include *Boot Boys*, *Norwegian Front*, *People's Party*, *German Army of Norway*, *Cells of Armed Aryans*, *Terror of White Aryans*, *Viking*, *Zorn 88*, etc. By the mid-1990s, the number of right-wing activists peaked. At the time, it was estimated at about 200 people.

Later on, right-wing radicals started to distinctly lean toward anti-migration sentiments, which intensified as the influx of refugees and displaced persons from Asia, Africa and the Middle East picked up steam. As it currently stands, right-wing extremist almost never profess "classic" anti-Communism as they have replaced it for mainly anti-Islamic and anti-Semitic narrative, as well as criticism of left-wing Norwegian political forces seeking to improve migrants' standing.

Norwegian neo-Nazis are few in numbers and divided. Low-key cells are present across the entire country, but most right-wing extremist are concentrated in the south, in Oslo region (up to 70% there while Oslo itself accounts for less than 10%) and along the southern coast.

A typical right-wing extremist is a man in his 30s or 40s, low education, often comes from a small settlement, located far-off from the administrative, cultural or other capital, plagued by personal life issues (single, unemployed) and

⁹⁴¹ The most up-to-date official data on neo-Nazism in Norway can be found in a Norwegian Ministry of Justice commissioned report "Right-Wing Extremism in Norway: developmental features, conspiracy theories and prevention strategies" by the Police Academy, Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX) and Center for Holocaust and Religious Minority Studies and report "Supporters of right-wing extremism in Norway, who are they?" by the Norwegian Police Security Service.

social vices (alcoholism, drug addiction, criminal record). Mental disabilities are also not uncommon.

Generally, law enforcement agencies believe that right-wing extremists and Islamists are radicalized along the same line, with right-wing extremists on average being a bit older.

According to law enforcement agencies, the most organized neo-Nazi group is the Norwegian branch of the *Nordic Resistance Movement* (SDS, Den nordiske motstandsbevegelsen, registered in Norway in 2011; the head of the local "arm" is a Norwegian national Tommy Olsen⁹⁴²) is being managed from Sweden (a country where it is most active). The movement is also present in Finland, Denmark and Iceland.

The *Nordic Resistance Movement* is characterized by a strict hierarchy, rigid internal structure with membership fees and an age requirement of 16 years. The linchpin of its ideology is the idea of "international Jewish conspiracy".

The organization advocates for creating of a national socialist state within the Nordic countries' borders, champions the purity of the "Nordic race" against "globalist institutions", including NATO, the EU, the European Economic Area, calls for the fight against the "Jewish-Zionist conspiracy" and LGBT, while professing the cult of self-sacrifice and healthy lifestyle.

SDS members take part in neo-Nazi rallies (mostly, in Sweden and Finland; usually, activists from all country branches are involved no matter wherever the rallies are held), put up posters and distribute leaflets, arrange hikes and training sessions to "make participants healthier" and bring them closer.

Heavy youth-targeted campaigning is underway; according to reports from the Norwegian branch of the SDS, its members regularly distribute leaflets and put up posters near high schools calling to join the organization.

At that, activists are acting publicly and don't conceal their identity and avoid using violence (although not completely).

⁹⁴² He has been part of various right-wing extremist communities for 20 years; sentenced to a year and two months prison term for stabbing two migrants in 2002.

Similar to political parties, the SDS organizes "educational" and "family-friendly" events and youth summer camps. Law enforcement agencies register a growing trend in SDS activity (largely, due to anti-migration factor) which is to make the group more assertive.

The organization often appeals to democratic principles as freedom of expression, assembly and association to legally hold events, rallies and disseminate propaganda materials, thereby limiting the law enforcers' ability to counter their actions.

Despite a pretty aggressive narrative (calls to "join the fight," using paramilitary terms when describing the organization's hierarchy and accusing the authorities of "lying," etc.) and their provocative nature, most SDS campaigns remain within the bounds of law (limiting law enforcers' abilities to counter them) and rarely result in court sentences, also due to the soft Norwegian legislation.

They decry any attempts by law enforcement agencies or ideological opponents to derail these events as "flagrant violations" of freedom of expression and disrespect of pluralistic opinions.

Thus, on April 9, 2018, the anniversary of German invasion of Norway, the activists pinned up banners and leaflets depicting swastikas and reading "We are back!" in a number of cities. Three SDS members (including Olsen) that took part in this action in the city of Kristiansand were initially found guilty of inciting hatred by the first-instance court and were fined, but after appealing against the judgment they were acquitted by the second-instance court in 2020. All charges against them were dropped.

According to a rough estimate, the "core" SDS activists in Norway number 30-40 people aged from 20 to 60 years (as compared to up to 300 SDS "soul mates" in Sweden), law enforcement agencies know most of them for their participation in other groups in the past, they have been convicted of various criminal offenses.

In August 2019, due to the dissent over working methods, the most radical faction splintered from SDS, subsequently establishing a new organization called

Nordic Strength (*Nordisk styrke*), with Haakon Forwald, the former SDS head in Norway, as one of its bosses. The organization preaches "returning to the roots", i.e. abandoning legal methods of promoting its ideas. The exact number of members of the new structure is unknown.

As migrants from non-European countries keep arriving in Norway, right-wing extremist organizations preaching Islamophobia and anti-Semitism have become more active. As of recently, an organization called Stop Islamisation of Norway (*Stopp islamiseringen av Norge, SIAN*), which opposes increased migration to Norway, especially from Muslim countries, has come to the fore (active since 2000, headed by Lars Thorsen⁹⁴³).

SIAN does not disclose the number of its members. While its Facebook group has more than 10,000 subscribers, experts believe their real number not to exceed 400 people.

SIAN's ideological platform includes combatting the spread of Islam and its ideas in Norway, as this religion, according to the organization's members, is "a political ideology under a religious disguise which threatens the Western world and freedom." The organization seeks to disassociate itself from neo-Nazi labels, arguing that it doesn't embrace racism and is committed to democratic and humanistic values, while its "opponents" are not the Muslims, who are themselves the "Islam's first victims", but the political and religious ideology of Islam.

As in case with SDS, SIAN seeks legitimize its views by pointing to freedom of speech and expression. The organization holds rallies on a regular basis, primarily in large cities in the south of the country, distributes leaflets, and is actively engaged in informational work in social media.

However, the public and the main political forces in Norway consider SIAN to be a far-right radical organization; in media publications it is often called neo-Nazi.

⁹⁴³ In November 2019, he was sentenced to a 30-day suspended jail sentence and fined for inciting hatred by addressing a SIAN rally in Oslo in July 2018. The court ruled that his utterances that "the more Muslims are religious, the more they are cruel", and "they should be deported to some remote region where they can worship their retarded ideology of oppression", incite hatred.

Most of the SIAN demonstrations trigger counter-rallies by its opponents, who seek to stop the events from happening in any way possible (for example, they surround the scene and try to roar down SIAN speakers). Periodically, clashes erupt against this backdrop.

Since 2019, SIAN activists have regularly been publicly burning the Qoran. Several such actions were staged by Lars Thorsen in March-April 2022 in front of Muslim mosques in the cities of Oslo and Sandefjord.

In 2019, a similar provocation prompted a backlash from Türkiye (Turkish Foreign Ministry published a condemning press release on its website), Iran and Pakistan (foreign ministries summoned Norway's envoys), as well as a series of rallies in a number of Turkish and Pakistani cities that featured burning of Norwegian flags. After this, the authorities were forced to make public steps. Justice Minister Jøran Kallmyr and Jens Frølich Holte, State Secretary of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, distanced themselves from SIAN, decrying its actions as provocative. The Norwegian telecommunications company Telenor, which provides mobile communications in Pakistan, also issued a press release condemning the action.

The police did not investigate Lars Thorsen, alleging that “burning the Qoran is no manifestation of hatred towards particular people⁹⁴⁴.”

In August 2020, during SIAN actions in Oslo and Bergen, those who opposed the organization gathered counter-rallies, which, among other things, saw attempts to attack activists, police officers and police special-purpose vehicles who were defending them (protesters threw stones and other objects at the vehicles and police officers, with one policeman injured after his face was hit by a stick).

As a result, the police repeatedly used tear gas on SIAN's opponents, with several of them being detained for "inciting riots" and resisting the law enforcement. At the same time, some politicians (mainly from the opposition) and activists lambasted law enforcement officers for "too harsh a response" and using tear gas in densely populated areas where the rallies were held.

⁹⁴⁴ Klassekampen, 27 April 2022.

The last such Qoran burning event, planned for February 2023 in front of the Turkish embassy in Oslo, was cancelled by the country's authorities due to “failure to ensure security at the appropriate level” after the Norwegian Ambassador in Ankara was summoned to the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

Given the rise in violence that has recently become intrinsic to SIAN rallies, a ban on such events in densely populated areas, primarily in residential areas, is on the table.

To add some "democratic legitimacy" to the organization, SIAN has tried several times to “fit” into the political process by partaking in prestigious nationwide political events (for instance, Arendal Week, a series of socio-political and business-oriented seminars, debates and addresses by prominent cultural figures, which is held annually in August and largely sets the tune for a new political season), but was rebuffed each time after a public backlash.

The majority (over 40%) of SIAN sympathizers support the most right-wing of the Norwegian parliamentary parties - the *Progress Party*, a slightly smaller share (about 30%) - even more radical marginal anti-immigrant parties as *Democrats*, *Independence Party*, or *Alliance*.

Other right-wing extremist groups operating are mostly marginalized and low-profile, the major well-known include: *Soldiers of Odin*, *Pegida*, *Vigrid*, the *Norwegian Defense League*, the *Fatherland Party*, *Stop Immigration*, *White Electoral Alliance* and *Norwegian Patriots*.

Meanwhile, international ideological movements, such as the 'identarists' (the “new right”) and 'alternative right' are on the rise in Norway, especially among the young people.

Despite national-socialism ideology being unpopular in Norway and scarcity of local neo-Nazi, their activities are a cause of concern for authorities. An increase in right-wing extremist sentiments is noted to depend on the number of refugees and displaced persons from Muslim countries, as well as evidence of increased cooperation between the neo-Nazi community members in Norway, Sweden and Finland.

Norwegian law enforcement bodies are particularly concerned by a trend in neo-Nazi and racist ideology to trickle down "to the grassroots level" with individuals being radicalized on the Internet and social media and practically untraceable as they use encrypted messages on closed-off platforms.

The neo-Nazi Anders Breivik, who staged terrorist attacks in Oslo and on the island of Utøya in 2011, the deadliest in Norway's the history (77 killed, more than 150 wounded), protesting against Norwegian authorities' "too lax" migration policy, is a classic example. Prior to the attacks, he circulated by e-mail his 1500-page manifest outlining his views that he kept on actively promulgating during the public trial. The court recognized him as criminally sane and sentenced to 21 years of prison.

After a high profile crime committed by his follower Philip Manshaus, a Quisling devotee and wannabe SDS member (in August 2019, he shot dead his Chinese-born half-sister on racist grounds and attempted an attack on a mosque in Oslo suburbs; in June 2020, he was sentenced to 21 years of prison and found liable to pay a compensation equivalent to about \$80,000), Norwegian intelligence agencies view right-wing extremism as one of the main terrorist threats to Norwegian society along with radical Islam (until June 2019, attacks by right-wing radicals were deemed "unlikely").

In its 2023 report⁹⁴⁵, the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST) who, among other things, is in charge of combating terrorism, notes that some members of Norwegian far-right groups are involved in hostilities in Ukraine. As a result, they along with gaining military experience, they may also expand their extremist network and go over to more violent *modus operandi*.

In its 2022 report, the PST also pointed out to a likely increase in the number of right-wing extremists, a trend linked to the growing popularity of the ideas they promote, online-available propaganda, socio-economic difficulties and increased isolation amid the pandemic.

⁹⁴⁵ PST National Security Threat Assessment Report, February 2023.
file:///C:/Users/Inet1/Downloads/_globalassets_ntv_2023_ntv_2023_eng_web.pdf.

The PST has recorded a growing number of Norwegian supporters of right-wing extremist attacks.

All this taken in account, the country has taken action in line with government plans to combat racism and discrimination on ethnic and religious grounds, as well as to combat discrimination and hate against Muslims. Both plans are intended for 2020-2023.

The November 2019 detention and deportation of US nationalist Greg Johnson in to "prevent the radicalization of population" is a clear example indicative of Norway's toughened right-wing extremist stance. Johnson planned to address a conference on Human biodiversity held in Oslo by *Scandza Forum*, the Bergen-based right-wing extremist organization (he attended without hindrance a similar *Scandza Forum* event in Norway in July 2017; he had earlier expressed sympathy for Breivik).

Despite an increased focus by law enforcement agencies on the right-wing extremism (since 2015, the number of cases filed on the grounds of relevant offenses has more than tripled), this phenomenon is far from being eradicated.

As of recently, incidents involving the public display of Nazi symbols have been gaining ground in Norway. In February 2018, the Torah rune depicted on the Norwegian ski team's uniform sent shockwaves in the media. Released were the images of team members wearing this uniform. The manufacturer reportedly decided to ignore the fact that the symbol is used by the Norwegian branch of SDS and was previously in use with German Nazi structures. The Norwegian Ski Federation said that the uniform wouldn't change and suggested that athletes decide themselves whether to wear it or not.

Reportedly, the Norwegian society still harbours negative attitude towards some nationalities and ethnic groups. Thus, for example, up to 20-30% of the country's population wouldn't like to have Roma or Muslims as their neighbours.

The Norwegian society is still prejudiced against neo-Nazism in general. Norwegians remain opposed to Nazism, attempts to revise the history of WWII are

unpopular. Publications that provide a distorted account of WWII are, as a rule, criticized by historians and representatives of military memorial organizations.

The country's authorities do not allow any glorification of the Nazi movement or former members of Nazi organizations, including SS. The determined non-participation of the governmental bodies in any searches or re-burying of the remains of Norwegian citizens who supported Wehrmacht during the Second World War is emphasized officially.

The 2017-launched initiative by the Norwegian Red Cross to set up in Norway at the public crib the "places of memory" of the Norwegian volunteers of the Waffen-SS by explaining that according of the Geneva Conventions dated 12 August 1949 on Protection of the Victims of War the authorities should allegedly assist families to get access to the places of their burial did not get support from the public or from the authorities.

The country does not accept, especially at the official level, the desecration or destruction of monuments to the fighters against Nazism and its victims⁹⁴⁶; the authorities support the construction of new monuments⁹⁴⁷. Numerous burial places and monuments to the Soviet military prisoners killed in the Nazi concentration camps in Norway (12,678 persons) are properly taken care of for account of the Norwegian state; renovation and modernization of monuments is provided when necessary. Ceremonies with participation of local authorities and public are regularly arranged, in particular on the occasion of anniversaries of Victory over fascism; Russian diplomats were invited to attend the events before 2022. Proper treatment of Soviet monuments is especially seen in the Northern Norway the Eastern part of which was liberated by the Red Army in 1944.

In October 2019, the 75th anniversary of this event was grandly and broadly celebrated. The King of Norway and the highest political leadership of the country

⁹⁴⁶ One of the rare exclusions is the desecration of the monument in memory of Oswald anti-fascist group in Oslo (2017). Vandals spilled the monument over with the red paint as far as the major part of the group was communist. Those responsible were not found.

⁹⁴⁷ On 7 October 2021, in the northern Norwegian municipality of Hasvik, in the presence of Norwegian Minister of Defence Frank Bakke-Jensen, the grand opening of the monument took place at the site of the death of the Soviet crew of the Catalina seaplane (crashed in June 1944 on the island of Sereya in Northern Norway during the ferry from the USA to the USSR as part of the Lend-lease programme in 1944-1945).

took part in the events. Russia was represented by Sergey Lavrov. In May 2020, the Norwegian Foreign Minister for the first time in many years took part jointly with the Russian Ambassador in the ceremony of wreath-laying to the monument on the tomb of the Soviet soldiers in Oslo.

Although there is an official unacceptance of the neo-Nazi ideology, in practice, the authorities can give concessions to neo-Nazis, showing excessive liberalism. There were cases when the police, in order to “avoid violence,” did not interfere with unauthorized ultra-right marches but used force against those protesting against them (the “aggressive” behaviour of anti-fascists was regarded as threatening public order).

While declaring that any extremist ideologies, including neo-Nazism, are unacceptable, Oslo is consistently refusing to support the resolution put forward by the Russian delegation and other co-authors in the UN General Assembly on “Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance” (the Norwegian delegation has traditionally abstained from voting on the resolution at the UN General Assembly; and on 15 December 2022, during the 77th General Assembly of the United Nations the Norwegian delegation voted against it for the first time).

The Norwegian Foreign Ministry has been soft on the “war” against monuments to Soviet soldiers in Poland, glorification of the “Forest Brothers” and mocking of the Great Patriotic War veterans in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

After the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation launched the special military operation (SMO) to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect civilians in the Donbass, the Norwegian media regularly publish pieces attempting to whitewash the Nazis of the “Azov” battalion and portray them as “true patriots” defending the interests of their country⁹⁴⁸. Their Nazi ideology and the use of SS symbols do not bother Norwegian journalists.

⁹⁴⁸ Article on the web-site of NRK state TV and Radio Company dated 29 March 2022: https://www.nrk.no/uri/azov-regimentet-i-ukraina_-hoyreekstrem-trussel-eller-vanlige-soldater_-1.15904686.

In May 2022 and May 2023, the Norwegian authorities refused to take part in the traditional memorial ceremonies on the occasion of the Victory Day. Publicly, Russia was accused of using of monuments to Soviet soldiers on the Norwegian territory for propaganda purposes, in particular, to portray Norway as its ally.

In connection with the events in Ukraine, in March 2022, a monument to the Soviet soldiers in the Verdal community (central Norway) was desecrated – the trespassers wrote “Slava Ukraini”⁹⁴⁹ on it. Local authorities took the initiative to remove the consequences of the “protest action.”

Meanwhile, the unimpeded selling on the largest Norwegian online trading platform finn.no of Nazi paraphernalia (banners, objects with swastikas and Nazi symbols), which are apparently considered as historical artefacts without ideological significance, contradict government statements on combatting the promulgation of extremist ideas.

In a bid to “restore justice”, the authorities, as a matter of fact, rehabilitated “romances” of many Norwegian women with Nazi soldiers during the occupation.

In 2018, Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg issued an official apology on behalf of the government for post-war persecution Norwegian women who had relations with German soldiers during the occupation by the authorities. Solberg said that such actions are “illegal” and contradict to “the basic principle of the rule of law, according to which no one can be considered a criminal without trial or judged outside the law.”

According to Norwegian estimates, about 40,000-50,000 Norwegian women had an affair with Germans, which is about 10 per cent from the nation's total female population aged from 18 to 35. These contacts gave birth to about 10,000-12,000 children.

After the war, the attitude towards these women in society was sharply negative: their hair was publicly shaved, and they were paraded in the streets in

⁹⁴⁹ Message on the web-site of the NRK state TV and Radio Company dated 20 March 2022: <https://www.nrk.no/trondelag/haerverk-pa-krigskirkegard-i-verdal-1.15900959>; article on the Adresseavisen web-site dated 20 March 2022: <https://www.adressa.no/nyheter/i/dnePJq/minnelund-tagget-ned-a-vandalisere-dette-er-bare-trist>.

disgrace. Many of them were arrested and put in internment camps for forced labour. A wave of job terminations swept through the country, with suicides taking place. Women who married Germans during the occupation, were deported, mainly to Germany (the practice was kept in place until 1947), for a long time they were not allowed to come back. Apart from this, the deported individuals were stripped of Norwegian citizenship, which is unique for the nation's history, given that such a practice had never been implemented before or thereafter.

In 2000, the authorities offered an apology to the “war's children” that Norwegian women gave birth from the occupants. In many cases, they were separated from their mothers, handed over to foster families or orphanages, and they also faced biased attitude from the society.

In May 2020, the Norwegian Parliament paid no heed to the appeal of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation to the parliaments of foreign states to support the initiative to recognize the Victory over Nazism as the Mankind's World Heritage, and to regard monuments dedicated to the fighters against Nazism in all countries as a humanity's universal memorial.

In November 2020, during the preparation of the vote on the Russian resolution “75th anniversary of the end of World War II” Norway turned out to be one of the states that managed to remove the passage about “preventing the desecration or destruction of monuments erected in memory of those who fought in that war on the side of the United Nations.”

Allegations that Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union are equally to blame for the start of the WWII are gaining more and more ground in Norway, as does the thesis that in post-war years, Eastern European countries actually lost their independence, while “the end of the war in Europe could be celebrated only after the fall of the Berlin Wall”, “real freedom came after the collapse of the totalitarian Soviet project” (similar ideas are promoted, for example, by the senior management of the Resistance Museum in Oslo).

In the remarks by officials on the Liberation Day and National Veteran's Day celebrated in Norway on May 8, the focus is increasingly shifting towards

praising NATO, Norway's participation in international military operations, including those bypassing the UN, calls to “strengthen the transatlantic link” (at the same time, the implication is that Russia is a “source of threat”).

Norwegian schoolbooks tend to make military increasingly history primitive (the Soviet Union role is “condensed,” only the Battle of Stalingrad and the D-Day are mentioned as “breakthrough” allied offensives). Liberation of Western Europe by US and UK troops (“it brought democracy”) is placed in opposition to the liberation of Eastern Europe by the Soviet Union (after fascism was suppressed, “the clout of another totalitarian movement threatening democracy increased”).

In April 2021, Norwegian state television and radio company NRK sparked public outcry after it released a four-episode semi-documentary “Front-line Soldiers” about Norwegians who fought on the Eastern Front on the Axis side. It was produced by the Defence and Culture ministries as well as Norwegian Film Institute. The film tells the tale of seven Norwegian members of the SS that fought against the Red Army and Yugoslav partisans, with their narratives about their “military exploits” accompanied by fictional clips “reconstructing” the wartime events. The “frontline soldiers” featured in the film denied participation in the executions of civilians and POWs, claiming that they “defended Norway's interests”, fought against “the expansion of Bolshevism, not for Hitler”, spoke with contempt about the Red Army soldiers. Historians featured in the film also urged “not to condemn, but to try understanding the motives of the front-line soldiers.” In essence, they were justifying their decision to join the Nazi troops by the political context: the “fear” of communists that was prevalent in pre-war Norway, “Lenin and Stalin's totalitarian regime”, the NKVD “repressions” in Poland, the Soviet-German “partition” of Europe, as well as by anti-Semitic sentiments that were deeply rooted “in the East.”

The film sparked a lot of outcry from experts and the Jewish community, while even historians who took in the project supported the criticism, arguing that their comments were “taken out of context.” The filmmakers and NRK were accused of “humanizing” war criminals and Nazi propaganda, “depersonalization”

of victims, ignoring evidence of Norwegian complicity in the fascist crimes, lack of critical context, insufficient attention to revealing the essence of the Holocaust and Hitler's aggressive plans. NRK dismissed the accusations as they highlighted that one of the film's goals was to foster “further debates.”

The Norwegian authorities proclaim the respect for human rights, including the right to protection against discrimination as a basic priority of the public policy. Nevertheless, the cases of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are not rare in Norway.

According to the Centre for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities/Senter for studier av Holocaust og livssynsminoriteter⁹⁵⁰, 9.3 per cent of the population are highly prejudiced against Jews and 30.7 per cent - against Muslims. About 26 per cent of the surveyed consider Muslims more violent; 33 per cent view them as a threat to the Norwegian culture; 14 per cent of the Norwegian population are of the opinion that Jews are “conducting underground work to increase their influence in the world,” 8 per cent say that the persecution of Jews is a consequence of their own actions.

According to the results of a survey conducted by the Norwegian Institute for Social Research/Institutt for samfunnsforskning⁹⁵¹, 54 per cent of the respondents consider Islam incompatible with the fundamental values of the Norwegian society, 47 per cent are sceptical about Muslims, 56 per cent negatively treat the idea of entering into marriage with persons professing Islam.

Representatives of small indigenous peoples (Sami) and national minorities (Kvens, Forest Finns, Gypsies, Taters, Jews) often become the target of discrimination.

According to the studies of the Norwegian National Institute on Human Rights/Norges Institusjon for Menneskerettigheter (NIM)⁹⁵², the Norwegians

⁹⁵⁰ Report on the “Treatment of Jews and Muslims in Norway in 2022”, dated November 2022: https://www.hlsenteret.no/forskning/jodisk-historie-og-antisemittisme/holdningsundersokelsene/holdningsundersokelsen-2022/hl-senteret_holdninger_til_joder_og_muslimere_web.pdf.

⁹⁵¹ Report “Attitude towards immigration, integration and ethnic diversity in Norway,” June 2022: <https://www.imdi.no/contentassets/dc454492316546a190861bd07159bda8/integreringsbarometeret-2022.pdf>.

⁹⁵² Report “Treatment of the Sami and national minorities in Norway,” August 2022: <https://www.nhri.no/rapport/holdninger-til-samer-og-nasjonale-minoriteter-i-norge/?showall=true>.

support the most negative stereotype messages concerning gypsies and Taters. Approximately one third of the population consider many of them criminals (34 per cent and 32 per cent, correspondingly) and vagabonds (27 per cent and 28 per cent).

The same conclusions were made by the human rights advocates from the Centre for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities⁹⁵³, according to who, 46 per cent of the Norwegians would not like to have gypsies as their neighbours, and about 30 per cent would not like to see them in their immediate circle.

Despite the absence of systematic and targeted oppression of the indigenous population of the country - the Sami (who live compactly within the two northern provinces: Troms and Finnmark, Nordland) - in modern Norway, there are isolated episodes of violation of their rights.

In 2019, the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation of Norway submitted a report to the Storting on the situation of the Sami language, culture and social life⁹⁵⁴.

The document revealed numerous negative trends in the Sami environment, which the authorities have not yet been able to overcome. Thus, the population in areas where the Sami live compactly remains relatively stable⁹⁵⁵. However, these areas have a higher proportion of elderly people than the rest of Norway, and their numbers are supported mainly by the influx of non-Sami migrants (their number has doubled since 2011). The Sami population is projected to continue to decline between now and 2030.

Among the Sami, especially men, the percentage of people with higher education is lower than the national average. The same trends are typical for secondary education (not all Sami complete their studies).

⁹⁵³ Report "Treatment of Jews and Muslims in Norway in 2022", November 2022: https://www.hlsenteret.no/forskning/jodisk-historie-og-antisemittisme/holdningsundersokelsene/holdningsundersokelsen-2022/hl-senteret_holdninger_til_joder_og_muslimere_web.pdf.

⁹⁵⁴ Meld. St. 31 (2019–2020). Samisk språk, kultur og samfunnsliv — Digitalisering. <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/meld.-st.-31-20192020/id2729805/?ch=1>.

⁹⁵⁵ About 55.6 thousand persons since 2011; at the same time, only about 17 thousand Sami appear in the unofficial lists of Sametinget (Sami parliament).

The level of violence in the Sami society is very high. According to the opinion polls, up to 45 per cent of Sami has been subjected to it (compared to 29 per cent of the population of the rest of Norway).

The indicators characterizing the level of discrimination of this category of the population in various spheres look even worse. Sami sources indicate a 10-fold excess of discrimination among the Norwegian population (35 per cent vs 3.5 per cent). There is a negative attitude towards Sami in social networks and mass media.

A separate chapter is dedicated to the state and trends of development of the Sami language⁹⁵⁶. Its position is stated to get weaker with gradual degradation through Norwegian “touches.” A small number of Sami speakers is noted. The report concludes that the language problem applies also to the social sphere, in particular healthcare, social care, etc. Even densely populated Sami areas, there is a shortage of competent diagnosis of diseases due to insufficient training of medical staff to use professional terminology in the Sami language.

Regarding the general situation, the human rights activists note that, despite the significant efforts made by the authorities to “atone” for the Sami and national minorities (Kven/Norwegian Finns, Jews, Forest Finns, Gypsies/Roma, Tatars/Romani) who have become “victims” of the Oslo policy on their assimilation, recently there have been frequent cases of violation of the rights of the Sami. This is especially noticeable in situations related to the implementation of infrastructure and industrial projects in the territories of their traditional residence, in connection with which representatives of indigenous peoples regularly express dissatisfaction.

The most resonant cases of Sami rights violations are connected with the construction of infrastructural and industrial facilities in the territories of traditional living of the Sami population. One of the brightest examples is the erection by Fosen Vind of a huge fleet of windmill parks (set in operation in 2021)

⁹⁵⁶ Includes six dialects: Northern Sami, Southern Sami, Lule Sami, Pite Sami, Ume Sami, Skolto Sami. All of them are listed as endangered by UNESCO.

on the Fosen peninsula in Trøndelag (Central Norway)⁹⁵⁷, as a result of which the Sami reindeer herders lost about one third of their traditional winter grazing area in the region. In June 2020, the court of second instance upheld the legality of the construction permits but ruled that Fosen Vind must pay the Sami 89 million kroner (\$8.4 million) in compensation for the loss of grazing areas. In October 2021, the Supreme Court of Norway ruled on the case⁹⁵⁸ for the benefit of the Sami, however, the windmill generators were not dismantled. In February 2023, the Sami activists started their protests as a result of which the government apologized to Sami people due to “prolonged uncertainty.” However, there were no specific steps taken afterwards.

According to NIM, the Fosen Vind litigation highlights the need for a clearer definition of interventions that violate indigenous cultural traditions. In this regard, the government is recommended to prepare clarifications on the interpretation and application of Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in Norwegian judicial practice⁹⁵⁹.

The geographical factor has a significant influence on the attitude of the local population towards the Sami and Kven: about 11 per cent of population of Northern Norway has a negative attitude towards them, which is almost four times higher than the national average (3 per cent)⁹⁶⁰.

The reports of the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution⁹⁶¹ repeatedly noted that the representatives of national minorities, especially women and children, still face discriminations.

Roma feel left out of the housing and labour markets and complain about insufficient opportunities to learn their native language. For Jews, the main

⁹⁵⁷ Article on the web-site of the NRK state TV and Radio Company dated 11 October 2022: https://www.nrk.no/trondelag/leif-arne-jama-fikk-medhold-i-hoyesterett_-ett-ar-senere-star-turbinene-fortsatt-i-fosen-fjellene-1.16132575.

⁹⁵⁸ <https://www.domstol.no/globalassets/upload/hret/avgjorelser/2021/oktober-2021/hr-2021-1975-s.pdf>.

⁹⁵⁹ Article 27 of the Covenant states the right of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities to enjoy their own culture and language, to profess and practice their own religion.

⁹⁶⁰ Report “Treatment of Sami and National Minorities in Norway” August 2022: <https://www.nhri.no/rapport/holdninger-til-samer-og-nasjonale-minoriteter-i-norge/?showall=true>.

⁹⁶¹ See, for example, Menneskerettighetene i Norge 2019. NIMs årsmelding, Dokument 6 (2019–2020). https://www.nhri.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NIM_A%CC%8Aarmelding_2019_web.pdf; Menneske-rettighetene i Norge 2018. NIMs årsmelding, Dokument 6 (2018–2019). https://www.nhri.no/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/NIM_Armelding_2018_web-1.pdf.

problem is statements that incite hatred and other manifestations of anti-Semitism. The Kvens/Norwegian Finns have difficulty learning in their native language and the lack of media published in it; the Forest Finns have difficulty preserving their culture as a whole.

On the other hand, the country is also implementing certain comprehensive measures to support the languages, cultures and way of life of the Sami and national minorities.

On 1 July 2021, amendments to the Law “On the Sami” came into force, aimed at establishing in a separate chapter the obligation of the authorities to consult with the Sami Parliament on issues relating to the indigenous people.

On 1 January 2022, the Law On Languages came into force to establish the status of languages of national minorities. It should be noted that the position of the Sami languages in comparison with the Norwegian language is already defined in more detail in the current legislation. However, for the first time they received their official clarified status at the national level - “indigenous languages.” The law stresses the equality of the Norwegian and Sami languages. Kven, Finnish, Roma and Romani received official status as “national minority languages.” Norwegian Sign Language (as opposed to International Sign Language) is also designated by law as the “national sign language.”

On 15 May 2023, the Constitution of Norway was amended (Art. 108) to strengthen the status of Sami as “indigenous people.”

On 1 June 2023, appointed by the Norwegian Parliament in 2018, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission mandated to analyse, *inter alia*, the consequences of “Norwegianisation” and injustice against Sami, Kven and Finnish national minorities and to develop possible “reconciliation” measures, presented its report⁹⁶². The conclusions of the document are disappointing - the rejection of the “Norwegianisation” policy at the state level did not reverse the consequences of the damage already caused. The continuous process of loss of the language, culture

⁹⁶² Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, June 2023: <https://www.stortinget.no/globalassets/pdf/sannhets--og-forsoningskommisjonen/rapport-til-stortinget-fra-sannhets--og-forsoningskommisjonen.pdf>.

and identity makes the risk of extinction of these ethnic groups high⁹⁶³. It is equally important that the negative social processes that developed during the period of “Norwegianisation” in relation to national minorities are still reproduced by society. It is noted that Norwegians know virtually nothing about the culture of national minorities living in Norway; a significant part of the population agrees with negative stereotypes about them. Many representatives of these ethnic groups face discrimination and abuse. There is a negative attitude towards the Sami in the social networks and mass media, and a high vulnerability of Sami women to domestic and sexual violence. As President of the Norwegian Parliament Masud Gharahkhani stated in connection with the presentation of the report, the establishment of the Commission was caused by “the understanding that Norwegian society has failed to cope with the task of protecting indigenous peoples and minorities.”⁹⁶⁴

Based on the Norwegian historical experience, the authorities continue to give special emphasis to tracking and preventing anti-Semitism. For a long time, the issue of Jew deportation from the country was under taboo. During the occupation, about 50 per cent of Norwegian Jews (760 people) were deported to Nazi concentration camps in Germany and Poland with the assistance of the local police, with 25 people returning to their homeland alive after the war. This fact was brushed under the carpet up until the early 1980s.

In the 21st century, historians and the public grew significantly more interested in the topic of the Holocaust and Norwegian complicity in it, which allowed to reveal new facts about persecutions during WWII. For example, in 2019, Aftenposten newspaper published a series of publications about Quisling's role in the extermination of Norwegian Jews. With references to archival sources, the pieces said that Quisling was likely aware of what Nazi had in store for Jews, but deliberately did nothing to protect them. During the post-war trial he denied

⁹⁶³ The most widespread of the Sami languages, Northern Sami, is now spoken by 25 thousand people. Given current trends and in the absence of new incentives, this number could be reduced by 60 per cent in the coming years.

⁹⁶⁴ Address by Gharahkhani on the occasion of presentation of the report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1 June 2023: <https://www.stortinget.no/no/Stortinget-og-demokratiet/Organene/Presidentskapet/taler-og-artikler-2021-2025/tale-ved-overrekkelsen-av-sannhets--og-forsningskommisjonens-rapport/>.

any involvement in the arrests and deportations of Jews to Germany, shifting the blame solely to the Germans, and was acquitted of this count of charges (he was found guilty only of "unpremeditated complicity in murder").

Norway has a government program for combatting anti-Semitism with a focus on preventing these sentiments in schools, social and regular media (in particular, experiments are ongoing that seek to detect anti-Semitic sentiments with electronic means). In January 2021, the government adopted another plan within this program, which is intended for 2021-2023 and provides additional funding for educational activities through the Jewish community, and envisages a more active Norwegian contribution to specialized international campaigns to fight anti-Semitism. Official support has helped to establish and propel the studies of the history of occupation, anti-Semitism in Norway, its current direction (the Center for Holocaust and Religious Minority Studies in Oslo, the Falstad Center for Memory and Human Rights). According to the government estimates, the measures, while at a slow pace, are having an impact, with the level of anti-Semitism in Norway put on a gradual decline.

Despite measures taken by the authorities, offences motivated by national, racial and religious intolerance are still prevalent in Norway. Compared to 2021, the number of complaints to the Norwegian police in 2022 for hate speech motivated by colour and ethnicity increased by 2.2% to 278, and for hate speech motivated by Islamic religion increased by 7.4% to 29. The number of appeals in relation to cases of discrimination on ethnic grounds increased by 75% to 21 over the same period⁹⁶⁵.

Such offences are often qualified by local law enforcement agencies as "manifestations of freedom of speech". In particular, in May 2022, the case against the imam of the Drømmen mosque, N.A. Noor, who had been posting anti-Semitic statements in Urdu on Facebook for several years, was closed on this basis.

Members of ethnic minorities report that the police are more suspicious of

965 Oslo Police District report "Hate Crime in Norway - Annual Report 2022", June 2023: <https://www.politiet.no/globalassets/dokumenter/oslo/rapporter/anmeldt-hatkriminalitet-oslo/hatkriminalitet-i-norge-2022.pdf>.

them than of native Norwegians. According to the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman's report "Checks without controls"⁹⁶⁶, of the 1,588 high school students surveyed in Oslo, 11% reported that in 2021 the police had stopped them on the streets to check their identity. Of these, almost 34% were from ethnic minorities. Every fifth believes that the police stopped him/her "on the basis of skin colour"

According to a 2021 study by the Norwegian Media Authority (Medietilsynet), 25% of Norwegians aged 16-20 faced "online hatred" on the Internet within the year⁹⁶⁷.

In January 2020, in a first, the Supreme Court of Norway brought in the verdict of guilty in the case related to the use of hate speech on social media, with the sentence being a suspended 24-day jail term.

Influence of Islamization, which was caused by migration influx and the growth of anti-immigrant sentiments, prompted the public attitude towards certain religions to generally deteriorate, with the legislation regulating the religion sphere being tightened. In this vein, in June 2018, the Parliament approved amendments to the 1998 Law "On Education" which banned wearing of face-concealing headgear by kindergarten staff and teachers of educational institutions during classes.

In the report of the Norwegian Institute for Research on Labor, Trade Union Movement and Public Policy called "Attitude to discrimination, equality and hate speech"⁹⁶⁸, the surveys show that 25% of Norwegians view representatives of certain races as "more intelligent", while 39% believe that migrants from Somalia will never become "full-fledged Norwegians", 22% say the same about Swedes, and 16% – about representatives of the black race. 33% of polltakers are afraid to pass by a group of people that look like Muslims, 35% believe that a woman wearing a hijab cannot count on being treated as equal. 38% wouldn't like to have

966 Checks Without Controls Report, October 2022: [ido.no/globalassets/ido_2019/bilder-til-nye-nettsider/etnisitet/ido_kontroller_uten_kontroll_elektronisk_versjon.pdf](https://www.ido.no/globalassets/ido_2019/bilder-til-nye-nettsider/etnisitet/ido_kontroller_uten_kontroll_elektronisk_versjon.pdf).

⁹⁶⁷ Young People's Experience of Hate Speech 2022 report, February 2022.:

<https://www.medietilsynet.no/globalassets/publikasjoner/kritisk-medieforstaelse/2022-rapport-hatefulle-ytringer.pdf>.

968 Holdninger til diskriminering, likestilling og hatprat i Norge. 2. utgave. Guri Tyldum. Fafo-rapport 2019:26 <https://www.faf.no/zoo-publikasjoner/fafo-rapporter/item/holdninger-til-diskriminering-likestilling-og-hatprat-i-norge-2-utgave>.

Gypsies as their neighbours, with 16% unwilling to live near Muslims.

While in recent years the Norwegian authorities, international structures and NGOs have assessed the human rights situation in the country as relatively trouble-free, the fact that human rights violations take place in Norway is recognized by relevant national and international institutions. In this vein, against the backdrop of a number of high-profile cases, the Norwegian authorities are being criticized for not observing refugees' rights.

Since February 2022, the Norwegian authorities have resumed the deportation of Afghans who were denied asylum in Norway, a practice that was temporarily suspended after the Taliban takeover.

In January 2022, the Norwegian migration authorities ordered Yasin, an asylum seeker from Afghanistan, (has resided in Norway since 2015), to leave the country due to the lack of grounds for granting him refugee status, and given that "Afghanistan is a safe state." Yasin has a wife and daughter in Norway (both have a residence permits). He and his family members are a part of the Hazaras ethnic group, which has been persecuted by the Taliban⁹⁶⁹.

In January 2022, the authorities ordered Amir Hussein Husseinzadeh, a refugee from Iran, to leave Norway (has been in Norway since 2010), despite the fact that while living in Norway he converted from Islam to Christianity, a move that makes his travelling back to Iran unsafe. Between 2018 and 2020, only 35% out of 110 Iranians, who converted from their religion, got asylum in Norway.

In its 2022 report on human rights observation in Norway, Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (NIM) details the violation of the rights of standalone refugees aged 15-18 years⁹⁷⁰.

Given that different rules apply for single refugees aged 15-18 and refugee children under the age of 15 who are overseen by child protection services (according to Norwegian law, the responsibility for custody of single refugees aged 15-18 years is assigned to the Directorate of Immigration, while young refugee

969 Article on the website of the state broadcaster "NRK" dated 25 January 2022:

<https://www.nrk.no/vestland/yasin-kan-bli-tvangsreturnert-til-talibans-afghanistan-1.15820481>.

⁹⁷⁰ Human Rights in Norway 2022 Report, March 2023: https://www.nhri.no/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/NIM_A%CC%8Arsmelding_2022_web-1.pdf.

children are processed by the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs), the Government is advised to adopt amendments giving equal rights to refugee children under the age of 15 and those who are older.

Commission on Immigration ordered Mustafa Hassan to leave Norway upon reaching the age of 18 on December 28, 2020, because his mother, when requesting asylum in 2008, incorrectly indicated his country of origin (Palestine instead of Jordan). In July 2021, a court in Oslo sided with Hassan, citing his "close ties" with Norway.

There remain serious complaints against the Barnevern children services, including with regard to the excessive number of child removals and the discriminatory approach to children of non-Norwegian origin. Since 2015, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has accepted 40 cases concerning the practice of Norwegian children services removing children from "problem" families and placing them with adoptive parents. In these cases, Norway has been found guilty 15 times. In particular, in 2021, the European Court of Human Rights finalised seven cases concerning the practice of Norwegian Barnevern children services removing children from "problem" families and placing them with foster parents. In these cases, Norway has been found guilty six times and acquitted once. All of the Barnevern cases involved violations of article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which guarantees respect for private and family life.

The practice of placing children of non-Norwegian origin in foster families without regard to language, culture or religious affiliation continues unabated. According to research by the Norwegian Arctic University of Tromsø, the majority of Roma children end up in non-Roma foster families. Their places of residence are hidden from their biological parents. The children are cut off from the Romani community, culture and language.⁹⁷¹

According to a joint investigation by the state broadcaster NRC and the Centre for Critical Journalism (SUJO), since 2015, 432 single minor refugees (the

⁹⁷¹ Article on the website of the state broadcaster "NRK" dated 26 January 2023: https://www.nrk.no/osloogviken/romske-barn-mister-sprak-og-kultur-i-fosterhjem_-_-bryter-barnekonvensjonen-1.16243406.

youngest child is only five years old) have escaped from alien detention centres and Barnevern care centres in Norway. The police is not actively searching for them and police databases contain incomplete information. It is suspected that the disappeared children may have fallen into a criminal environment or become victims of human trafficking offences⁹⁷².

In comments following the consideration of Norway's combined 23rd and 24th periodic reports⁹⁷³, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concern that "racist and neo-Nazi organisations have become more visible in social media and through demonstrations" and that "Norway has not, in accordance with its obligations, declared illegal organisations that promote and incite racial hatred". The Norwegian authorities, commenting on the conclusions, pointed out that it is not organisations but unlawful acts that are prohibited in Norway under the Penal Code.

There are no plans to introduce the concept of "race" into the 2017 Norwegian Law "On Equality and Prohibition of Discrimination", because, as the authorities believe, the issues of race discrimination are already addressed as "ethnic discrimination". There are no plans to establish a separate police structure to combat and investigate hate speech cases (Russia's recommendation on this matter within the universal periodic review within the framework of the UN Human Rights Council was rebuffed). The Norwegians point out that the only relevant special unit in Oslo "gives recommendations" to colleagues from other regions.

The above-mentioned facts show that xenophobia and intolerance belong to the problematic aspects of the Norwegian human rights dossier. This is largely due to the public discontent that is being triggered by the authorities' migration policies. Islamophobia and migrantphobia underpin the ideology of right-wing radical groups operating in the country, which, despite the authorities' statements rejecting of Nazism, are not outlawed yet.

⁹⁷² Article on the website of the state broadcaster "NRK" dated 6 December 2022: <https://www.nrk.no/vestland/432-barn-og-ungdommer-har-forsvunnet-fra-norske-asylmottak.-politiet-leter-sjelden-etter-asylsokerne-1.16184402>.

⁹⁷³ Presented on 2 November 2017.

The Norwegian authorities and law enforcement agencies continue to maintain an atmosphere of wariness and prejudice towards people from Russia, in line with the constant build-up of anti-Russian sentiments.

Norwegian security services urge fellow citizens to be "vigilant" in their contacts with Russians and to report to the competent authorities all suspicious circumstances concerning work colleagues and neighbours. There are cases of pressure being exerted on our compatriots by local counter-intelligence (they are interested in relatives in Russia, contacts with the Embassy and even encourage them to renounce their Russian citizenship, etc.

It is not uncommon to refuse to grant/renew "admission" to employees of organisations, as well as Norwegian citizens called up for military service⁹⁷⁴ who are of Russian origin or have close Russian relatives.

Russian origin can be a ground for ignoring employment application forms, unreasonable searches, detention and deportations⁹⁷⁵.

Recently, the Russian Embassy has again received complaints about offensive behaviour in public places, including at the airport in the capital, and unjustified detentions.

The removal of children from Russian citizens living in Norway by Norwegian guardianship authorities remains an acute issue (as of July 2023, the Russian diplomatic missions in Norway are monitoring 23 applications from Russian citizens regarding the removal of 48 children).

Since Russia launched a special military operation to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine, Norway has taken a sharply anti-Russian stance and has provided substantial political, military and financial support to the neo-Nazi Kiev regime.

Against the background of the events in Ukraine, there have been cases of manifestations of Russophobia, including harassment and insults, and the non-

⁹⁷⁴ Article on the website of the state broadcaster "NRK" dated 22 March 2022: <https://www.nrk.no/norge/matte-oppgi-drommen-om-a-fly-jagerfly-fordi-mor-er-russisk-1.15895024>.

⁹⁷⁵ See more on this in the Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation "On Violations of the Rights of Russian Citizens and Compatriots in Foreign Countries" https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/humanitarian_cooperation/-/asset_publisher/bB3NYd16mBFC/content/id/4641517.

admission of Russian citizens, including those with second citizenship, to international events⁹⁷⁶. Russian-speaking students in local schools were bullied⁹⁷⁷. A number of small business owners refused to serve people of Russian origin⁹⁷⁸, and some medical centres refused to make appointments for Russian patients who did not condemn the special military operation⁹⁷⁹. Norwegian employers had "educational" discussions with employees who held an alternative viewpoint. Some Russians have had difficulty finding employment in Norway because of their nationality⁹⁸⁰. One case of physical violence against a Russian-speaking citizen was recorded⁹⁸¹.

Such an approach was sharply condemned by Norwegian officials, who recognised that ordinary Russians were "not responsible for starting the war".

Oslo has consistently acceded to the EU's restrictive measures, with a number of exceptions. In particular, the Norwegians, citing "particularly strong constitutional protections for freedom of expression", refused to block RT and Sputnik, despite the fact that "these state-controlled media outlets are used to spread disinformation and fake news and engage in propaganda".

Vesterland recreation park (Songdal commune, Western Norway) that has 107 cottages and a small hotel, refused to accommodate Russian tourists from February 25, 2022 in connection with the events in Ukraine⁹⁸².

Starting from March 9, 2022, the Enter Tromsø hotel network (comprises five small hotels and apartments in the center of the city of Tromsø) refused to

⁹⁷⁶ Article on the website of the state broadcaster "NRK" dated 4 May 2023: <https://www.nrk.no/urix/har-tysk-pass--nektes-likevel-a-delta-i-dronning-sonja-sangkonkurranse-1.16396346>.

⁹⁷⁷ Article on the website of the Dagsavisen newspaper dated 28 February 2022: <https://www.dagsavisen.no/nyheter/2022/02/28/redd-barna-russiske-barn-i-norge-hetses-for-krigen-i-ukraina/>.

⁹⁷⁸ Article on the Dagbladet newspaper website dated 11 March 2022: <https://dagbladet.no/nyheter/vil-ikke-ha-russere-pa-vare-hotell/75595687>; Article on state TV and Radio company "NRK" of 25 February 2022: <https://www.nrk.no/vestland/turistvert-seier-nei-til-alle-russiske-gjester-1.15869639>.

⁹⁷⁹ Article on the website of the Verdens Gang newspaper dated 30 March 2022: <https://vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/k6O9dL/russiskfoedt-kvinne-nekted-helsehjelp-i-moss-fikk-beskjed-om-aa-se-paa-tv>.

⁹⁸⁰ Article on the website of the state broadcaster "NRK" dated 11 July 2022: <https://www.nrk.no/norge/julia-fikk-ikke-jobb-fordi-hun-er-russisk--klart-tilfelle-av-diskriminering-1.16026902>.

⁹⁸¹ Article on the website of the state broadcaster "NRK" dated 15 March 2022: <https://www.nrk.no/inlandet/maria-pa-12-ar-ble-overfalt-etter-a-ha-snakket-pa-russisk-med-moren-i-telefon-pa-veihjem.-1.15893367>.

⁹⁸² Article on the website of the state broadcaster "NRK" dated 25 February 2022: <https://www.nrk.no/vestland/turistvert-seier-nei-til-alle-russiske-gjester-1.15869639>.

accommodate tourists from Russia for the same reasons⁹⁸³.

In practice, attacks in public places, persecutions and insults, refusals to provide service to Russian nationals and pressure at work were also noted.

On March 14, 2022, in Hundorp settlement (Sør-Fron commune), a 12-year-old Maria Falkenhaug, of Latvian origin, was attacked by an unknown person as she was talking on the phone with her mother in Russian. As the result, she was badly bruised. The attacker, while running away, was shouting in Norwegian "bloody Russian"⁹⁸⁴.

Ekaterina Klueva, a Russian citizen residing in Aure commune and employed as a teacher in a kindergarten was invited for a conversation with representatives of municipal authorities due to her publications about the Ukraine conflict posted on her private page on Facebook social media (the "signal" to the authorities was sent by a colleague of hers). The meeting took place on March 15, 2022 in the community administration in the presence of her lawyer. The conversation was recorded on a voice recording device⁹⁸⁵.

After protests against Russophobia held on April 24, 2022 in front of the Storting (Parliament) building in Norway, Angelina Kivioya, who organized the rally, started to receive insults and threats, including physical violence⁹⁸⁶.

In May 2022, a social media campaign was unleashed against a Russian national E. Sazonova, 65, and a friend of hers, 70. They were accused of "inciting ethnic hatred." Some Ukrainian Facebook social media communities posted their photos with captions calling to "bully these women and their relatives." The reason for the hate campaign were the remarks the Russian nationals delivered in front of the participants of the anti-Russian rally at the Storting building⁹⁸⁷.

There was recorded a high-profile incident of refusal in medical services to people of Russian origin. Thor Kvamsdal, a doctor with Jeloy Fysioterapi clinic in

983 Article on the Dagbladet newspaper website dated 11 March 2022: <https://dagbladet.no/nyheter/vil-ikke-ha-russere-pa-vare-hotell/75595687>.

984 Article on the website of the state broadcaster "NRK" dated 15 March 2022: <https://www.nrk.no/innlandet/aria-pa-12-ar-ble-overfalt-etter-a-ha-snakket-pa-russisk-med-moren-i-telefon-pa-vei-hjem.-1.15893367>.

985 E.V. Klyueva's appeal to the Embassy.

986 A. Kivioya's appeal to the police.

987 E.N. Sazonova's appeal to the Embassy.

the town of Moss, refused to book an appointment for the Russian citizen Elena Kasin, who resides in Norway and needs regular injections of a medicine to relieve pains in her spinal column. Knowing that Elena Kasin had moved to Norway from Russia, the physical medicine and rehabilitation physician called her and asked what she thought about the events in Ukraine and Russian President Vladimir Putin, stating that he "would not provide services to a patient who does not condemn the war in Ukraine"⁹⁸⁸. Failing to obtain clear-cut answers, the doctor recommended Russian citizen "to watch the news on TV" and call him back later. Commenting on the case of Elena Kasin, Norwegian Prime Minister J.G.Støre told the media that "it is unacceptable when Russians are denied medical care in Norway because of the war in Ukraine".

In May 2023, two Russian citizens were denied applications to participate in the Queen Sonja of Norway International Music Competition⁹⁸⁹. The official reason was the decision of the directorate not to admit citizens of Russia and Belarus to the event "in solidarity with Ukraine". The restriction also affected the holders of "double" citizenship.

The facts of violations of the rights of people of Russian origin in Norway in connection with the situation in Ukraine are confirmed in the Oslo Police District report "Hate Crime in Norway" for 2022⁹⁹⁰. According to the document, since the initiation of the Special military operation, the Norwegian police have received a number of enquiries regarding unlawful acts committed against Russian citizens, including acts of vandalism and violence, threats, hate speech, and refusal to sell goods or services. It is recognised that these acts should be considered hate crimes if they are motivated by the victim's Russian origin. With reference to the Norwegian Attorney General's explanatory letter to the Oslo Police District dated 2 November 2022, it is noted that refusal to sell goods or services to Russian citizens

⁹⁸⁸ Article on the website of the Verdens Gang newspaper dated 30 March 2022:

<https://vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/k6O9dL/russiskfoedt-kvinne-nekted-helsehjelp-i-moss-fikk-beskjed-om-aa-se-paa-tv>.

⁹⁸⁹ Article on the website of the state broadcaster "NRK" dated 4 May 2023: <https://www.nrk.no/urix/har-tysk-pass--nektes-likevel-a-delta-i-dronning-sonja-sangkonkurranse-1.16396346>.

⁹⁹⁰ Oslo Police District report "Hate Crime in Norway - Annual Report 2022", June 2023:

<https://www.politiet.no/globalassets/dokumenter/oslo/rapporter/anmeldt-hatkriminalitet-oslo/hatkriminalitet-i-norge-2022.pdf>.

on the basis of sanctions legislation cannot be classified as discrimination under §186 ("Discrimination") of the Norwegian Penal Code. In addition, §185 ("Hate speech") and §186 of the Penal Code "may be interpreted restrictively on grounds of freedom of expression", for example, if the act committed towards Russians is "a manifestation of one's position on the war or the Russian authorities".

At the same time, official Oslo emphasises that its reaction is directed at the Russian authorities and not at Russian citizens, who should in no way be held responsible for the actions of the Russian leadership⁹⁹¹.

Against the background of increasing Russophobia, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has published a call on Twitter to take care of Russians in Norwegian society and to combat hate speech. The authorities' statements are also receiving practical confirmation. After cases of discrimination against Russian students, employees of universities and research centres were revealed, the Ministry of Education and Research sent letters of instruction to educational institutions. They drew the attention of educational institutions to the need to pay the utmost attention to this problem.

991 At the very least, these statements are controversial, as they may suggest that in Norway - unlike Russia and most other countries of the world - its main organs of power (except for the king) are not formed as a result of the people's participation in free elections.

Poland

Poland

The Polish authorities are promoting a "historical policy" that seeks to manipulate the history of the World War II for their own gain. The cause-and-effect connections and evaluation of the events during that tragic time for all humanity are deliberately distorted to fit political circumstances. Denials of the Red Army's decisive contribution to the defeat of Hitler's Germany are being propagated, and attempts are being made to eradicate the Soviet/Russian war memorial heritage in Poland. The objective of erasing from public consciousness the recollection of the Red Army's liberating role, not just in Poland but also in rescuing the Polish populace from physical annihilation by the Nazis, has been officially announced. Soviet military personnel are portrayed in a negative light in public discourse, with accusations of perpetrating offenses against civilians and infrastructure without historical context. Concurrently, the narrative of a dual occupation of Poland by Nazi and Soviet forces is actively promoted. The local propaganda positions Poland solely as the primary target of "two totalitarianisms." In the Polish media, Hitler's Germany and the "allied" USSR are portrayed as equally responsible for starting the war. This stance has been officially supported by a resolution of the Polish Sejm. However, the coverage of Nazi atrocities is inconsistent.

Polish state propaganda focuses on 17 September 1939, when the Red Army launched a campaign to liberate Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, rather than the Third Reich's attack on Poland on 1 September 1939. In the Polish version of history, this is portrayed as "a treacherous Soviet attack on Poland", which purportedly led to the final loss of independence and the division of the Polish state.

The country's leaders actively support this historical falsificationist policy. In 2021, during an event to commemorate 17 September 1939, the Polish President Andrzej Duda noted: "Two totalitarian empires - the Third German Reich

and the Soviet Union - destroyed independent Poland in close cooperation...." .⁹⁹²

On 1 September 2022, Poland's highest authorities participated in ceremonies in Gdansk to honour the 83rd anniversary of the outbreak of the World War II. In his address, President Duda acknowledged the war as "one of the worst tragedies in our history. Not only because it took away our freedom, not only because it took away our state, because after the Soviet attack on Poland and after the handshake between Soviet and German soldiers, the Polish state disappeared from the map of Europe, unfortunately, once again in history".⁹⁹³

On 17 September 2022, in his speech, Duda stressed: "The Soviet attack on Poland on 17 September, which was the result of the pact signed between the Nazi German Reich and Soviet Russia on 23 August 1939 - the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, or, to be more precise, the secret annex to this pact, which provided for the division of the Polish state between the German Empire and Soviet Russia - completed the destruction of Poland, the loss of our independence and sovereignty, the tragedy of the Polish people, part of whom found themselves under German occupation and terror, and the other part under Soviet, Stalinist occupation and terror".⁹⁹⁴

The aforementioned approaches are also broadcast by the Institute of National Remembrance⁹⁹⁵ (a state institution that is the main promoter of Polish historical policy and the main initiator of the campaign to demolish Soviet monuments in Poland). On 20 April 2022, the chairman of the Polish Institute of National Remembrance, Karol Nawrocki, stated: "To all those who still want to see a liberator in a monument depicting a Soviet soldier, I remind you of the

⁹⁹² <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/listy/do-uczestnikow-obchodow-82-rocznicy-agresji-sowieckiej,35160>

⁹⁹³ <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/wystapienia/wystapienie-prezydenta-rp-na-westerplatte,58154>

⁹⁹⁴ <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/wystapienia/gdynia-wystapienie-prezydenta-rp-58701>

⁹⁹⁵ The Institute of National Remembrance - Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against the Polish People operates in accordance with the Act of 1998 (as amended). Its primary obligations comprise of gathering and analysing documentation from state security institutions drafted between 22 July 1944 and 31 July 1990, investigating Nazi and communist criminal activity, conducting educational activities, searching for burial sites, as well as providing opinions on the presence of communist or any other totalitarian system propaganda in public spaces, buildings, objects and institutions. The last-mentioned task was assigned after the implementation of the "decommunisation law" in 2016.

picture of the burning cathedral in Gniezno (Wielkopolska Voivodeship) - one of the symbols of Christian culture in Poland - after the end of hostilities in January 1945. Those who want to see a liberator in a Soviet soldier, let them put before their eyes a young girl from the village of Ksęż in May 1945, who, having witnessed the rape of two women by Soviet soldiers, was shot dead on the spot. Those who want to see a liberator in a Soviet soldier with a PPSH, let them be transported to the small village of Radomysl on Christmas Day 1945, where Soviet soldiers raped a 56-year-old woman and a 23-year-old woman seven months pregnant.... On the bayonets of people like this Soviet soldier, the communist system was brought to Poland. They replaced German Nazism with Soviet totalitarianism, which killed until the end of 1989, so there is no place for such symbols in a free Poland."⁹⁹⁶

The distorted historical portrayal has been employed by Polish propagandists to discredit Russia following the Russian military intervention to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine, and safeguard civilians in Donbass, which began on 24th February 2022. The primary objective is to persuade the public that Russia/USSR is a perpetually criminal state.

The Russian justification for commencing their special military operation was countered by Polish propaganda which compared the situation to the 1939 invasion of independent Poland that sought to acquire its eastern territories. In Poland, this view is being promoted that Russia's current aim is to confiscate Ukrainian lands, while also destroying Ukrainian culture and national identity.

Similarly, the alleged "crimes" committed by Red Army soldiers against the civilian population of various European countries, including Poland, during the war and the deaths of civilians in Ukrainian cities such as Bucha, Irpen, Kramatorsk and others, are being mythologised. The Russian army is unjustly blamed by the Polish side for these events.

The Polish political elites seek to find grounds to accuse Moscow of

⁹⁹⁶ <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C1162539%2Cpomniki-upamietniajace-armie-czerwona-w-siedlcu-i-miedzyblociu>

"genocide", "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity" in Ukraine. Warsaw has welcomed the issuance of an arrest warrant for Vladimir Putin by the International Criminal Court on 17 March 2023, related to the alleged "kidnapping" of Ukrainian children. During the EU summit held on 23 March 2023 in Brussels, the Polish Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, referred to the Russian evacuation of children from the combat zone as "stealing children".

Polish political elites deny the existence of Nazism in Ukraine, ignore the facts of crimes committed by the Ukrainian military and radicals, and instead substitute concepts, accusing the Russian side of such actions without evidence. On 11 April 2022, at a press conference following a meeting with the Belgian Prime Minister, Polish Prime Minister Morawiecki, according to Polish media, said: "There can be no neutral positions on the battlefield of good versus evil. We must convince everyone around us, who still doubts it, that there is nothing to talk about with such a brutal regime as the fascist regime in Moscow. It must be forced to renounce the atrocities of the war that the Russians provoked".⁹⁹⁷ In May 2022, Morawiecki, speaking to journalists, claimed that "Russia is a barbaric country that cannot be relied upon for anything. It turned out to be not only an untrustworthy partner, but also a criminal state".⁹⁹⁸ On 11 July 2022, Morawiecki said: "Today Ukraine sees that the heir of the UIA (banned in Russia) is the Russian world. Today Putin and Moscow behave criminally, in the spirit of genocide, which increasingly resembles the worst crimes of genocide known from world history. The Russian world is imperialism, colonialism and extreme nationalism".⁹⁹⁹

On 22 June 2022, Polish President Duda, in an interview with the Latvian TV channel LSM, called "stories about some Nazis, some attacks on Russians and ethnic cleansing in Ukraine" a lie of Russian propaganda and a far-fetched reason

⁹⁹⁷ <https://radioszczecin.pl/6,438387,premier-z-tak-brutalnym-rezimem-jak-faszystowski>

⁹⁹⁸ <https://polskieradio24.pl/5/1222/artykul/2969749,premier-morawiecki-nikt-nie-chce-kupowac-energii-od-rosji-barbarzynskiego-kraju>

⁹⁹⁹ <https://www.wprost.pl/polityka/10778110/morawiecki-o-rzezi-wolynskiej-ukraina-widzi-ze-spadkobierca-upa-jest-ruski-mir.html>

to attack a sovereign state.¹⁰⁰⁰ In September 2022, he repeated these theses while talking to journalists in New York, where he arrived to participate in the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, and in October 2022 - during an interview with the Italian broadcaster RAI.¹⁰⁰¹

On 20 March 2023, during a speech at the University of Heidelberg (Germany), Morawiecki said: "Vladimir Putin and all accomplices of Russian aggression are the modern day fascists. As Europeans, we are obliged to oppose Russian fascism".

From the beginning of the special military operation until the end of July 2023, Poland, according to the country's defence ministry, has provided military aid to the Kiev regime worth about 3 billion euros, making it one of the top four (along with the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany). Warsaw handed Kiev tanks, IFVs, self-propelled howitzers, UAVs, assault rifles, missiles and ammunition. Citing Ukrainian sources, Polish mass media reported that up to 90 per cent of Western military aid to Ukraine comes through Polish territory.¹⁰⁰²

In order to whitewash the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev, the Polish authorities are putting pressure on independent Polish journalists. In April 2022, Dawid Warszawski, a columnist for the opposition liberal Polish newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza, published a piece in which he reported that its editorial board demanded that he call the Azov battalion banned in Russia not neo-Nazi, as Warszawski defined it in his articles, but "extreme right-wing" or use some other euphemisms.

As part of activities aimed at falsifying history in Poland, the merits of "underground heroes" - the "cursed" (or "unbroken") soldiers¹⁰⁰³ in achieving

¹⁰⁰⁰ <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/wywiady/wywiad-dla-telewizji-lsm-calosc,55783>

¹⁰⁰¹ <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/wystapienia/nowy-jork-wypowiedz-prezydenta-dla-mediow,58864> ; <https://www.tvp.info/64019062/wlochy-prezydent-andrzej-duda-udzielil-wywiadu-telewizji-rai-we-wtorek-wieczorem>

¹⁰⁰² <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/ogromna-skala-pomocy-ukrainie-nawet-90-procent-z-polski-6797051920595936a>

¹⁰⁰³ The Polish armed nationalist (anti-Soviet) underground members were responsible for killing civilians such as women and children, Orthodox Belarusians in eastern Poland (Podlasie), Jews, and Poles. One of the commanders, R. Rice ("Brown"), was part of the "damned". All underground paramilitary organisations in the territory of Poland occupied by German troops were united in the Armia Krajowa during World War II. After Poland was liberated by the Soviets in 1944-1945, certain members of this organization who refused to participate in the fight against the

freedom and independence of post-war Poland (which became allegedly possible only at the juncture of the 1980s-1990s¹⁰⁰⁴) are glorified at the state level. The Day of Remembrance of the "cursed" soldiers (as heroes of the "national liberation" struggle) is celebrated on 1 March. On the occasion of events marking this date in 2021, Polish President Duda said: "The unbroken soldiers - despite the fact that the World War II was over and Hitler's Germany was defeated - did not accept that there should be a Poland that was not a truly independent, sovereign state.... They did not accept that there was a Soviet occupation in Poland. In this connection they did not lay down their arms, having decided to fight for a free, independent, sovereign Poland to the end..."¹⁰⁰⁵

During similar events in 2022, Duda stated the following: "The story of the cursed - unbroken - soldiers is dramatic. They clearly and simply understood Poland's independence and sovereignty. They knew that if there were foreign troops in the country and a government that nobody chose, it was an unfree Poland, it was not what they fought for, bleeding, with the German occupier. So what if one occupier expelled the other, the struggle did not end..."¹⁰⁰⁶.

Since the start of the special military operation in Poland, anti-Russian propaganda of unprecedented intensity and mendacity (even by the standards of that country) has been deployed, fuelling a rampant Russophobia on an unprecedented scale. This campaign is largely initiated and encouraged by the Polish authorities and the majority of the Polish media.

Polish officials do not hide their anti-Russian and anti-Russian charge, publicly expressing the need to destroy Russia and abolish Russian culture (this was implemented by refusing to stage and perform works by Russian authors, co-operating with performers from Russia), "derusification" (reducing Poland's dependence on Russia), primarily in the energy sector.

Nazis initiated an underground resistance, in collaboration with their compatriots and the Red Army soldiers.

¹⁰⁰⁴ <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/wystapienia/art,989,wystapienie-podczas-centralnych-obchodow-narodowego-dnia-pamieci-zolnierzy-wykletych.html>

¹⁰⁰⁵ <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/wystapienia/prezydent-zolnierze-niezlomni-postanowili-walczyz-do-konca-o-wolna-polske,4424>

¹⁰⁰⁶ <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/wystapienia/wystapienie-podczas-odslonienia-epitafium-zolnierzy-wykletych,49692>

Thus, on 30 March 2022, Polish Prime Minister Morawiecki said that Russophobia in this state has become mainstream. Earlier, he also reported that the confiscation of Russian property could begin in the country, emphasising his readiness to meet with the opposition to discuss this issue in order to then bring it to the Sejm. In addition, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has initiated the process of seizing properties that are "in unauthorised possession" of Russia (a secondary school at the Embassy and an empty building).¹⁰⁰⁷

On 4 April 2022, Piotr Gliński, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Culture and National Heritage of Poland, called for Russian culture to disappear from the public space. In his opinion, the time of the special military operation is inappropriate for Russian ballet, productions based on Anton Chekhov and Alexander Pushkin, or performances by the Alexandrov Ensemble.¹⁰⁰⁸

Since April 2022, Poland has enforced national sanctions on Russian businesses. As of September 2022, an entry ban has been imposed on Russian citizens, including those with Schengen visas issued by third-party countries, for tourism, business, cultural, and sporting purposes. The suspension of the Russia-EU Agreement on simplified visa procedures for Russian and EU citizens has been welcomed in Warsaw. There are currently no passenger rail or air services available between Russia and Poland.

Within households, Russians residing in Poland frequently experience service declines. Refusal of service typically occurs at grocery stores, pharmacies, clinics, dental practices and beauty parlours.

The imposition of Russophobic attitudes has impacted Russian sports players who compete for clubs in Poland. Contracts were voided for those who declined to denounce the special military operation and the policies of the Russian administration.

In the wake of a significant information confrontation against Russia spearheaded by the Polish authorities following the demilitarization and

¹⁰⁰⁷ Poland's prime minister says plans to confiscate property of Russians in the country. RBC. 21 March 2022. <https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/6237a0e49a794719c51ff7a5>

¹⁰⁰⁸ Poland believes that Russian culture should disappear from the public sphere. RBC. 4 April 2022. <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/04/04/2022/624ae60d9a7947ec8b2d2561>

denazification operation of Ukraine, the Polish government censored the Polish portion of the internet in May 2022. As per the Internal Security Agency's proposal, various Russian and Polish internet platforms were obstructed for sharing "pro-Kremlin propaganda" (ria.ru, lenta.ru, pl.sputniknews.com, rt.com, dziennik-polityczny). com, myslpolska.info, wicipolskie.pl, wolnemedi.net, xportal.pl, wrealu.pl,) as well as a ban on five Russian channels (Russia Today, RTR-Planeta, Soyuz TV, Russia 24 and ORT-1) and one Belarusian channel (Bel-24).

The campaign against Russia has impacted the work of Russian diplomatic missions in Poland. On 25 February 2022, the bank accounts of both the Russian Embassy and Trade Representation in Poland were frozen. This action constitutes a clear violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, established in 1961. The financial control authorities and prosecutors' offices in Warsaw have justified their decision by citing suspicions of terrorist financing by Russian foreign institutions in Poland. On 26th February 2022, vandals threw paint over a sign on the main entrance gate, causing damage to the embassy's official symbols and breaking windows. Additionally, other individuals simultaneously threw paint bags on the school walls at the Russian Embassy. The last of the four Russian language and culture centres situated in Lublin terminated its operations on 9th March 2022.

On the night of 7-8 May 2023, an unidentified individual attempted to enter the grounds of the Russian Consulate General in Gdansk with the purported intention of destroying the Russian flag. The intruder was frightened off by the police, and successfully evaded capture. An investigation into the incident has been launched by Polish law enforcement authorities, but no suspect has been identified thus far.

As part of their campaign to manipulate historical records, the Polish authorities prohibit any opposing views. Among those affected are Russian representatives of social movements, journalists, and academics who experience harassment and pressure. Tsvil'skaya and Smirnova-Tyts, two Russian women who spoke out against the destruction of monuments, were detained and expelled

from Poland in May 2018 on false allegations of taking part in a "hybrid war against Poland" and still remain banned from entering the country. In 2017, the Russian historian Karnaukhov was expelled and in 2018, two more Russian citizens, Stolyarchik and Rotkhshtein, were also expelled. They were reportedly considered a threat to the country's security. At the behest of the Polish authorities, two Russian political scientists, Bondarenko and Martynov, have been banned from entering the country since late 2017. Moreover, they have been prohibited from entering the Schengen countries since early 2018.

In 2021, the Polish authorities extended the Schengen zone entry ban (until December 2025) for journalist Leonid Sviridov of the Russia Today a news agency, citing "conducting aggressive propaganda and damaging the image of Poland." Additionally, VGTRK correspondent Evgeny Reshetnev was banned from entering the country for five years in March 2021 for allegedly engaging in activities "beyond the scope of journalism."

Under the banner of combating "Soviet propaganda" and shaping the "correct" history of the World War II, a cult of even those "fighters against communism" who were stained by collaboration with the Nazis, war crimes and the killing of civilians is being planted in Poland. Thus, in August 2021, commemorative events were held in Warsaw to mark the formation of the "Świętokrzyska Brigade" of the National Armed Forces¹⁰⁰⁹. It was organised by the Office for Veterans and Repressed Persons. The ceremony was attended by representatives of the authorities and state institutions¹⁰¹⁰.

In September 2022, the Office for Veterans and Repressed Persons once again organised commemorative events in Warsaw to mark the formation of the Polish National Armed Forces (NSZ), during which the "Świętokrzyska Brigade" was also honoured¹⁰¹¹.

¹⁰⁰⁹ The National Armed Forces (NSZ) was one of the subterranean armed organizations that collaborated with the Nazis. The Świętokrzyska Brigade, a part of the NSZ, fought alongside SS forces against the Red Army in 1944-1945, ultimately retreating with the Nazis into Germany the following year.

¹⁰¹⁰ <https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/148025,77-rocznica-powstania-Brygady-Swietokrzyskiej-Narodowych-Sil-Zbrojnych-Warszawa-.html>

¹⁰¹¹ <https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/170669.Obchody-80-rocznicy-powstania-Narodowych-Sil-Zbrojnych-20-wrzesnia-2022.html>

Archival documents provide evidence that fighters of the Polish Armia Krajowa and its individual formations committed numerous murders of peaceful Soviet citizens. At the end of October 2022, the Federal Security Service of Russia published new archival documents, including a reference on terrorist acts committed by Polish gangs in the territories of Belarus and Lithuania in 1944 and from January to April 1945. The document, prepared in early May 1945, reports almost 70 terrorist acts and murders of Soviet citizens - not only military, but also representatives of the authorities, heads and workers of enterprises, teachers - committed by Polish militants¹⁰¹².

Poland is among the nations whose authorities are actively demolishing monuments and memorials in tribute to Red Army soldiers who lost their lives during the country's liberation from Nazism in the World War II. The 2020-2021 Soviet monuments inventory at the Russian Embassy in Poland has identified 9 recent demolitions that occurred from 2019-2021. The destroyed or depersonalised monuments are situated in villages of Baszków (Wielkopolska Voivodeship), Bincze and Radowo Wielkie (West Pomeranian Voivodeship), Wrocław and Szczynawa (Lower Silesian Voivodeship), Krzanowice (Silesian Voivodeship), Patrzyków (Łódź Voivodeship), Wilkow and Józefów (Lublin Voivodeship) have all experienced unlawful demolition of Soviet monuments.

The Russian authorities have been made aware of four documented incidents that took place in 2021, although it is possible that there have been additional occurrences that have not been reported by the Polish media recently. To note, these reports remain objective and free of subjective evaluations. During January, a monument, commemorating the Soviet soldiers who liberated Wysokie Mazowiecki (Podlaskie Voivodeship), was removed. In April, reports indicated the dismantling of the monument expressing gratitude to the Red Army in Lesko (Podkarpackie Voivodeship), and the monument honouring the Soviet-Polish brotherhood in arms in Ciechowice Dziedzice (Silesian Voivodeship).

¹⁰¹² <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/31102022-fsb-rassekretila-dokumenty-o-prestupleniyakh-polskikh-band-v-velikuyu-otechestvennuyu-voynu/>

Furthermore, the obelisk from the individual grave of the Hero of the Soviet Union Alexander Sinitsyn, located in the region of Wola-Buchowska (Podkarpackie Voivodeship), has disappeared. Additionally, there have been seven cases of vandalism against Soviet war graves in Wolyptyn and Rawicz (Wielkopolska Voivodeship), Swidnica, Węzów, and Luban (Lower Silesia Voivodeship), Zambrow (Podlaskie Voivodeship), and Ostrolenka (Mazowieckie Voivodeship).

Since the end of February 2022, the Russophobia spread by the Polish authorities has been reflected in the already active "war" against monuments and memorials in honour of fallen Red Army soldiers. Since the beginning of the special military operation, the number of acts of vandalism on Soviet memorials and graves on Polish territory has increased manifold. As a rule, vandals put Nazi and Ukrainian neo-Nazi symbols, obscene language, and sprayed paint on the monuments. There were 46 instances of vandalism at cemeteries dedicated to Soviet military personnel located in cities and towns throughout the voivodeships: Wielkopolska (Rawicz, Poznan and Gniezno); Świętokrzyskie (Sandomierz); Lubuskie (Żary); Mazowieckie (Warsaw, Radom, Garwolin and Minsk-Mazowiecki); Silesian (Katowice and Chorzów); Lower Silesian (Wrocław, Luban, Wałbrzych, Kąty Wrocławskie, Świdnica and Bolesławiec); Pomeranian (Gdańsk, Żukowo and Tczew); West Pomeranian (Kołobrzeg and Koszalin); Kuyavian-Pomeranian (Głinki (near Toruń) and Brodnica); Małopolskie (Szczucin, Węgrzce, Myslenice and Wadowice); Podkarpackie (Krosno and Melec); Lublin (Flisy and Wilków); Podlaskie (Zambrów and Harasimowicze); Warmińsko-Mazurskie (Elbląg, Lubawa, Ostróda and Wronki Wielkie); Łódz (Łódź, Zgierz and Piotrków Trybunalski) and four in respect of monuments (in Olyshtyn (Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship), Głubczyce (Opolskie Voivodeship), Węgrzce (Małopolskie Voivodeship) and Gliwice (Silesian Voivodeship)). Some memorial sites (in Warsaw, Poznań, Wrocław, Tczew, Luban) were repeatedly desecrated. A number of monuments (in particular in Chrzowice-Folwark, Głubczyce) were demolished "under the cameras". At the same time, the Polish authorities increased their efforts to destroy memorials in honour of the fallen Red

Army fighters. They voiced their intentions openly.

In March 2022, Karol Nawrocki, chairman of the IPN, announced that the Institute possessed a catalogue of 60 commemorative locations associated with the Red Army and that IPN would endeavour to remove them in collaboration with local government.¹⁰¹³

In April 2022, he pledged at a press conference that the IPN would energetically implement the "decommunisation" law concerning monuments (excluding burials).¹⁰¹⁴

Local authorities at different levels, in coordination with the Institute of National Remembrance of Poland, have started a large-scale demolition of Soviet monuments situated outside burial grounds.

The process of "decommunisation" of public spaces in Poland is carried out in accordance with the "Prohibition of the promotion of communism or other totalitarian system" law of 1 April 2016 (with subsequent amendments)¹⁰¹⁵. Monuments to Soviet soldiers who helped liberate are being taken down due to the perception that they represent the ideology of communism or promote it. Poland is therefore in breach of its international responsibilities as outlined in the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Poland on Friendly and Good-Neighbourly Cooperation of 22nd May 1992, as well as the intergovernmental agreements regarding cooperation in cultural, scientific, and educational fields dated 25th August 1993 and burials and commemoration sites for victims of wars and repression ratified on 22nd February 1994.

In 2022, there were 18 cases of unlawful demolition of Soviet monuments of which the Russian side became aware (there were probably more, but recently

¹⁰¹³ <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C1136300%2Cprezes-ipn-czas-dokonczyc-dekomunizacje-polskiej-przestrzeni-publicznej>

¹⁰¹⁴ <https://dzieje.pl/demontaz-upamietniajacych-armie-czerwona-pomnikow-w-siedlcu-i-miedzyblociu>

¹⁰¹⁵ The law was implemented in September 2016, stipulating the eradication of names linked to individuals, groups, occasions and dates that represent "the repressive, authoritarian and non-sovereign regime in Poland in 1944-1989" from public areas. Initially, the law focused on monuments without mention of removing any objects with connotations of communism or totalitarianism. However, in July 2017, an amendment was made to mandate the removal of any such objects from public spaces within one year of the amendment's enactment (the legislated deadline was later shortened to 31 March 2018). Despite this deadline, the Polish authorities failed to meet the requirements by the specified date. Less than 100 monuments to Soviet soldiers who liberated the country (compared to 561 in 1997) have been conserved.

the Polish media prefer to keep quiet about such incidents). Monuments were demolished in Chrzowice-Folwark, Brzeg, Byczyna, and Głubczyce (Opolskie Voivodeship), Garnzarsko (Lower Silesia Voivodeship), Międzybłocze, Biały Bur, and Brojce (Wielkopolska Voivodeship), Starogard, Bobolice and Stargard (West Pomeranian Voivodeship), Dąbrowa Górnicza (Silesian Voivodeship), Malbork (Pomeranian Voivodeship), Włodawa (Lublin Voivodeship), Mokre (Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship).

In July 2022, a monument situated on the mass grave of 64 Soviet soldiers who perished battling Hitler's troops in July 1944 was removed from Terespol (Lublin Voivodeship) without the agreement of the Russian side. On 1 September 2022, the Polish authorities decided to dismantle a memorial for the Red Army soldiers who lost their lives in the World War II near the Soviet military cemetery in Wałbrzych (Lower Silesia Voivodeship).

In May 2023, the Polish Institute of National Remembrance reported that nearly 28 "Soviet propaganda sites" had been demolished through efforts by the Polish government spanning a year and a half, commencing in February 2022.

From January to September 2023, four acts of vandalism were committed against Soviet war memorials; specifically, Kiezieliny (Olsztyn, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship), Szczecin (West Pomeranian Voivodeship), and twice in Rzeszów (Podkarpackie Voivodeship). Additionally, eight cases of war graves desecrations were recorded in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship (Morąg) and Mazowieckie Voivodeship (Warsaw), Lower Silesian Voivodeship (Wrocław), West Pomeranian Voivodeship (Szczecin), Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship (Labiszyn), Pomeranian Voivodeship (Kartuzy, Żukowo, Kościerzyna).

During the first three quarters of 2023, Soviet war monuments (or parts thereof) were unlawfully removed by Polish authorities in Tczew (Pomeranian Voivodeship), Lubawa (Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship), Głubczyce (Opolskie Voivodeship), and Szczecin (West Pomeranian Voivodeship).

For instance, in March 2023, the city authorities made the decision to dismantle a memorial plaque honouring Soviet soldiers in Tczew (Pomeranian

Voivodeship). Similarly, in Głubczyce (Opolskie Voivodeship), a Soviet monument was demolished by the Polish authorities in May.

On 5 May 2023, an obelisk was removed in Głubczyce, which had been erected in 1945 on the former grave of 676 Soviet soldiers of the 1st Ukrainian Front (according to the Polish Red Cross the remains of the soldiers were reportedly moved to a different cemetery in 1952). A press conference featuring Karol Nawrocki, chairman of the IPN, and Adam Siwek, director of the Bureau for the Commemoration of Struggle and Martyrdom of the IPN, took place before the demolition. Nawrocki criticised Soviet soldiers, labelling them "infanticide, murderers and rapists", and claimed that during the war, there was a conflict between "oppressors" and "evil fought evil". He argued that the monument contradicts history and lacks aesthetic merit.

Consequently, the majority of monuments honouring Soviet soldiers in Poland have been destroyed since the late 1990s, leaving only a few of the original 561 monuments remaining by 2023. However, even these remaining memorials are at risk of destruction.

New monuments are being constructed to replace the demolished Soviet ones, which aim to meet public requirements. Siwek asserts that through these actions, the Polish side is "reinstating authentic history and remembrance".

Due to the Soviet Union's silence about the liberation of Poland, the Polish authorities did not obstruct official events honouring the Red Army's liberation of Europe until February 2022; however, they typically did not take part in them. The situation changed dramatically following Russia's launch of the special military operation.

On 9th May 2022, a wreath-laying ceremony at the Soviet soldiers' cemetery organised by the Russian Embassy in Poland was disrupted by pro-Ukrainian individuals in Warsaw, with apparent connivance from the Polish authorities. The Russian Ambassador to Poland, Sergey Andreev, and his entourage were targeted in the attack. Similar attempts to disrupt a commemorative event organised by the Russian Consulate General on the occasion of Victory Day in the Great Patriotic

War occurred in Gdansk.

On 9th May 2023, a group of "activists" from the civil initiative Euromaidan-Warsaw, along with Ukrainian refugees, organised a demonstration at a Soviet cemetery. The information has been presented in a clear and concise manner with a logical structure. The central monument square was filled with Ukrainian flags, installations, and images of "arrested Putin". One of the architectural elements of the memorial displayed signs of vandalism, including obscene inscriptions with anti-Russian content. The event was accompanied by noise effects that replicated the sounds of air raids and bombings. The participants carried a banner with the message: "The presence of the Russian official representative in this place is an insult to the graves of soldiers who died during the World War II," accompanied by a hashtag captioning Russia as a "terrorist."

When the Russian delegation laid a wreath at a memorial, they were surrounded by a tight cordon of pro-Ukrainian protesters. One of the protesters tied himself to the wreath that the Embassy staff had intended to lay. After the Russian diplomats departed, the protesters removed a ribbon in the colours of the Russian flag from the wreath and affixed it to a mock missile before trampling on the wreath. The demonstrators, broadcasting via loudspeaker, requested the elimination of the St George's ribbons, characterising them as a representation of "support for aggression". The activists labelled the Ambassador and Russian delegation members as "fascists" and "murderers", and urged for the retreat of Russian forces from Ukraine (including Crimea) and the cessation of "bombing and killing civilians".

On 9 May 2023, Krzysztof Sobolewski, the Chair of the Executive Committee of Poland's ruling national-conservative Law and Justice party, made a statement requesting the Russian Ambassador to avoid "provocations". This was to prevent traditional ceremonies held at the Russian Embassy in memory of Soviet soldiers who died in the war. Similar aspirations were expressed by the head of the Bureau for International Policy in the Chancellery of the President of Poland, Marcin Przydacz.

After the commencement of the special military operation, the Polish media construed that the observance of Soviet soldiers on Victory Day had "taken on a new significance, signalling support for the Kremlin's policies".

On the 8th and 9th of May 2023, wreaths were placed by representatives from the Russian Consulates General in Krakow and Poznan at the Soviet memorials located in the Rakowice Cemetery in Krakow and the Citadel Park Complex. Additionally, wreaths were placed at the memorial plaque commemorating Vasily Chuikov, Marshal of the USSR and honorary citizen of Poznan, who commanded the 8th Guards Army during the liberation of the city in February 1945. Furthermore, wreaths were laid at the Milostowo Cemetery in Poznan without any complications.

Following the commencement of the special military operation, Poland ceased inviting Russian diplomatic and consular representatives to its events involving the diplomatic corps, including those honouring the events of the World War II.

This was exemplified in Gdansk on 8th May 2023, during which the municipal authorities held a commemorative ceremony in memory of the residents who lost their lives to the Nazis. Unlike representatives of the German and Ukrainian Consulates General, the staff from the Russian Consulate General in Gdansk did not receive an invitation to attend.

On 9 May 2023, the Russian Consulate General in Gdansk arranged a ceremony to place wreaths and flowers at the Cemetery of Soviet Soldiers. Approximately 40 people, including the Polish Association for Co-operation "Poland-East" and compatriots attended the event. No incidents occurred during the ceremony, which differed from the previous year (2022), when there were attempts to obstruct the laying of wreaths.

Museum institutions also comply with the policies of the Polish authorities. In August 2022, the Polish State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau administration closed the permanent exhibition "Tragedy.Courage.Liberation" in Block 14. The exhibition was prepared by the Russian Central Museum of the Great Patriotic War

of 1941-1945 to preserve the memory of the atrocities of Nazism and the role of the Red Army in liberating the camp. The management of the Polish museum cited the end of April 2022 as the expiration date of the operating agreements between the Polish and Russian museums, albeit as a pretext. However, in reality, the Polish side refrained from engaging in contacts regarding this issue for over two months, with both their Russian museum partners and Russian diplomats who attempted to alleviate the negative situation. After the exhibition was closed, Russian museum workers utilised it to create a multimedia exhibit called "Auschwitz.Pravda", which is available for viewing on the museum's website, <https://victoriumuseum.ru>.

In Poland, instances of distributing items emblazoned with Nazi symbols or publishing Nazi literature are frequent. For instance, in January 2021, an academic edition of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* was published in Poland, which caused uproar within the country. For instance, in January 2021, an academic edition of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* was published in Poland, which caused uproar within the country. It is worth noting that this was the second edition, with the first being published in the early 1990s. For instance, in January 2021, an academic edition of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* was published in Poland, which caused uproar within the country. The leader of the KURSK Commonwealth, Jerzy Tyc, argued during an interview with the Zvezda TV channel that the publication of *Mein Kampf*, Hitler's prohibited autobiography, in Poland constituted both a crime and a mockery. He also said that his organization plans to take the matter to the competent Polish authorities. Tyc pointed out that Poles purchase the book with enthusiasm, boasting about it on social networks.¹⁰¹⁶ The two-volume book includes 5,000 remarks by specialists and historians.¹⁰¹⁷ The book is adorned with the colours reminiscent of the Nazi symbols. The entire print run of two thousand copies was immediately sold out upon release. Subsequently, the owner of XXL publishing house, responsible for preparing the Polish version of the book for publication, expressed contemplation of an additional print run. However, the book

¹⁰¹⁶ Poland has called the publication of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in the country a "mockery". The Star. 23 January 2021. <https://tvzvezda.ru/news/20211231822-ZDi5V.html>

¹⁰¹⁷ Poland has released Hitler's "Mein Kampf", France is next. Rossiyskaya Gazeta. 20 January 2021. <https://rg.ru/2021/01/20/v-polshe-vypustili-majn-kampf-gitlera-na-ocheredi-franciia.html>

cannot be taken off the shelves in accordance with Polish laws. Public promotion of fascism in Poland is a criminal offence that could lead to imprisonment. However, the Polish prosecutor's office could only take action if an organisation advocating Nazi ideology sold the book 'Mein Kampf.' XXL Publishing House does not spread such ideology.¹⁰¹⁸ Media reports suggest that the Bavarian government, which owns the copyright to the book, is making efforts to prevent its publication abroad. The German Foreign Ministry is supporting Bavaria's efforts. German diplomatic missions in countries where "Mein Kampf" is set to be released are examining avenues to hinder the book's dissemination.¹⁰¹⁹ There are similar initiatives being pursued in this matter.

In January 2023, the Polish central newspaper "Rzeczpospolita" reported that the publishing house "3DOM" had released a book entitled "Face to Face". This book contains documented personal conversations of Hitler during 1941-1944. According to the article, the publisher defends the controversial publication by stating that it provides insight into the true nature and motivations of A. Hitler due to the absence of similar literature in the Polish market.¹⁰²⁰

Radical and nationalist groups persist with their activities within Poland. According to media reports, the Polish security services recognise about 200 "dangerous neo-Nazis". It is estimated that the number of neo-Nazi activists in the country falls between 600-700 people. "Never Again" (Nigdy Więcej), a Polish non-governmental organisation, suggests that there are several thousand admirers of fascism in Poland, along with more than 10,000 individuals under the influence of this particular ideology. A report on right-wing extremism in the EU, which was published by the European Parliament in May 2022, identified the existence of a religious element within Polish nationalist movements – namely Catholic-nationalism.¹⁰²¹

In Poland, there are numerous nationalist organisations that maintain

¹⁰¹⁸ Bavaria fights Nazi propaganda in Poland. Deutsche Welle. 9 March 2005. <https://www.dw.com/ru/бавария-борется-с-пропагандой-нацизма-в-польше/a-1512305>

¹⁰¹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰²⁰ <https://www.rp.pl/historia/art37869601-wydali-w-polsce-ksiazke-hitlera>

¹⁰²¹ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/700953/IPOL_STU\(2021\)700953_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/700953/IPOL_STU(2021)700953_EN.pdf)

relations with similar structures in other European countries. Among Poland's largest officially registered organisations are the National Radical Camp (ONR)¹⁰²², All-Polish Youth and National Movement (RN)¹⁰²³. Members of these groups maintain connections with nationalist organisations in Europe and promote Poland's exit from the EU, a return to traditional values and a strict migration policy.

ONR activists maintain connections with Belarusian nationalists who espouse the concept of "common Polish-Belarusian historical heritage," as well as with Polish organizations advocating Polish customs, culture, history, and language within Belarus. NRL members establish social network communities wherein they encourage residents of western Belarus to specify their Polish ancestry in all official documentation.

There is clear evidence of collaboration between Polish nationalists and Ukrainian radicals, including their involvement in the 2014 Kiev Maidan events.¹⁰²⁴ Additionally, Polish mercenaries participated in the nationalist battalions during the war in Donbass.

In October 2021, Marcin Wiącek, the Polish Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman), raised concerns about instances where the prosecutor's office declined to initiate proceedings for promoting a fascist state system. Publicly advocating for a fascist or other totalitarian state system is punishable by a fine, restriction or up to two years' imprisonment under the Polish Criminal Code.¹⁰²⁵

As an illustration, Wiącek referenced a specific scenario where Polish law enforcement declined to charge a nationalist march participant for making a Nazi salute on 1 August 2020. The district prosecutor argued that the gesture did not

¹⁰²² Polish far-right organisation (founded in 1993), taking the name of the pre-war party of the same name. The pre-war party was ideologically influenced by Italian fascism.

¹⁰²³ "The National Movement (RN) is a Polish nationalist political party founded in 2014. It is part of the political association Confederation Liberty and Independence (KWN), together with the political parties KORWiN and Confederation of the Polish Crown. RN advocates Poland's withdrawal from the EU and rejects the presence of NATO and US troops on Polish territory. Its leader is the Sejm deputy Robert Winnicki .

¹⁰²⁴ In particular, the participation of members of the "Stormtroopers" structure, a Polish extremist nationalist organisation, is known. It opposes capitalism and the "dictates" of Brussels, and advocates the creation of a "pure" Polish state based on traditional values. In July 2019, after the arrest of the organisation's leader, it ceased to exist and moved to the format of "individual actions".

¹⁰²⁵ <https://lexlege.pl/kk/art-256/>

amount to advocacy for fascism, but rather was a "salute of Roman soldiers". The court later reversed the prosecutor's ruling.¹⁰²⁶

There have been instances where efforts have been made to counter the actions of right-wing radical organisations, with civil society representatives taking the lead. Onet.pl, the Polish Internet portal reported that members of far-right groups, including Club 28, a cell of the international network Blood and Honour / Kombat 18, were apprehended by the Polish Internal Security Agency in 2018. The online platform has reported that although there has been a decline in the activity of neo-Nazi organizations, they persist in their operations and are associated with organized crime. Specifically, they are involved in drug distribution.

In February 2021, the Polish Supreme Court ruled on a four-year-long case between members of the ONR and activist R.Kolinski of the Left Together party¹⁰²⁷, who had opposed the Polish neo-Nazi marches in Elblag. In February 2021, the Polish Supreme Court ruled on a four-year trial between members of the ONR and activist R.Kolinski of the Left Together party, who had opposed the Polish neo-Nazi marches in Elblag. The radicals sued Kolinski because he pointed out in his publications that the organisation openly used references to links with a similar pre-war fascist, anti-Semitic, racist structure. In the end, the radicals' claims against R.Kolinski were rejected by the court. In particular, it was noted that today's ONR "uses the same symbols and name ... as the pre-war organisation, which was openly fascist". It was also stated that the organisation's modern programme called for Poland to be "ethnically homogeneous", which was "an important element of fascist views". On this basis, the court concluded that Kolinski was entitled to think so on the basis of the behaviour of the ONR activists, slogans, clothing and symbols they use¹⁰²⁸. The activist himself, however, considers this only a partial victory, as the courts did not rule on whether the ONR was a fascist organisation or not, but only on whether he had the right to call it

¹⁰²⁶ <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/pl/content/jak-sciga-sie-propagowanie-i-pochwalanie-faszyzmu-prokuratura-krajowa-w-koncu-ujawnila-rpo>

¹⁰²⁷ "Left together party" is a Polish left-wing political party. It was founded in 2015.

¹⁰²⁸ <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/olsztyn/sad-najwyzszy-zdecydowal-mozna-nazywac-onr-organizacja-faszystowska/wh2tfch>

such. In his opinion, what is needed in the future is an unambiguous court ruling that recognises the ONR as a fascist organisation and leads to its ban¹⁰²⁹.

In September 2021, the Polish NGO Racist and Xenophobic Behaviour Monitoring Centre reported¹⁰³⁰ that for the first time in Poland's modern (post-1990) history, a sentence was passed against members of the ONR. The defendants were sentenced to one year and six months' imprisonment (suspended) for public calls of an anti-Semitic nature during an ONR march in Białystok (Podlaskie Voivodeship) in April 2016. The NGO notes that the investigation against two members of the formation was suspended three times at the initiative of the prosecutor's office and was completed thanks to the Centre's efforts.

The Never Again organisation, which cooperates with the Polish online shopping platform Allegro, reported that in 2018-2021 they initiated the removal of more than 12,000 offers¹⁰³¹ to sell items containing neo-Nazi symbols, including copies of SS medals, Third Reich flags, items depicting the Celtic cross, belt buckles with the SS insignia and portraits of Hitler.

Nationalist and neo-Nazi public events are organised in Poland. On 11 November 2021, the Independence March, organised by the right-wing nationalist movement of the same name, took place for the eleventh time in Warsaw as part of the Independence Day celebrations. The march included Eurosceptic and anti-Russian slogans. Demonstrators burned the German flag and a portrait of the leader of the opposition liberal Civic Platform (CP) D. Tusk¹⁰³².

On 1 March 2022, in Hajnówka¹⁰³³ (Podlaskie Voivodeship), the seventh March of Remembrance of the "Cursed Soldiers", organised by nationalists, was held in honour of one of them, R. Rais ("Brown"). On the same day, in the town of Peremyshl (Podkarpackie Voivodeship), located near the Polish-Ukrainian border,

¹⁰²⁹ Far-right group can be called "fascist", rules Poland's Supreme Court. Notes from Poland. 28 February 2021. <https://notesfrompoland.com/2021/02/28/far-right-group-can-be-called-fascists-rules-polands-supreme-court/>

¹⁰³⁰ <https://omzrik.pl/czlonkowie-onr-skazani-na-kary-wiezienia>

¹⁰³¹ <https://www.nigdywiecej.org/komunikaty/komunikaty/193-rok-2021/4528-platformy-aukcyjne-kasuja-rasizm>

¹⁰³² "Civic Platform" - Polish liberal party, founded on 19 January 2001, chaired by D. Tusk. It is considered to be the main opposition party in Poland.

¹⁰³³ <https://oko.press/marsz-ku-czci-burego-i-kontrmanifestacje-w-hajnowce-coroczny-wstyd-dla-panstwa-polskiego/>

far-right football fans organised "patrols" to "clear the town"¹⁰³⁴ of refugees from the Middle East, Asia and Africa arriving from Ukraine. Police reported that three Indian nationals were attacked¹⁰³⁵, an Israeli journalist also reported the attack to OKO.press¹⁰³⁶.

On 11 July in Jedwabne¹⁰³⁷, nationalist organisations hold rallies aimed at expressing disagreement that Poles are responsible for crimes against Jews during the Second World War. At the 2021 rally, participants carried banners reading "We do not ask forgiveness for Jedwabne". The leader of the "Independence March" R.Bonkiewicz laid a wreath at the monument to the victims, but in his speech he demanded "truth, investigation and exhumations"¹⁰³⁸. In 2022 Polish nationalists carried traditional banners with slogans "Gross lies" and "We do not ask forgiveness for Jedwabne"¹⁰³⁹. Besides, on the eve of the commemorative date the chairman of the "Independence March" (organised annually on the Independence Day of Poland on November 11) R.Bonkiewicz in the air of "National Media"¹⁰⁴⁰ denied the conclusions of historians about the involvement of Poles in the murder of Jews. In his opinion, Poland "is under pressure from Washington", where "Jews have a great influence"¹⁰⁴¹.

On 11 November 2022, Polish nationalists held another "Independence March", traditionally gathering several hundred participants¹⁰⁴². Previously, the march was repeatedly opposed by the capital's mayor, R.Trzaskowski, who claimed that the organisations behind it had all "signs of fascism". However, as a

¹⁰³⁴ <https://oko.press/szesty-dzien-na-granicy-ogrom-pomocy-fala-rasizmu/>

¹⁰³⁵ <https://wydarzenia.interia.pl/raporty/raport-ukraina-rosja/aktualnosci/news-przemysl-troje-obywateli-indii-pobitych-przez-grupe-mezczyzn.nId,5863607>

¹⁰³⁶ In 1941, a mass murder of Jews took place in Jedwabne. Until 2000, it was believed to have been carried out by the Germans, until the Polish-born American historian J.T. Gross published his book *Sąsiedzi: Historia zagłady żydowskiego miasteczka* (Neighbours: History of the Destruction of a Jewish Village), in which he showed that the pogrom was carried out by Polish residents of Jedwabne. Although the Polish Institute of National Remembrance generally confirmed this version in 2004, there are groups in Poland who do not agree.

¹⁰³⁷ <https://oko.press/narodowcy-w-jedwabnem-w-80-rocznice-pogromu-zydow/>

¹⁰³⁸ <https://jewish.pl/pl/2022/07/11/jedwabne-to-nie-miejsce-na-historyczne-dysputy/>

¹⁰³⁹ An Internet channel created on the YouTube platform by the Independence March organisation. In February 2023, the National Media channel, which had more than 250,000 subscribers, was blocked by the video hosting site. The blocking followed the publication of a report by the NGO Never Again, which concluded that some of National Media's videos contained xenophobic statements.

¹⁰⁴⁰ <https://medianarodowe.com/2022/07/09/bakiewicz-trzeba-zawalczyz-o-prawde-nt-jedwabnego-nasz-wywiad/>

¹⁰⁴¹ <https://time.com/6232840/thousands-join-far-right-march-on-polish-independence-day/>

¹⁰⁴² <https://notesfrompoland.com/2022/11/10/poland-warns-of-putins-provocateurs-at-nationalist-independence-march-in-warsaw/>

rule, his efforts were blocked by the Polish government, as was the case, for example, in 2021¹⁰⁴³. At the march of nationalists in 2022, violence was largely avoided, but according to the statements of the mayor Trzaskowski, anti-Ukrainian and anti-European slogans¹⁰⁴⁴ were heard during the event. According to media reports, the march has become one of the largest gatherings of European far-right forces in recent years¹⁰⁴⁵.

On the same day, a "March of Poles" was also organised in Wrocław (Lower Silesia Voivodeship). According to journalists, its participants carried nationalist slogans, especially anti-Ukrainian slogans¹⁰⁴⁶.

In Kalisz (Wielkopolskie Voivodeship), during a similar "Independence March", the police detained three organisers of the action, who burned a copy of the Kalisz Statute, which guaranteed the rights of Jews in the 13th century. On 3 December 2021, all three were released on bail.

In October 2022, in Białystok (Podlaskie Voivodeship), a campaign (posters) "Orthodox - not Russian" was organised, the aim of which, according to the organisers, was to "protect" Orthodox Poles from the negative perception of the word "Russians", with whom the Orthodox are traditionally identified in Poland. Each photograph on the billboards is accompanied by a text emphasising the identity of the persons depicted as "Orthodox Poles" ("not Russians") or "Orthodox priests" ("not popes"). The campaign organisers said that the presence of Polish Orthodox priests and politicians at events dedicated to the Red Army "is not and should not be considered normal". According to the campaign's initiators, to be labelled a "Russian" (who "rape Ukrainian women" and "kill innocent children") is "the greatest insult"¹⁰⁴⁷ for any "decent" person.

¹⁰⁴³ <https://time.com/6232840/thousands-join-far-right-march-on-polish-independence-day/>

¹⁰⁴⁴ <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/europe/1636821465-poland-chanting-death-to-jews-far-right-activists-burn-book-on-jewish-rights>

¹⁰⁴⁵ <https://wroclaw.wyborcza.pl/wroclaw/7,35771,29133285,rosyjska-propaganda-na-marszu-narodowcow-we-wroclawiu-kim-sa.html>

¹⁰⁴⁶ <https://www.ekai.pl/ruszyla-kampania-prawoslawni-nie-ruski/>

<https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/new-poland-deputy-education-minister-was-member-of-far-right-parties-656852>

¹⁰⁴⁷ https://www.nigdywiecej.org/docstation/com_docstation/64/zachowajmy_solidarnosc_z_uchodzcami_raport.pdf

High-profile cases of right-wing radicals holding public or political office or otherwise openly participating in the public and political life of the country have been uncovered.

In January 2021, T.Zimkowski, who had previously been a member of extreme right-wing political parties, was appointed Deputy Minister of Education of Poland. The media reported that Zimkowski had made "problematic statements" regarding the Holocaust, Jews and other national minorities in Poland¹⁰⁴⁸.

On 22 February 2021, the chairman of the Institute of National Remembrance, J.Szarek, announced the resignation of the acting head of the INP Wrocław branch, T. Greniuch, who had been in office for about two weeks¹⁰⁴⁹. According to Polish media reports, in the past T.Greniuch was an activist of the radical nationalist organisation "National Radical Camp". There are photos of Greniuch raising his hand in a Nazi greeting gesture¹⁰⁵⁰. According to J.Sharek, T.Greniuch "apologised for this act and said repeatedly, many years ago, that it was a mistake"¹⁰⁵¹. Shortly before his resignation on 11 February 2021, the Israeli Embassy in Poland expressed its bewilderment on Twitter, suggesting that T.Greniuch visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau museum¹⁰⁵² whose mission is "to remind the world of the danger of Nazi ideology"¹⁰⁵³.

The activities of national radicals are also confirmed by statistics on racist behaviour and the use of the media to spread hate speech. According to data provided by the Polish National Prosecutor's Office at the request of the OCR, 1,658 racially and religiously motivated offences were registered in 2020 (0.15% of all criminal cases)¹⁰⁵⁴. The majority of cases concerned public insult on national, ethnic, racial or religious grounds (580), propaganda of fascist or other totalitarian

¹⁰⁴⁸ <https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/dla-mediow/komunikaty/138724,Oswiadczenie.html>

¹⁰⁴⁹ <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2021-02-25/tomasz-greniuch-stracil-prace-w-ipn/>

¹⁰⁵⁰ <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/kraj/ipn-dr-tomasz-greniuch-stracil-prace-w-instytucie-pamieci-narodowej/hq7d3tg>

¹⁰⁵¹ The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum (Auschwitz, Małopolskie Voivodeship) was opened in 1947 on the site of the former Nazi death camp.

¹⁰⁵² <https://twitter.com/IsraelinPoland/status/1359892449653571585>

¹⁰⁵³ <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/content/jak-sie-propagowanie-i-pochwakanie-faszyzmu-prokuratura-krajowa-w-koncu-ujawnila-rpo>

¹⁰⁵⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 22nd to 24th periodic reports of Poland. August 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fPOL%2fCO%2f22-24&Lang=ru

system or incitement to hatred - 354 cases, use of violence or threat of violence on racial and religious grounds - 286 cases. According to the prosecutor's office, 622 persons were charged in court, 421 of whom were convicted and 11 of whom were acquitted.

The activity of right-wing radicals in Poland has attracted the attention of international human rights bodies. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) expressed particular concern about the activities of racist organisations in Poland in August 2019¹⁰⁵⁵.

And in April 2021, following its consideration of Poland's information on follow-up to recommendations, the Committee expressed concern about the ineffectiveness of the Polish authorities' measures to combat racist speech. In this context, CERD noted that there was a climate conducive to hate crimes, which in turn was created by impunity for manifestations of intolerance, stigmatisation, discrimination or even incitement to violence. The Committee indicated that the information provided by the Polish authorities on the implementation of recommendations was unsatisfactory and requested Warsaw to include in its next periodic report information on how it ensured the effectiveness of measures taken to combat racist speech and incitement to violence, including measures to ban the activities of organisations and parties promoting racial discrimination¹⁰⁵⁶.

The continuing climate of intolerance, racism and xenophobia in the country was also pointed out by the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in January 2020. It was also noted that representatives of national minorities believe that the reaction of both local and central authorities to speech and acts of violence by extremist groups is insufficient. In their opinion, the attitude of the Polish authorities towards a

¹⁰⁵⁵ Letter from the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to the Permanent Representative of Poland to the UN Office at Geneva 30 April 2021 CERD/103rdsession/FU/MK/ks https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/POL/INT_CERD_FUL_POL_44796_E.pdf

¹⁰⁵⁶ Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Poland, adopted on 6 November 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-poland-en/1680993391>

particular ethnic group depends on Poland's relations with the countries concerned¹⁰⁵⁷.

In February 2021, the European Commission drew attention to irregularities committed by the Polish side in implementing into national law the provisions of EU Council Framework Decision 2008/913/PWD of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and manifestations of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law. In this regard, since 2018 the OCR has on three occasions sent proposals to the Polish Prime Minister M. Morawiecki to develop a comprehensive strategy to counter hate crimes. However, the government's equality representative, referring to the position of the Polish Minister of Justice, stated in a response letter that Polish criminal law contains all necessary mechanisms¹⁰⁵⁸.

As of 2019, the Polish National Prosecutor's Office has stopped publishing statistics on crimes motivated by racial and other intolerance. The authorities explain this by the fact that such documents contain information exclusively for internal official use. According to the latest available data, 1,658 racially and religiously motivated offences were recorded in 2020 (0.15% of all criminal cases)¹⁰⁵⁹. Most cases concerned public insult on national, ethnic, racial or religious grounds (580), propaganda of fascist or other totalitarian system or incitement to hatred (354), use of violence or threat of violence on racial and religious grounds (286). According to the prosecutor's office, 622 persons were charged in court, 421 of whom were convicted and 11 of whom were acquitted.

According to a number of human rights defenders, the cessation of publication of statistics on racist crimes is intended to conceal the sharp increase in such offences. In August 2019, the Committee against Torture, citing a report on a survey on the nature and extent of unreported hate crimes prepared by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Office of

¹⁰⁵⁷ <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/pl/content/mowa-i-przestepstwa-z-nienawisci-polskie-prawo-nie-wymaga-zmian-Pelnomocnik-rzadu-RPO>

¹⁰⁵⁸ <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/pl/content/jak-sciga-sie-propagowanie-i-pochwalanie-faszyzmu-prokuratura-krajowa-w-koncu-ujawnila-rpo>

¹⁰⁵⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the 7th periodic report of Poland. August 2019. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT/C/POL/CO/7&Lang=Ru

the Commissioner for Human Rights, expressed concern about Warsaw's serious underreporting of official statistics on hate crimes and called on Warsaw to take measures to address this situation and to combat manifestations of discrimination on racial, national and other grounds¹⁰⁶⁰.

In 2022, the Polish association of prosecutors "Lex Super Omnia" published a report on the actions of the prosecutor's office with regard to hate crimes in 2016-2022. The report shows that the number of hate crimes has increased since 2016, while the prosecutor's office has "lost the ability" to respond effectively to them. The authors point out that the methodology of countering hate crimes has changed since 2016, in particular, special lectures and conferences are no longer held for prosecutors, and instructions are not updated. In addition, investigations were often discontinued or decisions were made based on recommendations from "above"¹⁰⁶¹. At the same time, according to the authors of the report, the prosecutor's career advancement depended on his/her behaviour.

The passivity of the law enforcement agencies is pointed out by the Polish opposition liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza*. In December 2022, the newspaper's journalists reported on the decision of the district prosecutor's office in Kalisz to stop investigating law enforcement officers who did not prevent participants from shouting anti-Semitic slogans, including "Death to the Jews", during the "Independence March" on 11 November 2021. The prosecutor's office considered that the march "did not violate the provisions of criminal law" and therefore there was no need to stop it¹⁰⁶².

Xenophobia and intolerance towards migrants are on the rise in Poland. Polish and international human rights NGOs attribute this to the coming to power in October 2015 of the national-conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party and its reforms. These trends are confirmed by sociological research data. According to a survey conducted in February 2021 by the Polish Centre for Public Opinion

¹⁰⁶⁰ <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,29281343,naciski-odbieranie-sledztw-umorzenia-jak-prokuratura-chroni.html>

¹⁰⁶¹ <https://kalisz.wyborcza.pl/kalisz/7,181357,29340531,komendant-nie-wie-co-to-polin-tak-prokuratura-ziobry-legalizuje.html>

¹⁰⁶² https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2021/K_030_21.PDF

Research (CBOS)¹⁰⁶³ on Poles' attitudes towards other nationalities and ethnic groups, 42% of Poles dislike Roma. A negative attitude towards Arabs was admitted by 46% of respondents. CBOS emphasises that sympathy for Ukrainians, Belarusians and Jews (43%, 47% and 38% respectively) prevails over dislike (negative attitudes are expressed by 26%, 17% and 29% of respondents). At the same time, compared to March 2020, a decrease in the level of dislike towards Arabs (by 9%), Belarusians (by 8%), Russians and Ukrainians (by 7%) and Jews (by 1%) was registered¹⁰⁶⁴.

The report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus "The Most Resonant Cases of Human Rights Violations in Certain Countries of the World" 2022¹⁰⁶⁵ indicates that migrants and asylum seekers are in a discriminatory situation in Poland.

In the context of the crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border, which began in the summer of 2021, related to attempts by people from the Middle East to enter the EU territory, Warsaw has been criticised by human rights organisations for its categorical unwillingness to let asylum seekers through and to provide them with medical, legal and other assistance. The brutal treatment of refugees by Polish border guards has become publicised. From September to November 2021, the Polish authorities imposed a state of emergency (SOE) in the border area with Belarus in 183 settlements in the Podlaskie and Lubelskie voivodships. On this territory, it was temporarily forbidden to hold mass events, stay of persons not residing in the zone of the state of emergency, photo and video recording by the Polish law enforcement agencies. Representatives of the media, public and humanitarian organisations and independent observers were not allowed into the emergency area. From 1 December 2021 until 30 June 2022, the Ministry of the Interior and the Polish administration issued an order temporarily banning the stay

¹⁰⁶³ https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2021/K_030_21.PDF

¹⁰⁶⁴ Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus "The Most Resonant Cases of Human Rights Violations in Selected Countries of the World" 2022
https://mfa.gov.by/kcfinder/upload/files/22.07.04_report_HR_2.pdf

¹⁰⁶⁵ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/09112022-polskie-siloviki-izbili-bezhentsa-i-zastavili-bosikom-idti-na-territoriyu-belarusi/>

of non-residents in the areas in question, but allowing media access under certain conditions.

On 8 November 2022, Belarusian border guards found a foreigner at their border who had been beaten up by Polish law enforcers. The man, who identified himself as a Syrian citizen, needed medical assistance, warm clothes and shoes. The refugee said that he had been in Poland for three days before he was detained by Polish law enforcement officers and brought to the fence at the border with Belarus. He also explained that Polish law enforcers forced him to pass through the gate, beating him and spraying gas in his face. In addition to the abuse, he was ordered to take off his shoes despite the weather conditions¹⁰⁶⁶.

At the same time, human rights structures ignore the destructive role of Poland in the development of the migration crisis and the excessively harsh attitude of Polish border guards towards illegal migrants. There is no expert assessment of the measures taken by Warsaw to build a wall on the border with Belarus, ostensibly to protect against illegal migration flows, as well as the destructive environmental consequences that they have already led to and will cause in the future (a significant part of these constructions passes through the territory of a unique natural reserve).

It should be noted that this situation had prerequisites. In recent years, the Polish Border Guard Service has often refused to accept applications for international legal protection from foreigners attempting to enter the country. This practice was also applied to Russian citizens.

In August 2021, the Polish government adopted amendments to the 2013 Act on Foreigners and the 2003 Act on the Granting of Protection to Foreigners on Polish Territory. Now, if a foreigner applies for refugee status or political asylum, his or her application may not be considered if the migrant crossed the border illegally or came from a country where he or she was not in danger. Persons arriving from Belarus and Russia fall into the same category. Moreover, these

¹⁰⁶⁶ European Union Agency for fundamental rights. Fundamental rights report. 2022.
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

amendments authorise the border guard to immediately expel migrants who attempt to enter Polish territory bypassing official checkpoints.

The EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights (FRA) noted the critical humanitarian situation on the Polish-Belarusian border, as well as on the Belarusian-Lithuanian and Belarusian-Latvian borders (it is reported that by the end of 2021, 28,000, 8,000 and 4,000 migrants were prevented from entering Poland, Lithuania and Latvia respectively), as well as the legislative amendments adopted by Warsaw authorising the refoulement of migrants¹⁰⁶⁷. According to the AOHR, Poland, along with Croatia, Greece and Hungary, had the highest number of incidents of "pushing out"¹⁰⁶⁸ irregular migrants. In the report for 2023, the AOHR, citing data from the International Organisation for Migration, indicated that in 2022, 9 migrant deaths¹⁰⁶⁹ were recorded at the Polish-Belarusian border.

The problems of migrants at the Polish border were also pointed out by F.González Morales, Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council on the rights of migrants, who visited Poland and Belarus in July 2022 to study this problem. In his statement following his visit¹⁰⁷⁰, he noted the active practice of Polish border guards of refoulement of migrants, preventing them from entering the territory of the country, refusing to consider asylum applications, and excessive use of force against refugees. Women and children also faced such attitudes. Among others, F.González Morales noted that the refoulement of migrants is carried out by Polish border guards in such a way that it is not noticed by the Belarusian border guards. The time of day and weather conditions are not taken into account. He also pointed out that the Polish border guards officially record only the first case of detention and expulsion of an illegal migrant. If such persons

¹⁰⁶⁷ This term refers to a situation in which a person is apprehended after crossing the border illegally and is expeditiously returned to a neighbouring country without regard to his or her motives for crossing the border.

¹⁰⁶⁸ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report on the human rights situation in EU Member States for 2023. http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

¹⁰⁶⁹ ¹⁰⁶⁹ End of visit statement of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Felipe González Morales, on his visit to Poland and Belarus (12 – 25 July 2022). 28 July 2022.

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/migration/2022-07-27/EndofVisitStatement-Poland-Belarus26.07.2022.docx>

¹⁰⁷⁰ Poland: Human rights defenders face threats and intimidation at Belarus border – UN experts. 15 February 2022. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/02/poland-human-rights-defenders-face-threats-and-intimidation-belarus-border>

are detained repeatedly, their detention and refoulement are not recorded in any way. One and the same person can be expelled from the territory of Poland several times, which makes it impossible to obtain objective data on the number of migrants and the number of expulsions.

The Special Rapporteur noted that some migrants remain in the area of the Belarusian-Polish border, which passes through the territory of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha nature reserve, and are subjected to refoulement. In his opinion, the erection of a five-metre high fence with barbed wire by the Polish authorities on the border will not stop migrants from trying to enter Poland, but will only increase the danger for them and aggravate the humanitarian situation in the area between the Polish and Belarusian borders.

In Poland, journalists covering the refugee situation on the country's border are also subjected to harassment. In February 2022, with reference to statements by human rights defenders, this was reported by a UN human rights expert group¹⁰⁷¹. Among other things, it was noted that in November 2021, volunteer interpreter J.Sypiański was subjected to ill-treatment by Polish soldiers. The same happened to journalists M.Moskwa and M.Nabrdalik, who were searched, handcuffed, and scrutinised for photographic film and messages sent on their phones. Journalists O.Kortas and K.Körbel, who were filming a video about the situation of migrants at the border, were also subjected to unjustified harassment by Polish border guards.

In September 2021, two reporters from the French-German TV channel ARTE and a journalist from France Presse were detained by police near the Polish-Belarusian border. All of them claimed that they had entered the emergency zone by mistake. The police seized their computers and mobile phones and detained them. The journalists were released the next day.

At the same time, the attitude towards migrants largely depends on their country of origin. The Polish authorities displayed a brutal attitude towards people from the Middle East and North Africa. In addition to obstacles in crossing the

¹⁰⁷¹ Ibid.

Polish border, those migrants who do enter Polish territory are often held in specialised closed centres for foreigners run by the Polish Border Guard Service. The conditions of stay there are unsatisfactory.

The dismal state of such institutions is also recognised by Polish officials. The Deputy Commissioner for Civil Rights (DCR) of Poland, H.Machinska, speaking in February 2022 before the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, reported a "humanitarian catastrophe" in closed centres for foreigners in Poland. According to her, the conditions in such centres are worse than in prisons: 25 people are accommodated in one room, there is about two square metres of space per person (while the standard in Polish prisons is three square metres), toilets are outside hundreds of metres from the living quarters. There is a low level of medical and psychological care. Asylum seekers also face difficulties due to lack of language skills and lack of translation support.

In particular, the HRC Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrants, F.González Morales, spoke of double standards with regard to refugees. While noting the generally positive situation with the reception of Ukrainian refugees in Poland, the Special Rapporteur nevertheless pointed out the different attitude of the Polish authorities towards Ukrainian citizens and people from other countries, including migrants arriving from Ukraine who had applied for asylum there. The Special Rapporteur could not fail to point out the difference in the organisation of refugee reception. Thus, it was noted that Ukrainian citizens in Poland were accommodated not in special centres for foreigners, but mainly in private homes of Polish citizens. To receive Ukrainians, the Polish authorities deployed primary reception centres, catering and medical assistance points. They were provided with free travel by rail and bus to other parts of Poland and even to neighbouring countries¹⁰⁷².

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However, discrimination against this category of refugees has also been increasingly recorded recently. The NGO "Never Again" noted acts of racially motivated violence against black refugees from Ukraine, attempts of extortion and fraud under the pretext of providing assistance, cases of denial of assistance to refugees because of their nationality and religious (Orthodox) affiliation, preventing Ukrainian children from accessing education, as well as cases of organising xenophobic meetings and demonstrations, including in places of religious worship¹⁰⁷³.

AOHR indicated that between February and April 2022, NGOs recorded 82 cases of discrimination against people from Ukraine in Poland, including hate speech and aggression¹⁰⁷⁴.

In September 2022, the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma published a report on the situation of Roma refugees from Ukraine in Poland. The authors of the report drew attention to cases of discrimination against Roma from Ukraine by Polish volunteers at the border and in aid centres, Ukrainian refugees in Poland, and representatives of Polish local authorities. For example, the report cites the example of a deputy of the city council of Peremyshl (Podkarpackie Voivodeship) who posted information on his social media page that Roma from Ukraine were allegedly coming to Poland to receive financial assistance.

The AOHR also recognised discriminatory attitudes towards Ukrainian Roma refugees. Among other things, it noted that private citizens refused to host Ukrainian Roma. Moreover, Ukrainian Roma have encountered discriminatory attitudes towards themselves and their compatriots¹⁰⁷⁵ in the reception and registration centres for refugees.

The situation with Ukrainian refugees is also a source of discontent for Polish nationalist forces. Also in September 2022, the nationalist party Confederation of the Polish Crown held a demonstration under the slogan "No to

¹⁰⁷³ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report on the human rights situation in EU Member States for 2023. http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

¹⁰⁷⁴ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report on the human rights situation in EU Member States for 2023. http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

¹⁰⁷⁵ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/24092022-v-varshave-proshla-demonstratsiya-protiv-ukrainizatsii-polshi/>

the Ukrainianisation of Poland". About 200 people with Polish flags and banners reportedly took part. Protest leaders pointed to the current threats they believe the mass influx of Ukrainian citizens into Poland poses. The nationalists said that Poland has legal norms that privilege Ukrainians over Poles. In addition, the organisers of the demonstration stressed that the Polish government turns a blind eye to the manifestations of Banderaism and the negative attitude of Ukrainians towards Poland and Poles¹⁰⁷⁶.

Such accusations appear to be unfounded. On 7 November 2022, it became known that a Ukrainian cuisine restaurant called Chervona Kalina was being set up in Krakow to employ refugees from Ukraine. Due to criticism in social networks because of the association of this name with the song of the same name - the unofficial anthem of the UPA (an organisation banned in Russia), the owners changed the name of the establishment to "Ukrainian"¹⁰⁷⁷.

A high level of anti-Semitism is still recorded in Poland. According to the Ministry of Interior and Administration of Poland, the level of anti-Semitism in the country increased significantly from 30 registered incidents in 2010 to 179 in 2018, and then slightly decreased to 128 incidents¹⁰⁷⁸. It should also be noted that the fact that anti-Semitic attitudes are spreading in the country is recognised in Polish society itself. According to data cited in the 2018 study by the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights "Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism" on the results of a survey on discrimination and hatred towards Jews in the European Union, 89% of Polish respondents of Jewish origin consider racism in the country to be "a very big problem".

About half of the respondents said that they had encountered some form of anti-Semitism in the last five years. 70 per cent of non-Jewish respondents said that "Jews have too much power in Poland". However, they recognised that the level of anti-Semitism has increased significantly over the last five years. At the same time,

¹⁰⁷⁶ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/07112022-v-polshe-ukrainskiy-restoran-smenil-nazvanie-iz-za-assotsiatsiy-s-upa/>

¹⁰⁷⁷ Review by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights of manifestations of anti-Semitism in EU countries 2009-2019 https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-antisemitism-overview-2009-2019_en.pdf

¹⁰⁷⁸ Experiences and perceptions of Antisemitism second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-experiences-and-perceptions-of-antisemitism-survey_en.pdf

Poland has the highest level of distrust of the authorities' actions in this area: 91 per cent of respondents considered the Polish authorities' efforts to combat anti-Semitism insufficient and ineffective¹⁰⁷⁹. In its review of anti-Semitism in the EU area, the AOHR indicated that in 2020-2021 there is an increasing trend of anti-Semitic incidents in Poland (89 and 111 registered cases respectively)¹⁰⁸⁰. According to a study by the NGO Anti-Defamation League, the proportion of the population recognised as anti-Semitic in Poland is as high as 48%¹⁰⁸¹.

These indicators are manifested in practice. Anti-Semitic rhetoric was heard during the campaign ahead of the 2020 presidential election. In July 2020, the leader of the ruling PiS party, J.Kaczynski, in an interview with a Polish Catholic publication, accused Duda's opponent, Warsaw Mayor R.Trzaskowski, of supporting the idea of compensating Polish Jews for property lost during World War II¹⁰⁸². The criticism was picked up by Polish state TV channels.

In July 2020, Commissioner for Civil Rights (OCR) Adam Bodnar referred to the chairman of the National Broadcasting and Television Council a request for action against hate speech and anti-Semitism in the media. The OCR referred to the statement of journalist R.Zemkiewicz during the programme "W tyle wizji" in TVP Info on 23 June 2020, who, according to the OCR, placed the responsibility for the Holocaust on the Jews themselves, stating: "... it was not Poles who put Jews in wagons, caught them, escorted them out of the ghettos, but other Jews, the Jewish police, on the basis of lists drawn up by the Jewish Judenrat¹⁰⁸³, who managed it all"¹⁰⁸⁴. Based on the results of the investigation, the National Council of Radio Broadcasting and Television concluded that the opinion expressed by

¹⁰⁷⁹ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights review of anti-Semitism in the EU 2011-2021

http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-antisemitism-overview-2011-2021_en.pdf.

¹⁰⁸⁰ ADL. Poland. 2019. <https://global100.adl.org/country/poland/2019>

¹⁰⁸¹ Poland has not yet adopted a law on the return of real estate to Polish Jews. The Polish authorities point out that Polish Jews were citizens before the war and that they and their heirs can justify their claims in the national courts.

¹⁰⁸² Judenrat - during World War II, an administrative body of Jewish self-government, which, at the initiative of the German occupation authorities, was forcibly established in each ghetto to enforce Nazi orders concerning Jews.

¹⁰⁸³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFxDMzIlfas>

¹⁰⁸⁴ <https://www.rpo.gov.pl/sites/default/files/Odpowied%C5%BA%20KRRiT%2C10.09.2020.pdf>

R.Zemkiewicz did not violate the "Law on Radio Broadcasting and Television" of 29 December 1992¹⁰⁸⁵.

The adoption of amendments to the Polish Code of Administrative Procedure by the Polish Parliament on 24 June 2021 is indicative of the attitude of the Polish authorities to the problem of anti-Semitism. These amendments provide that, after 30 years from the date of a court judgement in an administrative case, it is impossible to challenge it. The novelty concerns, among other things, proceedings concerning property lost during and after the war (nationalised or escheated)¹⁰⁸⁶. The Polish authorities' actions drew criticism from Israel's foreign ministry and also sharpened the debate within the country, once again confirming the existence of strong anti-Semitic sentiments. On 30 June 2021, the nationalist organisation "All-Polish Youth", which does not support the restitution demands of the Polish Jewish community, reported on its Twitter page that it held a protest action in front of the Israeli Embassy in Poland, dumping construction waste and placing on it the inscription "Here is your property"¹⁰⁸⁷.

In April 2022, the far-right media group Magna Polonia republished an anti-Semitic book, "Meet the Jew", which describes Jews as a "parasitic tribe". The book, written by Polish publicist and conservative T. Jeske-Hoinski, was first published in 1912. The nationalist YouTube channel Media Narodowe discussed the book with one of the leaders of Magna Polonia, P. Golocher. This is not the first time the channel publishes such content. On this YouTube channel there is more than one video with anti-Semitic content and relevant titles (e.g. "This Jew is still harming Poland", "Jews ruining the Polish Academy" and "[President] Duda will return Poland to the Jews?")¹⁰⁸⁸.

It is also noteworthy that such nationalist structures are funded directly by the Polish authorities. For example, Media Narodowe is published by the Polish

¹⁰⁸⁵ Including "Jewish property" in Poland - private property owned by Jews and taken away by the Nazis during World War II and nationalised in the post-war period - falls under this category.

¹⁰⁸⁶ <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2021-07-02/mlodziez-wszechpolska-wsypala-tone-gruzu-pod-ambasada-izraela-oto-wasze-mienie/>

¹⁰⁸⁷ <https://notesfrompoland.com/2022/04/25/polish-state-funded-nationalist-media-outlet-promotes-antisemitic-book/>

¹⁰⁸⁸ <https://notesfrompoland.com/2022/04/25/polish-state-funded-nationalist-media-outlet-promotes-antisemitic-book/>

Independence March Association, which organises the annual nationalist march of the same name in Warsaw on Independence Day on 11 November. In 2021, the organisation received a grant of PLN 1.3 million (equivalent to 280,000 euros) from the "Patriotic Fund" established by the government and overseen by the Ministry of Culture. Media Narodowe itself also received a grant of PLN 198,000 for 2021 and 2022 from the National Institute for Freedom (a body set up by the government in 2017 to support civil society)¹⁰⁸⁹.

Polish authorities, meanwhile, reject apparent public criticism of their support for nationalist associations. In a statement issued in response to an enquiry by the newspaper Rzeczpospolita about an anti-Semitic book distributed by Media Narodowe, the Polish Ministry of Culture said that all applications for Patriotic Fund grants are assessed by experts according to the relevant criteria and solely on the basis of the content of the applications themselves.

It should also be noted that such actions of the authorities do not enjoy the support of the entire Polish society. For example, after the information about the grant to the Independence March Association was made public, more than 160 public figures in the country supported an open letter to the Polish Minister of Culture calling on him to "stop financing fascism"¹⁰⁹⁰.

Acts of vandalism against Jewish cemeteries and religious sites also continue. In particular, at the end of January, unknown persons painted swastika signs and SS runes on the walls of the Jewish cemetery in Auschwitz, located near the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial and museum, which was established on the site of the infamous concentration camp. On 26 June, three teenagers vandalised 67 tombstones at the Jewish cemetery in Bielsko-Biała (Małopolskie Voivodeship). The burning of a copy of the Kalisz Statute during a procession of nationalists in Kalisz on Independence Day on 11 November should also be included among the manifestations of anti-Semitism¹⁰⁹¹.

¹⁰⁸⁹ <https://notesfrompoland.com/2021/06/30/stop-financing-fascism-polish-public-figures-tell-culture-minister-after-grants-to-far-right-groups/>

¹⁰⁹⁰ Swastika, SS symbol painted on wall of Jewish cemetery near Auschwitz. The Times of Israel. 12 January 2021. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/swastika-ss-symbol-painted-on-wall-of-jewish-cemetery-near-auschwitz/>

¹⁰⁹¹ <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/europe/1636821465-poland-chanting-death-to-jews-far-right->

On 27 August 2022, an American citizen, leader of an organisation of aggressive anti-Semitic provocateurs spreading anti-Semitism in a number of American states, J. Minadeo organised an offensive action on the territory of the former Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp by taking a photograph with an anti-Semitic poster and then posting it on his social media account. According to media reports, he was detained. During his stay in Poland, Minadeo also published videos in which he raised his hand in a Nazi salute and insulted a man of Asian origin¹⁰⁹².

The situation of Roma continues to be difficult, as they face discrimination in employment, renting housing, access to banking services, as well as in the social and educational spheres (the low attendance of Roma children, especially girls, in primary and secondary schools is particularly frequently mentioned). These issues were raised by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2019, the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities¹⁰⁹³ and the Committee on the Rights of the Child in September 2021¹⁰⁹⁴. The EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights in its 2022 report drew attention to clashes between Poles and Roma in Melec, and also noted that the small Roma community in Maszkowice municipality lives in inadequate housing conditions¹⁰⁹⁵.

[activists-burn-book-on-jewish-rights](#)

¹⁰⁹² <https://www.timesofisrael.com/notorious-us-antisemite-arrested-in-poland-over-offensive-banner-at-auschwitz/>

¹⁰⁹³ Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Poland, adopted on 6 November 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-poland-en/1680993391>

¹⁰⁹⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Poland. September 2021. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/361/07/PDF/G2136107.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁰⁹⁵ European Union Agency for fundamental rights. Fundamental rights report. 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

Portugal

During the Second World War official Lisbon adhered to a policy of neutrality, there were no hostilities in the country. At the same time, the local population has been influenced by the ideology of Nazism and racial superiority through the prism of the dictatorial regime of Salazar-Caetano, which existed in the country since the mid-thirties of the twentieth century until April 25, 1974, when the democratic "carnation revolution" took place.

The Portuguese leadership does not question the fact that Nazi Germany unleashed the war and has made certain attempts to preserve the memory of the events of those years. For example, in 2021 the Holocaust Museum was opened in Porto.

Due to a lack of the general public interest in the topic of neo-Nazism, the use of Nazi slogans and symbols during rallies often goes unnoticed in the country. The actions by Ukrainian nationalists nearby the Russian Embassy in Lisbon and in the central squares of cities are easily agreed upon with local municipal administrations. There is no control over the use of Nazi paraphernalia during them.

According to Portuguese law enforcement authorities, a number of extreme right-wing movements and organisations have been active in the country in recent years. These include Group 1143, Aryan Brotherhood, Portuguese Order, National Front, Hammerskins-Portugal and National Renewal Party. The New Social Order is the largest and most active.

Most far-right associations do not have a clear structure. They may periodically disintegrate and regroup among themselves.

In March 2022, members of the New Public Order and National Front associations announced that they were heading to Ukraine to take part in military actions on the side of Ukrainian units with far-right and neo-Nazi ideology. According to independent investigations by the Portuguese media, some of them succeeded in doing so, although they often did not disclose their real names.

In June 2022, 21 members of the far-right organisation Hammerskins Portugal were sentenced. They were found guilty of offences motivated by discriminatory attitudes, including racial and religious intolerance. Some of the offences, including attempted murder and causing serious harm to health, were committed 6-7 years ago. Seven of the convicted persons are serving their sentences in penitentiary institutions.

In January 2023, the Office of the Attorney General of the Portuguese Republic convicted a seventeen-year-old Lisbon resident, a member of the international far-right organisation National Guerrilla Movement, of cyberattacking an online event of the Camoensa Lyceum on racism, which took place in February 2021. Law enforcement authorities labelled the showing of an offensive video to participants in the colloquium, mainly students of African descent, as incitement to hatred and incitement to violence on the grounds of race (Article 240 of the Portuguese Penal Code).

In 2022, Portugal, following general guidelines within the EU, voted for the first time in the UN General Assembly against the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", introduced annually by the Russian Federation and other co-sponsors (it had previously abstained, like other EU states). Moreover, in 2023, the document, traditionally approved by the Assembly of the Republic on the eve of International Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January), for the first time does not mention the role of the Red Army in liberating the Auschwitz concentration camp.

In 2022, the dissemination of right-wing views among Portuguese law enforcement officials became public. Racist messages calling for violence were found on the social media of nearly six hundred members of the Public Order Police and the National Republican Guard. The Inspectorate-General of the Internal Administration has announced the launch of an investigation into the matter. The Minister of Internal Administration, J.L. Carneiro, during a

parliamentary hearing on the subject, denied that far-right elements had deliberately infiltrated the Portuguese security services¹⁰⁹⁶.

A 2023 report by the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights (FRA) documented several cases of racist and xenophobic violence by police officers. The first case involved seven law enforcement officials who beat migrants from Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. At the time of the publication of the FRA study, they were preparing to appear in court. In the second case, which was also scheduled for trial, three police officers were accused of assaulting a woman of African descent, K. Simoinsh, in 2020. The third case also involved physical aggression by two law enforcement officers against a black man. In August 2022, the police launched an investigation into the case¹⁰⁹⁷.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), which operates within the Council of Europe, highlighted concerns that some law enforcement officials sympathise with extremists and sometimes even join their groups, as early as June 2018¹⁰⁹⁸.

Nevertheless, according to recent estimates by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD, May 2023), such investigations are not properly conducted in Portugal and impunity of law enforcement officials remains a widespread problem. The Committee was also concerned about reports of racial profiling, violence and ill-treatment on the grounds of racial intolerance, abuse of authority and excessive use of force against members of ethnic minorities and migrants, in particular Roma, Africans, people of African descent¹⁰⁹⁹. Earlier, in April 2020, the experts of the Human Rights Committee made similar comments on this issue, noting also reports of insufficient training of police officers seconded

¹⁰⁹⁶ Carneiro garante que não há infiltração “intencional” da extrema-direita na PSP e GNR. Público. 6 December 2022.

<http://www.publico.pt/2022/12/06/politica/noticia/carneiro-garante-nao-ha-infiltracao-intencional-extremadireita-psp-gnr-2030398>

¹⁰⁹⁷ EU Agency Fundamental Rights Report 2023.

http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

¹⁰⁹⁸ ECRI Report on Portugal (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 19 June 2018, published on 2 October 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-portugal/16808de7da>

¹⁰⁹⁹ Concluding observations of Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eighteenth and nineteenth periodic reports of Portugal. May 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FPRT%2FCO%2F18-19&Lang=ru

to areas with a high density of ethnic minorities¹¹⁰⁰.

CERD also noted the difficulties encountered by victims of such offences in accessing justice for financial reasons, even though free legal aid is available in Portugal¹¹⁰¹.

According to a study by the Centre for Social Sciences of the University of Coimbra, "Fighting racism in Portugal: an analysis of public policies and anti-discrimination legislation", 75% of racism cases against security personnel were left unmoved in the 10 years preceding its implementation¹¹⁰². Thus, only less than 30% of them were referred to the prosecutor's office for further consideration. At the same time, none of them resulted in an actual conviction.

In February 2020, demonstrations were held in Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra by a number of organisations opposed to racism and violence by law enforcement agencies, involving more than 700 people. During the march, calls were made for the authorities to publicise the results of the investigation into the police actions launched by the Portuguese Ministry of Internal Administration. In this context, reference was made to various examples of arbitrary law enforcement officers, the most high profile of which led to the death of a Cape Verdian student in Bragança on 31 December 2019.

The study of discriminatory practices in Portuguese judicial proceedings, launched in 2018, continues. The study on discriminatory practices in Portuguese judicial proceedings, launched in 2018 by the Justice Research Centre of the University of Minho (Braga), continues. Judges are being interviewed and the texts of the court decisions are being analysed. As a result of the work carried out, it became evident that in procedural documents they often resort to unflattering and negative characterisations of certain social groups. Some ironic comments are

¹¹⁰⁰ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the fifth periodic report of Portugal. April 2020. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fPRT%2fCO%2f15-17&Lang=ru

¹¹⁰¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eighteenth and nineteenth periodic reports of Portugal. May 2023. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FPRT%2FCO%2F18-19&Lang=ru

¹¹⁰² Combating racism in Portugal: an analysis of public policies and antidiscrimination law. Centre for Social Sciences of the University of Coimbra. <https://combat.ces.uc.pt>

made about members of religious minorities, in particular Muslims. The results of the project, called "Inclusive Courts", are published on a specially created free-access Internet portal¹¹⁰³.

At the same time, Portugal declares combat against manifestations of intolerance at the official level. The Constitution of the country, as well as laws No. 134/99 of August 28, 1999 and No. 93/2017 of August 23, 2017, prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin. There is a national Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination. In 2022, it received 491 complaints and issued five judgements, one of which was subsequently challenged in court. The majority of complaints relate to violations of the rights of Brazilians and Roma, as well as discrimination on the basis of skin colour¹¹⁰⁴.

With regard to the assessments of the work of the Commission by independent experts, CERD, while noting the increase in the number of complaints brought before the Commission, expressed concern at the low number of investigations and resulting judgements¹¹⁰⁵.

In 2021 the Portuguese government approved the National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination. Portugal thus became the first EU country to develop a program within the European Commission's 2020-2025 Action Plan against Racism. In March 2023, the Centre for the Study of Racism and Xenophobia was established by the authorities in cooperation with local universities. Its main objective is to collect and analyse data in order to make balanced decisions to combat hate speech and actions.

In submitting to CERD the combined eighteenth and nineteenth periodic reports on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the delegation of official Lisbon reported

¹¹⁰³ <http://inclusivecourts.pt>

¹¹⁰⁴ Queixas por discriminação racial aumentam em Portugal. Expresso. 3 March 2023.

<http://expresso.pt/sociedade/2023-03-03-Queixas-por-discriminacao-racial-aumentam-em-Portugal-f4d5dc21>

¹¹⁰⁵ Concluding observations of Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eighteenth and nineteenth periodic reports of Portugal. May 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FPRT%2FCO%2F18-19&Lang=ru

on the work under way in the State to amend article 240 of the Portuguese Penal Code. Nevertheless, the Committee remains concerned that the existing regulation does not fulfil the requirements set out in article 4 of the said international treaty. Thus, the scope of application of the above-mentioned article 240 of the Portuguese Penal Code covers only propaganda activities, while the promotion of or incitement to racial discrimination by public authorities, at both national and local levels, remains outside its scope. Another traditional cause for criticism by the international monitoring body is the low rate of prosecutions and convictions, as well as the lack of statistical data on the outcome of cases of racial discrimination under this article¹¹⁰⁶.

In practice, cases of discrimination, harassment and violence against ethnic and religious minorities, including people of African descent and Roma, as well as migrants, are frequently reported in Portugal. CERD experts attribute the State's racial stereotyping and intolerance to the country's colonial and slave-owning past¹¹⁰⁷.

This conclusion is confirmed by a Harvard University project that measures the level of racism in a State by testing its inhabitants for prejudice against people of another race, according to which Portugal still has problems in this area today¹¹⁰⁸. At the same time, according to the statistics of the European Social Survey, this state has the highest percentage of the population that believes in the superiority of some races over others in terms of intelligence - 52.9% (European average - 29.2%)¹¹⁰⁹.

It is noteworthy that at the same time, Portugal is supposedly one of the most tolerant countries in Europe, according to the Eurobarometer project's "Integration of Immigrants in the European Union" survey, due out at the end of 2021¹¹¹⁰.

The Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection

¹¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*

¹¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

¹¹⁰⁸ Project Implicit.

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatouchtest.html>

¹¹⁰⁹ <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>

¹¹¹⁰ EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion.

<https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/>

of National Minorities (AC FCNM) under the Council of Europe, note that the Portuguese still perceive their society as homogeneous and monolingual. The official authorities, on the one hand, recognize the existence of cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic diversity which includes a significant number of Roma living for at least five hundred years in the country, as well as the existence of a small community of people who speak the Mirandese language, in Miranda do Douro and the surrounding area. On the other hand, the authorities simultaneously maintain that there are no national minorities in Portugal. As a result, the contents of the Framework Convention is not brought to the attention of persons who might have an interest in protecting their rights thereunder.¹¹¹¹.

In January 2023, a group of teenagers attacked a Nepalese national in Olyan. The police detained three students. The President of the Republic, M. Rebelo de Souza, visited the victim immediately after the incident and condemned the "unacceptable act of xenophobia and intolerance". According to the head of state, "there is nothing to justify this inhuman, anti-democratic and criminal behaviour, which cannot be accepted in Portuguese society"¹¹¹².

In February 2023, a fire in an uninhabited building in a neighbourhood of Lisbon killed two migrants who were staying there and seriously injured fourteen others. In this regard, M. Rebelo de Sousa recalled that "at a time when the Portuguese economy needs foreign nationals due to labour shortages, the importance of ensuring decent living conditions for them cannot be underestimated"¹¹¹³. The opposition Social Democratic Party and "Enough!" called for greater control of the migrant flow in the wake of the incident, in particular the introduction of quotas for the entry of migrants¹¹¹⁴. The leader of the "Enough!"

¹¹¹¹ Fourth opinion of Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Portugal, adopted 28 June 2019, published 27 January 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-portugal-en/1680998662>

¹¹¹² Silêncio cúmplice com a grave situação de muitos imigrantes é racismo e xenofobia. Público. 11 February 2023.

<https://www.publico.pt/2023/02/11/politica/opiniao/silencio-cumplisce-grave-situacao-imigrantes-racismo-xenofobia-2038405>

¹¹¹³ *ibid.*

¹¹¹⁴ Montenegro defende que Portugal deve receber imigrantes «de forma regulada». Observador. 9 February 2023. <https://observador.pt/2023/02/09/montenegro-defende-que-portugal-deve-receber-imigrantes-de-forma-regulada/amp/>

movement A. Ventura, while agreeing that the country needs foreign workers, said it was necessary to carefully analyse the risks that different migrant groups could bring in the face of the recent increase in the threat of Islamist extremism¹¹¹⁵.

In April 2023, the first general manifestation of several associations of the Roma community took place to draw the attention of the country's leadership to its problems¹¹¹⁶. Letras Nómadas, an NGO established in 2013, reported that it considers insufficient the government's measures to address the situation of this group. In particular, processes to ensure access to housing, health care, education and the labour market are slow¹¹¹⁷. This is confirmed by the AOHR's 2022 report, according to which 96% of Roma live below the poverty line and 62% feel discriminated against¹¹¹⁸.

Universal and regional human rights monitoring bodies¹¹¹⁹ have repeatedly noted that the Roma community in Portugal faces direct and indirect discrimination in virtually all spheres of life. A large number of its members live in substandard conditions in informal settlements in huts or tents, often in remote areas with little or no access to drinking water, sewerage, electricity, or transport. In addition, many Roma are not eligible for social housing under the Special Resettlement Program, as applicants were identified on the basis of the 1993 census of informal

¹¹¹⁵ André Ventura volta a desafiar PSD para um "consenso" sobre imigração e inclui Iniciativa Liberal. Observador. 18 February 2023.

<https://observador.pt/2023/02/18/andre-ventura-volta-a-desafiar-psd-para-um-consenso-sobre-imigracao-e-exclui-iniciativa-liberal/amp/>

¹¹¹⁶ As comunidades ciganas estão em protesto e querem mais nos processos de integração. Expresso. 12 April 2023. <https://expresso.pt/sociedade/2023-04-11-As-comunidades-ciganas-estao-em-protesto-e-querem-mais-nos-processos-de-integracao-2f67280b>

¹¹¹⁷ Comunidade denuncia racismo apesar da maior abertura política. Jornal de notícias. 18 January 2023. <https://www.jn.pt/nacional/canal/forum-da-sustentabilidade-e-sociedade/amp/comunidade-denuncia-racismo-apesar-da-maior-abertura-politica-15682464.html>

¹¹¹⁸ EU Agency Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

¹¹¹⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fourth periodic report of Portugal. November 2014.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fPRT%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru;

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the fifteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of Portugal. December 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fPRT%2fCO%2f15-17&Lang=ru;

Fourth opinion of Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention

for the Protection of National Minorities on Portugal, adopted 28 June 2019, published 27 January 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-portugal-en/1680998662;>

Roma settlements.¹¹²⁰ As a result, many of them continue to live in slums or in crowded conditions, with several families living in the same apartment, often with no access to electricity or sanitary and hygienic facilities¹¹²¹. This leads, among other things, to a lower life expectancy among the Roma compared to the rest of the population¹¹²².

As noted in the 2022 FRA report, the implementation of the National Strategy for the Inclusion of the Roma Community (2013-2022) failed to improve the housing conditions of the majority of the Roma community¹¹²³.

Such living conditions are one of the reasons why the vast majority of Roma children living in these areas leave school after the fifth grade at the age of only 10-12 years without obtaining professional qualifications¹¹²⁴. The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)¹¹²⁵ and AC FCNM¹¹²⁶ have also expressed concern over the poor school enrolment, while the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) added that dropout and underachievement rates among Roma remained higher¹¹²⁷. Many of them are still enrolled in segregated schools or classes and subject to discrimination. Supporting traditional Romani livelihoods, such as street trading, is becoming increasingly difficult due to tightened regulations¹¹²⁸.

1120 Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fourth periodic report of Portugal. November 2014.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FPRT%2FCO%2F4&Lang=ru

1121 ECRI Report on Portugal (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 19 June 2018, published on 2 October 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-portugal/16808de7da>

¹¹²² Fourth opinion of Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Portugal, adopted 28 June 2019, published 27 January 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-portugal-en/1680998662>

¹¹²³ EU Agency Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

1124 Ibid.

1125 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Portugal. September 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FPRT%2FCO%2F5-6&Lang=ru

¹¹²⁶ Fourth opinion of Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Portugal, adopted 28 June 2019, published 27 January 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-portugal-en/1680998662>

¹¹²⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fifth periodic report of Portugal. March 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FPRT%2FCO%2F5&Lang=ru

1128 ECRI Report on Portugal (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 19 June 2018, published on 2 October 2018.

In its 2018 report, ECRI recommended that the authorities ensure compulsory school attendance for Roma children until they reach the age of 18.

Reporting on the implementation of this recommendation, the Portuguese authorities provided ECRI with statistics showing that school enrolment rates have increased at all stages of education. The best dynamics was demonstrated by the age group between 13 and 15 years old – pupils studying in forms 7-9: in academic year 2018/2019, their number increased by 4.5% as compared to academic year 2016/2017. The grades of children in this age group also improved¹¹²⁹.

According to the Secretariat of State for Equality and Immigration, in 2022 the Portuguese authorities allocated 120 scholarships for pupils in the third cycle of basic and secondary education through the "ROMA Educa" programme, which aims to reduce school dropout among Roma, and 39 scholarships in higher education through the "OPRE" programme in cooperation with the NGO "Letters from Nomads". The Portuguese Government is also committed to developing a new plan for the integration of the Roma community.

However, according to ECRI, enrolment rates for secondary and high school pupils are still low at 18.6% and 2.6% respectively. Hence, the Commission concluded only partial implementation of the previously given recommendation¹¹³⁰.

In addition to the above, in 2022, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern about the low level of education of Roma girls. Among the reasons why they are forced to drop out of school, experts cited child and/or forced marriage and early pregnancy, which in many cases are ignored by the authorities¹¹³¹.

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-portugal/16808de7da>

¹¹²⁹ ECRI Conclusions on the implementation of the recommendations in respect of Portugal subject to interim follow-up. Adopted on 30 March 2021, published on 18 May 2021.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a27d88>

¹¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹¹³¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 10th periodic report of Portugal. July 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fPRT%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru

CESCR's concluding observations express concern about the rights of another vulnerable group of the Portuguese population, Africans and people of African descent, in the field of education. Their failure and dropout rates are also quite high. At the same time, it is noted that reorienting such students towards vocational education may create formal and informal barriers to their access to higher education¹¹³². Similar concerns were raised by experts from the UN Human Rights Council Working Group on People of African Descent, which visited Portugal in December 2021.¹¹³³

They also noted cases of ill-treatment of black citizens by law enforcement officials and racially motivated physical and verbal violence against them¹¹³⁴.

The murder of black actor Bruno Cande in July 2020 caused a wide public outcry. The racism-driven crime was committed by a 76-year-old colonial war veteran.

Racist rhetoric is heard from numerous Portuguese football fan clubs and the skinhead movement. In February 2020, Moussa Marega, Malian player of the Porto football club, was forced to leave the pitch during the match due to shouting insults at him by the fans.

Human rights activists note that there are no programs in the country that directly address the issues of people of African descent. Among other things, they express concern that school textbooks may illustrate them in a discriminatory or stereotypical way¹¹³⁵.

According to the ECRI report, unemployment rate is much higher among people of African descent (33% in 2015), they are thrice more likely to take jobs that do not match their qualifications, and earn an average of 103 euros less per

¹¹³² Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fifth periodic report of Portugal. March 2023.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FPRT%2FCO%2F5&Lang=ru

¹¹³³ Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent. August 2022.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fPRT%2fCO%2f15-17&Lang=ru

¹¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹¹³⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the fifteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of Portugal. December 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fPRT%2fCO%2f15-17&Lang=ru

month. They often work without employment contracts, which is fraught with exploitation risks. Very few of them hold public office¹¹³⁶.

Some people of African descent were resettled as part of social housing programs that started in the 1990s. However, in practice this led to spatial segregation, as the main construction took place away from urban centres. All this said, migrants who arrived after the 1991 census that served the basis of these programs, were left behind still living in slums or areas with utterly substandard housing under the constant threat of forced eviction without prior notification, having no possibility to obtain either legal remedies or decent housing from the authorities¹¹³⁷.

CESCR is also concerned that the dismantling of social housing and the relocation of people of African descent and their families to the periphery of cities may lead to their exclusion from livelihoods¹¹³⁸.

This population group bears the burden of discriminatory attitudes not only in terms of access to education, work or housing. Problems also arise in the areas of health, social security and political participation. According to the concluding observations of CERD, Africans and people of African descent are the most frequent victims of multiple and intersectional discrimination¹¹³⁹.

Cases of intolerance against people of Asian origin have been recorded, a significant number of which occurred at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic.

In addition, the spread of COVID-19 in the country and the measures taken in this regard have resulted in an increase in poverty, especially among the most

1136 ECRI Report on Portugal (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 19 June 2018, published on 2 October 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-portugal/16808de7da>

1137 Ibid.

¹¹³⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fifth periodic report of Portugal. March 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FPRT%2FCO%2F5&Lang=ru

¹¹³⁹ Concluding observations of Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eighteenth and nineteenth periodic reports of Portugal. May 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FPRT%2FO%2F18-19&Lang=ru

vulnerable groups of national minorities¹¹⁴⁰.

Brazilians are the largest group of victims of discrimination on the grounds of nationality or origin in Portugal¹¹⁴¹.

There are no statistics on the number of incidents of hate speech on the Internet, but the ECRI report points to hundreds of posts on far-right Internet forums aimed at inciting hatred against the above-mentioned groups. Only some of the media outlets moderate comments before publication on their sites and screen out those containing hate speech¹¹⁴².

CESCR in March 2023 and CERD in May 2023 noted an increased level of intolerance and hate speech during the reporting period, including on the Internet and in the media, sports and speeches by political and other public figures. These include manifestations of xenophobia, Afrophobia, anti-Gypsyism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. At the same time, insults and threats, including threats of physical violence, are received not only against representatives of ethnic minorities themselves, but also against human rights defenders, social activists and journalists involved in efforts to combat racism and racial discrimination¹¹⁴³.

After the Russian Federation launched a special military operation to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine, discriminatory manifestations against the Russian-speaking population and Russian citizens have been recorded in Portugal.

Publications about "bad Russians" are widely circulated in the media. In contrast, the facts of inappropriate behaviour of refugees from Ukraine are hushed

¹¹⁴⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fifth periodic report of Portugal. March 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FPRT%2FCO%2F5&Lang=ru

¹¹⁴¹ Concluding observations of Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eighteenth and nineteenth periodic reports of Portugal. May 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FPRT%2FO%2F18-19&Lang=ru

¹¹⁴² ECRI Report on Portugal (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 19 June 2018, published on 2 October 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-portugal/16808de7da>

¹¹⁴³ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fifth periodic report of Portugal. March 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FPRT%2FCO%2F5&Lang=ru

Concluding observations of Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eighteenth and nineteenth periodic reports of Portugal. May 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FPRT%2FO%2F18-19&Lang=ru

up. Due to the tough Russophobic stance taken by the Portuguese authorities and society, Ukrainian nationalist organisations have felt free to engage in hate speech against Russians on the Internet space. At the same time, Portuguese moderators prefer not to notice offensive material with profanity against our citizens and compatriots on social networks and other websites. Unfortunately, such double standards in the human rights sphere are becoming commonplace in this country, potentially posing a serious challenge to its entire multi-ethnic society.

Ukrainian diplomatic representatives are actively involved in spreading Russophobia. Thus, one of the protest actions in front of the Russian Embassy in Lisbon, organised by the Portuguese branch of Amnesty International on 19 March 2022, was attended by Ukrainian Ambassador I. Ognivets, who, in addition to the standard accusations of "Russian aggression", spoke about the "corrosive influence" of Russian language schools in Portugal. After that, the head of the largest Ukrainian association in the country "Spilka" P.Sadokha published a list of all associations of the Russian diaspora with photos under the guise of warning Ukrainians against joining them. The said publication provoked a wave of insulting posts by Ukrainian nationalists against Russian-speaking activists.

Moreover, representatives of Spilka submitted appeals to the High Commissioner for Migration and Portuguese intelligence services about the alleged transfer by Russian diaspora organisations of information collected under the guise of assisting Ukrainian refugees to the Russian leadership. These unsubstantiated allegations led law enforcement authorities to launch an investigation into illegal access and leakage of personal data. The incident had a great public resonance, further fuelling anti-Russian sentiments among the Portuguese population.

Against this background, cases of refusals to provide services to natives of Russia began to be recorded. There is a case in which our compatriot was informed by a telecom operator that she would no longer be able to use the service of calls to Russia at the tariff that had previously been included in the service. Attempts to contact the support service did not bring any results. There, the Russian woman was told that this was a forced measure in the EU, taken in connection with the

situation in Ukraine. It also remained unclear at what price and whether it would be possible in general to make calls to Russia.

The Embassy has received reports from Russian compatriots of receiving threats of physical violence, property damage and bullying of children in local educational institutions. Portuguese judicial authorities are conducting proceedings against seven Ukrainian nationals who are accused of incitement to hatred and calls for violence. In March 2022, they broke into a Russian souvenir shop in Braga with threats and insults against the owner, a Russian citizen¹¹⁴⁴.

The Portuguese Constitution guarantees the prohibition of discrimination based on religious affiliation. In February 2023, the Minister of Justice, C. Sarmento e Castro, during a conference organised in Lisbon by the International Association for the Defence of Religious Freedom, stated that the relevant minorities in the country "have and will retain the freedom to express their faith and religion"¹¹⁴⁵.

At the same time, there have been cases of harassment of clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate: there have been attempts to disrupt divine services, calls for Ukrainians to leave parishes and to withdraw their children from the schools operating there. In October 2022, the rector of the Cathedral in honour of All Saints of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (Lisbon) was attacked. A criminal case was opened by the local police.

A Ukrainian association tried to disrupt a Victory Day event organised by a Portuguese NGO together with Russian compatriots in Lisbon. Representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora staged an unauthorised protest demonstration at the entrance to the club where the "Immortal Regiment" action and a concert of songs of the war years were taking place. The protest ended after law enforcement agencies arrived on the scene.

¹¹⁴⁴ Tribunal manda julgar sete ucranianos que ameaçaram lojista russa em Braga. O Minho. 11 апреля 2023 г. <https://ominho.pt/tribunal-manda-julgar-sete-ucranianos-que-ameacaram-lojista-russa-em-braga>

¹¹⁴⁵ Ministra da Justiça realça papel de Portugal na proteção das minorias religiosas. 7 февраля 2023 г. <https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc23/comunicacao/noticia?i=ministra-da-justica-realca-papel-de-portugal-na-protecao-das-minorias-religiosas>

Throughout 2022, Portuguese refugee reception organisations indicated that the Portuguese authorities treat people from Ukraine differently compared to people from other countries, including from the Middle East and North Africa region. For example, Ukrainian refugees are perceived to receive more favourable treatment in terms of accommodation and workplaces.

Romania

At the official level, the Romanian authorities demonstrate their willingness to pay attention to the issues of counteracting the spread of neo-Nazism, anti-Semitism and other types of xenophobia in society. In 2021, the country approved a National Strategy and 2021-2023 Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of anti-Semitism, Xenophobia, Radicalization and Hate Speech, a special government representative was appointed to promote the policy of memory, combat anti-Semitism and xenophobia, a law was passed to include a compulsory course "History of the Jews. Holocaust" from 2023 into school (IX-XII grades) and vocational education programs. A National Museum of the History of the Jews and the Holocaust is being created in Romania.

However, the results of the efforts by the authorities fall short of expectations. Director of the NGO "Center for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism" (MCA) M. Katz noted in January 2022 that he was observing with "growing concern" the "downplaying and denial of the Holocaust at the level of political, leading class of Romania"¹¹⁴⁶. In July 2022, the Elie Wiesel National Institute for Studying the Holocaust in Romania (INSHR-EW) noted "bad awareness and the lack of understanding of the issue by local authorities, public employees, judges and bodies responsible for the implementation of parliamentary and government measures".¹¹⁴⁷ According to a survey conducted by the INSHR-EW on 22 November – 2 December 2021, only 32 per cent of ordinary citizens are aware of the Holocaust in Romania, 38 per cent consider Gypsy national minority a "threat", 59 per cent of the respondents called Romanian Marshal Ion Antonescu, Adolf Hitler's accomplice, a "patriot" and 53 per cent – a "great strategist".¹¹⁴⁸

1146 Centrul pentru Monitorizarea și Combaterea Antisemitismului: Urmărim cu crescând discomfort negarea Holocaustului la nivelul clasei politice din România. Sesizările noastre către autorități au rămas fără răspuns. G4Media.ro. 5 January 2022

<https://www.g4media.ro/centrul-pentru-monitorizarea-si-combaterea-antisemitismului-atragem-attention-ca-toate-sesizarile-pe-care-le-am-inaintat-autoritatile-au-ramas-fara-raspunsuri-antisemiti-si-negationisti-notorii-conti.html>

1147 Antisemitismul în vreme de pandemie – raport de monitorizare 2022. INSHR EW. 20 July 2022

<https://www.inshr-ew.ro/monitorizarea-antisemitismului-in-romania-raport-2022>

1148 Opinii contradictorii și prejudecăți stabile despre evrei și Holocaustul din România. Sondaj de opinie 2021. INSHR EW. 23 December 2021

<https://www.inshr-ew.ro/sondaj-de-opinie-holocaust-2021>

This institute, the MCA and the Federation of the Jewish Communities in Romania continue to record certain anti-Semitic incidents. For example, the well-known Romanian actress of Jewish origin Maia Morgenstern made public the facts of hateful threats to her.

The Romanian legislation sets out the components of crimes motivated by hate and racism, and defines various types of punishment for them. In July 2015, Law No. 217 entered into force to amend and supplement 2002 Government Ordinance No. 31 on prohibition of fascist, racist and xenophobic organizations and symbols, as well as promotion of the cult of persons guilty of crimes against peace and humanity. It defines "Holocaust in the Romanian territory" as "the systematic mass extermination of Jews and Roma supported by the Romanian authorities and public institutions on the territories under their control between 1940 and 1944". The denial, approval, justification of or downplaying consequences of the Holocaust is punishable by imprisonment for up to 3 years or a fine.

However, the first conviction for Holocaust denial was handed down in 2021, almost 20 years after Ordinance 31/2002 was adopted. At the same time, a year later, the sentence of 13 months in prison, previously imposed on Vasile Zărnescu, colonel (rtd.) of the Romanian Information Service, for the book "Gogorita¹¹⁴⁹ of the Holocaust", was replaced with a warning¹¹⁵⁰. As stated in March 2022 by M. Katz, head of the MCA, this verdict of the Bucharest Court of Appeal "annulled and made a mockery" the authorities' progress in the fight against anti-Semitism.¹¹⁵¹

Legionary movements (organizations that operated in 1927-1941 under the names of Archangel Michael Legion, Iron Guard and All for the Country party)

¹¹⁴⁹ An imaginary creature that frightens children.

¹¹⁵⁰ Flavia Drăgan, Unda verde pentru negaționiști, de la CAB. Vasile Zărnescu, ex-ofițerul SRI care a negat Holocaustul, scapă de închisoare. Defapt.ro. 1 April 2022

<https://defapt.ro/negationistul-vasile-zarnescu-scapa-de-inchisoare/>

¹¹⁵¹ Vasile Zărnescu, fost colonel SRI, scapă cu un avertisment pentru negarea Holocaustului după ce judecătorii i-au admis apelul. G4Media.ro. 31 March 2022

<https://www.g4media.ro/vasile-zarnescu-fost-colonel-sri-scapa-cu-un-avertisment-pentru-negarea-holocaustului-dupa-ce-judecatorii-i-au-admis-apelul-in-prima-instanta-zarnescu-fusese-condamnat-la-13-luni-de-inchisoare-cu.html>

and their modern followers are also prohibited. The production, distribution and public use of their ideas, symbols, as well as promotion of the cult of recognized war criminals are punishable by imprisonment for a term of 3 months to 6 years, and the creation of organizations of a fascist, racist or xenophobic orientation and their support are sanctioned with imprisonment from 3 to 10 years with disenfranchisement.

Although the punishment introduced for promoting the legionary movement has led to the fact that part of the once officially registered organizations preaching these ideas were forced to curtail or minimize public activity, certain ultra-right structures continue to operate "from the underground", using platforms in social networks¹¹⁵². For example, the New Right party registered in 2015 and the Legionary Movement without a legal status.

Since 2018, Law 157/2018 "On Certain Measures to Prevent and Counter Manifestations of Anti-Semitism" in Romania has introduced penalties of up to 3 years in prison for promoting anti-Semitic symbols and ideas, up to 5 years for disseminating such materials, and up to 10 years – for the establishment and support of relevant organizations.

In January 2022, the Bucharest police initiated criminal proceedings on the basis of the elements of the offense under article 3 of Law 157/2018 (public promotion of anti-Semitic concepts and doctrines) due to laying a wreath with the inscription denying the fact of the mass murder of Jews on the memorial to the Holocaust victims during the official mourning events.¹¹⁵³

While Russian media are prohibited in Romania, the access to the website, news blog and social media pages of the Legionary Movement (leader - Sh. Suru) is not restricted, and the movement freely promotes the works of its "ideological fathers". In 2022, the organization held such conferences as Legionary Movement:

1152 Maria Teodoriu, Cum e ținută-n viață extrema dreaptă din România prin preoți, tabere izolate și manipulare. Vice. 30 August 2021

<https://www.vice.com/ro/article/k789pm/istoria-extremei-drepte-in-romania>

1153 Flavia Drăgan, Dosar penal, după incidentul la Memorialul Holocaustului, în prezența ambasadorului Israelului. Newsweek România. 27 January 2022

<https://newsweek.ro/actualitate/foto-incident-la-memorialul-holocaustului-din-capitala-in-prezenta-ambasadorului-israelului>

Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow (24 June), How to Be a Member of Legionary Movement (23 July), Nationalism among Romanians (17 December), the record was then disseminated on YouTube. In a public place the building of the movement's Bucharest office features a sign with the forbidden Iron Guard symbols. The INSHR-EW attempts to have it dismantled have failed: the prosecutor's office at the Bucharest Court of Appeal closed the case "for the lack of clear evidence" on 20 October 2020, after 5 years of hearings.¹¹⁵⁴ In February 2021, the court of Bucharest sector II upheld the decision.¹¹⁵⁵ Attempts to bring the movement to account as a whole have also failed. Despite the use of legionary symbols, uniform, Nazi salutes by its members, their holding of events to cherish the memory of Corneliu Z. Codreanu, founder of the Iron Guard, prosecutors at the Bucharest Court of Appeal recognized it only as "a small group of people with nostalgic inclinations and views".¹¹⁵⁶

A number of open fans of the legionary movement and war criminals, including dictator Ion Antonescu, entered the Romanian parliament upon the 2020 elections "under the banner" of the Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR) with about 8 per cent of the votes (44 mandates out of 466). They aspire to whitewash the war crimes of Romanian henchmen of A. Hitler masking their atrocities under the slogans of "national liberation struggle" for "saving historical territories" from Bolsheviks.

AUR Senator Sorin Lavric regularly addresses parliament with "political declarations" posted on the legislature official website to rehabilitate members and supporters of the legionary movement as "victims of the communist regime", including, a prominent member of the Senate of Iron Guard and one of its

1154 Flavia Drăgan, Șocant: placa pe care scrie "Mișcarea Legionară", afișată public, nu încalcă legea, spun procurorii. Newsweek România. 3 March 2021

<https://newsweek.ro/istorie/cum-a-scapat-seful-miscarii-legionare-de-dosarul-penal-deschis-pentru-placuta-pusa-in-sectorul-1>

1155 Nr. Dosar unic (nr. format vechi): 214293002020-2013

https://portal.just.ro/300/SitePages/Dosar.aspx?id_dosar=30000000000569327&id_inst=300

1156 Flavia Drăgan, Afișarea plăcuței cu Mișcarea Legionară: ilegală, dar clasată. Procurorul General a redeschis speța. Newsweek România. 23 April 2021

<https://newsweek.ro/actualitate/parchetul-general-critica-clasarea-dosarului-privind-placuta-cu-miscarea-legionara>

ideologists Traian Brăileanu (8 February 2023)¹¹⁵⁷, Gheorghe Jimboiu (22 June 2022)¹¹⁵⁸, Constantin Gane (27 April 2022)¹¹⁵⁹, Nicolae Călinescu (16 February 2022)¹¹⁶⁰, Valeriu Gafencu (24 February 2021)¹¹⁶¹, Constantin Opreșan (10 March 2021)¹¹⁶², Virgil Maxim (24 March 2021)¹¹⁶³. Mircea Vulcănescu, government member I. Antonescu (3 March 2021)¹¹⁶⁴ and Moldovan terrorist Filimon Bodiu (23 March 2022)¹¹⁶⁵ were awarded with S. Lavric eulogy. In January 2022, Călin Georgescu, AUR honorary chairman, who was nominated by this party for the post of prime minister, stated that Corneliu Z. Codreanu, founder and leader of the Romanian legionary movement, "fought for the human good morals", and also "did good things".¹¹⁶⁶

It is worth noting that many members of the Romanian ruling and intellectual elite sympathize with the figures of Marshal Ion Antonescu and Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. In September 2019, historian Valentin Chepeneag, who was then head of the Constantin Brâncuși Museum in Târgu Jiu¹¹⁶⁷, and in 2020, Florian Bichir¹¹⁶⁸, a lecturer at the National Military University, wrote similar posts on Facebook.

1157 Sorin Lavric, Traian Brăileanu. 16 February 2022

<https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/1569%20lavric%20s.pdf>

1158 Sorin Lavric, Gheorghe Jimboiu. 22 June 2022

<https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/1233%20lavric%20s.pdf>

1159 Sorin Lavric, Scriitorul Constantin Gane. 27 April 2022

<https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/1067%20lavric%20s.pdf>

1160 Sorin Lavric, Deținutul politic Nicolae Călinescu. 16 February 2022

<https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/840%20lavric%20s.pdf>

1161 Sorin Lavric, Personalitatea lui Valeriu Gafencu. 24 February 2021

<https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/48%20lavric%20s.pdf>

1162 Sorin Lavric, Constantin Opreșan. 10 March 2021

<https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/92%20lavric%20s.pdf>

1163 Sorin Lavric, Deținutul politic Virgil Maxim. 24 March 2021

<https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/143%20lavric%20s.pdf>

1164 Sorin Lavric, Savantul interbelic Mircea Vulcănescu. 3 March 2021

<https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/64%20lavric%20s.pdf>

1165 Sorin Lavric, Partizanul basarabean Filimon Bodiu. 23 March 2022

<https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/962%20lavric%20s.pdf>

1166 Călin Georgescu, despre Zelea Codreanu și Ion Antonescu: "Codreanu s-a luptat pentru moralitatea ființei umane. Față de martiri nu pot să am păreri/ E nevoie de schimbarea totală a sistemului"/ Despre asasinarea lui Nicolae Iorga la ordinul legionarilor: "Istoria este mistificată". G4Media.ro. 6 February 2022

<https://www.g4media.ro/calin-georgescu-despre-zelea-codreanu-si-ion-antonescu-codreanu-s-a-luptat-pentru-moralitatea-ființei-umane-fata-de-martiri-nu-pot-sa-am-pareri-e-nevoie-de-schimbarea-totala-a-sistemului.html>

1167 Directorul Muzeului "Constantin Brâncuși" îi laudă pe antisemitul Zelea-Codreanu și pe criminalul de război Ion Antonescu. Libertatea. 14 September 2019

<https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/directorul-muzeului-constantin-brancuzi-ii-lauda-pe-zelea-codreanu-si-ion-antonescu-2747196>

1168 Florian Bichir, conferențiar de la Universitatea de Apărare, a postat pe Facebook un selfie în care apare

In March 2020, after vandals poured paint over and painted an outdoor photo exhibition at the Russian Center for Science and Culture in Bucharest dedicated to the liberation of Europe from fascism by Soviet troops¹¹⁶⁹, the AUR related Action 2012 platform praised the vandals on its Facebook page, accompanying its post with anti-Russian comments¹¹⁷⁰. In response to the Embassy's note of protest, police opened a criminal case. However, the perpetrators were not brought to justice.

Meanwhile, cases of glorification of Nazism and manifestations of neo-Nazism in Romania are not isolated. Thus, according to Romanian *Adevărul* newspaper, the local confectionery manufacturer "SC Ro Star" used the image of Adolf Hitler for the "Dita" biscuits advertising campaign on Facebook on 31 March and 2 April 2019, under the pretext of holding a historical competition.

In March 2019, 28 parliamentarians of the ultra-liberal "pro-Soros" Save Romania Union proposed a bill "banning communist organizations and symbols".

In April 2019, many central media outlets reported that over 70 tombstones and monuments had been destroyed in the Jewish cemetery in Huși (Vaslui county).

According to the MCA, in December 2019 and April 2020, some unknown persons painted swastika images and Nazi slogans in the car parking of Unirea central department store in Bucharest.

On 1 June 2021, a memorial service was held for Ion Antonescu¹¹⁷¹ (shown several times on the Vaslui TV local channel) in St. Paraskeva Church in Vaslui, at the initiative of the Cultural League for the Unity of Romanians from Everywhere.

imaginea lui Ion Antonescu. Institutul "Elie Wiesel": "Postarea reprezintă o provocare la adresa instituțiilor statului". G4Media.ro. 5 May 2020

<https://www.g4media.ro/florian-bichir-conferentiar-de-la-universitatea-de-aparare-a-postat-pe-facebook-un-selfie-in-care-apare-imaginea-lui-ion-antonescu-institutul-elie-wiesel-postarea-reprez.html>

1169 Expoziția 75 de ani de la Marea Victorie de la București vandalizată Reacții. Sputnik 13 March 2020

<https://ro.sputnik.md/society/20200313/29519221/Expoziia-75-de-ani-de-la-Marea-Victorie-de-la-Bucuresti-vandalizat-Reacii.html>

1170 Cine ar fi vandalizat expoziția dedicată Armatei Sovietice de la București. Sputnik 13 March 2020

<https://ro.sputnik.md/society/20200313/29525524/Cine-ar-fi-vandalizat-expoziia-dedicat-Armatei-Sovietice-de-la-Bucuresti.html>

1171 Lavinia Ionița, Cum a fost elogiată maresalul Ion Antonescu într-o biserică din Vaslui. Ministrul de Interne și procurorul general au fost sesizați. Ziare.Com. 4 June 2021

<https://ziare.com/social/stiri-sociale/maresalul-antonescu-elogiat-biserica-vaslui-1682951>

The TV channel was fined¹¹⁷², and a criminal case was opened against the priests who performed the service¹¹⁷³.

Ion Antonescu is portrayed on the wall paintings of Bucharest churches, in particular St. Helena and St. Constantine Church¹¹⁷⁴, where this Fuhrer's accomplice is depicted in the positive image of a church warden. His image is also in the church of Mihai Voda monastery, among the especially revered kings and church hierarchs of Romania.¹¹⁷⁵

In June 2021, more than 20 tombstones and monuments were destroyed in the Jewish cemetery in Ploiești¹¹⁷⁶. In December 2021, two swastikas were painted on a synagogue building in Sighișoara. On 6 January 2022, an act of vandalism was committed against the synagogue in Fagaras. According to the MCA, in December 2019 and April 2020, some unknown persons painted swastika images and Nazi slogans, inter alia with anti-Semitic content, in the car parking of Unirea central department store in Bucharest.

After the Russian Federation launched a special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine, several Romanian historical community members made attempts to whitewash Ukrainian nationalists from the OUN-UPA banned in Russia in the wake of "solidarity" with Kiev. In May 2022, M. Stănescu, an employee of the Institute for Political Studies in the Field of Defense and Military History, published an article in the History journal in the spirit of the Ukrainian-promoted political myth that the OUN-UPA was alleged to cooperate with the Nazis forcedly only in their fight for independence against Bolshevism. In

1172 VASLUI TV. Un post local, amendat că a dat o comemorare a marelui Antonescu: "A fost un martir al neamului românesc". Pagina de media.ro. 26 January 2021

<https://www.paginamedia.ro/cna/televiziune-vaslui-amenda-cna-maresal-antonescu-20373767>

1173 3 preoți din Vaslui sunt cercetați penal: Au ținut o slujbă de comemorare a marelui Antonescu. Europa FM. 8 June 2021

<https://www.europafm.ro/3-preoti-din-vaslui-sunt-cercetati-penal-au-tinut-o-slujba-de-comemorare-a-maresalului-ion-antonescu>

1174 Biserica Sfintii Imparati Constantin si Elena – Vergului. CrestinOrtodox.ro.

<https://www.crestinortodox.ro/biserici-manastiri/biserica-sfintii-impairati-constantin-elena-vergului-67951.html>

1175 Buserică în care apare chipul marelui Antonescu, plimbată pe sine. Magna News. 8 December 2022

<https://magnanews.ro/2017/12/singura-biserica-care-apare-chipul-maresalului-antonescu-fost-plimbata-pe-sine/>

1176 Cimitirul Evreiesc din Ploiești a fost vandalizat. Trei tineri, reținuți pentru distrugerea mai multor monumente funerare. DIGI24. 7 June 2021

<https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/cimitirul-evreiesc-din-ploiesti-a-fost-vandalizat-cinci-tineri-cercetati-pentru-distrugerea-mai-multor-monumente-funerare-1554935>

particular, the author portrays in a positive light Taras Bulba-Borovets, the Nazi founder of the UPA, who massively exterminated Jews (which is not mentioned in the article). He also claims that the OUN "opposed the creation of the "Galicia" SS division" and limited itself in anti-Romanian actions due to "very good relations between Romanians and Ukrainians in the northern Bukovina".¹¹⁷⁷

Since 2021, the authorities have intensified efforts to rename geographical and administrative sites that bear the names of war criminals convicted of crimes against Roma and Jewish population. As a result, only one street - in Bechet (Dolj county) - in Romania still bears the name of Marshal Ion Antonescu. On 15 February 2023, the senate of the Bucharest University deprived this Hitler's associate of the title of an "honorary doctor".¹¹⁷⁸

According to the INSHR-EW, in Romania in nine localities there are still 16 sites that bear the names of war criminals.¹¹⁷⁹ Time after time, attempts fail to change the name of a street named after Radu Gyr-Demetrescu in Cluj-Napoca.¹¹⁸⁰ A street and a Technology College in the Romanian capital and a lyceum in Maramureş are named after Mircea Vulcănescu, and his bust is installed in one of the squares of Bucharest sector II. The attempts to rename the College¹¹⁸¹ and dismantle the monument have been resisted by the public and some officials¹¹⁸².

1177 Manuel Stănescu, *Ucrainenii, între Wermachtul și Armata Roșie*, Historia, Nr.244. May 2022, pages 30-36
1178 Universitatea din București retrace titlul de Doctor Honoris Causa marelui Ion Antonescu. Universitatea din București. 15 February 2023

<https://unibuc.ro/universitatea-din-bucuresti-retrace-titlul-de-doctor-honoris-causa-maresalului-ion-antonescu/>

1179 16 situații în care legea este încălcată: Lista străzilor cu nume de criminali de război condamnați / Unde mai sunt amplasate busturi ale acestora în România. G4Media.ro. 13 August 2021

<https://www.g4media.ro/16-situatii-in-care-legea-este-incalcata-lista-strazilor-cu-nume-de-criminali-de-razboi-condamnați-unde-mai-sunt-amplasate-busturi-ale-acestora-in-romania.html>

1180 Nu vă atingeți de radu Gyr! USR-PLUS reia demersurile pentru schimbarea numelui străzii Radu Gyr din Cluj-Napoca. Buciumul. 1 February 2022

<http://www.buciumul.ro/amp/2022/02/01/nu-va-atingeti-de-radu-gyr-usr-plus-reia-demersurile-pentru-schimbarea-numelui-strazii-radu-gyr-din-cluj-napoca/>

1181 VICTORIE de etapă - numele liceului Mircea Vulcănescu rămâne neschimbat, momentan. Mihai Tîrnoveanu: Acțiunea de susținere pentru păstrarea numelui Liceului Mircea Vulcănescu, în Șoseaua Vitan-Bârzești nr. 11. Active News. 16 February 2023

<https://www.activenews.ro/opinii/Actualizare-VICTORIE-de-etapa-numele-liceului-Mircea-Vulcanescu-ramane-neschimbat-momentan.-Mihai-Tirnovanu-Actiunea-de-sustinere-pentru-pastrarea-numelui-Liceului-Mircea-Vulcanescu-in-Soseaua-Vitan-Barzesti-nr.-11.-VIDEO-179764>

1182 De ce nu trebuie să aibă Mircea Vulcănescu bust? Istoric: Vulcănescu personal a coordonat măsurile de jefuire a evreilor și romilor. Rfi.România. 3 January 2023

<https://www.rfi.ro/politica-151869-de-ce-nu-trebuie-sa-aiba-mircea-vulcanescu-bust-istoric-vulcanescu-personal;> Pro-Nazi bust of government official stays in place in Romania. APL. 9 January 2023

<https://apleu.org/pro-nazi-bust-of-government-official-stays-in-place-in-romania/>

Against this background, on 29 June 2022, at the initiative of the mayor's office of Bucharest sector II, the Metropolitan Municipal Council decided to rename the park named after Marshal of the Soviet Union Fyodor I. Tolbukhin who had liberated Romania from the Nazi.¹¹⁸³

Books trying to rehabilitate Ion Antonescu and his entourage are published annually in Romania. In 2020-2021, major Romanian newspapers Adevărul¹¹⁸⁴ and Jurnalul National¹¹⁸⁵ promoted the books by the Holocaust denier Gheorghe Buzatu¹¹⁸⁶ "Marshal Antonescu in the Face of History" and "Romania with and without Antonescu" through their distribution networks, as well as the memoirs of war criminals close to the Romanian dictator published by the Bucharest publishing house "Paul Editions": Colonel Gheorghe Magherescu, head of his secretariat ("The Truth about Marshal Antonescu")¹¹⁸⁷, General Constantin Pantazzi ("With Marshal till Death")¹¹⁸⁸, and Commissar Radu Lecca, who was responsible for the "resolution of the Jewish issue" ("A Conflicting Game: Between the Fuhrer, the Marshal and the Jews in Romania")¹¹⁸⁹. In particular, the book by Radu Lecca is an attempt to play down his own responsibility and Ion Antonescu's role in the organization of the Holocaust in Romania. In 2022, G.

1183 Decizie a Consiliului General: Parcul Tolbuhin a fost redenumit. HotNews.ro. 30 June 2022
https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-administratie_locala-25651172-decizie-consiliului-general-parcul-tolbuhin-fost-redenumit.htm

1184 Începând cu luni, 15 noiembrie, Adevărul îți aduce timp de două săptămâni consecutive „Mareșalul Antonescu în fața istoriei”, vol. 1-2 – Gheorghe Buzatu. Adevarul. 18 November 2021

https://adevarul.ro/cultura/carti/Incepand-luni-15-noiembrie-adevarul-aduce-timp-doua-saptamaniconsecutive-maresalul-antonescu-fata-istoriei-vol-1-2-gheorghe-buzatu-1_619644a85163ec4271aef303/index.html

1185 Jurnalul vă oferă astăzi o carte-document: „România cu și fără Antonescu”, de Gheorghe Buzatu. Jurnalul.ro. 19 April 2021

<https://jurnalul.ro/cultura/carte/jurnalul-va-ofera-astazi-o-carte-document-romania-cu-si-fara-antonescu-de-gheorghe-buzatu-870667.html>

1186 Despre negaționistii Holocaustului din România (II). Y.Obidin. 4 March 2016

<https://razboiulpentrutrecut.wordpress.com/2016/03/04/despre-negationistii-holocaustului-din-romania-ii/>

1187 Începând din 9 noiembrie, Adevărul îți aduce săptămânal „Adevărul despre mareșalul Antonescu”, vol. 1-3 – col. Gheorghe Magherescu. Adevarul. 9 November 2020

https://adevarul.ro/cultura/carti/incepand-9-noiembrie-adevarul-aduce-saptamanal-adevarul-despre-maresalul-antonescu-vol-1-3-col-gheorghe-magherescu-1_5fa90b515163ec4271abdf6a/index.amphtml

1188 Luni, 29 iunie, Adevărul îți prezintă „Cu mareșalul până la moarte” – generalul Constantin Pantazzi. Adevarul. 26 June 2020

https://adevarul.ro/cultura/carti/luni-29-iunie-adevarul-prezinta-cu-maresalul-moarte-general-constantin-pantazzi-1_5ef5c0465163ec427155bd4a/index.html

1189 Luni, 24 august, Adevărul îți prezintă „Joc ambiguu” – Radu Lecca. Adevarul. 17 August 2020

https://adevarul.ro/cultura/carti/luni-24-august-adevarul-prezinta-joc-ambiguu-radu-lecca-1_5f3a10155163ec42710c026d/index.html

Manole's work "Antonescu at Hitler's Place"¹¹⁹⁰ and Cristian Troncota's "The Marshal's Secret Man"¹¹⁹¹, the story about a war criminal, head of Romanian intelligence in 1941-1945 E. Cristescu were published. The "Publisol" edition published and promoted the two-volume book by Marcel Dumitru Ciuca "The Process of Great National Betrayal: Marshal Antonescu Faces History"¹¹⁹², where the author tried to prove failure of the court to the Romanian dictator.

More and more often are attempts to conceal the criminal nature of the actions of Romanian collaborators of Nazi Germany highlighting their "other achievements" in the field of culture and science. On 1 April 2021, on the initiative of the Iași mayor's office, a bust was unveiled to Octavian Goga, the former prime minister (1937-1938), poet and playwright. Octavian Goga's government including chief ideologist of Romanian fascism Alexandru Cuza, pursued a nationalist, pro-fascist course with a pro Hitlerite orientation of its foreign policy. It was Octavian Goga's government that issued a decree depriving Romanian Jews of their citizenship.

Attempts are being made to whitewash Mircea Vulcanescu as an "outstanding philosopher". In 2018, his daughter initiated proceedings to establish the "political nature" of the 1946 tribunal decision recognizing her father as a war criminal. A decision in her favor in this case would have meant, in effect, the rehabilitation of a member of the Ion Antonescu's government. However, in 2019, the claim which was sustained at a court of original jurisdiction, was dismissed by the Bucharest Court of Appeal.

Some local media often depict the commander of one of the units of the legionary movement Radu Gyr Demetrescuas as a "martyr of communist prisons"¹¹⁹³ without mentioning his past or the fact that he had been recognized as

1190 https://www.librariaonline.ro/stiinte_umaniste/estetica_eseistica/antonescu_la_hitler-manole_gica-carteia_romaneasca-p10191815

1191 https://www.librarie.net/p/422892/nia=1693?2pau=d79aaed64&2ptt=quicklink&2ptu=da1148931&2pdlst=EAIaIQobChMIxLrwqu-k_QIVwevtCh26LwegEAQYByABEgI_OPD_BwE

1192 <https://www.librariaonline.ro/carti/procesul-marii-tradari-nationale-maresalul-antonescu-in-fata-istoriei-volumul-i-ciuca-marcel-dumitru-publisol-p10200419>

1193 Poeziile din închisoare (Radu Gyr). Tribuna Magazine.
<https://tribuna-magazine.com/poeziile-din-inchisoare-radu-gyr>

a war criminal (convicted in June 1945 for war crimes)¹¹⁹⁴. The "Legionary Police" member Gogu Puiu¹¹⁹⁵, recruited after 1945 by Western special services for organization of anti-government acts in socialist Romania, is often portrayed as a true "leader of Dobruja anti-communist resistance".

On 24 January 2023, A. Florian, the INSHR-EW director, expressed regret over the fact that the leader of the Social Democratic Party (the biggest political union of the country, member of the ruling coalition) Marcel Ciolacu started his public speech at the commemoration of the "Small Union" in Focșani by quoting the "anti-Semite philosopher", member of the legionary movement Petre Țuțea.¹¹⁹⁶

The Romanian public continues to express concern over the recognition by the Sibiu court ruling of 28 May 2007 of the Democratic Forum of the Germans of Romania as legal successor to the Group of Ethnic Germans that had been established at the insistence of Nazi Germany, banned by King Mihai Decree No. 485 of 7 October 1944 and ceased to exist. On the basis of the said court ruling, the Democratic Forum of the Germans of Romania (the DFGR represents German minority in the Romanian parliament) has started restituting property lost after 1944. Over 136 properties in Sibiu county are to be returned.¹¹⁹⁷ The claims to retribute 12 sites were satisfied, five sites were subject to compensation, and 61 claims were dismissed.¹¹⁹⁸ The local media pointed out that property rights were in some cases transferred to the DFGR with support of former DFGR chair and Sibiu mayor Klaus Iohannis (President of Romania since 2014).¹¹⁹⁹

1194 Memorialistica fascistă este în continuare prezentă în România. Rfi.România. 7 February 2021
<https://m.rfi.ro/politica-130328-memorialistica-fascista-este-continuare-prezenta-romania>

1195 17 ianuarie 1918. Gogu Puiu, lider al Rezistenței din Dobrogea, un destin învăluit în mister. Buciumul. 17 January 2022
<https://www.buciumul.ro/2022/01/17/17-ianuarie-1918-gogu-puiu-lider-al-rezistentei-din-dobrogea-un-destin-invaluit-in-mister/>

1196 Marcel Ciolacu și-a început discursul de la sărbătoarea Unirii din Focșani cu un citat din Petre Țuțea, fost publicist antisemit și legionar/ Consilierul premierului pe antisemitism și xenofobie: „Să-și ceară scuze numaidecât”/ Reacția Institutului Elie Wiesel. G4Media.ro. 24 January 2023
<https://www.g4media.ro/video-marcel-ciolacu-si-a-inceput-discursul-de-la-sarbatoarea-unirii-din-focsani-cu-un-citat-din-petre-tutea-fost-publicist-antisemit-si-legionar-reactia-institutului-elie-wiesel.html>

1197 Klaus Iohannis și FDGR, succesori ai organizației naziste Grupul Etnic German. Justițiarul. 9 February 2017
<http://www.justitiarul.ro/11189-2;>

Noua „Casă Verde“. CORECTPolitics. 9 February 2017
<http://www.corectnews.com/politics/noua-cas-verde>

1198 Doar 12 imobile au fost retrocedate. FDGR. 8 September 2022
<https://www.fdgr.ro/ro/doar-12-imobile-au-fost-retrocedate/>

1199 Haus Iohannis, filiera retrocedărilor. Forumul Democrat al Germanilor, profitor imobiliari. Jurnalul.ro. 5

In June 2021, the Cotidianul newspaper recalled that the decision "recognizing the DFGR as legal successor to a fascist organization" remained in force.¹²⁰⁰ One issue also raised the question of "the need to clarify the relationship between the DFGR and the Group of Ethnic Germans in the light of the declared [by authorities] combat against anti-Semitism". At the same time, it was noted that historians and media outlets who raised the alarm about the connection between the Forum and the Group were prosecuted following a DFGR lawsuit.¹²⁰¹ In December 2022, the newspaper drew attention to "double standards" in the context of the condemnation of the Iron Guard and simultaneous inaction by authorities regarding the DFGR.¹²⁰² Despite the fact that the DFGR does not belong to radical or extremist organizations the precedent for the restitution of property confiscated from a fascist organization may be applied to former legionary movement activists and members of the Ion Antonescu's government as well. In this context, the Romanian media, for example, noted the attempts by the descendants of the Group of Ethnic Germans' members to have the real estate, once forcibly seized under the Ion Antonescu's regime by Nazis from the Jews, returned to them.¹²⁰³

An open letter by Romanian political scientist and economist Radu Golban¹²⁰⁴ concludes: expert analyses carried out by Swiss lawyers show that the decision of Romanian judicial authorities to recognize the DFGR legal succession to the Group of Ethnic Germans is in fact recognition of a Nazi group and a violation of Bucharest's obligations under the peace agreements signed after World War II.

November 2014

<https://jurnalul.ro/stiri/observator/haus-iohannis-filiera-retrocedarilor-680749.html>;

Cum s-a transformat Grupul Etnic German în FDGR. Trădarea lui Klaus Iohannis. Anchetonline. 2 October 2016

<https://www.anchetonline.ro/2016/10/cum-s-a-transformat-grupul-etnic-german-in-fdgr-tradarea-lui-klaus-iohannis/>

1200 Sentința care a făcut din FDGR un succesor în drepturi de organizație fascistă. Cotidianul.ro. 10 June 2021

<https://www.cotidianul.ro/sentinta-care-a-facut-din-fdgr-un-succesor-in-drepturi-de-organizatie-fascista>

1201 Falsele procese despre Grupul Etnic German. Cotidianul.ro. 14 June 2021

<https://www.cotidianul.ro/falsele-procese-despre-grupul-etnic-german/>

1202 Crimele contra umanității și regimul actual. Cotidianul.ro. 27 December 2022

<https://www.cotidianul.ro/crimele-contra-umanitatii-si-regimul-actual/>

1203 Dosarele de retrocedare din Sibiu scot la iveală adevăruri istorice dureroase. Casa cu casă... de la evrei. Gazeta de Cluj. 20 March 2019

<https://gazetadecluj.ro/dosarele-de-retrocedare-din-sibiu-scot-la-iveala-adevaruri-istorice-dureroase-casa-cu-casa-de-la-evrei/>

1204 <http://radugolban.ro/>

Against the above background, the Romanian position on the UN General Assembly vote on the resolution "Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to the escalation of modern forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" introduced by Russia and other co-authors seems to be natural. In line with general EU course, in December 2022 the delegation of this country voted against the adoption of this document.

The National Council for Combating Discrimination acting under the control of the Romanian parliament, in 2022, recorded 988 complaints concerning discrimination of the Romanian population on various grounds (1,048 complaints in 2021). The largest number of complaints concerned violations of the right to work and choose a profession (362), protection of honor and dignity (239), discrimination based on social status and age (332). There were claims received in connection with violations of rights on national (92), ethnic (71) and linguistic (26) ground.

The situation of the Romanian ethnic minorities raises certain concerns among human rights activists. The policy in the field of ensuring their rights is not comprehensive, and the ways and means to implement it vary with particular regions of the country.

Hate speech against Roma, members of the Hungarian and Jewish communities, and Muslims has been recorded in the media and the Internet. In this regard, The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) by the Council of Europe even recommended that the Romanian authorities intensified the work of the cybercrime unit in order to combat hate speech on the Internet.¹²⁰⁵

The issue of spreading of extremism and nationalism in the predominantly Hungarian inhabited counties of Transylvania (1.3 million people or 6.5 per cent of the country's total population), whose ethno-cultural rights are systematically derogated by Romanian authorities, remains a particular concern for Bucharest.

1205 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Romania (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 3 April 2019, published on 5 June 2019
<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-romania/168094c9e5>

Using the Hungarian language in public institutions in places densely populated by Magyars and receiving secondary and higher education in their mother tongue, formally guaranteed by the law "On Education", are the most acute issues. Thus, with reference to streamlined budget expenditures, a policy is being implemented to remove a number of disciplines in the Hungarian language from the curriculum at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Târgu Mureş.

The unflattering remarks about the Hungarian ethnic group made by MEP Traian Basescu, the former President of Romania, in a televised address were a high-profile case in the reporting period. In this regard, the NGO "National Council of the Székelys" appealed to Romanian authorities with a demand to condemn politician's hate speech. The National Council for Combating Discrimination did not stand aside either, having examined this episode and imposed a fine of about 1,000 euros on the figurant.

Moreover, the Romanian authorities continue to persecute Magyars for using the flag of Székelys (Romanian Hungarians) and fine them for playing the Hungarian anthem during public events.

A controversial gesture was made by the then Romanian prime minister Mihai Tudose, who promised during a television program in January 2018 to "hang Hungarians involved in the use of Székely flag on the same poles". The National Council for Combating Discrimination issued a warning to the politician in this regard.

The 2021 report by Miko Imre Legal Aid Service for Minorities, created by the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR), noted cases of ethnicity-driven violent behavior against Hungarians in Romania: insulting an elderly woman, attacking young people who spoke Hungarian, and discrimination against a kindergarten teacher because of her nationality.¹²⁰⁶ In 2022, representatives of the Hungarian minority pointed out the fact of violation of their

1206 Report 2021. The violation of minority rights and the ethnic discrimination faced by the Hungarian community in Romania. Mikó Imre Minority Rights Legal Services Assistance. 2021. Pages 32-33.

linguistic rights due to the local authorities' refusal to take on the balance the kindergartens with teaching in Hungarian built at the expense of Budapest.¹²⁰⁷

In February 2021, acts of vandalism were committed against the monument to the "Székely Martyrs" in Târgu Mureș. In 2021-2022, similar acts were committed against Hungarian inscriptions on bilingual tablets with the names of localities in Transylvania.¹²⁰⁸

The Hungarian minority was also outraged by the anti-Hungarian tone of the comment posted by MP R. Cristescu in March 2021 on Facebook: "The leaders of DAHR horde continue to behave like heirs to Attila's Huns, not caring that they harm innocent people...".¹²⁰⁹

Incidents have also occurred at sports events. For example, the case of 2017 came to the attention of ECRI, when during a football match in Bucharest fans of one of the teams chanted anti-Hungarian slogans.¹²¹⁰

In August 2021, during a football match between the Sepsi team from Sfântu Gheorghe, the town of the predominantly Hungarian populated Romanian county of Covasna, and the Farul team from Konstanza, the latter's fans chanted a xenophobic slogan: "Hungarians out of the country!" The same words were heard during a Steaua and Csikszereda (a team from the Romanian county of Harghita, inhabited by Szekely Hungarians) match¹²¹¹. Similar words were heard in December 2021 during the Sepsi/FCSB match, in May 2022 – during the Sepsi/FCU match from Craiova, in August 2022 – during the game of Sepsi via the

1207 Report 2022. The violation of minority rights and the ethnic discrimination faced by the Hungarian community in Romania. Mikó Imre Minority Rights Legal Services Assistance. 2022. Page 13.

1208 Report 2021. The violation of minority rights and the ethnic discrimination faced by the Hungarian community in Romania. Mikó Imre Minority Rights Legal Services Assistance. 2021. Pages 12-13.; Report 2022. The violation of minority rights and the ethnic discrimination faced by the Hungarian community in Romania. Mikó Imre Minority Rights Legal Services Assistance. 2022. Page 10

1209 Derapaj verbal al unui deputat PSD, după ce UDMR a votat bugetul: „Se comportă ca niște urmași ai hunilor lui Atila, fără să le pese că lovesc în oameni”. Adevarul. 3 March 2021

https://adevarul.ro/news/politica/derapaj-verbal-unui-deputat-psd-udmr-votat-bugetul-se-comporta-urmasi-hunilor-atila-pese-lovesc-oameni-1_603f685b5163ec427186b3a3/index.html

1210 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Romania (fifth monitoring cycle) adopted on 3 April 2019, and published on 5 June 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-romania/168094c9e5>

1211 Scandări xenofobe ale galeriei Farului Constanța la meciul cu Sepsi Sfântu Gheorghe. Un oficial covăsnean amenință cu retragerea echipei din competiție. G4Media.ro. 9 August 2021

<https://www.g4media.ro/scandari-xenofobe-ale-galeriei-farului-constanta-la-meciul-cu-sepsi-sfantu-gheorghe-un-oficial-covasnean-ameninta-cu-retragerea-echipei-din-competitie.html>

team of the University of Cluj-Napoca¹²¹², as well as during the Myercourier Chuk and Bucharest football teams meeting. In November 2022, during the match between Sepsi and the Petrolul club from Ploiești¹²¹³ shouting became aggressive and police intervention was needed to prevent a fight¹²¹⁴.

Meanwhile, a number of NGOs in Transylvania maintain close contacts with far-right parties and organizations in Hungary (Jobbik, Hungarian National Guard, etc.) and under their influence advocate extremist and revanchist ideas, including that about the unjust Trianon Peace Treaty and its consequences. The Hungarian nationalist Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement has its own cells in Romanian Transylvania.

The existing radical views in the region have an impact on the attitude of Székely Hungarians towards representatives of other ethnic groups. For example, a case of racial intolerance was recorded in January 2020 in the commune of Ditrău, Harghita county. Outraged at two Sri Lankan nationals employed in a local bakery, the commune residents organized a rally with the use of racist and xenophobic slogans.¹²¹⁵

President of the Romanian Union of Ciscarpathian Ruthenians M. Lauruk regularly draws attention to the pressure exercised by Romanian authorities on the Ruthenian community. There was a wide range of incidents with unfounded persecution of the activists of the organization for their pro-Russian position. In fact, Bucharest shows indulgence to the forced Ukrainization of the Ruthenian national minority. According to information received by the Russian Embassy in

1212 Meciul dintre "U" Cluj și Sepsi, oprit pentru scandări xenofobe! Arbitrul Colțescu e cel care a luat decizia
Acest text a fost copiat de pe Ziare.com Meciul dintre "U" Cluj și Sepsi, oprit pentru scandări xenofobe! Arbitrul Colțescu e cel care a luat decizia. Ziare.Com. 22 August 2022
https://ziare.com/u-cluj/u-cluj-sepsi-xenofobie-suporteri-1757552?utm_source=Ziare.com&utm_medium=copy-paste

1213 Tot mai des în tribune: scandări xenofobe și rasiste. Reacții după meciul de vineri dintre Sepsi OSK și Petrolul Ploiești. Covasamedia. 15 November 2022
<https://covasamedia.ro/stirea-zilei/tot-mai-des-in-tribune-scandari-xenofobe-si-rasiste.-reactii-dupa-meciul-de-vineri-dintre-sepsi-osk-si-petrolul-ploiesti>

1214 World Report 2022. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019> The violation of minority rights and the ethnic discrimination faced by the Hungarian community in Romania. Mikó Imre Minority Rights Legal Services Assistance. 2022. Page 21

1215 Epurarea etnică de la Ditrău. Cum s-au răsculat etnicii maghiari împotriva a doi brutari din Sri Lanka. Adevarul. 2 February 2020
https://adevarul.ro/news/eveniment/epurarea-etnica-ditrau-s-au-rasculat-etnicii-maghiari-doi-brutari-sri-lanka-1_5e3720735163ec4271b3a467/index.html

Romania, in 2022, a group of citizens in areas densely populated by Ruthenians raided the homes of their compatriots, convincing them to classify themselves as Ukrainians as part of the census and collecting their personal data. They did not receive any mandate from the local authorities to do so, but no one hindered their activities either. Previously, there were cases of inaction of the authorities regarding the cases when property and business assets belonging to Ruthenians were raided.

Some complaints have been voiced by historic compatriots of the Russian-Lipovan Community of Romania and Carpathian Ruthenians before Romanian authorities regarding the possibility to receive education (from primary to complete secondary education) in their native language. It is reported that Russian-Lipovan children are only provided with mother tongue teaching as an optional subject, while most national minorities can receive primary school education (forms 1-9) entirely in their mother tongue.

Human rights activists point out that the Romanian Roma community (more than 620 thousand people, about 3.3 per cent of the population, and according to unofficial data – up to 2 million people) is the one that faces the most systematic social discrimination of all ethnic minorities, inter alia in education, employment and health services. ECRI experts note that anti-Roma sentiments in Romania are "commonplace".¹²¹⁶

In October 2022, a famous activist of the Roma minority Dorin Cioabă accused the University of Lucian Blaga in Sibiu of non-compliance with admission quota for applicants of this nationality and their discrimination.¹²¹⁷

The NGO "Center for Legal Research" described the education environment for Roma children in schools in detail, noting cases of racist manifestations on the part of teachers. In April 2021, the NGO "Salvați Copiii" stated that ethnic

¹²¹⁶ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Romania (fifth monitoring cycle) adopted on 3 April 2019, and published on 5 June 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-romania/168094c9e5>

¹²¹⁷ „Regele” Cioabă acuză Universitatea „Lucian Blaga” din Sibiu de discriminare: „Locurile pentru romi sunt aranjate”. DIGI24. 4 октябрия 2022 г. <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/social/regele-cioaba-acuza-universitatea-lucian-blaga-din-sibiu-de-discriminare-locurile-pentru-romi-sunt-aranjate-2105837>

segregation of Roma children in schools persisted.¹²¹⁸ Due to employment problems, Roma are much more at risk of falling below the poverty line than other national minorities in Romania.

The NGO "Open Society Foundation" draws attention to increased cases of discrimination against Roma in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. Inadequate living conditions and lack of food supplies, typical for this category of people, forced them to violate the quarantine restrictions imposed by authorities. As a result, a number of facts of exceeding official authority by police officers against Roma were recorded. The Balkan Insight highlights the shortcomings of the local judicial and legal system, which systematically advocates law enforcement in this type of matter. In addition, there have been cases of illegal denial of medical services to Roma.

Moreover, the spread of COVID-19 gave rise to publications in the Romanian segment of social networks blaming it on the country's Jewish¹²¹⁹ and Roma¹²²⁰ communities.

According to the findings of the 2019 monitoring, Romania's 2014-2020 National Roma Integration Strategy has been "extremely superficially" implemented. Denials of public services, access to health care and social protection systems, and equal employment conditions for Roma are still frequent.

There are often cases of ill-treatment. In 2019, in Zalău, a Roma woman and her child were beaten with a mop by a minibus driver in an attempt to chase them away from the vehicle, and the emergency services where she sought help responded with insults.¹²²¹ In August 2022, it became known that she was fined

1218 Salvați Copiii: Fenomenul segregării etnice în școli persistă. Agerpres. 9 April 2021
<https://www.agerpres.ro/educatie-stiinta/2021/04/09/salvati-copiii-fenomenul-segregarii-etnice-in-scoli-persista--693792>

1219 Raport de monitorizare antisemitism. INSHR EW. 2019 – April 2020
<http://www.inshr-ew.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/INSHR-EW-Raport-de-monitorizare-antisemitism-2019-aprilie-2020.pdf>

1220 See. Rasismul antiromi crește împreună cu vocile populiste în perioada pandemiei COVID-19 și ne periclitează pe toți. Libertatea. 16 April 2020

<https://libertatea.ro/opinii/harvard-margareta-matache-rasismul-anti-romi-creste-covid-19-2957550;>

Minoritatea romă: țap ispășitor în vremea pandemiei. 12 May 2020

http://www.crj.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Scrisoare-de-pozitie_12mai.pdf

1221 See. Rasismul de la 112. O operatoare STS înjură o femeie romă bătută: "Vorbiți ca ciorile!" "Trăzni-v-ar! Du-te dreacu!". Libertatea. 2 September 2019

1,800 lei by the Zalău court and the driver was just temporarily suspended from office.¹²²²

In April 2020, a video surfaced on social media of Roma being beaten by a law enforcement officer in Bolintin-Vale, Giurgiu county.¹²²³

Roma national minority often face discrimination on a race basis.¹²²⁴ In January 2020, mayor of Târgu Mureș Dorin Florea was heavily criticized by human rights organizations for ethnic hate speech against the local Roma.¹²²⁵

In 2022, representatives of the NGO "Aresel" and the Jesuit Refugee Service of Romania reported that Roma refugees arriving from Ukraine also faced discrimination: they were driven away from stands with free food and medicine, forbidden to enter waiting rooms at the Bucharest North Station, requests to take them to a refugee reception center were perceived negatively.¹²²⁶ In April 2022, in Bucharest a group of Roma refugees from Ukraine reported that their humanitarian assistance requests were denied.¹²²⁷

The National Agency for the Roma, established in 1997, is the main policymaker for the protection of Roma rights and their social integration. It is in charge of monitoring the observance of the rights of this ethnic group within the

<https://libertatea.ro/stiri/rasismul-de-la-112-o-operatoare-sts-injura-o-femeie-roma-batuta-vorbite-ca-ciorile-trazni-v-ar-dute-dreacu-2736227>

1222 Femeia săracă bătută de un șofer de microbuz a fost condamnată la amendă sau închisoare, iar bărbatul a primit cu suspendare. Libertatea. 1 August 2022

<https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/femeia-saraca-batuta-de-un-sofer-de-microbuz-a-fost-condamnata-la-amenda-sau-inchisoare-iar-barbatul-a-primit-cu-suspendare-4228459>

1223 „Ami pare rau la domni politisti”. Cazul violențelor poliției din Bolintin Vale are în spate o istorie lungă și complicată de conflicte nerezolvate și mai mulți vinovați. Ce învățăm din asta și ce facem mai departe. Republica. 30 April 2020

<https://republica.ro/cazul-violentelor-politiei-din-bolintin-vale-are-in-spate-o-istorie-lunga-si-complicata-de-conflicte-nerezolvate>

1224 Roma rights advocates warn of rising hate speech: many ‘don’t even know’ they’re being racist. UN News. 7 April 2022

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1115752>

1225 Primarul din Târgu Mureș, amendat cu 10.000 de lei. CNCD: Afirmațiile sale sunt extrem de rasiste. DIGI24. 22 January 2022

<https://www.digi24.ro/amphtml/stiri/actualitate/primarul-din-targu-mures-amendat-cu-10-000-de-lei-cncd-afirmatiile-sale-sunt-extrem-de-rasiste-1248976>

1226 Reportaj. Ce au pățit niște romi săraci din Ucraina când au fost confundați în Gara de Nord cu romi de la noi. Libertatea. 9 March 2022

<https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/reportaj-ce-a-patit-un-grup-de-romi-saraci-din-ucraina-cand-au-fost-confundati-in-gara-de-nord-cu-romi-de-la-noi-4022475>

1227 „Voi nu sunteți refugiați”. Reportaj CNN despre discriminarea romilor ucraineni care ajung la București și în alte orașe europene. Libertatea. 7 August 2022

<https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/voi-nu-sunteti-refugiati-reportaj-cnn-despre-discriminarea-romilor-ucraineni-care-ajung-la-bucuresti-dar-si-in-alte-orase-europene-4235673>

framework of the government strategy¹²²⁸, submitting proposals to change the legislation in this field, controlling the implementation of provisions of the relevant Romanian and European regulations, etc. However, both the lack of a comprehensive system for collecting data on discrimination against various social and ethnic groups, including the Roma community, and the reluctance of the Romanian authorities to classify ethnically problematic situations in terms of the law, make it impossible to fully assess the scale of violation of Roma rights.

Despite almost no mention of discrimination against Roma in the media, their existence is indicated by the stereotypes and prejudices persistent in the Romanian society regarding this national minority. Experts of the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance stated back in 2019 that anti-Gypsy sentiment in Romania was "commonplace".¹²²⁹

At the same time, the Commission's report deplores the delay by Romanian parliamentarians in adopting a professional code that prohibits any racism in speeches.¹²³⁰ The following cases of the use of hate speech by public figures, for example, demonstrate the long-overdue need for such a step.

In 2019, proceedings for the speech of one of the deputy chairpersons of the Save Romania Union party, A.Hobjila, who declared the need to get rid of Roma in the heart of Botoşani city at any cost, in the context of its reconstruction, caused a public outcry in Botoşani county. The remark of the official, basically calling for the forced relocation of Roma, was considered by the CNCD as discriminatory and degrading human dignity, and its author was fined 2,000 euro.

In addition, the Roma community members experience difficulties in obtaining identity documents. In such cases police write a residence report on the grounds of which applicants may only obtain a provisional identity document. Many Roma also lack documents confirming residence or housing tenure.

1228 The Romanian Government's Roma Integration Strategy 2014-2020

1229 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Romania (fifth monitoring cycle) adopted on 3 April 2019, and published on 5 June 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-romania/168094c9e5>
<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-romania/168094c9e5>

1230 Ibid.

The problems faced by Roma communities in Romania have been highlighted by the UN human rights treaty bodies (Human Rights Committee¹²³¹ and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women¹²³², as well as the mentioned ECRI¹²³³ and the CE Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities¹²³⁴.

In Romania as in many European countries there is still a stereotype and race-based attitude to people of African origin. It may be illustrated by a remark made by the Romanian ambassador to Kenya, Dragos Viorel Tigau during the meeting of the representatives of Eastern European states held at the United Nations office in Nairobi on 26 April. After observing a black monkey through the window of the conference hall, the ambassador referred to the African group by stating, "the African group has joined us". This remark subsequently caused a wave of righteous indignation on the part of diplomats representing this continent. After Dragos Viorel Tigau had twice apologized for this incident, an official letter of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania signed by its head Bogdan Aurescu was published. The letter said that such statements were unacceptable. The Ambassador was subsequently recalled from Kenya.¹²³⁵

Cases of violation of the rights and discrimination of Russians on the basis of nationality and citizenship began to be recorded in Romania with the start of a

1231 Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 5th periodic report of Romania. October 2017

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fROU%2fO%2f5&Lang=en

1232 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the combined 7th and 8th periodic reports of Romania. July 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fROU%2fCO%2f7-8&Lang=en

1233 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Romania (fifth monitoring cycle) adopted on 3 April 2019, and published on 5 June 2019.

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-romania/168094c9e5>

1234 Fourth opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Romania adopted on 22 June 2017, and published on 16 February 2018. <https://rm.coe.int/fourth-opinion-on-romania-adopted-on-22-june-2017/168078af76>

<https://rm.coe.int/fourth-opinion-on-romania-adopted-on-22-june-2017/168078af76>

1235 RACISM?: Romanian Diplomat Under Fire for Referring to Monkey as "African Group" in European Diplomatic Meeting. Kenyan Foreign Policy. 8 June 2023

<https://kenyanforeignpolicy.com/racism-romanian-diplomat-under-fire-for-referring-to-monkey-as-african-group-in-european-diplomatic-meeting/>

<https://kenyanforeignpolicy.com/who-is-dragos-viorel-tigau-the-romanian-recalled-racist-ambassador/>; 11 June 2023

special military operation for demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine. Russian citizens and compatriots living here have become the object of systematic attacks and insults on social networks. In addition to certain manifestations of Russophobia and aggressive behavior when applying for medical services, passing border control, or at schools, problems persist with servicing Russians in many banking institutions of the country.

Under the pretext of international sanctions, a number of Russian enterprises, including the factories of the TMK group and the Aeroflot representative office, were deprived of the ability to manage their own funds. This, in turn, endangered the social and economic rights of the employees of these companies, including their right to receive wages. Since 28 February 2022, the access to Sputnik Romania and Russia Today on all platforms, including websites, social networks, messengers and mobile applications, has been restricted in Romania in violation of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. On the same day, the National Broadcasting Council committed itself to take measures so that "not a single TV channel from the Russian Federation is rebroadcast in Romania", as well as "to monitor the way news programs and talk shows cover topics related to the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine".

Thus, in March 2022, the said authority issued fines to the Realitatea Plus TV channel (Leu 40,000 or USD 9,300) and the Gold FM radio station (Leu 50,000 or about USD 11,600), as well as warnings to TV channels Naşul TV and B1 TV. Local journalists (e.g., Sputnik Romania correspondent, author of the Friends of Vladimir Putin and In Prima Linie (inprimalinie.org) news blogs Giorgiana Arsene and editor of the Vesti din Rusia news site (vestidinrusia.ro) Vyacheslav Samoshkin), who try to cover events in Ukraine in a balanced way and from the perspective which differs from that of the "collective West", have been subjected to fierce harassment and threats in social networks.

North Macedonia

Neither the authorities, nor any political or public organizations of Northern Macedonia prevent the running of events in honour of Victory Day and other memorable dates related to the Great Patriotic War. The same goes for displaying Russian/Soviet symbols.

After the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation started a special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect civilians in Donbass (SMO) in February 2022, the government of North Macedonia, at the suggestion of Foreign Minister Bujar Osmani, recommended that the municipal authorities of Skopje and other cities refrain from participating in the flower laying ceremony organized by the Embassy of Russia to cherish an anniversary of the Great Victory.

A provocative inscription "1945 – liberators, 2022 – murderers" and streaks of red paint were left by unknown individuals in the early 9 May 2022 morning at the foot of the stela in downtown Skopje, dedicated to the memory of anti-Hitler coalition soldiers (installed on the Russian Embassy's initiative in cooperation with the Center municipality in 2020). Having learned about it a few hours before the wreath-laying ceremony, the Embassy removed the inscription by its own forces. Demands to investigate the incident sent twice by note from the Embassy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia (copied to the Minister of Internal Affairs), remained unanswered.

The cult of loyalty to the West, implanted in the country, became especially evident after the SMO started. On 4 April 2022, the Ministry of the Interior, referring to the current law, warned citizens about the possible criminal prosecution for "denial of war crimes in Ukraine." By the way, such a definition may include, among other things, denials of fake news distributed by Western and Ukrainian media aimed at discrediting Russia and its Armed Forces.

So far, no cases of discrimination or persecution of Russian citizens and compatriots under such pretexts have been reported in Northern Macedonia.

Noteworthy is the activity of the Ukrainian diaspora organization Lesya Ukrainka Society of Ukrainians in the Republic of North Macedonia (headed by

A.Urbanovich). Her Facebook page systematically posts materials and comments promoting hostility and violence against Russians.¹²³⁶

During the 12 June 2022 action in front of the Russian Embassy, members of the society broadcast through loudspeakers a Ukrainian remake of the Italian partisan song "Bella ciao" which glorifies the murder of Russians.

Despite the above warning by the Ministry of the Interior, encouragement of violence and discrimination based on nationality, religion or race is a criminal offense under article 407 of the local Criminal Code, in connection with which law enforcement authorities monitor comments on social networks related to the events in Ukraine, and intend to bring violators to justice – the North Macedonian police turn a blind eye to the nationalist devilments of Ukrainians.¹²³⁷

The general position of the country's leadership to unconditionally support the Kiev regime adds to that. In September 2022, a sign with the slogan "Glory to Ukraine — Glory to Heroes", used by the OUN and UPA collaborators and inherited by Ukrainian neo-Nazis¹²³⁸, was installed in the centre of Skopje. Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia Bujar Osmani was repeatedly seen using the Ukrainian nationalist greeting "Glory to Ukraine".¹²³⁹ In 2023, he became OSCE Chairman-in-Office, with all the responsibilities that this status entails. Country's leading news agencies disregard information about the criminal acts committed by the Armed Forces of Ukraine, national battalions and Ukrainian neo-Nazi groups (for example, 2 May 2022 was completely ignored as a newsworthy anniversary of the 2014 tragedy in Odessa).

At the same time, the delegation of Cyprus, following the General European line, annually abstains during the vote in the UN General Assembly on the resolution introduced by Russia and other co-sponsors "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance". When

¹²³⁶ https://www.facebook.com/groups/1067674929983038/?locale=mk_MK

¹²³⁷ <https://mvr.gov.mk/vest/19877>

¹²³⁸ <https://meta.mk/vo-centarot-na-skopje-otvorena-aleja-na-ukraina>

¹²³⁹ https://twitter.com/Bujar_O/status/1562484170739236869; https://twitter.com/Bujar_O/status/1562338091158982656; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uswv1DJv40c>

approving the document in 2022 — in November (Third Committee) and December (GA plenary) — North Macedonia voted against it for the first time.

At the same time, North Macedonia has been a member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance since 2021, and supported in January 2022 the German-Israeli UN General Assembly resolution condemning denial of the genocide of Jews during World War II. The first event organized on the country's territory within the framework of the North Macedonian OSCE Chairmanship in 2023 was the conference held in Skopje called "Combating Anti-Semitism in the OSCE Area" (on February 6-7).

Despite the rejection of the ideas of Nazism, neo-Nazism and hate ideology publicly declared by the authorities, there are no articles in the Criminal Code of North Macedonia punishing the glorification of Nazism. A bill criminalizing this act was prepared by the Jewish community back in 2018, but is still under consideration by government agencies.

Differing evaluation and estimation of the events and results of World War II by the largest national communities of North Macedonia – Macedonians (58.4%) and Albanians (24.3%) – is a characteristic manifestation of the contradictions that remain between them.

The Albanians tend to justify their ancestors' massive collaborationism with the Italian and German occupiers as "situational cooperation" that was forced and temporary in nature. It allegedly served to liberate them from the "oppressive" neighbouring Slavic peoples and to unite the 'ancestral Albanian lands' under Albanian Kingdom (1939-1944), a puppet state which included the most part of the modern Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija, west Macedonia and southern regions of Montenegro. The Albanians regard a Balkan protectorate, created by the Axis countries, as the "Greater Albania" project made reality, which allegedly fully justifies their complicity with the aggressor.

Guided by this logic, the majority of North Macedonian Albanians positively evaluate the activities of the Balli Kombetar (National Front) anti-communist nationalist movement (it was founded in 1942 in Albania and cooperated with the

fascist Italy and Nazi Germany), as well as the 21st Skanderbeg SS division and Vulnetari collaborationist military units composed mainly of Kosovo Albanians.

Among Albanians in Northern Macedonia, Nazi collaborators are openly honoured: in 2006 and 2015, in the Gostivar municipality, with the approval of its then head Nevzat Bejta (one of the heads of the Democratic Union for Integration, the leading party of the Albanian political bloc in the ruling coalition), monuments were erected to the most prominent representatives of the "Balli Kombëtar" and the «Vullnetari" Macedonian Albanians, fighters Xhemail Hasani (Xhem Hasa Gostivari) and Achif Krosi Rechani, who served the fascist invaders and led armed raids against Yugoslav partisans in Gostivar, Debar, Kičevo, Tetovo and other areas.

Repeated appeals by representatives of the Macedonian diaspora to the authorities of Western countries to condemn the perpetuated memory of collaborators in North Macedonia and facilitate the aforementioned monuments taken down, remain without due.¹²⁴⁰

At present, followers of the Balli Kombetar ideology in North Macedonia include the radical fan group Ballistet supporting the Shkendija football club (Tetovo) and promoting the "Greater Albania"-style nationalism.

The Albanians are contributing to the erasure of the memory of the Second World War in North Macedonia. In August 2023, a ceremony was held in Skopje, with the participation of Kosovo's "Prime Minister" Albin Kurti, to rename a street named after the Second Macedonian Brigade. During the war, the brigade resisted Wehrmacht units and Bulgarian Nazi collaborators. It was named after Adem Demaçi, the ideological inspirer of the Albanian nationalist movement in the Yugoslav period. The Macedonian environment is dominated by adherence to anti-fascist traditions, veneration of the memory of fallen partisans and an objective view of the Nazi crimes. The preamble to the North Macedonian Constitution recognizes the special role of the Anti-Fascist Assembly for the National

¹²⁴⁰ <https://umdiaspora.org/2019/12/23/umd-inquiry-on-statues-in-macedonia-dedicated-to-nazi-collaborators/>

Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM), which laid the foundations of modern statehood.¹²⁴¹

Following this line, the ruling circles of North Macedonia show respect for the leading veterans' organization — the Union of Fighters of the 1941-1944 Anti-Fascist National Liberation War in Macedonia. In early 2023, the government announced plans to repair and renovate all the Liberation War memorials.

The parties and movements that have at least a minimal socio-political weight in North Macedonia are not considered extremist or right-wing radical, and their programs do not reflect racist and xenophobic ideas.

At the same time, attempts by officials to interpret history on the basis of opportunistic considerations are becoming more and more noticeable. For example, in his 2022 addresses, Prime Minister Dimitar Kovačevski equated Victory Day with "Europe Day" celebrated in the European Union, without mentioning the USSR and its contribution to the defeat of fascism.¹²⁴² The prime minister used the thesis of his country's "correct historical choice" in reference to both the events of World War II¹²⁴³ and the current situation around Ukraine, in which North Macedonia supports the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev.¹²⁴⁴

Samuel Sadikario, President of the Holocaust Fund of Macedonian Jews, repeatedly pointed out to the trouble qualifying such tendencies as the glorification of Nazism or its supporters in the Albanian community. According to him, the episodes of collaboration with the Nazis are glossed over by Albanian historiographers, who highlight the "national liberation aspect" in their activities.

Public concern is caused by a gradual revision of the approach to teaching the history of World War II in schools, including the downplayed USSR role in the liberation of Europe from fascism.

At the same time, with the signing of the Treaty of friendship, good-neighbourliness and cooperation with Bulgaria (2017) and the Prespa agreement with Greece (2018), the educational literature used here should be revised to take

¹²⁴¹ <https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Odluki%20USTAV/UstavSRSM.pdf>

¹²⁴² <https://vlada.mk/node/28717>

¹²⁴³ <https://vlada.mk/node/28717>

¹²⁴⁴ <https://vlada.mk/node/29064?ln=mk>

into account the wishes of neighboring countries. The bilateral historical commissions established under the pressure from Sofia and Athens are used to erase the facts of Bulgarians' and Greeks' collaborationism during World War II from textbooks, primarily the occupation of the greater part of modern North Macedonia's territory by Bulgaria. In particular, official Sofia demands a complete rejection of the wording "Bulgarian fascist occupiers", common in Macedonian historiography, which, in its interpretation, contributes to inciting hatred against Bulgarians living in the country. In order to please Sofia who is blocking Skopje's rapprochement with the European Union, the Zoran Zaev government (2017-2022) authorized the removal of references to the "Bulgarian fascist occupation" from dozens of local monuments to the heroes and victims of the war. In his public speeches Mr. Zaev repeatedly called for this wording to be replaced for the neutral term "administration" that suits the Bulgarians.

In April 2022, amidst the aggravation of such contradictions with Bulgaria, cultural clubs of the Bulgarian national minority were opened in North Macedonia (Bitola and Ohrid) named after Ivan Mihailov (a 20th century political figure who denied the existence of a Macedonian nation and was known among Macedonians as a Hitlerite collaborator) and Tsar Boris III (an ally of Nazi Germany, during whose reign Bulgarian troops occupied a large part of present-day North Macedonia). At the same time, a delegation of the Bulgarian government, headed by then Prime Minister Kiril Petkov, attended the event in Bitola.¹²⁴⁵

This provoked an extremely negative reaction of the Macedonian public¹²⁴⁶ and led to the adoption by the Parliament of amendments to the Law on Political Parties (2004)¹²⁴⁷ and the Law on Associations and Foundations (2010).¹²⁴⁸ According to them, the use of names and abbreviations inciting hatred on the basis of race, religion, etc., as well as glorifying the ideas of fascism, Nazism and their

¹²⁴⁵ <https://rossaprimavera.ru/news/9274b2ff> .

¹²⁴⁶ <https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/politika/vo-bitola-protesti-protiv-otvoranjeto-na-bugarski-klub-so-imeto-na-fashistot>; <https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/politika/zapochna-protestot-vo-ohrid-se-izvikuva-predavnici-fashisti-nadvor-od-makedonija>

¹²⁴⁷ <https://www.sobranie.mk/detali-na-materijal.nsp?param=31aeb888-6c06-4de1-bc84-a98c3a4d7b79>

¹²⁴⁸ <https://www.sobranie.mk/detali-na-materijal.nsp?param=758c8d89-692a-4d79-86cd-4014b480dd85>

adherents is prohibited. At the same time, previously established organizations are ordered to bring their names in full compliance with the amendments.

This, in turn, has caused discontent in Bulgaria, where it is claimed that their compatriots in North Macedonia are subjected to systematic discrimination and harassment.

The following incidents have fuelled the fire.

In May 2022, the opposition Left Forces party filed a lawsuit against the chairman of the Ivan Mihailov Cultural Center, L. Gergievski, accusing him of inciting interethnic discord by posting numerous publications on the Internet, which, according to the party, are offensive to Macedonians.

On 4 June 2022, during a visit to Skopje by Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Teodora Genchovska, the entrance door of the Association was set on fire in protest by a well-known singer in North Macedonia, Lambe Alabakovski. This prompted the Bulgarian leadership to declare that the harassment of their compatriots in the neighbouring country continued.

On January 19, 2023, the secretary of the Tsar Boris III Club in Ohrid, H. Pendikov, was beaten.¹²⁴⁹ The Bulgarian side claims that the actions of the attackers were motivated by ethnic hatred, the North Macedonian law enforcement authorities are conducting an investigation.

A trend common to European countries is becoming characteristic of North Macedonia: an increasing interest in the ideas of the right-wing extremist "subculture" among young people. This is most noticeable among sports fans. As a rule, they are quite mobile, highly active and have a pronounced propensity for violence.

An incident involving the Albanian Shverceri group is illustrative. In November 2019, during its 30th anniversary celebration, members of this group trashed the Macedonian National Theatre, causing noticeable material damage to the building.¹²⁵⁰

¹²⁴⁹ <https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/sudstvo/napagjachite-na-pendikov-kje-odgovaraat-za-krivichno-delo-od-omraza>

¹²⁵⁰ https://polpred.com/?ns=1&ns_id=3793495.

At the same time, radical manifestations are also characteristic of Macedonian supporters. In June 2019, members of the Komiti group, celebrating the victory at the European tournament of the handball club Vardar, were chanting: "Death to the cursed Shqiptars¹²⁵¹", "A good Shqiptar is a dead Shqiptar".¹²⁵²

In July 2018, a Komiti activist was murdered. According to human rights organizations, the crime was directly linked to animosity between fan communities. Its coverage on social media was accompanied by a surge of nationalist rhetoric.¹²⁵³

The issue of neo-Nazism manifestations among the new generation is being discussed by the Union of Fighters of the 1941-1945 Macedonian National Liberation War and its successors, the North Macedonia's main veterans' organization. Its representatives emphasize the topicality of this issue, pointing out the need to address and prevent it within the current public youth policy.

Ethnic conflicts remain a wide-spread phenomenon in North Macedonia. They are mostly recorded by law enforcement agencies as domestic crimes. Human rights and international organizations, such as the local Helsinki Committee office and OSCE Mission to Skopje, have repeatedly pointed out to this fact in their reports, but the trend is still there despite amendments to the Criminal Code of North Macedonia penalizing hate crimes as a separate offence.

Xenophobic graffiti is a common phenomenon that the authorities combat: in January 2023, on the occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the head of the municipality of Karposh (Skopje), together with the U.S. Ambassador to North Macedonia, participated in a campaign to remove anti-Semitic wall inscriptions, including swastikas.¹²⁵⁴

The desecration or destruction of monuments to the heroes and victims of World War II is generally uncommon in North Macedonia. □ Nevertheless, such cases were repeatedly recorded in the town of Tetovo (the majority of residents are ethnic Albanians). In September 2022, unknown vandals damaged the Victory

¹²⁵¹ "Shiptars" is a pejorative name for Albanians.

¹²⁵² https://polpred.com/?ns=1&ns_id=3793495.

¹²⁵³ Ibid.

¹²⁵⁴ <https://infomax.mk/за-чист-карпош-агелер-и-јакимовски-бри>

(Revolution) Monument, a memorial in the city center dedicated to the fallen soldiers of the 1941-1944 Liberation War.¹²⁵⁵ The same site was desecrated in 2018 by fans of the soccer club "Shkendija" who sprayed graffiti with "Great Albanian" slogans¹²⁵⁶, and in 2021, ahead of the municipal elections, it was covered with campaign posters of one of the parties of the Albanian political bloc "Fidelity", whose candidate B. Kasami was subsequently elected mayor of Tetovo.¹²⁵⁷ The city branch of the Union of Liberation War fighters consistently - but to no avail - expressed outrage at the incidents, calling for the perpetrators to be found and punished.

Another story is related to Tetovo: since 2005, the busts of two NOAVM heroes T. Tsipovski and S. Stojnic, killed by Albanian collaborators in 1943, have been missing from the town's central square, removed by the local authorities under the pretext of reconstruction. Before that, the busts were systematically desecrated. Despite regular appeals of the Union of Liberation War fighters, the permission to install them in the same or another place has not been received yet.¹²⁵⁸

Concerns of veteran associations were caused by the repeated theft (with the first case reported in 2019) of the bust of the Liberation War hero N. Gergieva in the municipality of Kisela Voda (Skopje) in October 2022. The director of the school where the monument to the Macedonian guerrilla fighter is installed does not rule out a political background.¹²⁵⁹

¹²⁵⁵ <https://kanal5.com.mk/oshteten-spomenikot-na-revolucijata-vo-tetovo/a548274>

¹²⁵⁶ <https://sdk.mk/index.php/dopisna-mrezha/isharan-spomenikot-na-revolucijata-vo-tetovo-politsijata-ne-reagira-oti-nikoj-ne-prijavil/>

¹²⁵⁷ <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/foto-spomenikot-na-revolucijata-vo-tetovo-ischkrtan-i-oblepen-so-predizborni-plakati/>

¹²⁵⁸ <https://alfa.mk/бистите-на-борците-од-ноб-никако-да-се-в>

¹²⁵⁹ <https://sitel.com.mk/ukradena-i-bistata-na-nevena-georgieva-dunja-borcite-baraat-seriozen-odnos-od-drzhavata>

Slovakia

The social division caused by the outcomes of World War II still remains in Slovenia. In 1941 the territory of the country was occupied by Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Horthy's Hungary. Part of its youth was forcefully mobilized by the invaders, with the other part becoming the partisans. Numerous bishops of Catholic Church have supported the oppressors, deeming the "spread of Communism" as the primary threat to them. The forces that openly sympathize the "Home Guard" and "armed anti-Communist militia" – units formed by German and Italian invaders. Political disciples of Nazi collaborationists try their best to whitewash their actions and recognize all who died in battles with anti-Fascist partisans as "victims of revolutionary violence", with elevating some of them to the level of "true fighters for Catholic faith". Some electronic and printed media publish the articles that raise the topic of equalizing the Communism and Nazism and glorifying the collaborationists as "fighters against the Communist evil".

At the same time in Slovenia the veteran organizations possess significant influence. The most numerous of them is the Union of the Associations for the Values of the National Liberation Movement of Slovenia (ZZB NOB). It unites over 40000 members. Among them, there are veterans of the anti-Fascist resistance (several thousand people) as well as the representatives of following generations. As their objective they see the preservation of historic and cultural legacy of the partisan movement and preventing the justification of crimes of Nazism and Fascism and spread of their ideology in present-day world. ZZB NOB, together with other public memorial and military associations, is the member of the Coordinating Committee for Veteran and Patriotic Organizations of Slovenia which plays a significant role in social and political life of the country.

However, no matter how influential the veteran organizations might be, they are not always safe from the risks of direct pressure of the country's official authorities. In particular, their activities received greater attention due to a sharp strengthening of the Russophobic bias of Janez Janša's government (remained in power from March 2020 to April 2022) against the background of the events in

Ukraine and the launch of special military operation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. In early March 2022 the Ministry of Defence of Slovenia sent them a circular letter recommending to refrain from inviting the Russian officials and citizens to military commemorative events. According to the document, failure to meet this condition would've entailed an automatic non-participation of the Slovenian Armed Forces.

In a general way, each time the right-wing political forces come to power it is accompanied by a surge of right-wing radical activity. Back in the 1990s and then in 2005-2008, the right-wing political forces attempted to ban the symbols of the anti-Fascist movement (as well as, indirectly, those of the USSR and Red Army) to no avail.

In 2012-2013 the right-wing government adopted a decision (which was later cancelled) to ban the red star as a symbol of anti-Fascist resistance of the Slovenians during the World War II at the official ceremonies (this restriction was not applied to Russian/Soviet monuments and events) and did not let the representatives of veteran organizations with partisan banners participate in the commemorative event in honour of the Statehood Day on 25 June 2012.

In 2021, on the eve of celebrations in honour of 30th anniversary of Slovenia's independence, Janez Janša's centre-right government once again openly declared it unacceptable to demonstrate the banners with five-pointed stars at the event. As a result, it was boycotted by ZZB NOB, a number of other veteran organizations and several left-wing politicians.

Besides, starting from 2009 the representatives of right-wing forces have been unsuccessfully attempting to push a document "in support" of European Parliament resolution on European conscience and totalitarianism.¹²⁶⁰ Slovenian MEPs have supported the European Parliament resolution on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe and urged the National Assembly (Parliament) of Slovenia to take its provisions as a guide for action.

¹²⁶⁰ In 2009, the Slovenian National Assembly "took the text of this document in consideration"

In 2020-2021, in line with a revisionist approach to the history of WWII, the central authorities adopted, as official, the practice to laying wreaths to the monument to soldiers of collaborationist Slovenian National Army (formally active from January to May 1945 with one of its parts being under command of Wehrmacht, and the other one – under direct command of SS¹²⁶¹) in Žale memorial park in Ljubljana¹²⁶². Meanwhile, the refusal of Janez Janša, who served as Prime Minister at the time, to lay flowers in honour of anti-Fascist fallen partisans during a commemorative ceremony held on 2 November 2021 - Day of Remembrance of the Dead, marked annually.

Notable also is the pseudo-scientific activity of extreme right-wing politician Roman Lejak, mayor of Radenci Municipality, who filmed a documentary and published a book under the title “The Myth of Jasenovac” in 2018. In his works, allegedly based on the documents available in the archives, he attempted to dispel the “propagandist manipulations” with the data on the number of victims of the Croatian death camp Jasenovac which had been established in 1941 by the Fascist Ustaše regime and German occupation administration for genocide of the Serbs, Jews and Roma. Slovenian expert community, media and representatives of the civil society have strongly condemned R.Lejak’s attempt to rehabilitate Fascism. Croatia regarded R.Lejak’s actions as revanchism and an insult to the memory of victims of genocide and banned him from entering the country.

In 2021, the Slovene Association of Journalists filed a complaint to the police against Norma Brščič, wife of right-wing politician Bernard Brščič and TV host of the political talk show "Faktor" on the Slovenian “TV3” channel, for publicly inciting hatred and intolerance. During the show, the host made racist remarks, including on Holocaust denial. There are some cases of desecration of monuments to anti-Fascist partisans who fought against the Italian and German invaders during World War II. For example, in early September 2021 in Ljubljana, a monument to the 24 hostages – victims of shootings carried out by the Nazi

¹²⁶¹ In 1946, this organization was recognized as criminal by the Nuremberg Trial (judges appointed by the UK, USSR, USA and France).

¹²⁶² Garda Slovenske vojske v imenu Janše položila venec domobrancem. Dnevnik. 2 November 2021 <https://www.dnevnik.si/1042976236>

occupiers on 13 October 1942 as a response to the murder of the political activist and collaborator Marko Natlačen¹²⁶³ was vandalized. On the night of 3 July 2019, six different monuments commemorating the heroes and victims of the Yugoslav People's Liberation War during World War II were desecrated in different parts of the capital city. This act of vandalism was condemned by the President of Slovenia and representatives of the country's Ministry of Culture¹²⁶⁴.

In January 2021 in Ljubljana, unidentified vandals damaged the Eternal Flame gas burner installed at the monument in the Žale memorial complex to the Sons of Russia and the Soviet Union who died in Slovenia during World War I and World War II. The municipal authorities immediately took actions to completely restore the memorial.

The activities of neo-Nazi groups in Slovenia are generally marginal. There is no official evidence of them being associated with any influential political forces. Scattered radical associations include "Here – Slovenia", "Bounty Hunters", "Autonomous Nationalists of Slovenia" and "Identity Generations of Slovenia" – local division of the all-European youth movement with extreme right views and others. There are also followers of European neo-Nazi organization "Blood and Honor". In recent years they use mainly social networks (first and foremost Facebook) to promote their ideas and maintain contacts. Shielding themselves with pseudo-patriotic slogans, these organizations oppose migrants, Muslims, Roma, immigrants from the former republics of Yugoslavia, as well as their ideological opponents.

During the 77th session of the UN General Assembly in December 2022, the Slovenian delegation, in line with the common position of the EU member states, for the first time voted against the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" introduced by

¹²⁶³ Oskrunili spomenik v središču Ljubljane. Delo. 8 September 2021.

<https://www.delo.si/novice/slovenija/oskrunili-spomenik-v-srediscu-ljubljane/> ;

Vandalski pohod od spomenika do spomenika. Delo. 8 September 2021.

<https://www.delo.si/novice/slovenija/vandalski-pohod-od-spomenika-do-spomenika/>

¹²⁶⁴ V Ljubljani oskrunili več spomenikov. MMC RTV SLO. 3 July 2019.

<https://www.rtv slo.si/crna-kronika/v-ljubljani-oskrunili-vec-spomenikov/493550>

Russia and other co-authors (traditionally it abstained from the vote also, in line with the common position of the EU member states).

Public rejection of attempts to falsify history is widely spread in Slovenia, which, to an extent, contributes to preservation of years-long tradition of holding the military-memorial events with the participation of Slovenian officials. For example, on 28 October 2022, on the eve of the Day of Remembrance of the Dead, Russian Ambassador to Slovenia Timur Eyvazov, Russian Embassy staff members together with Zoran Janković, deputy mayors Dejan Crnek and Aleš Čerin, Slovenia's Minister of Defence Marjan Šarec and representatives of Austria's and Serbia's Embassies, took part in mourning ceremony at the monuments dedicated to World War I and World War II in Žale memorial park. The wreaths from Russian Embassy, leadership of the Slovenian capital city and local veterans were laid to monument of the Sons of Russia and the Soviet Union, who died on Slovenian soil during the First and Second World Wars.

On 8 January 2023, upon the invitation of the veteran organization, Russian Embassy staff members took part in the commemorative ceremony, organized by ZZB NOB, in honour of the 81st anniversary of the first serious direct combat encounter of Slovenian partisans with German invaders in the village of Dražgoše (Municipality of Železniki). The ceremony was attended by President of Slovenia Nataša Pirc Musar, President of the National Council Marko Lotrič, President of the National Assembly Urška Klakočar Zupančič, first President of Slovenia Milan Kučan, Minister of Culture Asta Vrečko, Minister of Labour Luka Mesec, Members of Parliament, representatives of the public and veteran organizations of Slovenia, France and Croatia.

WWII International Research Centre in Maribor which is located in the former building of Hitler's "death camp" where thousands of Red Army soldiers were tortured by the Nazis during the war, makes a significant contribution to preservation of memory of the events of the war and our country's decisive input in defeating Nazism. Thematic international conferences, movie screenings and guided tours for school students are organized at the Centre on regular basis.

Among the recent events – international videoconference linking Maribor, Israel, Sofia, Minsk and Moscow, organized by Department for External Economic and International Relations of Moscow, entitled “On countering the falsification of history, patriotic upbringing, volunteer initiatives – topical areas of supporting the Russian-speaking youth in foreign countries” (May 2023), exhibition “Escaping the Oblivion” (December 2022), based on the archive materials regarding Stalag-XVIII-D concentration camp, and exhibition “To Survive Against All Odds!” (January 2023) on the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day and anniversary of Red Army’s liberation of prisoners of Auschwitz death camp. The opening ceremony of the latter event, organized in cooperation with the Central Museum of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, was marked with a video address by Director of Victory Museum, Deputy Secretary of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation Alexander Shkolnik. A series of round tables, including those for studying youth, press-conferences with concentration camps survivors, meetings with veterans, screenings of Soviet archive footage, dedicated to International Day of the liberation of Nazi concentration camps (April) and Victory Day (May) were held.

As for manifestations of xenophobia and discrimination, after Russia launched the special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine in February 2022, a number of cases of Russophobia were recorded in the country, both at the household and official level. A number of cases of bullying of the Russian children from the side of their classmates of Slovenian and Ukrainian origin took place in schools. On 19 March 2022 the authorities arrested a sailing yacht belonging to a Russian citizen that was about to start for Russia. The need to comply with the law banning the export the luxury goods, which the yacht was estimated as, from the EU customs zone was given as a pretext. In December 2022 the Slovenian side refused to issue visas for Synodal Choir of the Moscow Patriarchate, which was to perform in Maribor and Ljubljana, with the wording; “a threat to public order and national security”. However, in general, these negative

tendencies, as well as the attempts to introduce “cancelling of Russian culture” failed to find wide support of Slovenian public.

Despite the adoption by Slovenia of legislative acts prohibiting racially motivated discriminatory hate speech, racist and xenophobic language against persons belonging to minorities, as well as migrants, refugees and Roma was noticed in public statements of some politicians. This was noted, in particular, by Human Rights Committee¹²⁶⁵.

A number of serious flaws of legal regulation of criminal prosecution for using the hate speech became a source for criticism from the side of European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) which functions within the framework of Council of Europe. Firstly, according to Article 197 (1) of the Criminal Code of Slovenia, such act is penalized under the condition that it is committed “in a way that would threaten or violate the law and public order, or with use of force, threats or with resorting to abusive language or verbal insult”. Secondly, a legal opinion of Slovenian Prosecutor General’s Office, issued in 2013, states that the conditions provided in the said Article must be fulfilled collectively, not alternatively, with mandatory requirement being the cause-effect relations between the hate speech and a threat to public order.

In 2021, while evaluating Slovenia’s fulfilment of recommendations that are subject to interim follow-up, ECRI noted with interest the creation of a working group within the framework of Slovenian Prosecutor General’s Office aimed at, among other things, harmonizing the various practices of prosecution of persons who had resorted to hate speech. Moreover, the Commission welcomed the decision of the Supreme Court of Slovenia, adopted on 4 July 2019, containing a wider interpretation of Article 297 of the national Criminal Code. It provides, in particular, for regarding the aforesaid criteria for prosecution as alternative, while the perpetrator’s behaviour, according to the Court, doesn’t have to represent a specific risk to public order. Following this decision, the law enforcement agencies

¹²⁶⁵ Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Slovenia. April 2016
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FSVN%2FCO%2F3&Lang=ru

received corresponding instructions from Prosecutor General's Office of Slovenia. Nevertheless, the experts noted with concern that the proposal to officially and fully harmonize the earlier legal opinion with the new Court's decision was declined by the Prosecutor's Office. Besides, nothing has significantly changed in reality: in spite of tangible increase of the hate speech cases under investigation by police, the volume of indictments, issued by the Prosecutor's Office, remains relatively low¹²⁶⁶.

Moreover, the absence of an effective mean of legal protection in case if the Prosecutor's Office declines the victim's complaint or decides not to launch a criminal investigation is a flaw. In 2005, the High Court of Ljubljana stated that a physical person may not initiate the investigation in case of hate speech or incitement of violence. In 2013, in its legal opinion the General Prosecutor's Office of Slovenia determined that in case the hate speech is directed against a community or a group of people as a whole, individual persons belonging to such a community or a group, may not be regarded as victims.

Among the repeated recommendations of ECRI o Slovenian authorities – to organize the accumulation of disaggregated data for the purposes of combatting the racial discrimination. In 2021, experts had to note the lack of progress on this track as well: at the time of preparing of the Commission's concluding observations, the country was not planning to adopt the legislation that would ensure such accumulation while observing the principles of confidentiality, informed consent and voluntary self-identification¹²⁶⁷.

There is still no adoption of an amendment to the Law on the Mass Media which would determine the way to protect public interests in case of publication of hate inciting materials in the media, including the remedial actions: immediate removal of illegal content and sanctions against the media that committed the violation.

¹²⁶⁶ ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in Respect of Slovenia Subject to Interim Follow-Up. Adopted on 7 December 2021. Published on 3 March 2022.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a59af2>

¹²⁶⁷ Ibid.

ECRI highlighted several cases of religious intolerance in Slovenia. Thus, for example, the construction site of the country's first Islamic cultural centre and mosque in Ljubljana was vandalized several times. The government, NGOs and religious communities condemned the perpetrators' actions and called for respect for cultural diversity. Some Christian shrines were also desecrated. In January 2021, unidentified persons intentionally damaged unique wall murals in the Church of St. Nicholas in Ljubljana.

The discussion with regards to wearing the hijabs in healthcare institutions is still under way in human rights community. Since this matter is not properly governed, the Health Ministry is encouraged to develop a corresponding statute that would systematically govern the matter of banning or enabling the wearing of hijabs for medical workers throughout the country.

To this day the issue of the “erased” – former citizens of Yugoslavia who had permanent registration in Slovenia prior to February 1992 and, in accordance with the Law “On Foreigners” were removed from the list of permanent residents – is still on human rights agenda. The amendments to national legislation adopted in 2010 allowed to restore the status of 12000 people who belonged to this category. According to Slovenian human rights advocate, there are over 25,6 thousand of such persons in overall¹²⁶⁸.

In 2012, while considering the complaint by a group of the “erased” (Kurić and Others v. Slovenia), the Grand Chamber of European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) established that Slovenia violated the right to respect for private and family life and the right to an effective remedy jointly with the prohibition of discrimination, enshrined in Article 14 of the Convention. ECHR obliged the Slovenian government to develop and introduce the algorithm of compensation payments to the “erased” within a year.

¹²⁶⁸ Izbrisani–informacije in dokumenti
<https://www.mirovni-institut.si/izbrisani/>

Pursuant to the decisions of ECHR and Constitutional Court of Slovenia a corresponding law was adopted and applied since 18 June 2014. In overall, more than 15,5 million euros were paid as compensations.

In 2017, President of Slovenian parliament even publicly apologized to the “erased”.

However, the representatives of this group in Slovenia face a significant number of difficulties even today. This includes problems with housing, the amount of compensations, legal status of close relatives, respect for social and economic rights etc. In particular, it was recommended for Slovenia to extend the effect of the law adopted in 2010 that governs the status of the “erased” on their children residing beyond the borders of the country and allow all the “erased” to restore their legal status with no administrative restrictions, ensure the full compensation of damage as well as access to education, professional training and employment.

ECRI positively noted the presence of a response to incidents of hostility and incitement to hatred, including against migrants and asylum seekers in Slovenian society. So, in 2017, the municipality of Nova Gorica, in response to the distribution of stickers containing offensive slogans addressed to refugees, issued an order to remove them immediately. In May 2018, about a hundred people took part in a peaceful demonstration in Ljubljana, acting against the use of hate speech by the participants in the pre-term parliamentary elections¹²⁶⁹.

In 1998, Slovenia ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and to this day applies its provisions to the people of Hungarian, Italian and Roma origin. However, its practical implementation has a number of flaws.

For example, despite that the programmes in Hungarian, Italian and Romany are present on radio and television, the duration and frequency of broadcasts in Hungarian and Romany are estimated by the experts of the Advisory Committee

¹²⁶⁹ ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in Respect of Slovenia Subject to Interim Follow-Up. Adopted on 7 December 2021. Published on 3 March 2022.
<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a59af2>

on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (AC FCNM) as insufficient. Besides, AC FCNM noted that languages of other national minorities should also be heard on radio and television and the broadcasted programmes should include the information about them to facilitate the society's consolidation and better mutual understanding¹²⁷⁰.

Despite the requests for official recognition from the side of German-speaking ethnic group, as well as Albanian, Bosnian, Macedonian, Serbian, Croatian and Montenegrin national communities, the authorities deny them the status of national minorities and granting the corresponding protection¹²⁷¹.

According to the estimates of the international human rights control mechanisms, the status of the Roma community remains one of the most acute human rights problems in Slovenia. So far, Ljubljana failed to achieve significant progress in improving the situation of this ethnic group. Overwhelming majority of Roma still has low social status and is subject to various forms of discrimination.

In May 2022, AC FCNM stated that the number of Roma settlements which lack electricity, water supply and sanitation has not reduced in Slovenia since 2017. Inadequate living conditions slow the process of integration of this ethnic group into society and have a devastating effect on the quality of life of its individual representatives¹²⁷². For example, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is concerned over poor health of Roma women which is tied, according to experts, among other things, with social and economic factors such as unhealthy living conditions, low education level and poverty¹²⁷³.

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination draws the attention to the fact that education system's coverage over Roma children is lower than

¹²⁷⁰ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities Fifth Opinion on Slovenia, adopted on 18 May 2022.

<https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-slovenia-en-/1680a830d8>

¹²⁷¹ Ibid.

¹²⁷² Ibid.

¹²⁷³ Concluding observations of Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the seventh periodic report of Slovenia. March 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FSVN%2FCO%2F7&Lang=ru

country's average coverage¹²⁷⁴. Meanwhile, AC FCNM experts note the authorities' efforts to enrol them into pre-school education institutions, although there are fewer Roma children in kindergartens than those of other ethnic groups¹²⁷⁵.

In its report of 2020 the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights notes that there are disproportionally more Roma children (in relation to share in population's general composition) in specialized education institutions for students with psychic disorder. Officially, inadmissibility of segregation in schools was envisaged for in the Strategy of Recovery and Education for Roma in 2004. A year earlier, it was prohibited to create classes for students belonging uniquely to that national minority.

According to CEDAW concluding observations, Roma girls often become victims of early and/or forced marriages and early pregnancy¹²⁷⁶. In this regard, Slovenian Office for National Minorities organized consultation and training courses on the matter of negative consequences of this harmful practice that still remains in the country¹²⁷⁷.

Roma access to labour market remains limited. According to human rights organizations, the average unemployment level within this ethnic group is 95%¹²⁷⁸. Against this background, the implementation of large-scale employment programmes in Slovenia for Roma, aimed at developing the job search skills, carrier guidance and qualifications upgrade¹²⁷⁹, is a positive moment. At the same

¹²⁷⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eighth to eleventh periodic reports of Slovenia. January 2016

https://tandis.odihr.pl/explore?bitstream_id=23537&handle=20.500.12389/20947&provider=iiif-image#c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&xywh=168%2C153%2C2819%2C1305

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¹²⁷⁶ Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Slovenia of Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. March 2023.

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¹²⁷⁷ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights Fundamental Rights Report -2023

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

¹²⁷⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eighth to eleventh periodic reports of Slovenia. January 2016

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¹²⁷⁹ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights Fundamental Rights Report -2023

time, in view of the aforesaid opinion of the AC FCNM on Slovenia, expressed in May 2022, the depressing situation with unemployment of Roma population of this country hardly saw any significant changes over the last six years.

In his annual report on situation with human rights in Slovenia Peter Svetina, Human Rights Ombudsman, has repeatedly highlighted the need for a more active cooperation between the state and local authorities in resolving the issues related to Roma. In particular, he noted inadequate legal and municipal services in Roma settlements.

In 2021, Ombudsman managed to make the Government task the municipalities with introducing detailed specialized programmes and measures in accordance with the Law on Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia. In parallel the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport introduced the amendments into corresponding rules and approved the establishment of the position of Aide on the Matters of Roma in kindergartens, primary schools and primary schools with adapted programmes next academic year.

Slovenia

The social division caused by the outcomes of World War II still remains in Slovenia. In 1941 the territory of the country was occupied by Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Horthy's Hungary. Part of its youth was forcefully mobilized by the invaders, with the other part becoming the partisans. Numerous bishops of Catholic Church have supported the oppressors, deeming the "spread of Communism" as the primary threat to them. The forces that openly sympathize the "Home Guard" and "armed anti-Communist militia" – units formed by German and Italian invaders. Political disciples of Nazi collaborationists try their best to whitewash their actions and recognize all who died in battles with anti-Fascist partisans as "victims of revolutionary violence", with elevating some of them to the level of "true fighters for Catholic faith". Some electronic and printed media publish the articles that raise the topic of equalizing the Communism and Nazism and glorifying the collaborationists as "fighters against the Communist evil".

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However, no matter how influential the veteran organizations might be, they are not always safe from the risks of direct pressure of the country's official authorities. In particular, their activities received greater attention due to a sharp strengthening of the Russophobic bias of Janez Janša's government (remained in power from March 2020 to April 2022) against the background of the events in

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Besides, starting from 2009 the representatives of right-wing forces have been unsuccessfully attempting to push a document "in support" of European Parliament resolution on European conscience and totalitarianism.¹²⁸⁰ Slovenian MEPs have supported the European Parliament resolution on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe and urged the National Assembly (Parliament) of Slovenia to take its provisions as a guide for action.

¹²⁸⁰ In 2009, the Slovenian National Assembly "took the text of this document in consideration"

In 2020-2021, in line with a revisionist approach to the history of WWII, the central authorities adopted, as official, the practice to laying wreaths to the monument to soldiers of collaborationist Slovenian National Army (formally active from January to May 1945 with one of its parts being under command of Wehrmacht, and the other one – under direct command of SS¹²⁸¹) in Žale memorial park in Ljubljana¹²⁸². Meanwhile, the refusal of Janez Janša, who served as Prime Minister at the time, to lay flowers in honour of anti-Fascist fallen partisans during a commemorative ceremony held on 2 November 2021 - Day of Remembrance of the Dead, marked annually.

Notable also is the pseudo-scientific activity of extreme right-wing politician Roman Lejak, mayor of Radenci Municipality, who filmed a documentary and published a book under the title “The Myth of Jasenovac” in 2018. In his works, allegedly based on the documents available in the archives, he attempted to dispel the “propagandist manipulations” with the data on the number of victims of the Croatian death camp Jasenovac which had been established in 1941 by the Fascist Ustaše regime and German occupation administration for genocide of the Serbs, Jews and Roma. Slovenian expert community, media and representatives of the civil society have strongly condemned R.Lejak’s attempt to rehabilitate Fascism. Croatia regarded R.Lejak’s actions as revanchism and an insult to the memory of victims of genocide and banned him from entering the country.

In 2021, the Slovene Association of Journalists filed a complaint to the police against Norma Brščič, wife of right-wing politician Bernard Brščič and TV host of the political talk show "Faktor" on the Slovenian “TV3” channel, for publicly inciting hatred and intolerance. During the show, the host made racist remarks, including on Holocaust denial. There are some cases of desecration of monuments to anti-Fascist partisans who fought against the Italian and German invaders during World War II. For example, in early September 2021 in Ljubljana, a monument to the 24 hostages – victims of shootings carried out by the Nazi

¹²⁸¹ In 1946, this organization was recognized as criminal by the Nuremberg Trial (judges appointed by the UK, USSR, USA and France).

¹²⁸² Garda Slovenske vojske v imenu Janše položila venec domobrancem. Dnevnik. 2 November 2021 <https://www.dnevnik.si/1042976236>

occupiers on 13 October 1942 as a response to the murder of the political activist and collaborator Marko Natlačen¹²⁸³ was vandalized. On the night of 3 July 2019, six different monuments commemorating the heroes and victims of the Yugoslav People's Liberation War during World War II were desecrated in different parts of the capital city. This act of vandalism was condemned by the President of Slovenia and representatives of the country's Ministry of Culture¹²⁸⁴.

In January 2021 in Ljubljana, unidentified vandals damaged the Eternal Flame gas burner installed at the monument in the Žale memorial complex to the Sons of Russia and the Soviet Union who died in Slovenia during World War I and World War II. The municipal authorities immediately took actions to completely restore the memorial.

The activities of neo-Nazi groups in Slovenia are generally marginal. There is no official evidence of them being associated with any influential political forces. Scattered radical associations include "Here – Slovenia", "Bounty Hunters", "Autonomous Nationalists of Slovenia" and "Identity Generations of Slovenia" – local division of the all-European youth movement with extreme right views and others. There are also followers of European neo-Nazi organization "Blood and Honor". In recent years they use mainly social networks (first and foremost Facebook) to promote their ideas and maintain contacts. Shielding themselves with pseudo-patriotic slogans, these organizations oppose migrants, Muslims, Roma, immigrants from the former republics of Yugoslavia, as well as their ideological opponents.

During the 77th session of the UN General Assembly in December 2022, the Slovenian delegation, in line with the common position of the EU member states, for the first time voted against the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" introduced by

¹²⁸³ Oskrunili spomenik v središču Ljubljane. Delo. 8 September 2021.

<https://www.delo.si/novice/slovenija/oskrunili-spomenik-v-srediscu-ljubljane/> ;

Vandalski pohod od spomenika do spomenika. Delo. 8 September 2021.

<https://www.delo.si/novice/slovenija/vandalski-pohod-od-spomenika-do-spomenika/>

¹²⁸⁴ V Ljubljani oskrunili več spomenikov. MMC RTV SLO. 3 July 2019.

<https://www.rtv slo.si/crna-kronika/v-ljubljani-oskrunili-vec-spomenikov/493550>

Russia and other co-authors (traditionally it abstained from the vote also, in line with the common position of the EU member states).

Public rejection of attempts to falsify history is widely spread in Slovenia, which, to an extent, contributes to preservation of years-long tradition of holding the military-memorial events with the participation of Slovenian officials. For example, on 28 October 2022, on the eve of the Day of Remembrance of the Dead, Russian Ambassador to Slovenia Timur Eyvazov, Russian Embassy staff members together with Zoran Janković, deputy mayors Dejan Crnek and Aleš Čerin, Slovenia's Minister of Defence Marjan Šarec and representatives of Austria's and Serbia's Embassies, took part in mourning ceremony at the monuments dedicated to World War I and World War II in Žale memorial park. The wreaths from Russian Embassy, leadership of the Slovenian capital city and local veterans were laid to monument of the Sons of Russia and the Soviet Union, who died on Slovenian soil during the First and Second World Wars.

On 8 January 2023, upon the invitation of the veteran organization, Russian Embassy staff members took part in the commemorative ceremony, organized by ZZB NOB, in honour of the 81st anniversary of the first serious direct combat encounter of Slovenian partisans with German invaders in the village of Dražgoše (Municipality of Železniki). The ceremony was attended by President of Slovenia Nataša Pirc Musar, President of the National Council Marko Lotrič, President of the National Assembly Urška Klakočar Zupančič, first President of Slovenia Milan Kučan, Minister of Culture Asta Vrečko, Minister of Labour Luka Mesec, Members of Parliament, representatives of the public and veteran organizations of Slovenia, France and Croatia.

WWII International Research Centre in Maribor which is located in the former building of Hitler's "death camp" where thousands of Red Army soldiers were tortured by the Nazis during the war, makes a significant contribution to preservation of memory of the events of the war and our country's decisive input in defeating Nazism. Thematic international conferences, movie screenings and guided tours for school students are organized at the Centre on regular basis.

Among the recent events – international videoconference linking Maribor, Israel, Sofia, Minsk and Moscow, organized by Department for External Economic and International Relations of Moscow, entitled “On countering the falsification of history, patriotic upbringing, volunteer initiatives – topical areas of supporting the Russian-speaking youth in foreign countries” (May 2023), exhibition “Escaping the Oblivion” (December 2022), based on the archive materials regarding Stalag-XVIII-D concentration camp, and exhibition “To Survive Against All Odds!” (January 2023) on the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day and anniversary of Red Army’s liberation of prisoners of Auschwitz death camp. The opening ceremony of the latter event, organized in cooperation with the Central Museum of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, was marked with a video address by Director of Victory Museum, Deputy Secretary of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation Alexander Shkolnik. A series of round tables, including those for studying youth, press-conferences with concentration camps survivors, meetings with veterans, screenings of Soviet archive footage, dedicated to International Day of the liberation of Nazi concentration camps (April) and Victory Day (May) were held.

As for manifestations of xenophobia and discrimination, after Russia launched the special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine in February 2022, a number of cases of Russophobia were recorded in the country, both at the household and official level. A number of cases of bullying of the Russian children from the side of their classmates of Slovenian and Ukrainian origin took place in schools. On 19 March 2022 the authorities arrested a sailing yacht belonging to a Russian citizen that was about to start for Russia. The need to comply with the law banning the export the luxury goods, which the yacht was estimated as, from the EU customs zone was given as a pretext. In December 2022 the Slovenian side refused to issue visas for Synodal Choir of the Moscow Patriarchate, which was to perform in Maribor and Ljubljana, with the wording; “a threat to public order and national security”. However, in general, these negative

tendencies, as well as the attempts to introduce “cancelling of Russian culture” failed to find wide support of Slovenian public.

Despite the adoption by Slovenia of legislative acts prohibiting racially motivated discriminatory hate speech, racist and xenophobic language against persons belonging to minorities, as well as migrants, refugees and Roma was noticed in public statements of some politicians. This was noted, in particular, by Human Rights Committee¹²⁸⁵.

A number of serious flaws of legal regulation of criminal prosecution for using the hate speech became a source for criticism from the side of European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) which functions within the framework of Council of Europe. Firstly, according to Article 197 (1) of the Criminal Code of Slovenia, such act is penalized under the condition that it is committed “in a way that would threaten or violate the law and public order, or with use of force, threats or with resorting to abusive language or verbal insult”. Secondly, a legal opinion of Slovenian Prosecutor General’s Office, issued in 2013, states that the conditions provided in the said Article must be fulfilled collectively, not alternatively, with mandatory requirement being the cause-effect relations between the hate speech and a threat to public order.

In 2021, while evaluating Slovenia’s fulfilment of recommendations that are subject to interim follow-up, ECRI noted with interest the creation of a working group within the framework of Slovenian Prosecutor General’s Office aimed at, among other things, harmonizing the various practices of prosecution of persons who had resorted to hate speech. Moreover, the Commission welcomed the decision of the Supreme Court of Slovenia, adopted on 4 July 2019, containing a wider interpretation of Article 297 of the national Criminal Code. It provides, in particular, for regarding the aforesaid criteria for prosecution as alternative, while the perpetrator’s behaviour, according to the Court, doesn’t have to represent a specific risk to public order. Following this decision, the law enforcement agencies

¹²⁸⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee of Human Rights on the third periodic report of Slovenia. April 2016

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FSVN%2FCO%2F3&Lang=ru

received corresponding instructions from Prosecutor General's Office of Slovenia. Nevertheless, the experts noted with concern that the proposal to officially and fully harmonize the earlier legal opinion with the new Court's decision was declined by the Prosecutor's Office. Besides, nothing has significantly changed in reality: in spite of tangible increase of the hate speech cases under investigation by police, the volume of indictments, issued by the Prosecutor's Office, remains relatively low¹²⁸⁶.

Moreover, the absence of an effective mean of legal protection in case if the Prosecutor's Office declines the victim's complaint or decides not to launch a criminal investigation is a flaw. In 2005, the High Court of Ljubljana stated that a physical person may not initiate the investigation in case of hate speech or incitement of violence. In 2013, in its legal opinion the General Prosecutor's Office of Slovenia determined that in case the hate speech is directed against a community or a group of people as a whole, individual persons belonging to such a community or a group, may not be regarded as victims.

Among the repeated recommendations of ECRI to Slovenian authorities – to organize the accumulation of disaggregated data for the purposes of combatting the racial discrimination. In 2021, experts had to note the lack of progress on this track as well: at the time of preparing of the Commission's concluding observations, the country was not planning to adopt the legislation that would ensure such accumulation while observing the principles of confidentiality, informed consent and voluntary self-identification¹²⁸⁷.

There is still no adoption of an amendment to the Law on the Mass Media which would determine the way to protect public interests in case of publication of hate inciting materials in the media, including the remedial actions: immediate removal of illegal content and sanctions against the media that committed the violation.

¹²⁸⁶ ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in Respect of Slovenia Subject to Interim Follow-Up. Adopted on 7 December 2021. Published on 3 March 2022.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a59af2>

¹²⁸⁷ Ibid.

ECRI highlighted several cases of religious intolerance in Slovenia. Thus, for example, the construction site of the country's first Islamic cultural centre and mosque in Ljubljana was vandalized several times. The government, NGOs and religious communities condemned the perpetrators' actions and called for respect for cultural diversity. Some Christian shrines were also desecrated. In January 2021, unidentified persons intentionally damaged unique wall murals in the Church of St. Nicholas in Ljubljana.

The discussion with regards to wearing the hijabs in healthcare institutions is still under way in human rights community. Since this matter is not properly governed, the Health Ministry is encouraged to develop a corresponding statute that would systematically govern the matter of banning or enabling the wearing of hijabs for medical workers throughout the country.

To this day the issue of the “erased” – former citizens of Yugoslavia who had permanent registration in Slovenia prior to February 1992 and, in accordance with the Law “On Foreigners” were removed from the list of permanent residents – is still on human rights agenda. The amendments to national legislation adopted in 2010 allowed to restore the status of 12000 people who belonged to this category. According to Slovenian human rights advocate, there are over 25,6 thousand of such persons in overall¹²⁸⁸.

In 2012, while considering the complaint by a group of the “erased” (Kurić and Others v. Slovenia), the Grand Chamber of European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) established that Slovenia violated the right to respect for private and family life and the right to an effective remedy jointly with the prohibition of discrimination, enshrined in Article 14 of the Convention. ECHR obliged the Slovenian government to develop and introduce the algorithm of compensation payments to the “erased” within a year.

¹²⁸⁸ Izbrisani–informacije in dokumenti
<https://www.mirovni-institut.si/izbrisani/>

Pursuant to the decisions of ECHR and Constitutional Court of Slovenia a corresponding law was adopted and applied since 18 June 2014. In overall, more than 15,5 million euros were paid as compensations.

In 2017, President of Slovenian parliament even publicly apologized to the “erased”.

However, the representatives of this group in Slovenia face a significant number of difficulties even today. This includes problems with housing, the amount of compensations, legal status of close relatives, respect for social and economic rights etc. In particular, it was recommended for Slovenia to extend the effect of the law adopted in 2010 that governs the status of the “erased” on their children residing beyond the borders of the country and allow all the “erased” to restore their legal status with no administrative restrictions, ensure the full compensation of damage as well as access to education, professional training and employment.

ECRI positively noted the presence of a response to incidents of hostility and incitement to hatred, including against migrants and asylum seekers in Slovenian society. So, in 2017, the municipality of Nova Gorica, in response to the distribution of stickers containing offensive slogans addressed to refugees, issued an order to remove them immediately. In May 2018, about a hundred people took part in a peaceful demonstration in Ljubljana, acting against the use of hate speech by the participants in the pre-term parliamentary elections¹²⁸⁹.

In 1998, Slovenia ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and to this day applies its provisions to the people of Hungarian, Italian and Roma origin. However, its practical implementation has a number of flaws.

For example, despite that the programmes in Hungarian, Italian and Romany are present on radio and television, the duration and frequency of broadcasts in Hungarian and Romany are estimated by the experts of the Advisory Committee

¹²⁸⁹ ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in Respect of Slovenia Subject to Interim Follow-Up. Adopted on 7 December 2021. Published on 3 March 2022.
<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a59af2>

on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (AC FCNM) as insufficient. Besides, AC FCNM noted that languages of other national minorities should also be heard on radio and television and the broadcasted programmes should include the information about them to facilitate the society's consolidation and better mutual understanding¹²⁹⁰.

Despite the requests for official recognition from the side of German-speaking ethnic group, as well as Albanian, Bosnian, Macedonian, Serbian, Croatian and Montenegrin national communities, the authorities deny them the status of national minorities and granting the corresponding protection¹²⁹¹.

According to the estimates of the international human rights control mechanisms, the status of the Roma community remains one of the most acute human rights problems in Slovenia. So far, Ljubljana failed to achieve significant progress in improving the situation of this ethnic group. Overwhelming majority of Roma still has low social status and is subject to various forms of discrimination.

In May 2022, AC FCNM stated that the number of Roma settlements which lack electricity, water supply and sanitation has not reduced in Slovenia since 2017. Inadequate living conditions slow the process of integration of this ethnic group into society and have a devastating effect on the quality of life of its individual representatives¹²⁹². For example, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is concerned over poor health of Roma women which is tied, according to experts, among other things, with social and economic factors such as unhealthy living conditions, low education level and poverty¹²⁹³.

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination draws the attention to the fact that education system's coverage over Roma children is lower than

¹²⁹⁰ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities opinion on Slovenia (fifth cycle), adopted on 18 May 2022.

<https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-slovenia-en-/1680a830d8>

¹²⁹¹ Ibid.

¹²⁹² Ibid.

¹²⁹³ Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Slovenia of Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. March 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FSVN%2FCO%2F7&Lang=ru

country's average coverage¹²⁹⁴. Meanwhile, AC FCNM experts note the authorities' efforts to enrol them into pre-school education institutions, although there are fewer Roma children in kindergartens than those of other ethnic groups¹²⁹⁵.

In its report of 2020 the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights notes that there are disproportionally more Roma children (in relation to share in population's general composition) in specialized education institutions for students with psychic disorder. Officially, inadmissibility of segregation in schools was envisaged for in the Strategy of Recovery and Education for Roma in 2004. A year earlier, it was prohibited to create classes for students belonging uniquely to that national minority.

According to CEDAW concluding observations, Roma girls often become victims of early and/or forced marriages and early pregnancy¹²⁹⁶. In this regard, Slovenian Office for National Minorities organized consultation and training courses on the matter of negative consequences of this harmful practice that still remains in the country¹²⁹⁷.

Roma access to labour market remains limited. According to human rights organizations, the average unemployment level within this ethnic group is 95%¹²⁹⁸. Against this background, the implementation of large-scale employment programmes in Slovenia for Roma, aimed at developing the job search skills, carrier guidance and qualifications upgrade¹²⁹⁹, is a positive moment. At the same

¹²⁹⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eighth to eleventh periodic reports of Slovenia. January 2016

https://tandis.odihhr.pl/explore?bitstream_id=23537&handle=20.500.12389/20947&provider=iiif-image#c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&xywh=168%2C153%2C2819%2C1305

¹²⁹⁵ Fifth Opinion on Slovenia of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, adopted on 18 May 2022.

<https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-slovenia-en-/1680a830d8>

¹²⁹⁶ Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Slovenia of Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. March 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FSVN%2FCO%2F7&Lang=ru

¹²⁹⁷ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights Fundamental Rights Report -2023

http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

¹²⁹⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eighth to eleventh periodic reports of Slovenia. January 2016

https://tandis.odihhr.pl/explore?bitstream_id=23537&handle=20.500.12389/20947&provider=iiif-image#c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&xywh=168%2C153%2C2819%2C1305

¹²⁹⁹ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights Fundamental Rights Report -2023

time, in view of the aforesaid opinion of the AC FCNM on Slovenia, expressed in May 2022, the depressing situation with unemployment of Roma population of this country hardly saw any significant changes over the last six years.

In his annual report on situation with human rights in Slovenia Peter Svetina, Human Rights Ombudsman, has repeatedly highlighted the need for a more active cooperation between the state and local authorities in resolving the issues related to Roma. In particular, he noted inadequate legal and municipal services in Roma settlements.

In 2021, Ombudsman managed to make the Government task the municipalities with introducing detailed specialized programmes and measures in accordance with the Law on Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia. In parallel the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport introduced the amendments into corresponding rules and approved the establishment of the position of Aide on the Matters of Roma in kindergartens, primary schools and primary schools with adapted programmes next academic year.

USA

The United States aggressively works to rewrite what happened during and after World War II. Regardless of political orientation, American authorities, local media, and the expert community focus on the role of the US and its Western allies in defeating Nazism while neglecting the USSR's substantial role in defeating Hitler's Germany. They would rather not discuss the Soviet Army's role in liberating prisoners from Auschwitz and other concentration camps.¹³⁰⁰

Washington started to propagate hostile rhetoric, accusing Russia of abusing history and distorting and misappropriating the Holocaust, as the Russian Armed Forces launched a special military operation (SMO) to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilian population of Donbas. Ellen Germain, the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues,¹³⁰¹ and members of the United States Congressional Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission) have come out with statements to this effect.¹³⁰²

Throughout 2022, the Joe Biden administration began to promote views about the "fascist" nature of Russian authorities with the help of political specialists and the press. The words of Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, that Zelensky has in fact betrayed the memory of his Jewish ancestors by approving the annihilation of the peaceful population of Donbass are perceived by the Americans as an example of anti-Semitism. The letter Z becoming a symbol of the SMO is compared to the swastika. They highlight the nation's support for far-right organizations and draw attention to Partizan, Katehon, the works of Aleksandr Dugin, the websites Geopolitika.ru and Tsargrad TV, as well as their connections to German neo-Nazis. Particularly, this served as the foundation for the statement issued on June 23, 2022, by Michael Carpenter, the United States Permanent Representative to the OSCE.¹³⁰³

¹³⁰⁰<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/01/26/statement-from-president-joe-biden-on-international-holocaust-remembrance-day/>

¹³⁰¹<https://www.state.gov/on-the-anniversary-of-the-massacre-at-babyn-yar-joint-statement-from-special-envoys-for-holocaust-issues-condemning-russian-actions-in-ukraine/>

¹³⁰²<https://www.csce.gov/international-impact/press-and-media/press-releases/helsinki-commission-announces-hearing-alarmed>

¹³⁰³ The Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine. 23.06.2022: <http://osce.usmission.gov/the->

The American press frequently publishes articles alleging that “Kremlin propaganda” is purposefully inciting expressions of racism and right-wing extremism in the country. Links to Russian official media and content from the social network ‘VKontakte’ are supposedly provided by “influencers” in an effort to stir up xenophobic feelings in the country (a related “study” was carried out by the University of Washington).¹³⁰⁴

“Historical” works aimed at falsifying history and shifting the emphasis on the “crimes” of the Soviet Union under the leadership of “Soviet dictator Stalin” are published.

For example, in 2021 Jonathan Brunstedt, assistant professor of History at Texas A&M University, published a book called *The Soviet Myth of World War II: Patriotic Memory and the Russian Question in the USSR*. The author’s main thesis is that when evaluating the results of the Great Patriotic War, Soviet leaders promoted the idea of “Russian nationalism” and “Russocentrism.”

Crude attempts to falsify the outcomes of World War II and downplay the significant role the USSR were made in *Stalin’s War: A New History of World War II* by Sean McMeekin, published in April 2021. The American Conservative rightly points out how well this review fits into a culture where it is popular to despise Russia.¹³⁰⁵

Materials along the same lines have also been published in the media. They include two articles published in the Washington Times: *Whitewashing Culpability*, by Herman Pirchner Jr., on August 14 2020 and *Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact: a Bad Deal, 80 Years Ago*, by Victor Davis Hanson, on August 15 2020, both of which attempted to lay the blame for the outbreak of the Second World war equally on Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Journalists do this by using techniques that have become “traditional”: one-sided interpretations of the political

[russian-federations-ongoing-aggression-against-ukraine-15](#)

¹³⁰⁴ Russian media drives online hate. 07.06.2022: <http://axios.com/2022/06/07/russian-media-online-hate-extremists-racism>

¹³⁰⁵ [Rewriting History for the New Cold War](#). The American Conservative. August 28, 2021. <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/rewriting-history-for-the-new-cold-war/>.

and military realities of the pre-war period and distortions of historical events.¹³⁰⁶

Articles revealing unsightly facts about the history of USA cooperation with the Nazis are rather an exception. One example is a 2021 article on Medium, which claimed that the German economy during World War II provided huge opportunities for US business. Especially for those companies that supported Nazi Germany, including Ford, IBM and Standard Oil. According to the website brewminate.com, Coca-Cola can be added to this list.

CNN reports that the USA tainted itself with cooperation with the Nazis, thus doing a “deal with the devil.”¹³⁰⁷ After the Second World War, about 120 scientists from the Third Reich worked on NASA’s rocket programs. Many collaborators had friendly relations with high-ranking officials and even US presidents. The aim justifies the means in terms of fighting the Communists, according to Washington’s reasoning.

Crude attempts to misrepresent the outcomes of the defeat of Nazism and erase the crucial role the USSR played in it persisted in the United States even during the solemn days of the nationwide commemoration of the Victory’s 75th anniversary. On the eve of May 9, 2020, the Trump administration posted a video on its official page on Instagram recording Trump laying a wreath at the World War II Memorial, accompanied by the video with the caption “On May 8, 1945, the USA and Great Britain defeated Nazism.” This document differs from the resolution passed on April 25, 2020. On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the meeting of USSR and American forces on the Elbe River, the Presidents of the Russian Federation and the United States, Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump, released a joint statement.¹³⁰⁸

At the same time, it should be noted that there are some precedents of contemporary American officials, including at the highest level, recognizing the

¹³⁰⁶https://tass.ru/obschestvo/6789623?utm_source=google.com&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=google.com&utm_referrer=google.com.

¹³⁰⁷ It’s time to confront the dark postscript to America’s role in defeating the Nazis. CNN, February 24, 2021. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/02/24/opinions/dark-postscript-america-nazis-golinkin/index.html>.

¹³⁰⁸ Joint statement by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin and President of the United States of America Donald Trump on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Meeting on the Elbe. April 25, 2020 <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63277>.

Soviet Union's contribution to the Victory.

Certain American diplomatic missions have also been involved in efforts to distort history. For example, the USA Embassy in Hungary has begun selecting projects and programs with the common theme of “Remembering World War II and its Aftermath - The Long Walk to Freedom.” According to a document published on the website of the American Embassy, American and Hungarian organizations and individuals are required to “carefully follow the instructions” when preparing an application for participation. Among other things, the American side demands that the authors of the projects focus on stories that would describe “cruelty and collaboration in the midst of the Holocaust and World War II, as well as under the tyranny of the Soviet Union.”¹³⁰⁹

Such a position of the United States is clearly not conducive to improving the situation inside the country, combating racial discrimination, xenophobia and the legacy of the “brown plague.”

Systemic racism and police impunity continue to flourish in the US. Ethnic minorities become victims of discrimination and social inequality.

Immigrants and prisoners, including minors, are experiencing a steady erosion of their liberties. Journalists feel unsafe, and are subjected to assaults. The government has still not fulfilled its plans to close the Guantanamo Bay detention camp.

Human rights activists from the NGO Human Rights Watch (HRW) noted that despite progress on the human rights front, the United States continues to struggle with racism, the denial of social and economic rights, abuses in prisons, migration law, and police brutality, in annual reports on the state of rights and freedoms published in early 2022¹³¹⁰ and January 2023.¹³¹¹

Separately, the NGO referenced the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) conclusions from August 2022 that the US is not fully complying with its anti-racism commitments. Human rights activists used

1309 The Russian Embassy in Washington called on the USA to refuse to distort the facts about the Second world war. TASS. May 1, 2020 <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/8382109>.

1310 World Report 2022: United States / Human Rights Watch, 01.2022. — <https://www.hrw.org>.

1311 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/united-states>

CERD's recommendation that Washington establish a commission to explore the legacy of slavery and reparations proposals.¹³¹²

To attract voters, the United States administration and the entire party of Democrats have made combating all forms of intolerance a priority. The White House conducted a national event called United We Stand in September 2022, inviting survivors of various forms of violence and discrimination, human rights defenders, and local officials. The conference's goal was to demonstrate a commitment to combat hate speech and advance "diversity" in line with a left-liberal agenda. The president and other prominent speakers made the support of various "minorities" a main point of their talks.¹³¹³

Expert circles are extremely alarmed by the situation with the spread of extremist ideology in the United States. The research report "The Year in Hate and Extremism," prepared by the non-governmental group Southern Poverty Law Center in 2021, notes an unparalleled rise in its acceptance in American society.¹³¹⁴ The seriousness of the problem is increasingly drawn to the attention of senior American officials and legislators.

According to expert surveys, there are 733 active hate groups in the United States,¹³¹⁵ 98 of which advocate white nationalism.¹³¹⁶ These include: Neo-Nazis, skinheads, the Ku Klux Klan, anti-immigrant, and Islamophobic movements. According to the authors of the report, the fall in the number of such organizations, down from 838 in 2020, does not mean that the problem has become less pressing. On the contrary, the radicals' work is closely coordinated and legalized; they correspond in private groups on social media using end-to-end encryption technology.

According to polls, approximately 29% of all Americans directly know

1312 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/united-states>

1313 Fact Sheet: The United We Stand Summit. Taking action to prevent and address hate-motivated violence and foster unity. 15.09.2022: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/09/15/fact-sheet-the-united-we-stand-summit-taking-action-to-prevent-and-address-hate-motivated-violence-and-foster-unity/>

1314 The Southern Poverty Law Center's report: The Year in Hate and Extremism Report 2021.

1315 <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map/by-state>

1316 NGO Southern Poverty Law Center: <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map>.

someone in their neighborhood who believes in white supremacy.¹³¹⁷

Individual hate organizations expanded quickly in 2021, gained access to the political establishment, and also grew in influence.

The US National Security Strategy names right-wing extremism as a severe danger to domestic stability.¹³¹⁸ President Joe Biden has often emphasized the threat that people who support racial, ethnic, political, and religious intolerance pose to democratic institutions.

The actions of such evil groups as The Base, Feuerkrieg Division, and Atomwaffen Division, as well as the far-right organizations Proud Boys and Oath Keepers, severely concern human rights advocates. Due to proof of their role in assaulting the Capitol and spreading Trump's rhetoric about a stolen victory in the 2020 presidential election, the latter two have come under heavy scrutiny by federal authorities.

The "Western chauvinist" group Proud Boys has undergone the most significant change, which is thought to be the first step in luring new members into hate-based organizations. According to a 2021 study by Die Zeit, this organization's influence is so strong that many neo-Nazis who are not members of it are drawn to its leader, James Mason.¹³¹⁹ In addition, the structure has expanded its activities to the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada and the Baltic States. According to reports, as of mid-2019, 35 Americans had flown from the United States to Ukraine to fight.¹³²⁰

In 2021 the group was documented as having 72 active divisions throughout the country, compared with 43 in the previous year. The increase in the group's cell count is especially noticeable given that at least 40 of its members have been

1317 Report by the Southern Poverty Law Center - Year of hate and extremism 2020.

1318 National Security Strategy. 12.10.2022: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf>

1319 The Brown Internationale. Kai Biermann, Christian Fuchs, Astrid Geisler, Yassin Musharbash, Hogler Stark. Die Zeit. 11 February 2021. https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2021-02/fascism-international-right-wing-extremism-neo-nazis-english/komplettansicht?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

1320 Anti-Defamation League NGO report "White supremacist terror: modernizing our approach to today's threat." April 2020 <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/White%20Supremacist%20Terror%20final.pdf> page 25, report of The Soufan Center "White Supremacy Extremism: The Transnational Rise of the Violent White Supremacist Movement", September 2019. <https://thesoufancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Report-by-The-Soufan-Center-White-Supremacy-Extremism-The-Transnational-Rise-of-The-Violent-White-Supremacist-Movement.pdf>

charged in connection with the aforementioned “storming of the Capitol” on January 6, 2021. According to VICE writer Tess Owen’s study in 2021, At least 114 public events have been attended by the Proud Boys.

Apparently, law enforcement officers made a series of arrests of extreme conservative figures as part of the criminal procedures surrounding the events of January 6, 2021. Former Oath Keepers leader Steward Rhodes and former Proud Boys chairman Enrique Tarrio have been charged with attempting to overthrow the government with armed force, a crime punishable by up to 20 years in jail.¹³²¹

More than 1,000 people have been charged for their involvement in the storming of the US Capitol Building on January 6, 2021.¹³²²

A special committee of the House of Representatives conducted a separate session.¹³²³ It was very anti-Trump.

As far as neo-Nazis are concerned, the most prominent groups include the Tennessee Shield Wall Network, Daily Stormer, 14First The Foundation, Rise Above Movement, Keystone United, National Policy Institute, Woman for Aryan Unity, New Jersey European Heritage Association, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Aryan Nations, Black and Silver Solution, Daily Archives, Nazi Central, Universal Order, White Nationalist Defender, Kommandant Base 211, and Joey Faust.

After all, online platforms allowed “individuals to interact with hate and antigovernment groups without joining them, as well as to form connections and talk with likeminded people.”¹³²⁴

Extremists have been disseminating more and more ideological content in recent years. The NGO Anti-Defamation League (ADL) states that there were over 5,000 allegations of racist, anti-Semitic, and other hate speech in 2020, nearly double from the previous year. The three organizations that were most active in

1321 Oath Keepers’ Rhodes guilty of Jan.6 seditious conspiracy. 29.11.2022: <https://apnews.com/article/oath-keepers-founder-guilty-of-seditious-conspiracy-42affe1614425c6820f7cbe8fd18ba96>

1322 At least 1003 people have been charged in Capitol insurrection so far. 05.01.2023: <https://news.yahoo.com/least-948-people-charged-capitol-192631254.html>

1323 Jan.6 panel says Trump, far-right groups responsible for insurrection. 10.06.2022:

<https://ncpolicywatch.com/2022/06/10/jan-6-panel-says-trump-far-right-groups-responsible-for-insurrection/>

1324 The Year in Hate and Extremism 2020. Southern Poverty Law Center. <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2021/02/01/year-hate-2020>

spreading propaganda were the Patriot Front, the New Jersey European Heritage Association, and the Nationalist Social Club (92% of all activity)¹³²⁵.

New structures are emerging to glorify Nazism and deny the Holocaust. Thus, in 2019, Iron Youth and Folksfront were established. In July 2020, members of the disbanded Atomwaffen Division announced the creation of a new organization called the National Socialist Order.

Many radical organizations claim to participate in the political life of the country. Among them are American Freedom Party, Racial Nationalist Party of America, American Identity Movement and Proud Boys.¹³²⁶

Such organizations feel protected by the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech (freedom of expression). Law enforcers, on the other hand, intervene in the most extreme cases, when it is often too late.

In the US, neo-Nazi demonstrations and marches generally take place with a police presence - but they see their main function as preventing any unacceptable disorder resulting from clashes between extremists and their opponents.

In American society, the issue of racism and racial discrimination has spread throughout all facets of social life. The problem remains a weakness in Washington's policy. Local experts condemn particular US states' laws prohibiting school curricula that accurately depict historical racial practices in the country.

Representatives of the NGO Human Rights Watch (HRW) asserted to have joined the Freedom to Learn campaign and offered it their unflinching support in a May 4, 2023, release on censorship in educational institutions. Several African-American rights organizations are in charge of the project, which was founded in 2019. Eliminating barriers to education on racism and other forms of prejudice, such as those affecting ethnic and sexual minorities, is the goal.

According to HRW specialists, the aforementioned derogatory policy is observed in 36 states, including the state of Florida. To put it another way, several

1325 White supremacist propaganda spikes in 2020. Anti-Defamation League. <https://www.adl.org/white-supremacist-propaganda-spikes-2020>

1326 Latest violence showcases Proud Boys' toxic mix of politics and bigotry. Anti-Defamation League. 5 September 2021. <https://www.adl.org/blog/latest-violence-showcases-proud-boys-toxic-mix-of-politics-and-bigotry>

legislative assemblies have passed laws prohibiting the mistreatment of black people as well as specific ethnic groups' significant contributions to historical events.

The human rights defenders declare that one of their goals is to ensure, as far as possible, the implementation by local authorities of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. First of all, in the field of education and culture, recall the call of the UN human rights treaty body that monitors compliance with this international treaty to take effective measures to include chapters on the history of peoples of African descent in textbooks. Encourage the creation and distribution of printed materials on this subject as well.

Statistics demonstrate that the liberties of non-white people are deteriorating and confirm the emergence of neo-Nazi and other extremist organizations. Human rights groups have pointed to an increase in hate speech against minorities against a backdrop of rising white nationalism and an increase in violent crime across the country.

According to FBI crime statistics, 57.6% of the 8,302 hate crimes recorded by law enforcement in 2019 were motivated by the victims' race or ethnicity. African Americans were the victims of 48.4% of the offenses, followed by white people (15.8%), Hispanic people (14.1%), and Asian people (4.3%). 2,391 people of African descent were among the 4,930 victims of racially motivated hate crimes.¹³²⁷

For 2020, the FBI also recorded a high rate of hate crimes - 7,759 cases, of which 4,939 were motivated by racial or ethnic hatred and 1,174 had religious overtones. In recent years, attacks on African Americans have increased from 1,930 to 2,755, and on people of Asian descent from 158 to 274. There were 773 attacks on whites.¹³²⁸

¹³²⁷ The Report on Human Rights Violations in the United States in 2020 by the State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China. March 2021. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-03/24/c_139832301.htm.

¹³²⁸ Hate crimes rise to highest level in 12 years amid increasing attacks on Black and Asian people, FBI says. The Washington Post. August 30, 2021. https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/hate-crimes-fbi-2020-asian-black/2021/08/30/28bede00-09a7-11ec-9781-07796ffb56fe_story.html; Hate Crime in the United States Incident Analysis. 2020. Federal Bureau of Investigation Crime Data Explorer <https://crime-data-explorer.fr.cloud.gov/pages/home>.

The FBI released its annual report on hate crimes in December 2022. The data shows that there were 7,262 incidents throughout the United States of America. The majority of them (64.8%) were motivated by rejection based on race, ethnicity, or country of origin. Persecution based on sexual orientation (15.6%), religion (13.3%), and so-called gender identity (3.6%) follows.¹³²⁹ It should be noted that a number of experts have expressed doubts regarding the accuracy and completeness of the provided data. The low number of law enforcement organizations that took part in the reporting is the cause.¹³³⁰

According to a 2022 report on the United States by the State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, religious intolerance is on the rise in the country.¹³³¹ According to the FBI's 2021 Hate Crime Statistics, which were made public on December 15, 2022, a total of 1,005 religious hate crimes were reported in the United States in 2021, of which 31.9% involved anti-Semitic incidents, 21.3% targeted Sikhs, 9.5% targeted Islam, 6.1% targeted Catholics, and 6.5% targeted Orthodox Christians.¹³³²

Hate crimes have increased in the twenty largest cities. Increases in New York and Los Angeles have been 18% and 20%, respectively. African Americans remained the most common victims, accounting for 63.2% of all cases. They are followed by Hispanics at 13.4%. There have been fewer attacks on people of East Asian cultural heritage.¹³³³ Experts acknowledge that this might be a result of the COVID-19 pandemic's psychological effects being gradually overcome. Previously, the new coronavirus spread was frequently attributed to this socioeconomic group.¹³³⁴

California State University, San Bernardino, reports that crimes against people of Asian descent rose by 224% in 2022 compared to 2021.

1329 FBI releases 2021 Hate Crime Statistics. 12.12.2022: <https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/hate-crime-statistics>

1330 <https://www.npr.org/2023/01/01/1145973412/researchers-say-the-fbis-statistics-on-hate-crimes-across-the-country-are-flawed>

<https://time.com/6240880/fbi-hate-crime-data-gaps/>

1331 http://ge.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/xwdt/202303/t20230328_11050361.htm

1332 http://ge.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/xwdt/202303/t20230328_11050361.htm

1333 FBI releases 2021 Hate Crime Statistics. 12.12.2022: <https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/hate-crime-statistics>

1334 Report: Hate Crimes increased in several major US cities. 23.01.2023: <https://www.voanews.com/a/report-hate-crimes-increased-in-several-major-us-cities-in-2022/6927926.html>

In the United States, hate crimes against the Asian population have reportedly reached previously unheard-of proportions, according to a research by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism. In 2021, the number of such incidents against persons of Asian origin was 339% higher than in 2020, while in 2020 violent crimes were 150%¹³³⁵ higher than in 2019. There was a sharp increase in New York, from 30 to 133 incidents, and in San Francisco there were 60 incidents, compared with 9 the previous year.

The China Society for Human Rights Studies' 2022 report on the United States, which discovered a sharp rise in the number of hate crimes motivated by racial bias in the country between 2020 and 2022, also documents the rise in racism.¹³³⁶

One of the USA's largest racially-motivated mass shootings in 2022 is considered to be the May 14 attack on a supermarket in Buffalo, New York, in which an 18-year-old killed 10 people. The shooter had previously published a "manifesto" setting out his white-supremacist views. The text is full of intolerant statements, including claims that immigrants and Black people were "replacing" whites.

The high-profile murders of Asian women in Atlanta, Georgia, in March 2021 sparked an outpouring of public outrage: an armed white guy drove a car among spas, shooting female personnel and visitors.

According to an opinion poll, 32% of African Americans and 21% of Asian Americans live in fear of racially-motivated attacks.¹³³⁷

In 2021, amid an accelerated US withdrawal from Afghanistan, experts expressed concern that neo-Nazis, hoping to provoke an "inevitable race war" that would lead to a whites-only state in North America and Europe, expressed admiration for the ideology of the Afghan Taliban Movement for its anti-Semitism,

1335 Hate crimes targeting Asian Americans spiked 150 % in major US cities. Voice of America. 2 March 2021.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/race-america/hate-crimes-targeting-asian-americans-spiked-150-major-us-cities>

1336 http://ge.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/xwdt/202303/t20230328_11050361.htm

1337 NGO Pew Research Center: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/05/20/safety-concerns-were-top-of-mind-for-many-black-americans-before-buffalo-shooting/>.

homophobia and severe restrictions on women's freedom.¹³³⁸

It should be noted that in 2020, following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a large increase in the number of incidents in which Asian Americans were assaulted or insulted in public places, refused admittance to shops, business centers or public transport.

According to the NGO Stop AAPI Hate, from March 19, 2020, to June 30, 2021, 9081 incidents were recorded, of which 4548 occurred in 2020 and 4533 occurred in the first half of 2021. The majority (63.7%) were insults, 16.5% were intentional avoidance, 13.7% were physical attacks, 11% were workplace discrimination, denial of service, etc., and 8.3% were cases of insults on the Internet. A significant portion of occurrences happened in public places (31,6%) and in offices (30.1%) Women made up the majority, i.e. 63.3%, of all victims.¹³³⁹ One in four young Asian Americans is the target of racial harassment, according to the China Society for Human Rights Studies' 2020 report on the United States.¹³⁴⁰

The 2022 US report by the China Society for Human Rights Studies also makes reference to a study by the nonprofit organization Stop AAPI Crime, which discovered that between March 19, 2020, and March 31, 2022, it received reports of over 11,500 hate-motivated crimes.¹³⁴¹

Between June and November 2020, the poverty rate in America increased by 2.4 percent, from 9.3 to 11.7 percent, according to researchers at the Universities of Chicago and Notre Dame. In the meantime, the black American poverty rate increased by 3.1%. In the first quarter of 2020, the national homeownership rate for white households was 73.7%, but for African American households, the rate was only 44%. According to ABC News, 15.7% of Hispanic Americans lived in poverty in 2019, more than double the rate compared to white Americans.¹³⁴²

The China Society for Human Rights Studies' 2022 report on the United

1338 White supremacist praise of the Taliban takeover concerns US officials. CNN, 1 September 2021. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/09/01/politics/far-right-groups-praise-taliban-takeover/index.html>; Amid Chaos, Islamist Extremists Celebrate Taliban's Success in Afghanistan. Anti-Defamation League. August 26, 2021. <https://www.adl.org/blog/amid-chaos-islamist-extremists-celebrate-talibans-success-in-afghanistan>.

1339 Stop AAPI Crime. National Report. <https://stopaapihate.org/stop-aapi-hate-national-report-2/>

1340 http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-03/24/c_139832301.htm

1341 http://ge.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/xwdt/202303/t20230328_11050361.htm

1342 http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-03/13/c_138874115.htm

States emphasizes housing discrimination based on race, color, and national or ethnic origin.¹³⁴³ For instance, compared to 10.8% of white applicants, 19.4% of black applicants for mortgages were turned down in 2021, according to real estate firm Zillow.

24 million Americans experienced food shortages due to a lack of employment in January 2021, an increase of 5 million from the same figure in August 2020. Low-income families make up 45% of those with insufficient food supplies. At the same time, two-thirds of them are African Americans and immigrants from Central and Latin America.¹³⁴⁴

According to official statistics, over the past 40 years, the number of people detained in prisons has increased by almost 700%, with the number of convicted Americans exceeding 2.3 million.¹³⁴⁵ The number of prisoners by the end of 2020 was 1.814 million. According to the human rights NGO Vera Institute of Justice, there was a slight decrease in this figure compared to 2019 (2.115 million people).¹³⁴⁶ Both human rights groups and scientists agree that this is a temporary phenomenon.¹³⁴⁷ According to experts, the reduction is due to prisoners being released because of the coronavirus outbreak or because their sentences or punishments were modified. At the same time, people of color are much more likely to be arrested and imprisoned than whites.

US penitentiaries are overcrowded, incarceration conditions are appalling, and inmates suffer daily occurrences of violent behavior and racial abuse at the hands of penitentiary officers. Statistically, black female inmates are two times as likely to be discriminated against as whites; black men - six times as likely as white men.¹³⁴⁸

According to the Death Penalty Information Center NGO, the majority of

1343 http://ge.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/xwdt/202303/t20230328_11050361.htm

1344 United States: Pandemic Impact on People in Poverty. Human Rights Watch Report. 2 March 2021.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/02/united-states-pandemic-impact-people-poverty>

1345 Prison Policy Initiative, Report: Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2020, March 24, 2020

1346 People in jail and prison in 2020. Vera Institute of Justice. 2021.

1347 People in jail and prison in 2020. Vera Institute of Justice. 2021; Decarcerating correctional facilities during COVID-19: advancing health. Equity and safety. National academy of sciences, engineering and medicine. 2020.

1348 People in jail and prison in 2020. Vera Institute of Justice. 2021; Decarcerating correctional facilities during COVID-19: advancing health. Equity and safety. National academy of sciences, engineering and medicine. 2020.

those sentenced to capital punishment are African Americans, Latinos or representatives of other ethnic minorities.¹³⁴⁹ Specifically, as the NGO noted, African Americans account for 34.1% of all convictions. At times, innocent people are sentenced to death due to mistakes made during trial proceedings and other factors. The NGO Amnesty International has found that 156 persons sentenced to death were found to be innocent. In addition, capital punishment was applied disproportionately against people of color and the poor.

In June 2021, the media learned that the authorities of the state of Arizona purchased toxic substances for use in gas chambers. The resonance was caused by the fact that such toxic substances were used by the Nazis during the Holocaust.¹³⁵⁰

International systems of human rights monitoring and civil rights NGOs have pointed out that racism, xenophobia as well as ethnic and religious intolerance continued to spread in the United States.

E. Tendayi Achiume, Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council on contemporary forms of racism, speaking at the 41st session of the UN Human Rights Council in June 2019, cited the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) report, entitled “The Year in Hate: Rage Against Change,” which reported statistics demonstrating a 30% rise in hate groups in the US since 2014, including a 7% increase in 2018.¹³⁵¹

Human rights activists have recently become aware of cases of the spread of racist and neo-Nazi ideology among American servicemen; reports on high-profile crimes committed by American military personnel who adhere to racist ideologies and are members of radical groups have been widely publicized. The problem is that membership in a white nationalist group among US servicemen was not prohibited, but active participation in such an organization “could lead to an administrative discharge.” In February 2020, US defense officials told a hearing of the House Armed Services subcommittee that membership in a white nationalist

¹³⁴⁹ Website of NPO Death Penalty Information Center Facts about death penalty, as of May 20, 2020. <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/>.

¹³⁵⁰ Outrage greets reports of Arizona plan to use Holocaust gas in executions. New York Times. June 2, 2021.

¹³⁵¹ Report A/HRC/41/55 entitled “Global extractivism and racial equality” by E. Tendayi Achiume, the UN Special Rapporteur on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, at 41st Session of UN Human Rights Council, June 2019.

group would not be enough to keep a man or a woman out of the military.¹³⁵² They also said that there was “no reliable data on how many service members had been administratively discharged for espousing white supremacist ideology.”¹³⁵³

On May 14, 2021, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) released the “Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Data on Domestic Terrorism” report that acknowledged the “threat posed by international and domestic threat actors” had evolved significantly since 9/11. It is noted that the greatest threat is posed by movements spreading the ideology of religious and ethnic enmity, racial superiority, and militant nationalism, especially white supremacy. According to the report, the greatest terrorism threat to the United States was “posed by lone offenders.” In addition, 2019 was the most lethal year for DVE attacks since 1995, “with five” such attacks resulting in 32 deaths, 24 of which occurred due to actions of RMVEs “advocating for the superiority of the white race.”¹³⁵⁴

The authors of the report also discussed radicalization online and mentioned non-US actors by defining a lone offender “as an individual motivated by one or more violent extremist ideologies who, operating alone,” supported or engaged “in acts of unlawful violence in furtherance of that ideology or ideologies” that could “involve influence from a larger terrorist organization or a foreign actor.” It should also be noted that, while the US authorities emphasize the threat posed by right-wing extremism, in practice their approaches to different organizations of this type are inconsistent. A number of US experts and lawmakers have pointed out the danger posed by far-right groups active in Ukraine who have been “responsible for a rising number of violent attacks in recent years.” Such organizations have reportedly established ties with US-based extremist groups, such as Atomwaffen

1352 Members of white nationalist groups not barred from US military, official says. The Times of Israel. 14 February 2020. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/members-of-white-nationalist-groups-not-barred-from-us-military-official-says/>.

1353 Neo-Nazi Group Membership May Not Get You Booted from Military, Officials Say. 12 February 2020. <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/02/12/neo-nazi-group-membership-may-not-get-you-booted-military-officials-say.html>.

1354 The inside is terrible: the USA recorded an increase in extremist sentiment. Izvestia. 23 May 2021. <https://iz.ru/1165713/kirill-senin/iznutri-uzhasnye-v-ssha-zafiksirovali-rost-ekstremistskikh-nastroenii>, America’s Deadly Domestic Extremism Worst In 24 Years, Reveals New FBI Report. HuffPost. 15 May 2021. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/deadly-domestic-extremism-worst-in-25-years-fbi-white-supremacists_n_60a0591ae4b03e1dd38a5b4e.

Division. In the US military, incidents involving racist language and discriminatory attitudes remained a problem. In fact, “Defense Department officials tracked at least 27 reports of extremist activity by active-duty troops from 2013 to 2018.”

Given the extremely limited information about this structure and its connections to other countries, experts have many questions about the US government’s decision to add the Russian Imperial Movement to the national terrorist list. However, the Right Sector, Azov, and C14 (SICH), three infamous Ukrainian organizations whose members have been involved in serious criminal offenses, have not yet received the same treatment.

The tendency of law enforcement bodies to use excessive force against suspects remains a serious problem in the USA. American law enforcement bodies often resort to force and use firearms and other means of restraint or abuse, regardless of the real need to prevent threats to their lives by intruders.

The Washington Post reports that in 2019, more than a thousand people died at the hands of police, and that figure somewhat decreased to 967 accidents in 2020 (this does not account for crimes perpetrated by law enforcement agents off-duty).¹³⁵⁵ At the same time, the End Police Violence NGO points to more than 1.1 thousand murders committed by American police officers in 2020.

Racial profiling is closely linked with this problem since police abuse of power disproportionately impacts non-white members of US society. African Americans, who account for less than 13% of the population, are the group most frequently killed by police: in 2019, there were 1,512 African American deaths at the hands of policemen per 42 million people, 2.5 times more than there were white Americans (2,890 deaths per 197 million people).¹³⁵⁶

The death in January of 29-year-old Tyre Nichols, who was a victim of police brutality, was widely publicized.¹³⁵⁷

1355 The Washington Post, Police shootings database.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/>

1356 The Washington Post, Police shootings database.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/>

1357 <https://www.npr.org/2023/01/28/1151504967/tyre-nichols-memphis-police-body-cam-video>

According to analysts, 1 in 1,000 black men and boys can expect to die at the hands of law enforcement officers over the course of their lives. The chances of being killed by police peaked between the ages of 20 and 35. ABC news also stated that, according to statistics, black citizens of the United States are victims of such accidents 2.5 times more often than whites.¹³⁵⁸ The Washington Post reported that Hispanic Americans were also killed by law enforcement officers at a disproportionate rate (27 per million).

The infamous killing of African-American George Floyd by police officer Derek Chauvin in Minneapolis during an arrest in May 2020 was far from the only example of excessive use of force by police officers against African-Americans. Other high-profile cases of gratuitous use of lethal force by police officers include the following.

On October 12, 2019, police officer Aaron Dean shot and killed Atatiana Jefferson in her own home in Fort Worth, Texas.¹³⁵⁹ He and another officer were responding to a non-emergency call by a concerned neighbor who had noticed “the home’s exterior doors were open at that late hour.” Prior to the shooting, the victim had been playing videogames with her eight-year-old nephew. A law enforcement officer shot to kill immediately after giving a warning, giving his victim no chance of surviving.

On January 28, 2020, William Green, who had been taken into custody on suspicion of drunk driving, was shot dead while handcuffed by a police officer in Temple Hills, Maryland.¹³⁶⁰ The detainee, who was in the front seat of the patrol car and not resisting, was shot multiple times by the law enforcement officer.

On March 13, 2020, a police officer mistakenly shot and murdered Nurse Breonna Taylor while searching her home in Louisville, Kentucky.¹³⁶¹ The raid

1358 Shot at home by police: Teaching officers how to react under stress after Botham Jean, Atatiana Jefferson killings. ABC News, 19 December 2019. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/shot-home-police-teaching-officers-react-stress-botham/story?id=67825639>

1359 Shot at home by police: Teaching officers how to react under stress after Botham Jean, Atatiana Jefferson killings. ABC News, 19 December 2019. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/shot-home-police-teaching-officers-react-stress-botham/story?id=67825639>

1360 Maryland police officer charged with murder in killing of handcuffed man. BBC, January 29, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-51291200>.

1361 FBI to Investigate Shooting of Breonna Taylor by Louisville Police. New York Times, 21 May 2020.

was carried out as part of a narcotic investigation but the victim was not found to be involved in the drug operation.

On September 1, 2020, an African American cyclist was shot dead by police in Los Angeles, allegedly violating traffic rules. After the suspect was stopped, a scuffle ensued in which he was shot and killed.

On April 11, 2021, a female police officer killed Daunte Wright during a traffic stop in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota. During a press conference, the local police chief said that the policewoman had “intended to deploy her stun gun” but accidentally shot the young African American man instead. The incident was followed by riots with pogroms and arson, including the Dollar Tree department store. The security forces responded with tear gas and stun grenades.¹³⁶²

Ma'Khia Bryant, a black 16-year-old girl, was shot and killed by a police officer in Columbus, Ohio, on April 20, 2021, after the officer had responded to a report of a female brandishing a knife.

A deputy police chief shot and killed an African-American man named Andrew Brown Jr. on April 21, 2021 in Elizabeth City, North Carolina.¹³⁶³ This incident triggered widespread rioting in the city, and in response the authorities declared a curfew.

At the same time, experts note that the responsibility of law enforcement in the USA for unlawful and unreasonably harsh actions against alleged offenders and prisoners is very rare. According to ABC News, there were only 16 convictions in such cases between 2004 and 2020.

The most recent high-profile verdict was the sentencing of D. Chauvin, the killer of African American G. Floyd, to 22 and a half years in prison in 2021.¹³⁶⁴

Another case of prosecution was noted in May 2021, when law enforcement

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/21/us/fbi-louisville-shooting.html>.

¹³⁶² Police fire tear gas at protesters in a second night of demonstrations after Minnesota officer fatally shoots Black man. CNN, 12 April 2021. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/04/12/us/brooklyn-center-minnesota-police-shooting/index.html>.

¹³⁶³ Black residents of Elizabeth City, N.C., thought police violence happened in other places. Then it came to their town. The Washington Post. 29 April 2021. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/elizabeth-city-police-shooting/2021/04/29/80b28b40-a8ed-11eb-8c1a-56f0cb4ff3b5_story.html.

¹³⁶⁴ Why Derek Chauvin's sentencing for murdering George Floyd is a rarity. ABC News. 26 June 2021. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/derek-chauvins-sentencing-murdering-george-floyd-rarity/story?id=78402027>.

officer B. Palkowitz was sentenced to 6 years in prison for excessive use of force against the African American man he arrested, F. Baker. During his arrest, F. Baker was beaten and a police officer let a service dog down on him, although he offered no resistance.¹³⁶⁵

A contentious discussion about the need for a systemic solution to the issue of racial intolerance in the United States erupted after a jury found Kyle Rittenhouse not guilty of shooting and killing two people in Kenosha, Wisconsin, during protests over the shooting of Jacob Blake, who happens to be black.¹³⁶⁶

Human Rights Watch researchers frequently encountered resistance from US law enforcement agencies in their attempts to obtain information on police work. As a result, human rights advocates were forced to independently gather and analyze this data. As of December 31, 2021, 1,141 people were killed by police in 2021, more than in previous years. Statistically, African Americans are 3 times more likely to be killed by police officers than white Americans.¹³⁶⁷

The systemic abuses of USA intelligence agencies, which engage in widespread mass surveillance of citizens, also show signs of racial profiling. According to experts, about 25 percent of the 18,000 US police departments have access to such data.¹³⁶⁸ “Over half of all American adults are” in a driver’s license database that are searched using facial recognition.

The use of face recognition technology (FRT) is a good example of the systemic bias. In a number of states, such a system includes not only suspects of typical criminal offenses but also individuals suspected of breaching immigration laws. Human rights activists have frequently emphasized the shortcomings of such systems as well as their discrimination against people who identify as racial or

¹³⁶⁵ Ex-officer was sentenced for causing severe injuries to unarmed Black man while a police dog mauled him. Washington Post. 22 May 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/05/22/st-paul-officer-sentenced-beating-black-man/>.

¹³⁶⁶ CNN, These are the 5 charges the jury in Kyle Rittenhouse’s trial considered: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/14/us/kyle-rittenhouse-jury-deliberations-charges/index.html>.

¹³⁶⁷ Mapping Police Violence. — <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org>.

¹³⁶⁸ The Untold Number of People Implicated in Crimes They Didn’t Commit Because of Face Recognition. the American Civil Liberties Union, 24 June 2020. <https://www.aclu.org/news/privacy-technology/the-untold-number-of-people-implicated-in-crimes-they-didnt-commit-because-of-face-recognition/>.

religious minorities, particularly African Americans.¹³⁶⁹

Amnesty International (AI) experts have urged the New York Police Department to stop utilizing facial recognition technology (FRT) video cameras to discriminate against racial and ethnic minorities.¹³⁷⁰

More than 7,000 volunteers participating in a global campaign called Ban the Scan helped rights activists identify more than 25 000 FRT-enabled CCTV cameras in the city. AI researchers later compared their findings with the statistics on arrests and demographic data. They consequently discovered that the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens had the most number of such devices installed out of all five boroughs in New York City¹³⁷¹ since those are the places where police enforcement personnel are most likely to stop and search African Americans and Hispanics.¹³⁷²

Commenting on the results of the research, Dr. Matt Mahmoudi, expert on artificial intelligence and human rights at Amnesty International, noted that the police's indiscriminate use of such identification systems is in effect a digital version of the stop and frisk policy,¹³⁷³ which constitutes an infringement of citizens' right to privacy, free assembly and equality, and facilitates police discrimination against non-white citizens. The use by the police of surveillance technology during protest events can also be seen as a deliberate attempt to intimidate participants, as it enables people who are exercising their civic rights to be identified, tracked and harassed.¹³⁷⁴

Jumaane Williams, the Public Advocate for New York City agrees with Amnesty International's views. He has pointed out that community representatives and activists have for a long time been observing how law enforcement bodies are

1369 Data from Just Security. <https://www.justsecurity.org/73321/the-future-of-u-s-foreign-intelligence-surveillance/>.

1370 USA: Facial recognition technology reinforcing racist stop-and-frisk policing in New York — new research // Amnesty International. 15.02.2022. — <http://www.amnesty.org>.

1371 New York has five boroughs: the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island.

1372 World Report 2022: United States / Human Rights Watch, 01.2022. — <https://www.hrw.org>.

1373 Police officers have the right to stop people outside of their homes and in public places under the stop-and-frisk procedure in many states if they have cause to reasonably suspect that they have committed, are committing, or are about to commit a crime. A person who has been stopped on “reasonable grounds” may be searched for concealed weapons on the spot

1374 World Report 2022: United States / Human Rights Watch, 01.2022. — <https://www.hrw.org>.

biased against ethnic minorities, and how the frequent malfunctioning of face-recognition software leads to wrongful arrests.¹³⁷⁵

In April 2021, for example, Detroit resident R. Williams was detained by police for more than 30 hours for allegedly stealing from a home. The police believed that he was connected with the crime because a face recognition search “found similarities between grainy surveillance footage of the theft and Mr. Williams’ driver’s license photo.” By comparing a photo of the invader with that of Robert Williams, Robert Williams had been mistakenly recognized by the security cameras and facial recognition software employed by city law enforcement.¹³⁷⁶

In July 2020, a similar incident occurred again in Detroit, Michigan. Michael Oliver, a Black man, was arrested for allegedly reaching into a person’s car, grabbing a mobile phone and damaging it. “Facial recognition flagged” him as a possible suspect. However, the perpetrator, captured on the footage, did not look like Michael Oliver, as the latter had tattoos on his arms unlike the person in the video. After a more detailed comparison of M. Oliver’s images with the real perpetrator, the police concluded that the misidentification.¹³⁷⁷

The leadership of the Detroit police was forced to acknowledge that the identification system used is incorrect in 96% of cases after media reports about people being mistakenly labeled as intruders and criticism from the human rights community about the arrests of innocent citizens appeared.¹³⁷⁸

At the beginning of 2021, Amnesty International expressed concern about the use of facial recognition technologies not only by law enforcement agencies, but also other organizations and businesses. The Nelson Management Group, the

1375 World Report 2022: United States / Human Rights Watch, 01.2022. — <https://www.hrw.org>.

1376 Wrongfully Accused by an Algorithm. The New York Times, 24 June 2020.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/24/technology/facial-recognition-arrest.html>; American Civil Liberties Union. <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases-michigan-father-sues-detroit-police-department-wrongful-arrest-based-faulty-facial>.

1377 Facial recognition linked to a second wrongful arrest by Detroit police. Engadget, 10 July 2020.

<https://www.engadget.com/facial-recognition-false-match-wrongful-arrest-224053761.html>.

1378 Detroit Police Chief: Facial Recognition Software Misidentifies 96% of the Time. Vice, 29 June 2020.

https://www.vice.com/en/article/dyzykz/detroit-police-chief-facial-recognition-software-misidentifies-96-of-the-time?utm_content=1593453617&utm_medium=social&utm_source=VICE_twitter; ACLU Statement on Second Wrongful Arrest due to Face Recognition Technology. the American Civil Liberties Union, July 10, 2020. <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/aclu-statement-second-wrongful-arrest-due-face-recognition-technology>.

landlord of Atlantic Plaza Towers in Brooklyn, “sought state approval for the introduction of” facial recognition cameras in July 2018. From 2018 to 2019, residents of the Black majority complex “successfully resisted attempts at installing” such equipment in their apartment buildings. They had initially learned about the plan in the fall of 2018 by accident (“as a result of chaotic mail delivery”). “By collaborating with civil society, legal, technology and media organizations,” the residents’ pushback received significant attention. And by November 2019, “Nelson Management announced that they would not be pursuing the installation of facial recognition cameras in the apartment complex.”¹³⁷⁹

International human rights organizations have been aware of the issue of racial profiling by US law enforcement agencies for some time now. As long ago as August 2014, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), founded in accordance with the UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, noted the large numbers of racist incidents and the prevalence of racial profiling among law enforcement agencies, as well as the fact that African Americans and representatives of other ethnic minorities were the most frequent victims of violence by law enforcement officers.¹³⁸⁰

The UN Human Rights Council’s Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent has pointed out that even though African Americans account for only 13% of the US population, in 2015 26% of people killed by police were African Americans, and the proportions for 2016 and 2017 were 24% and 23% respectively. Black people made up 20% of police fatalities in the first half of 2018.¹³⁸¹

Following the killing of the African American George Floyd¹³⁸² by white police officers, nationwide protests broke out, putting the spotlight on the problem

¹³⁷⁹ [Ban the scan: do you want your face to be used to track you? Amnesty International.](https://banthescan.amnesty.org/)

¹³⁸⁰ [https://banthescan.amnesty.org/.](https://banthescan.amnesty.org/)

¹³⁸⁰ [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUSA%2fCO%2f7-9&Lang=ru.](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUSA%2fCO%2f7-9&Lang=ru)

¹³⁸¹ Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent at 74th session of the UN General Assembly A/74/274 October 2019. [https://undocs.org/ru/A/74/274.](https://undocs.org/ru/A/74/274)

¹³⁸² What We Know About the Death of George Floyd. New York Times, May 27, 2020, and Wall Street Journal, May 29, 2020.

of systemic discrimination against African Americans and members of ethnic minority groups. According to experts, 26 million people participated in the protests that this high-profile murder inspired in June 2020 alone.¹³⁸³ Many protesters faced unjustified police brutality.¹³⁸⁴

Many reporters opined that American authorities handling these demonstrations violated US and international legislation. First and foremost, criticism was directed against law enforcement officers for unjust and disproportionate use of force against mainly peaceful protesters and journalists reporting about them. Civilians were subjected to mass arrests, and the police used rubber bullets, tear gas, stun grenades and other measures against demonstrators.

The crisis in the United States became so serious that on June 17 2020, upon the resumption of the 43rd session of the UN Human Rights Council a group of African states called for urgent debates on the human rights abuses, systemic racism, police violence and use of violence against peaceful protestors. During these debates the policies of the current US government were strongly criticized.

In its formal statement published on June 12, 2020, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), acting under its Early Warning and Urgent Action Procedures,¹³⁸⁵ expressed its concern about “the continuing practice of racial profiling, the brutality and excessive use of force by law enforcement officials” in the United State against persons belonging to racial and ethnic minorities, including unarmed individuals. The CERD also criticized the “excessive use of force” against peaceful protesters across the country. The Committee urged the United States of America to submit “its combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports,” which were overdue since November 20, 2017, and include information on the measures taken to address the issues, such as racial

1383 Black Lives Matter may be the largest movement in US history. The New York Times, July 3, 2020.

1384 Many human rights organizations have analyzed this situation. See, for example, The Amnesty International report “the World is watching. Mass violations by US Police of Black Lives Matter protesters’ rights.” 2021.

1385 It is important to remember that the Committee has previously expressed similar dissatisfaction. In response to violent clashes between alt-right demonstrators and counter-protesters in Charlottesville, Virginia, on August 18, 2017, the CERD, also acting under the aforementioned procedures, expressed its alarm about the violence during the racist demonstrations, and called on the US government to “not only unequivocally and unconditionally reject and condemn racist hate speech and racist crimes in Charlottesville and throughout the country, but also to actively contribute to the promotion of understanding, tolerance, and diversity between ethnic groups.”

discrimination, highlighted in the statement.¹³⁸⁶

The leading UN entity on human rights also addressed the situation in the United States. In a statement on June 3, 2020, then-High Commissioner Michele Bachelet urged Washington to act swiftly to address inequality and to strongly reject the structural racism damaging American society.

The serious threat posed by racism and abuses of power by the police to the fabric of US society drew attention of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council (HRC). On June 5, 2020, in response to the demonstrations in the United States, joint comments from the UN Human Rights Council's special procedures were released, denouncing modern "racial terror" and urging the American government to restructure the justice system.

Racism is closely tied to another large-scale problem in the USA: the circulation of firearms in the country.

With over 390 million weapons in circulation in 2020, the United States will continue to lead worldwide in both absolute and per-capita handgun ownership.¹³⁸⁷ This situation has arisen because of the liberal gun laws (the Second Amendment to the US Constitution guarantees Americans' right to bear arms), and the accessibility of these weapons.

According to the results of a study published by the Annals of Internal Medicine in 2022, 7.5 million adult American citizens, or just under 3% of the population, bought a firearm for the first time between January 2019 and April 2021.

Hence, the number of incidents involving guns in the US has remained high. In 2011, data collected by the FBI showed "that firearms were used in 60 percent of murders" and "21 percent of aggravated assaults nationwide." Each year, firearms are used in about 8,500 hate crimes against racial, religious, and other minorities.¹³⁸⁸ Curiously, US federal law does not currently "require universal

1386 <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CERD/EarlyWarning/Statements/USA.pdf>.

1387 America's gun culture in charts. BBC. April 8 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-41488081>;
Top 10 civilian gun-owning countries. Small arms survey research project. <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org>.

1388 In the Line of Fire: Human Rights and the US Gun Violence Crisis. Amnesty International.
<https://www.amnestyusa.org/reports/in-the-line-of-fire-human-rights-and-the-u-s-gun-violence-crisis/>.

comprehensive background checks with each and every transfer or purchase of a firearm in the USA.”

In 2019, there were more mass killings in the United States “than any year dating back to at least the 1970s.” According to data compiled by The Associated Press and USA Today in 2019 there were 41 mass killings, defined as incidents in which attackers killed 4 or more people. Most of these (i.e. 33) involved gun violence.¹³⁸⁹ Reportedly, there are approximately 100,000 “non-fatal firearm injuries in the United States each year.”

This high level of gun violence has increased in 2020. Major shooting incidents occurred approximately every 73 days. The Washington Post noted, citing research by experts from the University of Cleveland, that on average more than 100 Americans are injured daily in shootings across the country, including fatally.¹³⁹⁰ According to USA Today, in 2020, American law enforcement officials observed 611 instances of gun violence in populated areas that resulted in 513 fatalities and 2,543 injuries.¹³⁹¹ According to the Firearms Incident Archive, 20,000 Americans (including nearly 300 minors) died from injuries in 2020, an increase of 3,600 cases from 2017.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that 45,222 people died from gunshot wounds in 2020, either as a result of homicide or suicide. This figure is the highest on record, 43% greater than the number of victims in 2010 and 25% higher than the 2015 data. 38,355 people were killed by firearms in 2019. The mass shootings and firearm-related homicides generally attract a great deal of media attention, but according to statistics suicides are the most common type of firearm-related death.

The coronavirus pandemic has played an important role in exacerbating the problem of violence. The researchers see the reason in total self-isolation, as a

¹³⁸⁹ US mass killings hit new high in 2019, most were shootings. The Associated Press. 28 December 2019. <https://apnews.com/4441ae68d14e61b64110db44f906af92>.

¹³⁹⁰ Shootings never stopped during pandemic: 2020 was the deadliest gun violence year in decades. The Washington Post. March 24, 2021.

¹³⁹¹ Mass shootings hit a record high in 2020. Can COVID-19 vaccines bring peace in 2021? USA Today. 26 February 2021. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2021/02/26/mass-shootings-soared-covid-black-lives-matter-fears-2020/6784339002/>.

result of which social and educational programs were curtailed. An additional “irritant” was the high-profile death of African American George Floyd in May 2020. As a result, public distrust of law enforcement has only increased. Some urban settlements refused to obey the security forces at all. “Autonomous zones” free from police were created.¹³⁹²

The situation in this area has also been exacerbated by an increase in the circulation of weapons. In 2020, the Americans purchased more than 23 million units of this type of weapons – 64 % more than in 2019.¹³⁹³

According to a Pew Research Center survey conducted in June 2021, four out of ten American adults have a firearm in their home, with 30% personally owning one.

As the number of guns in circulation has increased, so has the number of firearms-related incidents. In 2021 there were 693 mass shootings, while in 2020 there were 611 and in 2019 there were 417.

Mass shootings in the United States have persisted through 2022. The most serious of these incidents was the May 24 shooting in a primary school in Uvalde, Texas, in which 19 pupils and 2 teachers were killed by a gunman. Other shootings occurred on April 3, in the center of Sacramento, in Corsicana, Texas on April 5, and on January 23, in Milwaukee. Six people were killed in each of those incidents. On March 19 one person was killed and 27 were wounded in a shooting at a car show in Dumas, Arkansas.

A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in April 2021 revealed considerable variety in Americans’ attitudes to firearm-related violence. Despite the large number of incidents involving firearms use, 48% of Americans believe gun violence is a very serious problem in the country today, while 22% believe it is a minor issue, and 6% believe it is not a problem at all.

Given the current situation, rights groups continue to appeal to legislators to tighten control over the circulation firearms. Amnesty International considers that

¹³⁹² See, for example, What is the Black House Autonomous Zone? The Washington Post, 24 June 2020; Welcome to the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone, where Seattle protesters gather without police. Seattle Times, June 10, 2020.
¹³⁹³ Shootings never stopped during pandemic: 2020 was the deadliest gun violence year in decades. The Washington Post. 24 March 2021.

the requirement for people to undergo special training before purchasing a firearm are gun does not provide a sufficient guarantee. Additional measures to directly address violence in “risk groups” are therefore required.

Many states are lifting restrictions on the freedom to carry firearms openly. In June 2021 Greg Abbott, governor of Texas, signed a law allowing residents of the state to carry firearms without a license and without having undergone training. Georgia adopted a similar law was adopted on April 12 2022.

In 2022 US President Joe Biden proposed the introduction of new restrictions on access to firearms in a bid to resolve the problem of firearms violence, from killings in a number of major cities to mass shootings. His proposals included increasing the minimum age for purchasing firearms from 18 to 21, and introducing stricter background checks on potential purchasers.

African Americans often suffer from the use of firearms.

At the same time, a number of experts note that members of ethnic minorities in America themselves take part in the shootings. According to the NGO Gun Violence Action Fund, African Americans between the ages of 15 and 34 commit 37% of homicides.¹³⁹⁴

The UN’s Human Rights bodies have been drawing attention to the seriousness of this problem for a long time. The Human Rights Committee (HR Committee) and CERD expressed special concern with the United States’ high number of gun-related fatalities and injuries as well as the disproportionate toll that these occurrences take on women, children, and people of color who are ethnic minorities. The UN HRC also pointed out “the discriminatory effect of the ‘Stand Your Ground’ laws,” which, in the opinion of the Committee, were “used to circumvent the limits of legitimate self-defense in violation of the State party’s duty to protect life.”¹³⁹⁵

At the same time, the problem of systemic racism has increasingly been used

1394 Shootings never stopped during pandemic: 2020 was the deadliest gun violence year in decades. The Washington Post. 24 March 2021.

1395 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fUSA%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUSA%2fCO%2f7-9&Lang=ru.

as an element of internal political struggle. Many Americans saw the “root of all evil” in the actions of the previous administration. The claims made by ex-president Trump and his supporters on social media have been blamed for provoking an increase in violence which culminated in the storm of the US Congress on January 6, 2021.

The need to prevent violence was used as justification for the widespread censorship of Donald Trump and his supporters on social media, but making the issue political did not help to address the nation’s urgent concerns or improve the grim situation. In truth, people were discriminated against based on their political preferences and personal opinions. Any opposing viewpoint has recently been banned on social media. The “liberal” public tries to portray those who express such opinions as spreading “fakes” and conspiracy theories. At the same time, many individuals were perplexed as to why many radical websites continued to run unabated.

After the Democrats came to power, the law enforcement and intelligence agencies launched a massive campaign to harass the participants in the “hijacking,” who were labeled as “domestic terrorists.” More than 2,000 charges were brought against the FBI alone. Hundreds of permits have been requested through the courts to search and summon suspects, and about 500 people have been detained. The media noted that those taken into custody were subjected to torture and psychological pressure.¹³⁹⁶ With the help of such methods, as well as “processing” of relatives and friends of “domestic terrorists,” the investigation achieves the “necessary” testimony.

Members of the Republican party also noted that their supporters were being harassed. Thus, Congressman P. Gosar has claimed that “outright propaganda and lies are being used to unleash the national security state against law-abiding US citizens, especially Trump voters. The FBI conducts blatant searches of the homes

1396 Capitol riot defendant claims prison guards beat ant torture inmates charged in relation to insurrection. The Washington Examiner. April 8 2021. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/capitol-riot-defendant-claims-guards-torture-inmates-related-to-insurrection>.

of veterans and civilians with no criminal records. Restricts the fundamental liberties of those who have never been charged with a crime.”¹³⁹⁷

It is amazing that, despite the “harassment” of conservatives, authorities prefer to ignore the left-wing radicals who have carried out pogroms across the country during marches for racial justice.¹³⁹⁸ The Democrat supporters’ actions were interpreted solely as manifestations of the freedom of expression and peaceful assembly guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. This is despite the fact that the riots caused at least \$1 billion in material damage to the property of American citizens.¹³⁹⁹

In contrast, members of Congress have made no attempt to investigate the death of A. Babbitt, who was shot while unarmed as she was attempting to climb into the Congress building on January 6, 2021

In 2022 26 Nazi monuments were documented in the USA. According to experts, such monuments can be found in Illinois, Ohio, Alabama, Florida, New Jersey, New York State, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin.¹⁴⁰⁰ The authorities continue to believe that condemning a memorial to Lithuanian Nazi henchman Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas in the Chicago suburbs (on private land) in 2019 is unnecessary. The American media bypass this shameful fact. Criticism from the Simon Wiesenthal Center is ignored.¹⁴⁰¹

Anti-Semitic sentiment is high in the United States. In his words, President Biden has made no secret of the situation, including neo-Nazi expressions of swastikas on automobiles, attacks on synagogues, and Holocaust denial.¹⁴⁰²

Islamophobia is widespread in the country, with 50 extremist anti-Islamic

1397 <https://www.rollcall.com/2021/05/12/at-hearing-republicans-recast-jan-6-rioters-as-victims/>;
<https://thehill.com/homenews/house/553122-gops-gosar-says-jan-6-rioter-was-executed>.

1398 More George Floyd protests planned at Colorado Capitol into the weekend. The Denver Post. 29 May 2020.
<https://www.denverpost.com/2020/05/29/george-floyd-protests-colorado-capitol/>.

1399 \$1 Billion-plus riot damage is most expensive in insurance history. AXIOS. 16 September 2020.
<https://www.axios.com/riots-cost-property-damage-276c9bcc-a455-4067-b06a-66f9db4cea9c.html>.

1400 It’s time to confront the dark postscript to America’s role in defeating the Nazis. CNN, 24 February 2021.
<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/02/24/opinions/dark-postscript-america-nazis-golinkin/index.html>.

1401 The BBC Russian service. 8 May 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-48198574>
http://www.wiesenthal.com/about/news/2019_5-2-simon-wiesenthal-center-urges.html.

1402 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/01/26/statement-from-president-joe-biden-on-international-holocaust-remembrance-day/>

organizations and 61 anti-Semitic organizations operating.¹⁴⁰³ Many cases of attacks on mosques and synagogues and their congregations have been documented.

Based on survey results reported by ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) on March 31, 2021, American Jews continued “to face significant fear and anxiety from the threat of anti-Semitic or other hateful attacks and harassment.” In the previous five years, 63% of those polled had experienced or observed a racially motivated hate crime. 56% stated that they received threats and insults, while 9% claimed to have been physically and verbally abused.¹⁴⁰⁴

According to the non-governmental organization Anti-Defamation League, the United States had a record level of anti-Semitism in 2021, with 2,717 cases of anti-Semitic attacks, harassment, and vandalism. In comparison to the number of instances recorded in 2020, this number is 34% greater. (2,024 episodes). It is the highest indicator since the ADL started keeping track of attacks involving Jews in 1979.¹⁴⁰⁵

Attacks on Jewish facilities, such as synagogues and community centers, rose by 61%; incidents at schools rose by 106%; and incidents on college campuses rose by 21%. There were 14% more acts of vandalism and 167% more attacks on individuals motivated by anti-Semitism.

On January 6, 2021, there were rioters sporting neo-Nazi emblems, including a man wearing a hoodie that read “Camp Auschwitz” and another wearing a T-shirt that read “6MWE” (“6 Million Wasn’t Enough”).¹⁴⁰⁶

On February 26, 2020, four extremists operating in Seattle, Tampa, Houston and Phoenix were arrested on charges of conspiracy to endanger the lives of journalists and nongovernmental organization activists. The affected persons were Jewish Americans and African Americans. Images of Nazi swastikas, weapons and Molotov cocktails were sent to them by mail.

1403 Data from NGO Southern Poverty Law Center: <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map?ideology=anti-muslim>.

1404 Survey on Jewish Americans’ Experiences with Antisemitism by the NGO Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

31 March 2021. <https://www.adl.org/blog/2021-survey-on-jewish-americans-experiences-with-antisemitism>

1405 <https://www.adl.org/audit-antisemitic-incidents-2021>

1406 The US Capitol riot was full of hate symbols. Here’s how to spot them - ABC News.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-12/washington-capitol-hate-symbols-race-riots-trump-antisemitism/13048516>

Anti-Semitic attacks were reported to have surged significantly during the conflict between Israel and Hamas in May 2021, rising by 148% over May 2020. The number increased from 127 instances two weeks prior to the conflict to 222 cases two weeks later. Hundreds of anti-Israeli protests took place in dozens of cities across the country. Of the 387 assaults on Jews documented in two major cities, New York and Los Angeles, 297 occurred after May 10, when the conflict officially began. Law enforcement officers intensified patrols in Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods.

Anti-Semitic incidents included an attack by a group of people carrying Palestinian flags on Jews dining outside in Los Angeles, aggression against Orthodox Jews in New York, and the desecration of a synagogue in Alaska with Nazi symbols. Pro-Palestinian demonstrations and synagogue vandalism have also been recorded in Arizona, Illinois, Florida, and New York, as well as in Salt Lake City, where an unidentified guy spray-painted a swastika on a synagogue door.¹⁴⁰⁷

On March 31, 2021, a Jewish family with a young child was attacked by gunfire in New York City, and on February 24, 2021, a memorial to the victims of the Jewish genocide was vandalized in Oklahoma.¹⁴⁰⁸

Another incident occurred in Florida on March 26, 2021. A car belonging to a Holocaust survivor was marked with two swastikas.¹⁴⁰⁹

In January 2021 journalists from CBS television reported that there had been more than 2,100 incidents since 2016, in which members of the diaspora were assaulted or insulted, or in which their property was vandalized.¹⁴¹⁰

Anti-Semitic incidents were recorded throughout the entire 2022. A gunman held hostages at a Jewish community in Colleyville, Texas, on January 15.¹⁴¹¹

1407 Who's behind recent rise in US anti-Semitic attacks? BBC. May 28 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-57286341>; US Faces Outbreak of Anti-Semitic Threats and Violence. The New York Times, May 26 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/26/us/anti-semitism-attacks-violence.html>.

1408 NY Man Attacks Hasidic Jewish Couple and Baby With Knife. Jewish Journal. April 1, 2021 <https://jewishjournal.com/news/334923/ny-man-attacks-hasidic-jewish-couple-and-baby-with-knife/>.

1409 Holocaust survivor's car marked with swastikas; auto center tagged with anti-Semitic message. WSVN, March 27 2021. <https://wsvn.com/news/local/miami-dade/holocaust-survivors-car-marked-with-swastikas-auto-center-tagged-with-anti-semitic-message/>.

1410 CBS News. 26.01.2021.

1411 Douglas, Jack; Zapotosky, Matt; Fisher, Marc (January 22, 2022). Angry outbursts and cool determination: Inside the synagogue attacker's 18-day journey to terror THE WASHINGTON POST

It is known that brochures were distributed in many states informing them that all measures to combat the coronavirus were being taken in the interests of Jews. Every Aspect of the COVID Agenda is Jewish.¹⁴¹²

The track record of anti-Semitic publications and statements of American rapper Ye (formerly known as K. West - Kanye West) - for example, the image of the Star of David together with the swastika - has gained wide coverage¹⁴¹³ Donald Trump's encounter with white supremacy theorist Nicholas Fuentes also contributed to the scandal.¹⁴¹⁴ Basketball player Kyrie Irving offended the public when he shared a link to an anti-Semitic film on social media.¹⁴¹⁵

But when members of the Ukrainian neo-Nazi battalion "Azov" visited Stanford University along with former US Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul, the United States handled it calmly.¹⁴¹⁶

An independent, interdepartmental working group headed by the NSC has been formed to create a national anti-Semitism strategy.¹⁴¹⁷ According to Deborah Lipstadt, the US Special Representative for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism, it is alarming that American society as a whole is not aware of the problem.¹⁴¹⁸

Despite the declared concern for overcoming hatred in society, the practical actions of the authorities are at odds with their words. This is especially evident in attitudes toward immigrants. Detained illegal aliens, including children, are frequently housed in unhygienic facilities that lack basic sanitation standards. Non-citizens have been refused health care services, according to human rights

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/angry-outbursts-and-cool-determination-inside-the-synagogue-attackers-18-day-journey-to-terror/2022/01/22/2015da20-7931-11ec-83e1-eaef0fe4b8c9_story.html

1412 <https://www.berkeleyside.org/2022/02/22/anti-semitic-flyers-berkeley-hills>,

<https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Antisemitic-flyers-found-in-San-Francisco-16800705.php>.

1413 <https://www.vox.com/culture/23519717/antisemitism-hatred-jews-violence>

1414 <https://www.npr.org/2022/11/29/1139742844/republicans-denounce-trump-dinner-white-supremacist-nick-fuentes>

1415 <https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/columnist/dan-wolken/2022/11/01/kyrie-irvings-antisemitic-film-endorsement-must-dealt-nba/10655972002/>

1416 <https://stanforddaily.com/2022/10/03/freed-ukrainian-prisoners-of-war-call-for-support-against-russia/>

1417 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/12/12/statement-from-white-house-press-secretary-karine-jean-pierre-on-inter-agency-group-to-counter-antisemitism/>

1418 <https://www.state.gov/remarks-at-the-conference-of-presidents-of-major-american-jewish-organizations-antisemitism-the-interconnected-hatred/>

organizations and researchers.¹⁴¹⁹ The program of mass deportations persisted under President Biden, including the employment of the accelerated removal mechanism under the pretext of quarantine requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁴²⁰

Politicians on the right blame illegal immigration for the rise in crime and the abuse of drugs.¹⁴²¹ The ostensibly pro-Republican governors of Florida, Arizona, and Texas, Ron De Santis, Douglas Ducey, and Greg Abbott, have sent people who do not have legal status in the country to liberal areas, even to Vice President Kamala Harris' home.¹⁴²² Conservative voters are in favor of such strategies.

Members of human rights community have repeatedly expressed concern about the increasingly tough measures taken by US authorities in order to “resolve” the immigration crisis facing the country. In 2019, the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) were launched, and under the program “certain foreign individuals entering or seeking admission” to the United States from Mexico – illegally or without proper documentation – could be returned to Mexico to wait outside of the US “for the duration of their immigration proceedings.”

The practice of artificially creating queues at southern border crossings has been documented, resulting in life-threatening consequences for thousands of migrants and refugees forced to violate USA law and cross the border at inappropriate locations. The impact of the program on children of asylum seekers and border crossers was particularly negative.

US authorities often separated families seeking asylum in the United States once they crossed the US-Mexico border. According to the ACLU (a nonprofit

1419 The Biden administration's unfulfilled promise of humane border policies. 28.05.2022:

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(22\)00741-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(22)00741-3/fulltext)

1420 Title 42 must end. Here are five reasons why. 20.12.2022: <https://www.wola.org/analysis/title-42-must-end-here-are-five-reasons-why/>

1421 Anti-immigrant campaign ads negatively impact Latino mental health and make them feel unwelcome in the United States. 01.11.2022: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2022/11/01/anti-immigrant-campaign-ads-negatively-impact-latinos-mental-health-and-make-them-feel-unwelcome-in-the-united-states/>

1422 Where GOP governors are transporting migrants. 23.09.2022: <https://www.axios.com/2022/09/23/gop-governors-sending-migrants-democratic-cities>

organization), minors were routinely separated from their families.¹⁴²³ They were then transferred to various immigration facilities. Reportedly, over 2 500 immigrant children were separated from their parents or caregivers. “1,033 of them were under the age of ten when they were detained, including 185 under five.”¹⁴²⁴ According to the organization, as of August 2020, 678 children have been separated by the authorities under the pretext of “parental criminal records.” By August 17, 2020, the organization had “filed 400 legal actions against the Trump administration,” with one filing (a class-action lawsuit) aimed at blocking “the removal of children seeking asylum at the border.”¹⁴²⁵

According to The Washington Post, “of the children screened, 895 — nearly 1 in 10 — said they had been verbally abused by CBP officers, while 147 said they had been subjected to physical abuse... [A]nd just over 40 percent reported a lack of adequate food or water during their detention.”¹⁴²⁶ In 2018–2019, over 2,600 teenagers were detained; five died. As of March 2021, there were 4,200 juveniles in detention.

The Washington Post reported on an incident in which 10-year-old asylum seeker W. Obregon was deported to Mexico by authorities and then kidnapped by unknown assailants. Reporters are convinced that there are thousands of such incidents.¹⁴²⁷

The living conditions of migrants, which include living in cramped “barrack”-style quarters or tent cities, being without heat, and not having access to basic hygiene supplies, have also come under fire from experts. Frozen foods, including expired ones, are in the diet.¹⁴²⁸

Among other problems, analysts note unemployment and the criminal situation. There are known cases of refugees settling in religious buildings and

1423 From 2017 through the first quarter of 2021, there were more than 5,000 such cases, according to the China Society for Human Rights Studies.

1424 <https://www.aclu.org/issues/family-separation>.

1425 ACLU. ACLU has Filed 400 Legal Actions Against Trump Administration. August 17, 2020 <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/aclu-has-filed-400-legal-actions-against-trump-administration>.

1426 The Washington Post, 31 October 2020.

1427 Migrant boy found wandering alone in Texas had been deported and kidnapped. The Washington Post. 9 April 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/04/09/migrant-boy-found-wandering-alone-texas-had-been-deported-kidnapped/>.

1428 Data from the NGO Physicians for Human Rights, Forced into Danger, January 2021

places of worship. Migrants' children are not given the opportunity to attend educational institutions, nor are proper measures taken against the spread of serious infectious diseases, including HIV.

According to the Remain in Mexico program, which the US launched in January 2019, applicants must wait for an asylum ruling from a court outside the US. Human rights activists have harshly criticized this. This policy was alleged to have led to large-scale violations of fundamental freedoms. Nearly 70,000 people who sought asylum in the USA found themselves stuck in Mexican cities near the US border.¹⁴²⁹ Many migrants were victims of crimes including sexual exploitation and human trafficking.¹⁴³⁰

The coronavirus pandemic also violated the right of asylum seekers to a fair and timely trial. Hearings for applicants were postponed indefinitely, further endangering their health and lives.¹⁴³¹ Only 615 persons (less than 1% of applicants) have been granted permission to apply for asylum in the United States since the "Stay in Mexico" program's implementation began.¹⁴³² In total, approximately 400 thousand people were left waiting for a response to their asylum application in 2020.¹⁴³³

Asylum seekers have experienced denials of their applications and unjustified deportations to nations where they risk their lives. Since 2013, 138 Salvadoran nationals who had been removed have perished, according to the NGO Human Rights Watch. American deportation centers have also been criticized for holding people in overcrowded and insanitary conditions.

Since March 2020 the US Department of Homeland Security has been deporting migrants based on rules introduced by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, empowered by Article 42 of the US Code of Federal Regulations. Human Rights

1429 TRAC Immigration, Details on Migrant Protection Protocols (Remain in Mexico) Deportation Proceedings. Syracuse University.

1430 Data from the NGO Physicians for Human Rights, Forced into Danger, January 2021.

1431 Data from the NGO Physicians for Human Rights, Forced into Danger, January 2021

1432 TRAC Immigration, Details on Migrant Protection Protocols (Remain in Mexico) Deportation Proceedings. Syracuse University.

1433 Data from American Civil Liberties Union NGO, Hundreds of Thousands of People in Limbo as they Wait for Justice

First has investigated at least 8 705 assaults on or kidnappings of persons whose asylum applications have been refused based on Article 42 or other regulations restricting the right to asylum. Many of these people, both individuals and families, are living in poor conditions which are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and by the lack of basic healthcare and adequate nutrition.

December 23, 2020 Under the Trump administration, the US Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice have proposed a rule that would revoke protections for refugees who transit through or arrive from a nation where COVID-19 or other potentially contagious diseases are common, describing such refugees as “dangerous to the national security of the United States.”

Despite the country’s escalating political unrest and violent crime, the United States has deported over 20,000 Haitians, including children and asylum seekers, back to Haiti since January 2021.

Direct deportations under Section 42 also persisted as of the end of February 2022 to nations such as El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

During the Trump administration the United States entered into Asylum Cooperative Agreements (ACA) with Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, and the Biden administration subsequently withdrew from and terminated these agreements. Under the ACA, the US government deported at least 945 asylum seekers to Guatemala without providing them with any legal support. The agreements with El Salvador and Honduras were never implemented.

Leading healthcare experts in the USA have repeatedly stressed that restricting the right to asylum cannot be justified on public health grounds, and that such policies put migrants’ health and security at risk. While asylum seekers are not allowed to request protection along the border, including at ports of entry, vaccinated tourists and other visitors with visas have been allowed to enter the United States through southern border ports since November 2021, which highlights the discriminatory nature of the situation for potential refugees.¹⁴³⁴

1434 <https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/rsource/us-asylum-and-border-policies-resulting-human-rights-violations>.

The policy of not allowing migrants and refugees from Mexico into the United States has been repeatedly challenged in local courts as contrary to the principles of humanity. Despite the fact that one of the Federal instances ruled that such measures were unlawful,¹⁴³⁵ the USA Supreme court subsequently rejected that ruling.¹⁴³⁶

In April 2020, over 120 organizations (including human rights ones) urged the US Department of Homeland Security in a letter to halt expulsions at the nation's southern border. The appeal further emphasizes that the processing of asylum seekers' applications did not follow international law. The bare minimum requirements for the defense of children's rights were also broken. Reportedly, "at least 400 children - from Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico" - had already been expelled to Mexico. In some cases, minors ended up in the care of adults "whose relationship to the children has not been checked, placing children at risk of trafficking." Such incidents occurred in part because DHS instructed border patrol agents to "rapidly expel individuals encountered at the border, including unaccompanied children."

Human rights activists point out that the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the situation. The victims were mainly from Latin American countries. This group's death rate was 38.4%, far greater than that of the white race.¹⁴³⁷ For African Americans, it was 27.9%.¹⁴³⁸ In particular, the administration of migrant detention centers showed disregard for the people who were there, their medical care, and their living conditions. Results of the aforementioned study, conducted by "Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) staff and Harvard Medical School faculty and students," showed that the number of people per month who tested positive for COVID-19 in ICE detention "between April and August 2020 was between 5.7 to 21.8 times higher than the case rate of the US general population during that same time." Interviews with immigrants who had been detained at 22 different ICE

1435 Data from the American Civil Liberties Union NGO, Comment on Appeals Court Stay Ruling in Remain in Mexico Program. March 4, 2020.

1436 Data from the American Civil Liberties Union NGO, Comment on Supreme Court Stay Ruling in Remain in Mexico Program, 11 March 2020.

1437 Data from the USA Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2020.

1438 The Century Foundation Report. 2020

facilities revealed that measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 had often not been complied with, and living conditions at these centers had put detainees at risk of catching the disease. Respondents were unable to maintain a social distance because the detention facilities were overcrowded, and did not have access to soap or sanitizer. Many of those who became infected had to wait up to 25 days before they could see a doctor.¹⁴³⁹

Data from analysts at Harvard University, using the Otay Mesa detention center as an example, demonstrates the disregard for COVID-19 sanitation and hygiene regulations, as well as the WHO recommendations.¹⁴⁴⁰ The following data is given¹⁴⁴¹: there are on average eight people per 23 m², which contradicts the norms of social distancing for the prevention of transmission of the virus. At the same time, the sick persons are kept in common rooms of approximately 90 persons per room.

Testing for COVID-19 was extremely limited. Out of almost 26 thousand persons detained in such institutions, only a quarter was checked for the presence of the disease. Tests for the disease conducted in individual centers, however, revealed positive results for coronavirus in over 70% of those who were there. Human rights activists also point to the fact of possible concealment of the real situation of morbidity in such institutions. Many detention centers never released statistics on the spread of the coronavirus, or stated that there were no cases.

In February 2021, a number of organizations (including human rights ones) again sent a coalition letter to the US Department of Homeland Security urging the latter “to reject the use of expedited removal and immigration detention,” as such policies “effectively eliminated humanitarian protections at the border in violation of US law and treaty obligations.” They expressed grave concerns “with the

1439 Praying for Hand Soap and Masks. Health and Human Rights Violations in US Immigration Detention during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Physicians for Human Rights website, January 12 2021. <https://phr.org/our-work/resources/praying-for-hand-soap-and-masks/>.

1440 Harvard College Data Analytics Group, www.detainedindanger.org.

1441 NGO Human Rights First, Detained in Danger: Database raises troubling questions about COVID-19 in ICE Detention Centers. <https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/press-release/detained-danger-database-raises-troubling-questions-about-covid-19-ice-detention>.

expedited removal process.”¹⁴⁴²

In May 2021, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) urged the US to “restore access to asylum for people whose lives depend on it.” Despite his promises to mitigate the harsh policies of the Trump administration in relation to asylum seekers at the Mexican border, Joe Biden is continuing with the deportations, despite the fact that this policy is putting children at risk, splitting up families and illegally jeopardizing the safety of asylum seekers, including Black asylum seekers, who are at risk of violence in Mexico.¹⁴⁴³

In December 2021, following a court ruling, which is currently being appealed against, expulsions of migrants and refugees under the RMX policy began again. In December 2021 dozens of members of Congress signed a letter criticizing the government’s renewal of expulsions under the RMX policy, and called on it to reverse its decision to extend the scope of the RMX to refugees of other nationalities. The Administration stated that it would use the RMX policy to expel people who could not be removed under Section 42.

The Department of Homeland Security is now able to prohibit, send back, or deport an even broader spectrum of migrants and asylum seekers to Mexico by combining the RMX policy and Title 42. The NGO Human Rights First has monitored at least 1,544 publicly reported cases of kidnapping, murder, torture, rape, and other violent acts on persons back in Mexico in the two years since the Trump administration introduced RMX. At least two asylum seekers who were sent back to Mexico under the RMX policy were subsequently killed.

As the media and human rights organizations routinely point out, indigenous people continue to be among the most socially disadvantaged Americans and the targets of racism. According to a number of analysts, indigenous people living on reservations endure a high level of socioeconomic inequality and a significant income gap. Over 20% of Native Alaskians live below the poverty line. This

1442 Coalition Letter to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas. Regarding Use of Expedited Removal Process for Asylum Seekers at the Border. Human Rights Watch, February 16 2021.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/16/coalition-letter-department-homeland-security-secretary-mayorkas>.

1443 <https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/rsource/us-asylum-and-border-policies-resulting-human-rights-violations>.

situation gives rise to a number of adverse social consequences. For example, native American communities tend to suffer from lower levels of education and higher levels of crime, alcoholism, unemployment and suicide (50.9 cases per 100,000, which is four times the national average).

Native Americans continue to have one of the lowest rates of literacy of any ethnic group in the United States, according to the American Civil Liberties Union of Montana, an NGO. Children from Native American families often face discrimination in the education system. The suicide rate among youth aged 15 to 24 is comparable to that of war veterans.¹⁴⁴⁴

In 2014, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed its concern about the legislative obstacles faced by indigenous peoples “to effectively exercise their right to vote, due inter alia to restrictive voter identification laws” (e.g. many reservation residents have non-traditional addresses), district gerrymandering, and state-level felon disenfranchisement laws. Furthermore, the distance between polling locations and indigenous people’s homes has an impact on the implementation of their electoral rights. Hence, some members of indigenous communities do not take an active part in elections.

Human rights organizations have expressed concern about the inadequacy of actions implemented by American authorities to protect the interests of people of indigenous origin. The lengthy and expensive judicial processes used by members of this community to assert their rights have come under fire. The problems of protecting indigenous peoples’ sacred sites from desecration, as well as pollution or destruction due to the activities of extractive industries or the construction of their transportation facilities, tourism development, or the dumping of toxic waste were noted. The restriction of access of indigenous peoples to sacred areas The UN human rights treaty bodies, in particular the HRC and CERD, have raised these issues with concern.

The functioning of the largest oil pipeline from North Dakota’s Access oil

1444 NGO American Civil Liberties Union Montana: <https://www.aclumontana.org/en/news/contextualizing-federal-indian-boarding-school-initiative-report>.

pipeline, which underwent construction between 2014 and 2016 despite protracted and vehement opposition from the Sioux Indians, is another illustration of the improper treatment of Native Americans by US authorities. The pipeline runs from an oil field in western North Dakota, down the Mississippi and Missouri rivers and under Lake Oahe on the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation, through South Dakota and Iowa, and ending in Patoka, Illinois. The facility, which is planned to pump 570 thousand barrels of crude oil per day, will also affect ancient Indian burial grounds, crop fields, rivers, and a lake that provide drinking water to thousands of Indian families. Its capacity will be increased to 1.1 million barrels per day from current 750,000 bpd. Protests by community activists against the construction of the pipeline were severely suppressed by the authorities. Attempts by tribal residents of the two Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations to prevent the transfer of oil through a pipeline already built have been rejected through the courts. The Indians fear that the main source of drinking water for the 10,000-strong Sioux Nation would be threatened if an oil spill caused by pipeline damage or even small leaks were to occur. At the same time, the media reported that there had already been cases of oil leakage at the pipeline.¹⁴⁴⁵

In 2020, the US District Court for the District of Columbia revoked a key environmental permit for the pipeline and ordered an additional environmental study. However, as early as September 20, the pipeline operator asked the USA Supreme Court to reconsider the need for this additional environmental review. On September 22, activists in the Standing Rock Sioux community sent a letter to Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Works at the USA Department of Defense H. Pinkham, urging the federal government to abandon the ongoing environmental review of the pipeline and begin anew, because serious mistakes had been made in its implementation. Including withholding key project information from Indian activists and ignoring the technical and cultural information they provide.¹⁴⁴⁶

1445. <https://ria.ru/20170514/1494257910.html>; The Dakota Access Pipeline Is Already Leaking. Vice. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/d7adaj/the-dakota-access-pipeline-is-already-leaking>.

1446 Standing Rock calls on feds to scrap DAPL environmental review and start over. Grand Forks Herald. September 22 2021. <https://www.grandforksherald.com/business/energy-and-mining/7206681-Standing-Rock-calls-on-feds-to-scrap-DAPL-environmental-review-and-start-over>; Dakota Access pipeline asks US Supreme Court to

The oil company's actions target one of the most vulnerable Native American communities. The situation of the Indians living at Standing Rock is quite depressing. More than 40% of the reservation's population earns less than the federal poverty line, which is 13.8 percent of the national median personal income.¹⁴⁴⁷

The media also reported that the Dakota Access pipeline was originally planned to take a different route, which was changed because it was supposed to pass through an area inhabited by the white community.¹⁴⁴⁸

At the same time, there are cases of indigenous peoples and environmental campaigners triumphing over oil multinationals. In June 2021, it became known that the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline leading from Canada to the United States has officially stopped. This was done after President Joe Biden revoked a critical White House permit required to complete the almost 2,000-kilometer-long project's US project.¹⁴⁴⁹ The Dakota Access pipeline's development through the states of North and South Dakota has long been a source of contention, drawing opposition from indigenous people and farmers alike.

There has been a distinct increase in Russophobic sentiments in the United States in recent years, against the backdrop of anti-Russian rhetoric in the officialdom and media. The State Department, the White House, and lawmakers have all repeatedly accused Russia of pursuing an aggressive and expansionist foreign policy, meddling in American domestic affairs, violating human rights at home, and supporting authoritarian regimes abroad.

Since the United States is home to one of the largest Russian diasporas in the world with more than 2.8 million people, or 0.8% of the nation's total population, as of 2020, the Russophobia imposed by American authorities has had a negative

scrap environmental study order. Reuters, September 21 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/dakota-access-pipeline-asks-us-supreme-court-scrap-environmental-study-order-2021-09-20/>; US judge orders that Dakota Access oil pipeline can remain open. Reuters. May 21 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/business/legal/us-judge-orders-that-dakota-access-oil-pipeline-can-remain-open-2021-05-22/>.

1447 <https://time.com/4551726/dakota-access-pipeline-standing-rock-sioux-tribe-devastate-poorest-people/>.

1448 <https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/north-dakota-access-pipeline-protests-map-white-indigenous-latest-a7448161.html>

1449 Construction of the disputed Keystone XL pipeline has been terminated. Voice Of America. June 10, 2021 <https://www.golosameriki.com/a/ay-keystone-xl-is-stopped/5924181.html>.

effect on the situation of people of Russian descent in the country. During 2021, about three hundred fellow citizens permanently residing in the USA were subjected to prosecutions by the American intelligence services on contrived grounds, thus violating their lawful rights to preserve their national cultural identity and their freedom to maintain connections with Russia.

In the Russian-speaking diaspora, activists who speak Russian face persecution. The Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots' (CCRC) operations have been constrained. Agents of the FBI questioned employees and searched offices. Elena Branson, the Chairperson of the CCRC, was accused of illegally working as a foreign agent.

The Russian position of inadmissibility of putting pressure on our compatriots was more than once informed to the American government. There was emphasized inadmissibility of gross violation of the Russian citizens' rights to maintain connections with their historical Motherland.

In view of the Department of State's failure to respond to a formal communication from the Russian embassy on November 18 2021, the CCRC decided to cease its activities. E. Branson, as well as the organization's General Director, S. Gladyshev, and a number of other officers of the CCRC were forced to leave the USA. In the statement published by the CCRC it is noted that the American authorities have created inadmissible conditions for continuing the work on consolidation of the community, promotion of the Russian language, holding memorial actions.

There is continued pressure of the American authorities on representatives of the Russian media who in the recent years on repeated occasions became victims of cruel and unjustified actions of law enforcement agencies. Thus, while dispersing demonstrators in Minneapolis (Minnesota) on May 30, 2020, the police pored teargas in the face of IMG Rossiya Segodnya journalist M. Turgiev. This happened notwithstanding his showing to the police officers his press card. As could be seen from the video taken at the place of the incident, the Russian had identified himself in a loud and clear manner, he did not offer any resistance and

his clothes had the necessary markings.

On the evening of July 22, 2020 in Portland, Oregon, another occurrence took place. Channel One correspondent Yu. Olkhovskaya and operator V. Arkhipov suffered from the actions of law enforcement officers in the course of preparation of materials about the disorders provoked by the killing of Afro-American J. Floyd. The “guardians of law and order” inflicted damage to the health of the Russians and damaged their professional equipment - broke the video camera and mobile phone. The incident happened after our fellow citizens had informed about their appurtenance to the media. Total over 30 journalists were wounded as the result of unlawful actions of law enforcement and intelligence service officers in Portland while highlighting the protests.¹⁴⁵⁰

On October 29, 2020 in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), an assault related to robbery was made on Channel One crew. Correspondent G. Olisashvili suffered, operator M. Kataev had a concussion, multiple bruises and scratches. The robbers broke into the Russian citizens' car, stole a bag with personal belongings and funds and a video camera. As informed by the journalists, the local law enforcement officers demonstrated absolute indifference and total absence of any interest to investigate the incident.

On October 15, 2020, officers of the Federal Customs and Border Control Service interrogated RT channel journalist K. Rozhkov during many hours. The Russian citizen arrived in the USA to shoot a documentary about America on the eve of the presidential elections. The discontent was caused by his intention to highlight burning issues in the country and, on the whole, his work for RT channel that had been included in the list of foreign agents. They demanded the reporter to open access to all available electronic media, further on - to provide explanations on the information placed in public domain (including about the performed vaccination with Sputnik V) as well as on the correspondence related to his journalistic activity. What happened definitely went beyond the ordinary

1450 NGO Committee to Protect Journalists

<https://cpj.org/2020/08/were-scared-shitless-out-here-four-reporters-on-covering-the-federal-response-to-portland-protests/>.

procedures related to ensuring public safety.

On October 23, 2020, IMG Rossiya Segodnya employee D. Zlodorev was subjected to a thirty minutes' telephone interrogation by a representative of the Baltimore FBI office. Our citizen was requested to provide information about his professional contacts with the CCRC as well as with the representative office of Rossotrudnichestvo (Federal Agency for CIS Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation) in Washington.

In July 2020, YouTube video hosting blocked the accounts of Tsargrad TV channel and the Imperial Eagle historical society. The formal ground was "violation of the platform terms and conditions and of export legislation." In March 2021, the service administration also restricted access to the film of the Russian journalist A. Kondrashev "Crimea. Way to Motherland," and in September 2020 - to A. Rogatkin's film "Beslan," under the pretext that they contained materials able to frighten or shock users.

The Department of State failed to respond to any of the messages from the Russian ambassador calling for a full investigation into each of these incidents, and for the guilty parties to be prosecuted, and for measures to be taken to ensure the safety of media professionals.

The US media and official discourse have actively contributed to the rise in Russophobia since the start of the Special Military Operation. The US authorities orchestrated a campaign to "cancel" everything Russian, which has now exceeded the fanatical anti-Communist campaign of the McCarthy years.

The anti-Russian hysteria is now having an impact on people's everyday lives. Russian restaurants and cafes, cultural centers, and Russian Orthodox churches and cemeteries have all been vandalized. Many states have prohibited the sale of Russian goods. Many Russian speakers have been harassed at work and some have been forced to resign. They are frequently threatened - including with physical attacks.

Owners of shops and restaurants who used in the names of their businesses the word "Russian," or included Russian specialties in the menu, were one of the

first to face everyday aggression. It was demonstrated mostly through petty hooliganism - insulting graffiti on walls and shop-windows, negative comments on websites, anonymous threatening telephone calls. However this contributed to spreading fear among restaurant keepers.

Discrimination is prosecuted by law in the USA, however it is quite problematic to prove the fact of harassment based on national or ethnic origin. Due to such negative background, many emigrants, even those who have achieved great success abroad, started thinking of possibility to return to Russia. The anti-Russian attitudes in the American society not only influence colleagues' attitude towards persons of Russian origin, they destroy families. There are reported incidents when American spouses stopped communicating with, speaking with their Russian spouses or even letting them into the home.¹⁴⁵¹

Performances of Russian classical music and drama have been removed from the repertoire of orchestras and theatres in the USA. In New York literary evenings dedicated to the work of Alexander Pushkin have been canceled, as have concerts by Russian performers.

On February 24, 2022, the management of the Carnegie Hall concert hall in New York announced that the Russian conductor Valery Gergiev would not be leading the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in three upcoming concerts. At the same time, Russian pianist Dennis Matsuev's participation in the concert set for February 25, 2022, was canceled.¹⁴⁵²

The US government is continually imposing new restrictions on the participation of Russian athletes, coaches and referees in international competitions.

On April 6, 2022, the Boston Athletic Association, a nonprofit organization

1451 "People are being fired": Kochin, the head of the Russian Youth of America organization, verified the rise in Russophobia in the United States. https://riafan.ru/22912317-lyudei_uvol_nyayut_glava_obschestva_russkaya_molodezh_ameriki_kochin_podtverdil_usilenie_rusofobii_v_ssh

1452 Gergiev and Matsuev's appearances at Carnegie Hall in New York were canceled. TASS. 25 February 2022. <https://tass.ru/kultura/13850801>.

whose principal mission is to promote healthy lifestyles, announced its decision to prohibit Russian and Belarussian athletes who are residents of the two nations from competing in the annual Boston Marathon. At the same time, non-residents are allowed to the competition not depending on their citizenship. Until further notice, the organization refused to acknowledge any designation by the athletes of their appurtenance to Russia and Belarus, including using their state flags.¹⁴⁵³

Simultaneously, our cultural icons and athletes have been asked to publicly oppose Russia's policy in Ukraine.

Bilateral cooperation on scientific and educational projects is also being reduced. Russian research centers, universities and academics have been excluded from American projects, and in many cases the local scientific community are concerned about the situation (especially in joint research projects in the Arctic region). It has become so bad that Democratic Congressman Eric Swalwell has advocated for "the expulsion of Russian students from American Universities."¹⁴⁵⁴ Russians have also been refused licensing certificates under the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates program. US cancer organizations have lobbied the international oncologists' network "Onco Alert" to bar Russia from participation due to the hysteria surrounding the country. And the Space Foundation has changed the name of the annual Yuri's Night festival, dedicated to the first man in space, to A Celebration of Space.

The US Government has set out to erase all memory of the historical cooperation between the USA and Russia. The annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington Cemetery in Washington, D.C., honoring the meeting of Soviet and American troops at Elba in April 1945, was refused to the Russian Embassy in 2022. It was essentially impossible for American veterans to attend the Victory Parade in Moscow in May 2022 or May 2023.¹⁴⁵⁵

In line with the current tendency, public organizations are promoting anything with a connection to Ukraine, in a bid to "counteract Russian influence."

1453 B.A.A. Policy on Russian and Belarussian Athletes. <https://www.baa.org/baa-policy-russian-and-belarusian-athletes>.

1454 <https://www.foxnews.com/media/eric-swallow-russians-us-universities-retaliation>

1455 <https://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/68366>

For example, the University of South Carolina Symphony Orchestra has removed P.I. Tchaikovsky's Marche Slave, replacing it with The Great Gate of Kiev, by M.P. Mussorgsky, and in American universities Russian language courses have been replaced by courses in the Ukrainian language. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City has included the great Russian painters Ivan Aivazovsky,¹⁴⁵⁶ Arkhip Kuindzhi,¹⁴⁵⁷ and Ilya Repin¹⁴⁵⁸ on its list of Ukrainian painters,¹⁴⁵⁹ and the French impressionist Edgar Degas' picture "Russian Dancer" has been renamed "Dancer in Ukrainian Dress."¹⁴⁶⁰

Washington actively involves its controlled media and IT companies who, using all possible means, obstruct bringing the Russian approaches and objective points of view on the events in Ukraine to the attention of the international community. For these purposes, censoring is openly used, up to full exclusion of the Russian position from the media environment. Both Russian media and common persons who publish content reflecting the Russian positions fall under repressions in the Internet.

Since April 2020, more than 60 examples of discrimination against Russian media, as well as official, public, and sports organizations and people, have been identified by Roskomnadzor. The restrictions in respect of the Russian media resources were drastically enhanced in the end of February 2022. Among other things, the accounts or content of the information agencies Russia Today and Sputnik, of the TV channels Russia 24, Zvezda, RBC, NTV, TNT, REN TV, Izvestia, The Fifth Channel, Russian Radio, Tsargrad and others were blocked. Channel One, Russia 1, Culture, RIA Novosti also fell within the scope of the restrictions. According to statements by the administration of the video hosting site, the content distributed by the TV channels, including about the Special Military Operation, "violates its policies."

1456 <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/435570>

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437979>

1457 <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436833>

1458 <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437440>

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437441>

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437442>

1459 <https://www.rt.com/pop-culture/571291-metropolitan-changes-painter-nationality/>

1460 <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436157>

Concurrently with these restrictions, the administrators and moderators of YouTube do not object to the transmission of information by outlawed Ukrainian extremist organizations, especially the Right Sector and the nationalist formation Azov. In reality, YouTube has become one of the primary channels for discrediting the Russian Federation's Armed Forces by propagating misleading news about the Special Military Operation's progress. According to Roskomnadzor, over 12 thousand of such materials are posted on the service.

In the end of February 2022, Google prohibited to Russian official media place advertisements on its platforms. In the beginning of March, its management informed that Google Play users in Russia will not be able to prolong paid subscriptions or install paid applications due to decisions taken by the payment systems.

Meta (identified as an extremist in Russia), which owns the social network Facebook, is actively imposing censorship. These resources also restrict dissemination of content of Russian media, public persons and public figures, as well as of ordinary citizens, containing the Russian position. At the same time, in the beginning of February - March 2022 the calls "to kill Russians," instructions on the ways of killings and making explosives, as well as other similar content, were actively distributed on these platforms. Moderators ignored complaints from users about such definite dissemination of ideology of hatred.

On March 11, 2022 a letter from Meta internal communications was published. As followed from this letter, the company would temporarily allow to Facebook and Instagram in some countries not to block users' calls on violence against Russians including military servicemen. It was also noted that calls to death addressed to the presidents of Russia and Belarus would not be removed on social media.

After the revealed fact of using double standards in respect of Russian citizens, Meta attempted to repair the situation. However, its subsequent statement simply served to confirm its racist publication policy. In particular, it was stated that users would be allowed to call to "death to Russian occupants" but at the same

time the platform administration would block calls to violence against Russian civilians. The company also noted that publications on ways of killings would be banned.

The company also did not comply with the Russian government's lawful demand to delete such dangerous materials. On March 21, 2022, the Russian court found Meta company an extremist organization and its activities were prohibited in Russia.

Serious aggression to Russians and even just Russian-speaking persons is demonstrated by representatives of the Ukrainian community residing in the USA. Fearing attacks, Russians try to avoid speaking their native language in public places. Our compatriots fear that it will be demonstrated to the greatest extent in organization of pro-Russian events. Previously, when pro-Russian actions were conducted, their participants were often approached by nationalistically-minded persons who tried to impede the holding of such events. They even had confrontations with the police. However now, according to our fellow citizens' assessment, one can not expect protection from the law enforcement authorities.

Even minimal connection to Russia may become the reason for physical violence. An example of this may be the attack on the American blogger, Brooklyn resident, by his Ukrainian neighbor. It was provoked by the fact that the man carelessly unfolded in the street the flag of the "Somali" division - a present mailed to him by his subscriber from the Donetsk People's Republic. For this, he was hit on the face, and his tooth was broken. The attacker pursued him for several blocks shouting racist insults, Charges have been already brought against him, including those of commission of a hate crime, and a court injunction on approaching the blogger has been delivered. At that, the latter is of both Russian and Ukrainian origins.¹⁴⁶¹

The Rubic website popular in the USA published its readers' stories about demonstration of discrimination that they have faced. Among others, there were

1461 Brooklyn man attacked for pro-Russian flag says he got it from YouTube fan. New York post. March 18, 2022.

<https://nypost.com/2022/03/18/nyc-man-attacked-for-pro-russian-flag-says-he-got-it-from-youtube-fan/>

also reported cases of discrimination and aggression in respect of Russian children at schools, biased attitude and fault-finding in respect of persons of Russian origin at work, especially on the part of those company owners who were Ukrainian. Online and social media abuse has significantly increased.¹⁴⁶²

Propagation of Russophobia and its visual manifestation may be next to absurd. Stickers with the Ukrainian flag at the entrance of stores, cafes, hospitals, dry cleaners, and other public locations were prevalent in the United States after the start of the Special Military Operation. At that, quite often the specialists working there explain to their Russian clients that in this way they just avoid unnecessary conversations.

It has to be acknowledged that Washington has been avoiding normal, civilized cooperation with Russia in the line of law enforcement authorities based on the Russian-American 1999 Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters. Instead, the inadmissible practice of arrest of Russian citizens in third countries based on the US law enforcement authorities' inquiries is going on. It actually concerns unlawful extraterritorial application of the American legislation against our citizens. Almost 60 such cases have been reported since 2008. In 2021, at the request of the USA, V. Dunaev was extradited from the Republic of Korea, and V. Klyushin was extradited from Switzerland, and in 2022, A. Vinnik was extradited from Greece.

On repeated occasions, there occurred situations when American intelligence services organized obvious provocations against and even kidnappings of our compatriots. The arrests of K. Yaroshenko, V. Bout, and R. Seleznev are prime examples.

Overall, there are about one hundred Russian citizens in US prisons and remand centers. As shown in practice, the majority of them serve punishment for non-violent crimes (violation of immigration laws, fraud, stealing, etc.).

The absence of exact data on the number of detained Russians can be

¹⁴⁶² "Do you speak Russian? Then, you are a traitor": How they treat immigrants from the former USSR in America now. <https://www.kp.ru/daily/27374/4567724/>

explained by the fact that the US government not always provide information on their detention or release from custody. The application of the Embassy of the Russian Federation to the US Department of State requesting to provide data about the number of citizens of the Russian Federation who are in detention facilities remained unanswered.

As a rule, when our fellow citizens fall into the hands of the American justice they are subjected to biased approach from the investigative bodies and courts. They are subjected to psychological pressure. The well-known situation with Maria Butina, who was rescued from an American prison at the cost of enormous efforts and returned to her homeland, is yet another confirmation of this.

Using various methods, including direct threats, they try to coerce our fellow citizens to admission of their guilt and plea bargain, notwithstanding the absurdity of the charges, and if they refuse they are sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

The spread of COVID-19 aggravated the already difficult situation of Russian citizens detained in penitentiary facilities. Notwithstanding the dramatic growth in the number of infections, qualified medical assistance is rarely provided to Russian prisoners. They are only tested for coronavirus in exceptional cases.

Despite the many violations of human rights and basic freedoms referred to in this document, and the repeated highlighting of such violations by international organizations and NGOs including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, the USA is continuing to accuse other countries of committing human rights violations, and is setting itself up as the “main global champion” of human rights throughout the world, despite having long ago forfeited its right to such a status.

Washington has consistently abstained from voting in favor of Russia’s yearly UN General Assembly resolution to condemn the glorification of Nazism, and it has also made efforts to exert pressure on other nations to block the move from receiving widespread international support.

According to American representatives, the glorification of Nazism and any other hate speech is an exercise of the right to freedom of expression (“freedom of

speech”) and assembly, which contravenes, among other things, Washington’s obligations under The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, including its Article 4 (the US reservation to this article was qualified by CERD as incompatible with the object and purpose of this international treaty in the meaning of Article 19 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties). In this regard, the serious rise of racism within the country is not surprising.

Ukraine

The formation of a society based on Nazi ideas is taking place in Ukraine at an accelerated pace, with the active encouragement of Western handlers. To that end, the regime in Kiev has consistently taken efforts for aggressive neo-Nazi propaganda, accompanied by rewriting of the history of the Great Patriotic War and the Second World War and building of nationalist sentiments among broad segments of the Ukrainian society. Glorification of Nazism, promotion of its penetration into all spheres of public life, systemic suppression of human rights, opposition and dissent in Ukraine, as well as the fight against everything connected with Russia, has become a deliberate policy of the Ukrainian regime since 2014.

Distorted interpretations of historical events, which belittle the role and contribution of the USSR to the victory over Nazism and are aimed at destroying the historical memory of the Ukrainian people about the events of that war, have been instilled. Ukraine's State policy and active steps of the authorities at all levels to whitewash and glorify Nazism and Nazi collaborators of the Second World War and to dignify various formations of Ukrainian collaborators with the Nazis during the war under the guise of participants in the "national liberation movement" contribute to the cultivation of a nationalist attitude among the general public. Particular attention is paid to the adoption of a wide range of measures to provide State support for movements glorifying Nazi criminals and collaborators.

In 2022-2023, against the background of the active glorification of Nazism and the breeding of hostility towards Russia among the population, the human rights situation in Ukraine itself continued to seriously deteriorate.

It is indicative that Vladimir Zelensky was elected as President in 2019 under the slogans of achieving peace and ending discrimination against the population of the south-eastern part of the country. However, to date, the current Ukrainian leadership's policy on most key issues, including in the humanitarian sphere, has not only remained a copy of Poroshenko's aggressive course, but has also repeatedly aggravated the existing problems and contributed to the emergence of new ones.

As rightly noted by some researchers, in 2022 the Kiev regime underwent a political mutation. The conditions it created as a result of the imposition of martial law allowed it to build an authoritarian system of government in the country, characterized by an absolute monopoly on power, extrajudicial killings, strict censorship, the de facto elimination of independent media and the destruction of the political opposition, total State propaganda, and an active search for traitors, fictitious Russian spies and saboteurs. The current regime, having adopted the ideology and practices of Ukrainian radical nationalists, has essentially degenerated into a neo-Nazi dictatorship.

For such a regime, a state of war and the use of the widest range of repressive measures are necessary as the only and at the same time the safest way to preserve its dominance. It exists as long as a high degree of escalation in society is maintained, armed confrontation with an external enemy continues, and most importantly, massive Western assistance, primarily military, is provided. The end of the war for such a regime would be tantamount to the end of its existence.

The right to freedom and personal integrity is regularly violated in the country, and numerous cases of illegal arrests and subsequent detention, torture, intimidation, inhuman and cruel treatment, aimed primarily at forcing detainees to confess guilt, have been recorded.

The persecution of political opponents, independent journalists and media companies, and members of non-governmental organizations undesirable to the authorities has taken on an unprecedented scale, usually accompanied by references to the need to combat "Russian aggression" and "separatism." To this end, the authorities in Kiev actively employ members of radical nationalist structures, who often break the law but remain unpunished.

The Nazi approaches of the Kiev regime are clearly reflected in their attitude towards the inhabitants of Donbas. During the internal armed conflict unleashed by Kiev in the south-east of the country nine years ago, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens, including the elderly, women and children, died and suffered. As a result of the severe restrictions imposed by the Ukrainian authorities, citizens

living in the areas of hostilities were exposed to serious life-threatening risks. They had to daily overcome significant difficulties in obtaining basic services such as social benefits, water, heating and health care. Kiev's military actions resulted in residential areas falling into disrepair, and there were no mechanisms for legal protection and compensation for the inhabitants of Donbas.

The Human Rights Committee (HRC) pointed out in November 2021 (its concluding observations published in February 2022) that individuals in Donbas do not enjoy the same level of the human rights as those of their counterparts in the Kiev-controlled Ukraine. According to the Committee, there were differences, including in the form of the difficulties encountered by individuals in Donbas when seeking the issuance of birth certificates, which required a prior court decision. The need to intensify efforts to protect civilians, in particular children, under military conditions, including demining, was also highlighted. The HRC also noted with concern the severe restrictions imposed on civilians at the checkpoints during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee expressed concern that internally displaced persons face multifaceted discrimination, including with regard to their political rights, in particular opportunity to vote, and that such discrimination hampers their reintegration into society. In this regard, the Kiev regime was recommended to facilitate the procedure for the registration of the actual residence of internally displaced persons and encourage them to exercise their right to vote.¹⁴⁶³

In Ukraine, the rights of internally displaced persons, the Russian-speaking population and representatives of national minorities (many of whom are also IDPs) are being restricted. Kiev's campaign against the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), which has now taken the form of a total ban on it, has reached a completely new level of cynicism and hypocrisy.

The problem of corruption, which is deeply rooted in the Ukrainian State, persists. The measures declared by the authorities to combat it, including the

¹⁴⁶³ Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021. (observations published in February 2022)
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUkr%2FCO%2F8&Lang=en

establishment of relevant specialized structures, are ineffective in practice. The situation in this area was pointed out with concern by the Independent Expert of the UN Human Rights Council on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of human rights, Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, following his mission to Ukraine in May 2018.¹⁴⁶⁴ The extent of corruption was also highlighted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in April 2014¹⁴⁶⁵ and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in February 2017. According to CEDAW experts, corruption, as well as the growth of unemployment, the decline in standards of living of the population, and the ongoing crisis create favourable conditions for widespread human trafficking.¹⁴⁶⁶

International human rights monitoring structures have recorded numerous cases of illegal detention, torture, intimidation, ill-treatment, sexual violence, including those aimed at forcing confession or cooperation. Such examples are regularly included in the reports of the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. In November 2021, the Human Rights Committee expressed concern about reports that acts of torture and ill-treatment continue to be perpetrated by law enforcement authorities and about the limited number of convictions handed down despite the high numbers of complaints lodged.¹⁴⁶⁷

The rights of citizens to a fair trial continue to be violated, especially in criminal cases related to the armed conflict. The practice of hearing cases in the

¹⁴⁶⁴ Report of the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, on his mission to Ukraine in May 2018. December 2018. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/024/59/PDF/G1902459.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁴⁶⁵ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Ukraine. April 2014. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fUKR%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en

¹⁴⁶⁶ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine. February 2017. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f8&Lang=en

¹⁴⁶⁷ Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021. (observations published in February 2022) https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f8&Lang=en

absence of the accused is widespread, and right-wing radicals often openly intimidate and attack lawyers and exert pressure on representatives of the judiciary.

The use of torture and violence against detainees by law enforcement agencies and the Security Service of Ukraine seems to be structural and impunity widespread.¹⁴⁶⁸

In November 2021, the Human Rights Committee pointed out to problems in bringing to justice those responsible for crimes committed during Kiev's attempts to subjugate the population of Donbas by force. The Committee, while welcoming the Kiev leadership's assurance that it will investigate all crimes committed in the context of armed conflict, noted with concern the lack of progress made in investigating cases of and prosecuting those responsible for grave human rights violations, including summary executions, acts of sexual violence, abductions, enforced disappearances, unlawful or arbitrary detentions and acts of torture and ill-treatment, including in the unofficial detention facility in Kharkiv, from 2014 to 2016. It was also concerned about reports indicating that victims, particularly women, often do not report human rights violations because of fear of reprisal, lack of trust in State institutions and lack of knowledge about their rights. Besides, it noted with concern reports of lawyers being threatened for having defended individuals in cases related to the armed conflict. In this regard, the HRC recommended taking all possible measures to end impunity for perpetrators and guaranteeing the protection of complainants and lawyers. It was also recommended to ensure that persons convicted for serious human rights violations are excluded from positions of power and authority.¹⁴⁶⁹

Extortion of confessions is a common problem. The Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine documented cases of individuals who complained that they were forced to confess to being affiliated or linked with the armed groups

¹⁴⁶⁸ Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Nils Melzer, on his visit to Ukraine on 28 May – 8 June 2018. January 2019. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/010/58/PDF/G1901058.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁴⁶⁹ Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021. (observations published in February 2022) https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FCR%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=en

on camera. In several cases, such videos were published on the official websites of the national police or the SBU.¹⁴⁷⁰

Since the launch by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation of a special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilian population of Donbas, the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev has definitively ceased even formal attempts to create the appearance of maintaining law and order and respecting human rights in the country.

The authorities uncontrollably distribute weapons to anyone willing, which are used primarily by criminal elements. Criminals, including those convicted of serious criminal offences, are being released from prisons. We are referring in particular to former military officers S.Torbin (convicted for the murder of Kherson activist E.Gandzyuk), D.Balaboukh (convicted for the murder of a civilian during the conflict in Donbas), former deputy of the Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine and commander of the Donbas battalion S. Semenchenko, and former commander of the Tornado battalion R. Onishchenko (convicted for torture, rape and incitement to suicide). As a result, Kiev and other major Ukrainian cities have seen a surge in banditry, looting, armed attacks and murders, and the self-appointed territorial defence units are engaged in robbery instead of protecting fellow citizens.

Chaos and lawlessness have spread in the country. People are detained, interrogated and searched by radicals at the slightest suspicion. As a result, civilians face the risk of being killed on the spurious pretexts of belonging to allegedly numerous "subversive groups" and "collaborators." Numerous images of Nazi illegal massacres and abuse of civilians have been published on the Internet.

Right-wing militant groups use civilians as "human shields" with the tacit permission of the authorities. This has been noted even in the materials of *Amnesty International*, an NGO not known for its pro-Russian views. The research prepared by the organization *Ukraine: military endangering civilians by locating forces in*

¹⁴⁷⁰ OHCHR Report: Human Rights in the Administration of Justice in Conflict-Related Criminal Cases in Ukraine. April 2014 – April 2020. August 2020. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/Ukraine-admin-justice-conflict-related-cases-en.pdf>

*residential areas – new research*¹⁴⁷¹ underlines that Ukraine's tactics have violated international humanitarian law as they've turned civilian objects into military targets. The Ukrainian military establish bases and operating weapons systems mainly in residential areas – including in schools and hospitals.

In addition, the media have reported about a sharp increase in trafficking in human beings and children in Ukraine in 2022, or, more precisely, in human organs for transplantation (the previous peak of such illegal activities was observed in 2014-2015). This was also pointed out by international organizations, including the OSCE, which noted in 2014 that bodies of people with removed internal organs, most likely victims of transplantologists, were found in mass graves in the area of military operations. Information about this was published, inter alia, by the *Tsargrad* television channel.¹⁴⁷² Experts also note that while the Kiev regime was preparing for an offensive against the Donbas Republics, the Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine began to urgently consider bills aimed at simplifying the activities of transplantologists in the country to the maximum, and in 2022 law-making in this area became even more active. At the end of 2021, deputies from the presidential party "Servant of the People" initiated and passed through the Verkhovnaya Rada a law according to which a Ukrainian can become a donor under a simplified procedure. The need to notarize the written consent of the donor or, in case of his/her death, his/her next of kin, for organ transplantation has been cancelled. On 14 April 2022, the Verkhovnaya Rada adopted a new law on transplantation, according to which this activity is exempt from VAT, which actually creates prerequisites for the easiest possible export of human organs from Ukraine.¹⁴⁷³ In short, the Kosovo Liberation Army, whose members are known to have been stained for cooperating with "black transplantologists," has found "worthy" followers in Ukraine.

¹⁴⁷¹ <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/ukraine-military-endangering-civilians-locating-forces-residential-areas-new>

¹⁴⁷² See, for example, https://amp.tsargrad.tv/articles/chjornaja-transplantologija-na-ukraine-izvestna-propiska-doktora-smert_604078, https://tsargrad.tv/investigations/koncy-v-krematorij-ukraina-platit-za-oruzhie-vnutrennimi-organami-grazhdan_523850

¹⁴⁷³ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221027-zelenskiy-prevratil-ukrainu-v-ray-dlya-chernykh-transplantologov/>

Russian servicemen taken hostage are being held in appalling conditions and subjected to torture and other forms of inhuman and cruel treatment. This is confirmed by international monitoring mechanisms.

At a briefing on 15 November 2022, Matilda Bogner, Head of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, acknowledged that, based on the results of interviews with 175 Russian prisoners of war, the mission received information about their ill-treatment and torture by the SBU.¹⁴⁷⁴

On 24 January 2023, responding to a question from the Russian news agency *RIA-Novosti*, the spokesperson for the OHCHR, Ravina Shamdasani, confirmed that the Office was aware of the video recording of the torture of Russian prisoners of war, which was attached to the materials for the preparation of relevant reports. In addition, she recalled that the OHCHR report on the first 6 months of the conflict documented 50 cases of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners of war by the SBU.¹⁴⁷⁵

On 24 March 2023, Matilda Bogner, presenting the Mission's report on treatment of prisoners of war in Ukraine, said about the summary execution of up to 25 Russian POWs and persons hors de combat by Ukrainian armed forces. According to her, almost half of the 229 Russian POWs who we interviewed spoke of being tortured or ill-treated by members of Ukrainian armed forces and the SBU. POWs were beaten, shot in the legs, stabbed in their limbs, electrocuted, subjected to mock executions, threats of sexual violence or death.¹⁴⁷⁶

There is no question of the Ukrainian authorities bringing those responsible for these grave crimes to justice, not to mention the silence of the relevant international organizations, such as the Council of Europe, the OSCE and others, which pretend that nothing of the sort is happening.

It should be noted that numerous reports of crimes committed with unprecedented cruelty by Ukrainian neo-Nazi groups and foreign mercenaries against Russian servicemen are not included in this document. An assessment of

¹⁴⁷⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/ru/press-briefing-notes/2022/22/ukraine-russia-prisoners-war>

¹⁴⁷⁵ <https://ria.ru/20230124/video-1847213537.html>

¹⁴⁷⁶ <https://news.un.org/ru/story/2023/03/1439157>

those criminal acts, which fully demonstrate the allegiance of contemporary neo-Nazis in Ukraine to the ideas and tactics of the German fascists and local collaborators from the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) during the Great Patriotic War, is being made by the Russian competent authorities as part of the investigation of numerous criminal cases concerning those heinous crimes. Significant efforts are also being made by Russian civil society organizations and all concerned individuals to uncover the truth about the real face of the Ukrainian authorities and radical nationalists covered up by them. Information on the crimes will be included in separate analytical materials.

In Russia, crimes against civilians in Donbas and Ukraine committed by the Kiev military and political leadership, nationalists and representatives of the Ukrainian security forces have been recorded and investigated by the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation (IC of Russia) since 2014. As of July 2023, 3,286 criminal cases have already been opened. Such crimes include genocide, terrorism, cruel treatment of civilians, use of prohibited means and methods in armed conflict, murder, intentional destruction and damage to property (Articles 205, 356, 105, and 167 of the Russian Criminal Code), etc. 849 persons are the defendants, including representatives of the SBU high command and commanders of military units who gave criminal orders to shell civilians and civilian infrastructure facilities.¹⁴⁷⁷ A total of 179 criminal investigations have been completed, including 166 cases sent to courts and 63 sentences passed. Other criminal cases are still under consideration. The Investigative Committee establishes and gives a legal assessment of the actions of all persons involved in the offences committed.

A policy of falsifying history and whitewashing Nazi criminals and fascist henchmen is being pursued at the State level in Ukraine. The Kiev regime has created a legal framework for these purposes.

¹⁴⁷⁷ <https://ria.ru/20230725/bastrykin-1886103829.html>

In April 2015, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted a "decommunization package" of legal acts, in particular the following laws: "On the condemnation of the communist and national socialist (Nazi) regimes, and prohibition of propaganda of their symbols", "On access to archives of repressive agencies of totalitarian communist regime of 1917-1991", "On perpetuation of the Victory over Nazism in World War II of 1939-1945" and "On the legal status and honouring the memory of fighters for Ukraine's independence in the twentieth century."

These documents banned Soviet symbols, condemned the communist regime, opened the archives of the Soviet secret services, and recognized members of the Ukrainian military nationalist formations of the Second World War – the OUN and the UPA¹⁴⁷⁸ and their leaders – the leader of OUN, S. Bandera, and the commander-in-chief of the armed units of the Third Reich (Nachtigal Battalion and the 201st Battalion of the Ukrainian Legion), R. Shukhevich, as fighters for independence.

In addition, criminal liability was introduced for negative assessment of the activities of the above units, as well as for the manufacture, distribution and public use of symbols of the "totalitarian communist regime".

The "decommunization" laws affected such issues as granting benefits to former members of nationalist armed formations and banning the use of Soviet symbols, as well as symbols and insignia of the Red Army. The Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offences was amended in May 2017 to prohibit the public use, wearing or display of the ribbon of Saint George (Guards ribbon) or its image.

In line with the provisions of the law "On the Legal Status and Honouring the Memory of Fighters for Ukraine's Independence in the Twentieth Century", the Lvov Regional Council passed on 30 January 2018 an ordinance to use the flag of OUN-UPA on an equal footing with the national flag of Ukraine. Similar decisions

¹⁴⁷⁸ In the Russian Federation, both organizations are recognized as extremist.

were adopted by the Volyn Regional Council, city councils in Ternopol, Kiev and a number of other cities.¹⁴⁷⁹

The law on amendments to the law "On the Status of War Veterans, and Guarantees of Their Social Protection" (No. 2640-VIII) was adopted in December 2018, which essentially equated collaborators as "participants in the fight for Ukraine's independence in the 20th century" and veterans who fought on the side of the anti-Hitler coalition.¹⁴⁸⁰

On 20 June 2023, Zelensky signed a law on the payment of pensions to "political prisoners of Soviet times", including former Bandera and UPA fighters. Funds for the new payments will be taken from the abolished pensions for Soviet figures and holders of Soviet awards and titles.

Including decisions on celebrating memorable dates and anniversaries of Ukrainian Nazi collaborators in the resolutions that are adopted annually by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine is among notable examples of Kiev's state policy to "preserve national memory". In addition, back in 2018, the Verkhovna Rada approved the slogan of the OUN nationalists "Glory to Ukraine! Glory to heroes!" which is a copy of the infamous Nazi salute, for use as a salute in the army and law enforcement agencies.

In December 2019, a resolution of the Verkhovna Rada included into the calendar of memorable dates and anniversaries for 2020 the anniversaries of such Nazi collaborators, as V.Kubiyovych (who actively supported cooperation with the Germans and the initiator of the SS "Galicia" Division), I.Poltavets-Ostryanitsa (the head of the UNAKOR – the Ukrainian National Cossack Movement which included auxiliary police units that took part in massacres of Jews in Volyn, Zhytomyr, Vinnytsia, and Belaya Tserkov), V.Levkovych (a member of the Ukrainian auxiliary police unit in Dubno, and later the commander of the Military District "Bug" within the UPA, who was convicted by the Military Tribunal of the

¹⁴⁷⁹ Infringement of rights and freedoms in Ukraine. Manifestation of discrimination, incitement of ethnic hatred, hate crimes and extremism. Report for the OSCE human dimension implementation meeting 2019. The Institute of legal policy and social protection, the Antifascist human rights legal league. 2019.

¹⁴⁸⁰ <https://strana.today/news/175167-bojtsy-upa-oun-i-unra-poluchili-v-ukraine-status-uchastnikov-boevykh-dejstvij.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/175244-vekhovnaya-rada-predostavila-status-uchastnikov-boevykh-dejstvij-bojtsam-upa-oun-uvo-poleskaja-sech-i-unra-sut-zakona.html>)

Kiev Region Interior Ministry troops in 1947), U.Samchuk (OUN activist and the editor-in-chief of "Volyn", pro-Nazi newspaper in Rovno that published articles calling for the extermination of Jews), V.Sydor (a member of the OUN and the UIA who served as commander of a section of the Nachtigall battalion, which participated in punitive operations; after the war, he continued to take an active part in clandestine activities and held the position of deputy commander-in-chief of the UIA until his elimination in 1949), A.Melnik (head of the OUN board, who openly collaborated with the Nazis, head of the Ukrainian National Rada in Kiev during the war, organizer of the Ukrainian auxiliary police units and mass killings of Jews), K.Osmak (member of the OUN (Stepan Bandera's wing), and one of the leaders of the Ukrainian National Rada in Kiev, headed by A.Melnik), A.Vishnyvskyi (one of the initiators of the SS "Galicia" Division), Y.Starukh (member of the OUN board, and organizer of anti-Jewish pogroms), V.Galas (one of the leaders of the OUN, who was in charge of an OUN clandestine network in Western Ukraine, organizer of anti-Jewish pogroms in Ternopol Region and massacres of Poles), as well as nationalists, in particular, M.Zalizniak (leader of the Koliivshchyna, who was involved in the massacre of Jews in Uman in the 18th century). At the same time, in a number of cases, these individuals are mentioned simply as public figures as, for example, "historian and geographer" V.Kubiyovich, "political and military figure" Y.Starukh, and "writer, publicist and journalist" U.Samchuk, with no reference to their association with the nationalists or the Nazis. Public funds are allocated for holding commemorative events in honour of these "public figures". The Ministry of Education and Science was instructed to conduct classes and awareness raising events. It is also planned to issue commemorative coins and postage stamps in honour of these individuals.

Notably, this decision by the Kiev City Council is being challenged in court. Lawyer and public figure A.Portnov filed a lawsuit demanding to ban the celebration of commemorative dates approved by the Kiev City Council in December 2019, related to Nazi criminals involved in the Holocaust and mass

murders of Jews and Roma. On 23 July 2020, the Kiev Administrative Court of Appeal granted the lawsuit.¹⁴⁸¹

However, this did not change Ukraine's general state policy of glorifying Nazi criminals and collaborators. The resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of 16 December 2020 on celebration of memorable dates and anniversaries in 2021 gave national holiday status to the birth anniversaries of S.Timoshenko (Minister of the UPR, who was involved in the construction of Wehrmacht military facilities in Poland), L.Perfetskiy (veteran of the SS "Galicia" Division), N.Kapustyanskiy (deputy head of the Melnik-led OUN wing, who engaged in forming auxiliary Ukrainian units for the Nazis), V.Shchigelskiy (UPA member, Nazi war criminal; commandant of the Ukrainian auxiliary police who participated in the mass extermination of Jews and Poles; executed by a firing squad in post-war Poland for aiding and abetting the Nazis), R.Kliachkovsky (one of the organizers of the Volyn massacre – mass murder of tens of thousands of civilian Poles, including women and children, by the UPA units in 1943-44), I.Litvinenko (Nazi collaborator, involved in the Holocaust and the Volyn massacre, executed in Kiev in 1947 for war crimes), O.Dyakiv (OUN member, liquidated by the Soviet security agencies), and R.Voloshin (OUN and UPA member, Nazi collaborator, head of the regional administration in Rovno, complicit in the extermination of more than 20,000 Jews there).¹⁴⁸²

On 17 December 2021, the Verkhovna Rada adopted another resolution on celebrating memorable dates and anniversaries in 2022-2023. According to the document, the holidays include the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the UPA and the 110th anniversary of S.Bandera's ally Y.Stetsko (he wrote to Hitler in July 1941 after the Nazi occupation of Lvov: "Your Excellency! Filled with sincere gratitude and admiration for your heroic army which has covered itself with unfading glory on the battlefields against the worst enemy of Europe – Moscow

¹⁴⁸¹ <https://strana.today/news/254461-portnov-osporil-reshenie-kievskoho-horsoveta-o-prazdnovanii-natsistskikh-dat.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/280541-sud-priostanovil-reshenie-kievsoveta-otmechat-daty-svjazannykh-s-natsizmom-portnov.html>)

¹⁴⁸² <https://strana.today/news/306764-pamjatnye-daty-2021-hoda-koho-vnesli-v-postanovlenie-verkhovnoj-rady.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/306764-pamjatnye-daty-2021-hoda-koho-vnesli-v-postanovlenie-verkhovnoj-rady.html>)

Bolshevism, we send you, the Great Führer, on behalf of the entire Ukrainian people and its Government which is established in the liberated Lemberg [Lvov], heartfelt congratulations and wishes to crown this struggle with landslide victory ..."); 130th anniversary of SS "Galicia" Division member, P.Silenko-Kravets, who received the "Iron Cross" from the Nazis for his service in its ranks¹⁴⁸³; and 130th anniversary of "geologist and geographer" Y.Polianskiy, who was the burgomaster of Lvov under the Nazis and was directly involved in mass killings of Lvov Jews, murder of Polish intellectuals, pogroms and looting; 100th anniversary of the birth of Fyodor Vorobets, OUN member and one of UPA agents, Nazi collaborator who arrived in the territory of the Ukrainian SSR together with the Germans in 1941, etc.¹⁴⁸⁴

As a follow-up to such resolutions of the Verkhovnaya Rada, the authorities of Ukrainian regions adopt their own regulatory acts.

On 24 December 2019, the Lvov Regional Council adopted a resolution to allocate public funds in 2020 for holding commemorative events in honour of one of the leaders of the OUN, A.Melnik, as well as an adherent of the ideas of Ukrainian nationalism, I.Lipa, and his son Y.Lipa, ideologist of nationalism.

On 27 February 2020, at the suggestion of Y.Sirotyuk, deputy from the "Svoboda" party, the Kiev City Council adopted a resolution on celebrating memorable dates and anniversaries in Kiev of the above collaborators, including V.Kubiyovich, I.Poltavets-Ostrianytsia, V.Levkovich, U.Samchuk, V.Sidor, Y.Lipa, V.Galas and A.Melnik.¹⁴⁸⁵

Other draft laws aimed at glorifying Nazism are also being submitted to the Ukrainian Parliament. On 21 September 2020, for example, representatives of parliamentary parties "Voice" and "Servant of the People", as well as O.Savchuk, member of the "Svoboda" party, came up with an initiative to submit to the Verkhovnaya Rada a draft resolution to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the

¹⁴⁸³ <https://amp.ctsna.news/news/367541-pamjatnye-daty-ukrainy-2022-2023-hoda.html>

¹⁴⁸⁴ <https://vp.donetsk.ua/ukraina-mir/100938-vr-prinyala-postanovlenie-o-prazdnovanii-pamyatnykh-dat-v-2022>

¹⁴⁸⁵ <https://strana.today/news/252473-kollaboranty-v-ukraine-khha-podderzhal-postanovlenie-o-pamjatnykh-datakh-i-jubilejakh.html> (panee <https://strana.ua/news/252473-kollaboranty-v-ukraine-khha-podderzhal-postanovlenie-o-pamjatnykh-datakh-i-jubilejakh.html>)

proclamation in Lvov of the "Act of Restoration of Ukrainian Statehood" adopted on 30 June 30 1941, immediately after the beginning of the Nazi occupation of Western Ukraine. It stated, for example, that "the restored Ukrainian State will work closely with the National Socialist Greater Germany, under the leadership of its leader Adolf Hitler, which is forming a new order in Europe and the world".¹⁴⁸⁶

Ukrainian officials have repeatedly expressed direct support for Nazi figures. In September 2018, for example, A.Parubiy, former speaker of the Verkhovnaya Rada, in a live broadcast on the ICTV TV channel, called A.Hitler "the greatest man who practiced direct democracy".¹⁴⁸⁷

The actions of Ukrainian Consul in Hamburg V.Marushchynets, who actively published xenophobic and racist posts on social networks, justifying Nazism and anti-Semitism, provoked a huge outcry in the media. He also posted photos against the background of the Bandera flag, and with a cake in the form of Hitler's book "Mein Kampf" which was given to him by colleagues on his 60th birthday. In May 2018, V.Marushchynets was removed from office, but in early November 2019, the media reported that Ukrainian courts had ruled his dismissal illegal.¹⁴⁸⁸

On 3 May 2019, A.Nakonechnyi, mayor of the city of Karlovka in the Poltava Region, posted his pictures in a Nazi uniform on Facebook.¹⁴⁸⁹

October 2019 saw a high-profile incident involving A.Goncharuk, the then Prime Minister of Ukraine, who attended a concert on the Defender of Ukraine Day by the band Sekira Peruna against which a criminal case was opened in 2018 for glorifying Adolf Hitler, Rudolf Hess and Waffen SS forces, and for using Nazi symbols. The concert was attended by Ukrainian neo-Nazis and organized by A.Medvedko, who had been detained for murdering writer and journalist Oles Buzina but released together with the other potential perpetrator, D.Polishchuk,

¹⁴⁸⁶ The Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance. <https://uinp.gov.ua/istorychnyy-kalendar/cherven/30/1941-progoloshennya-vidnovlennya-ukrayinskoyi-derzhavy>

¹⁴⁸⁷ <https://korrespondent.net/ukraine/4007639-parubiyi-vspomnil-o-priamoi-demokratyyi-hytlera>

¹⁴⁸⁸ <https://lenta.ru/news/2019/11/12/zvilen/>, https://aif.ru/politics/world/fashistom_byt_pochetno_ukrainskiy-konsul-antisemit_vosstanovlen_na-rabote

¹⁴⁸⁹ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine. Institute of Legal Policy and Social Protection named after Irina Berezhnaya, 2022.

under the neo-Nazis' pressure. A.Goncharuk went on stage to welcome the "veterans" of ATO. He later confirmed his participation in the neo-Nazi gathering in a Facebook post and explained it by a desire to "congratulate veterans and to talk about felt needs".¹⁴⁹⁰

On 17 March 2022, head of the Ukrainian State Border Guard Service, S.Deineko, called for killing Russian women and children in a Facebook post which was later deleted.¹⁴⁹¹

On 8 March 2022, former Acting President, Verkhovnaya Rada Speaker and Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council, A.Turchinov, published a post on his VKontakte account, in which he called for "exterminating Rusnya wherever possible, not only in Ukraine but also beyond it, in the territory of Russia".¹⁴⁹²

On 1 July 2022, A.Melnik, the then Ukrainian Ambassador to Germany, said that S.Bandera had been a "freedom fighter" and had nothing to do with the mass murder of Jews and Poles. This provoked public outcry not only in Poland but also in Germany. Melnik was criticized by F.Klein, Federal Government Commissioner for Jewish Life in Germany and the Fight against Antisemitism, and the Israeli Embassy in Berlin.

On 22 August 2022, Ukrainian Ambassador to Kazakhstan, P.Vrublevskiy, who was later recalled to Kiev, told the media: "We are trying to kill as many of them [Russians] as possible. The more we kill now, the fewer our children will have to kill. That's it".

Before that, mayor of Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk), B.Filatov, spoke in the same vein: "This is a time for cold fury. We now have a moral right to kill these non-humans calmly and imperturbably around the world, as long as it takes and in the largest possible number".

On 15 December 2022, commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, V.Zaluzhnyi, said in an interview with "The Economist": "The most important

¹⁴⁹⁰ <https://rg.ru/2019/10/14/premer-ukrainy-otdohnul-v-kompanii-neonacistov.html>

¹⁴⁹¹ <https://politnavigator.news/ukrainskijj-general-poobeshhal-ubivat-russkikh-zhenshhin-i-detejj.html>

¹⁴⁹² https://vk.com/video-202555139_456240594

experience we had and the one which we have practiced almost like a religion is that Russians and any other enemies must be killed, just killed, and most importantly, we should not be afraid to do it".¹⁴⁹³

In December 2022, Ukraine's police chief, I.Klimenko, said that the Russian-speaking people in Donbass were "poisoned by Russian propaganda" and were "the main problem of that region".¹⁴⁹⁴

On 1 January 2023, Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada published a tweet on its official account in which it glorified S.Bandera and included some of his quotes. The tweet was deleted after Prime Minister of Poland M.Morawiecki said that Poles would never agree to show any mercy for those who refuse to admit to that horrible genocide, plead forgiveness and fully redeem themselves.¹⁴⁹⁵

On 18 May 2023, M.Podolyak, advisor to the head of the President's office, wrote on his Twitter page: "Yes, Ukraine hates you [Russians]. We will persecute you. Always and everywhere. Ukraine will get each and every one of you, and it doesn't matter how exactly legally or physically".¹⁴⁹⁶

On 15 June 2023, he also said on air at an all-Ukrainian telethon that "there is one plan – to push forward as hard as possible with maximum killing of Russians".

On 14 July 2023, commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces V.Zaluzhnyi noted in an interview with "The Washington Post" that "this is our problem, and it is up to us to decide how to kill this enemy. In a war, you can and must kill them in their territory. If our partners are afraid to use their weapons, we will kill with ours. But only as many as necessary".¹⁴⁹⁷

It is worth noting that such moves by Ukrainian representatives attracted the attention of the international community, as was the case with the above statement by A.Melnik. As early as in 2016, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was concerned at reports of a rise in racist hate speech and

¹⁴⁹³ <https://www.economist.com/zaluzhny-profile>

¹⁴⁹⁴ <https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/igor-klimenko-zaraz-ukrayini-bilshe-temryavi-1670509562.html>

¹⁴⁹⁵ <https://strana.today/news/420555-v-polshe-osudili-publikatsiju-rady-ko-dnju-rozhdenija-bandery.html>

¹⁴⁹⁶ https://twitter.com/Podolyak_M/status/1659095813916688386

¹⁴⁹⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/07/14/ukraine-military-valery-zaluzhny-russia/>

discriminatory statements in the public discourse, including by public and political figures and in the media, in particular on the Internet and during rallies, directed mainly against minorities.¹⁴⁹⁸

Both NGOs and foreign politicians have drawn attention to the spread of neo-Nazism and the activities of radical groups in Ukraine. In November 2020, for example, the Centre for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) presented a report in which Ukraine was named one of the key spreaders of neo-Nazi ideology.¹⁴⁹⁹

Following a visit to Kiev in May 2021, a group of French senators stated that the activities of neo-Nazi groups in Ukraine cannot but be a cause for concern. As the senators explained, in the midst of a fair as part of the Kiev Day celebrations in the centre of the capital, they unexpectedly came across a pavilion where members of the neo-Nazi Azov battalion were teaching children how to assemble and disassemble weapons. The pavilion was also used to sign up volunteers to fight in Donbass and featured an improvised shooting range. As part of the "performance", Ukrainian radicals offered young people to shoot at a paper image of the Kremlin. Nearby, stalls were selling identity cards of Nazi soldiers from the Second World War, swastikas and other attributes. Senator N.Goulet, who personally witnessed all this, sent a parliamentary enquiry to the French Foreign Ministry. After that, the SBU launched an investigation against this group of French senators.¹⁵⁰⁰ The French Foreign Ministry, however, did not see anything alarming in this situation and in its reply to Goulet's enquiry noted that "there are neo-Nazi groups in Ukraine", but their popularity "does not exceed the European average".¹⁵⁰¹

In other words, Ukraine enjoying the silent encouragement by "the collective West", ignores the concerns of the international community and continues to promote the neo-Nazi ideology.

¹⁴⁹⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Ukraine. August 2016.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

¹⁴⁹⁹ Hatebook. Facebook's neo-Nazi shopfronts funding far-right extremism. Report by Center for Countering Digital Hate. https://252f2edd-1c8b-49f5-9bb2-cb57bb47e4ba.filesusr.com/ugd/f4d9b9_55b47be4de914daf866cfa1810cc56c5.pdf

¹⁵⁰⁰ <https://remembrance.ru/2021/06/30/kiev-vozmushhen-tem-chto-evropejcy-na-ukraine-nashli-nacistov/>

¹⁵⁰¹ <https://i-sng.ru/publikacii/zabyli-shkolnyy-urok-istorii-pochem/>

There are frequent cases in Ukraine when officials at different levels organize events and public campaigns glorifying Hitler's Germany, German Nazis and their accomplices.

In July 2018, Verkhovna Rada leaders organized a thematic exhibition dedicated to the 77th Anniversary of the "Act of Restoration of Ukrainian Statehood" which was made public on 30 June 1941 and sealed the creation of a German protectorate and dependency in Galicia, determining its course for cooperation with Nazi Germany. The exhibition was dedicated to OUN leaders S.Bandera and Y.Stetsko, and to R.Shukhevich, who commanded the Nachtigall battalion and the UPA at an early stage in the Great Patriotic War.¹⁵⁰²

In February 2019, the nationalist forces were outraged by a police operation to disperse a nationalist rally in Kiev's Kontraktovaya Square, during which an officer shouted: "Lie down, Bandera!". In response, national police heads launched a flash mob, #IAMABanderovite, in the social media. For example, national police chief S.Knyazev and patrol police chief Y.Zhukov posted the hashtag on their Facebook pages.

In March 2019, chief of general staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine V.Muzhenko approved new brigade chevrons of the land forces. A red-and-black chevron with a skull and the inscription reading: "Ukraine or Death", was approved for the 72nd Black Zaporozhian Cossacks Mechanized Brigade. The chevron bears a striking resemblance to those of the 3rd SS Panzer Division Totenkopf.¹⁵⁰³

In June 2020, V.Mikolayenko, mayor of then Ukrainian Kherson,¹⁵⁰⁴ congratulated the local residents on an anniversary of the "Act of Restoration of Ukrainian Statehood" promulgated by the OUN collaborationists in Lvov in 1941. The Act committed to "work closely with the National Socialist Greater Germany, under the leadership of its leader Adolf Hitler, which is forming a new order in Europe and the world and is helping the Ukrainian People to free itself from

¹⁵⁰² <https://rada.gov.ua/ru/news/Novosty/Sobshchennyia/160401/html>; <https://eodaily.com/ru/news/2018/07/05/v-rade-ukrainy-otkryta-vystavka-vo-slavu-nahtigalya-i-evreyskih-pogromov>

¹⁵⁰³ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/2587743.html>

¹⁵⁰⁴ On 30 September 2022, the Russian Federation and the Kherson Region signed a treaty on the accession of the Kherson Region to the Russian Federation.

Moscovite occupation". The city was covered with outdoor advertisements reproducing the front page of OUN newspaper *Samostiynaya Ukraina* dated 10 July 1941, with the text of the said Act.¹⁵⁰⁵

In 2022, it became clear that the Nazi ideas prevailed not only among members of the volunteer units (mostly manned by neo-Nazis) but also among ordinary Ukrainian officers and men. Nazi symbols are commonly found in tattoos covering the bodies of Ukrainian army personnel, who also openly wear chevrons bearing Nazi symbols and slogans. Quite frequently these are exact copies of chevrons that Germans and their accomplices sported during the Great Patriotic War.

Specifically, there were media reports that militants from Azov, Aidar, and other nationalist units, captured by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, wear swastikas, chevrons and symbols of the Nazi battalions of the Waffen-SS, have relevant tattoos and openly read and propagate A.Hitler's book "Mein Kampf".¹⁵⁰⁶

There are cases on record of Nazi symbols being used by Ukrainian officials. President V.Zelensky, for one, illustrated his Victory Day greetings to the public on 9 May 2022 (posted in his Telegram account), with a photograph showing a Ukrainian soldier with the SS Totenkopf emblem on his chest. This caused an uproar, whereupon the image was promptly removed. At the same time, the Ukrainian Defence Ministry which used a similar photo of a serviceman with symbols of the Nazi division SS Totenkopf, stood by it.

On 1 January of each year, torchlight processions are held in Kiev and other Ukrainian cities to mark the birthday of OUN leader S.Bandera. They are accompanied by the shouting of nationalist slogans and display of Nazi salutes and symbols. Since 2019, the date has been given a national holiday status.

On 1 January 2021, the nationalists organized torch marches as usual in honour of S.Bandera in major Ukrainian cities. The Ukrainian media noted,

¹⁵⁰⁵ <https://eodaily.com/ru/news/2020/06/26/mer-hersona-pozdravil-gorozhan-s-banderovskim-aktom-i-prisyagoy-gitleru>

¹⁵⁰⁶ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/997883-lavrov-nacifikaciya-ukraina>

however, that there were fewer radicals involved in the rallies, which was interpreted as a sign of dwindling public support for the nationalists. At the same time, these gatherings are also held unopposed during the presidency of V.Zelensky, who is not hiding the fact that he follows the policy of his predecessor, P.Poroshenko.¹⁵⁰⁷

1 January 2022 saw another torch march in Kiev on this occasion. The march was led by activists of the nationalist party All-Ukrainian Union "Svoboda" and other extreme right-wing radical organizations, as well as representatives of the schismatic "Orthodox Church of Ukraine" (OCU). The composition on the main poster of the march featured S.Bandera's portrait against the background of the Moscow Kremlin in flames. Other posters called for holding a "Nuremberg-2 trial against Moscow Judaic Communism", with their bearers shouting nationalist and xenophobic slogans.

The nationalist march was denounced by the embassies of Israel and Belarus in Ukraine, as well as the German Foreign Ministry.¹⁵⁰⁸ On 3 January 2022, D.Yarosh, head of the Ukrainian volunteer army and former leader of the extremist Right Sector party, called Israeli Ambassador M.Brodskiy "a Kremlin agent of influence" on his Facebook page and urged the authorities to "drive such 'diplomats' out of Ukraine". Director of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee E.Dolinskiy said in a comment that D.Yarosh's statement was an "anti-Semitic message" and an attempt at a "Judaophobic division of Jews into bad and good characters: a good Jew must love his murderers. But a Jew who dislikes Bandera and Shukhevich is an enemy, a Kremlin agent, and should be driven away".

On January 1, 2023, ceremonies commemorating the 114th anniversary of the birth of Bandera were held in the western regions of Ukraine. The traditional torchlight procession in Kiev was cancelled due to curfew and other restrictions on public events.¹⁵⁰⁹

¹⁵⁰⁷ <https://strana.today/news/309866-marsh-bandery-v-kieve-1-janvarja-2021-onlajn-transljatsija-video.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/309866-marsh-bandery-v-kieve-1-janvarja-2021-onlajn-transljatsija-video.html>)

¹⁵⁰⁸ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/13358107>

¹⁵⁰⁹ <https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/stepan-bandera-yak-v-ukrajini-vidznachatimut-den-narodzhennya-providnika-oun-v-umovah-viyni-50294650.html>

The Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UINM) has a prominent role in the propagation of neo-Nazism. Under its previous director, Vladimir Viatrovykh, known for his Russophobic and nationalist views, the UINM was active in a number of different areas, including lobbying for laws promoting the glorification of Fascist accomplices and honouring the memory of members of the Ukrainian "liberation movement", publishing "patriotic" literature and methodological recommendations for secondary and higher educational institutions, and organizing various events and festivals on the same subject with the participation of veterans from the UPA, fighters from the so-called anti-terrorist operation in South-East Ukraine (ATO), and Ukrainian "pro-banderite" historians, including the Bandershtat festival, dedicated to the Nazi collaborators. It was – and remains – very persistent in feeding the public with propaganda promoting such figures as S.Petliura, Y.Konovalets, S.Bandera, R.Shukhevych, Y.Stetsko and A.Melnik as model citizens.

Thus, at the start of the year 2017, the Institute unveiled its propaganda project "UPA: Response of the Unconquered People," timed to coincide with the 75th anniversary of this criminal organization's establishment. Despite the fact that more than 70% of UPA officers were former Nazi henchmen – fighters in collaborationist groups – and its commanders were members of the Schutzmannschaft, auxiliary police forces until 1943, the UINM leadership characterized it as an anti-Nazi entity. According to the UINM report for 2018, events (photo exhibitions, lectures, and seminars) aimed at popularizing the activities of UPA fighters were held in educational institutions, military units, and state institutions as part of the project "UPA: Response of the Unconquered People." The UINP also released a Board game that glorified members of the Bandera bandit groups for propaganda purposes.¹⁵¹⁰ In July 2019, The Ministry of Education of Ukraine recommended this game for use in schools.¹⁵¹¹

¹⁵¹⁰ See . <https://ukrinform.ru/rubric-culture/2548034-v-ukraine-razrabotali-nastolnuu-igru-o-borbe-upa.html>

¹⁵¹¹ <https://golospravdy.eu/eduard-dolinskij-ministerstvo-obrazovaniya-rekomendovalo-lozh-falsifikacii/>,
<https://strana.ua/opinions/212015-sredi-detej-prodvihajut-nastolnuju-ihru-s-heroicheskimi-banderoj-i-shukhevichem.html>

The Institute recreates "insurgent awards," which are granted to "participants in the Ukrainian liberation movement" and relatives of deceased "liberators." The UINM also organized an exhibition at the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine titled "The Ukrainian Army: 1917-1921," a set of events defined by official Ukrainian historiography as the people's battle for political self-determination and the foundation of statehood.

In December 2019, with the change of management team, there has been no real change in the organization's direction under the new leadership. In 2020, on the eve of May 9, the new Director of the UINP A.Drobovich recorded a video dedicated to the Day of remembrance and reconciliation, celebrated on May 8¹⁵¹², and the 75th anniversary of the Victory over Nazism. In this video, in addition to the attempts traditionally made by the current Ukrainian authorities to present Ukrainian collaborators as fighters against Nazism, although the facts of their cooperation are undeniably confirmed, the director of the UINP actually equalized the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation and the Victory Day over Nazism in World War II.¹⁵¹³

In May 2021, the UINM once again "drew attention" by publishing yet another work containing distorted historical facts. The head of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee E. Dolinsky published information about the distribution of a manual by the Institute, which tells how to celebrate Victory Day, on his page in social networks. In particular, the manual states that the "100,000-strong UIA" fought alongside the Allies against Nazism, despite the fact that, according to official data, in "the best of times", the number of participants of this formation amounted to 35 thousand people.¹⁵¹⁴

¹⁵¹² The Day of remembrance and reconciliation (May 8) became a public holiday in Ukraine in 2015. Former President P.Poroshenko established it for the purpose of "honoring the feat of the Ukrainian people and its outstanding contribution to the victory of the Anti-Hitler Coalition in World War II, and expressing respect for all the fighters against Nazism", thus trying to unite the Red Army and Bandera supporters, many of whom served in the SS and other volunteer auxiliary units of the Nazis.

¹⁵¹³ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obschestvo/08052020-ukraina-vstrechaet-den-pobedy-istoricheskoy-shizofreniy/>

¹⁵¹⁴ <https://strana.today/news/332149-ukrainskij-institut-natspamjati-sozdat-metodichku-o-pravilnom-otmechanii-dnja-pobedy.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/332149-ukrainskij-institut-natspamjati-sozdat-metodichku-o-pravilnom-otmechanii-dnja-pobedu.html>)

In its similar information materials on celebrating the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation on May 8 (but not the Victory Day on May 9), published in 2022 and 2023 and positioned, among other things, as guidelines for teachers, the UINM went even further and blamed the Soviet Union for starting World War II together with Nazi Germany.¹⁵¹⁵

In September 2021 D. Getmantsev, head of committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and people's deputy representing the governing party "Servant of the People", acknowledged in his interview to the Ukrainian Public TV that the UINM "took part in commemoration on Nazis", stating that he meant glorification of soldiers of the Waffen SS Division "Galicia".¹⁵¹⁶

In this context, a notable situation is a case of whether or not to recognize the emblems of the Waffen SS division "Galicia" as Nazi in Ukrainian court and the UINM's prohibition to propagate back.

In 2017, N.Myasnikova, a Kiev citizen, disputed in court the concept advocated by then-UINM Director V.Viatrovych that the Waffen SS Division "Galicia" and its emblems were not Nazi because the division belonged to SS troops rather than general SS divisions and was utilized largely as a combat unit. The claimant filed an appeal with the court asking it to recognize the UINM's and its leader's efforts to interpret paragraph 5 of part 1 of Article 1 of the Law of Ukraine, which is titled "On condemning the communist and national socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes in Ukraine and banning the promotion of their insignia" as illegal. It describes the Waffen SS Division "Galicia"'s official insignia of the national-socialist (Nazi) totalitarian state and forbids the use of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (1st Galician) insignia in propaganda, taking into account any name changes that have occurred since. The claimant also requested the court to order the UNIM to retract its statements concerning the symbols of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division.¹⁵¹⁷

¹⁵¹⁵ <https://uinp.gov.ua/informaciyni-materialy/vchytelyam/metodychni-rekomendaciyi/informaciyni-materialy-do-dnya-pamyati-ta-prymyrennya-8-travnja-20231>

¹⁵¹⁶ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/12472563>

¹⁵¹⁷ <https://www.unn.com.ua/ru/news/1893299-sud-skasuvav-rishennya-oask-yakim-simvoliku-diviziyi-ss-galichina-viznavali-natsistskoyu>; <https://strana.today/news/291280-sud-priznal-nezakonnym-reshenie-o-priznanii-simvoliki->

On May 27, 2020, the Kiev District Administrative Court concluded that the UNIM has no right to distribute the statement made by its leader, and ordered it "abstain from doing anything to disseminate" the insignia. However, the court only upheld the claimant's suit in part, rejecting other parts. Radical Ukrainian nationalists from Right Sector, the National Corps, Sokol (the Youth wing of the Svoboda party), and Tradition and Order organized a fire show in front of the court during the hearing, and the judge and N.Myasnikova's lawyer both received threats by SMS on the day before the court's decision was issued.¹⁵¹⁸

On September 23 2020, regarding the decision on the claim of UINM, the Sixth Administrative Appeals Court of Kiev overturned an earlier ruling of the District Administrative Court in which it had, in effect, classified the insignia of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division as Nazi symbols.

On December 6, 2022, on this issue, the Supreme Court of Ukraine ruled that the decision of the appellate court was lawful. Thus, the symbols of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division are no more considered as Nazi symbols in Ukraine.¹⁵¹⁹ This decision contradicts the verdict of the Nuremberg Tribunal, which recognized the SS troops, which included Waffen SS Division "Galicia", as a criminal organization. During the Great Patriotic War, its members participated in punitive actions, killed Soviet soldiers and civilians, put down uprisings in Warsaw and Slovakia, and fought against Yugoslav partisans.

Kiev implemented a "new" policy of patriotic education for young people based on militant Russophobia, instilling the ideology of nationalism and xenophobia in the younger generations, and praising Ukrainian Nazi accomplices posing as members of the national liberation movement after the nationalist forces took control of Ukraine as a result of an armed coup d'état in February 2014 and the outbreak of military conflict in Donbass. It is based on the national-patriotic

[ss-halichina-natsistskoj.html](https://strana.ua/news/291280-sud-priznal-nezakonnym-reshenie-o-priznanii-simvoliki-ss-halichina-natsistskoj.html) (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/291280-sud-priznal-nezakonnym-reshenie-o-priznanii-simvoliki-ss-halichina-natsistskoj.html>)

¹⁵¹⁸ <https://strana.today/news/291414-kak-natsionalisty-zastavili-sud-otmenit-zapret-na-simvoliku-ss-halichiny.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/291414-kak-natsionalisty-zastavili-sud-otmenit-zapret-na-simvoliku-ss-halichiny.html>)

¹⁵¹⁹ <https://rg.ru/2022/12/06/verhovnyj-sud-ukrainy-ne-priznal-nacistskoj-simvoliku-divizii-ss-galichina.html>

education strategy for 2020-2025 that the government is implementing and that President Poroshenko approved in May 2019.

According to this document, young Ukrainians' development of "value orientations and civic consciousness" should be based on "examples of the heroic struggle for the establishment of sovereignty and the ideals of freedom and unity," passed down from the Cossacks, the Sich Streltsy, the Ukrainian and Western Ukrainian People's Republics, participants in the anti-Bolshevik uprisings, the Karpatskaya Sich units, the UPA, and the dissident movement.

Distorted interpretations of historical events are aimed at growth of a nationalistic mood among the population, especially young people. The so-called new national idea of Ukraine, which is founded on propaganda of hatred against the Russian people and Russia, is practically the only lens through which information is presented in school textbooks. The Russian state is portrayed throughout history as the invader and brutal executioner, while Ukraine itself is shown as the sufferer. Books with such material are also published for the very young: soon following the events on the Maidan in 2014, Ukrainian historian Oleg Vitvitskiy published a new "patriotic" alphabet for children.

Educational literature was likewise changed to reflect the official narrative of history. Facts indicating that the Ukrainian nationalists were collaborators were removed from it. For example, the Ministry of Education and Science demanded to withdraw the circulation of history textbooks for grades 10-11, which contained information about the cooperation of R.Shukhevych, as well as the Roland and Nachtigall battalions with the army of Nazi Germany during World War II.¹⁵²⁰

The policy of honouring the Nazis and their collaborators is beginning to have a negative impact on a considerable portion of Ukrainians, as indicated by sociological monitoring data, among other things. According to a sociological survey conducted by the "Democratic Initiatives" Foundation, the majority of Ukrainians (52%) celebrate the Victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic

¹⁵²⁰ <https://yavoriv-info.com.ua/novini/novini-lvivshhini/zi-shkilnogo-pidruchnika-priberut-naklep-na-ukrainskix-nacionalistiv>

War on May 9. Meanwhile, 56% of respondents agree that both Nazi Germany and the USSR are responsible for unleashing of the bloodiest conflict in the history of mankind. It is worth noting that only 32.2% of those surveyed chose the option that the war was World War II, not the Great Patriotic War, and was won by the anti-Hitler coalition. Almost 40% of respondents support the status quo, where both Victory Day and Remembrance and Reconciliation Day are considered as public holidays.¹⁵²¹

Moreover, the Ukrainian authorities actually involve right-wing and ultra-nationalist groups and organizations in "patriotic work" with young people, providing state support to certain groups.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine (previously the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of Ukraine) allots a sizable amount of money each year to support "military-patriotic youth-educational" projects, such as festivals, contests, congresses, camps, military-field games, and other events that glorify Nazi collaborators Stepan Bandera, Roman Shukhevych, and others while instilling anti-Russian sentiment.

For example, during the annual all-Ukrainian children's and youth game "Jura" (Falcon), children aged 6 to 17, by analogy with the structure of the UPA, unite in "swarms" and "kurins", which are named after the "historical struggle for independence" ("insurgents", "Azovtsy", "Aydarovtsy", "named after Roman Shukhevych", etc.).

Since 2007, the "All-Ukrainian Youth Movement National Alliance" has held an annual "Festival of the Ukrainian spirit "Bandershtat" in Lutsk, Volyn region, with the cooperation of the Kiev authorities. The goal of the event, according to the organizers, is to "immortalize the image of Bandera as a national symbol."

The state awarded subsidies totalling more than a million hryvnias to the All-Ukrainian Union "Freedom" (Svoboda), and C14 in 2018 for the execution of programs aimed at "patriotic education of young people". In 2019, a state funding

¹⁵²¹ <https://dif.org.ua/article/den-peremogi-i-yogo-mistse-v-istorichniy-pamyati-ukraintsiv>

was allocated for the "Cornet" youth military-Patriotic camp, named after the collaborator T.Borovets, and several other similar projects. In the summer of 2019, the Banderstat festival was held in Lutsk, the festival in honour of the ideologist of Ukrainian nationalism D.Dontsov was held in Melitopol, and the "Paths of Taras Borovets" festival was held in Olevsk.

In December, 2019, a statute entitled "On State Recognition and Support of the National Scout Organization of Ukraine "Plast" was adopted by the Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine". In fact, this text provides the foundation for bringing a group under the state's wing, something comparable to the infamous "Hitler Youth" (or "Hitlerjugens"), where children are deliberately ideologically brainwashed. To understand what such processing can lead to, it is enough to remember that almost the entire command of the UPA (S.Bandera, R.Shukhevych, V.Kuk, etc.) passed through the "Plast" movement¹⁵²² at one time.

Also in December 2019, the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports of Ukraine again allocated funding for a number of "military-patriotic youth-educational" projects in 2020 to the amount of 20 million hryvnias, including 2 million hryvnias to the Plast scouting organization, which openly declares the succession of the Banderite organization structure (including 770 thousand hryvnias for financial support of military-patriotic camps of this structure, 450 thousand hryvnias for holding an all-Ukrainian game, and 500 thousand hryvnias for the organization of the cultural identity festival Den Plastuna); 440 thousand hryvnias for the festival of the Ukrainian spirit Bandershtat, which is allegedly of "ideological and patriotic nature"; 350 thousand hryvnias for the Youth Nationalist Congress on the propaganda of the ideas of Ukrainian nationalism within the framework of the Camp Season 2020 action, the central event of which will be the military field games of Gurba-Antonovtsy, dedicated to the UPA battle against the NKVD troops in the Ternopol region; 485 thousand hryvnias to organize a military-patriotic game "Jura"; over 250 thousand hryvnias

¹⁵²² <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/385-IX>; <https://news-front.info/2019/12/24/detyam-ukrainy-slugi-naroda-pod-yolochku-podlozhili-plast/>

to the Ukrainian Youth Union (supports the rehabilitation of Symon Petliura, Stepan Bandera, and Roman Shukhevych) to organize a conference of the World Ukrainism, holding historical events (180 thousand hryvnias) and the organization of children's camps "Zagrada" (95 thousand hryvnias), whose participants visit memorable places of the UPA; 300 thousand hryvnias to hold military and historical events "Under Cover of Trizub (Trident)" in Boryas (Kiev Oblast); 560 thousand hryvnias to the Ukrainian Reserve Army for sports and patriotic camps "Kuznya Unyzh" and "Rebel Heart" for children of combat participants in the south-east of the country; 250 thousand hryvnias to the All-Ukrainian Association of Military and Historical Organizations for holding competitions at one of the military units.

In January 2020, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of Ukraine announced the results of a contest of children's and youth projects, which provided funding from the state in 2020.¹⁵²³ A total of 8 million hryvnias (more than 20 million rubles) was allocated for such projects. This is almost half of all funds allocated by the ministry to children's and youth organizations.¹⁵²⁴ For example, the Plast organization was allocated 2.7 million hryvnias for the organization of summer camps and thematic forums. 400 thousand hryvnias were allocated to the Youth Nationalist Congress for cycles of the training program "The course of free people" and "The course of a young Banderite." 200 thousand hryvnias were allocated to the National Alliance for the All-Ukrainian Field Game "Victory", held since 2006. 120 thousand hryvnias were allocated to the "Educational Assembly" affiliated with the radical group "C14" for the action "Proud of the Ukrainians". 200 thousand hryvnias were allocated to the structure "Falcon of Freedom," which is the youth wing of the All-Ukrainian Union "Freedom" (Svoboda), to hold the "Games of Patriots" in the Ternopol region. In addition, funding was provided for the "Ukrainian People's Youth" all-Ukrainian campaign "True History of Ukraine" and the festival of social advertising. In addition, many

¹⁵²³ http://www.dsmsu.gov.ua/media/2019/12/27/1/Rishennya_26.PDF

¹⁵²⁴ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/713423-ukraina-nacionalisty-deti-vospitanie-granty>

of these organizations also received funding from the state budget for national patriotic education, as well as direct funding for their activities from both the state and local government budgets.¹⁵²⁵

In March 2021, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine (reorganized in March 2020) allocated another 8 million hryvnias budget for "military-patriotic youth-educational" projects. In particular, 350 thousand hryvnias was allocated for holding the all-Ukrainian festival "Zashkiv" in honour of the OUN leader E.Konovalets in the Lvov region; 185 thousand hryvnias – for the all-Ukrainian camp "Khorunzhiy" in the Volyn region, where children are brought up on the example of the OUN-UPA members; 1 million 200 thousand hryvnias – for activities "to honor the heroes of the struggle of the Ukrainian people for the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine"; 3 million hryvnias – for educational measures in general, with the funds from this article also going to nationalist organizations or their affiliated structures.¹⁵²⁶

In January 2022, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine allocated budgetary funds of 9 million hryvnias for the implementation of "national-patriotic education" projects. The Plast organization was allocated 1.7 million hryvnias to hold various "military-patriotic camps in the field". The Youth Nationalist Congress received 715 thousand hryvnias for the same purpose. The public organization "Youth Corps" (a branch of the far-right party "National Corps") was allocated 240 thousand hryvnias for the organization of all-Ukrainian competitions named after Igor Beloshitskiy (Azov fighter, killed in 2014 near Mariupol), and 100 thousand hryvnias for the school of national patriotic education named after Elena Stepaniv, who fought in the First World War in the ranks of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen within the Austro-Hungarian Armed Forces. "Volyn Student

¹⁵²⁵ <https://strana.today/news/247099-natsionalisty-poluchili-ot-minkulta-pochti-polovinu-bjudzheta-na-molodezhnye-orhanizatsii.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/247099-natsionalisty-poluchili-ot-minkulta-pochti-polovinu-bjudzheta-na-molodezhnye-orhanizatsii.html>)

¹⁵²⁶ The online environment as a tool for violating rights and freedoms in Ukraine. Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection named after E.Berezhnaya. 2022.

Brotherhood" received 270 thousand hryvnias for the event "By the Paths of the UPA".¹⁵²⁷

Kiev's activities in organizing financial support for national-radicals at the state's expense did not go unnoticed. In July 2019, the Ukrainian government was accused of secretly funding far-right extremist groups under the guise of educational programs. According to the Bellingcat group, the government allocated funds within the program of "national-patriotic education" of young people. The investigation pointed out that such grants were used to increase the influence of nationalists and attract new supporters.¹⁵²⁸

In March 2020, the acting Minister of Education and Science Lubomyra Mandziy was at the centre of a scandal. It became known that the acting Minister of Education of Ukraine L.Mandziy in 2018, holding at that time the position of the head of the Department of Education of the Lviv Regional Administration, became one of the organizers of the drawing competition among schoolchildren on the theme of the SS division "Galicia" and Ukrainian volunteers in its ranks. The assignment was to depict "an SS man or Reichsfuhrer Heinrich Himmler meeting with his division personnel." The award ceremony was scheduled for April 28, 2020, along with a ceremonial parade to mark the 75th anniversary of the creation of the Waffen-SS division. Along with the march and drawing competition, there was a weapons exhibition. After public outrage, L. Mandziy in comments to journalists tried to disown the event, saying that the Department of Education "only informed schools about the competition".¹⁵²⁹

Children have been recruited into the AFU and nationalist groups for a very long time, and fighters from the neo-Nazi Azov battalion (registered as a terrorist organization in the Russian Federation) have been indoctrinating them with a hatred of everything that is Russian. They took over the Pilgrim orphanage in what was then Ukrainian Mariupol. Long-term military training of the orphanage

¹⁵²⁷ https://mms.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/16/Patriotychny_vyhovannia/Konkursy/richenia/2022%20%D1%80%D1%96%D0%BA/rishennya-no-1-vid-17012022.pdf

¹⁵²⁸ <https://ukraina.ru/news/20200130/1026509598.html>

¹⁵²⁹ <https://strana.today/news/257560-io-ministra-obrazovaniya-mandziy-orhanizovyyala-vo-lvove-konkurs-v-chest-divizii-ss-halichina.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/257560-io-ministra-obrazovaniya-mandziy-orhanizovyyala-vo-lvove-konkurs-v-chest-divizii-ss-halichina.html>)

residents, severe penalties for any misbehaviour, and exhausting physical training exercises made up the mentoring aspect of the Azov men. Particular attention was paid to hand-to-hand combat, girls were taught mostly sniper training. At the same time, the ideological conditioning of the pupils, based on Russophobia, anti-Semitism, and the glorification of Nazi Germany, was carried out.

The Western press has published articles on this topic.¹⁵³⁰

The Ukrainian authorities also continue to erect monuments and memorial signs in honour of the OUN-UIA fighters and pay tribute to former Nazis who have survived to this day. According to the study of the American newspaper The Forward on monuments to Fascists, Nazis and Nazi collaborators in different countries, Ukraine ranks first in the world on this subject.¹⁵³¹ As of December 2022, 50 monuments were set up in different regions of the country only to S.Bandera, and more than 500 streets, lanes and avenues throughout Ukraine were named in his honour.

The largest ultranationalist marches are tied to the date of the foundation of the UIA and to the birthday of S.Bandera. The radicals taking part in such rallies use hateful speech, mostly directed against Russians, while also performing various provocative escapades.

On January 29, 2020, in Ivano-Frankovsk, a former vigilante and member of the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia" M.Mulyk, was buried in the Alley of Glory, in a solemn ceremony attended by regional officials and clergymen. Many of those attending the ceremony were dressed in Nazi uniforms.¹⁵³² According to the Ukrainian media, M.Mulyk was the chairman of the regional brotherhood of the "Galicia" Division participants, and an honorary citizen of Ivano-Frankovsk.¹⁵³³

¹⁵³⁰ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3195711/Now-CHILDREN-taking-arms-Shocking-pictures-inside-Ukraine-s-neo-Nazi-military-camp-recruits-young-six-learn-fire-weapons-s-ceasefire.html>
<https://apimagesblog.com/blog/2018/11/12/training-kids-to-kill-at-ukrainian-nationalist-camp>

¹⁵³¹ <https://forward.com/news/462916/nazi-collaborator-monuments-in-ukraine/?amp=1>

¹⁵³² <https://galychyna.if.ua/2020/01/28/martsinkiv-poobitsyav-nazvati-vulitsyu-imenem-mihayla-mulika/>

¹⁵³³ <https://strana.today/news/246875-foto-kak-v-ivano-frankovske-proshchalas-s-umershim-natsistom-iz-divizii-ss.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/246875-foto-kak-v-ivano-frankovske-proshchalas-s-umershim-natsistom-iz-divizii-ss.html>)

On March 22, 2020, Lvov authorities officially marked the 95th anniversary of Waffen SS Division "Galicia" Unterscharführer R.Matsuk and presented him with a portrait of himself in his youth in a Nazi uniform as a gift.¹⁵³⁴

In April 2020, in Kalush (Ivano-Frankovsk Region), the Brotherhood of the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia" soldiers presented Vasily Nakonechny, a veteran of the division, with a special award in a solemn ceremony. Such "decorations" are presented to all the surviving members of the former SS. When the 95 year-old veteran of the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia" was awarded, he reflexively extended his arm in a Nazi salute. Earlier, in May 2018, by decision of the Kalush City Council, he had been awarded the title of honorary citizen of Kalush.¹⁵³⁵

On 23 May 2020 on the occasion of the "Heroes Day"¹⁵³⁶ a one-time financial assistance from the regional budget was paid to the veterans of the Ukrainian Insurgence Army (UPA) residing in Lvov Oblast. In overall, it was received by 989 people.¹⁵³⁷

On 21 June 2020, Lvov City Council's press-service reported that Lvov Mayor Andrey Sadovoy congratulated Olga Ilkiv, former liaison officer for UPA leader Roman Shukhevich, on her 100th birthday. The report mentioned that in honour of 78th anniversary of UPA's creation, a flat in Lvov was bought for Olga Ilkiv on behalf of the city and region.¹⁵³⁸

On 18 July 2020, a memorial cross to UPA's "General-Cornet" Ivan Treiko was installed in a forest between the village of Gorodnitsa in the Zhitomir Oblast and Storozhev village in the Rovno Oblast, with the support of Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UINM). The event was attended by representatives of local authorities, UINM and social activists.¹⁵³⁹

¹⁵³⁴ The online environment as a tool for violating rights and freedoms in Ukraine. Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection named after E.Berezhnaya. 2022.

¹⁵³⁵ <https://strana.today/news/262422-v-kalushe-nahradili-veterana-divizii-ss-poluchaja-nahradu-tot-zihanul.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/262422-v-kalushe-nahradili-veterana-divizii-ss-poluchaja-nahradu-tot-zihanul.html>)

¹⁵³⁶ This date was designated as commemorative by Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) in 1941. Ukrainian nationalist organizations celebrate it since 2014. At their behest, some representatives of state and municipal authorities of Ukraine take part in commemorative events.

¹⁵³⁷ Manifestations of Nazism, neo-Nazism and Xenophobia in Ukraine. Information and Analytical Review, 2020

¹⁵³⁸ <https://city-adm.lviv.ua/news/society/public-sector/279791-mer-lvova-pryvitav-zviazkovu-romana-shukhevycha-zi-100-littiam>

¹⁵³⁹ <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/na-polissi-vstanovyly-pamyatnyy-hrest-general-horunzhomu-upa-ivanu->

In August 2020, "Petlyura's Litter Pick Day" was held in Kiev in "commemoration" of the fighters of 1st Bogdan Khmelnytsky Ukrainian Regiment, buried on Zamkovaya Mountain.

On 19 August 2020, a memorial plaque in honour of Yuri Lipa was placed on the building of district library in Yavorov village in Lvov Oblast.¹⁵⁴⁰

On 30 August 2020, a monument to K.Brychok – Nazi collaborator, member of Polissian Sich and UPA, who participated in mass murders of civilians of Polish and Jewish origin – was solemnly unveiled in Karpilovka village in the Chernigov Oblast¹⁵⁴¹.

On 5 October 2020, UPA veteran, involved in mass murder of Jewish and Polish residents of the Rovno Oblast Alexander Derkach was buried with war honours and a guard of honour.¹⁵⁴²

On 13 October 2020, the authorities of the city Lutsk had organized an online festival-competition of insurgents' song "For Ukraine! For its freedom!", where the songs glorifying the UPA were performed. On the same day an exhibition dedicated to Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevich was held in Vinnitsa.

On 14 October 2020, in Kiev, radicals from "Svoboda", "Right Sector" and "National corps" held a traditional march on the occasion of 78th anniversary of UPA creation. The participants of the march carried glass cans containing photos of Anatoly Shariy, Viktor Medvedchuk and a number of other social and opposition activists, to imitate severed heads. They chanted slogans of organizing "legal" prosecution of Ukrainian citizens for "pro-Russian" activities, revoking the licenses of "112-Ukraine", "NewsOne", "ZIK", "NASH", "Inter" and "Kiev Live" and cancelling the ceasefire in Donbass for Ukrainian military.

treyku

¹⁵⁴⁰ <https://golossokal.com.ua/ru/novyny-kultury/y-misti-iavorovi-vidbylos-vidkrittia-memorialnoi-tablici-na-fasadi-raionnoi-centralnoi-biblioteki-imeni-uriia-lipi.html> , <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2020/08/22/v-lvovskoy-oblasti-chestvuyut-vracha-evtanaziologa-iz-oun-upa>

¹⁵⁴¹ Online Environment as an Instrument of Human Right and Freedom Violations in Ukraine. Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, 2022.

¹⁵⁴² Online Environment as an Instrument of Human Right and Freedom Violations in Ukraine. Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, 2022.

On the same day, in Lvov, wreath-laying ceremonies at the graves of UPA fighters, funeral services with participation of head of Lvov Oblast regional administration Maxim Kozitsky, and marches with the emblems of Ukrainian nationalists, were held.¹⁵⁴³ A historic exhibition "Against Goliath" dedicated to UPA members, including Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevich, organized by UINM was held in Vinnitsa.

On 12 November 2020, with the support of the city authorities, relatives of OUN-UPA fighters were awarded with that formation's medals "For combat merits" and "For special contribution to the development of OUN armed underground" in Lvov historic museum.

On 20 January 2021, Ukraine's nationwide competition for raising a monument to Simon Petliura was declared in Poltava.¹⁵⁴⁴

On 29 January 2021, upon the initiative of Kiev City Council "Readings from Bandera" were held again.

In February 2021, in the city of Striy (Lvov Oblast), former fighter of SS "Galicia" Division Ivan Fialka was buried with honours. City mayor and members of the nationalist organizations attended the event.

On 16 February 2021, Council of Lvov Oblast requested President Zelensky to return the title of Hero of Ukraine to Stepan Bandera. The deputies have also decided to declare 2021 the year of Yevgeny Konovalts (leader of Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN)).¹⁵⁴⁵ Besides, the deputies of Ivano-Frankovsk City Council came up with an initiative to bestow the title of Hero of Ukraine to former fighter of "Galicia" Mikhail Mulik.

On 5 March 2021, the deputies of Ternopol City Council supported the initiative of city mayor Sergey Nadal to give the city stadium, where the final match of Ukraine Soccer Cup was scheduled to be held, the name of Roman Shukhevich. Israeli Ambassador to Ukraine Joel Lion urged the authorities to cancel that decision. In turn, Ukrainian MFA Spokesperson supported the local

¹⁵⁴³ <https://lviv.depo.ua/rus/lviv/yak-u-lvovi-svyatkuyut-den-zakhisnika-ukraini-fotoreportazh-202010141229260>

¹⁵⁴⁴ <https://zn.ua/UKRAINE/v-poltave-prokhodit-vseukrainskij-konkurs-na-luchshij-pamjatnik-simonu-petljure.html>

¹⁵⁴⁵ <https://m.day.kyiv.ua/ru/news/160221-lvovskiy-oblsovet-trebuuet-vernout-bandere-zvanie-geroya-ukrainy-i-obyavil-2021-y-godom>

authorities, saying that "preservation of national memory was among the priorities of state policy" and such news pegs should be commented on by historians, not diplomats.¹⁵⁴⁶

This initiative was seized by Lvov Oblast Regional Council which, on 16 March 2021, proposed the Ukrainian Government to rename "Arena Lvov" to "Stepan Bandera Arena Lvov". This stadium was supposed to receive the first rounds of the qualifiers for 2022 World Cup. This initiative came from "European Solidarity" party of Petr Poroshenko.¹⁵⁴⁷

On 28 April 2021, in Kiev, the radicals for the first time held the march in honour of the creation of Nazi SS "Galicia" Division. Nazi symbols were used during the march. It was escorted by the police who blocked the traffic on a number of city's central streets. According head of Ukrainian Institute of Analysis and Policy Management Ruslan Bortnik, Kiev city administration has partially financed the march, though it declared that it was made by mistake. Earlier such events in honour of SS "Galicia" were mainly concentrated in Lvov and other cities in Western Ukraine. According to experts' estimates, such march can be regarded as a provocation given the upcoming 9 May, while Kiev's inaction can be explained by the threat of pressure coming from the right-wing forces that had become more influential.¹⁵⁴⁸

On 2 May 2021, members of "National corps" held events to glorify the fighters of SS "Galicia" Division in Lvov and Ternopol. Nazi symbols were also used during these events.

On 22 May 2021, a solemn ceremony of burying the remnants of the UPA fighters was held in Strelki village (Lvov Oblast). The event was attended by leader of "European Solidarity" party's fraction in Lvov Oblast Regional Council Oleg Duda.

¹⁵⁴⁶ <https://strana.today/news/321233-ternopolskij-stadion-poluchil-imja-romana-shukhevicha.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/321233-ternopolskij-stadion-poluchil-imja-romana-shukhevicha.html>)

¹⁵⁴⁷ <https://strana.today/news/323062-arena-lvov-imeni-bandery-cto-hovorjat-o-pereimenovanii-stadiona-v-chest-vozhdja-oun.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/323062-arena-lvov-imeni-bandery-cto-hovorjat-o-pereimenovanii-stadiona-v-chest-vozhdja-oun.html>)

¹⁵⁴⁸ https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2021/04/28_a_13576064.shtml

In mid-June 2021, in Kiev, St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery which belongs to Orthodox Church of Ukraine saw the solemn burial of head of Kiev regional Brotherhood of OUN-UPA veterans, former fighter of SS "Galicia" Division and former OUN leader Orest Vaskul. Lying-in-state ceremony was held in accordance with official funeral solemnity of Ukraine's Ministry of Defence with participation of guard of honour from Hetman Bogdan Khmelnytsky Separate Presidential Regiment. The ceremony was attended by former Education Minister Sergey Kvit, former head of UINM Vladimir Vyatrovich and others.¹⁵⁴⁹

On 25 July 2021, the remnants of punishers from SS "Galicia" Division who had been destroyed by the Soviet troops of the 1st Ukrainian front in 1944 in the Battle of Brody were solemnly reburied in the village of Chervonoye (Lvov Oblast).

In July 2021, it was discovered that during the city day in Novomirgorod (Kirovograd Oblast) children's team named "Hitlerites" took part in the street basketball competition.¹⁵⁵⁰

On 10 August 2021, the 100th birthday of UPA lieutenant and Ukrainian auxiliary police commissioner Vladimir Shigelsky – who had actively participated in killing Jewish and Polish civilians during WWII – was solemnly celebrated in Lvov. In 1949 he was executed in Poland for collaboration with the Nazis, war crimes and mass murders of civilians.

On 18 August 2021, in Litin village (Vinnitsa Oblast), solemn events in commemoration of 110th birthday of former OUN and UPA member Yemelyan Grabets were held. He served as Ukrainian auxiliary police commissioner in Rovno and was directly involved in mass murder of around 30,000 Jews residing in the city. Aside from the commemorative march in the street named in his honour, and wreath-laying ceremony at the plaque, local history museum organized a round table which resulted in a recommendation for local authorities to bestow the name of Yemelyan Grabets upon the Litin sports complex.¹⁵⁵¹

¹⁵⁴⁹ https://aif.ru/politics/world/budni_ukrainy_veterana_ss_provodil_v_posledniy_put_prezidentskiy_polk

¹⁵⁵⁰ https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2021/07/22/n_16278944.shtml

¹⁵⁵¹ <https://vesti.ua/strana/v-vinnitse-otprazdnovali-110-letie-komandira-ukrainskogo-gestapo>

In September 2021, the plans were revealed to install a memorial sign dedicated to high-ranking member of OUN Vladimir Bagazyi, as part of "One stone, one life"¹⁵⁵² project. Bagazyi organized the Ukrainian auxiliary police, later he was appointed burgomaster of Kiev. This was reported by head of Ukrainian Jewish Committee Eduard Dolinsky, who highlighted that that Bagazyi was directly involved in killing the Jews residing in Kiev. According to media, collaborator's photo and name appeared on the interactive map of the official site of the project containing the addresses of all memorial stones and names of those honoured with those memorials. Bagazyi's biography which is published on the same site, does not mention his involvement in shootings of Jews during the period of occupation of Kiev.¹⁵⁵³ In response to RT newspaper's request, German Foreign Ministry said that "debates around image of Vladimir Bagazyi" are taken into consideration and at the moment the instalment of a memorial sign in his honour is not planned. German MFA stresses that it took the statements of Vladimir Bagazyi's involvement in Holocaust seriously and thus, in cooperation with Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies and other specialists, would "examine this person's biography".¹⁵⁵⁴ As of 12 October 2021, Vladimir Bagazyi's biography is removed from the project's site.

On 7 October 2021, in the vicinity of Sokolovka village (Lvov Oblast) solemn reburial of UPA fighters took place.

On 19 October 2021, Kiev saw the unveiling of "memorial cross", created in 2009, dedicated to 100th birthday of Stepan Bandera. Back then, the permission to install the monument was not granted. This time, the city authorities did not oppose this initiative of nationalists.

On 11 January 2022, the presentation of book "Ukrainian unkershafts" dedicated to SS "Galicia" Division, was held in one of the libraries of Nikolayev

¹⁵⁵² "One stone, one life" project was launched by Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies with the support of Kiev City Administration and Ukrainian branch of Goethe-Institut. Germany's Embassy in Ukraine co-authored the project. In its turn, this project is part of an expansive decentralized "Stumbling stones" memorial of Gunther Demnig – an artist from Cologne – dedicated to memory of people who suffered persecution during the years of Nazism.

¹⁵⁵³ <https://ria.ru/20210928/natsizm-1752215853.html>

¹⁵⁵⁴ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/912962-babii-yar-ukraina-germaniya-pamyatnik>

(Lvov Oblast). The event was attended by a man in Nazi uniform, cap with Roman eagle and a skull with crossed bones and officer's sword knot.¹⁵⁵⁵

On 4 February 2022, during European futsal championship semi-final match between team Russian and team Ukraine, the Ukrainian fans chanted nationalist and Russophobic slogans, including "Ukraine above all", "Who doesn't jump is a Muscovite" etc. They sang a song "Fight the Muscovite" calling to kill Russians.

On 5 February 2022, in Kiev, 9th "Readings from Bandera" were held by "Svoboda" nationalist party in commemoration of 80th anniversary of creation of UPA. One of "Svoboda"'s leaders, former Ukrainian MP Yuri Sirotyuk, was the moderator of the conference. According to organizers, the readings are "intellectual forum" which is held under the aegis of Stepan Bandera's ideas. The event was dedicated to 80th anniversary of creation of UPA. Leader of ultra-right organization "S14" (as of late, it is active under the name "Foundation of future" or "Society of future") Evgeny Karas spoke at the event. Among other things, he said that nationalists are "having fun fighting and killing". Besides, he declared a threat that should the radicals come to power, Ukraine might attack the European countries, in particular, Hungary.

On the same day, in Kharkov, a "march of unity" was held by "National corps" and other nationalist parties and movements. The participants brought the flags of OUN-UPA and chanted nationalist slogans as they marched.

On 14 October 2022, Vladimir Zelensky awarded the title of Hero of Ukraine and the Order "Gold Star" to 99-year-old Miroslav Simchich – a war criminal, organizer and participant of mass murders of the Poles during WWII, commander of UPA sotnya unit.¹⁵⁵⁶ After the war he was convicted by Polish court for killing the residents of Pisten village in Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast with primarily Polish population. The initiative to address the President of Ukraine to bestow the

¹⁵⁵⁵ <http://pravua.info/v-biblioteke-pod-lvvovom-proveli-prezentacziyu-knigi-ob-ss-galichina-s-muzhchinox-v-nacizistkoj-forme/>

¹⁵⁵⁶ <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/6992022-44385>

honorary title upon former Nazi came on 22 October 2021 from the deputies of Lvov Oblast Regional Council.¹⁵⁵⁷

On 8 November 2022, in Ivanovtsy village in Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast a renovated monument to Mikhail "Spartan" Moskalyuk was unveiled. He was the commander of UPA sotnya unit that participated in punitive operations of "Nachtigall" Battalion and fought against Soviet partisans as part of 201st battalion of "Ukrainian legion" schutzmannschaft.

On 30 November 2022, in Ledykhov village of Ternopol Oblast, the remnants of ten UPA members had who had died in battles against the Red Army and NKVD troops in 1944 while the latter two had been liberating the Ukrainian SSR Western regions from nationalist underground and their Nazi accomplices, were solemnly reburied.

In December 2022, a Christmas crèche was installed in state historic and cultural centre "Naguyevichi" in Lvov Oblast. Among other traditional Biblical characters in the crèche, there was a statue of OUN leader Stepan Bandera.¹⁵⁵⁸

On 10 December 2022, in Lvov, Yuri Shukhevich, leader of far-right UNA-UNSO¹⁵⁵⁹ party in 1990-1994, son of Roman Shukhevich, was buried with war honours.

On 21 December 2022, Ternopol Oblast Regional Council adopted the decision to install a monument to Roman Shukhevich – who was involved in mass killings of Poles and Jews in Western Ukraine – in commemoration of 80th anniversary of creation of UPA.¹⁵⁶⁰

On 14 February 2023, Vladimir Zelensky issued a decree to give 10th Separate Mountain Assault Brigade the name "Edelweiss". 1st Mountain Infantry Brigade of Nazi Germany bore the same name.¹⁵⁶¹

¹⁵⁵⁷ Online Environment as an Instrument of Human Right and Freedom Violations in Ukraine. Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, 2022.

¹⁵⁵⁸ <https://strana.today/news/419500-vo-lvovskoj-oblasti-v-rozhdestvenskij-vertep-ustanovili-fihury-bajdena-i-bandery-foto.html>

¹⁵⁵⁹ This organization is recognized as extremist by the decision of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation of November 17, 2014; its activities are prohibited in Russia.

¹⁵⁶⁰ https://teren.in.ua/news/u-ternopoli-vstanovlyat-pam-yatnik-romanu-shuhevichu_394446.html

¹⁵⁶¹ <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/802023-45805>

On 29-30 March 2023, state-level commemorative events were held in honour of 150th birthday of Nikolai Mikhnovsky – ideologist of Ukrainian nationalism who formulated the slogan "Ukraine is for Ukrainians" and called for killings of Poles, Russians and Jews, whom he considered enemies of Ukrainian people.¹⁵⁶²

On 8 May 2023, on the eve of Day of Victory over Nazism (which is no longer celebrated in Ukraine) an exhibition was held by UINM for the cadets of Kharkov National University of Internal Affairs, which is temporarily located in Vinnitsa, under the title "UPA – response of the unbowed people", dedicated to the organization the majority of members of which served in armed formations of the Third Reich.¹⁵⁶³

On 14 June 2023, a lecture of history dedicated to OUN leader Yevgeny Konovalts was held in Museum of Maidan in Kiev.¹⁵⁶⁴

On 22 September 2023, Vladimir Zelensky, during his visit to Ottawa, together with Canadian MPs and country's leadership, gave a standing ovation to Yaroslav Gunko (Hunka) – veteran of Nazi SS "Galicia" Division – who had been invited to the session of House of Commons. After the scandal unfolded and the incident was condemned by representatives of Jewish organizations, Russia, Poland and Germany, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau officially apologized and Canadian Parliament Speaker Anthony Rota resigned¹⁵⁶⁵. At the same time, no apology was given by Kiev with regards to this incident.

On 1 October 2023, in accordance with Vladimir Zelensky's decree, one of Ukrainian Armed Forces' battalion was given the name of Yevgeny Konovalts – OUN leader who actively collaborated with the Nazis.¹⁵⁶⁶

Feeling the support of official authorities and their own impunity, the far-right radicals in Ukraine actively resort to violence and methods of intimidation

¹⁵⁶² <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/31-bereznya-vypovnytsya-150-rokiv-ideologu-ukrayinskoyi-nezalezhnosti-mykoli-mihnovskomu-zahody>

¹⁵⁶³ <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/lokalna-pamyat-perepohovannya-uchasnykiv-drugoyi-svitovoyi-viyny-u-vinnyci-ta-inshi-novyny-z-regioniv>

¹⁵⁶⁴ <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/u-kyeivi-vidbuvsya-lektoriy-prysvyachenyy-yevgeny-konovalcyu>

¹⁵⁶⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/09/27/poland-ukrainian-nazi-veteran-canada-extradition/>

¹⁵⁶⁶ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/18886607> and

with regards to political opponents, civil and human rights activists, journalists, and put pressure on authorities for the purposes of adopting the decisions which are beneficial for them.

The acts of the radicals remain unpunished. The demonstrative aggressiveness of such organizations, coupled with inaction (or even permissiveness in some cases) of law enforcers create a dangerous situation when reasonable majority gets intimidated by the fringe groups.

On 4 May 2020, in Kharkov, the radicals from "National corps", "National militias" and "Democratic axe" organized a rally opposing the appointment of deputy head of Kharkov Oblast Regional Administration Yevgeny Gritskov on the position of president of the coordinating council for national-patriotic upbringing. A photo of 2015, where Gritskov is pictured with former Governor of Kharkov Oblast Mikhail Dobkin holding a red banner, served as a pretext. On 6 May Yevgeny Gritskov resigned as president of the coordinating council.

On 23 May 2020, in Kiev, the radicals from "National corps" assaulted the office of "Opposition Platform – For Life" (OPFL) that opposes the xenophobia and glorification of Nazism. The nationalists attempted to set the office on fire, threw flares and smoke pots through the windows, and doused the building with paint. The radicals assaulted the employees of the organization, taking advantage of permissiveness of the police who blocked the work of office's security service.¹⁵⁶⁷

In mid-July 2020, the nationalists organized mass protests in Kiev, Dnepropetrovsk, Lvov, Kharkov and Chernovtsi against consideration of the bill on the use of national minorities' languages in education by Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament). That document provided for a postponement of the restrictions coming into force and extension of a transition period for use of Russian as language of instruction. During the protests the radicals behaved aggressively, committed acts of desecration of Russia's state symbols. In some cases, there are even recorded clashes with the police. The nationalists received

¹⁵⁶⁷ <https://112.ua/mnenie/nacional-radikaly-napali-na-ofis-oppozicionnoy-platformy--za-zhizn-537009/html>

support even from local deputies of separate regions. In particular, the Lvov Oblast Regional Council stated in its address to President Vladimir Zelensky that everyone who would've voted for the bill prepared by MP from "Servant of the People" party Maxim Buzhansky would be considered "collaborators" and "traitors of Ukraine".¹⁵⁶⁸

On 4 February 2021, the members of far-right Ukrainian organizations attempted to break into the building of "NASH" TV channel in Kiev, demanded to close the channel as, in their opinion, it upheld pro-Russian views in its policies. During the clashes with far-right radicals, the police used tear gas, several people were apprehended.

On 22 February 2021, in Odessa, far-right organization "Tradition and order" assaulted the left-wing activists because of the latter's participation in the protests against raising the tariffs on utilities. The assaulters used tear gas and threatened with blade weapons.¹⁵⁶⁹

On 28 February 2021, members of "National corps" attacked Viktor Vikarchuk, businessman and politician, who ran for local elections to Khmelnytskyi City and Regional Council from the OPFL, and doused him with green paint.¹⁵⁷⁰

In April 2021, the nationalists from "Fraikor" demanded, while accusing her of spreading "Russian propaganda", to fire professor Natalia Semeykina from Kharkov State Academy of Culture for her critical comment on social media with regards authorities' actions as well as her views on conflict in Donbass. Academy's leadership echoed the position of the radicals. Vice-rector Yuri Loshkov said Natalia Semeykina brought discredit to the title of a teacher with her words and "if that was truly her point of view and that is what her convictions are, then she cannot be a Ukrainian teacher". Later Natalia Semeykina was included in the database of extremist "Mirotvorets" website.¹⁵⁷¹

¹⁵⁶⁸ <https://ukraina.ru/exclusive/20200718/1028290011.html>

¹⁵⁶⁹ <https://violence-marker.org.ua/blog/2022/06/03/ultrapravi-konfrontacziyi-ta-nasyilstvo-u-2021-roczni/>

¹⁵⁷⁰ *ibid*

¹⁵⁷¹ <https://strana.today/news/328307-v-kharkove-natsionalisty-trebujut-uvolit-prepodavatelja-akademii-nauk-za-podv-seti.html> (<https://strana.ua/news/328307-v-kharkove-natsionalist-trebujut-uvolit-prepodavatelja-akademmm->

On 7 May 2021, in Kharkov, members of far-right organizations destroyed OPFL propaganda banners bearing inscription "Fascism will not stand" which had been prepared for 9 May.¹⁵⁷²

On 9 May 2021, in Kiev, during the celebrations of Victory Day the nationalists instigated a fight with members of Anti-Fascist Committee of Ukraine, ripped off their red ribbons, snatched flowers from their hands and treaded them down.

On 7 July 2021, in Kiev, far-right radical Alexey Svinarenko and members of his organization "National resistance" assaulted the people who came to a rally carrying Belarussian flags. Tear gas was used. Alexey Svinarenko wrote in his Telegram channel that he "attacked Belarussian anti-Fascists".

On 23 July 2021, in Kharkov, far-right radicals stripped a member of Shariy party off his shirt and beat him. This information was shared through far-right publications.¹⁵⁷³

On 30 October 2021, far-right radicals assaulted the camera crew of "NASH" TV channel in Sumy. Cameraman and anchor were beaten and the equipment destroyed in front of the police.¹⁵⁷⁴

In November 2021, a wave of pogroms struck the bars and clubs in Podol District of Kiev. On 6 November, far-right radicals from "Foundation of future", "Ukrainian flag" and "National resistance" attacked "Khvilyovi" – a popular bar in Podol District – and blocked the exit to the courtyard. They chanted racist and homophobic slogans, covered the walls with inscriptions MS-WP (NS – National Socialism, WP – White Power), threw firecrackers, smoke pots, flour and eggs at the bar staff members. On 10 November, extremists from "Century" wrote "YAKARTA VIENIE" on the wall of the same bar. Apparently, this is a reference to mass murders of followers of the Indonesian Communist party in 1965-1966, when half a million to a million people were killed. On 16 November, "SHOOM" club was attacked. Phrase "Death to left-wingers" was written on its doors. On 26

[nauk-za-post-v-seti.html](#))

¹⁵⁷² <https://violence-marker.org.ua/blog/2022/06/03/ultrapravi-konfrontacziyi-ta-nasyilstvo-u-2021-roczni/>

¹⁵⁷³ *ibid*

¹⁵⁷⁴ <https://ria.ru/20211030/telekanal-1757027767.html>

November, far-right radicals from "Foundation of future", "National resistance" and "Century" broke into "Khvilyovi" bar, shattered the windows, sprayed tear gas, and beat the guests and security employees with batons, while chanting racist and homophobic slogans.¹⁵⁷⁵

On 27 November 2021, in Korosten (Zhitomir Region), radicals attacked a team of the Nash TV channel interviewing the mayor of the city, V.Moskalenko. The journalist was punched in the face right during the report.¹⁵⁷⁶

On 11 December 2021 in Nikolayev, "patriotic activists" tried to disrupt the filming of a tour of the museum exposition dedicated to the occupation and liberation of the city during the Great Patriotic War. Chasing the film crew, one of the radicals said that if the case had been at the front, he would have "blown their heads off".¹⁵⁷⁷

On 18 December 2021, in Poltava, representatives of the "Nationalcorps" disrupted the congress of the OPZZh party. A fight broke out between right-wing radicals and employees guarding the entrance to the congress, and tear gas was used.¹⁵⁷⁸

On 1 February 2022 in Kiev, far-right activists staged a rally in front of the office of the Nash TV channel, during which they burned firecrackers, shouted "Russian, surrender!" and called for "hanging Nashists" (employees of the Nash TV channel).

In February 2022, radicals in Odessa threatened the owner of the Oblaka restaurant, which was to host a concert by Russian rapper Basta (V.Vakulenko). Right Sector member D.Ganula, who is one of the organisers and perpetrators of the Odessa tragedy in the House of Trade Unions on 2 May 2014, wrote on his Facebook page: "The concert is planned in the restaurant "Clouds", owned by A.Zarichansky. If Andrei has brains and pro-Ukrainian position, he will cancel the concert of the occupant. Otherwise, serious trials await his business – "Clouds" is not Zarichansky's only establishment. Vakulenko came and will leave, and you

¹⁵⁷⁵ <https://delo.ua/society/samoprovozglasennaya-policiya-nravov-kak-pravoradikaly-voyuyut-protiv-kieva-389685/>

¹⁵⁷⁶ <http://pravua.info/v-korostene-radikaly-napali-na-zhurnalistov-telekanala-nash/>

¹⁵⁷⁷ <http://pravua.info/v-nikolaeve-radikaly-napali-na-zhurnalistov-telekanala-nash/>

¹⁵⁷⁸ <https://violence-marker.org.ua/blog/2022/06/03/ultrapravi-konfrontacziyi-ta-nasylstvo-u-2021-roczii/>

will live in this city!". After that, D.Ganula published a photo of himself with a machine gun in the social network, as well as a video of people in military uniforms with machine guns. The concert was cancelled.¹⁵⁷⁹

Radicals are also known to freely organize actions against legislative initiatives they do not like and against court rulings against their supporters. For example, when one of the two young people, who doused the monument to General N.F.Vatutin in Mariinskyi Park (Kiev) with antiseptic green dye on the night of February 10 2020, was tried, the head of the radical group S-14 Y.Karas and representatives of D.Korchynsky's Brotherhood party were present in the Pecherskyi District courtroom. The prosecutor requested the defendant to be taken into custody until the conclusion of the investigation. But judge O.Batrin decided he could be released on bail, which was provided by M.Bondar, a MP of the Verkhovna Rada.¹⁵⁸⁰ Human rights activists believe that the presence of the nationalists in the courtroom was intended to exert pressure on the judge. There had previously been a number of incidents in which radicals carried themselves aggressively in courtrooms, demanding the release of their supporters.

Another similar incident occurred in mid-June 2020 in Kiev, outside the courthouse, where S.Sternenko, a member of a nationalist group, was being tried for a manslaughter he committed in May 2018 in Odessa. Radicals attacked journalists from Strana.UA and Sharij.net media, as well as ZIK and NewsOne TV channels, who were covering the trial. The nationalists also stormed the courtroom, provoked fights with the police, lit flares and firecrackers, trying to exert pressure on the court. In all such cases the police demanded all journalists to leave the courtroom without giving any explanation, which led to further attacks. Journalist B.Aminov, who tried to interview the accused, was threatened with a "visit from the participants of the ATO, who will show [him] how to love Ukraine." At the same time, none of the attackers was arrested. Moreover, according to Strana.UA,

¹⁵⁷⁹ <http://pravua.info/radikaly-shantazhom-dobilis-otmeny-konczerta-basty-na-ukraine/>

¹⁵⁸⁰ <https://strana.today/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html> (before <https://strana.ua/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html>)

afterwards the police apologized for beating the "activists" and promised to punish those responsible.¹⁵⁸¹

On 20 July 2021 in Kiev, about 40 extremists from the Society of the Future, National Corps, National Resistance, Alternative, Tradition and Order, Right Youth and Unknown Patriot tried to disrupt the hearing in the Court of Appeal of the appeal of Belarusian anti-fascist Aleksei Bolenkov against the decision of the Security Service of Ukraine to expel him from Ukraine. The right-wing radicals also attacked the left-wing activists who came to support Bolenkov¹⁵⁸² outside the court building.

After the start of the special military operation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine on 24 February 2022, many representatives of Ukrainian far-right organisations took part in the hostilities.¹⁵⁸³ The crimes they committed took on a completely different scale, turning from unlawful acts of violence to the killing of civilians, as well as the torture and murder of captured Russian servicemen.

Accustomed to complete impunity, members of Nazi battalions continue to commit crimes against their fellow citizens. On 29 September 2023, militants from the Kraken unit (part of the Azov regiment, which is territorialist and banned in Russia) used weapons to seize a stationary checkpoint in Kharkov because of an attempt by police and military officers on duty at the checkpoint to check members of the Nazi battalion.¹⁵⁸⁴

Against the background of the rehabilitation of the Nazis and their accomplices, attempts are being made to vilify Red Army soldiers, even to the point of holding them responsible for crimes committed by the Nazis. For example, the object of such fabrications is the tragedy that occurred in March 1943 in the village of Koryukovka in Chernigov region, where the Nazis as a result of punitive

¹⁵⁸¹ <https://strana.today/news/273216-sud-po-sternenko-kak-storonniki-radikala-izbivali-zhurnalistov-i-politsiju-foto-i-video.html> (before <https://strana.ua/news/273216-sud-po-sternenko-kak-storonniki-radikala-izbivali-zhurnalistov-i-politsiju-foto-i-video.html>)

¹⁵⁸² <https://violence-marker.org.ua/blog/2022/06/03/ultrapravi-konfrontacziyi-ta-nasyilstvo-u-2021-roczii/>

¹⁵⁸³ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/997883-lavrov-nacifikaciya-ukraina>

¹⁵⁸⁴ <https://strana.today/news/446715-zakhvativshie-blok-post-voennye-zajavili-cto-ikh-podrazdelenie-proverit-nelzja.html>

action almost completely killed the local population. In publications in the Ukrainian media, timed to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the massacre, the incident was presented in such a way that civilians were killed because of partisans who allegedly provoked the Nazis to commit atrocities.

In recent years, it has become a tradition for nationalists and right-wing radicals, acting with connivance of the Ukrainian authorities, to actively disrupt events commemorating Victory Day and other significant dates, as well as anti-fascist events. Generally, no follow-up measures are taken in relation to threats to anti-fascist activists. The Ukrainian police did nothing to prevent the unlawful acts of these criminals and certainly did not hold them legally accountable, instead allowing the radicals to hide and to single out their victims. The actions of the nationalists were classified as hooliganism, irrespective of the motivations and actual nature of their conduct. At the same time, the police initiated cases against those who displayed Soviet symbols. Experts saw such actions by the Kiev authorities as an attempt to intimidate the activists, to create an atmosphere for them in which they would feel uncomfortable admitting that members of their families served in the Soviet Army.

In 2018-2019, in Kiev, on Victory Day, nationalists wearing clothes with Nazi symbols attacked E. Berezhnaya, the director of the Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, who organized commemorative events. The law enforcement officers were oblivious to the radicals' doings, yet they arrested the victim.¹⁵⁸⁵

In February 2020, then Foreign Minister Prystayko said that Ukraine would not celebrate 9 May.¹⁵⁸⁶ Earlier, during his visit to Poland in January 2020, Zielenski blamed the Soviet Union for unleashing the Second World War.¹⁵⁸⁷

¹⁵⁸⁵ Infringement of rights and freedoms in Ukraine. Manifestation of discrimination, incitement of ethnic hatred, hate crimes and extremism. Report for the OSCE human dimension implementation meeting 2019. The Institute of legal policy and social protection, the Antifascist human rights legal league. 2019.

¹⁵⁸⁶ <https://strana.today/news/252459-pristajko-i-den-pobedy-pochemu-hlava-mid-ne-khochet-prazdnovat-9-maja.html> (ранее <https://strana.ua/news/252459-pristajko-i-den-pobedy-pochemu-hlava-mid-ne-khochet-prazdnovat-9-maja.html>)

¹⁵⁸⁷ <https://ria.ru/20200128/1563949212.html>

Nevertheless, on 9 May 2020, the 75th anniversary of the Victory over Nazi Germany, people in Ukraine took to the streets to honour the memory of the Red Army soldiers, including their fathers and grandfathers. Ukrainian nationalists organized a number of blasphemous actions. In Odessa they interrupted a motor rally, instigated fights and hindered celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the Victory. The radicals also organized marches during which they carried portraits of Nazi accomplices from the OUN, the UIA and similar organizations, as well as the insignia of the Nazi Waffen-SS Division Galicia.¹⁵⁸⁸ In Lvov, young neo-Nazis organized a rally on the Hill of Glory, during which they displayed Nazi symbols and played a recording stylized as a Nazi occupiers' bulletins, while residents were laying flowers at the tombs of soldiers who had died in the war. The Ukrainian authorities were completely oblivious to all of such incidents¹⁵⁸⁹. In Kharkov, activists from the Freikorps¹⁵⁹⁰, the ATO Veterans Union, the Right Sector, and the Veterans' League for the Defense of Ukraine hung banners from three bridges, each bearing the provocative slogan: "Дякую діду за те, що давив московську гниду" ("Thank you, Grandad, for squashing the Muscovite nit").¹⁵⁹¹

In 2021, memorial events to mark Victory Day once again became the scene of fights and attacks carried out by radicals. Nationalists attacked a reporter from RT Ruptly news video agency after he had interviewed passers-by in a Ukrainian city about their attitudes towards Victory Day. In Odessa's Avenue of the Unknown Sailor, a fight broke out right in front of a camera operator of Strana.ua agency when nationalists tried to wrestle a portrait of G.K.Zhukov with a Saint George's ribbon attached to it from a woman who was holding it. The police did not try to arrest the attackers, but instead took the victim to the police station. Also in Odessa, police officers arrested a 63-year-old man who had come to Shevchenko Park wearing a Saint George's ribbon.¹⁵⁹² On May 10, 2021, the press service of

¹⁵⁸⁸ <https://ria.ru/20200509/1571213659.html>

¹⁵⁸⁹ <https://tass.ru/politika/8476375>

¹⁵⁹⁰ After World War I, the same name was used by right-wing volunteer units in Germany, many of whom later joined the Nazi party

¹⁵⁹¹ https://www.sq.com.ua/rus/news/novosti/09.05.2020/den_pobedy_natsionalisty_razvesili_po_harkovu_bannery_foto/

¹⁵⁹² <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/860361-ukraina-9-maya-zelenskii-napadeniya>

the Odessa Region police reported the initiation of criminal proceedings against a resident of the city who wore a forage cap with Soviet symbols during the celebration of Victory Day.

On May 9, 2022, in Kiev, official events to mark Victory Day were cancelled due to martial law. However, people were able to come to Park of Glory privately to lay flowers at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. There were far fewer people in Park of Glory than in previous years. On May 9, in Odessa, a 24-hour curfew, which lasted from 22:00 of May 8 until 05:00 of May 10, was declared. The same was done in Zaporozhye, under Kiev's control.

On 8 May 2023, Zelensky signed a decree according to which Ukraine will celebrate Europe Day on 9 May instead of the Day of Victory over Nazism in World War II.

Along with honouring Nazi accomplices, the Ukrainian authorities endeavour to demolish monuments to the Red Army soldiers. In addition to the local authorities, right-wing radicals are also involved in the "war" against monuments to the Red Army soldiers and victims of the tragic events of World War II, including those related to the Holocaust. Until 2022, Ukrainian law enforcement officers recorded and documented such cases in a unified register of prejudicial inquiries, yet the participants of these blasphemous actions had not been prosecuted.

In February 2020, in Odessa, nationalists removed the memorial plaque with a bas-relief of Marshal G.K.Zhukov from the wall of the Odessa I.I. Mechnikov National University dormitory, where, in the postwar years, the headquarters of the Odessa Military District, led by Zhukov in 1946-1948, was located. It was the last bas-relief of the Soviet commander in the city. The "activists" committed these actions with consent of the University administration.¹⁵⁹³

During the same month, in Odessa, vandals desecrated a memorial honouring the liberation of the city, located on April 10th Square¹⁵⁹⁴, while in

¹⁵⁹³ <https://ria.ru/20200204/1564239120.html>

¹⁵⁹⁴ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/721345-vandaly-oskvernili-memorial-odessa>

Kiev, two young men desecrated a monument to N.F.Vatutin in Mariinskyi Park by dousing it with antiseptic green dye.¹⁵⁹⁵ The monument to N.F.Vatutin is installed above the general's grave. The media initially reported that the police opened a criminal case under Article 297.3 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (vandalizing a grave or other burial place or a corpse).¹⁵⁹⁶ However, later, when the police detained only one vandal, he was charged with an offense under Article 296.2 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (hooliganism committed by a group of persons).¹⁵⁹⁷

In March 2020, unknown people damaged a monument to a Soviet soldier in the village of Nyrkov in Ternopol Region by chipping off his head and part of his arm. The law enforcement authorities opened criminal proceedings under part 2 of Article 297 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine.

In May 2020, in Slavyansk, on the eve of the anniversary of the Victory, nationalists desecrated a monument in Shelkovichny Park by painting a figure of the Soviet soldier next to the Victory Banner in the colours of the OUN flag. A monument installed on the mass grave of the soldiers who died liberating Ukraine from Nazi invaders was also damaged.¹⁵⁹⁸

On May 19-20, 2020, in Kharkov, the monument to G.K.Zhukov was attacked again: for two nights in a row, unknown persons doused it with red paint.¹⁵⁹⁹

On 12 January 2021, unknown persons desecrated the mass grave of soldiers-liberators of the Great Patriotic War in Kherson. The vandals smashed and fell to the ground 17 monuments in the memorial cemetery of this city.

On 13 January 2021, in the village of Yareski, Poltava Region, radicals desecrated a monument to Soviet soldiers who died in the Great Patriotic War and also damaged the foot of the monument.

¹⁵⁹⁵ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/716870-kiev-zelyonka-pamyatnik-vatutin>

¹⁵⁹⁶ <https://Kiev.npu.gov.ua/news/novini/u-stoliczi-speczpriznachenczi-zatrimali-molodika-za-poshkodzhennya-pam-yatnika>

¹⁵⁹⁷ <https://strana.ua/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html>

¹⁵⁹⁸ <https://russkiymir.ru/news/272570/>

¹⁵⁹⁹ <https://www.interfax.ru/world/709467>

On 23 March 2021 in Cherkasy, nationalists desecrated and damaged the memorial complex to internationalist soldiers on Shevchenko Boulevard.

On May 9, 2021, in Novyi Razdol and Sudovaya Vishnya (Lvov Region), vandals damaged the monument to the Red Army soldiers.

In Lvov, the Monument of Military Glory of the Armed Forces of the USSR was demolished by July 2021. The figures of the Soviet soldier and the Motherland were the last to be dismantled. According to the media, all parts of the monument were sent to the Terror Territory Museum. The authorities planned to create a square in memory of Ukrainian heroes on the site of the former monument.¹⁶⁰⁰

The Monument of Glory of the Soviet Armed Forces was installed in Lvov's Central Park of Culture and Recreation in 1970. It was an ensemble of a 30-metre high stele, a massive wall with figures of Soviet army soldiers and two central sculptures symbolising a soldier and Motherland.

On August 18, 2021, the authorities of Drohobych (Lvov Region) initiated the dismantling of the Eternal Flame memorial installed on the mass grave of the Red Army soldiers who died liberating Western Ukraine from the Nazis.

On 30 September 2021 in Kolomyia (Ivano-Frankovsk region), a monument was demolished from the mass grave of Red Army soldiers by local authorities. Several tombstones with the names of the buried were broken.

On 19 October 2021, in Vladimir, Volyn region, in the central alley of Lodomir cemetery, nationalists desecrated and damaged a monument on the mass grave of Soviet soldiers. Earlier in the same alley, vandals vandalised the monument on the mass grave of soldiers who died during the First World War.¹⁶⁰¹

On October 22, 2021, in Poltava, vandals smashed a memorial plaque in honour of F.Kiva, the Hero of the Soviet Union.

On 25-27 October 2021, by decision of the Executive Committee of Lvov City Council, the central element of the memorial-burial ground "Marsovo Pole" – a large-scale replica of the Medal of the Patriotic War – was dismantled under the

¹⁶⁰⁰ https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2021/07/24/n_16288910.shtml

¹⁶⁰¹ Online environment as an instrument of violations of rights and freedoms in Ukraine. Institute of Legal Policy and Social Defence named after I. Berezhnaya. 2022.

pretext of "renovation, renewal and rethinking of the space around the Lychakov Military Cemetery".

On 2 November 2021, in Dergachy (Kharkov region), the monument to the fallen soldiers of the Great Patriotic War was desecrated and the granite monument to the Chekist soldiers of the 227th NKVD regiment who died in the defence of Kiev was demolished.

On November 5, 2021, in Zubra (Lvov Region), extremists from the Society of the Future (S14) group damaged a memorial at the burial site of Soviet soldiers.

On the night of March 15, 2022, in Fontanka near Odessa, malefactors destroyed a monument to the Cheka soldiers who defended the city from Nazi invaders in 1941.

On April 11, 2022, in Mukachevo (Zakarpatskye Region), the monument to the Soviet T-34 tank was dismantled. On the same day, in Stryi, Lvov Region, the stele to the Soviet soldier was dismantled with the help of special equipment.

On April 14, 2022, in Ternopol, the monument to the Soviet MIG-17 plane, located at the entrance to the National Renaissance Park on the "Eastern" massive, was dismantled.

On April 16, 2022, in Zdolbunov (Rovno Region), the monument to the Hero of the Soviet Union, partisan N.T. Prikhodko, was bulldozed.

On April 17, 2022, in Kharkov, militants from the local Kraken armed group demolished the monument to the Soviet commander G.K. Zhukov.

On 19 April 2022, in Mukachevo (Zakarpatskye region), an obelisk of glory in honour of soldiers who died during the Great Patriotic War was dismantled in compliance with the decision of the executive committee "On the dismantling of historical and monumental monuments". According to the local authorities, those buried in the graves will be reburied. On the same day, a monument to the Soviet Soldier was demolished in Kremenets (Ternopol region).

On 21 April 2022 in Chernigov, Ukrainian vandals destroyed a monument to Hero of the Soviet Union Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya. On the same day in

Chernivtsi, the sculpture "Red Army Men in Battle" was demolished, and the Eternal Flame memorial was dismantled in a park in Drohobych (Lvov region).

On April 29, 2022, in Rovno, a monument erected on the grave of a division commander M.M.Bogomolov, a hero of the Civil War, was demolished. In addition, the plaques with the names of the Heroes of the Great Patriotic War were destroyed in the city.

In May 2022, in Dnieper (Dnepropetrovsk), a campaign was launched to destroy objects linked to the Soviet past. Among the first to be dismantled was the Zhukov Square stele on Victory Boulevard. A total of 13 monuments fell under demolition.

In the same month, in Zaporozhye, a monument to Soviet pilots – a pedestal-mounted La-5 fighter plane, which took part in air battles of the Great Patriotic War, was demolished on Shevchenko Boulevard.

On May 4, 2022, in Rovno, the monument to the legendary Soviet intelligence officer, the Hero of the Soviet Union N.I.Kuznetsov, who personally eliminated 11 generals and high-ranking officials of the Nazi occupation administration during the war, was demolished.

On 5 May 2022, the authorities of Zhitomir removed a T-34 tank from the pedestal of the monument erected in honour of the Red Army soldiers on Victory Square.¹⁶⁰²

On 8 May 2022 in Dolgoye village (Zakarpatskye region) they dismantled the monument to 14-year-old Soviet pioneer-hero, partisan scout Valya Kotik. On the same day in Uzhgorod, local authorities decided to demolish the monument to the Soldier-Liberator.

On 13 May 2022, in Chervonograd (Lvov region), the monument to the Soviet soldier was dismantled from the Eternal Flame memorial complex.

On May 18, 2022, in Pustomyty, Lvov Region, a monument to the Red Army soldiers who liberated the city from the Nazis was demolished.

¹⁶⁰² https://lenta.ru/articles/2023/01/19/pamyatniki_ua/

On May 19, 2022, the Verkhovina village council in Lvov Region decided to demolish monuments to the Red Army soldiers in the villages of Verkhovina, Iltsi, Verkhniy Yasenev and Krasnik.

On May 20, 2022, the Lvov Regional Council initiated the demolition of all the monuments to the Red Army soldiers, who liberated the region from the Nazi invaders, on its territory.

On May 30, 2022, in Brovary, Kiev Region, the dismantling of three Soviet memorial sites in Victory Park began. A monument to Soviet MiG-15 fighter jet, which was also produced in Ukraine, is among them.

At the same time, in Svaliava (Zakarpatskye Region), a star from a monument to the Soviet soldiers was dismantled. In Zalizhchyky (Ternopol Region), a monument to the Soviet tankers was destroyed. In Zbarazh District of Ternopol Region, a monument to Sidor Kovpak partisans was demolished. In Iltsi, Verkhovina District of Ivano-Frankovsk Region, a monument to the Soviet soldier was destroyed. In Borislav (Lvov Region), local authorities decided to dismantle the monument to the Soviet soldier. In Rakhov (Zakarpatskye Region), vandals doused the monument in honour of the Red Army soldiers with red paint. After a few days, the monument was demolished. In Rovno, the monument to the Budyonny cavalrymen was destroyed. In Yasinia (Zakarpatskye Region), a monument dedicated to the Soviet soldier was also destroyed. In Kapustyany (Khmelnitskyi Region), the bust of N.F. Vatutin was dismantled.

On June 2, 2022, in Odessa, a monument, erected in front of School No. 56 on Tenistaya Street, representing Soviet anti-aircraft gun 52-K, which was used to defend the city from the Nazis during World War II, was demolished. In addition, in early June, in Mazurovo, Krivoozerskyi District of Nikolayev Region, a monument to V.I.Chapayev was demolished and the Soviet order replica was dismantled. In Naroditskaya District of Zhitomir Region, Soviet symbols were stripped from the plaque with the names of the Red Army soldiers. In Karlovka, Poltava Region, a mosaic with sickle and hammer was dismantled. In Rovno, the bust of Gulya Koroleva, a Soviet actress and a sanitary instructor during the Great

Patriotic War, was dismantled. In Korsun, Cherkasy Region, memorial plaques with the names of the Heroes of the Soviet Union were dismantled.

On June 3, 2022, in Krivoi Rog (Dnepropetrovsk Region), vandals taped up the memorial plaque to N.F.Vatutin with an information leaflet in honour of R.Shukhevich. Also, the street sign (Nikolai Vatutin Street) was taped up with a leaflet "Roman Shukhevich Street".

On the same day, in Rovno, a monument to the Red Army soldiers was dismantled.

In June 2022, in Busk (Lvov Region), a monument to the Soviet soldier was demolished. In Chernivtsi, vandals doused the monument to those who liberated Bukovina from Nazi invaders with red paint, calling this action an "art installation". In Glukhov (Sumy Region), Soviet symbols were dismantled from the memorial to the Red Army soldiers. In June, the monuments to the Red Army soldiers who died liberating Ukraine from the Nazis were also demolished in Rava-Russkaya (Lvov Region), Berezhany (Ternopol Region), Torgovitsa (Zakarpattya Region), Zhdenevo urban community of Zakarpattia Region, Shumsk (Ternopol Region), Borislav (Lvov Region), Urezh (Lvov Region), Gukalevtsy (Ternopol Region), Rozhniatov (Ivano-Frankovsk Region). In Kiev, memorial plaques to Nikolai Gastello, Sidor Kovpak, Feodora Pushina, Pavel Ribalko and Ivan Sergienko were dismantled.

In Lvov, near the Medical University, a plaque was dismantled from the monument to military medics who worked during the Great Patriotic War .

In Kamenets-Podolskyi, Khmelnytskyi Region, a Soviet T-34 tank was dismantled from its pedestal.

In Uzhgorod, the second memorial plaque to Ivan Ankudinov, the Great Patriotic War veteran and the Hero of the Soviet Union, was dismantled.

In Kropovnytskyi (formerly Kirovograd), the memorial plaque to Semyon Budyonny was removed.

In Privolna urban community of Volyn Region, a monument to Members of the Secret Service (Chekists) was dismantled.

In Podobna, Cherkasy Region, the bust of Nikolai Shchors was demolished.

In Rovno, the pedestal of the monument to the participant of the First World War and the Russian Civil War Oleko Dundich was dismantled. Earlier, vandals had damaged the monument by ripping off the sculpture's head. Then the remains of Oleko Dundich were reburied – they were transferred from the city centre to the local cemetery.

On 10 August 2022, the Executive Committee of the Chernovtsy City Council decided to dismantle some of the Soviet monuments in the city centre, including the mass grave of Red Army generals and officers, the monument "Warrior with a Machine Gun" and Guards Lieutenant Nikitin's T-34 tank, and relocate them to Odessa Street.¹⁶⁰³

On August 19, 2022, in Lvov, the local City Council decided to dig out and transfer the remains of the Soviet soldiers, who had died during the Great Patriotic War and had been buried at the Field of Mars military memorial.

On 19 October 2022 in Nikolaev, after a failed attempt to demolish it, they blew up the monument to the police officers of the Nikolaev region who had died in the Great Patriotic War while on duty.

On 3 November 2022, unknown persons blew up in Nikolaev the obelisk "Motherland", which was located in Mourning Mother Square as part of a mass grave memorial.

On 9 November 2022, in Uzhgorod, the monument "Ukraine for the Liberators", a state cultural heritage site, was barbarically destroyed. The monument in the form of a bronze statue of a soldier with a rifle and a banner was erected in 1970 on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War.¹⁶⁰⁴

On 26 November 2022, it was announced that in Khmelnytsky, at the intersection of Svobody and Proskurovska streets, the Soviet monument to the T-34 tank had been dismantled. The tank was erected in 1967 in honour of the

¹⁶⁰³ <https://ria.ru/20220810/pamyatniki-1808630229.html>

¹⁶⁰⁴ <https://www.mk.ru/social/2022/12/02/ot-pushkina-do-suvorova-skolko-pamyatnikov-uzhe-snesli-na-ukraine.html>

military units that liberated the city from the Nazi invaders. In a social media post, Mayor Simchishin wrote that the tank was in its own way "a unique historical exhibit that no longer exists", so it would be a museum piece that and a reminder of the "occupation past".¹⁶⁰⁵

On 16 December 2022, in Dnepr (formerly Dnepropetrovsk), a monument to pioneer Volodya Dubinin, who was a member of a partisan detachment near Kerch during the Great Patriotic War, was demolished.

On 25 December 2022, the monuments to two Soviet generals of the Great Patriotic War – Nikolai Vatutin and Alexei Zygin – were covered in red paint in Poltava. Both died during the war on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR. In July 2023, the monument to General Vatutin was demolished. On 27 July 2023, Irina Gerashchenko, a member of the Verkhovnaya Rada from the European Solidarity Party, published photos on her Telegram channel showing that the monument to General Vatutin had already been stacked on the platform of a lorry together with the demolished monument to the poet Alexander Pushkin.¹⁶⁰⁶

In January 2023, the monument to the Hero of the Soviet Union Alexander Matrosov was dismantled in Dnipro and the Soviet T-34 tank, erected in honour of General Yefim Pushkin, the defender of the city, was removed from its pedestal.¹⁶⁰⁷ Also removed were a sign commemorating students and teachers who died during the Great Patriotic War in the city of Uman, Cherkasy Region; a monument to Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya in the city of Novovolynsk, Volyn Region; a memorial plaque to Soviet soldier Vladimir Pachulia and Heroes of the Soviet Union Stepan Artamonov in Iziium, Kharkov Region, Serafim Zemlyanov in the town of Kolomye, Ivano-Frankovsk Region, a memorial plaque to Marshal Georgi Zhukov in Iziium, Kharkov Region, and a portrait sculpture of Hero of the Soviet Union Nikolai Gastello in Trapovka, Odessa Region. At the Hill of Glory memorial in Uzhgorod, the image of a Soviet soldier was dismantled and all the Soviet stars on the concrete graves were plastered over. In Mostiska, Lvov Region,

¹⁶⁰⁵ <https://ria.ru/20221126/pamyatnik-1834477083.html?in=t>

¹⁶⁰⁶ <https://eodaily.com/ru/news/2023/07/27/derusifikaciya-na-ukraine-v-poltave-snesli-pamyatniki-pushkinu-i-vatutinu>

¹⁶⁰⁷ <https://www.svoboda.org/a/v-dnepre-snesli-pamyatnik-aleksandru-matrosovu-raboty-vucheticha/32207478.html>

it was decided to move the cemetery of Soviet soldiers from the centre of the town to the outskirts.¹⁶⁰⁸

In February 2023, the bust of Hero of the Soviet Union General Nikolai Vatutin in the village of Hetmanovka, Kharkov region, the monuments to Heroes of the Soviet Union Valeri Chkalov and Nikolai Vatutin in Kiev, and the Soviet star on the eternal flame in the centre of the town of Beregovo, Transcarpathia region, were dismantled.

In March 2023, wall carvings and monuments to the Soviet soldier, were dismantled in the town of Turka, the settlements of Medenichi, Strelki, Suliatichi, Popovka and Opory in Lvov Region, in the villages of Stanishovka, Kiev Region, Dolina, Ivano-Frankovsk Region, Turia Paseka, Turya Remety and Turytsa in the Transcarpathia Region, a stained glass window depicting Soviet soldiers in Uzhgorod, and a bust of Hero of the Soviet Union Vasily Sidorov in Kostopol, Rovno Region.

In April 2023, monuments to Soviet soldiers and those who died during the Great Patriotic War were dismantled or damaged in Veliatino village, Transcarpathia Region, Vladimir, Volyn Region, Voloshcha, Voloscha, Malnov, Beregovoye, Krasnoye, Lvov region, Nadvornaya, Ivano-Frankovsk Region. In Podgaytsy, Ternopol Region, it was decided to exhume the bodies of Soviet soldiers in order to move the monument to Soviet soldiers: Hero of the Soviet Union, Major Yakov Toporkov and Captain Zubkov.¹⁶⁰⁹

In May 2023, monuments and memorial plaques commemorating the feat of arms of Soviet soldiers and the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War were demolished in Kharkov, Putivl, Sumy Region, the village of Velykyi Khodachkov, Ternopol Region, and more than ten villages and towns in Transcarpathia Region, as well as two dozen settlements in the Lvov Region. In the town of Svalyava, Yasinya and Dolgoe villages, Transcarpathia Region, it was decided to remove the

¹⁶⁰⁸ <https://zahid.espreso.tv/u-mostiskakh-na-lvivshchini-kladovishche-radyanskikh-soldativ-perenesut-z-tsentru-mista>

¹⁶⁰⁹ <https://zahid.espreso.tv/na-ternopilshchini-eksgumuyut-tila-radyanskikh-soldativ-shchob-perenesti-pamyatnik>

memorial graves, exhume the remains of the Red Army soldiers and transfer them to the cemetery.¹⁶¹⁰

On 8 May 2023, the Eternal Flame, a symbol of the eternal memory of the soldiers who fell in the Great Patriotic War, was extinguished in Poltava.¹⁶¹¹

On 14 June 2023, monuments to the heroes of the Great Patriotic War were reportedly demolished in the village of Shchirets, the villages of Bolotnya and Velykoe Kolodno in the Lvov region. Two monuments were demolished in the villages of Selets and Tysmenichany in the Ivano-Frankovsk Region. In two other villages in the region – Maidan and Pavlovka – references to the Great Patriotic War have been completely erased from monuments. One monument each was destroyed in the settlements of Velikie Gai in the Ternopol Region and Veliatino, Transcarpathia. In addition, plans to demolish another monument with reburial of Soviet soldiers who were killed during the Great Patriotic War were announced in Rakhov, Transcarpathia Region.¹⁶¹²

On 21 June 2023, on the eve of the anniversary of Hitler's Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, the destruction of monuments to Red Army soldiers in the villages of Zhukov, Remezovtsy and Polyany in the Zolochev district of the Lvov region became known.¹⁶¹³

On 23 June 2023, a monument to Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya was demolished in Kiev. At the same time, Ukrainian social networks began to spread the message that it was time to demolish the monuments to the writers Pushkin and Bulgakov, the head of a Red Army division during the civil war, Nikolai Shchors, and the hero of the Soviet Union, General Mikhail Kirponos.¹⁶¹⁴

On another anniversary of the start of the Great Patriotic War in western Ukraine, monuments to Red Army soldiers were destroyed in the villages of

¹⁶¹⁰ http://www.mukachevo.net/ua/news/view/5054113?fbclid=IwAR22xvNpaAgxkqk058hno22om8YS_wG5FKMo_qgP_ulnGU1Fh0ewdAS_4v6s

¹⁶¹¹ <https://zmist.pl.ua/news/vichnyj-vogon-u-poltavi-zagasyly>

¹⁶¹² <https://iz.ru/1528472/2023-06-14/neskolko-pamiatnikov-geroiam-vov-snesli-na-zapadnoi-ukraine-za-sutki>

¹⁶¹³ <https://iz.ru/1532770/2023-06-22/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-za-sutki-demontirovali-tri-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam>

¹⁶¹⁴ <https://iz.ru/1533611/2023-06-23/v-kieve-snesli-pamiatnik-zoe-kosmodemianskoi>

Varyazh, Staroye Selo, Stenyatin, Peretoki and Chishki in the Lvov region, and Ushomir in the Zhytomir Region.¹⁶¹⁵

On 29 June 2023, two monuments to Red Army soldiers were destroyed in the villages of Kavskoe and Lisyatichi in the Lvov Region. On this occasion, the head of the regional military administration, Maksim Kozitsky, announced his intention to 'completely rid the Lvov region of the traces of Soviet propaganda'.¹⁶¹⁶

In July 2023, around 30 monuments to Red Army fighters were demolished in the Lvov region alone. On 15 July, Mayor of Lvov, Andrei Sadovy, announced that the monument to the Soviet liberators in Vinniki had been demolished.¹⁶¹⁷ On 16 July, a monument to Red Army soldiers was demolished in the village of Podorozhne, Stryi district.¹⁶¹⁸ On 17 July, monuments in the villages of Buyanov, Lipovtsy, Lopushanka, Pomoryany¹⁶¹⁹, Zavodskoye and Podgaichiki were destroyed.¹⁶²⁰ On 19 July, memorials to Red Army soldiers in the villages of Veliky Luben, Gliniany, Kutishche, Mikhalevichi and Palikorovy were destroyed.¹⁶²¹ On 20 July, monuments to Red Army soldiers in the villages of Krinitza, Solonskoye and Fusov were destroyed.¹⁶²² On 21 July, reports appeared online of the demolition of monuments to Soviet soldiers in 9 other towns in the region (Brody, Orechovich, Podkamen, Ponikovitsa, Rudniki, Semignov, Skelevka, Sukhovolia).¹⁶²³ On 25 July, monuments to Red Army soldiers in the villages of Pogortsy and Suslov, Lvov Region. The monuments were destroyed and taken away piece by piece.¹⁶²⁴

In August 2023, the coat of arms of the USSR was removed from the shield of the monument "Motherland", erected in 1981 on the territory of the National

¹⁶¹⁵ <https://iz.ru/1533362/2023-06-23/na-zapade-ukrainy-snesli-shest-pamiatnikov-sovetskim-soldatam-za-sutki>

¹⁶¹⁶ <https://iz.ru/1536745/2023-06-29/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-eshche-dva-sovetskich-pamiatnika>

¹⁶¹⁷ <https://iz.ru/1544699/2023-07-15/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-pamiatnik-sovetskomu-voinu-osvoboditeliu>

¹⁶¹⁸ <https://iz.ru/1544850/2023-07-16/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-snesli-eshche-odin-sovetskii-pamiatnik>

¹⁶¹⁹ <https://iz.ru/1546230/2023-07-19/chetyre-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam-snesli-za-sutki-vo-lvovskoi-oblasti>

¹⁶²⁰ <https://iz.ru/1545688/2023-07-18/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-za-sutki-snesli-dva-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam>

¹⁶²¹ <https://iz.ru/1546803/2023-07-20/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-za-sutki-demontirovali-piat-pamiatnikov-sovetskim-soldatam>

¹⁶²² <https://iz.ru/1547327/2023-07-21/tri-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam-demontirovali-za-sutki-vo-lvovskoi-oblasti>

¹⁶²³ <https://iz.ru/1547881/2023-07-22/devyat-pamiatnikov-demontirovali-za-sutki-vo-lvovskoi-oblasti>

¹⁶²⁴ <https://iz.ru/1549481/2023-07-25/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-dva-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam>

Museum of the History of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 in Kiev. The Ukrainian trident was installed in its place.¹⁶²⁵

On 29 August 2023 it was announced that the monument erected in Shevchenko Park in honour of the Heroes of the Soviet Union Major General Fyodor Bobrov and Colonel Lavrenti Voloshyn and other officers of the Red Army had been demolished by decision of the Chernovtsy city authorities. The graves were moved to another place. The decision to rebury the remains of Soviet soldiers and demolish the monument was taken in April 2023. According to Mayor Roman Klichuk, it was the last Soviet monument in the regional centre.¹⁶²⁶

On 6 September 2023, it emerged that monuments to Soviet soldiers in Dobrosin, Velykyi Luben, Magerov and Koropuzh, Lvov Region, had been demolished.¹⁶²⁷

The radicals attacked not only memorials honouring the Red Army soldiers who fought the Nazis and Ukrainian nationalists, but also monuments dedicated to the representatives of Russian culture and great figures of the Russian Empire.

It should be noted that the fight against monuments in Ukraine began long before the 2014 coup, when the 'struggle' entered its most acute and active phase, apart from the current one. As early as the 1990s, the country began demolishing monuments to Lenin. In the first decade after the collapse of the USSR, more than 2,000 such monuments were destroyed in Ukraine, mainly in its western part. Then, at the turn of the 1990s and 2000s, more than 600 Lenin monuments were dismantled in the western and central regions, and in 2005-2008, more than 600 monuments were removed, mainly in the central parts of the country. Another wave of demolitions in 2013-2014 began with an attack by "activists" of the so-called Euromaidan on the Lenin monument in Bessarabskaya Square. In total, 552 monuments were destroyed.¹⁶²⁸

Following the launch of the "decommunisation" process by then Ukrainian President Petr Poroshenko on 15 May 2015, which aimed to get rid of all

¹⁶²⁵ <https://ria.ru/20230806/ukraina-1888424397.html>

¹⁶²⁶ <https://ria.ru/20230829/pamyatnik-1893014729.html>

¹⁶²⁷ <https://life.ru/p/1605695>

¹⁶²⁸ https://riafan.ru/23789952-hronika_voini_s_pamyatnikami_na_ukraine

communist monuments except those dedicated to the Great Patriotic War, there came a new series of monument demolitions. In less than two years, on 16 January 2017, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UINM) announced that 1320 monuments to Lenin had been removed.

In addition to the demolition of monuments, the "decommunisation" from the outset meant, above all, that settlements and streets would be renamed, and memorials and images associated with the Soviet past would be dismantled.

According to official records, in six years (from 2015 to 2021) 52,000 place names were changed, 987 villages, towns and cities have been renamed and more than 2,500 Soviet-era monuments were taken down.

There have been cases where place names have been renamed in honour of Nazi collaborators, Holocaust perpetrators and terrorists. For example, in November 2019, the Kiev City Council renamed two streets in honour of Nazi collaborators Ivan Pavlenko, commander of the 109th battalion of the SS auxiliary police, and Nil Hasevich, an active participant in the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists, organiser and participant in the mass murders of Jews, Ukrainians, Belarusians, including women and children, in the cities of Belaya Tserkov, Vinnitsa, Zhitomir, as well as on the territory of Belarus. The head of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee, E.Dolinsky, expressed outrage at these blasphemous acts.¹⁶²⁹ Later in October, Kiev City Council also decided to rename a street in honour of Amina Okuyeva, a sniper and spokeswoman for the Dzhokhar Dudayev Battalion, a paramilitary unit that fought on the side of Ukrainian security forces in Donbass.¹⁶³⁰

In February 2021 it was reported that Kiev City Council had appealed against a ruling of the Kiev District Administrative Court cancelling the city authorities' decision to rename Moskovsky Avenue as Stepan Bandera Avenue,

¹⁶²⁹ <https://ukraina.ru/20230421/1045528163.html?ysclid=lmgnybvmz65187943>

¹⁶³⁰ <https://vz.ru/news/2019/11/13/1008211.html>

and General Vatutin Avenue as Roman Shukhevych Avenue.¹⁶³¹ In April 2021 the Sixth Administrative Appeals Court ruled that the renaming was lawful.¹⁶³²

At the end of May 2021 the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory drew up a list of 26 sites in Kiev that remained to be decommunised. Among these were the Motherland monument – the figure still bears the crest of the USSR on her shield, the equestrian monument to Nikolai Shchors on Boulevard Shevchenko, the sculptures under the Arch of the Friendship of Peoples, and the bust of Vladimir Lenin at Teatralnaya metro station.¹⁶³³ In September 2023, the sculpture of the worker was demolished, the USSR emblem on the shield of the "Motherland" monument was replaced by the Ukrainian "trident", and the monument to Nikolai Shchors was removed from the Ukrainian State Register of National Cultural Heritage, paving the way for its subsequent demolition.

The Verkhovna Rada provoked a new wave of renaming in 2022 by starting to consider a draft law that would ban geographical names in Ukraine related to Russia, its history and prominent personalities. On 29 December 2022, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory and the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture reported that 7,652 place names across the country had been changed in the past year as part of "derusification (decolonisation)".¹⁶³⁴

In early January 2023, the Ukrainian authorities continued their "derusification", introducing a bill to the Verkhovna Rada to legalise the fight against "hundreds of Pushkin street names" and "reduce the influence of Russian narratives". This was announced by Minister of Culture Alexander Tkachenko on 4 January. The law is designed to allow the Ukrainian authorities to quickly rename streets with Russian names and demolish monuments to Russian figures.¹⁶³⁵

On 27 July 2023, this law, passed by the Verkhovna Rada on 21 March 2023 under the title "On Condemnation and Prohibition of Propaganda of Russian

¹⁶³¹ <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/722799.html>

¹⁶³² <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/739447.html>

¹⁶³³ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/11504093>

¹⁶³⁴ <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/mkip-ta-uinp-pidbyly-pidsumky-za-rik-shchodo-podolannya-naslidkiv-rusyfikaciyi-y-totalitaryzmu>

¹⁶³⁵ <https://iz.ru/1450760/2023-01-05/na-ukraine-reshili-uzakonit-derusifikaciiu-radi-borby-s-pushkinym>

Imperial Policy in Ukraine and Decolonisation of Place Names", came into force.

Within six months of this date, by 27 January 2024, local governments and military administrations are required to rid public space of "symbols of the Russian world": remove monuments and memorial signs, rename streets and other objects.

On 3 August 2023, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory published the first list of 183 places to be renamed in accordance with the adopted law.

Kiev attacked not only sculptures of political figures, but also religious symbols. On 25 May 2014, a monument to Vladimir the Great, the Baptist of Kievan Rus, was desecrated and damaged on the embankment near Pochtovaya Square in Kiev. The guilty were not found. In March 2017, Kiev's oldest sculptural monument to this historical figure, erected in 1853, was also attacked. Unknown assailants poured red paint on the statue of Vladimir the Great.¹⁶³⁶

One of the "trends" of 2022 was the declaration of a personal war on the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin by the fighters against the "Russian past", on the grounds that Russian literature was allegedly a conductor of imperial ideas, and that Pushkin himself, in his poem "Poltava", negatively portrayed the hetman Ivan Mazepa, who betrayed Peter the Great and went to serve the Swedes. As of 8 December 2022, around 30 monuments to the Russian poet have been dismantled across Ukraine in the first 11 months of 2022 alone.¹⁶³⁷ In some cases, the situation reached the point of absurdity. In the village of Pushkino, Transcarpathian region, the local authorities considered renaming the village after the destruction of the monument to the great poet.¹⁶³⁸

On February 3, 2022, in Poltava, the monument to the Russian commander Alexander Suvorov was demolished. The justification was that it was "not a monument of history, art, culture, architecture, urban planning, science and technology" and had "elements of Soviet propaganda".

The monument originally stood in the courtyard of the Kiev Suvorov Military School (renamed to Ivan Bogun Military High School in 1992). In

¹⁶³⁶ <https://ria.ru/20220627/vandaly-1797851444.html>

¹⁶³⁷ https://riafan.ru/23789952-hronika_voini_s_pamyatnikami_na_ukraine

¹⁶³⁸ <https://www.mk.ru/social/2022/12/02/ot-pushkina-do-suvorova-skolko-pamyatnikov-uzhe-snesli-na-ukraine.html>

January 2019, the monument was dismantled following the initiative of the High Schools's directorate and with the support of the Deputy Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kirilenko and the head of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory Vladimir Vyatrovich. Later, the monument to Alexander Suvorov was put on display at the Poltava Museum of Heavy Bomber Aviation, which is a branch of the National Museum of Military History.

On April 7, 2022, in Mukachevo, Transcarpathian Region, the monument-bust to Alexander Pushkin was dismantled and the memorial plaque to the school that bore his name was removed. The decision was made by the local authorities.

On April 9, 2022, the Ternopol authorities decided to dismantle the monument to Alexander Pushkin. In justifying this decision, Mayor Nadal stated that "everything Russian should be dismantled, including the monument to the Russian writer".

On April 10, 2022, by decision of the Uzhgorod authorities, a monument to the Russian poet was dismantled.

On 29 April 2022, the monument to writer Maxim Gorky in the Nikolai Leontovich Central Park was demolished.

On 30 April 2022 in Cherkassy, the authorities decided to burn off with a blowtorch the inscription on the monument to Bogdan Khmelnytsky calling for a reunification of Ukraine with Russia, which had been there for years.

On the same day in Chernigov, the 119th Territorial Defence Brigade demolished a 121-year-old monument to Alexander Pushkin in one of the city's parks.

On May 1, 2022, in Sumy, it was reported that the monument to the Sumy hussars had been destroyed. The only reason radicals were not pleased with them was that they had represented the Imperial Russian Army.

On the same day in Odessa, the "Glory to Russian Arms" plaque was removed from the 1904 monument. The plaque was on a trophy cannon removed from a British warship during the Crimean War (in 1853-1856).

On 7 May 2022, in Korosten (Zhitomir Region), "activists" felled a Soviet monument to Komsomol members, which the local authorities had previously renamed "Korosten Youth of the XX century".

On 10 May 2022 in Dnepr (former Dnepropetrovsk) on Sobornaya Square, a monument to Komsomol members – a young man and a woman planting a tree – was dismantled. The inscription on the monument read: "Legends will tell how we were".

On 11 May 2022, the Chernigov Region decided to disassemble the monument "Three Sisters" erected in August 1975 at the junction of the borders of the Chernigov, Gomel and Bryansk Regions in honour of the friendship between the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The dismantling of the monument is under way.

On May 16, 2022, in Leventsovka, Poltava Region, a bust of Maxim Gorky was dismantled. It was transferred to the "Soviet Period Park" in Putivl. Also, by decision of the executive committee of the Kozelshchina village council, Kremenchug District, the operation of the Maxim Gorky Museum in Manuylovka was suspended.

In mid-May, it was reported that in Kegichevka, Kharkov Region, yet another monument to Maxim Gorky had been demolished. In Kharkov, a monument to the Russian Prince Alexander Nevsky, erected near an Orthodox church named in honour of the revered saint, was also destroyed.

On May 19, 2022, the authorities of Pereiaslavl, Kiev Region, decided to demolish the monument in honour of reunification with Russia.

On May 21, 2022, in Nikolayev, the monument to Alexander Pushkin, which had been installed in the square at the intersection of Pushkinskaya and Naberezhnaya Streets, was removed from its pedestal.

In late May 2022, in Aleksandriia, Kirovograd Region, the Maxim Gorky School and Dnepropetrovsk Highway were renamed. The bust of Maxim Gorky is also going to be dismantled. The monument to the writer was also demolished in Golozubentsy, Khmelnytsky Region. And in Karlovka, Poltava Region, a bust to

the Soviet state official Nikolay Podgorny, a native of Poltavshchina, was dismantled. In Dnepr (former Dnepropetrovsk), a monument and memorial plaques installed in honour of the famous Soviet doctor N.A.Semashko were demolished.

In the same period, a number of memorial sites were attacked by vandals. In Kharkov, the bust of Yevdokim Shcherbinin, the head of Sloboda Ukraine Governorate, was doused with paint. And on 29 May, in Izmail (Odessa Region), a monument to Alexander Suvorov was doused with red paint.

The surviving monuments to communist figures in Ukraine have also been targeted in the "fight" against Russian and Soviet heritage. In late May 2022, in Khotin, Chernovtsi Region, a bust of Karl Marx, was demolished.

On May 2, 2022, in Chernigov, the monument to Alexander Pushkin was destroyed by the territorial defence soldiers.

On 18 May 2022, in the village of Kegichevka in the south of the Kharkov Region, the main local landmark – a monument to Maxim Gorky – was demolished.¹⁶³⁹

On June 3, 2022, in Kiev, a memorial plaque to Leo Tolstoy was dismantled.

In June 2022, the Khmelnytskyi Regional Council decided to demolish the monument to writer N.A.Ostrovsky in Shepetivka.

On June 29, 2022, in Boiarka, Kiev Region, the monument to Nikolai Ostrovsky was dismantled.

On 13 August 2022, in Alexandria, Kirovograd region, an excavator crushed and demolished a monument to Maxim Gorky.

On 15 August 2022, a memorial plaque to Russian writer Mikhail Bulgakov, a native of Kiev, was removed from the facade of Kiev National University named after Taras Shevchenko.

On 11 October 2022, the oldest monument to Alexander Pushkin, erected in front of National Transport University in 1899, was dismantled in Kiev.

On 30 October 2022, offensive messages were painted on the monument to the Russian Empress Catherine II in Odessa, calling on Mayor Trukhanov to

¹⁶³⁹ https://lenta.ru/articles/2023/01/19/pamyatniki_ua/

demolish the monument. On 2 November 2022, offenders put a red bag over the monument, wrapped a rope with a noose around a hand, and doused the pedestal with red paint.

On 7 November 2022 unknown persons hung noose from the monument to Commander Alexander Suvorov in Odessa. On 8 November 2022, it was marked with the inscription "Nastupniy" (Ukr. "Next").

On 10 November 2022, the monument to the writer Nikolai Gogol in Kharkov was covered with sandbags. Earlier in the city, a bust of Alexander Pushkin was dismantled in Poetry Square. First it was also barricaded with sandbags, and then removed.¹⁶⁴⁰

On 10 November, 2022, in Odessa, unknown people painted inscriptions on the sculpture of A.S. Pushkin, installed on the street of the same name. The word "get" (translated from Ukrainian as "out") was written on all sides of the monument.¹⁶⁴¹

On 11 November, 2022, a monument to A.S. Pushkin, which was installed at the end of the 19th century, was demolished in the centre of Zhitomir. The head of the city administration, S. Sukhomlin, said that in the future the monument might be placed in a museum or it might be offered to Russia in exchange for Ukrainian prisoners of war.¹⁶⁴²

On the same day it became known that busts of writer Maxim Gorky, scientist D.I.Mendeleev, poet A.S.Pushkin and scientist M.V.Lomonosov at the Kiev metro station "University" were covered with boards (in total, busts of eight prominent figures of science and culture were placed on the pylons in the central hall of the station opened in 1960). Next to it is the Kiev National University named after T.Shevchenko.¹⁶⁴³

¹⁶⁴⁰ <https://ria.ru/20221110/pamyatnik-1830499944.html?in=t>

¹⁶⁴¹ <https://ria.ru/20221110/pamyatnik-1830551444.html?in=t>

¹⁶⁴² <https://radiosputnik.ria.ru/20221111/zhitomir-1830770172.html>

¹⁶⁴³ <https://ria.ru/20221111/kiiev-1830880339.html>

On 13 November, 2022, a bust of the writer was dismantled on the territory of the Maksim Gorky sanatorium in Odessa. The decision was made by the management of the facility.¹⁶⁴⁴

On 17 November, 2022, the monument to A.S. Pushkin was dismantled in Chernivtsi. This was announced by the city council on its page in social networks, stating this "news" in a mocking form: "Did you know that in Chernivtsi there were two monuments to "the great Russian poet Pushkin"? Exactly there were, as we have already dismantled one. The second one is a matter of time".¹⁶⁴⁵

On 18 November, 2022, the monument to A.S.Pushkin was desecrated again in Odessa. A yellow bag was put on the head of the bronze statue and wrapped with duct tape, the whole figure was painted, and the vandals wrote the word "occupant" at the base of the monument.¹⁶⁴⁶

On 21 November, 2022, a bust of A.S.Pushkin was demolished in Kremenchug. The local newspaper Kremenchugskaya Gazeta reported that the monument would be placed in a museum.¹⁶⁴⁷

On 25 November, 2022, in Poltava, inscriptions in white and black paint appeared on the monument to A.S.Pushkin, which is located in Berezovyy Square. The head of the Poltava city council, A.Mamai, said after the council session that the inscriptions on the monument would be washed off.¹⁶⁴⁸

On November 29, 2022, a memorial plaque in honour of A.S.Pushkin was demolished in Nikolaev, as reported in the social network profile of the head of the department for culture and protection of cultural heritage of the Nikolaev city council Y.Lyubarov.¹⁶⁴⁹

On 30 November, 2022, the Odessa City Council decided to dismantle the monuments to Russian Empress Catherine II and Russian commander A.V.Suvorov. The monuments were repeatedly attacked by vandals. The monument to Catherine II was doused with paint, inscriptions were applied, a red

¹⁶⁴⁴ <https://ria.ru/20221114/odessa-1831333092.html?in=t>

¹⁶⁴⁵ <https://ria.ru/20221117/pushkin-1832349833.html>

¹⁶⁴⁶ <https://radiosputnik.ria.ru/20221118/odessa-1832493489.html>

¹⁶⁴⁷ <https://ria.ru/20221121/kremenchug-1833034746.html>

¹⁶⁴⁸ <https://ria.ru/20221125/vandaly-1834261086.html>

¹⁶⁴⁹ <https://ria.ru/20221129/nikolaev-1834964507.html?in=t>

cap was put on it, and a noose was put in its hand, which, according to the authors of this action, was supposed to symbolise that the empress, who founded the city, was allegedly an "executioner".¹⁶⁵⁰

It is noteworthy that the call to save the monument to Russian Empress Catherine II from dismantling was made by activists from Italy. The author of the petition on the change.org website is journalist and publicist Marco Baratto, who believes that the monument should be preserved. The journalist called Catherine II one of the most important women of the Age of Enlightenment and suggested that instead of demolishing the monument, it should be taken to Milan or Naples, where the culture of the Age of Enlightenment has a large number of followers.¹⁶⁵¹

On 30 November, 2022, a monument to A.S.Pushkin was demolished in the town of Ananyev, Odessa region.¹⁶⁵²

On December 1, 2022, in Izmail (Odessa region), the monument to A.V.Suvorov, made in the early XX century in honour of the 120th anniversary of the capture of the fortress of Izmail by Russian troops under the command of this great commander, was dismantled and moved from the central avenue to the museum.

On the same day, a monument to Soviet writer N.A.Ostrovsky was demolished in Shepetivka, Khmelnytsky region.

On 6 December, 2022, simultaneously with the decision of the Supreme Court of Ukraine not to recognise the symbols of the SS division "Galicia" as Nazi, the Dnieper mayor B. Filatov ("famous" for his formula "We will hang them later") announced the demolition of the monuments to A.S.Pushkin, M.V.Lomonosov and Maksim Gorky.¹⁶⁵³

On 10 December, 2022, monuments to A.S.Pushkin and A.V.Suvorov were dismantled in Tulchyn, Vinnytsia region. The monuments are planned to be scrapped and the proceeds will be given to the AFU.

¹⁶⁵⁰ <https://ria.ru/20221130/pamyatnik-1835241748.html>

¹⁶⁵¹ https://aif.ru/society/history/v_italii_prizvali_spasti_pamyatnik_ekaterine_ii_v_odesse

¹⁶⁵² <https://ria.ru/20221130/pushkin-1835220510.html?in=t>

¹⁶⁵³ <https://russian.rt.com/opinion/1083328-sokolov-sud-simvolika-ss-galichina>

In December 2022, there were further cases of "fighting" against monuments to A.S.Pushkin all over the country. On 23 December, Chernivtsi also demolished the last monument to the poet in the city. The first one was destroyed back in November 2022.¹⁶⁵⁴ On 27 December in the same city, a bust of A.S.Pushkin was removed from the facade of the Chernivtsi Musical Drama Theatre.¹⁶⁵⁵ On 30 December, a monument to A.S.Pushkin, located in the city park, was demolished in Kramatorsk. Only the pedestal was left of it.¹⁶⁵⁶ On 31 December in Kiev, vandals sprayed paint on Ukraine's largest monument to the poet, located in the Pushkin Park in Shulyavka district. The sculptures were labelled "Demolish", "Monument to Cultural Expansion" and "Executioner".¹⁶⁵⁷

On 29 December, 2022, the monument to A.V.Suvorov and the monument "Founders of Odessa" dedicated to Catherine II and her associates were demolished in Odessa.

On the night of 5 January, 2023, in Nikolaev, the monument to A.V.Suvorov, erected in 2010 near the building of the Department of Military Training of the Nikolaev National University named after V.A.Sukhomlinsky to the 280th anniversary of the birth of the outstanding commander, was destroyed. The monument was decorated with a gilded cannon and cannonballs.¹⁶⁵⁸

On 4 January, 2023, a monument to N.A. Ostrovsky was dismantled in Kharkov. Shortly before the demolition, vandals wrote the word "kat" (Ukr. "executioner") on the pedestal of the monument.¹⁶⁵⁹

On 5 January, 2023, in Nikolaev the monument to A.V.Suvorov was dismantled.¹⁶⁶⁰ Five more monuments to this great Russian commander were demolished in Odessa region in January 2023.

¹⁶⁵⁴ <https://iz.ru/1445590/2022-12-23/v-ukrainskikh-chernovtcakh-snesli-poslednii-v-gorode-pamiatnik-pushkinu>

¹⁶⁵⁵ <https://iz.ru/1447322/2022-12-27/v-ukrainskikh-chernovtcakh-demontirovali-biust-pushkina-s-fasada-teatra>

¹⁶⁵⁶ <https://iz.ru/1449038/2022-12-30/biust-pushkina-demontirovali-v-kramatorske>

¹⁶⁵⁷ <https://iz.ru/1449426/2022-12-31/v-kieve-oskvernili-pamiatnik-pushkinu>

¹⁶⁵⁸ https://lenta.ru/articles/2023/01/19/pamyatniki_ua/

¹⁶⁵⁹ <https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/63b70ae99a79473217bfb961>

¹⁶⁶⁰ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/16746419>

On 6 January, 2023, in Dnieper (Dnepropetrovsk), a monument to Russian scientist M.V.Lomonosov, located on Dmitry Yavornitsky Avenue, was demolished.¹⁶⁶¹

On 14 February, 2023, in Petrovka village of Belgorod-Dnistrovsky district the last monument to A.V.Suvorov in Odessa region was dismantled.¹⁶⁶² Three more monuments to this military figure were demolished in February 2023 in Vinnytsia region, one each in Chernivtsi, Khmelnytsky, Kirovograd and Dnepropetrovsk regions.

On 17 February, 2023, the monument to A.S. Pushkin in the village of Belenchenkivka, Poltava region, was demolished.¹⁶⁶³

On 1 March, 2023, in the village of Vesely Podol, Poltava region, a monument to the outstanding Russian biologist and breeder I.V.Michurin was demolished.¹⁶⁶⁴

On 17 March 2023, a monument to M.Gorky was demolished in the village of Serednyaki, Poltava region, on the initiative of the local branch of the UINM.¹⁶⁶⁵

On 27 March, 2023, in Odessa the memorial plaque to A.V.Suvorov was destroyed.¹⁶⁶⁶

On 29 March, 2023, in Kalush, Ivano-Frankovsk region, a bust of the Russian scientist-encyclopedist, who discovered the periodic law of chemical elements, D.I.Mendeleev, was demolished.¹⁶⁶⁷

On 8 May, 2023, a monument to the city's founder, Prince G.A.Potemkin, was demolished in Nikolaev.¹⁶⁶⁸

On 16 May, 2023, two busts of M.Gorky were dismantled in Poltava region.

On 25 May, 2023, a monument to the fighters for Soviet power was demolished in the village of Svyatylyvka, Poltava region. The demolition was initiated by the Poltava branch of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory.¹⁶⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶¹ https://lenta.ru/articles/2023/01/19/pamyatniki_ua/

¹⁶⁶² <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/17047603>

¹⁶⁶³ <https://kolo.news/category/suspilstvo/34139>

¹⁶⁶⁴ <https://kolo.news/category/suspilstvo/34229>

¹⁶⁶⁵ <https://web.archive.org/web/20230331164131/https://irt.pl.ua/news/29112/>

¹⁶⁶⁶ <https://dumskaya.net/news/v-odesse-demontirovali-memorialnuyu-dosku-suvoro-174206/ua/>

¹⁶⁶⁷ <https://kl.informator.ua/2023/03/30/u-kalushi-demontuvaly-pamyatnyk-mendelyeyevu/>

¹⁶⁶⁸ <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3706328-u-mikolaevi-demontuvali-pamatnik-potomkinu.html>

On 17 June, 2023, in Vynogradov, Transcarpathian region, a bust of the outstanding Soviet educator and writer A.S.Makarenko, the author of the "Pedagogical Poem", who dealt with the problems of education in a collective, was demolished. He carried out the first experience in pedagogical practice of mass re-education of delinquent children.¹⁶⁷⁰

On 19 June, 2023, a bust of the first Soviet cosmonaut Y.A.Gagarin was demolished in Kiev. The granite bust was installed in the courtyard of the Centre for Technical Creativity and Vocational Guidance of School Youth of Darnitsa district in the late 1960s after Y.A. Gagarin's arrival in Kiev in April 1966.¹⁶⁷¹

On 5 July, 2023, the image of the world-famous Russian composer P.I.Tchaikovsky was dismantled from the facade of the music school in Uzhgorod.¹⁶⁷²

On 27 July, 2023, the authorities of Kamenskoye, Dnepropetrovsk Region, removed a bust of former USSR leader Leonid Brezhnev from the central Avenue of Liberty. The city is the birthplace of Leonid Brezhnev.¹⁶⁷³

On the same day a monument to A.S.Pushkin was dismantled in Poltava.¹⁶⁷⁴

On 17 August, 2023, the last monument to A.S.Pushkin in Poltava region was demolished in Lubny.¹⁶⁷⁵

On 20 August, 2023, a bust of Russian and Soviet biologist I.V.Michurin was destroyed in Mikhnovtsy village, Lubensky district, Poltava region.¹⁶⁷⁶

On 11 September, 2023, in Cherkasy, a monument erected in Soborny Park on the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution in honour of the workers of state security and law and order structures who had fallen on duty was demolished.¹⁶⁷⁷

¹⁶⁶⁹ <https://iz.ru/1518156/2023-05-25/v-poltavskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-pamiatnik-bortcam-za-sovetskuiu-vlast>

¹⁶⁷⁰ <https://iz.ru/1530513/2023-06-17/v-zakarpatskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-biust-sovetskogo-pedagoga-makarenko>

¹⁶⁷¹ <https://iz.ru/1531503/2023-06-20/v-kieve-demontirovali-biust-iurii-gagarina>

¹⁶⁷² <https://suspilne.media/522075-v-uzgorodi-demontuut-zobrazenna-rosijskogo-kompozitora-p-cajkovskogo-z-fasadu-uzgorodskoi-muzicnoi-skoli/>

¹⁶⁷³ <https://life.ru/p/1596481>

¹⁶⁷⁴ <https://iz.ru/1550202/2023-07-27/v-poltave-demontirovali-pamiatniki-pushkinu-i-generalu-vatutinu>

¹⁶⁷⁵ <https://suspilne.media/554221-u-misti-na-poltavsini-demontuvali-ostannij-pamatnik-puskinu/>

¹⁶⁷⁶ <https://life.ru/p/1601746>

¹⁶⁷⁷ <https://ukraina.ru/20230911/1049316031.html>

On 11 September, 2023, the Poltava City Council announced its intention to destroy the monument erected to commemorate the actions of the city residents under the leadership of the commandant of the Poltava fortress, Colonel A.S.Kelin, during the Battle of Poltava in 1709. This monument has been a visiting card of the city for many years now.¹⁶⁷⁸

In the light of the special military operation carried out by the Russian Federation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine, there is an increasing tendency in the Western media and NGOs to whitewash the Ukrainian neo-Nazis, who are presented as fighters for the freedom and independence of a "democratic" country, fighting the "aggression of a dictatorial regime".

American IT companies are providing notable assistance to Kiev. It is known, that the administration and moderators of YouTube do not object to the dissemination of information by extremist organizations, primarily the "Right Sector" and "Azov", which are banned in Russia. In fact, YouTube has become one of the key platforms spreading fakes about the special military operation in Ukraine discrediting the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

Censorship is actively applied by Meta (recognised as extremist and banned in Russia), which owns the social networks Facebook and Twitter. These resources also actively disseminated calls to "kill Russians", manuals on how to kill and make explosives and other similar content since late February-March 2022. The moderators ignored user complaints about such explicit dissemination of hate ideology. At the same time, content from Russian media, public figures, as well as ordinary citizens, comprising the Russian position or simply objective viewpoints on the events in Ukraine, was blocked.

After the practice of applying double standards to Russian citizens was revealed through the publication of the company's internal correspondence, Meta tried to correct the situation. However, its statement only once again confirmed its

¹⁶⁷⁸ <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2023/09/11/derusifikaciya-na-ukraine-v-poltave-snesut-pamyatnik-yavlyayushchiysya-simvolom-goroda>

racist approaches to the publications. In particular, it stated that users would be allowed to call for the "death of the Russian occupiers".

After the change of ownership of the social network Twitter, information began to appear in the public domain, indicating that the former management actively used censorship to manipulate public opinion. The new owner I. Musk has taken a number of steps to increase the popularity of the platform and return confidence in it. Among other things, Twitter's internal documents are regularly published, which confirm that the social network not only blocked the accounts of individuals, but also for a long time carried out shadow blocking, when the publications of unwanted users were simply not visible to anyone up to the fact that they were not shown in search queries. The users themselves also did not receive information about the blocking – they saw that their accounts were not blocked, but the number of views of publications was minimal.

Nevertheless, many international Internet resources help to conceal from public attention materials testifying to the crimes of the Kiev regime. In December 2022, it became known that the English-language site of the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia removed an article in English about the Alley of Angels memorial erected in Donetsk in memory of children killed by Ukrainian armed forces shellings. So far, there are still materials about the Alley of Angels in Russian, Ukrainian and six other languages. However, the media noticed false information there¹⁶⁷⁹.

Efforts to whitewash Ukrainian neo-Nazis are also recorded. In February 2023, Meta's management removed the Ukrainian nationalist formation Azov from the list of dangerous organisations, thus giving this extremist structure the opportunity to openly run social networks, including to promote violence and its criminal methods of warfare. Azov militants have never concealed and, even on the contrary, publicly emphasised their adherence to the ideas of neo-Nazism and hatred on national and ethnic grounds. Such actions by Meta serve as further confirmation that the "collective West" contradicts its own previously proclaimed

¹⁶⁷⁹ https://riafan.ru/23779823-angloyazichnuyu_versiyu_stat_i_ob_allee_angelov_v_donetske_udalili_s_wikipedii

democratic values and uses misanthropic ideas in an attempt to ensure its dominance.

It should also be noted that the Ukrainian authorities have previously been seen attempting to edit information publications on the Internet in order to conceal the true picture of what is happening in Ukraine. Thus, in April 2020 the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry announced the launch of a campaign to correct Wikipedia articles, in particular, about "Russian aggression", as well as about Crimea, Donbas, integration with the European Union and NATO. Although the stated goal of the Ukrainian diplomats was to fill the online encyclopaedia with supposedly unbiased information about the country, in reality it turned into a blatant attempt to edit a free information resource with the help of state agencies and distort facts to suit the current political objectives of Kiev and its Western curators, justifying such actions by referring to the "opinions of people".¹⁶⁸⁰

At the same time, even in the Western media appear publications that directly point to the Nazi essence of the right-wing radical structures in Ukraine¹⁶⁸¹, to which the image of "pro-independence fighters" is created. Particular attention is drawn to the fact that prior to the special military operation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, many Western media pointed out the Nazi component of radical Ukrainian formations and their glorification of Nazi collaborators S. Bandera and R. Shukhevych. However, after February 2022, this opinion has been diligently removed from the Western public space. At the same time, it is rightly noted in the above-mentioned articles that the Russian leadership's explanation of the reasons for the special military operation largely coincides with what was previously published in objective articles by Western journalists, who acknowledged the presence of neo-Nazism in Ukraine.

¹⁶⁸⁰ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/740011-kiev-wikipediya-perepisat>, https://news.rambler.ru/world/44072204/?utm_content=news_media&utm_medium=read_more&utm_source=copylink

¹⁶⁸¹ В качестве примеров можно привести: A.Ripp. Ukraine's Nazi problem is real, even if Putin's "denazification" claim isn't. NBC News. 5 March 2022. www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/ukraine-has-nazi-problem-vladimir-putin-s-claim-war-ncna1290946; B.Marcetic. Whitewashing Nazis doesn't help Ukraine. Jacobin. 4 July 2022. <https://jacobin.com/2022/04/ukraine-russia-putin-azov-neo-nazis-western-media>; J.McCann. Protecting the Ukrainian Nazis. Standpoint Zero. 16 March 2022. <https://standpointzero.com/2022/03/16/protecting-the-ukrainian-nazis/>

Another vivid illustration of the collective West's efforts to whitewash the crimes of the Kiev authorities is the report prepared by the NGO Amnesty International, which acknowledged the facts of war crimes committed by the AFU against civilians, in particular the use of civilians as human shields. In fact, the international organisation has shown the true nature of Kiev's use of terrorist tactics. To minimize the damage, Western countries organized a campaign to divert attention from this unseemly fact by presenting an almost united front. In response to the accusations made by the Kiev authorities, human rights activists apologized and organised a retest of the research, but they did not completely retract their words.

In addition, it should be noted that Ukrainian neo-Nazi groups are closely linked to right-wing radical and extremist groups in Europe and the United States (see the relevant sections of the report). Ties have been established between these structures. Nationalists from abroad regularly travelled to Ukraine, where they trained in Ukrainian nationalist formations and in the combat positions of the Ukrainian military in Donbas. It is widely known that since 2015, a former American serviceman K.Lang participated in the hostilities in Ukraine on the side of nationalist battalions and shot a married couple upon his return to the USA.¹⁶⁸²

Other data on the participation of Americans and Europeans in the military operations in Donbas have also appeared in the public space. For example, the Buzz Feed News media company reported about more than 40 American citizens, while the report "White supremacy extremism: the transnational rise of the violent white supremacist movement" published in September 2019 by the Soufan Centre NGO noted that 3,879 foreigners had been trained during the hostilities in Donbas at that time. The participation of foreign militants from European countries and the United States in the ranks of the Azov nationalist battalion (recognised as a

¹⁶⁸² Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy in the Military How to Stop It? U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Military Personnel (Committee on Armed Services) Hearing. 11 February 2020. Dr. Mark Pitcavage. Witness Statement. <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS02/20200211/110495/HHRG-116-AS02-Wstate-PitcavageM-20200211.pdf>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-49803732>, <https://strana.ua/news/230444-azov-i-neonatsisty-ssha-pochemu-v-konhresse-khotjat-priznat-polk-terroristami.html>

terrorist organisation in the Russian Federation) is described in a detailed article on the activities of neo-Nazis in the newspaper Die Zeit.¹⁶⁸³

As already noted in the report of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs "on the Kiev regime's unlawful actions against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, its clergy and parishioners", published on 25 July 2023 (available on the official website of the Ministry with translations into a number of foreign languages), the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which the Kiev authorities have been trying for many years to uproot from the religious field of the country, has come under the blows of the Russophobic Kyiv regime. A large-scale information campaign has been launched against the clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church aimed at discrediting its priests in the eyes of the flock and creating an image of them as "collaborators of the enemy". Slandorous rumours are being spread about the rectors of parishes and the clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and multiple fakes are published on social media that church hierarchs are allegedly assisting the Russian armed forces. On a daily basis, the Ukrainian police and the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) make accusations that the storage of weapons, ammunition and provisions for the "aggressor" has been organised in the churches of the UOC. On the basis of such "arguments", Ukrainian politicians and officials are calling for the UOC to be banned and deprived of its property.

Concrete legislative steps have already been taken in this direction. Five bills directed against the UOC have been registered in the Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine. Bill No. 7204 of 22 March 2022, proposed by O.Savchuk, a representative of the nationalist Svoboda party, provides, in particular, for a direct ban on the activities of church structures affiliated with the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine and the nationalisation of all their property. Religious communities that want to avoid the restrictions will be given 14 days to "change their subordination". Bill No. 7213 was put forward on 26 March 2022 by an inter-factional group of parliamentarians who are supporters of the schismatic OCU. It

¹⁶⁸³ The Brown Internationale. Die Zeit. 10 February 2021. <https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2021-02/facism-international-right-wing-extremism-neo-nazis-english>

proposes the introduction of a "ban on the activities of religious organisations that form part of the structure (is part of) of a religious organisation (association), the governing centre (management) of which is located outside Ukraine in a state that is recognised by law as having carried out military aggression against Ukraine and/or temporarily occupied part of the territory of Ukraine".

On 23 November 2022, the European Solidarity Party introduced bill No. 8221 "On Ensuring the Strengthening of National Security in the Sphere of Freedom of Conscience and Activities of Religious Organisations". The text of the document states that any organisation or community positioning itself as Orthodox, in canonical and organisational matters should build its activities "taking into account the Tomos" and be subordinate to the OCU. In other words, the schismatic structure is supposed to have the exclusive right to be called "Orthodox" and a de facto monopoly on the practice of Orthodox worship in the country.

On 5 December 2022, the Ukrainian parliament registered bill No. 8262 "On Improving the Legal Regulation of the Activity of Religious Organisations", which goes in "tandem" with bill No. 8221 and is also directed against the UOC. It was co-authored by 24 MPs of the pro-presidential Servant of the People party and the European Solidarity party. This document envisages a significant simplification of the procedure for transferring not only communities, but also dioceses and monasteries of the UOC to the OCU, and for them to change their jurisdiction. Now it will also become possible to register OCU communities at the address of existing UOC communities, in their churches, monasteries or other premises. In essence, this will legalise the raiding of canonical parishes by the schismatics, which they have been seeking since 2019. In addition, the bill provides a basis for future decisions by the authorities to break lease agreements with religious organisations "linked to Russia", which will create (or rather, is already creating) conditions for the eviction of all monastic and ordinary UOC communities from premises that are in state and communal ownership.

On 19 January 2023, the Ukrainian government submitted to the Verkhovna Rada a bill No. 8371 "On Amendments to the Laws of Ukraine on

the Activities of Religious Organisations in Ukraine", which prohibits in the country "the activities of religious organisations whose governing centre (administration) is located in a state that is carrying out armed aggression against Ukraine". The document envisages a significant simplification of the procedure for legally banning the functioning of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.¹⁶⁸⁴

A notable role in the offensive against the UOC is assigned to organised groups of national radicals who raid churches. At the same time, parishes of the UOC become the target of numerous "independent" looters and pogromists, who motivate their raids with the ideological struggle against the "occupiers" and their "spiritual protégés". Video footage of these actions is being circulated in Ukraine's social networks with a call to follow these examples.

On 3 February 2022, the management of the public historical and architectural conservancy site "Khotyn Fortress" refused to renew the agreement with the UOC community on the use of the local church which Orthodox believers had restored from ruins on their own, and closed it. These actions resulted from the brutal pressure by Right Sector militants demanding the church to be transferred to the OCU.

Numerous "saboteur priest" fakes were circulated on social networks. As a result, the UOC Kiev Metropolis was forced to refute the disinformation that law enforcement officers allegedly detained a priest in Kiev along with a certain 38-year-old man suspected of espionage. There was also disinformation that a group of saboteurs, two of whom were liquidated during arrest, was allegedly exposed in the monastery of St. Mary Magdalene Co-Apl. (the city of Belaya Tserkov).

Only in March 2022, several cases became known of kidnapping canonical church priests. The abbot of the Trinity Dukonsky Monastery (Ivano-Frankovsk diocese) Archimandrite Tita (Drachuk) and a novice disappeared on 9 March. A few days later they were found in the Chernovtsi region. It turned out that they were kidnapped, interrogated violently, and then, under death threat, they were banned not just from ministry in the Ivano-Frankovsk region, but also from living

¹⁶⁸⁴ <https://ria.ru/20221123/rpts-1833602560.html>

there. On 16 March, Archimandrite Laurus (Berezovsky), rector of the Ivanovka village church in the Zhitomir region, was assaulted. On the same day a local priest, Father Gennady, was kidnapped in the village of Tomashovka, Fastov district, Kiev region. On 28 March, Hieromonk Vasily was abducted by armed people during a service in the Holy Protection Church in the town of Smela, Cherkasy region.

In March 2022, in Vinnytsa region alone, at least six cases of attacks on UOC churches and clergy were recorded. On March 6, in Malye Krushlintsi, radicals broke into the church during a divine service, desecrated the altar, beat the priest and dragged him outside. On 12 March, in Lavrovka (Vinnytsa region), OCU supporters tried to throw the priest and parishioners outside during a divine service, threatening with physical violence. The police, upon arriving at the scene, closed and sealed the church. However, a few days later it was reopened, but for OCU supporters yet. On 13 March, in Sosnovka, schismatics forced chairman of the parish council to open the church, allegedly for weapons checks. Then the village elder forcibly took the church keys and handed them over to OCU supporters. On the same day, in Penkovka, radicals sawed off padlocks and seized the local church. They tossed church utensils and liturgical books belonging to the community out of the window. On March 19, in Miziakovskiye Khutora, "territorial defence" members blocked the passage to the church not letting the priest and parishioners in and threatening them with violence. On March 20, the same individuals seized the church in the neighbouring Pereorky. And in Bolshie Krushlintsi, the local OCU supporters attempted to take the church keys from the UOC priest, threatened to disrupt the divine service and demanded that he join the schismatic entity.

In Ivano-Frankovsk region, schismatics helped by territorial defence fighters, seized the St.Nicholas church in Kalush, the Anna Conception Church in Verkhovina, and the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary Icon "Pantanassa" in Tseniava. The Holy Protection Church on Marko Hill (Golovy) was closed, and the

chapel was sealed in Shkindovski Grun. The monks were evicted from the Archangel Michael monastery in Babianka.

On 3 April 2022, in Dolina (Ivano-Frankovsk region), the UOC St. John the Baptist church was closed following a search conducted by law enforcement officers.

On April 3, 2022, in the city of Dolina (Ivano-Frankivsk region), after a search conducted by law enforcement officers, the UOC church in honor of John the Baptist was closed.

On 8 April 2022, clergy and believers of the UOC Ivano-Frankovsk diocese made public their appeal to the Ukrainian president concerning the pressure and threats by authorities and OCU supporters that clergy and believers were subjected to. According to the believers, on 4 April 2022, Roman Martsinkiv, mayor of Ivano-Frankovsk, declared the allegedly "voluntary" change of confessional affiliation by the Cathedral of the Nativity of Christ religious community and urged the citizens to help the community pass over to another church jurisdiction. The parishioners perceived this call for "help" as coercive pressure on the religious community to change allegiance and a threat to seize the church by force if this was not done.

On 10 April 2022, OCU members together with armed men seized the UOC Dormition Church in Mikhalcha (Chernovtsi region).

On 14 April 2022, a group of armed men led by "OCU hierarch" A.Drabinko forcibly seized the Dormition Church in Kruhlyk (Kiev region). The malefactors kicked down the door and announced the "voluntary" pass over of the UOC religious community to OCU jurisdiction.

In early May 2022, V.Pekarsky, head of the Dubno military administration, handed the keys to the previously sealed UOC church in Pereniatyn over to OCU supporters. In Palchi (Volyn region) "activists" sawed padlocks off the Intercession Church and handed it over to schismatics, and in Ozero (the same region), UOC parishioners were "converted" to the OCU while they prayed in the church.

On 21 May 2022, schismatics from the OCU, supported by police and territorial defence, seized the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Ivankov (Kiev region) and the church in Belashov (Rovno region). The takeover was accompanied by clashes instigated by OCU supporters.

On 26 May 2022, the St. John the Evangelist church in Fursy (Kiev region) was reported to have been forcibly seized. OCU supporters physically assaulted church rector, priest Andriy Mukha, and UOC parishioners. The rector said that after the impending provocations had become known, the church community officially appealed on behalf of the parish assembly to the territorial community chairman, Ministry of the Interior and the SBU to prevent illegal actions, seizure of property and interference in the affairs of the church community. However, no action was taken by the authorities.

On 30 May 2022, OCU supporters, led by men in priestly attire, attempted to seize the St. Prince Alexander Nevsky church in Tsarevka (Zhytomyr region). The clergy and parishioners were able to defend their church.

In addition to the use of violence and intimidation, radicals, together with OCU adherents, actively organize vandal acts and provocations against churches and priests of the canonical UOC.

On 9 May 2022, in Dorogostai (Rovno region) unknown persons doused the yard, fences, crosses and the Saint Spyridon church with animal blood.

On 22 May 2022, rector of the Resurrection Church in Stryi (Lvov region) priest Volodymyr Mandzyuk was doused with antiseptic green dye in his face during the divine service.

On 23 May 2022 a crowd of aggressive OCU supporters was reported to have unwarrantedly replaced the locks in the St. Stephen the Archdeacon Church in Cherniatyn (Vinnytsa region), threatening parishioners and a UOC priest. The takeover began during a Sunday divine service held by the canonical church community. At first, the schismatics interfered with the service, then they started to show aggression, shouting slogans and threats. Then the OCU supporters "voted"

for the conversion to a new structure and unwarrantedly closed the church with their padlocks. None of the actual church congregation took part in the vote.

On 29 May 2022, OCU supporters came in an orderly way for Sunday celebrations in the UOC parishes in Lvov, Volyn, Rovno, Zhytomyr and Kiev regions to disrupt the prayers of Orthodox believers. Several "activists" disrupted the service, humiliated and insulted the believers in the UOC St. Vladimir Church in Lvov. In Ozhyshche (Volyn region), also during a divine service, OCU supporters broke in the St. Michael Church demanding the church to be handed over to them. They were very aggressive and attacked the believers.

In Lvov, the UOC-owned Church of the Holy Prince Vladimir Co-Apl. was attacked by vandals several times in May 2022 alone. On 1 May radicals tried to disrupt a divine service; on 8 May, unknown persons poured foam over the church door and painted the walls with offensive inscriptions. On 14 May vandals tried to set fire to the church and once again desecrated its walls with writings. On 25 May unidentified people sprayed offensive graffiti on the church again. On 28 May vandals desecrated the church another time by spraying insulting graffiti and crossing out crucifixes.

In the late May 2022, Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev, the UOC Primate, stated over 40 cases of UOC churches taken over in Ukraine from February to May 2022. According to the Primate, both Ukrainian officials and local governments participated in the seizure of church property. About 50 UOC communities were forced to pass over to the OCU.¹⁶⁸⁵

On 14 June an unidentified group attacked the home of Father Pyotr Monastyrsky, rector of the UOC Holy Protection Church in Novozhyvotov (Vinnytsa region). The vandals pelted the rectory with stones, breaking the windows.

In the night of 19-20 June 2022, a fire broke out in the Church of the Holy Prince Vladimir Co-Apl. in the Lvov-Sikhov neighbourhood as a result of the arson.

¹⁶⁸⁵ <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/05/27/upc/?ysclid=lmgpwakjrq743121602>

Since November 2022, the SSU has tightened its anti-UOC action to the utmost. "Counterintelligence activities" aimed at intimidating believers began in UOC churches and monasteries. According to the media, the SSU searched 19 UOC facilities in the Transcarpathian, Chernovtsi, Rovno, Volyn, Nikolaev, Sumy, Lvov, Zhytomyr regions and the Kiev-controlled part of the Kherson region. In particular, searches took place in the Holy Protection Church and Holy Exaltation Cathedral in Uzhgorod, Holy Trinity Church in Lvov, St.Basil Cathedral in Ovruch (Zhytomyr region), and Holy Dormition Monastery in the Rovno region.¹⁶⁸⁶ Ukrainian security forces have repeatedly conducted searches on the territory of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra.

During such "activities," intelligence officers interrogated clergy and monks, and also looked for supposedly "subversive pro-Russian literature," including Moscow Patriarch's Easter messages which are transmitted to all dioceses of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The persecution of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church unleashed by Kiev reached its climax in early December 2022, when Vladimir Zelensky enacted the National Security and Defense Council decision on restrictive measures and sanctions against the church, essentially formalizing its complete ban.

In mid-December 2022, official documents of the SSU Kherson region department made public by the media proved that Ukrainian security members had been working to intimidate UOC priests since the 2014 coup. They threatened such priests with criminal charges and tried to instill their own understanding of "patriotism." In particular, similar "preventive measures" are known to have been carried out in the Holy Spirit Cathedral and St.Catherine Cathedral in Kherson in January and April 2016. An SSU officer, under the pretext of checking the vigilance of church personnel, visited churches and intimidated clergy, threatening with articles of the Criminal Code of Ukraine that envisage punishment for crimes against national security. He called his actions to intimidate the clergy "helping form responsibility for their actions." Along with this, he gave examples of the

¹⁶⁸⁶ <https://rg.ru/2022/12/14/sbu-prishla-s-obyskom-v-pravoslavnye-hramy-v-deviati-oblastiah-ukrainy.html>

"heroism" of a number of Kherson townspeople who participated in punitive operations in Donbass in order to "instill a sense of patriotism" in the priests. To intimidate the UOC clergy, he told them about "the SSU successful combat against separatism and other anti-constitutional activities of certain groups and individuals in the Kherson region." To crown it all, he left explosive device simulators in the St.Catherine and Holy Spirit Cathedrals "for the purpose of reasonable digestion of the material".¹⁶⁸⁷

The number of forceful seizures of UOC churches increased almost 20 times in 2022. A report by the UOC administrator, Metropolitan Anthony, noted that the number of raider seizures of UOC churches and illegal re-registration of its parishes increased manifold in 2022. In particular, 129 such seizures of UOC churches were recorded, as well as 74 local authorities' decisions to ban the activities of UOC religious organizations, 84 cases of re-registration of parishes and 10 acts of vandalism.¹⁶⁸⁸

In his interview on the Ukrainian "1+1" TV YouTube channel published 21 December 2022, Acting Chairman of the SSU V. Malyuk stated that the Service had opened 50 criminal cases against UOC priests. He especially emphasized the need to "clean out this entire enemy environment of "moles in robes."¹⁶⁸⁹ 55 UOC clergymen, including 14 bishops, became defendants in these criminal cases.¹⁶⁹⁰

Immediately after the New Year the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine broke the lease agreement with the UOC for a part of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra buildings. Canonical church clergy were not allowed thereupon into these premises to conduct Christmas services. Instead of them, OCU priests were demonstratively brought in there.

According to a SSU report published at the beginning of April 2023, since 2022, almost 250 UOC clergymen have been banned from entering the territory of

¹⁶⁸⁷ <https://rg.ru/2022/12/13/sbu-neskolko-let-vela-rabotu-protiv-ukrainskoj-pravoslavnoj-cerkvi-obnaruzheny-sekretnye-dokumenty.html>

¹⁶⁸⁸ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/16691353?ysclid=imgpw2342o357713255>

¹⁶⁸⁹ <https://iz.ru/1444393/2022-12-21/na-ukraine-zavedeno-50-ugolovnykh-del-protiv-sviashchennikov-uptc>

¹⁶⁹⁰ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/18462289?ysclid=imgs853axa989219718>

Ukraine, 61 criminal cases have been opened against the clergy, with, among others, 14 bishops charged with "high treason" and "inciting religious hatred."

19 UOC bishops were deprived of Ukrainian citizenship, which is prohibited by the country's Constitution. Among them are Metropolitans of: Tulchin and Bratslav Jonathan (Eletsy), Chernivtsi and Bukovina Meletiy (Egorenko), Dnepropetrovsk and Pavlograd Iriney (Seredniy), the abbot of the Holy Dormition Svyatogorsk Lavra, Metropolitan Arseny (Yakovenko), Metropolitan of Khust and Vinogradov Mark (Petrovtsev), Archbishops of Bucha Panteleimon (Bashchuk), Artsyzsk Viktor (Bykov) and others. On 11 April 2023, a petition appeared on the website of Zelensky's Office demanding that primate of the UOC Metropolitan Onuphry be deprived of Ukrainian citizenship.

On 21 January 2023, the NSDCI imposed sanctions against two dozen Russian religious figures. Along with this, the Kiev regime continued its efforts to seize the Kiev Pechersk Lavra. The situation around the monastery became tense at the end of March. Ukrainian security forces began to regularly come to the Lavra. Special police units cut the locks and turned off the alarm in one of its buildings. In early July 2023 the Ministry of Culture demanded that the monks vacate five buildings of the Lower Lavra which is under the canonical UOC jurisdiction. In case of refusal, ministry employees threatened to replace the locks and seal the buildings.

On 10 August 2023, a Kiev court satisfied the claim of the National Kiev-Pechersk Historical and Cultural Conservancy Site "to remove obstacles to the use of property," thus legalizing the eviction of monks from their place of permanent residence. On 11 August Ukrainian security forces cordoned off the Lavra, blocking the entrance for believers, and a Ministry of Culture commission sealed several buildings. Already from the evening of August 10, pilgrims who lived in the monastery hotel and had special passes to enter its territory could not enter the Lavra. Immediately before this, on 9 August, another Kiev court rejected Lavra's

counterclaim against the conservancy site to declare illegal the unilateral breach of agreement on the use of the monastery.¹⁶⁹¹

The Kiev regime has launched criminal prosecutions of UOC priests, cynically declaring that there is supposedly no religious persecution in the country, and all the authorities demand from the canonical UOC is to sever ties with Russia. Amid efforts to seize the Kiev Pechersk Lavra, its abbot, Metropolitan Paul, was charged with "denying Russian aggression." He himself stated publicly that the authorities had repeatedly promised to stop the persecution and release him from custody if he and his parishioners passed over to the OCU. In mid-July, Metropolitan Paul was transferred from house arrest to a pre-trial detention centre. Only on 7 August 2023, after a bail equalling to almost a million US dollars had been posted, he was released from custody. The funds, according to the clergyman's lawyer, were raised by more than a thousand people.¹⁶⁹²

Repressions have also been launched against other UOC hierarchs and clergy. In particular, Metropolitan Theodosius (Snegirev) of Cherkassy, as well as Joasaph, the former Metropolitan of Kirovograd and Novomirgorod, at present Metropolitan of Vasilkov, have been criminally prosecuted on charges of "inciting religious hatred" since 2022.

The first sentence was passed in May 2023. The Leninsky District Court of Kirovograd sentenced Metropolitan Joasaph (Peter Guben) and secretary of the diocese Fr. Roman Kondratyuk to three years. The priests were found guilty of "inciting religious strives".¹⁶⁹³

In May 2023, the SSU summoned abbot of the UOC Ascension Bancheny Monastery Metropolitan Longinus for interrogation in connection with a criminal case opened against him under Criminal Code of Ukraine Art.161 (incitement of interreligious hatred)¹⁶⁹⁴ because of his "disparaging" statements about the

¹⁶⁹¹ <https://360tv.ru/news/obschestvo/vlasti-ukrainy-lishat-monahov-dostupa-k-korpusam-kievo-pecherskoj-lavry/>, <https://iz.ru/1557646/elena-vasileva/opechatnoe-slovo-v-kieve-nachalsia-silovoi-zakhvat-lavry>

¹⁶⁹² https://www.1tv.ru/news/2023-08-07/458729-namestnik_kievo_pecherskoy_lavry_osvobozhden_iz_pod_strazhi_pod_zalog

¹⁶⁹³ <https://360tv.ru/news/mir/mitropolitu-upts-dali-tri-goda-tjurmy-na-ukraine/>

¹⁶⁹⁴ <https://news.church.ua/2023/05/22/proti-mitropolita-banchenskogo-longina-yakij-usinoviv-ponad-400-ditej-ta-je-gerojem-ukrajini-policiya-vidkrila-spravu-ta-viklikaje-na-dopit-video/#2023-10-04>

schismatic OCU. Metropolitan Longinus is the founder and director of the monastery orphanage in Molnitsa (Chernovtsi region), where more than 400 orphans are under his care. For many years of charitable activities, the Hero of Ukraine title was bestowed on the clergyman in 2008. In September 2023, the investigation into the case of Fr. Longinus was completed and transferred to court.¹⁶⁹⁵ Parishioners of the monastery and Orthodox activists have concerns that conviction of the Metropolitan would jeopardize the fate of his pupils.

On 7 July 2023, the SSU detained a UOC cleric, rector of the St. Archangel Michael Church in Borodyanka (Kiev region) archpriest Victor Talko, on suspicion of assisting the evacuation of local residents to Belarus. Criminal proceedings were commenced against him on suspicion of "collaboration activities." The priest is facing up to 5 years in prison.¹⁶⁹⁶

On 7 August 2023, head of the Tulchin UOC diocese Metropolitan Jonathan (Eletskikh) was sentenced to five years in prison "for publicly justifying armed aggression against Ukraine." On 11 August, the Vinnitsa prosecutor's office announced that it would file an appeal against the court decision in his case. The prosecutors were not satisfied that the hierarch was adjudged to just a five year term instead of a six year one.¹⁶⁹⁷

The Kiev regime is also acting out rapaciously against another large UOC monastery. In May 2023, the Ternopol region prosecutor's office opened a criminal case on mismanagement of the lands of the Holy Dormition Pochaev Lavra, and a Ministry of Culture commission was sent there. The pretext was that the monks allegedly used an area of over a thousand square meters without permission, and removed the top layer of agricultural land. The Ukrainian authorities did not hide their aggressive intentions. Head of the Ternopil Regional Council M. Golovko stated in March 2023 that he demanded the agreement with the UOC on the land use by the monastery be dissolved. Meanwhile, the 50-year lease agreement was concluded in 2003. The reason for this could be a far-fetched accusation of

¹⁶⁹⁵ <https://news.church.ua/2023/09/12/mitropolit-longin-rozpoviv-scho-jogo-budut-suditi-video/#2023-10-04>

¹⁶⁹⁶ <https://rusk.ru/newsdata.php?idar=116887>

¹⁶⁹⁷ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/18462289?ysclid=lmgs853axa989219718>, <https://iz.ru/1557646/elena-vasileva/opechatnoe-slovo-v-kieve-nachalsia-silovoi-zakhvat-lavry>

violation of its contractual obligations by the canonical church. The steps by the Ukrainian authorities prove such attitude. The schismatic OCU and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) also laid claim to the Pochaev Lavra along with the government.¹⁶⁹⁸

On 19 August, 2023, the Ternopol region authorities allegedly "for security reasons" banned a religious procession to the Pochaev Lavra to honour the Dormition of the Virgin Mary. The procession was blocked in three regions: Ternopol, Khmelnytsky and Rovno. At the cathedral of Kamenets-Podolsky (Khmelnytsky region), believers' gathering point, parishioners and clergy were met by police. The security forces also tried to hand over call-up notices to men of military age.¹⁶⁹⁹

The already routine actions of schismatics to seize churches by force and destroy them also continued.

On 21 August 2023, the UOC Holy Trinity Church in Khalyavin (Chernigov region) burned down almost completely due to arson. A canister with gasoline residues was found at the scene.¹⁷⁰⁰

On 22 August 2023, the Khmelnytsky UOC diocese reported that OCU activists had seized two canonical churches in the Khmelnytsky region: the St. Nicholas Church in the village of Mytintsy and St. John the Theologian Church in the village of Volitsa. The seizure could not be prevented by the expression of desire of the rectors and active parishioners – members of the UOC religious communities – to remain under the UOC jurisdiction.¹⁷⁰¹

On 4 September 2023, police raided the Holy Epiphany Convent in the Ternopol region. The reason for this was the end of another lease term. The

¹⁶⁹⁸ <https://360tv.ru/news/obschestvo/vlasti-ukrainy-natselilis-na-zahvat-pochaevskoj-lavry-smi/>

¹⁶⁹⁹ <https://www.1tv.ru/news/2023-08-19/459560->

<vlasti-ternopolskoy-hmelnitskoy-i-rovenskoy-oblastey-zapretili-krestnyy-hod-k-pochaevskoy-lavre>

¹⁷⁰⁰ <https://iz.ru/1562132/2023-08-21/khram-kanonicheskoi-upte-pochti-polnostiu-sgorel-pod-chernigovom-posle-podzhoga>

¹⁷⁰¹ <https://iz.ru/1562558/2023-08-22/storonniki-ptcu-zakhvatili-dva-khrama-upte-v-khmelnitckoi-oblasti?ysclid=lmgpw5jit1524131723>

regional authorities, as expected, did not extend it and ruled the Convent be closed and the nuns evicted.¹⁷⁰²

Kiev's persecution of the canonical church came to the attention of international human rights monitoring mechanisms. In November 2021, the Human Rights Committee expressed concern. In particular, the Committee mentioned cases of aggression, intimidation and vandalism in churches associated with the process of re-registration of churches and religious communities from the jurisdiction of the UOC to that of the OCU. The HRC also pointed out to inaction of the Ukrainian police in such incidents and a lack of information about the investigation of offenses.¹⁷⁰³

Since Ukraine became independent, the country's authorities have set a course for the forced Ukrainization of all spheres of public life and assimilation of all ethnic groups living in the country for the purpose of creating a mono-ethnic state. These processes noticeably accelerated after the coup d'état of 2014. At the same time, Kiev's policy towards various ethnic communities assumes a differentiated nature, which contradicts the Constitution of Ukraine guaranteeing equal rights and freedoms for all citizens.

In legislative terms, the Crimean Tatars, Krymchaks and Karaites who, according to the most optimistic Kiev estimates, make up no more than 0.1% of the population now, enjoy a privileged position in Ukraine. Moreover, this was done recently: the law "On Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine"¹⁷⁰⁴ was adopted in July 2021 in the interests of the mentioned groups, guaranteeing their rights to get education in their native language, create their own educational institutions and media, as well as protection from assimilation (the rest of national minorities were not awarded such a privilege).

¹⁷⁰² <https://www.1tv.ru/news/2023-09-04/460551->

[na-ukraine-politsiya-vorvalas-v-svyato-bogoyavlenskiy-zhenskiy-monastyr](https://www.1tv.ru/news/2023-09-04/460551-na-ukraine-politsiya-vorvalas-v-svyato-bogoyavlenskiy-zhenskiy-monastyr)

¹⁷⁰³ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 8th periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (observations published in February 2022)

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru

¹⁷⁰⁴ https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=36748189

As for other nationalities, the Kiev regime is pursuing a consistent line of legislatively consolidating the dominant role of the Ukrainian language and reducing the possibility of using other languages in the public space, while varying in degree of severity. The rights of Russian and Russian-speaking population are subject to the ultimate restrictions. Gradual legislative restriction of the linguistic rights of ethnic Russians and numerous Russian-speaking people of other nationalities became the main step in this direction.

For example, in 2017, the law on Education¹⁷⁰⁵ was adopted, which provided for the transition of Ukrainian educational institutions to the state language from 2020. Teaching in minority languages was only allowed in preschools and elementary schools.

According to the expert opinion of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe,¹⁷⁰⁶ many provisions of the mentioned act are discriminatory. PACE resolution "Protection and Development of Regional and Minority Languages in Europe" also criticized the document.¹⁷⁰⁷ In particular, the author of the report on the topic of the resolution, Hungarian MP Rózsa Hoffman said: "I firmly believe that while enacting the new legislation, the country failed to meet its international obligations and the Council of Europe standards." In December 2018, the then OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Lamberto Zannier stressed that Ukraine "must remain a space for all nationalities with different languages, which they should have the right to use".¹⁷⁰⁸

In April 2019, the law on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language¹⁷⁰⁹ was adopted. It mandated the use of the Ukrainian language in all areas of public life except for private communications and religious practice. Accordingly, any attempts to introduce an official policy involving multilingualism in Ukraine are seen as actions geared toward effecting violent changes, or toppling the constitutional order.

¹⁷⁰⁵ https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=37708387

¹⁷⁰⁶ [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2017\)030-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2017)030-e)

¹⁷⁰⁷ <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/23532#trace-1>

¹⁷⁰⁸ <https://ria.ru/20181206/1547556068.html>

¹⁷⁰⁹ https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=33624660

One of the prerequisites for this law was the February 2018 decision of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine, which declared unconstitutional the law on the Fundamentals of State Language Policy,¹⁷¹⁰ according to which the Russian language was a regional language in certain regions (13 out of 24 regions). Subsequently, at the instigation of some "language activists" the Russian language was deprived of its regional status by decisions of Ukrainian courts.

In compliance with the law on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language, the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of the Official Language and the National Commission on Ukrainian Language Standards have been established in 2019 to monitor the implementation of the laws on language. The Office of the Commissioner perform indeed functions of a repressive mechanism, since its responsibilities include monitoring compliance with the requirements outlined in language legislation, including conducting official investigations and making proposals on the imposition of disciplinary or administrative penalties on people or organizations who are in breach of the laws on language. Moreover, from 2022 on a legal provision imposing liability for debasing or disparaging the Ukrainian language came into effect. The introduced system of fines is of an impressive amount from 200 to 400 minimum wages.

On 21 June 2019, a group of 51 MPs of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine filed a submission to the Constitutional Court of Ukraine (CCU) raising the issue of the constitutionality of the law on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language with regard to the restrictions it imposes on the right of citizens to use and protect their native language and the right to develop the linguistic identity of indigenous peoples and national minorities of Ukraine.¹⁷¹¹ As one of the initiators of the appeal to the court, Novynskyy noted, instead of regulating public relations in the field of language policy in a multinational state, this law pits Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking citizens against each other.¹⁷¹² On

¹⁷¹⁰ <https://ria.ru/20180228/1515481546.html>

¹⁷¹¹ <https://www.ukrinform.ru/rubric-politics/3057613-konstitucionnyj-sud-vo-vtornik-vozmetsa-za-azykovoju-zakon.html>

¹⁷¹² <https://vesti.ua/strana/obrashhenie-v-ksu-po-yazykovomu-zakonu-yavlyaetsya-zashhitoy-prav-russkoyazychnyh>
<https://strana.today/articles/analysis/277345-pochemu-predstavitel-prezidenta-v-ks-zajavil-chto-ne-nuzhno->

14 July 2021, the CCU issued a ruling in which it recognized the law on the state language as compliant with the constitution.¹⁷¹³

In addition to the Russian language, the languages of other national communities, particularly the Hungarian language, were also affected. In December 2020, in response to a petition filed by the Ukrainian Prosecutor General Taras Kremin, the Commissioner for the Protection of the Official Language, all decisions issued by the Beregovsky and Vinogradovski district councils in Transcarpathia on the functioning of regional languages were deemed illegal and rescinded.¹⁷¹⁴

After the adoption of the law on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language, its provisions came into force gradually.

Since 16 January 2020, its Article 32, which defines the state language as the language of advertising in Ukraine, has been in force. The exceptions are the same as in other areas: print media and advertisements may be published in one of the EU languages. The corresponding amendments have been introduced to the law on Advertising.

On 16 July 2020, the next provisions of the law came into force, according to which the scientific sphere had to use only the Ukrainian language. According to the new requirements, in addition to Ukrainian, it is allowed to publish scientific publications in the EU official languages, but such works must necessarily contain an abstract in Ukrainian. Dissertations, monographs, and abstracts published after that date must be in Ukrainian or English. The same languages are used both for the academic defense and for the holding of public scientific events.

On 16 January 2021, Article 30 of the law came into effect, which provided for the service area to use only the Ukrainian language.

On 16 July 2021, a new stage of Ukrainianization of all spheres of public life began in the country. This refers to the entry into force of Articles 23 and 26 of

[otmenjat-zakon-o-totalnoj-ukrainizatsii-.html](#) (earlier <https://strana.ua/articles/analysis/277345-pochemu-predstavitel-prezidenta-v-ks-zajavil-hto-ne-nuzhno-otmenjat-zakon-o-totalnoj-ukrainizatsii-.html>)

¹⁷¹³ <https://tass-ru.turbopages.org/turbo/tass.ru/s/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/11902213>

¹⁷¹⁴ <https://strana.today/news/312768-na-zakarpate-utratali-dejstvie-mestnye-reshenija-o-rehionalnykh-jazykakh.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/312768-na-zakarpate-utratali-dejstvie-mestnye-reshenija-o-rehionalnykh-jazykakh.html>)

the law on language, according to which all cultural events must be held in the Ukrainian language, including theatre performances, concerts, and shows. Posters or advertising in other languages are prohibited, with the exception of names of artists, performers, or creative teams. Information boards, audio-video guides, booklets, and signs on exhibits in museums, galleries, and exhibition halls must be in the state language. Films in other languages must be dubbed into Ukrainian on television or in cinemas. As for book publishers, they are required to publish in Ukrainian at least 50 per cent of the total annual print run. Tourism and excursion services have also become more and more ukrainianized. At the same time, candidates for civil service positions have now to prove their knowledge of the Ukrainian language.

On 16 January 2022, a new language law concerning the media sphere came into force in Ukraine. The national print media are obliged, as of January 2022, to start issuing compulsory Ukrainian versions of issues published in non-national languages (for regional media the same norm will come into force in July 2024). Russian-language content is available only as an optional. In July 2024, the quota of broadcasting programs and films in Ukrainian language on TV and radio will increase to 90 per cent for national TV channels and 80 per cent for regional channels (now 75 per cent and 60 per cent respectively).

Law prohibits publishing advertisements in press in any language other than Ukrainian. Exceptions are made for English, the official languages of the EU, and the languages of indigenous peoples. In this connection, the Opposition Platform – For Life political party (since March 2022, along with the other 16 (as of January 2023) political parties in Ukraine, is has been banned) issued a statement where it called the destruction of Russian language print media as discrimination and humiliation of millions of Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine. The party noted that the introduced norm will make it unprofitable to publish media in Russian and impossible for Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine to receive information in their native language.

Since 16 July 2022, according to the next regulations of the law on language, all websites and social networking pages of public authorities, local governments, enterprises, institutions and organizations registered in Ukraine must have a Ukrainian-language version, which is loaded by default. All goods which have installed computer programs must have the Ukrainian-language interface. Also from this day on, fines may be levied against individuals for using the Russian language, if it is deemed to violate the provisions of the above-mentioned law.

It is worth noting that due to the sharply negative reaction of a number of European countries, primarily Hungary, to the discriminatory provisions of the law on Education, the law on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language included a provision stating that representatives of national minorities, whose languages are official in the European Union, are entitled to continue general secondary education in their native language until 1 September 2023 if they started it before 1 September 2018. In June 2023, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine approved a bill extending this period for another year, i.e. until 1 September 2024.¹⁷¹⁵ However, other national minorities remained outside the scope of application of the new norms. Thus, the Russian language has been subjected to double discrimination (simultaneously in relation to the state language and the official languages of the EU), which has been once again pointed out by the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, who noted the contradiction between the language law and Ukraine's international obligations, and also voicing fears that the law may create inter-ethnic tension in society.¹⁷¹⁶ The Commission's assessments and recommendations were supported by OHCHR.¹⁷¹⁷

Nevertheless, the recommendations of the expert body were ignored, and the next step towards the establishment of a mono-ethnic language regime in a multi-ethnic state was the adoption of the law on Complete General Secondary Education

¹⁷¹⁵ <https://delo.ua/ru/politics/v-ukraine-prodlyat-na-god-perexod-skol-nacmensinstv-na-ukrainskii-yazyk-obuceniya-419048/>

¹⁷¹⁶ [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2019\)032-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2019)032-e)

¹⁷¹⁷ OHCHR Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine. 16 February – 31 July 2020
https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/30thReportUkraine_RU.pdf

on 16 January 2020.¹⁷¹⁸ The document introduced three teaching models which depend upon the language spoken by the students. Provision was made for teaching Ukraine's indigenous peoples (which in Ukrainian law refers to the Crimean Tatars, Krymchaks, and Karaites) in their native languages during the entire period of their studies. Representatives from national minorities whose languages are official languages in the European Union have the opportunity to study in those languages during their first four years in school, after which the number of disciplines taught in Ukrainian will gradually increase from 20 per cent up to 60 per cent by the ninth grade. For all other students, the percentage of classes taught in the official language should range from 80 per cent to 100 per cent by the fifth grade.

As the result of a number of the laws adopted, including the laws on Education, on General Secondary Education and on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language, the Russian language was subjected to triple discrimination in the Ukrainian state: in relation to the state language, official EU languages and indigenous languages.

It is indicative that the Ukrainian authorities were not ready for the implementation of these innovations. In the run-up to a general transition to using the Ukrainian language for education, during the second half of June 2020, an inventory was taken of school libraries around the country to ensure all educational institutions had sufficient textbooks. However, the resources found were not enough to implement the requirements of the law. According to pupils' parents, schools were unable to provide children with textbooks, so it was recommended that they purchase them at their own expense.¹⁷¹⁹

The school year 2020/2021 showed that the implementation of the education law was conducted according to the toughest scenario, and in some regions local authorities exacerbated the situation. For example, in Lvov, the Ukrainization of Russian Lyceum No. 45, one of the most prestigious educational institutions in the

¹⁷¹⁸ <https://iz.ru/986778/2020-03-13/prezident-ukrainy-podpisal-zakon-ob-obrazovanii>

¹⁷¹⁹ <https://strana.today/news/272272-zakrytie-russkikh-shkol-v-ukraine-hde-brat-uchebniki-na-move.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/272272-zakrytie-russkikh-shkol-v-ukraine-hde-brat-uchebniki-na-move.html>)

city where about 1,000 children of different ethnicities studied, was presented as a special "achievement". A school principal who actively popularized Russian-language education was forced to resign from his position, and replaced with principal who had no previous connection to the school, but favoured the ban on teaching in Russian.

In order to "squeeze out" the Russian language, the forces of "civil society" (often radical organizations) were also involved, who, with the indulgence of the authorities, organized various aggressive actions against teachers who continued to use the Russian language. In March 2020, nationalists organized bullying of lyceum teachers in Lvov. The teachers were accused of "propaganda of the Russian World" and "Russification of Ukrainian children".¹⁷²⁰ A similar incident happened to the honoured teacher of Ukraine Pavel Viktor. In April 2020, nationalists unfolded an aggressive campaign against him because he had filmed physics video lessons in Russian.¹⁷²¹

In November 2020, professor at the National Technical University "Dnepr Polytechnic" (the city of Dneprpetrovsk) Valeriy Gromov, under the pressure of the university administration, had to submit his resignation after an official complaint lodged against him by a student who was indignant at the fact that the professor lectured in Russian.¹⁷²²

In general, the Ukrainian government's education policy has led to a decrease in the number of Russian-language schools in the country since 2013, from 1,275 to 25 in the 2021/2022 academic year.

In 2022, the process of "squeezing" the Russian language out of the sphere of education was completed in Ukraine: the curriculum for secondary schools for the academic year 2022/2023 no longer provides for teaching subjects in Russian or studying Russian either as a subject or as an elective. All literary works by Russian and Soviet (with the exception of Ukrainian) authors have been removed

¹⁷²⁰ <https://strana.today/news/253594-kak-vo-lvove-natsionalisty-atakujut-shkolu-s-rusским-jazykom-obuchenija-.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/253594-kak-vo-lvove-natsionalisty-atakujut-shkolu-s-rusским-jazykom-obuchenija-.html>)

¹⁷²¹ <https://vesti.ua/odessa/rabotaet-na-kreml-v-odessa-zatravili-izvestnogo-professora-iz-za-yazyka>

¹⁷²² <https://strana.today/news/299846-jazykovej-skandal-v-dnepre-za-cto-uvolili-professora-hromova-iz-dpi.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/299846-jazykovej-skandal-v-dnepre-za-cto-uvolili-professora-hromova-iz-dpi.html>)

from the literature programs of Ukrainian schools.¹⁷²³ The Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine has developed recommendations for the removal of Russian literature from library collections. These works, according to representatives of the ministry, "will be sent to waste paper for the printing of Ukrainian books".

On 7 February 2022, two teachers in Kiev schools (Lyceum No. 303 and School No. 152) were fired for using the Russian language during teaching. Dismissals occurred during an investigation of two educational institutions by Taras Kremin's office, the Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language. Teachers were reprimanded in educational institutions before they were fired.

On 9 February 2022, the State Language Protection Commissioner, Taras Kremin, addressed the mayors of a number of Ukrainian cities with a demand to dismantle the outdoor advertising, signboards and signs installed in violation of the language law. The message about this was published on the Taras Kremin's Facebook page. In particular, it was reported that letters were sent to the heads of Kiev, Kharkov, Odessa, Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk), Zaporozhye, Nikolayev, Kherson, Sumy, Poltava, Chernigov, Cherkasy, Chernovtsi, Kropivnitskiy, Uzhgorod, Kremenchuk, Beregovo, Mariupol, Kramatorsk, Bakhmut and Krivoy Rog, and the heads of the Volnovakha, Slavyansk, Severodonetsk and Lysychansk city military-civil administrations.

In April 2022, Taras Kremin publicly called for abolition of teaching in Russian language in all educational institutions of the country since 1 September 2023.¹⁷²⁴ He proposed to replace the discipline "the Russian language" with other languages, for example, history of Ukraine or English, and until that was done he proposed that before the beginning of each lesson of the Russian language teachers should explain to Russian-speaking children that their native language is by definition the language of the aggressor, which is shameful to speak. Taras Kremin also said that the foreign literature program should be revised, since it places a

¹⁷²³ https://ru.osvita.ua/doc/files/news/866/86629/1_Rishennya.pdf

¹⁷²⁴ <https://strana.today/news/386692-v-shkolakh-mohut-perestat-obuchat-russkomu.html>

significant emphasis on the study of the works of Russian writers. On 11 April, he urged to get rid of the Russian-language names of settlements in the country justifying it by the slogan "Ukraine for Ukrainians".¹⁷²⁵

The Kiev authorities are not limiting themselves to excluding the Russian language only from education and science. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted in first reading the draft law No. 7633 on prohibiting the use of "Russian sources of information" in education in mid-December 2022, which imposes a ban on the use of Russian-language literature in science and education. The document proposes amending the law on Education to make it clear that references to literature and sources of information produced in the country's state language by Russian Federation persons or legal organizations are not permitted in Ukrainian curriculum. Similar changes are envisaged in the law on Scientific and Scientific-Technical Activity. All this is being introduced to "protect the educational and informational space of Ukraine from the influence of the Russian imperialism".¹⁷²⁶ In fact, it means a complete ban on scientific literature published in the Russian language, on the territory of Russia or by Russian citizens. Sources in Russian may no longer be used in schools, universities, or in scientific work.

Previously imposed obstacles preventing import of Russian literature by Ukrainian authorities (in the form of refusals to obtain relevant licenses) have already had detrimental implications. According to Strana.UA (a Ukrainian online newspaper), between November 2019 and 8 July 2020, not a single Russian publication was imported into Ukraine, and not a single license was issued. The restriction applies to fiction and also to specialist literature, which has resulted in an information deficiency. The lack of up-to-date research papers, including virology, became particularly evident during the pandemic.¹⁷²⁷

On 14 March 2022, Ukraine's Committee on Television and Radio Broadcasting imposed a ban on import and distribution of all Russian publishing

¹⁷²⁵ <https://ria.ru/20220411/yazyk-1782979284.html>

¹⁷²⁶ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/amp/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221219-v-pogone-za-movoy-ukraina-polnostyu-khoronit-ostatki-svoey-nauki-i-kultury/>

¹⁷²⁷ <https://strana.today/news/277505-zapret-na-vvoz-knih-iz-rossii-sprovotsiroval-defitsit-na-rynke-nauchnoj-literatury-v-ukraine.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/277505-zapret-na-vvoz-knih-iz-rossii-sprovotsiroval-defitsit-na-rynke-nauchnoj-literatury-v-ukraine.html>)

products with the goal of "preventing Russia's cultural and informational influence on Ukrainians."¹⁷²⁸

Furthermore, in June 2022, regulations were passed prohibiting the import and distribution of books and other publishing products from Russia and Belarus, as well as publication and sale of books written by Russian citizens.

Since May 2020, there has been a three-year extension of the 2017 ban restricting access from Ukrainian territory to 468 Russian sites and social networking platforms, including Yandex, Mail.ru, VKontakte, and Odnoklassniki, as well as software products from 1C, Kaspersky Lab, and Doctor Web. Furthermore, in September 2020, Oleksiy Danilov, Secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, announced that the Ukrainian special services would track and preserve a registry of those who used the aforementioned social networks.¹⁷²⁹

Despite the legal restrictions, programs in Russian are still in demand, although the Ukrainian authorities have been trying to address this. It is illustrative that on 13 January 2022, the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council of Ukraine announced during an online meeting that it would conduct checks on Ukrainian channels because of the abundance of Russian-language content on New Year's Eve.

Simultaneously, the provisions of the law on Television and Radio Broadcasting¹⁷³⁰ forbid the streaming of films and programs where "banned" actors starred. Also, under Ukrainian law on Cinema,¹⁷³¹ it is prohibited to show films and TV shows related to Russian security forces, as well as Russian television programs and films in Russian produced after 2014.

On 7 October 2022, the law on Amending the Ukrainian law on Support of National Music Production and Restriction of Public Use of Music Production Produced by the Aggressor State,¹⁷³² which outlaws broadcasting Russian music on

¹⁷²⁸ <https://iz.ru/1304904/2022-03-14/na-ukraine-vveli-zapret-na-vvoz-i-rasprostranenie-vsekh-knig-iz-rossii>

¹⁷²⁹ <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/25/09/2020/5f6db5599a794765448c5e81>

¹⁷³⁰ https://urst.com.ua/ru/act/o_televidenii_i_radioveschani

¹⁷³¹ https://kodeksy.com.ua/ka/o_kinematografii.htm

¹⁷³² <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/go/2310-20>

television, radio, and in public places, as well as tours of Russian singers, and forbids the broadcast of Russian music on TV, radio, and in public places, as well as tours by Russian performers, entered into force.

Even before this law was passed, nationalists were actively involved in combating the public performance of Russian songs and, in general, the use of the Russian language in everyday life. For example, since the beginning of 2021, unofficial associations who are radically inclined towards the Russian language – the so-called "language activists"¹⁷³³ – consisting mainly of young people,¹⁷³⁴ have become active in Lvov. They conducted a number of relevant actions. For example, "language activists" demanded from the administration of "Puzata Khata" café to stop broadcasting Russian music and sent a complaint to the head office of this café networks. Such "actors" provoked a conflict in the city centre with the entertainer, who played Russian music. Another clash took place in the "AzArt" hookah café between the "activist blogger", Andreyev, and one of the café owners. Andreyev demanded in a form of an ultimatum that the owner turned off the Russian music which was playing in the place. The owner refused and Andreyev was forced to leave. The blogger published a critical post on social media after this and appealed to the city administration to check the café.

The pressure on citizens who use the Russian language in everyday life was not limited to formal measures. For example, on 5 March 2021, nationalists assaulted two street musicians who were performing songs in Russian in Lvov. The local police did not respond to this illegal attack as they should have done.¹⁷³⁵

There have also been cases of discrimination against Russian-speaking customers in a number of catering establishments, especially in Western Ukraine. For example, the administration of the New York Street Pizza cafe in Chernovtsi displayed a crossed-out image of a pig painted in Russian flag colours on its entrance. In response to the journalists' appeals, the cafe administrator said: "Such

¹⁷³³ Self-name – "Movniy Patrol", i.e. – "language patrol".

¹⁷³⁴ <https://is.gd/TmiDr3> (Facebook page of one of the "moovy patrol" associations).

¹⁷³⁵ <https://lvov.strana.today/366447-zakon-o-jazyke-vo-lvove-izbili-ulichnykh-muzykantov-za-pesni-na-russkom.html> (earlier <https://lvov.strana.ua/321171-zakon-o-jazyke-dobraljsja-do-muzykantov-vo-lvove-izbili-ljudej-za-russkij-jazyk.html>), <https://iz.ru/1262808/2021-12-10/vo-lvove-izbili-ispolnivaushikh-pesni-na-russkom-muzykantov>

visitors refuse to communicate in an English foreign language and in Ukrainian. And we, on principle, do not communicate in Russian. It's our language policy."¹⁷³⁶

On 30 May 2022, a video filmed in Lvov appeared on the Internet showing a volunteer refusing to provide the UN humanitarian aid to refugees from the eastern part of Ukraine because they spoke Russian. When asked, the volunteer told the women that he did not understand them and demanded that they address him in Ukrainian. A nearby police officer pointed out to the refugees that it was forbidden to film the volunteer and, in response to their indignation, threatened to take the outraged women to the police station.

On 2 June 2023, a minor from Odessa singing Viktor Tsoi songs in Russian was detained in Lvov on the application of Natalia Pipa, an MP from the "Golos" party, who called the police. After the detention, he was sent from the police station to a shelter for minors in Lvov, where he spent a week because his disabled mother could not come and pick him up in person.¹⁷³⁷

According to statements made by Ukrainian officials, the authorities are purposefully pursuing a policy of elimination of the Russian-speaking space in Ukraine. In particular, the Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine Aleksey Danilov openly stated that "the Russian language should disappear altogether".¹⁷³⁸

Some Ukrainian officials have also been harassed for using the Russian language. On 13 January 2023, Kharkov Mayor I.Terekhov sued the language ombudsman Taras Kremin for repeatedly fining him for using the Russian language. Previously, in November 2022, he had been fined for using a non-state language while speaking on the Ukrainian national telethon. At the same time, he was given a warning for the fact that the social pages of the mayor of Kharkov are in Russian. In response, I.Terekhov said that he would continue to use Russian in

¹⁷³⁶ Online environment as a tool for violations of rights and freedoms in Ukraine. Institute of Legal Policy and Social Protection named after Irina Berezhnaya. 2022.

¹⁷³⁷ <https://focus.ua/ukraine/571602-skandal-s-pesney-coya-vo-lvove-paren-vyshel-iz-priyuta-i-rasskazal-o-planah-video>

¹⁷³⁸ <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/21/10/2022/6352a7b49a7947f3b9632b73>

his communication with Kharkov citizens, as it is spoken by 80 per cent of the citizens.

Meanwhile, the data from a sociological survey conducted by the Kiev International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) in February 2020 showed that 33 per cent of respondents believe that the state should provide all Russian-speaking citizens throughout Ukraine with the right to receive their school education in Russian all over the country. 40 per cent of the respondents consider that the Russian-speaking population should have that right in those regions where the majority of the population so wishes, but not throughout all Ukraine. Another 24 per cent of respondents consider the state should not support such a right. In addition, 37 per cent of respondents believe that the state should provide Russian-speaking citizens throughout Ukraine with the right to communicate with government officials in Russian, while another 31 per cent believe this should apply in those regions where the majority of the population wants this, but not throughout all of Ukraine, and 28 per cent of respondents believe that the state should not support such a right.¹⁷³⁹

Furthermore, according to the results of another KIIS survey conducted in April 2020, 48.8 per cent of respondents believe that the Russian language is part of Ukraine's historical heritage, and should be developed.¹⁷⁴⁰

Against this background, it is obvious that all the above-mentioned laws adopted by the Kiev regime are directed against the Russian language and their purpose is to narrow its use. The following examples may be provided. In October 2020, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Concept of the State Target Social Program of National-Patriotic Education until 2025,¹⁷⁴¹ which published the data of a sociological survey showing that less than half of the country's population – only 46 per cent – uses the Ukrainian language in family and household communication. It is noted that this indicator corresponds to zero in

¹⁷³⁹ <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=rus&cat=reports&id=920&page=7>

¹⁷⁴⁰ https://www.kiis.com.ua/materials/pr/20200406_pressconf/politics_april%202020.pdf

¹⁷⁴¹ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/prinyato-koncepciyu-derzhavnoyi-cilovoyi-socialnoyi-programi-nacionalno-patriotichnogo-vihovannya-na-period-do-2025-r>

Donbass. This situation is qualified by the Ukrainian authorities as "threatening".¹⁷⁴²

This demonstrates that, contrary to what the Kiev authorities claim, the underlying goal of legal management of the language field in Ukraine is not at all the popularization and development of the Ukrainian language, but a forced change in the linguistic identity of non-Ukrainian-speaking citizens living in the country.

This set of legislative measures, aimed at the gradual squeezing of the Russian language out of public life, contradicts both national legislation and Ukraine's international obligations. In particular, the policy of Ukrainianization conflicts with Article 10 of the Constitution of Ukraine, which guarantees free development, use and protection of Russian and other languages of national minorities of Ukraine; with Article 22, which states that the content and scope of existing rights and freedoms may not be restricted when new laws are adopted or when existing documents are amended; and with Article 53, which states the right of national minorities to study in their native language.

The provisions of the above acts contradict Ukraine's obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and a number of soft law acts: The UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, the Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the OSCE, the Concluding Document of the Vienna OSCE Meeting, and The Hague Declaration on the Rights of National Minorities to Education.

¹⁷⁴²<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1233-2020-%D1%80#Text>, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1233-2020-p#Text>).

It should be noted that all measures aimed at squeezing the Russian language out of public life of Ukraine were adopted, as indicated above, despite critics from the international human rights structures. The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the OHCHR have expressed their comments about the discriminatory legislative measures taken by the Ukrainian authorities. It is also worth highlighting the opinion delivered by the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe regarding the law "On Education" (December 2017)¹⁷⁴³, which confirmed the existence of discriminatory provisions in the document, and regarding the Law "On the functioning of the Ukrainian language as the official language" (December 2019),¹⁷⁴⁴ which pointed out the inconsistencies between its provisions and Ukraine's international obligations. The Commission's assessments and recommendations were supported by OHCHR.¹⁷⁴⁵

In addition to the elimination of the Russian language from all facets of Ukrainian society, there have been ongoing initiatives to spread hostility toward Russian citizens and the Russian culture as a whole. Such activities were not only not condemned or responded to by the authorities, but were also undertaken by the Ukrainian leadership itself. For example, President Zelensky, in an interview published on 5 August 2021,¹⁷⁴⁶ advised Russians to get out of Ukraine.

Hatred of Russians was openly propagandized on national and regional television channels. Russophobic remarks and calls for the murder of Russians were frequently broadcast. For example, the official advertisement of the program of Ukrainian journalist Y.Sokolova on "Channel 5" stated as follows: "Turn on 5! Moskals are pissed off!" In August 2022, on NTA television, she said that Russians should not be taken prisoner, they should be killed as much as possible, adding that she wanted "all of them to be destroyed as quickly as possible."

¹⁷⁴³ Conclusion No. 902/2017 of the Venice Commission (8-9 December 2017)

[https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2017\)030-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2017)030-e)

¹⁷⁴⁴ Conclusion No. 960/2019 of the Venice Commission (6-7 December, 2019)

[https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2019\)032-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2019)032-e)

¹⁷⁴⁵ OHCHR Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine. 16 February – 31 July 2020

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/30thReportUkraine_RU.pdf

¹⁷⁴⁶ <https://kanal-dom.tv/esli-ty-schitaesh-chto-my-russkie-bolshaya-oshibka-ostavatsya-zhit-na-donbasse-zelenskij-video/>

Journalist and TV host and former media director of the television channel "ZIK" O.Drozdov repeatedly publicly insulted Russian-speaking citizens and claimed that the Russian language for Ukraine is not only foreign, but also "aggressive-occupying and threatening". He also branded individuals who live in the nation and speak Russian "the pledge of war" and that they should "disappear as a species." In November 2022, O.Lakunova, a member of the Ukrainian Armed Forces who returned from captivity in an exchange, declared that "the entire Russian population must be destroyed". Moreover, she urged that even children should not be spared.

Russophobia spreads unhindered on the Internet and social networks. By now, many different publications, pictures, collages have been published that contain not just derogatory attitudes toward Russians, but that directly dehumanize them. This includes such negative comparisons as "Coloradas," "Vatniks," and "Orcs". Materials justifying and calling for the murder of Russians are being actively distributed.

Non-governmental organizations defending the interests of the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine have repeatedly sent appeals to European regional and international structures, including the Council of Europe and the OSCE, to ensure the rights of the Russian-speaking community. However, there was no reaction. According to NGOs, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Kairat Abdrakhmanov did not meet with members of Russian communities or heads of Russian-language human rights organizations during his official visit to Ukraine in September 2021. Similarly, the meeting of Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, with Russian-speaking human rights activists was not organized.¹⁷⁴⁷ The specialized structures of the European Union, to which the current Ukraine is so keen to be admitted, blatantly ignore the dismal human rights situation in that country.

¹⁷⁴⁷ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection 2022.

The position of our compatriots in Ukraine has recently substantially deteriorated due to the unprecedented Russophobic hysteria generated by the Kiev-controlled media. Ukrainian officials make serious efforts in this area. So, in response to the fraudulent staged-up action in Bucha, Culture Minister Aleksandr Tkachenko stated in an interview with 1+1 TV channel that "there is no mention of good Russians, as there are no good Russians" and urged people to fight them all over the world. The advisor to the President of Ukraine A.Geraschenko called on in the social media "to find and punish" all civilians who cooperated with the Russian military servicemen in the Kiev Oblast. B.Filatov, the mayor of Dnepropetrovsk (Dnepr) known for his hate of all Russian, advocated on Facebook to "kill Russians all over the world and in large numbers." The secretary of the National Security and Defense Council, A.Danilov, called the Russians "rats" and "swine dogs" ("schweinehund"), and called for "poisoning them" and "destroying them by all means".

On 17 June 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted Decree No. 692¹⁷⁴⁸ on withdrawal from the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of Ukraine on visa-free travels of citizens of the Russian Federation and Ukraine of 16 January 1997, which expired on 1 January 2023, and on 10 April 2023, the Cabinet adopted a law on termination of the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the procedure of crossing the Russian-Ukrainian border by the residents of border regions of the Russian Federation and Ukraine of 18 October 2011. Kiev has unilaterally introduced a visa regime with Russia, which has had a negative impact on the situation of tens of thousands of its citizens permanently residing or temporarily staying in Ukraine.

By 2021, Russian journalists have been de facto deprived of the right to pursue their activities in Ukraine. They are not allowed to events designated for the media, conducted by the state governmental institutions. Their accreditation

¹⁷⁴⁸ https://base.spininform.ru/show_doc.fwx?rgn=141570

requests are not taken into consideration. In 2021, the Kiev office of TASS was closed due to sanctions restrictions introduced against it.

Russian compatriots continue to face a challenging scenario as their rights and liberties are frequently abused. In recent years, Russian-speaking activists have continuously faced violation of their rights to the integrity of person, dwelling, property; they have been intimidated and subjected to pressure by law enforcement authorities, intelligence services and nationalist groups.

In December 2018, SBU officers searched the premises of members of the Russian-speaking community in Poltava. The coordinator of the All-Ukrainian Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriot Organizations, Sergey Provatorov (who also heads *Russkoye Sodruzhestvo* (Russian Commonwealth) association), had his Pushkin medal confiscated.

Investigative activities were conducted in respect of the historian Yu. Pogoda (a well-known researcher of the Northern War period), poet and publicist V. Shestakov (head of the Poltava Oblast Russian Community). Criminal proceedings were brought against them under Article 110 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine ("attempts on territorial integrity").

In May 2019, the SBU conducted a search of the head of the Transcarpathian regional association "Rus" V. Saltykov. Mobile communication devices and personal computer equipment were seized.

The arrest (in August 2020) on suspicion of treason (which is subject to a punishment in the form of imprisonment for a period of 12 to 15 years with confiscation of property) by the SBU officers of a Russian language and literature teacher, head of the non-government organization Russian National Community "Rusich", a distinguished teacher with long-term experience, T. Kuzmich, who is widely known for her active work to promote the Russian language in Ukraine, has caused great public outcry. The Ukrainian security services accused her of the fact that during her stay in Crimea she allegedly "was involved by the FSB of Russia in espionage activities, transferred materials for conducting subversion activities in the Kherson Oblast and all over Ukraine" and that she was also involved in

"creation of a spy network". It is worth noting that T.Kuzmich has paid regular visits to the peninsula since 2008 within the framework of her professional duties for taking part in the Great Russian Word Festival. The measure of restraint chosen for her was remand in custody, however in the beginning of October 2020 she was released on bail.

From the start of the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilian population of Donbass, the MFA of Russia received applications from over 5 thousand Russian citizens staying in Ukraine. In most of the cases, these letters contained requests to inform about safe ways of evacuation from Ukraine to Russia and other countries. Many of our fellow citizens point to the violence unleashed in Ukrainian cities by members of the so-called Territory Defense Forces and others who obtained firearms through uncontrolled distribution.

Among those kept prisoner by Ukrainian authorities were over a hundred Russian sailors in the ports of Odessa and Izmail, as well as foreign citizens – students from other countries attending Ukrainian colleges and crew members of maritime vessels. They were treated inappropriately and were subjected to physical abuse. The Russian sailors were released in several exchanges, the last of which did not take place until mid-October 2022.

The Kiev regime's officials are taking steps to limit our citizens' liberties. The National Bank of Ukraine became one of the first among such bodies who prohibited to the credit institutions in the country to perform any currency operations using the Russian rouble. This step made by the regulator left thousands of persons in the country without means of subsistence.

On 1 March 2022, all mobile operators in Ukraine banned communication for phones with Russian numbers.¹⁷⁴⁹

The private property rights of Russians are also violated. The Ukrainian law "On the Main Principles of Compulsory Seizure of Property in Ukraine of the

¹⁷⁴⁹ <https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2022/03/03/17376829.shtml>

Russian Federation and its Residents"¹⁷⁵⁰ went into effect on 7 March 2022. The law allows for the extrajudicial seizure of movable and immovable property, money, bank deposits, and other items by the decision of the National Security and Defense Council, which was implemented by presidential decree, without providing any sort of compensation.

The decision to halt processing of Russian citizen applications for immigration and residency permits during the duration of martial law was made by the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers on 2 November 2022.¹⁷⁵¹

On 30 December 2022, V.Zelensky signed Law No. 8224 "On National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine", adopted by the Verkhovna Rada on 13 December 2022, according to which ethnic Russians, or as they are veiled in the text – "who identify their membership by ethnic origin with the state recognized in Ukraine and/or international organizations as the state-terrorist (aggressor-state)". For the duration of martial law in Ukraine and for six months after its lifting, virtually all rights and freedoms are restricted, including the right to peaceful assembly, to receive funding, to establish consultative bodies under local administrations, and the right to participate in international activities.

The provisions of this law were criticized in the report of the Venice Commission of 12 June 2023, therefore, in order to remove obstacles to European integration, on 21 September 2023, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine voted to amend the law on national minorities. At the same time, these amendments do not imply any real expansion of the rights and freedoms of Ukraine's national minorities, and even impose additional restrictions on Russian-speaking citizens.¹⁷⁵²

The whole spectrum of xenophobia is characteristic of modern Ukraine. Anti-Semitic incidents significantly increased as a result of widespread campaigns to glorify Ukrainian Nazi collaborators who organized and took part in the slaughter of the Jewish population of the country during World War II.

¹⁷⁵⁰ https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=33474326&pos=10;-32#pos=10;-32

¹⁷⁵¹ <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/02/11/2022/6361c4e79a79478937e28120>

¹⁷⁵² <https://ukraina.ru/20230922/1049615530.html>

It went so far as to directly borrow the methods used by the Nazis (which the Ukrainian authorities began to demonstrate widely in 2022). The incident against the Jewish community in Kolomyia is illustrative in this respect. On 11 February 2020, the head of the local Jewish community, Y. Zalitsker, received a letter from the Ivano-Frankovsk regional subdivision of the National Police, requesting him to provide them with a complete list of all Jewish residents, including students, with their addresses and contact details. This demand was explained as being part of the fight against organized crime.¹⁷⁵³

According to a survey conducted by the Anti-Defamation League, Ukraine is the second most anti-Semitic country in Europe. In 2016, 32 per cent of Ukrainians admitted to being intolerant of Jews, and by 2019 the proportion was 46 per cent.¹⁷⁵⁴ At the same time, the position of the non-governmental organization towards Ukraine has recently softened. According to the 2023 monitoring data, the level of anti-Semitism was 29 per cent.¹⁷⁵⁵ Moreover, in March 2022, the organization began to justify the neo-Nazi Kiev regime having published an interview with David Fishman, professor of Jewish history at the Jewish Theological Seminary, where he said that neo-Nazis in Ukraine are a small and very marginal group with no political influence and who don't attack Jews".¹⁷⁵⁶

The Kantor Center's report on the state of anti-Semitism around the world confirms that in 2020, in Ukraine, there were recorded more anti-Semitic incidents than in previous years.¹⁷⁵⁷

The United Jewish Community of Ukraine's 2020 report on anti-Semitism¹⁷⁵⁸ mentions, among other things, attacks on synagogues in Vinnitsia and Mariupol, as well as an attempted arson of a synagogue in Kherson, which occurred on 20 April 2020. As the investigation into the latter incident revealed,

¹⁷⁵³ https://lenta.ru/news/2020/05/13/perepis_jude/

¹⁷⁵⁴ <https://apnews.com/f18c9fa70b794974b214b6e9f1552cfd>

¹⁷⁵⁵ <https://global100.adl.org/country/ukraine/2023>

¹⁷⁵⁶ See, for example, <https://www.informationliberation.com/?id=62981>, <https://www.sott.net/article/465995-ADL-defends-Ukraines-neo-Nazis-They-dont-attack-Jews-or-Jewish-institutions?ysclid=lmgpcgkh6q921807334>

¹⁷⁵⁷ <https://lenta.ru/news/2021/04/07/antisemitism/>

¹⁷⁵⁸ 2020 Report on Anti-Semitism in Ukraine. <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/otchyot-po-antisemitizmu-v-ukraine-za-2020-god>

the perpetrators espoused Nazi ideology and attempted to set fire to a synagogue building to celebrate the anniversary of Hitler's birthday.

On 19 January 2020, a memorial sign commemorating the 15,000 Jews exterminated in the Holocaust was desecrated in Krivoy Rog, the Dnepropetrovsk Oblast.

On 20 February 2020, an unidentified man in camouflage burst into the synagogue in Vinnitsa and attacked a member of the congregation, shouting "beat the Jews!"

On 15 June 2020, an announcement was circulated on the Internet, including Facebook, about the 1st all-Ukrainian competition-festival of contemporary music "Gonta-fest," named after the organizer of the Uman massacre, I.Gonta.¹⁷⁵⁹

On 11 September 2020, a sign in Ukrainian/Hebrew appeared in the Kozerog cafe in Uman, the Cherkasy Oblast, stating that "Hasidim are not served/Hasidim are not allowed in."

On the night of 24-25 October 2020, in Melitopol, the Zaporozhye Oblast, unknown persons desecrated the monument "Crying for the Unborn," set up in memory of Holocaust victims.

In December 2020, employees of the Southeast Interregional Department of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory used images with anti-Semitic content in their presentation materials.

In 2021, the total number of anti-Semitic incidents was slightly higher than in 2020. At the same time, there was an increase in anti-Semitic vandalism, which peaked during Hanukkah celebrations at the end of November-beginning of December 2021. At the time, in Lisichansk, six Hanukkahs and a memorial to Holocaust victims were vandalized by anti-Semites.¹⁷⁶⁰

On 7 February 2021, the Center of Educational Literature published the book "Jews or Zhids" by the Nazi collaborator and OUN activist Zinovy Knysh.

¹⁷⁵⁹ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection 2022.

¹⁷⁶⁰ Anti-Semitism in Ukraine – 2021. <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/antisemitism2021>

Zinovy Knysh was directly involved in organizing the Jewish pogroms and led the anti-Semitic Ukrainian Central Committee.¹⁷⁶¹

At the end of 2021, there were also incidents of an anti-Semitic nature, which were timed to coincide with the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah in Rovno. According to reports from the United Jewish Community of Ukraine, vandals damaged a Hanukkiah lamp in Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk) on 29 November and in Kiev on 30 November. On 4 December, a Hanukkiah in Rovno was damaged.¹⁷⁶²

In 2022, anti-Semitic acts and attacks continued.

On 18 January 2022, in Lisichansk, another anti-Semitic act of vandalism was recorded. Unknown persons destroyed a memorial to Jewish victims of World War II in Lysychansk located at the city cemetery "Green Grove". This is the second destruction of the monument. After the first, which occurred in December 2021, the monument was rebuilt with donations from concerned citizens.

On 28 January 2022, a similar attack occurred in Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk): unknown persons desecrated lamps at the monument to the Holocaust victims in the Gagarin Park, and the memorial was doused with paint. Igor Romanov, the director of the Dnepropetrovsk Oblast' association of Jewish communities, noted that this is not the first act of vandalism, and due to the lack of video surveillance cameras, previous desecrations of memorials have also gone unpunished. According to him, such criminal acts are timed either to coincide with Jewish holidays or Holocaust-related mourning dates, including the International Holocaust Remembrance Day.¹⁷⁶³

At the beginning of February 2022, the Centre for Contemporary Art of Ivano-Frankovsk hosted an exhibition of anti-Semitic paintings by the Ukrainian artist R. Bonchuk as part of the Precursor exhibition. One of them was titled "A Jew with a Pig". The second depicted a monster in a black hat, and the Torah scroll

¹⁷⁶¹ The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine The Irina Berezhnaya Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection 2022.

¹⁷⁶² <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/13112933?ysclid=lmgp74s2g1129419910>

¹⁷⁶³ <https://ria.ru/20220627/vandaly-1797851444.html>

was presented in place of the meat in the shawarma machine. After complaints from the United Jewish Community of Ukraine, they were removed on 6 February.

On March 31, 2022, I.Perelman, director of the Jewish Community of Ivano-Frankovsk, was attacked and stabbed three times while distributing lunches to the needy in Ivano-Frankovsk. The physical violence was accompanied by anti-Semitic remarks in front of numerous witnesses.¹⁷⁶⁴

On May 16, 2022, in Khmelnytsky, vandals drew a swastika on the Tkhiya Jewish community center.¹⁷⁶⁵

On July 26, 2022, M.Kovalchuk, a former deputy of the Kiev City Council and head of the National-Patriotic Movement of Ukraine, published an anti-Semitic post on his Facebook page in which, among other things, he claimed that "orthodox Jews practice ritual murder of people".¹⁷⁶⁶

On September 29, 2022 (on the Day of Remembrance of Babi Yar victims), at the OKKO gas station near the town of Yavorov, Lvov region, Hasidim were denied service on ethnic and religious grounds.¹⁷⁶⁷

On October 4, 2022, in Ivano-Frankovsk, a group of young people destroyed part of the hedge at the oldest cemetery in the city, tearing down the Star of David.

On December 26, 2022, graffiti containing anti-Semitic inscriptions and a call to kill Jews appeared in Uzhgorod.¹⁷⁶⁸

On February 14, 2023, unknown people threw paint on the recently restored monument to Jewish poet P.Celan.¹⁷⁶⁹

On April 11, 2023, the United Jewish Community of Ukraine reported that anti-Semitic inscriptions were systematically appearing in Mirgorod, Poltava region.¹⁷⁷⁰

¹⁷⁶⁴ <https://www.unian.net/incidents/direktor-evreyskoy-obshchiny-ivano-frankovska-poluchil-tri-nozhevyh-raneniya-novosti-ukraina-amp-11767225.html>

¹⁷⁶⁵ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/vandalyi-narisovali-svastiku-na-evrejskom-obshhinnom-czentre-v-xmelniczkom>

¹⁷⁶⁶ <https://amp.strana.today/news/401075-eks-deputat-kiev rady-mikhail-kovalchuk-zajavil-cto-evrei-ubivajut-detej.html>

¹⁷⁶⁷ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/na-okko-v%D1%96dmovlyayut-v-obslugovuvann%D1%96-xasidam-zanacz%D1%96onalnoyu-ta-rel%D1%96g%D1%96jnoyu-oznakoyu>

¹⁷⁶⁸ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/vipadok-antisem%D1%96tskogo-vandal%D1%96zmu-v-uzhgorod%D1%96>

¹⁷⁶⁹ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/u-chern%D1%96vczyax-oblily-farboyu-pamyatnik-poeta-evrejskogo-poxodzhennya>

On June 23, 2023, an old Jewish cemetery was desecrated in Khorol, Poltava region.¹⁷⁷¹

On July 28, 2023 in Ovruch, Zhitomir region, heavy machinery destroyed the territory of the old Jewish cemetery.¹⁷⁷²

The sharp increase in pressure on Russians and Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine in 2022 did not mean that all the problems of other national minorities in the country had been eliminated. Serious concerns about the continuing infringement of the rights of compatriots in Ukraine are still felt in Budapest and Bucharest. They note that Kiev has not given up its attempts to assimilate the Hungarian and Romanian communities and continues to deprive them of the opportunity to use their native language "outside their homes" and get an education in it. It is not by chance that back in January 2023 the Hungarian and Romanian Ombudsmen for Human Rights announced their plans to visit Ukraine in the near future in order to find out on the spot to what extent Law No. 8224 "On National Minorities (Communities)" adopted by the Verkhovna Rada on December 13, 2022 actually meets the task of protecting their rights.

A blatant violation by the Ukrainian authorities of the Hungarian community's right to preserve its cultural identity, as stated in this law, was the dismantling on October 13, 2022 of the Turul sculpture in Mukachevo Palanok Castle (Transcarpathian region), which was replaced by a Ukrainian trident.

The Kiev regime exerted brutal pressure on the Hungarian community living in Transcarpathian region. At the end of 2020, armed Ukrainian special forces searched the house of the chairman of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association L. Brenzovics and the office of the organisation in connection with a criminal case for separatism. The reason was the singing of the Hungarian national anthem at a meeting of the organisation. According to the representatives of the Association, they used to sing the hymn before as well at ceremonial events where no decisions were made, but no one paid attention to it. The organisation itself

¹⁷⁷⁰ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/antisem%D1%96tsk%D1%96-napisi-pom%D1%96tili-v-mirgorod%D1%96>

¹⁷⁷¹ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/u-xorol%D1%96-oskvernyayut-stare-kladovishhe>

¹⁷⁷² <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/v-ovruch%D1%96-oskvernyayut-stare-evrejske-kladovishhe-foto>

believes that the actions of the Ukrainian security forces based on fabricated political accusations are aimed at making the activities of Hungarian organisations impossible and intimidating the Hungarians of Transcarpathia and their leaders.¹⁷⁷³

The administrative changes taking place in the country also pose a threat to the interests of ethnic minorities. Thus, on July 17, 2020, the Verkhovna Rada decided to enlarge Beregov district where Hungarians accounted for 76% of the population. According to I. Borto, deputy head of the Transcarpathian Regional Council, MP of the Party of Hungarians of Ukraine, after the expansion of its territory by adding Vinogradov district, the percentage of the Hungarian minority decreased to 43%. A similar situation took place in all Transcarpathian districts where representatives of this nationality lived compactly. Thus, after the enlargement of Uzhgorod district, Hungarians accounted for only 13% of the total population instead of 33%, and in Mukachevo district – for 4% instead of 12%.¹⁷⁷⁴

Representatives of the Romanian community also claim that their rights have been violated as a result of the language and administrative reforms carried out by the Ukrainian authorities. Redrawing of the borders of the districts where the representatives of this minority lived compactly resulted in the formation of new administrative territorial units where the Romanians account for about 10% of the total population. For them, this means the loss of representation in the country's parliament and its reduction in local councils, as well as forced assimilation in violation of Ukraine's international obligations.¹⁷⁷⁵

The fact that the majority of persons belonging to ethnic or national minorities in Ukraine are at risk of discrimination and stigmatisation has been pointed out by international human rights monitoring mechanisms. Among others, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has noted that radical right-wing organisations operating in the country, such as the Right Sector, the

¹⁷⁷³ <https://strana.today/news/304131-venhry-zakarpatja-nazvali-okhotoj-na-vedm-obyski-v-venherskom-fonde-i-proverku-sbu.html>

¹⁷⁷⁴ <https://ukraina.ru/exclusive/20200613/1027978005.html>; <https://gordonua.com/amp/newspolitics/rada-vmesto-490-sozdala-v-ukraine-136-rajonov-polnyj-spisok-1509766.html>

¹⁷⁷⁵ <https://strana.today/news/278990-ukrainskie-rumyny-pozhalovalis-bukharestu-na-prinuditelnuju-ukrainizatsiju-i-adminreformu.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/278990-ukrainskie-rumyny-pozhalovalis-bukharestu-na-prinuditelnuju-ukrainizatsiju-i-adminreformu.html>)

Azov Civil Corps and the Social-National Assembly actively incite racial hatred and propagate racist ideology.¹⁷⁷⁶ Numerous cases of intolerance propaganda can be found on the Internet. Racist and anti-Semitic publications are posted on specific nationalist information resources.¹⁷⁷⁷ Ukraine's human rights organisations have noted a growth in the number of instances of xenophobia and aggression directed at foreigners by law enforcement officers. The practice of detaining, arresting individuals, conducting document checks based on a person's race or ethnicity is still widespread.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination also noted that racist hateful speech and discriminatory comments mainly directed at minorities are now becoming increasingly common in public discussions of all kinds, including in speeches given by public and political figures, in the media – especially on the Internet, and during demonstrations.¹⁷⁷⁸

In November 2021, the Human Rights Committee indicated that hate speech is widespread in the country and hate crimes against minorities are frequently committed by members of right-wing organisations. Roma, Hungarians, Crimean Tatars (along with Jehovah's Witnesses and members of the LGBT community) were mentioned among such minority groups.¹⁷⁷⁹

Human rights advocates have recorded dozens of instances of intolerant or aggressive conduct towards members of minorities or persons with alternative political views. They are particularly concerned about illegal actions by members of radical nationalist organisations (S14, the Right Sector, Tradition&Order, the National Corps, the National Vigilantes, the OUN, etc.). Their violent attacks are

¹⁷⁷⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) on the combined 22nd and 23rd periodic reports of Ukraine. August 2016.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

¹⁷⁷⁷ <https://strana.ua/opinions/161506-ukrainskie-natsionalisty-nachali-raspolzatsja-po-seti.html>

¹⁷⁷⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) on the combined 22nd and 23rd periodic reports of Ukraine. August 2016.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

¹⁷⁷⁹ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (observations were published in February 2022)
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f2F8&Lang=ru

almost entirely ignored by Ukraine's law enforcement bodies. The right-wing radicals make no attempt to hide the fact that their activities are closely coordinated with the SSU and Ministry of Interior.

Stereotypes and prejudices against Roma persist. Members of this community are often victims of aggression, up to the most extreme manifestations, physical attacks and murders. Right-wing radicals regularly harass Roma on the Internet by publishing offensive texts, caricatures and collages. For example, in November 2020, a number of news outlets in Ivano-Frankovsk published articles describing Roma with negative ethnic stereotypes, which triggered a wave of hate speech against the Roma community and calls for violence on social networks.¹⁷⁸⁰

International human rights organisations and bodies have noted that the Ukrainian justice system barely responds to attacks on the Roma community by nationalists¹⁷⁸¹. Moreover, Ukrainian officials are involved in the persecution of this national minority. In March 2020, the then Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine, V.Krykliy, together with members of the radical structures S14 and Municipal Guard took part in a "raid to combat" Roma at the railway station in Kiev.

On April 22, 2020, the mayor of Ivano-Frankovsk, R.Martsinkiv, officially ordered to remove all members of the Roma community from the city to the Transcarpathian region.¹⁷⁸²

Attacks against Roma are a regular occurrence in Ukraine. On January 10, 2021 in Lvov, unknown persons attacked a member of this nationality, accusing him of theft, doused him with the dilute alcoholic solution of brilliant green and beat him up.¹⁷⁸³

¹⁷⁸⁰ Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights & Freedoms in Ukraine. Institute for Legal Policy & Social Protection named after Irina Berezhnaya, 2022.

¹⁷⁸¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) on the combined 22nd and 23rd periodic reports of Ukraine. August 2016.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

¹⁷⁸² Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights & Freedoms in Ukraine. Institute for Legal Policy & Social Protection named after Irina Berezhnaya, 2022.

¹⁷⁸³ <https://violence-marker.org.ua/blog/2022/06/03/ultrapravi-konfrontacziyi-ta-nasylstvo-u-2021-roczni/>

On October 5, 2021, a similar attack took place in Dnepr, during which an unknown right-wing radical beat a Roma man and sprayed a gas canister in his face.¹⁷⁸⁴

On October 17, 2021, members of the neo-Nazi organisation S14 and the "Municipal Guard" attacked a tabor of Roma in the town of Irpen with flares and smoke bombs. One of the organisers of the attack was A.Mevedko who was accused of the murder of writer O.Buzina.

On October 23, 2021, a member of the Azov battalion, M.Yarosh, openly and cynically beat Roma women in the centre of Kiev. The attack was videotaped and subsequently disseminated on the Internet.¹⁷⁸⁵

On November 17, 2021, Ukrainian neo-Nazis again attacked Roma girls in the centre of Kiev. During the abuse, the radicals damaged the victims' faces and clothes. They filmed their actions and disseminated them on the Internet.¹⁷⁸⁶

On January 14, 2022, in Lutsk, a man with a gun attacked a Roma family, threatened to kill everyone, and hit a child with a brick.¹⁷⁸⁷

Even deputies are attacked by nationalists. On August 13, 2021, the Verkhovna Rada MP, member of the Servant of the People party Zhan Beleniuk, was insulted in Kiev by two radicals who called him a "black monkey" and suggested that he "go to Africa".

Racist acts against Asian and African nationals in Ukraine in February-March 2022 were shocking. These included the beating of Indian students for their country's refusal to vote against Russia at the UN General Assembly; rude treatment of Africans wishing to leave Ukraine; negative treatment of Chinese nationals, etc.

Many testimonies of the victims who suffered racial discrimination when trying to leave the country along with Ukrainians were published in the media. In particular, there is a clearly visible pattern of people of African and Asian descent

¹⁷⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸⁶ Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights & Freedoms in Ukraine. Institute for Legal Policy & Social Protection named after Irina Berezhnaya, 2022.

¹⁷⁸⁷ <https://youtu.be/ru71taHU3yU> (News of Lutsk and Volyn)

being prevented from boarding trains or buses, being taken out of vehicles, and being held in separate queues at border checkpoints.

The African Union expressed its concern about the situation of African citizens in Ukraine in its statement of February 28, 2022, noting that the "expulsion" of Africans and the unacceptable dissimilar treatment of them is shockingly racist.

In the spirit of the best Nazi examples, the Kiev authorities are conducting a campaign to purge political circles of undesirable figures and forces that oppose the biased domestic and foreign policy and represent competition to the ruling circles. To this end, the special services and the country's judicial system are actively involved.

As early as in November 2021, the Human Rights Committee noted a number of problems with the activities of political parties in Ukraine. In particular, corruption and opacity in the financing of political campaigns and the use of public funds for them were of concern. The Committee was also concerned about broad, vague legal provisions that allow parties to be denied or cancelled registration on the pretext of threats to national security. In addition to the need to ensure transparent, effective monitoring of campaign finance and the investigation of corruption allegations, the recommendations to Kiev include the promotion of a culture of political pluralism. At the same time, the Committee's experts pointed out that the realisation of civil and political rights in the country had been affected by the authorities' efforts to combat the coronavirus. As a result, the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers had introduced restrictive measures under the pretext of combating the disease. They mostly affected residents of the armed conflict zone, women, Roma and elderly people.

The Human Rights Committee was also concerned about the situation in the judiciary. In particular, it noted the lack of measures to fully ensure the independence of judges and prosecutors, the absence of a transparent procedure for the appointment and dismissal of judges, the conduct of qualification examinations and the investigation of possible cases of corruption. As a result, these factors,

together with the insufficient number of judges in the country, lead to delays in the consideration of court cases and, in general, difficulties in access to justice for a significant number of Ukrainian citizens.

The authorities were advised to refrain from interfering in the judicial system and to guarantee its independence. The fact that the investigation into the Maidan tragedies (the investigation has been completed and charges have been brought against V.Yanukovich and law enforcers in absentia) and the Odessa tragedy is being slowed down was cited as a manifestation of the underfunding of the courts and the shortage of personnel.¹⁷⁸⁸

The Ukrainian authorities are exerting undisguised pressure on the media, interfering in the work of those publications whose editorial policy and assessments contradict the position of official Kiev. The independent work of journalists is being restricted and attempts are being made to tighten censorship. Special services often interfere in the activities of the media and public organisations that hold alternative views to the official position.¹⁷⁸⁹ In this connection, the level of aggression against media workers remains high. In particular, there have been repeated cases of right-wing radical "activists" blocking television channels that Kiev does not want.

Despite calls from many human rights structures and mechanisms, there are still no visible developments in the investigation of the high-profile cases related to the deaths of O.Buzina and P.Sheremet.

International observers also point out numerous problems in the media field. In particular, they note the tendency of the media to lack editorial independence due to the political bias of their owners. In the same line, there are difficulties in journalists' access to public information due to administrative barriers created by the authorities. In addition, it is stated that the actions of the national regulator, the National Council of Television and Radio Broadcasting, in relation to the media

¹⁷⁸⁸ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (observations were published in February 2022)
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru

¹⁷⁸⁹ Monitoring of the observance of human rights in Ukraine in January 2018 – April 2019.
<https://forbiddentoforbid.org.ua/ru/monitoring-prav-cheloveka-konets-2018-nachalo-2019/>

may also be biased due to its affiliation with a number of politically biased media resources.

Attempts to present an alternative official view of the situation in the country or relations with Russia are being sharply suppressed by the Kiev regime, and this began long before 2022. On February 2, 2021, a decree issued by President V.Zelensky blocked the broadcasting of the national news television channels 112-Ukraine, NewsOne and ZIK, owned by Opposition Platform – For Life MP T.Kozak. Sanctions were also imposed against Kozak for five years. In his opinion, all these actions were caused by the inconsistency of the TV channels' positions with the central line pursued by the authorities.¹⁷⁹⁰

The ZIK and 112-Ukraine TV channels, as well as the Nash TV channel, have previously been harassed by Ukrainian law enforcers. They were accused of broadcasting programmes whose participants allegedly made statements containing signs of national and racial hatred, called for undermining the constitutional order of the state, violating its territorial integrity and sovereignty, and made statements popularising the authorities of the "aggressor country" and justifying the "occupation of Ukrainian territories". However, the channels were not closed.

Following the decision of the Ukrainian president to close the channels, journalists working for them created a new TV channel, Pershiy Nezalezhniy (First Independent). The channel went on air for the first time and was almost immediately disconnected from broadcasting. Against the backdrop of these events, several dozen well-known Ukrainian journalists representing various media outlets formed an association to defend their rights and demanded that the country's authorities stop their attacks on the press.¹⁷⁹¹

Criminal prosecution remains a common means of exerting pressure on unwanted journalists by the Kiev regime. The editorial offices of news agencies have been repeatedly searched. Since 2015, numerous charges have been brought against I.Guzhva, editor-in-chief of Strana.UA, Ukraine's largest independent

¹⁷⁹⁰ <https://strana.today/articles/analysis/315598-kakimi-budut-posledstviya-blokirovki-kanalov-dlja-zelenskoho-.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/articles/analysis/315598-kakimi-budut-posledstviya-blokirovki-kanalov-dlja-zelenskoho-.html>)

¹⁷⁹¹ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/11581293>

Internet media outlet, as a result of which he was forced to leave the country and seek political asylum in Austria. In August 2021, in accordance with the decision of the National Security and Defense Council, sanctions were imposed against him, which also applied to legal entities associated with him. In particular, the website of Strana.UA was blocked. The owner of Open Ukraine news agency and former serviceman A.Medinsky¹⁷⁹², the head of RIA Novosti Ukraine news agency K.Vyshinsky, independent journalists Y.Lukashin and V.Skachko were also harassed. D.Vasilets¹⁷⁹³ (released under house arrest in 2018 as the Court of Appeal overturned the conviction, but the case was not closed), V.Muravistky¹⁷⁹⁴ (since 2018, he was held under 24-hour house arrest, since November 2019, he was held under overnight house arrest), and P.Volkov¹⁷⁹⁵ (in March 2019, he was fully acquitted) were held in remand prisons, usually without the right to be released on bail.

Moreover, in addition to the direct impact on media outlets that take an independent position on the most sensitive issues, nationalists attack the offices of such media resources with the de facto connivance of the authorities. Thus, the buildings and premises of the TV channels Inter, NASH, 112-Ukraine, and NewsOne have been repeatedly threatened and attacked by radicals. As a rule, such incidents took place in connection with events involving participants from Russia or the demonstration of material critical of the Kiev authorities (including the well-known film by American director O.Stone "Revealing Ukraine").

On June 11, 2020, supporters of radical S.Sternenko, accused of committing a murder in May 2018 in Odessa, chased away journalists working for A.Shariy's resources from the SSU building, where investigative actions were taking place. The video published on Twitter shows how in response to a journalist's question about the reasons for inappropriate behaviour with her colleagues nationalists

¹⁷⁹² Ibid.

¹⁷⁹³ <https://riafan.ru/1212680-otsidevshii-bolee-dvukh-let-ukrainskii-zhurnalist-rasskazal-o-terrore-rezhima-poroshenko>

¹⁷⁹⁴ <https://uspishna-varta.com/ru/pravozashhitnye-kejsy/delo-vasiliya-muravitskogo>

¹⁷⁹⁵ <https://ukraina.ru/news/20190327/1023114167.html>

turned on a siren and, being close to the journalist, used foul language through a loudspeaker¹⁷⁹⁶.

On November 28, 2020, the correspondent of NewsOne TV channel V.Tovkes was attacked while reporting from Kiev's Park of Glory. During the live broadcast, an unknown person wearing a mask and a hood approached the journalist, took away and smashed the microphone on the pavement while shouting "This is a Rashist channel!", and then he pushed the journalist, shouted several insults and fled. Although the police opened criminal proceedings in connection with this incident, however, as of today nothing is known about the identification and detention of the suspect.

On February 12, 2021, in Kiev, radicals from S14 attacked journalist V.Shevchuk (*Pravovoy Kontrol* publication) who was covering a rally organised by nationalists near the premises of Nash TV channel. The law enforcement bodies did not arrest the attacker, although the victim detained him, and deliberately delayed the process of obtaining video recordings from surveillance cameras. The lawyer of the injured journalist pointed out the interest of the bodies of inquiry in covering up the traces of the crime.¹⁷⁹⁷

Human rights organisations emphasized that the impunity of the perpetrators for earlier attacks worsened the situation with media freedom. As an example, they cited the brutal beating in Cherkasy of journalist V.Komarov who specialised in investigative journalism, who was in a coma for a month and a half and died on June 20, 2019.¹⁷⁹⁸ The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine also noted in 2019 that O.Buzina murder trial which had already lasted for more than three years was under constant pressure from right-wing radical groups. As a result, the case, which had been heard by different courts, was in fact halted, and

¹⁷⁹⁶ <https://strana.today/news/272646-storonniki-sternenko-prohnali-ot-zdanija-sbu-storonnikov-sharija.html> (pauze <https://strana.ua/news/272646-storonniki-sternenko-prohnali-ot-zdanija-sbu-storonnikov-sharija.html>); <https://strana.today/news/272487-pod-zdaniem-sbu-hruppa-podderzhki-sternenko-prizyvaet-plevat-v-litso-zhurnalistam.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/272487-pod-zdaniem-sbu-hruppa-podderzhki-sternenko-prizyvaet-plevat-v-litso-zhurnalistam.html>)

¹⁷⁹⁷ <https://strana.today/news/317443-ljudi-karasja-sovershili-na-menja-otkrovennoe-napadenie-a-politsii-zatjahivaet-s-rassledovaniem-zhurnalist-serhej-shevchuk-o-podrobnostjakh-napadenija.html>

¹⁷⁹⁸ Amnesty International Report "Human Rights in Eastern Europe and Central Asia in 2019" <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/EUR0113552020ENGLISH.PDF>

the process returned to the beginning after the judge in charge of the case recused himself in May 2019.¹⁷⁹⁹ At the same time, on December 12, 2019, law enforcement agencies detained three suspects in the 2016 murder of prominent journalist P.Sheremet.¹⁸⁰⁰

In November 2021, the Human Rights Committee pointed with concern to attacks and acts of intimidation of journalists and human rights defenders by right-wing radicals (anti-corruption activists and LGBT defenders were noted as suffering). It also mentioned delays in the investigations into the murders of journalists O.Buzina, P.Sheremet and V.Komarov, as a result of which the perpetrators have not yet been found. It is recommended that Kiev should prohibit official interference in the legitimate activities of journalists and human rights defenders, guarantee them protection from any kind of threats, pressure, attacks and ensure the confidentiality of journalists' sources of information.¹⁸⁰¹

As noted above, in 2022 the Kiev authorities actively used the emerging situation to turn the state into the only source of information. Ukraine has taken measures in this area before. On March 11, 2021 President Vladimir Zelensky approved a decision of the NSDC on the creation of a Center for Combatting Disinformation, which is a working group forming part of the NSDC.¹⁸⁰² The Center is now known for spreading a lot of false information and "fake" news.

Legislative steps are being taken to combat alternative viewpoints. On March 19, 2022, the president of Ukraine enacted the decision of the National Security and Defense Council "On the implementation of a unified information policy under martial law," according to which all national TV channels are to be united on a single information platform of strategic communication – the 24hour marathon "Unified News".

¹⁷⁹⁹ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/AttacksAgainstJournalists.aspx>

¹⁸⁰⁰ https://ria.ru/20191224/1562805139.html?rcmd_alg=svd

¹⁸⁰¹ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (observations were published in February 2022)

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru

¹⁸⁰² <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/10952263>

On August 30, 2022, the Verkhovna Rada supported in the first reading the scandalous draft law "On the Media", designed to become a tool in the fight of the authorities against unwanted members of the press. This document, in particular, prohibits the publication of "materials containing the popularization or propaganda of organs of the aggressor state" as well as "unreliable materials" (the criteria for defining such materials are rather vague).

On December 16, 2022, this biased document was finally adopted by the Verkhovna Rada and entered into force in March 2023. The new regulation introduces the Kiev regime's total control of the media, extrajudicial blocking, and a de facto ban on the publication of any neutral information about Russia. It gave the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council of Ukraine unlimited mechanisms of pressure on any media, up to large fines and extrajudicial closure.

The normative act was adopted without regard to the opinion of the journalistic community. It was criticized in the summer of 2022 by the European Federation of Journalists, which called the project "worthy of the worst authoritarian regimes". Even at the stage of preparation of the draft law, it was severely criticized by the scientific-expert department of the parliament itself, which noted in its conclusion that "the provisions of the draft contradict the constitution of Ukraine, do not take into account the legal positions of the constitutional court of Ukraine, the international legal obligations of Ukraine and the practice of the European Court of Human Rights". It was also stated that "the mechanism of general regulation is indicated by the classic indicators of state coercion, characteristic of strict regulation of the activities of state power bodies".¹⁸⁰³

Secretary General of the International Federation of Journalists Anthony Bellanger in his statement of January 12, 2023 criticized the new law "On media" as a threat to media freedom and pluralism of opinion and called on the Kiev authorities to revise it in a dialogue with journalist associations.¹⁸⁰⁴

¹⁸⁰³ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221216-dostoinnyy-khudshikh-avtoritarnykh-rezhimov-na-ukraine-prinyali-shokiruyushchiy-zakon-o-smi/>

¹⁸⁰⁴ <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/ukraine-ifj-calls-on-the->

While the Ukrainian authorities are trying to gain full control over the law-abiding media offering an alternative view of the situation in the country, the notorious Myrotvorets website, which blatantly violates citizens' right to privacy, continues its operations without any hindrance. The site publishes illegally collected personal data of both Ukrainian citizens and foreigners who it considers to be "separatists" or "enemies of Ukraine", including reporters, politicians, cultural figures and even Russian diplomats.

This web site is used by the Ukrainian special services and radical nationalist organizations in order to put psychological pressure on those whom they accuse of "separatism and treason". The most egregious example was the site's publication in 2015 of personal data of the writer and journalist Oles Buzina, including his address. He was killed shortly afterwards this information appeared on the site. Many media professionals have reporting having their bank accounts blocked after the site listed them as "enemies of Ukraine". It is also known that in May 2016, the head of the National Bank of Ukraine V.Gontareva signed a letter recommending that Ukrainian organizations and businesses use the website "Myrotvorets" to obtain the data needed to "combat financial abuse and terrorist financing". Moreover, Myrotvorets is also used as a source of evidence by the Ukrainian courts at all stages of the judicial procedure, as has been clearly demonstrated by the NGO Uspishna Varta, which has identified more than 100 court decisions in criminal cases in which the reasoning given in the text of the judgment cites materials taken from the site.¹⁸⁰⁵

On March 14 2021, R.Zaitsev, the head of Myrotvorets, clearly hinted in an interview with the Ukrainian newspaper Fakti that his site was supported by the Ukrainian authorities (the Foreign Ministry, Interior Ministry, Ministry of Defense and Border Force) and also by foreign (Western) special services.

To date, more than 240 thousand people are listed in the Myrotvorets database, about 75 thousand of them are Russians. Among others, the personal

[government-to-revise-new-media-law.html](#)

¹⁸⁰⁵ Use of materials from the Myrotvorets site in court practice. Human rights platform "Uspishna VARTA". January 22, 2019 <https://uspishna-varta.com/ru/news/ispolzovaniye-materialov-sayta-mirotvorets-v-sudebnoy-praktike>

information of 327 minors was published on the site. In October 2021, a 12-year old resident of Lugansk F.Savenkova who allegedly "poses a threat to the national security of Ukraine" was included in the Myrotvorets database. The reason thereof was her open appeal to the members of the UN Security Council on the Children's Day where she drew attention to the situation of children in Donbass.

In January 2022, "Myrotvorets" announced the opening of a new area of activity – combating unscrupulous law enforcement officers who allegedly fabricate criminal cases. However, the site administrators referred to this category only those investigators and prosecutors who conducted criminal proceedings against veterans of the ATO and members of nationalist battalions, as well as against the deputy S.Fedina, who made extremist statements.

International human rights organizations have brought attention to the issues that this vile Internet resource's operation in Ukraine is causing. In 2019, the OHCHR monitoring mission in Ukraine called on deputies of the Verkhovnaya Rada to initiate the closure of the nationalist resource; similar calls were voiced by the EU office in Kiev and the NGO Journalists without Borders, but this did not bring results.

In November 2021, the Human Rights Committee pointed out the lack of information about the results of criminal investigations into the operation of the odious website Myrotvorets. We are talking about cases of publication of personal data of thousands of Ukrainians and other persons accused by the web resource of connections with "armed groups" or called "terrorists".¹⁸⁰⁶ The HRC attached great importance to this issue. This is indicated, in particular, by the fact that the recommendation to ensure the right to privacy, including in the context of the Myrotvorets website, along with comments on the independence of the judiciary and the administration of justice, as well as freedom of expression in the context of journalists' activities was included by the Committee in the list of issues on which information should be sent during the year.

¹⁸⁰⁶ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 8th periodic report of Ukraine. November 2021 (observations published in February 2022)
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FUKR%2FCO%2F8&Lang=ru

The state of martial law imposed in 2022 has been used by V.Zelensky not only to limit freedom of speech and purge the country's media space, but also to eliminate any possible political concurrents. The political party "Opposition Platform – For Life" and its leaders were one of the first political parties prosecuted by Zelensky's regime. Following the closure of three national news channels owned by party member Taras Kozak in early February 2021, the National Security and Defense Council, on February 19, imposed sanctions on the leader of the "Opposition Platform – For Life" party, V.Medvedchuk, and his wife, TV presenter O.Marchenko, freezing all of their assets and property in Ukraine. The grounds for that were an investigation conducted by the SBU into the financing of terrorism.¹⁸⁰⁷ In addition, O.Marchenko was included on a blacklist hosted by the infamous Myrotvorets website for her "financing of terrorists and Russian occupiers, denying that Russian aggression exists, and participating in propaganda activities in favour of Russia (an aggressor country) etc."¹⁸⁰⁸ As of May 2021, a criminal case was opened against V.Medvedchuk and T.Kozak for state treason and attempted theft of national resources in Crimea.

In 2022, measures to eliminate opposition political parties became even more active. On May 14, 2022 Zelensky signed a law banning "pro-Russian parties" in the country. Following this decision, as of January 11, 2023, Ukrainian courts had banned 17 opposition parties representing the interests of millions of Russian-speaking residents of Ukraine and advocating for dialogue with Russia. Their property, finances, and other assets were seized and turned over to the state. The leaders of these parties were criminally prosecuted.

Earlier, on April 23, 2022, amendments to the Criminal Code regarding "ensuring the responsibility of those who carry out collaborator activities" entered into force. For complicity with the "aggressor State" the punishment is imprisonment for up to 12 years. In reality, this innovation is used by the Ukrainian authorities to persecute dissenters. As of August 2023, the Prosecutor

¹⁸⁰⁷ <https://strana.today/news/318673-sanktsii-snbo-protiv-medvedchuka-19-fevralja-hlavnoe.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/318673-sanktsii-snbo-protiv-medvedchuka-19-fevralja-hlavnoe.html>)

¹⁸⁰⁸ <https://strana.today/news/316460-oksanu-marchenko-vnesli-v-mirotvorets.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/316460-oksanu-marchenko-vnesli-v-mirotvorets.html>)

General's Office of Ukraine had opened 16,692 criminal cases on suspicion of committing crimes against national security, including on such grounds as infringement on the territorial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine (article 110 of the Criminal Code, the number of criminal cases opened was 6,157; the number of cases of treason (article 111 of the Criminal Code) was 2,585; the number of cases of collaboration (article 111-1 of the Criminal Code) was 6,029; the number of cases of aiding an aggressor State (article 111-2 of the Criminal Code) was 807; and the number of cases of sabotage (article 113 of the Criminal Code) was 74.¹⁸⁰⁹ More than 422 convictions have already been handed down in such cases in 2022.¹⁸¹⁰

It gets to the point of real terms of imprisonment for Ukrainian pensioners who have "liked" a post on social media Odnoklassniki, VKontakte, etc. For supporting pro-Russian post, they risk imprisonment up to 5 years, which is equal to the convictions for theft, murder or rape. 99 such convictions have been handed down from March to September 2022, 176 from October 2022 to September 2023.¹⁸¹¹

Public figures and human rights defenders are also prosecuted under these articles, mostly those who protect the rights of Russians in Ukraine and support constructive relations with Russia. One of the illustrative examples is the well-known Ukrainian social activist E.Berezhnaya, who actively defends the rights of the Russian-speaking population and national minorities of Ukraine. Her regular appearances at the UN, OSCE, and other international organizations most likely became one of the main reasons for the persecution of this activist by the Ukrainian security services. On March 16, 2022, Berezhnaya was detained by the SBU under the pretext of suspicion of treason and has been kept in a detention centre ever since. A number of human rights defenders drew attention to her fate.

¹⁸⁰⁹ <https://zmina.info/news/kilkist-vidomyh-ukrayinskym-slidchyh-voyennyh-zlochyniv-vchynenyh-rosiyanamy-perevalyla-za-100-tysyach/>

¹⁸¹⁰ https://supreme.court.gov.ua/userfiles/media/new_folder_for_uploads/supreme/ogliady/Stan_Pravosuddya_Criminal_2022.pdf

¹⁸¹¹ <https://www.bbc.com/russian/articles/c4nxmxm1ev7o>

She also addressed letters herself to the Council of Europe and the OSCE. But there is still no progress on her case, and the activist is still detained.

In March 2022, writer, satirist, journalist and TV presenter Yan Taksyur was arrested. The reason was the satirist's literary works, which allegedly "undermined the sovereignty of the state." Y.Taksyur was kept in the pre-trial detention center despite serious health problems. A few months later he was released on bail.

In June 2022, accusations of treason in absentia were brought against the famous Ukrainian political scientist Mikhail Pogrebinskiy. He was accused of acting as an "expert" and "repeatedly participating in TV programs and talk shows, disseminating well-written Russian messages aimed at destabilizing the socio-political situation in the country". Earlier, in March 2022, Mikhail Pogrebinsky's apartment was searched.

It should be noted that in the spring of 2022 there were numerous cases of persecution of public figures in Ukraine who allowed themselves to express their independent judgments about the situation in the country and not to conform to official approaches. The media also reported on the detention of activist A.Gorbenko, political scientist and journalist D.Dzhangirov; political scientist Y.Dudkin, who took part in live broadcasts of the channels 112-Ukraine, NewsOne, and ZIK, which were closed by the Kiev regime; politicians M. and A.Kononovych; political scientist and blogger G.Lyashenko; anti-fascist activist A.Mayevskiy (he managed to escape during the burning of the Trade Union House in Odessa on May 2, 2014); communist and anti-fascist A.Matyushenko; anti-maidan activist O.Novikov; journalist of the "NewsOne" and "Nash" TV channels M.Nazarov, head of the public organization "Slavic Movement "Russia Revived" A.Tarnashevskiy, lawyer D.Tikhonenkov, who defended activists of Antimaidan, journalist D.Tkachev, professor of the Nikolaev Institute of Law S.Shubin and many others. Sentences have been handed down in the cases of some public figures. Thus, in May 2022, A.Matyushenko was sentenced to 3 years in prison on charges of "infringement on the territorial integrity of Ukraine".¹⁸¹²

¹⁸¹² <https://ukraina.ru/20220715/1036459856.html>

After the start of the special military operation, the SBU began harassing and intimidating local Ukrainian deputies and officials who accepted humanitarian cargoes from Russia or negotiated with the Russian military to organize corridors for evacuating civilians. On March 1, 2022, V.Struk, Mayor of Kremenna, was kidnapped by men in military uniform. Two days later his body was discovered with signs of torture. On March 7, 2022, Y.Prylypko, Mayor of Gostomel, was found murdered. He negotiated with the Russian military to establish a humanitarian corridor for civilians. On March 24, 2022, H.Maciegora, Mayor of Kupyansk, published a video calling on Zelensky and his administration to release his daughter, who had been kidnapped by SBU agents to put pressure on the official. The media also reported on the detention of A.Brukhanov, Mayor of Yuzhnoye, Cherkasy City Council deputy from the "Opposition Platform – For Life" A.Zamiraylo, Kherson City Council deputy I.Karamalikov, Mariupol City Council deputy V.Klimenko, politician I.Kolesnikov, and the mayor of the village of Kherson, E.Konovalov, Mayor of Stry Saltov, V.Ladukha, Mayor of Buryin, A.Lazurenko, deputy of Solonitsevskiy village council of Kharkov region.

In 2023, the Kiev regime continued to cleanse the political space of alternative opinions. On July 25, 2023 SBU accused of treason former deputy of the Verkhovna Rada, leader of the now prohibited party "Nashi" Evgueny Muraev. Earlier, in November 2022, Ukrainian special services searched his house.¹⁸¹³ In the same month, a criminal case for state treason was opened against another former deputy Vadim Rabinovich. He was arrested in absentia.¹⁸¹⁴

Often representatives of the Ukrainian security services directly inform the detainees that the reason for their arrest is the intention to use them to exchange them for Ukrainian soldiers who surrendered to the Russian Federation Armed Forces.

¹⁸¹³ <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/18353577?ysclid=lmgo78j2vv396866235>

¹⁸¹⁴ <https://ren.tv/news/v-mire/1128632-ukrainskogo-deputata-rabinovicha-zaochno-arestovali-zaglosizmenu?ysclid=lmgoejpg3r636374100>

The fact that such actions are not in accordance with international law was pointed out by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet in her report at the 50th session of the UN Human Rights Council in July 2022.

Finland

Official Helsinki has a fairly balanced attitude to issues related to the history of the Second World War. There have been no attempts by the Finnish authorities to question its outcome in general. Revanchist associations promoting the idea of returning to Finland the land lost after the Second World War remain marginalized and do not enjoy any noticeable support in the Finnish society.

At the same time, noteworthy is the discussion started after Finland's decision to join NATO on possible revision of the international legal status of the Aland Islands, in particular, there have been speculations regarding the refusal of the demilitarized status of the Archipelago, as well as statements about "undesirability" of the presence of the Russian Consulate there. However, that would contradict the provisions of the 1940 USSR–Finland Agreement on the Aland Islands and the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty. A campaign to collect signatures in support of a so-called citizens' initiative to close the Russian Consulate on the Aland Islands in Finland was instigated, but failed to garner the required 50,000 signatures for submission to the Finnish Parliament. Currently, according to the decision of the Ministerial Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland is conducting a legal review of Finland's international obligations to ensure the Russian consular presence on the Aland Islands. Earlier, the Finnish Foreign Ministry stated the country's commitment to fulfil its obligations, including maintaining the demilitarized status of the Islands.

On 15 December 2022, following the shared confrontation policy of the EU and the “collective West,” Finland voted against the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance," which is adopted annually at the initiative of Russia and other co-sponsors and condemns various manifestations of whitewashing Nazism and its henchmen. This policy looks all the more ignoble as it contradicts the internal policy of the Finnish authorities. Finnish legislation does not explicitly prohibit Nazi, neo-Nazi or any other radical ideology, and Nazi symbols are not banned by

law. However, the authorities still combat such phenomena within the framework of existing legal provisions. In particular, such cases may be qualified in Finland as "incitement to ethnic hatred" (paragraphs 10 and 10 (a) of Chapter 11 of the Criminal Code), although experts recognize that the threshold for the application of the relevant articles for the purposes of criminal prosecution is quite high.

The presence of swastika in the symbols of some Finnish Air Force units is still noteworthy. The debate on this topic took place once again in June 2022, on the occasion of the celebration of the Flag Day of the Finnish Air Forces. In response to criticism, the military stress that the symbol has a long history and began to be used by the Finnish Air Force in 1918, long before Hitler came to power in Germany. In addition, the symbol can still be found on one of the country's highest State decorations, the Cross of Liberty (Vapaudenristi), which, in particular, is depicted on the Standard of the President of Finland.

During the summer of 2023, a number of scandals erupted, causing the first major crisis of the newly formed Finnish government. They were related to members of the Finnish government from the right-wing populist and anti-immigrant *Finns Party*. Thus, Finnish Minister of Economic Affairs Vilhelm Junnila resigned after only 11 days in office. The information campaign against Vilhelm Junnila was based on the facts of his systematic links with extreme right-wing movements. During his previous parliamentary term (2019-2023), he repeatedly tried to lobby for additional State funding for the NGO *Brotherly Aid*, a union of veterans of the Finnish volunteer unit that fought in the Waffen-SS and their relatives. Vilhelm Junnila was also reminded of his 2019 parliamentary enquiry in which he recommended that the Government promote abortion in African countries in order to curb overpopulation and the climate carbon footprint of "undeveloped societies."

Later, the media also published information about disparaging remarks made by the new Minister of Economic Affairs Wille Rydman about migrants in his private correspondence on social media, which caused a wide public outcry and sharp criticism of the Cabinet of Ministers.

Riikka Purra, Minister of Finance in the rank of Deputy Prime Minister and Head of the *Finns Party*, had to apologize for her 15-year-old statements on social media – comments in a derogatory tone against immigrants, assuming the possibility of violence against them, etc. This information provoked a negative reaction from other parties – partners in the Government coalition. Finnish President Niinistö did not ignore the situation either, calling on the Government to clearly indicate "zero tolerance towards racism," which would be "a good signal, including to the outside world."

The right-wing radical movement in Finland is generally poorly organized, and experts estimate the total number of its active members at several hundred. Until recently, the largest right-wing organization in Finland has been the neo-Nazi *Nordic Resistance Movement* (Pohjoismainen Vastarintaliike, also known as the NRM), which shared openly neo-Nazi views and defended them, including by violent means. After the Supreme Court finally banned the activities of the movement in 2020, there are no major right-wing radical organizations left in Finland. However, some right-wing radical groups and initiatives continue to exist.

Of the current structures, the most prominent is the *Soldiers of Odin*, which has assigned itself the mission of "patrolling the streets" and is opposed to "uncontrolled immigration, Islamisation, the EU and globalization." Despite its radical attitudes, the organization is officially listed in the Finnish NGO register, has cells in 34 municipalities and periodically participates in rallies where it publicly presents its "values." In addition, the *Blue-and-Black Movement* (Sinimusta Liike), which is making active efforts to enter the political arena, has attracted public attention. In particular, this structure, which makes no secret of the closeness of its ideological base to classical fascism, obtained registration with the Finnish authorities as a political party in 2022, and in April 2023 took part in Parliamentary elections (88 candidates in four constituencies), where it hoped to win at least one parliamentary mandate (it lost the election with less than 0.1 per cent of the vote). In addition, still active is the *Towards Freedom!* movement (Kohti vapautta), whose members essentially continue the work of the banned

Nordic Resistance Movement, but under a different label. There are also less structured nationalist movements that form around specific events, usually on Finland's Independence Day on 6 December.

A separate group consists of organizations that advocate stricter migration policies. Examples include protest movement *Close the Borders!* (Rajat kiinni!) and political party *Finnish People First* (Suomen Kansa Ensín), created by its former members and registered in 2018.

The Finnish authorities do not take actions against organizations fighting neo-Nazism - like right-wing radicals, anti-fascists freely participate in demonstrations as long as they act within the legal framework.

There were no restrictions on activists organizing Victory Day events. In the area of preserving the memory of servicemen who died in World War II, the 1992 bilateral intergovernmental agreement regulating responsibility for the maintenance of Soviet war graves in Finland and Finnish war graves in Russia remains in force. The Finnish authorities continue to fully observe their obligations under this document. With regard to acts of vandalism, misconduct of this kind against Soviet/Russian war memorial sites has not been widespread in Finland. The only serious case was the desecration of several memorial tombstones in Kirkkonummi by perpetrators in May 2022, on the eve of the Victory Day, by spraying them with coloured paint. The tombstones were promptly cleaned and the offence was reported to the local police, who opened an investigation into the incident.

Despite Finland's increased attention to the human rights agenda and its image as a "model country" in this field, official Helsinki still has unresolved human rights problems. Among other things, there are difficulties in countering manifestations of racism and racial discrimination among law enforcement officials. There have been repeated cases of ethnic profiling in public order policing. In 2021, in fact, the police publicly admitted to the press¹⁸¹⁵ that in 2013-

¹⁸¹⁵ <https://yle.fi/a/73-11920475> ; <https://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/19201-two-yle-reports-set-off-discussion-about-police-racism-in-finland.html>

2017 they had purposefully tracked the movement of Roma in the metropolitan area. On 8 September 2022, the Supreme Administrative Court convicted those Helsinki police officers who in 2016 had stopped two black women in the street as part of street prostitution monitoring;¹⁸¹⁶ the Court qualified the police officers' actions as discriminatory because they were found to have had no other reason to conduct the check other than the ethnicity of the passers-by.

The presence of persons with racist attitudes among Finnish law enforcement officers has been confirmed in a number of internal checks. At the beginning of 2022, the Helsinki Police Department dismissed an officer who had corresponded inappropriately about minorities with a colleague.¹⁸¹⁷ Earlier, in 2021, two law enforcement officers in the capital were fired due to similar behaviour. Such incidents have been recorded in other police departments in Finland.

Universal and regional human rights mechanisms (in particular CESCR and the HRC, as well as ECRI) have drawn attention to cases of racial or ethnic profiling among Finnish police officers. The need to combat racial profiling in law enforcement agencies as well as manifestations of hatred and discrimination was one of the frequent recommendations for Finland during the Universal Periodic Review under the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in November 2022.¹⁸¹⁸

In addition, there are known cases of right-wing radical ideas among law enforcement officers. Such a group of individuals was identified in the police force during an investigation launched in 2020. As a result, three officers were dismissed from the department in 2021-2022, two of whom were suspected of preparing to commit an offence.

The Finnish society in general is wary of immigrants on a domestic level (as pointed out by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2017),¹⁸¹⁹ and employment and self-fulfilment opportunities for foreigners,

¹⁸¹⁶ <https://yle.fi/a/3-12615086>

¹⁸¹⁷ <https://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000008554173.html>

¹⁸¹⁸ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on Finland. January 2023.

<https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FHRC%2F52%2F9&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>

¹⁸¹⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the twenty-third periodic report of Finland. May 2017.

especially those of non-European origin, are traditionally worse than for Finnish citizens. In particular, Russian-speaking residents of Finland, as well as other foreigners, have faced negative attitudes toward them, including on the basis of language or origin, as the results of relevant surveys showed.

Cases of violations of the rights of migrants and Roma, who face discrimination and harassment in such areas as employment, housing, and education, also continue to be documented. There are a number of restrictions on refugee status, inter alia, it is not allowed to enter new information in repeated asylum applications, and obstacles to family reunification, including the requirement of an appropriate income. Introduced alternatives to detention, such as "prescribed residence," also contain restrictive reporting obligations.

The Finnish authorities are steadily tightening their migrant policy. In spring 2022, in order to counter "hybrid threats," including the migration crisis and the large number of asylum seekers, the Border Guard Act was amended to allow the Finnish authorities to limit the reception of asylum applications in emergency circumstances by concentrating them at only one or a few border crossings. This change was received with concern by international human rights bodies. In her letter to the Finnish Minister of the Interior dated 27 July 2022, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe Dunja Mijatović¹⁸²⁰, while generally understanding the concerns of Finns, drew attention to the fact that the provisions introduced may lead to violation of the universal principle of non-refoulement of a person to his/her home country where he/she may be in danger, and could also contribute to depriving foreigners of the fundamental right to claim asylum if they are turned away *en masse* at the border. The letter also draws attention to the fact that the measures envisaged by the amendments may result in migrants being placed more frequently in designated centres located at the border.

The Human Rights Committee¹⁸²¹ and the Committee on Economic, Social

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FFIN%2FCO%2F23&Lang=en

¹⁸²⁰ <https://rm.coe.int/letter-to-krista-mikkonen-minister-of-the-interior-of-finland-by-dunja/1680a7537d>

¹⁸²¹ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the seventh periodic report of Finland. March 2021.

and Cultural Rights,¹⁸²² among others, have drawn attention to the problems of migrants. The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has also raised the issue of various forms of discrimination against migrant children. More generally, it expressed concern about the persistent discrimination against children and adolescents based on gender, age, language, and national or ethnic origin, migratory background, disability and religion. It also pointed out violence and bullying against children from vulnerable groups on the Internet and in everyday life, including bullying in schools, suggesting that a research on root causes of such violence be carried out. The Committee also highlighted the problem of obtaining quality education free from discriminatory attitudes for children from vulnerable categories, which include migrants, Roma, children with disabilities and children from disadvantaged families, as well as Sami children. CRC experts called on the Finnish authorities to intensify awareness campaigns that promote equality, and can contribute to changing conduct and behaviour of people, and transforming social discriminatory norms. CRC also focused on the situation of migrant children in particular, noting the Finnish authorities' obstruction of the reunification of unaccompanied migrant children with their families.¹⁸²³

The repatriation to Finland of children of Finnish citizens from Syrian camps for the families of terrorist fighters has received much less attention from the international community. This problem is common to many European countries whose citizens have taken part in fighting in Syria on the side of terrorist organizations. According to the Finnish Border Guard, in 2012-2016, about 80 Finnish citizens left the country to join the ISIS. In December 2019, the Finnish Government decided to return Finnish children in the camp (more than 30 people). Of them, two returned home, but the repatriation plan was subsequently suspended

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/FIN/CO/7&Lang=En

¹⁸²² Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the seventh periodic report of Finland. March 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/FIN/CO/7&Lang=En

¹⁸²³ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined fifth and sixth reports of Finland. May 2023.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FFIN%2FCO%2F5-6&Lang=en

due to the coronavirus pandemic. Concerns about the situation of these children were expressed by the Human Rights Committee¹⁸²⁴ in March 2021. This issue was also raised by representatives of several Middle East countries during the next round of the Universal Periodic Review of Finland at the HRC in November 2022.¹⁸²⁵

The situation of people of Russian origin in the country remains difficult. According to the Statistics Finland, as of 31 December 2022, more than 71,000 Russian citizens (1.3% of the population) lived in the country. The number of people speaking Russian as their mother tongue on the same date was 93,500 (1.7% of the population), making Russian the most widely spoken foreign language in Finland.

From a formal point of view, the legal framework of Finnish legislation on national minorities consists of multilateral treaties to which Finland is a party, bilateral agreements (in relations with Russia, the 1992 Treaty on the Foundations of Relations is in force) and national acts (including the Constitution (731/1999), the Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014), the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (1386/2010), the Language Act (423/2003), a group of so-called educational acts, including the Basic Education Act (628/1998), etc.).

The Swedish-speaking community (287,000 people, 5.2% of the population) is in the most privileged position in legal terms, as their language has the status of the State language along with Finnish. In addition to the Swedes, special attention is declared for the Sami community, the only indigenous people of Finland living compactly in the northern part of the country. It is noteworthy that the legislation mentions the Roma as a minority, but this does not contribute to the complete eradication of discrimination against them.

Legally, the Russian and Russian-speaking communities are categorized as

¹⁸²⁴ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the seventh periodic report of Finland. March 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/FIN/CO/7&Lang=En

¹⁸²⁵ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on Finland. January 2023.

<https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FHRC%2F52%2F9&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>

"other groups," which have the right to maintain and develop their own language and culture. Provisions on guarantees for the diaspora are also included in the Russian-Finnish Treaty on the Foundations of Relations, as well as in the specialized 1992 Agreement on Cultural, Educational and Scientific Cooperation, which provides for Finnish support to natives of Russia in preserving their identity and cultural heritage.

Despite legislative guarantees, the Russian-speaking diaspora in Finland faces a number of challenges. In addition to higher unemployment than among the Finnish population, the difficulty of finding a job in a profession obtained in the USSR or the Russian Federation remains an important problem for our economically active compatriots. Many are forced to accept low-paid jobs that do not require high qualifications.

Discrimination against non-Finnish communities has affected the Russian community long before 2022. In June 2019, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities expressed concern about the increased intolerance in Finland in recent years, which has resulted in higher pressure on local national minorities, including Russians. The Committee emphasized, *inter alia*, that a large proportion of Russians have faced discrimination on the grounds of origin and language. It also pointed out that there has been no mechanism for monitoring Russophobic statements.

Following the start by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation of a special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilians of Donbas, a large-scale anti-Russian information campaign was launched in the Finnish media, against the background of which an increase in negative and discriminatory attitudes towards local Russian-speaking population was recorded. The Finnish authorities, for their part, tried to prevent a possible rise in social tensions by repeatedly appealing to prevent violations of the rights of Russians. The situation has been partly stabilized: a survey conducted in June-July 2022 on behalf of the Finnish Culture Foundation showed¹⁸²⁶ that the vast majority of

¹⁸²⁶ <https://culturas.fi/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Cultura-sa-a-tio-sr-Suomen-vena-ja-nkieliset-2022-selvitys.pdf>

Russian speakers (82%) did not experience discrimination or hate speech on the grounds of language after the start of the operation. However, despite this generally positive picture, the same survey indicates that there is a significant segment of the Russian-speaking diaspora (17 per cent) that experienced the effects of anti-Russian rhetoric fuelled by the local press. Individual episodes of intolerance that emerged in the press after the survey confirmed the persistence of Russophobic attitudes in the Finnish society in various spheres, including labour, education, culture and sports.

The large-scale anti-Russian information campaign launched in the country since February 2022 has also led, according to media reports, to a decline in the popularity of the Russian language among applicants to some universities and language courses. Bilateral cooperation between Finnish and Russian educational institutions has been frozen. A number of former partners engaged in the dissemination of the Russian language have discredited themselves by their unfriendly stance, in particular a major NGO, the *Finland-Russia Society*.

Finland's adherence to the Russophobic vector of the "collective West" has also had a negative impact on the situation of many compatriot associations in the country. Under the conditions of dominance of anti-Russian sentiments spread by the Finnish mass media, and sometimes due to undisguised external pressure, a significant number of compatriot organizations have sharply reduced the scale of their activities. At the same time, some of them were forced to refrain from contacts with Russian partners for fear of negative consequences.

The current international situation has partially affected the presence of the Russian Orthodox Church in Finland. In the heat of Russophobic fervour, the Turku authorities revoked a previously granted permit for the use of a municipal building adjacent to the Russian Consulate General in Turku, which housed a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. As a result, the Church of the Dormition of the Mother of God, which had existed there since 2001 and had a permanent congregation, was forced to close in summer 2022, and its staff had to find other ways to continue the activities demanded by local

Russian-speaking people.

In addition, despite the declared attitude to the inadmissibility of infringement of the rights of a certain category of citizens, the Finnish authorities continue to take discriminatory measures against Russian citizens. An example is the Finnish Government's decision on visa restrictions against Russians, which, in fact, have become a manifestation of discrimination based on nationality. In August 2022, a daily quota was introduced for the total number of applications accepted (500 per day for the entire Russia, of which 100 – tourist applications). Later, a decision was taken to completely ban the issuance of tourist visas to Russian citizens from 30 September 2022 and to restrict the entry of Russian citizens to Finland for tourist purposes.

On 6 July 2023, the Finnish authorities introduced another package of restrictions, tightening entry for Russian students of Finnish educational institutions, businessmen and property owners from 10 July. Businessmen are allowed to travel only to Finland; transit to other countries through the Finnish territory is prohibited. In addition, businessmen have to justify the need to visit the country and personally conduct business there in each case. Property owners must also now provide reasons for their presence in the country. Students are only allowed to enter Finland if they obtain an academic degree at the end of their education.¹⁸²⁷

Evidence of persistent Russophobia has repeatedly become public. The October 2022 incident when a contestant on *The Voice of Finland* was disqualified from competing because of her Russian citizenship caused widespread publicity.¹⁸²⁸ Employment problems were reported by Russian IT specialists, one of whom was dismissed from the national pension authority *Kela* following a security check and another was not allowed to work on a commercial project related to this authority.¹⁸²⁹ Russians have been denied flight training, participation in advanced scientific research and national sporting events referring to Europe-wide restrictive

¹⁸²⁷ <https://iz.ru/1540403/2023-07-06/finliandiia-uzhestochit-vezd-abiturientam-biznesmenam-vladeltcam-nedvizhimosti-rf-s-10-iulia>

¹⁸²⁸ <https://yle.fi/a/3-12665460>

¹⁸²⁹ <https://yle.fi/a/74-20009664>

measures or security concerns.¹⁸³⁰ Commenting on such cases, the Finnish authorities emphasize that discrimination is unacceptable. However, it is clear that the efforts made at the national level are not sufficient.

As for the situation with the Russian language, no negative changes have been observed so far. As mentioned above, Russian remains the most widely spoken foreign language in the country. The Finnish authorities still have not imposed any restrictions on its use and study. It is taught at all levels of education, from pre-school to higher education. State support for Russian as a foreign minority language, including through the specialized Finnish Foundation *Cultura*, has also continued.

The problem of gender segregation in the labour market and the persistence of the wage gap remains relevant; violence against women remains a serious challenge, as has been highlighted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.¹⁸³¹

International human rights mechanisms have identified a number of significant shortcomings in the enjoyment of the rights by Finland's indigenous people – the Sami. Most often, attention is focused on problems related to the practical realization of the right to use the Sami language, which is enshrined in legislation. The ratification by Finland of the International Labour Organization Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, signed by Finland in 1989 along with other countries, has been "in limbo" for a long time. The issue of ratification of the instrument to strengthen the protection of the rights of the Sami people has been repeatedly raised by States during the Universal Periodic Review of Finland at the HRC in November 2022.¹⁸³²

The right of citizens to participate in elections to the Sami Parliament is high on the agenda: over the past decade, there have been numerous cases in which

¹⁸³⁰ <https://yle.fi/a/74-20017058>

¹⁸³¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the eighth periodic report of Finland. October 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FFIN%2FCO%2F8&Lang=en

¹⁸³² Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on Finland. January 2023.

<https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FHRC%2F52%2F9&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>

persons who have been rejected from the electoral roll by the Sami authorities have challenged the rejection before the Supreme Administrative Court of Finland and have been eventually included in the electoral roll. The court's judgements have been based on an expansive interpretation of the criteria for membership of the Sami community as set out in the Sami Parliament Act. The Sami view this as a violation of their legal rights, including the right to self-determination under article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Sami attitude is shared by international human rights bodies, including the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which issued observations and recommendations on this issue to the Finnish authorities in February 2019 and June 2022, respectively.¹⁸³³ Under public pressure, the Government has accelerated its regulatory work and in November 2022 submitted to the Parliament a bill amending the Sami Parliament Act to, inter alia, narrow the criteria for including persons on the Sami electoral list in order to eliminate the possibility of double interpretations. The bill is currently under consideration in parliamentary committees.

Of the thirty-five years that the Finnish Sami Parliament has existed, the last ten there has been a fight over a new version of the Sami Parliament Act, promoted by the Sami themselves. One of the most important amendments is the granting of voting rights in elections to the Sami Parliament. For many years there has been a dispute between the Finnish Supreme Administrative Court and the Sami Parliament: the Sami are not satisfied with a number of candidates on the voting lists of the Court and have challenged these decisions. The Sami believe that by using the wording of the relevant law, which allows for an expansive interpretation of the concept of a Sami, the Finnish authorities deliberately introduce certain “elements” into the Sami Parliament that are far from understanding the specifics and needs of this indigenous people. For example, in 2019 alone, the board of the Sami assemblies rejected 200 applications for inclusion on the electoral roll (with a

¹⁸³³ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2019/02/un-human-rights-experts-find-finland-violated-sami-political-rights-sami>, <https://www.euronews.com/2022/06/15/un-flnds-finland-violated-political-rights-of-indigenous-sami-people>

total electoral roll for the Sami Parliament of 5,800).

The 2023 electoral lists (approved in February 2023) have had a record number of eligible voters, exceeding 6,000.¹⁸³⁴ Besides, there are twice as many newly registered voters as in the previous election cycle. According to the Sami representatives, this indicates not so much an increase in the consciousness of the Sami themselves or in the size of the community, but confirms the fact that the Finnish authorities have deliberately expanded the electoral list of the Sami Parliament.

The updated draft law on the Sami Parliament is aimed at changing this order of things. A total of 23,000 signatures were collected in favour of this document, which was proposed by Sami representatives. Despite this, in February 2023, the Eduskunta Constitutional Law Committee stopped consideration of the bill for the formal reason of the expiry of the current body's term of office. In their petition from the Sami Parliamentary Council to Prime Minister of Finland Sanna Marin on 23 March 2023, Sami expressed disappointment at the failure of the process of amending the Sami Act. They also noted that many statements made by Finnish authorities and municipalities during the consideration of the bill made it clear that the rights of the Sami as indigenous peoples, "even though they are also specified in the Finnish Constitution, are not understood or seen as necessary for realization in Finland."¹⁸³⁵ Given this development, it is not surprising that when Finland underwent the next round of the Universal Periodic Review at the HRC in November 2022, among the recommendations relating to indigenous rights, many States emphasized the need to complete the process of adopting the updated draft Sami Parliament Act, taking into account the views of the Sami themselves.¹⁸³⁶

The Finnish authorities' policy towards Sami children who were sent to boarding schools also remains on the agenda. The Finnish way of life promoted in

¹⁸³⁴ <https://www.samediggi.fi/2023/03/16/tiedote-saamelaiskarajien-vuoden-2023-vaaliluettelin-vahvistamiseen-liittyen/>

¹⁸³⁵ https://dokumentit.solinum.fi/samediggi/download/?d=documenttipankki/kansainv%C3%A4linen_toiminta/saamelainen_parlamentaarinen_neuvosto/saamelaisen_parlamentaarisen_neuvoston_vetoamus_p%C3%A4%C3%A4ministeri_mainille.pdf

¹⁸³⁶ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on Finland. January 2023. <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FHRC%2F52%2F9&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>

these institutions, aimed at forming "true" Finnish citizens, led to the fragmentation of the identity of Sami children or contributed to their feeling of being "between" two worlds and their inability to fully integrate into Sami or dominant Finnish society.¹⁸³⁷

The legal disputes involving the Sami have two main themes. In the area of land use, the indigenous people is dissatisfied with the disregard of its interests in certain issues related to economic activities in the Sami region, such as the permits to resource extraction companies. In decisions on claims by the Sami people, Finnish courts have ruled that Sami communities and the Sami Parliament have no authority to challenge such licences. According to the law, the hereditary rights to Sami land are based on the principle of permanent use, but these rights have not been documented for the Sami, and the territories are therefore under the jurisdiction of the State. Also in this context, the ratification by Finland of the above-mentioned International Labour Organization Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples has long been on the agenda.

It should be noted that the issue of mineral development on Sami pastures has received considerable attention in scientific studies (e.g. plans to develop the Sokli ore deposit in Finland's largest pastoral area, Kemin-Sompio). There are also examples where infrastructure projects, which are steadily increasing in number, have an impact on the areas where they are located. For example, it is a common phenomenon when wind turbines benefit local remote settlements but also provoke conflicts between Sami and the companies that own the facilities (as they are installed mainly in Sami pasture areas).¹⁸³⁸ In the case of Sami pastoral reindeer herding, the construction of such a facility affects the surrounding neighbourhood and causes a deterioration of the traditional way of life of the indigenous peoples. According to researchers, Finland's legislation in this area has not yet been applied

¹⁸³⁷ Detailed information on the issue see in the work of Sandra Alexis Juutilainen. Structural racism and indigenous health. A critical reflection of Canada and Finland. (Academic dissertation). University of Oulu, Faculty of medicine. Oulu 2017.

¹⁸³⁸ Examples of conflicts between Sami and private companies over construction of wind energy facilities are in the section on Sapmi, *The Indigenous World 2020*, ed. by Dwayne Mamo. pp. 526-535. IWGIA, 2020.

positively in practice.¹⁸³⁹

The second theme concerns the right of indigenous citizens to participate in the election of deputies to the Sami representative body, the Sami Parliament. Currently, the Supreme Administrative Court of Finland has the final say, which can grant a person's request to be added to the electoral list, even if the Parliament itself has previously refused to do so. The problem stems from an expansive interpretation of the definition of who is a Sami in the Sami Parliament Act, which the Court first applied in connection with the 2011 Sami elections. Subsequently, similar practices have occurred in other elections to the Sami representative body. According to the Sami Union (a non-governmental organization of Sami people in Finland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden), out of a total electorate of 5,800 persons in the Sami Parliament, the Court has admitted 161 persons into the Sami Parliament since 2011, against the will of the Parliament. To date, as mentioned above, the demands of the Sami authorities have consisted of cancelling previous court judgements and amending legislation to avoid ambiguities in the interpretation of the definition of Sami.

¹⁸³⁹ S. Nysten-Haarala¹, T. Jona, I. Hovila. Wind energy projects and reindeer herders' rights in Finnish Lapland: A legal framework. / *Elem Sci Anth (ELEMENTA Science of Anthropocene)*. 2021.

France

France has a well-developed legal framework that makes it possible to counter the spread of right-wing radical ideologies, suppress manifestations of neo-Nazism and attempts to glorify the Nazis and their accomplices.

The Constitution of France guarantees equal treatment of citizens regardless of origin or religion.¹⁸⁴⁰

The Law of 1990 for the Suppression of Racist, Anti-Semitic, or Xenophobic Acts criminalizes the denial of crimes against humanity cast in the Nuremberg Charter.

Public demonstration of ideology declaring superiority of a group of persons or calling for discrimination of a person/group of persons, public insult because of belonging or not belonging to an ethnic group, nation, race or religion is criminalized.

According to Article 24 of the Law "On Freedom of the Press,"¹⁸⁴¹ such acts are punished by a fine of 45,000 euros and/or imprisonment for 1 year. Persons who deny crimes against humanity and glorify war crimes are punished by a fine of 45,000 euros and imprisonment for 5 years.

Because of the numerous incidents of racial, ethnic or religious hatred on the French segment of the Internet, in 2020 the law "On Combating Hate on the Internet" was adopted.¹⁸⁴² This act contains provisions requiring the operators of Internet platforms to inform the competent authorities of the appearance of illegal content on their resources and to remove such materials, within 24 hours, from search engines, social networks and websites. Failure to do so is punishable by a fine of 75,000 euros and one year in prison.

Under Article 132-76 of the Criminal Code, racist motives qualify as an aggravating circumstance in a criminal offense.¹⁸⁴³

Wearing or displaying Nazi symbols, uniforms and insignia in public places

1840 <https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/le-bloc-de-constitutionnalite/texte-integral-de-la-constitution-du-4-octobre-1958-en-vigueur>

1841 https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/article_lc/LEGIARTI000043982456

1842 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000042031970/>

1843 https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/article_lc/LEGIARTI000033975349

is also prohibited in France according to article R645-1 of the French Penal Code, except when necessary for the production of a motion picture, the staging of a spectacle or the organization of an exhibition of the relevant history period.¹⁸⁴⁴ The wearing or display in public places of uniforms, insignia or symbols resembling those used either by members of an organization defined as criminal according to article 9 of the Nuremberg Tribunal or by a person convicted of one or more crimes against humanity, is a class five misdemeanour (i.e., the most serious of the non-serious violations of the law)¹⁸⁴⁵.

The punishment for this crime includes confiscation of the objects with which it was committed, a fine of 1,500 euros, community service for 20 to 120 hours, confiscation of weapons owned or possessed by the offender and a ban for at least three years on keeping or carrying weapons for which a permit is required. In the case of a repeat offender, a fine of up to 3,000 euros is stipulated. For legal entities, liability is provided in the form of a fine of 7,500 euros and confiscation of the objects with which the crime was committed; in the case of a repeat offender, the fine is up to 15,000.

However, the reproduction of gestures used by the Nazis of Hitler's Germany, including the famous salute gesture, is not an offence. The controversy about the need to criminalize these gestures has been going on for a long time in France. Another scandal was caused by the fact that on 12 July 2022 R.Rebeiro, a deputy of the National Assembly of France from the presidential party "Renaissance" addressed a deputy of the right-wing conservative party "National Union" using the Nazi salute.¹⁸⁴⁶

France is a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and reports on its implementation to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). However, despite the strong recommendations of this Committee, France refuses to withdraw the reservation to Article 4 of the Convention, which puts respect for "freedom of

1844 https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/article_lc/LEGIARTI000022375941

1845 https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/article_lc/LEGIARTI000022375941

1846 <https://www.nouvelobs.com/politique/20220729.OBS61477/le-depute-qui-a-fait-un-salut-nazi-a-l-assemblee-fait-un-don-a-une-association-de-deportes.html>

speech and the press" above the obligation to prohibit ideologies of racial superiority.¹⁸⁴⁷

France has reservations to many articles of universal and regional treaties on human rights. Thus, Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is implemented with a reservation on the principle of state secularity enshrined in the Constitution. France has not ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and is not party to Protocol 12 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level.

Based on the principle of unitary State, as a matter of principle, French authorities do not recognize the existence of ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples on their territory.

In France the monuments to Soviet soldiers who died during World War II, as well as their burial places, are still cherished on its territory. Chief among these are the Soviet military necropolis in Noyer-Saint-Martin, monuments to Soviet resistance fighters in the Parisian cemetery Père-Lachaise and to the Normandie-Niemen air regiment in Le Bourget. French central and local authorities generally promote the organization of commemorative events on the occasion of Victory Day in the Great Patriotic War. From 2015, marches of the "Immortal Regiment" are traditional in France. The years 2022 and 2023 were no exception; not only did the authorities of French cities, including Paris, issue permits for the "Immortal Regiment" action, but helped ensuring their safety and protecting their participants from provocations.

At the same time, in relation with the conflict in Ukraine, the French party began to avoid joint ceremonies in memory of the legendary Normandie-Niemen regiment, which have become a good tradition in many decades. In spring 2023 it was reported that the French not only retouched Soviet stars on the fuselages of the

¹⁸⁴⁷ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fFR A%2fCO%2f7-8&Lang=ru

aircrafts of the air regiment bearing the name of Normandie-Niemen, but also sent them to the Russian borders for “exercises”.

Until 2021 inclusive, France annually abstained from voting on the draft resolution of the UN General Assembly "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" prepared by Russia and other co-authors, referring to the consolidated position of the EU. In 2022, together with other EU countries, France voted for the first time against this resolution.¹⁸⁴⁸

The French authorities prevent and condemn attempts to glorify Nazism or promote neo-Nazi ideas at the national level. But Paris has been turning a blind eye for many years to the rehabilitation and glorification of Nazi and collaborationists, as well as to neo-Nazism in Ukraine, the Baltics and other Eastern European countries, actually indulging such phenomena. Thus, in June 2021, Senator N.Goulet sent a request to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which she noted the rapid spread of neo-Nazi ideology in Ukraine and demanded a public assessment of the activities of Ukrainian nationalist organizations. In response, Quai d'Orsay stated that neo-Nazis in Ukraine "have no political influence" and that their presence "does not reflect political trends" in the country.¹⁸⁴⁹

Despite the developed legislative and law enforcement tools (in 2023, another National Plan to Combat Racism, Anti-Semitism and Discrimination Based on Origin was adopted up to 2026¹⁸⁵⁰), the situation with racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in the country, including manifestations of their modern forms, is far from ideal.

A sociological study published in June 2021 by the French Public Opinion Institute (IFOP) noted that 42% of job rejections were due to ethnic reasons.¹⁸⁵¹

The report of the French Interior Ministry published in March 2023 states

¹⁸⁴⁸<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiY2MxNGMwNGMtOTYzYS00MTU1LTg3N2UtMjc2ZTBmZDhmOTZlZiwiZCI6IjBmOWUzNWwiLTU0NGYtNGY2MCIiZGNjLTVIYTQxNmU2ZGM3MCIiImMiOj9> .

¹⁸⁴⁹ <http://www.senat.fr/questions/base/2021/qSEQ210623223.html>

¹⁸⁵⁰ <https://www.gouvernement.fr/actualite/un-nouveau-plan-national-contre-la-haine-et-les-discriminations>

¹⁸⁵¹ <https://www.ifop.com/publication/observatoire-meteojob-des-discriminations-a-lembauche/>

that 12,600 ethnic, racial, or religious offenses were reported in 2022 (12,500 in 2021), including 6,600 criminal offenses. It is noteworthy that the number of criminal offenses increased by 5 percent compared to 2021 (6,300 cases in 2021), and the number of administrative offenses decreased by 12 percent to reach 6,000 cases, which indicates the rising degree of social danger of such acts.¹⁸⁵² Among the most frequent crimes in 2022 were public insults and provocations (58 percent, an increase by 4 percent), threats and blackmail (17 percent, a decrease by 8 percent). Attempts on life and health accounted for 6 percent of the total number of offenses, with an increase by 31 percent compared to 2021. The most vulnerable regions are metropolitan Ile-de-France, Bas-Rhin, and Alpes-Maritimes.

According to the latest open statistics, 1659 manifestations of xenophobia on religious grounds were recorded in France in 2021. 857 of them were committed against representatives of Christian faith, 589 on anti-Semitic grounds, and 213 were due to Islamophobia.¹⁸⁵³

It is noted that crimes against Christians are mostly limited to damage to private property and/or desecration of church buildings and property. Attacks on individuals are not very frequent, but particularly violent. For example, three people were killed (one of the victims had her throat slit) in an attack by a 21-year-old immigrant from Tunisia on October 29, 2020, in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Nice.¹⁸⁵⁴ Another attack on a priest and a nun in that city occurred on April 22, 2022 in the Church of the Holy Apostle Peter.¹⁸⁵⁵

A series of attacks on churches spread throughout the country in 2022.¹⁸⁵⁶ Among the most resonant cases are acts of vandalism in churches in the suburbs of Paris (Saint-Denis, Bondi, Romainville and Creteil)¹⁸⁵⁷, destruction of the interior of the cathedral in Boulogne-Sur-Mer (Pas-de-Calais) on 26 July 2022, relic theft

1852 <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/actualites/communiqués-de-presse/atteintes-a-caractere-raciste-xenophobe-ou-antireligieux-en-2022>

1853 https://medias.vie-publique.fr/data_storage_s3/rapport/pdf/284641.pdf

1854 <https://information.tv5monde.com/info/france-attaque-au-couteau-nice-l-agresseur-interpelle-381393>

1855 https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2022/04/24/nice-un-petre-blesse-au-couteau-dans-une-attaque-sans-caractere-terroriste-a-priori-l-assaillant-a-ete-arrete_6123459_3224.html

1856 <https://www.famillechretienne.fr/39502/article/le-bilan-impressionnant-des-attaques-contre-leglise-en-france-en-2022>

1857 <https://www.vaticannews.va/fr/eglise/news/2022-01/vandalisme-eglises-france-saint-denis.html>

in Paray-le-Monial (Saône-et-Loire) on 8-9 January 2022 and in Fécamp (Seine-Maritime) on 1-2 June 2022.

On 12 April 2023, the Sainte-Madeleine church in Angers (Maine-et-Loire) was vandalised,¹⁸⁵⁸ and in June 2023 two Islamist fanatics who were preparing a terrorist act in a church in Paris were arrested.¹⁸⁵⁹

One of the serious problems of the French society is a rather high level of anti-Semitism. According to the Jewish Community Protection Service, there were 436 anti-Semitic incidents in 2022. More than half of them (53 percent) were infringements upon individuals, including attacks involving weapons (14 percent) and one murder. According to the statistics, only in 24 percent of cases the perpetrators were held accountable.¹⁸⁶⁰ But the total number of anti-Semitic incidents considerably decreased compared to 2021, when 589 incidents were recorded (75 percent more than in 2020). At the same time, the number of physical attacks increased by 36 percent¹⁸⁶¹.

Cases of desecration of graves and monuments occur in the country, including by drawing Nazi symbols. These offenses are predominantly anti-Semitic in nature. Only 20 percent of defilers were condemned in 2020.¹⁸⁶²

For example, in August 2020, vandals desecrated a memorial centre to the victims of World War II in Oradour-sur-Glanc¹⁸⁶³ (Haute-Vienne). In December 2020, a swastika was inscribed on 67 graves in Fontainebleau.¹⁸⁶⁴

In August 2021, swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans were found on the walls

1858 <https://www.ouest-france.fr/societe/faits-divers/a-angers-une-eglise-saccagee-au-lendemain-des-festivites-de-paques-d99544fc-d94f-11ed-a8f2-3d52644ec35b>

1859 <https://www.midilibre.fr/2023/06/20/un-projet-dattentat-djihadiste-dejoue-en-france-contre-nimporte-qui-deux-jeunes-radicalises-ce-que-lon-sait-11289715.php>

1860 <https://www.spcj.org/les-chiffres-de-l-antis%C3%A9mitisme-2022-a>

1861 <https://www.fondationshoah.org/antisemitisme/une-augmentation-tres-inquietante-des-actes-antisemites-en-2021>

1862 La lutte contre le racisme, l'antisémitisme et la xénophobie - Année 2019. Rapport public. Commission nationale consultative des Droits de l'Homme

<https://www.vie-publique.fr/rapport/274694-la-lutte-contre-le-racisme-lantisemitisme-et-la-xenophobie-2019>

1863 Oradour-sur-Glanc : «Tout sera fait» pour poursuivre les auteurs des tags, assure Macron. Le Parisien. 21 August 2020.

<https://www.leparisien.fr/societe/oradour-sur-glanc-des-tags-inscrits-sur-le-centre-de-la-memoire-du-village-martyr-21-08-2020-8371416.php>

1864 Fontainebleau : 67 tombes profanées par des croix gammées. L'express. 28 December 2020.

https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/fontainebleau-67-tombes-profanees-avec-des-croix-gammees-dans-un-cimetiere_2141641.html

of the cemetery in Ruffach (Haut-Rhineland), and in Perros-Gerek (Côte d'Armor) swastikas appeared on a memorial stone erected in honour of prominent French Jewish lawyer and politician S.Veil, who was a concentration camp prisoner at Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen during World War II and was president of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation from 2001-2007. In March 2022, a swastika was painted on a memorial plaque to Jewish resistance fighters in Grenoble.¹⁸⁶⁵

In May 2023, four Christian and two Jewish graves were desecrated at the Noé cemetery south of Toulouse.¹⁸⁶⁶ The incident had great impact because many of those buried in this cemetery had been prisoners of the concentration camp that was nearby during World War II.

On 15 July 2023, in Plœuc-L'Hermitage (Côte d'Armor) the memorial to the Resistance fighters was desecrated on the day of the 79th anniversary of their execution by Hitler's troops.¹⁸⁶⁷

In order to strengthen the fight against manifestations of anti-Semitism, a National Hate Crime Unit was created in 2019 under the General Directorate of the National Gendarmerie of the French Interior Ministry. Its main task is to coordinate investigations into anti-Semitic acts throughout the country.

It is noteworthy that the threat of anti-Semitism in the country comes not only from neo-Nazis or radical Muslims, but also at the grassroots level from ordinary citizens, who tend to blame Jews for all the flaws of capitalism and globalization. Anti-Semitic slogans and manifestations often took place during the "yellow vests" demonstrations throughout 2019 and then during the coronavirus pandemic.

Manifestations of Islamophobia are also multiplying. Thus, in December 2021 the Muslim sector of the cemetery in Mulhouse (Haut-Rhin) was desecrated.¹⁸⁶⁸ In November 2022, Islamophobic insults were found on the walls of

¹⁸⁶⁵ <https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/auvergne-rhone-alpes/isere/grenoble/grenoble-une-croix-gammee-taguee-sur-une-plaque-commemorative-un-acte-intolerable-reagit-le-crif-2509789.html>

¹⁸⁶⁶ <https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/occitanie/haute-garonne/toulouse/degradation-de-steles-chretiennes-et-juives-d-un-cimetiere-de-haute-garonne-2775858.html>

¹⁸⁶⁷ <https://www.rtl.fr/actu/justice-faits-divers/la-vive-emotion-des-habitants-de-ploeuc-l-hermitage-apres-la-profanation-d-un-monument-dedie-a-la-resistance-7900283952>

¹⁸⁶⁸ <https://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/haut-rhin-le-carre-musulman-du-cimetiere-de-mulhouse-vandalise->

the mosque in Flers (Orne), together with inscriptions glorifying French Waffen SS legionnaires from Charlemagne division.¹⁸⁶⁹ In March 2023, the premises of the Muslim association Al-Amal were attacked in Wattignies (Nord).¹⁸⁷⁰

At the same time, Islamist radicalism has gained ground in recent years, especially in the suburbs. According to a study by the French Institute of Public Opinion (IFOP),¹⁸⁷¹ at least 74 percent of young French Muslims consider the principles of Islam more important than the laws and values of the French Republic.

In order to combat Islamist separatism and to protect the principles of a secular society, the law "On protection of republican principles" was adopted on 24 August 2021.¹⁸⁷² It provides, among other things, for the strengthening of state control over the activities of religious organizations, the introduction of the principle of neutrality in the civil service, the training of civil servants in the principles of secularism. It also fixes provisions for transparency in the financing of associations, combating hostile actions, including on the Internet, strengthens control over private educational institutions, introduces a ban on religious propaganda in the educational system, and essentially allows local authorities to close Islamic schools that violate republican principles.

There are approximately 16,000 Roma in France, who, because of prejudices and stereotypes widespread against them, are systematically attacked by local residents and experience various forms of discrimination. Often their access to public services, including education, medical care, and social security, is restricted.

Another problem that became extremely acute recently is the rise of Russophobic attitudes after the beginning of a special military operation (SMO) by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine.

20211212

1869 <https://www.aa.com.tr/fr/journal-de-lislamophobie/france-des-injures-islamophobes-et-n%C3%A9o-nazis-inscrites-sur-la-mosque-de-flers/2743433>

1870 <https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/hauts-de-france/nord-0/lille/les-locaux-de-l-association-al-amal-de-wattignies-vandalises-c-est-la-goutte-d-eau-qui-fait-deborder-le-vase-2735630.html>

1871 Sondage: les jeunes musulmans plus radicaux que leurs aînés. Le Figaro. 8 September 2020.

<https://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/sondage-les-jeunes-musulmans-plus-radicaux-que-leurs-aines-20200908>

1872 Loi n° 2021-1109 du 24 août 2021 confortant le respect des principes de la République.

[https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/dossierlegislatif/JORFDOLE000042635616/?detailType=EXPOSE_MOTIFS&detailId=.](https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/dossierlegislatif/JORFDOLE000042635616/?detailType=EXPOSE_MOTIFS&detailId=)

The situation of Russian citizens and Russian-speakers in France has worsened. They face manifestations of Russophobia and aggression in everyday life and are discriminated by banks, educational institutions, service companies. Threats and insults against employees of Russian foreign missions and their families became more frequent. Credit and financial institutions suspended operations from Russian citizens pretexting “additional inspections”, the practice of arbitrary denials to grant credits is also known. Anti-Russian rhetoric disseminated by the French authorities and media, as well as the activity of the radical Ukrainian diaspora, has contributed to this to a great extent.

It should be noted that the French Ministry of Interior takes appropriate measures to ensure safety of Russian foreign missions. The French Ministry of Higher Education sent out a circular letter emphasizing that Russian students and researchers in the country can continue their activities without any interference.¹⁸⁷³

A serious concern is caused by cases of discriminatory approach of French judges in imposing unreasonably harsh measures of restraint and punishment on Russian citizens. In 2016-2022, A.Vinnik, I.Zhirnov, M.Ivkin and P.Kosov, as well as V.Balakhnichev and A. Melnikov, faced shortcomings in the administration of justice and execution of sentences, including unsatisfactory conditions in penitentiary institutions and the late submission of case files to lawyers and their principals.¹⁸⁷⁴

Cases of psychological pressure on priests of the Russian Orthodox Church in France were recorded. Father Andrey (Eliseev), rector of the St. Nicholas Cathedral in Nice, and clergy of the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Paris, located on the territory of the Russian Orthodox Church, received anonymous letters threatening to kill them if they refused to leave French territory in the near future. Social networks also publish death threats against the priests "as henchmen of the Russian authorities". French law enforcement authorities responded promptly to the

¹⁸⁷³ <https://studia.universita.corsica/plugins/actu/actu-front.php?id=7997>

¹⁸⁷⁴For more details see Report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on Violation of the Rights of Russian Citizens and Fellow Citizens in Foreign Countries.

https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/humanitarian_cooperation//asset_publisher/bB3NYd16mBFC/content/id/4641517

incidents and opened criminal cases.

Against the background of anti-Russian hysteria in spring 2022, everything that reminds of Russia was under the threat of prohibition. Thus, on 1-3 March 2022, a number of bookstores in Toulon were instructed to remove from sale all Russian-language publications, including educational literature for teaching the Russian language, and return them to the publishers. On 11-16 March 2022, announcements about the withdrawal of "Russian products" from sale appeared in grocery stores in France. Owners of Russian restaurants in various regions of France received threatening letters with the same content, requiring them to leave the country. The scope of the threatening letters has not been fully assessed, because not all the owners reported the letters.

On 1 March 2022, J.Thévenot, President of the Chamber of Advocates of Valenciennes and part-time President of the Autonomous Fund for Settlement of Advocates (CARPA) of the Chamber of Advocates of the Hauts-de-France, sent a letter to the five Bar Associations of the mentioned region with a blatantly racist instruction "to block all money transfers to clients whose names sound Slavic". There have been reports of damage to the personal vehicles of Russian compatriots (such as bumping dents, deep scratches, broken rear-view mirrors and wipers, damage to cars with blue and yellow paint, and, less frequently, broken windows), as well as attacks on real estate and businesses owned by Russians.

According to the National Advisory Commission on Human Rights, the level of tolerance in French society as a whole is decreasing. The fact that racist, xenophobic, anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic manifestations, including violent ones, have increased in France in recent years, have been repeatedly pointed out by international and national human rights organizations, as well as by the United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies: Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Human Rights Committee, and the Committee against Torture.¹⁸⁷⁵ An urgent problem for France is police violence on ethnic and

¹⁸⁷⁵https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fFRA%2fCO%2f7-8&Lang=ru;
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fFRA%2fCO

racial grounds, including deaths resulting from the use of weapons.

Until 2018, there were no official statistics on murders committed by law enforcement officers in France. Now it is published by the General Inspectorate of the National Police of the French Interior Ministry: thus, 32 people were killed in 2020, and 37 in 2021.¹⁸⁷⁶ The comparison and analysis of data collected by human rights activists and experts show that the typical profile of the victim is a man of African or Arab origin, 25-30 years old, living in a disadvantaged area of one of the major cities. The typical circumstances of the murder are during apprehension/attempted escape or during pre-trial detention (due to restraint measures applied).

According to the French ombudsman, the instructions and notices sent to police officers between 2012 and 2018 contained provisions clearly encouraging the practice of ethnic profiling. In particular, police officers were required to identify "black and North African groups" as well as to "systematically chase homeless people and gypsies away from their places of residence".¹⁸⁷⁷

There are frequent cases of abuse by law enforcement officers against migrants, as well as French citizens of non-European phenotype. They are often subjected to identity checks under far-fetched pretexts, while their real reason is the racial or ethnic origin of the person being checked.¹⁸⁷⁸

The latest resonant case is the murder on 27 June 2023 of the 17-year-old teenager of Arab origin Nael M by a police officer in Nanterre (suburb of Paris) after reiterated refusal to obey the requirements of the authorities, which caused a large wave of unrest in France.

Repeated incidents of violence and excessive use of force by police during forced camp closures, as well as against Roma, have been cited by UN human rights treaty bodies such as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fFRA%2fCO%2f7&Lang=ru;
¹⁸⁷⁶<https://www.ouest-france.fr/societe/police/37-morts-et-79-blesses-lors-d-operations-de-police-l-igpn-a-eu-fort-a-faire-en-2021-f91ff036-099a-11ed-0d51db3723ba>
¹⁸⁷⁷http://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/sites/default/files/atoms/files/decision_2019-090_defenseur_des_droits.pdf
¹⁸⁷⁸https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fFRA%2fCO%2f5&Lang=ru

Discrimination and the Committee against Torture.¹⁸⁷⁹

In this context, a strong resonance was caused in France by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) calling on Paris to address the issues of racism and discrimination among French law enforcement officers.¹⁸⁸⁰ The French Foreign Ministry declared that any accusation towards French law enforcement bodies of racism or systemic discrimination is “completely unfounded”, because French police officers use force only in case of absolute necessity.¹⁸⁸¹ Prefect of police L.Nunez also assured the UNHCR that there is no racism in police.¹⁸⁸²

On 25 May 2021, the Law on General Security and Preservation of Liberties was issued.¹⁸⁸³ It provides, among other things, for the expansion of municipal police powers, the list of law enforcement officers who can get access to CCTV footage, allows public services to use drones to ensure public order, search for intruders and rescue people. The consideration of the corresponding bill in the National Assembly in early December 2020 coincided with several major scandals related to the police. These included the use of force in the dispersal of protests and the destruction of migrant tent camps in Paris, as well as the beating by law enforcement officers of the black producer M.Zeckler, which, according to the victim, was accompanied by racist insults.

Despite the efforts of the authorities to suppress the manifestations and spread of neo-Nazism within the country, the problem of far-right extremism in France has been exacerbated in recent years.

According to the Europol report for 2022, France accounts for 45 percent of the total number of far-right extremists arrested in the EU. Three years ago French

1879 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fFRA%2fCO%2f20-21&Lang=ru;

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fFRA%2fCO%2f7&Lang=ru

1880 https://www.bfmtv.com/police-justice/nahel-l-onu-demande-a-la-france-de-se-pencher-sur-les-serieux-problemes-de-racisme-chez-les-forces-de-l-ordre_AD-202306300390.html

1881 <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/la-france-et-les-nations-unies/evenements-et-actualites-lies-aux-nations-unies/actualites/article/declaration-de-la-porte-parole-du-haut-commissariat-des-nations-unies-aux>

1882 https://www.bfmtv.com/police-justice/mort-de-nahel-laurent-nunez-soutient-qu-il-n-y-a-pas-de-racisme-dans-la-police_AN-202307020275.html

1883 <https://www.senat.fr/petite-loi-ameli/2020-2021/495.html>

radicals accounted for 33 percent of all the far-right extremists arrested in the EU countries.¹⁸⁸⁴

The fight against organized neo-Nazi groups is based on the provisions of the 1936 law "On Combat Groups and Private Armed Structures" and anti-terrorist legislation, which allow for arrests on suspicion of forming an extremist group without waiting for the commission of unlawful acts. As of 2017, the French National Counterterrorism Prosecutor's Office is usually in charge of investigating such criminal cases.

In order to prevent the spread of extremist ideology, the French authorities use a mechanism developed in 2016 and optimized in 2020-2021 that allows for the administrative (extrajudicial) dissolution and prohibition of any organization whose activities threaten public safety by decree of the Council of Ministers. However, it is not uncommon for far-right groups to recreate themselves after some time in the same composition, changing their name, or as undeclared associations after such a procedure.

By the end of 2022, French competent authorities estimated that there were about three thousand far-right extremists in the country, including around 1300 violent ones, listed in the database of persons posing a threat to national security. According to the police, recently the activity of the far-right raised significantly. They recruit young people in new groups created instead of those disbanded and prohibited.¹⁸⁸⁵ Approximately 100 radicals are under special surveillance as potential terrorists.¹⁸⁸⁶

On 14 December 2022, Minister of the Interior J. Darmanin confirmed the risks of far-right radicals committing terrorist acts, noting at the same time that they are significantly lower than risks related to terrorist activity of Islamists. From 2017 French special services have prevented nine terrorist acts prepared by far-right extremists.¹⁸⁸⁷ Four of them were prevented in 2022,¹⁸⁸⁸ which indicate the

1884 https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/Tesat_Report_2022_0.pdf стр. 47-49

1885 <https://www.leparisien.fr/politique/ultradroite-la-mouvance-est-en-train-de-se-reorganiser-en-petits-groupes-27-12-2022-KUCLZ2KYFFCP5LH3CREHABZSAE.php?ts=1676460171303>

1886 <https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceinter/ultra-droite-en-france-la-nouvelle-menace-terroriste-1612243>

1887 <https://www.vie-publique.fr/discours/287568-gerald-darmanin-14122022-ordre-public>

growth of far-right terrorist threat.

There are signs of coordinated actions of far-right groups at the national level. On 14 December 2022, after the World Cup semi-final France-Morocco many French cities witnessed a wave of mass disturbances involving radicals armed with cold arms and smoke bombs.¹⁸⁸⁹ The police detained 266 people, 167 of them in Paris.¹⁸⁹⁰ Among the detainees in the capital 38 are far-right extremists, 15 of which are registered as persons posing a threat to national security, including leaders and members of previously prohibited or disbanded neo-Nazi organizations Paris Zouaves, L'Alvarium, Groupe Union Défense. Two of the detainees had documents as members of French armed forces; one had a license of emergency response service within French Interior Ministry.¹⁸⁹¹

According to L.Nunez, head of the French president's National Coordinating Centre for Intelligence and Counterterrorism, surveillance of far-right organizations has become one of the priorities of the country's Directorate General of Internal Security (DGSI).¹⁸⁹²

In May 2022, 11 members of the group "Patriotic Revenge" were detained on suspicion of preparation of acts of violence.¹⁸⁹³ In November 2021, as a result of an extensive operation, the nationalist organization "Recolonization of France" consisting of about 100 people was neutralized, its leader and 12 heads of regional cells were detained and 51 weapons were seized. Members of the group recruited

1888

https://www.liberation.fr/societe/police-justice/extreme-droite-onze-interpellations-autour-du-groupe-survivaliste-vengeance-patriote-20220518_H6IHQFKPVBHAXD3L5PEZAG5H3I/

https://www.lemonde.fr/police-justice/article/2022/06/02/operation-contre-l-ultradroite-en-alsace-quatre-suspects-en-garde-a-vue-des-armes-lourdes-saisies_6128603_1653578.html

<https://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/plusieurs-perquisitions-visant-la-mouvance-de-lultradroite-en-alsace-31-05-2022-47FAF54UBJABTE5LCZ2RC2TMFO.php>

https://www.bfmtv.com/police-justice/heinrich-himmler88-un-neonazi-soupconne-d-un-projet-de-tuerie-de-masse-mis-en-examen-en-france_AD-202206040182.html

<https://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/ultradroite-un-homme-de-19-ans-mis-en-examen-pour-des-soupcons-de-projet-terroriste-13-09-2022-HBCNA6HJYRBS5JPMBNO3G3XXFU.php>

1889 <https://www.rtl.fr/actu/debats-societe/les-infos-de-18h-france-maroc-les-attaques-de-l-ultradroite-etaient-elles-coordonnees-7900215855>

1890 https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2022/12/15/mondial-266-interpellations-dont-167-a-paris-la-gauche-denonce-des-ratonnades-de-l-ultradroite_6154554_3224.html

1891 https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2022/12/15/qui-sont-les-militants-d-extreme-droite-interpelles-a-paris-le-soir-de-france-maroc_6154609_3224.html?random=1746559494

1892 <https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceinter/ultra-droite-en-france-la-nouvelle-menace-terroriste-1612243>

1893 <https://www.tf1info.fr/justice-faits-divers/ultradroite-11-arrestations-autour-du-groupe-vengeance-patriote-soupconne-de-projets-d-actions-violentes-2220196.html>

like-minded people through chat rooms in the Telegram messenger and hatched plans to kill Jews, Africans and Muslims.¹⁸⁹⁴

French nationalist associations are traditionally active in such regions as Brittany and Alsace, as well as in the cities of Lyon and Marseille.

During the searches in May 2022 by law-enforcement agencies of the country in Alsace, 23 unregistered weapons, more than 120 thousand pieces of ammunition, including magazines for the Kalashnikov automatic rifle, over 35 kg of gunpowder and extremist literature were found. Earlier, in the autumn of 2021, 14 leaders of an organized network of ultra-right associations "DW Renversion" were arrested in Alsace, who had intended to organize a coup d'état by storming the Elysée Palace.¹⁸⁹⁵ A group of nationalists affiliated with this network, "Honour and Nation," who were going to blow up the Masonic lodge, were also neutralized.¹⁸⁹⁶

In October 2021 five members of the ultra-nationalist group Secret Armed Organization were sentenced to real terms for preparation, according to the investigation, of terrorist acts and murders of political figures in France.

In January 2022 in Paris, demonstrations against the regime of anti-Covid restrictions were attended by activists of the neo-Nazi organizations Identity Generation and Paris Zouaves, banned in March 2021 and early January 2022, respectively. Based on the "personnel asset" of the Génération identitaire, the group "Strongholds" was created in Lyon in 2021.¹⁸⁹⁷ In May 2022, members of the groups Social Bastion and Blood and Honour, disbanded in July 2019, held a torchlight procession in the Haut-Rhin department in memory of French Waffen-SS legionnaires. On 14 December 2022, neo-Nazis from the Paris Zouaves participated in the organization of mass unrest in the capital.¹⁸⁹⁸

In Lyon, attempts to recreate the "French Nationalist Party" were

1894 https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2021/11/24/derriere-l-organisation-d-extreme-droite-demantelee-par-la-justice-des-militaires-et-d-anciens-militaires_6103339_3224.html

1895 <https://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/operation-azur-le-projet-secret-du-gourou-complotiste-remy-daillet-pour-renverser-lelysee-27-10-2021-MJQOSTJVIBFH7KPYPO2XUXXJF4.php>

1896 https://www.liberation.fr/societe/police-justice/cinq-neonazis-soupconnes-davoir-voulu-preparer-un-attentat-mis-en-examen-20210925_ZNLWE33UHJB7JNZG6VUUCZH23Q/

1897 <https://www.lyoncapitale.fr/politique/panorama-de-l-ultra-droite-a-lyon>

1898 https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2022/12/15/qui-sont-les-militants-d-extreme-droite-interpelles-a-paris-le-soir-de-france-maroc_6154609_3224.html?random=1746559494

recorded.¹⁸⁹⁹ Currently the said group “Strongholds” is active there. On 5 December 2022 its members, acting as an organized group, beat up representatives of the left-wing party Unbowed France.¹⁹⁰⁰ On 8 December 2022, despite the prohibition from the prefecture, they held a torchlight march¹⁹⁰¹ with at least 200 participants.¹⁹⁰² On 14 December 2022 they staged riots during the World Cup semi-final France-Morocco.¹⁹⁰³ On 5 January 2023, local neo-Nazi covered the Resistance and Deportation History Centre in Lyon with leaflets showing the Nazi and war criminal Klaus Barbie, guilty of tortures and mass slaughters of Resistance fighters.¹⁹⁰⁴ Currently local authorities require the French Interior Ministry to prohibit and dissolve the “Strongholds”.

In March 2022, members of the far-right neo-Nazi organization Pit Bulls of Paris beat up the owner of a bar in the 11th arrondissement of Paris.¹⁹⁰⁵ On June 2, 2022, in Besançon, racist graffiti and swastikas were painted on the election posters of Stéphane Ravaclette,¹⁹⁰⁶ candidate of the leftist political forces for the National Assembly, and in late June 2022, a neo-Nazi meeting was held in Orleans.¹⁹⁰⁷

In Bourgogne – Franche-Comté there is a neo-Nazi group “Vandal Besak” (VDL BSK) created in 2021. In the night from 27 to 28 August 2022, 20 activists of the group held a march in Besançon, administrative centre of the region, with Nazi military songs, fascist salutes, posters and leaflets bearing SS symbols. They organized a photo session at the fountain of the General Staff on the square named

1899 <https://www.rue89lyon.fr/2021/10/23/extreme-droite-lyon-panorama-groupuscules/>

1900 https://www.ouest-france.fr/auvergne-rhone-alpes/lyon-69000/le-maire-de-lyon-demande-des-mesures-contre-l-ultra-droite-locale-apres-l-agression-de-militants-lfi-7e355020-7617-11ed-8508-e43b098bc9f7#error=login_required&state=25e48f29-09ab-42c7-8e6c-7523cb570275

¹⁹⁰¹ https://www.bfmtv.com/lyon/lyon-l-ultra-droite-a-brave-l-interdiction-de-participer-a-la-montee-aux-flambeaux_AV-202212090312.html

1902 <https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/151222/lyon-l-ultradroite-se-lache-et-defie-de-nouveau-les-pouvoirs-publics>

1903 https://actu.fr/auvergne-rhone-alpes/lyon_69123/violences-de-l-extreme-droite-a-lyon-le-maire-accuse-la-police-et-l-etat-de-laisser-faire_56375440.html

1904 <https://www.20minutes.fr/justice/4017648-20230106-lyon-justice-saisie-apres-decouverte-stickers-neonazis-colles-ville>

1905 https://actu.fr/ile-de-france/paris_75056/video-un-groupe-neonazi-revendique-une-agression-dans-un-bar-de-paris-trois-mois-apres-les-faits_51014789.html

1906 <https://linsoumission.fr/2022/06/03/stephane-ravacley-tags-nazis/>

1907 <http://www.revolutionpermanente.fr/je-ne-suis-pas-un-n-gr-a-Orleans-des-neo-nazis-filmes-chantant-leur-haine-raciste>

after Jean Cornet (French Resistance fighter). According to the mayor of the city, other extremist groups also hold actions in the region for a long time. They often leave neo-Nazi graffiti and swastikas on buildings. Over the past two years at least ten racist actions took place in the city. In March 2022, neo-Nazis beat up a local left-wing activist. In December 2022, another local organisation “Nationalist raccoons” appeared on social media, spreading quotes from anti-Semitic writer Maurice Barrès and glorifying the founder of the British Union of Fascists Oswald Mosley.¹⁹⁰⁸ The municipality calls for all these persons to be held accountable.¹⁹⁰⁹

Recently, far-right radicals also became more active in the capital and other regions. In late October 2022 Nazi symbols were found on the buildings of some educational institutions of the Ile-de-France region, on the facades of the universities in Nanterre, Grenoble, Creteil, the Paris Institute of Political Studies, the École Supérieure de Commerce of Paris.¹⁹¹⁰

Neo-Nazi ideas resonate among French bikers. The motto of the "Bandidos" bike club based in Besançon (Dou Department) reproduces the SS motto ("our honour is our loyalty"), and among its members are former leaders of the banned far-right organizations "Fight 18" and "Blood and Honour".¹⁹¹¹ The Vagos bike club based in Metz (Moselle department) openly displays Nazi and neo-Nazi symbols at its events. According to media reports, both formations have connections with organized far-right criminal groups in the U.S.¹⁹¹²

Military personnel, including those in "sensitive" positions, have often joined far-right organizations. Thus, according to leaks in the media, among the members of the "French Recolonization" was a colonel who served at Vilacoublay Air Base, where a large proportion of government and presidential flights are

1908 https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2022/12/26/a-besancon-l-ombre-de-la-culture-neonazie-derriere-la-degradation-de-la-statue-de-victor-hugo_6155690_3224.html

1909 <https://www.macommmune.info/neonazis-deambulants-dans-les-rues-de-besancon-que-font-la-police-et-la-ville/>

1910 https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2022/11/17/antisemitisme-dans-l-enseignement-superieur-les-etablissements-universitaires-doivent-denoncer-et-informer_6150248_3232.html

1911 <https://www.streetpress.com/sujet/1640009244-bikers-neonazis-gand-motards-crime-organise-besancon-freres-bettoni-extreme-droite>

1912 <https://www.streetpress.com/sujet/1646058430-vagos-groupe-bikers-neonazis-installent-metz-extreme-droite-ayoub>

stationed and serviced^{1913 1914}, and among the "DW Renversment" conspirators were several active French military personnel.

In July 2020 and March 2021, the electronic newspaper Mediapar published investigative journalism about 50 neo-Nazis discovered in the French armed forces thanks to their social media accounts. After the second publication, the then head of the Ministry of Defence F.Parly assured at parliamentary hearings that the persons involved in the first investigation were severely punished, and promised to check and take measures if the new facts uncovered by the journalists were confirmed.

However, on December 8, 2021, Mediapar again raised this topic, questioning the quality of the inspection conducted by the Ministry of Defence. The reason was the incidental detention of two people by the French customs on November 20, 2021, during the search of their residence 200 kg of cartridges, 130 weapons, including AK-47 and AR-15 assault rifles and submachine guns as well as neo-Nazi propaganda were found. One of the detainees turned out to be the subject of a March investigation by Mediapar.¹⁹¹⁵

Illegal arms trafficking often involving far-right groups is becoming an increasingly acute problem.

EU officials are concerned about the fate of weapons supplied to Ukraine. Some experts note that this country has become a centre of illicit arms trade and fear the weapons reaching the black market in Europe.¹⁹¹⁶

In Alsace, there is a nationalist group "Strasbourg Offender" whose members are involved in illicit arms trafficking,¹⁹¹⁷ threaten journalists,¹⁹¹⁸ assault foreigners

1913 <https://www.midilibre.fr/2021/11/23/groupuscule-dultradroite-13-membres-de-recolonisation-france-interpelles-des-armes-saisies-9946172.php>

1914 <https://www.marianne.net/societe/terrorisme/un-colonel-de-gendarmerie-pourrait-etre-ecarte-en-raison-de-ses-liens-avec-lultra-droite>

1915 <https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/081221/neonazis-dans-l-armee-l-insupportable-laisser-faire-du-ministere>

1916 https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/europe/manifestations-en-ukraine/guerre-en-ukraine-les-armes-envoyees-sur-le-front-risquent-elles-de-revenir-illegalement-en-europe-de-l-ouest_5168269.html

1917 <https://www.rue89strasbourg.com/deux-hooligans-strasbourg-offender-perquisitions-armes-mouvance-neonazie-238434>

1918 <https://www.rue89strasbourg.com/journaliste-menaces-neonazis-248618>

with racist motives,¹⁹¹⁹ attack events of anti-fascist movements and organizations.¹⁹²⁰ During the above-mentioned raid in Alsace in May 2022, members of this gang were detained and charged with large-scale arms trafficking.¹⁹²¹

There are many asocial "loners" among French neo-Nazis. The law enforcement agencies do not tend to underestimate the threat posed by them and fear the emergence of a "French A.Breivik".

On 31 May 2022, a 20-year-old radical was arrested on suspicion of plotting a terrorist attack; he diffused on social media, under the nickname HeinrichHimmler88, neo-Nazi ideology and threatened with physical violence Jews, dark-skinned people, feminists and representatives of the LGBT community.¹⁹²² On 6 September 2022 special services detained a 19-year-old neo-Nazi on suspicion of plotting a terrorist attack using an improvised explosive device with racist and anti-Semitic motives.¹⁹²³

At the level of law enforcement practice, judges try to impose long prison terms as punishment for them. Thus, in January 2022, the Paris correctional court sentenced neo-Nazi A.Chapot to 9 years in prison for "self-preparation for committing an act of terrorism. This is the second conviction with this wording in the history of the country.¹⁹²⁴

1919 <https://www.rue89strasbourg.com/hooligans-strasbourg-offender-agresse-proches-joueur-racing-239111>

1920 https://www.liberation.fr/politique/des-radicaux-dextreme-droite-attaquent-une-conference-antifasciste-a-strasbourg-20220227_KCIB543KHVDAREABZXADXULDW4/

1921 <https://www.rue89strasbourg.com/deux-hooligans-strasbourg-offender-perquisitions-armes-mouvance-neonazie-238434>

1922 https://www.bfmtv.com/police-justice/heinrich-himmler88-un-neonazi-soupconne-d-un-projet-de-tuerie-de-masse-mis-en-examen-en-france_AD-202206040182.html

1923 <https://www.lefigaro.fr/faits-divers/ultradroite-un-mosellan-de-19-ans-mis-en-examen-pour-des-soupcons-de-projet-terroriste-20220913>

1924 https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2022/01/29/ultradroite-aurelien-chapeau-condamne-a-neuf-ans-de-prison-ferme-en-raison-de-la-multiplicite-des-actes-preparatoires-a-un-attentat_6111461_3224.html

Federal Republic of Germany

In Germany, attempts to glorify the Nazi movement and its individual representatives in any form are criminalized. The following are criminally prosecuted: public denial, justification or underestimation of the crimes of National Socialism, public approval or glorification of Nazi tyranny, distribution of propaganda materials and use of symbols of anti-constitutional organizations, including the Nazi and neo-Nazi organizations (para. 86, 86a and 130 of the German Criminal Code (CC)).

At the same time, manifestations of racist ideologies of various kinds, including neo-Nazism, accompanied by aggressive Russophobia at the state level and unlimited support for the Kiev regime, have been growing in recent years.

In 2023, there were no direct bans by the German authorities on holding events to commemorate the Victory Day and the end of World War II: all requests to organize relevant events in Germany were satisfied. At the same time, the display of the "Z" and "V" symbols was prohibited everywhere (prosecuted under para. 140 of the German Criminal Code "Encouragement and Approval of Crimes", punishable by up to 3 years' imprisonment). Other restrictions were regulated on a case-by-case basis and varied considerably from state to state.

In Berlin, a police order prohibited:

- wearing of military uniform, its elements, and military insignia;
- demonstration of the St. George's Ribbon, flags of Russia, flags and coat of arms of the USSR, coat of arms of the Chechen Republic, images of the heads of Russia/USSR and the Chechen Republic;
- demonstration of flags of the Republic of Crimea, Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, Zaporozhye and Kherson Oblasts, Russian and Soviet military flags, images of the territory of Ukraine without the Republic of Crimea, Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, Zaporozhye and Kherson Oblasts;
- playing and performing Russian marches and war songs at the Soviet war memorials in Treptow Park, Tiergarten and Pankov and adjacent areas from

6 a.m. on 8 May 2023 until 10 p.m. on 9 May 2023.

Colors of the Russian flag and the St. George's Ribbon were allowed only as elements of the design of wreaths, bunches of flowers, etc., intended for laying at monuments or graves. Restrictions on the wearing of military uniforms, insignia and the St. George's Ribbon did not apply to veterans of the Great Patriotic War. These prohibitions did not apply also to diplomatic delegations.¹⁹²⁵

In other federal states, restrictions were imposed within the framework of specific announced actions. In particular, Russian and Soviet flags, the Victory Banner, elements of military uniforms, St. George's ribbons, etc. were not allowed during the "Immortal Regiment" processions in Munich. In Hamburg, the ban applied to any flags, banners and military uniforms, in Augsburg – only to the St. George's ribbon. In Frankfurt am Main it was possible to use the flags of Russia, the USSR and the Victory Banner, in Kiel – only the flag of the USSR and the Victory Banner, in Saarbrücken – the flag of Russia and the St. George's Ribbon, in Stuttgart – the St. George's Ribbon. In Cologne and Hürth there were no bans.

After the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation launched a special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilian population of Donbass, Russian foreign missions in Germany recorded a sharp increase in the number of cases of desecration/vandalism at Russian (Soviet) war graves and memorials in the country: three such incidents took place in 2021, 16 – in 2022, and nine – from January to mid-May 2023.

Germany maintains double standards with regard to the payment of individual compensation to those who survived the siege of Leningrad, which was one of the most terrible acts of genocide by Nazi Germany against the peoples of the Soviet Union during the Great Patriotic War, when more than one million residents of Leningrad of various nationalities fell prey. Under far-fetched pretexts Germany makes payments only to Jews who survived the blockade, who, of course, have every moral right to them. Berlin has refused for years to extend

¹⁹²⁵ Polizei Berlin schützt Versammlungen und Veranstaltungen am 8. und 9. Mai. [Berlin.de Das offizielle Hauptstadtportal](https://www.berlin.de/polizei/polizeimeldungen/2023/pressemitteilung.1320879.php). 5 May 2023 <https://www.berlin.de/polizei/polizeimeldungen/2023/pressemitteilung.1320879.php>

payments to the remaining survivors of the blockade, to the defenders and residents of the city. On 8 September, on the next anniversary of the blockade, an open appeal to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany of those who defended the city and lived there was published encouraging the German authorities to restore historical and human justice by making humanitarian compensation payments to all living blockade survivors regardless of their nationality and country of residence.

Germany's refusal to extend payments to all blockade survivors without discrimination on the basis of nationality is shocking against the background of the social benefits it has been paying for decades to former Third Reich soldiers who served in SS units and other recognized criminal paramilitary structures, as well as to foreign collaborators of Hitler's regime directly involved in the blockade of Leningrad.

According to AFP, 1,532 people in Europe receive such pensions, including 573 in Poland, 184 in Slovenia, 101 in Austria, 94 in the Czech Republic, 71 in Croatia, 54 in France, 48 in Hungary, 34 in the UK, 34 in the Netherlands, and 18 in Belgium. In total, more than 2,030 people worldwide received payments in February 2023, which roughly amounted to about €1,300 per month per person, including 250 people in the US and 121 people in Canada.¹⁹²⁶ The case of Heinz Barth is representative. An 80-year-old former Nazi SS officer has been serving a life sentence in a German prison for his part in the June 1944 massacre of hundreds of civilians in the French town of Oradour.¹⁹²⁷ After the German reunification in 1990, he gained the right for a monthly payment of \$450 on the grounds that he had lost a leg during the war.

Right-wing extremism continues to be regarded by German authorities as one of the most serious threats to the country's internal security. According to the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany (BfV; internal security and counterintelligence service), it was estimated

¹⁹²⁶ Nazisme: 2 000 personnes dans le monde touchent une pension controversée. The Times of Israel.

22 February 2019 <https://fr.timesofisrael.com/nazisme-2-000-personnes-dans-le-monde-touchent-une-pension-controversee/>

¹⁹²⁷ Nazi war criminal dies in Germany. BBC.14 August 2007 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6946159.stm>

in 2022 that there was about 38,800 right-wing extremists in the country (in 2021 – 34,000). About 14,000 of them were considered prone to violent acts (in 2021 – 13,500).¹⁹²⁸

There are several far-right political parties in the country. The largest of them is the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPDG), which has existed since 1964 and has about 3,000 members. The "Right", "Third Way", and "Free Saxons" parties (each with no more than 500-600 members) take an active part in organizing and holding mass events with appropriate right-wing extremist slogans and disseminate aggressive nationalist propaganda on the Internet.¹⁹²⁹

Not only political parties, but also right-wing groups hold their activities through other organizations and movements registered as legal entities or existing on an informal basis. These include, among others, the Identity Movement, Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West (PEGIDA), the Citizens' Movement for Chemnitz, neo-Nazi "free associations," self-appointed "civil defense squads," etc. The BfV points to a decrease in the influence of officially registered ultra-right parties and organizations in favor of informal, non-permanent structures without a common leader, emerging inter alia on the Internet, which makes monitoring by law enforcement agencies more difficult.¹⁹³⁰ In February 2020, this principle was used, in particular, by the "Group C" (its members planned terrorist acts against Muslims and political figures), the right-wing extremist organization Combat 18, which was banned by the German Interior Ministry in January 2020, and cells of the international neo-Nazi groups "Blood and Honor"¹⁹³¹ and "Atomwaffen Division".¹⁹³²

The law enforcement agencies of the Federal Republic of Germany are seriously concerned with Reichsbürger – revisionists who do not recognize the

1928 Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz. Rechtsextremismus. Zahlen und Fakten.

https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/DE/themen/rechtsextremismus/zahlen-und-fakten/zahlen-und-fakten_node.html

1929 Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat. Verfassungsschutzbericht 2022.

https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/themen/sicherheit/vsb2022-BMI23007.pdf;jsessionid=24D6218B60F6522D15730F4D0C3A17E3.2_cid350?_blob=publicationFile&v=8

1930 Ibid.

1931 Rechtsextremes Netzwerk vor Gericht. Tagesschau. 8 April 2022 <https://www.tagesschau.de/investigativ/ndr-wdr/prozess-blood-honour-101.html>

1932 Atomwaffen Division und Combat 18. ZEIT. <https://www.zeit.de/politik/2022-04/atomwaffen-division-und-combat-18>

legitimacy of Germany and its authorities and consider themselves citizens of the German Empire in its pre-war borders. Their number has been increasing and is currently estimated at about 23,000 people. More than 2,000 of them are considered to be prone to violence.¹⁹³³ There is a growing radicalization of this people and their willingness to engage in open conflicts with the authorities has increased. On 7 December 2022, during a large-scale police special operation, the activities of Reichsbürger, who, according to investigators, had been planning an attempted armed seizure of power, were suppressed (25 people were detained).¹⁹³⁴ Earlier, on 19 March 2020, one of the largest organizations of Reichsbürger – "United German Nations and Tribes" – was banned.

Sociological studies indicate that extremist ideologies have been gradually spreading in broad segments of German society. The results of a study conducted by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation on the political attitudes of the German middle class, published in June 2021, indicated a decrease in pure right-wing extremist views in the society. On the other hand, the number of those who do not distance themselves sufficiently from statements with populist and xenophobic overtones was growing.

Mass right-wing extremist and xenophobic events are regularly held in the country. Among the largest of such events are demonstrations in Dresden on the anniversary of the savage bombing of the city by British and American aircraft on 13-15 February 1945. Up to 600 people took part in another such demonstration with revisionist slogans on 13 February 2023.¹⁹³⁵ In addition, far-right forces regularly organize protests, primarily in the east of the country, against the development of asylum-seekers' accommodation facilities, gathering up to several hundred people.¹⁹³⁶ The German law enforcement community has noted the close

1933 Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz. Reichsbürger und Selbstverwalter. Zahlen und Fakten.

https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/DE/themen/reichsbuerger-und-selbstverwalter/zahlen-und-fakten_node.html

1934 Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz. Exekutivmaßnahmen gegen Vereinigung aus "Reichsbürger"-Spektrum.

<https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/hintergruende/DE/reichsbuerger-und-selbstverwalter/exekutivmassnahmen-gegen-reichsbuerger-spektrum.html>

1935 Dresden: Keine Menschenkette zum 13. Februar. Saechsische.De.

<https://www.saechsische.de/dresden/lokales/menschenkette-und-demos-was-in-dresden-am-13-februar-wichtig-ist-5820520-amp.html>

1936 Wie Rechtsextreme wieder gegen Flüchtlingsunterkünfte mobil machen. Redaktions Netzwerk Deutschland,

intermingling of local neo-Nazi groups, Reichsbürger, COVID deniers, and supporters of various conspiracy theories.

The proportion of right-wing extremist elements in law enforcement agencies has been growing significantly. According to the second special report of the German Ministry of the Interior between July 2018 and June 2021, 860 checks were carried out against members of the security services (police, special services, Bundeswehr, customs) on suspicion of having right-wing extremist views or views close to those of Reichsbürger. In 327 cases suspicions were confirmed. Over 450 criminal cases on incitement of ethnic hatred, use of symbols and propaganda of anti-constitutional organizations and others were filed.¹⁹³⁷

In a profile report published in December 2020 by the Parliamentary Control Committee of the Bundestag (which supervises the activities of law enforcement agencies) it was stated that right-wing radicals in the police, special services, and Bundeswehr maintain close ties with right-wing extremist parties, movements, and groups (the NPD, the Identity Movement, neo-Nazi "partnerships," etc.)¹⁹³⁸

It was also stated in documents of the Parliamentary Control Committee of the Bundestag that right-wing radicals in the police, special services, and Bundeswehr maintain close ties with right-wing extremist parties, movements, and groups. For example, this was pointed out in the government's response to a request by a group of Bundestag deputies for an analysis from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021, published in July 2022. In addition to the 319 alleged manifestations of right-wing extremism in state security agencies and 58 cases in federal security agencies (684 and 176 cases at the federal state level, respectively) indicated in the first report, an increase in the number of such incidents at the federal and regional

4 February 2023. <https://www.rnd.de/politik/rechtsextreme-machen-wieder-gegen-fluechtlingsunterkuenfte-mobil-MOSR4IA3CRDQRHTNLDD5KXXH3Q.html>

1937 Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz. Lagebericht "Rechtsextremisten, ‚Reichsbürger‘ und ‚Selbstverwalter‘ in Sicherheitsbehörden". May 2022

<https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/rechtsextremismus/2022-05-lagebericht-rechtsextremisten-reichsbuerger-und-selbstverwalter-in-sicherheitsbehoerden.pdf>

1938 Unterrichtung durch das Parlamentarische Kontrollgremium Öffentliche Bewertung des Parlamentarischen Kontrollgremiums gemäß § 10 Absatz 2 Satz 1 des Kontrollgremiumsgesetzes zum Kontrollauftrag Erkenntnisse, Beiträge und Maßnahmen von Bundesamt für den Militärischen Abschirmdienst, Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz und Bundesnachrichtendienst zur Aufklärung möglicher rechtsextremistischer Netzwerke mit Bezügen zur Bundeswehr. Deutscher Bundestag 19. Wahlperiode. Drucksache 19/25180. 11 December 2020 <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/251/1925180.pdf>

levels was recorded. Accordingly, it was assumed that there were 189 confirmed cases of staff members belonging to right-wing extremists in the federal states and 138 such cases in the federal government. The BfV attributed this primarily to increased attention to the issue because of its considerable sensitivity for German society. The inclusion of additional categories of Reichsbürger in the analysis was also cited as a reason. It was noted that out of the 327 security officers listed as probable or proven participant in extremist groups, 201 had actual ties to extreme right-wing organizations.¹⁹³⁹

In the German armed forces, the most problematic unit in terms of right wing extremist sentiments is the KSK Special Forces, one of whose companies was disbanded in July 2020 for this reason. It was revealed that in April 2021, German soldiers in the NATO contingent in Lithuania had organized Nazi parties, where Hitler had been glorified and sexual violence had taken place.¹⁹⁴⁰

Scandals repeatedly rocked the German police: dozens of its officers were active in chats, where pictures of Hitler, swastikas, photo montages of shootings of black people, etc. were forwarded.¹⁹⁴¹ Evidence that police officers from the federal states of Hesse, Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria in 2018-2019,¹⁹⁴² as well as from Berlin and North Rhine-Westphalia in 2020¹⁹⁴³ were members of extremist chats was made public.

German authorities have taken action against right-wing extremists. In April 2022, the media reported that German law enforcement authorities searched

1939 Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Martina Renner, Nicole Gohlke, Göky Akbulut, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion DIE LINKE.– Drucksache 20/2366 – Lagebild Rechtsextremisten in Sicherheitsbehörden. Deutscher Bundestag. 20. Wahlperiode. 22 July 2022
<https://dserv.bundestag.de/btd/20/028/2002873.pdf>

1940 German soldiers dismissed over Hitler birthday song. Reuters. 16 June 2021
<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/german-soldiers-dismissed-over-hitler-birthday-song-2021-06-16/>; Germany withdraws platoon from Nato mission in Lithuania. BBC. 16 June 2021 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-57487869>; German military threw a Nazi party in Lithuania. Gazeta.RU. 17 June 2021
<https://www.gazeta.ru/army/news/2021/06/17/16115654.shtml?updated>

1941 Berlin and NRW: Neue rassistische Chatgruppen bei Polizei entdeckt. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. 1 October 2020 <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/berlin-und-nrw-neue-rassistische-chatgruppen-bei-polizei-entdeckt-16981029.html>

1942 Right-wing extremists in German police? It all started in a chat. DW. 17 September 2020
<https://www.dw.com/ru/pravye-jekstremisty-v-rjadah-policii-frg-vse-nachalos-v-chate/a-54963251>

1943 Berlin und NRW: Neue rassistische Chatgruppen bei Polizei entdeckt. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. 1 October 2020 <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/berlin-und-nrw-neue-rassistische-chatgruppen-bei-polizei-entdeckt-16981029.html>

the homes of about 50 suspects in 11 federal states on suspicion of involvement in the right-wing extremist criminal organizations Nockout 51, Kombat 18, Atomwaffen Division and Sonderkommando 1418. Among the suspects was a non-commissioned officer of the German armed forces. There was information about the detention of 11 persons involved in the above-mentioned structures.¹⁹⁴⁴

Civil society activists pointed out that the German authorities tolerate various neo-Nazi manifestations, although they pretend not to notice them. In particular, the chairman of the German Union of Free Thinkers Klaus Hartmann spoke about this with regard to the participation of the German military in the above-mentioned NATO regular military exercises in Lithuania, which was named "Iron Wolf" (a scandalous name from the historical point of view). The name of these exercises refers to the Lithuanian nationalist movement of the 1930s "Iron Wolf" (Geležinis Vilkas), also known as the "Association of Iron Wolves." The movement was anti-Semitic and Nazi in nature, and its ideology called for ridding Lithuania of Poles and Jews and generally creating a powerful state in the image of European fascist movements. During World War II, its members collaborated with the Nazi authorities.¹⁹⁴⁵

The public is aware of ties between German right-wing radicals and foreign extremist structures. For example, the results of a journalistic investigation published by Die Zeit in February 2021 showed that German far-right organizations had strengthened ties to Ukrainian neo-Nazis and have participated in the armed conflict in Donbass on the side of the Kiev regime. It was pointed out at the intense activity in Germany of the Ukrainian neo-Nazi association "Azov" and its cooperation with the German neo-Nazi associations.¹⁹⁴⁶

The Internet plays a significant role in the dissemination of right-wing

1944 German police raid neo-Nazi cells across country. The Guardian. 6 April 2020

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/06/german-police-raid-neo-nazi-cells-across-country>

1945 Germany outraged by the name of the Iron Wolf exercise in Lithuania. Sputnik. Lithuania 15 November 2019

<https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20191115/V-Germanii-vozmutilis-nazvaniem-ucheniy-Zheleznyy-volk-v-Litve-10675615.html>

1946 The Brown Internationale. Kai Biermann, Christian Fuchs, Astrid Geisler, Yassin Musharbash, Hogler Stark. Die Zeit. 11 February 2021. https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2021-02/fascism-international-right-wing-extremism-neo-nazis-english/komplettansicht?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2Fhttps://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2021-02/fascism-international-right-wing-extremism-neo-nazis-english/komplettansicht?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

extremist ideology in Germany. Far-right groups actively use the possibilities of popular social networks to propagandize and mobilize participants in public events. Such views are also disseminated on the so-called image boards ("4chan," "8chan," etc.) and on platforms for gamers ("Steam," "Discord," etc.).¹⁹⁴⁷ Sociological research has recorded a consistently high level of hate speech against persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities in the German segment of the Internet.¹⁹⁴⁸

According to the Federal Criminal Police Office of Germany (BKA), in 2022 about 23,500 politically motivated right-wing extremist crimes were registered in the country, of which over 1,100 were violent. There were 11,500 hate crimes against certain groups, of which 1,400 were violent. This category includes more than 10,000 xenophobic crimes, 3,200 racist crimes, 2,600 anti-Semitic crimes, more than 600 Islamophobic crimes and 145 anti-Gypsy crimes (one act might combine different motives). 1,400 crimes (278 violent) were directed against refugees and asylum seekers, 120 crimes were directed against places of their accommodation.¹⁹⁴⁹

The EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights, citing German specialized agencies, points to a 23 per cent increase in hate crimes (the highest rate since 2001). At the same time, there was a 29 per cent increase in anti-Semitism manifestations. Equality bodies in Germany also record a high level of complaints of discrimination. In particular, according to the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, in 2022 2,080 (or 37 per cent) out of 5,617 registered complaints were related to racial discrimination.¹⁹⁵⁰

Multilateral human rights monitoring mechanisms have drawn attention to

1947 Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Petra Pau, Dr. André Hahn, Doris Achelwilm, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion DIE LINKE. – Drucksache 19/15214 – Global vernetzter Online-Rechtsextremismus – Sicherheitsarchitektur und Prävention. Deutscher Bundestag – 19. Wahlperiode. 19 February 2019 <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btd/19/161/1916170.pdf>

1948 #HASS IM NETZ: DER SCHLEICHENDE ANGRIFF AUF UNSERE DEMOKRATIE EINE BUNDESWEITE REPRÄSENTATIVE UNTERSUCHUNG. Institut für Demokratie und Zivilgesellschaft. June 2019 https://www.idz-jena.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Hass_im_Netz_-_Der_schleichende_Angriff.pdf

1949 Politisch motivierte Kriminalität – Bundesweite Fallzahlen 2022. Bundeskriminalamt. 9 May 2023 <https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/UnsereAufgaben/Deliktsbereiche/PMK/2022PMKFallzahlen.pdf>

1950 EU Agency for Fundamental Rights 2023 report https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

the need to counter the activities of extreme right-wing structures. In March 2020, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) called on Germany to intensify its efforts to prevent and combat right-wing extremism and neo-Nazism, and to create guarantees for effective prosecution of hate speech on the Internet. ECRI was alarmed by the rise of hate speech, xenophobia and Islamophobia in German public discourse and the growing number of violent right-wing extremists. The report recommended the establishment of a comprehensive system of independent anti-discrimination bodies at both federal and state level.¹⁹⁵¹

In November 2021, the Human Rights Committee also highlighted this problem. In particular, the Committee expressed concern about incitement of hatred in Germany, including verbal attacks, online publications and hate speech in the context of political discourse, as well as the significant number of hate crimes, including violent attacks and desecration of religious sites, committed against people of African descent, Roma, Muslims, Jews, refugees and migrants.¹⁹⁵²

German citizens experience racism. According to research by the German Center for Research on Integration and Migration, more than 80 per cent of respondents reported systemic inequalities caused by racial differences in areas such as education, employment and rent.¹⁹⁵³

Racial discrimination has also affected attitudes towards refugees from Ukraine in Germany. In particular, according to the AOHR, this has manifested itself in relation to Ukrainian Roma. The latter were repeatedly portrayed negatively in the media, which resulted in their being treated differently from other Ukrainians.¹⁹⁵⁴

After the Russian Armed Forces launched a Special Military Operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the peaceful population of Donbass, there was a sharp increase in cases of discrimination, insults, threats and direct

¹⁹⁵¹ The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Germany (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 10 December 2019, published on 17 March 2020 <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-report-on-germanv-sixth-monitoring-cycle-/16809ce4be>

¹⁹⁵² Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the seventh periodic report of Germany. November 2021. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/357/48/PDF/G2135748.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵⁴ Ibid.

violence against Russian-speaking citizens living in Germany. According to the BKA, at its peak in the spring of 2022, up to 200 criminal offenses on this basis were recorded per week.¹⁹⁵⁵

It should be noted that the sharp increase in discrimination after the start of Russian Special Operation was against all representatives of the Russian-speaking diaspora, including Jews and Russian Germans from among the late resettles, including citizens of Germany. Since late February, there have been a lot of quite different incidents, even those coming beyond the legal framework, and cases of violence: the use of physical force, threats, insults, deliberate damage to the property of Russian-speaking people, refusal to provide them with services, including medical and bank services, illegal dismissal from work, forced public repentance and condemnation of actions of the Russian authorities, etc. Psychological harassment and persecution of Russian-speaking children in schools "Iron Wolf" – by both classmates and teachers "Iron Wolf" – has become widespread. Many schools hold classes in which teachers, following centralized instructions, assigned homework which discredited Russia and its authorities and distorted information about what is happening in Ukraine. Russian-speaking children who refuse to attend such lessons and assignments are threatened with expulsion from schools.

The Russian Embassy in Berlin actively receives feedback from Russian compatriots to collect information about cases of discrimination and harassment of Russian-speaking people, as well as to respond promptly to their concerns about such discriminatory incidents. The Embassy systematizes information received via this hotline with regard to particular instances of violation of Russian-speaking citizens' rights in Germany and posts it on its official website in the section #StopHatingRussians.

The wave of Russophobia affected the spheres of culture and religion. A campaign was launched in the country to force Russian cultural figures to publicly

¹⁹⁵⁵ BKA registriert Dutzende Delikte: Angriffe auf Russen und Ukrainer in Deutschland. N-TV. 19 April 2022 <https://n-tv.de/politik/Angriffe-auf-Russen-und-Ukrainer-in-Deutschland-article23275758.html>

condemn the actions of the Russian leadership. This was followed by demonstrative refusals to cooperate with Russian cultural figures and institutions, as well as attempts to eliminate works by Russian authors from programs. In March 2022, attacks on and desecration of Orthodox churches of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate in Düsseldorf, Essen, Krefeld and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in Hanover, Berlin and Bielefeld took place.

The German authorities seek to intimidate those activists of the Russian-speaking community who openly express disagreement with the ongoing demonization of Russia in Germany and who have shown a loyal attitude to our country. The German media publish articles about the "control" of such activists exercised by the Kremlin, accusing them of cooperating with the Russian Embassy and collaborating with extremists.

A striking example is the persecution by the German authorities of the pro-Russian activist Yelena Kolbasnikova (born in Dnepropetrovsk), who has been living in the country for many years, and her husband, German citizen Maxim Schlund, known for their active participation in the organization of several pro-Russian automobile rallies in Germany. Following a criminal case against Yelena Kolbasnikova, the Cologne District Court fined her with 900 euro for her statements in support of Russia on 8 May 2022 during the Victory Day event in June 2023. According to media reports, Kolbasnikova is also under a second investigation on suspicion of providing financial assistance to the Russian military. She could face up to five years in prison for this.¹⁹⁵⁶ The International Association of Russian-speaking Lawyers (IARL) and the International Council of Russian Compatriots (ICRC) issued a statement calling on the German authorities to stop politically motivated persecution of Yelena Kolbasnikova and suggesting that

1956 The trial of Yelena Kolbasnikova, accused of war propaganda, began in Germany. The Fund to Support and Protect the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad. 10 March 2023 https://pravfond.ru/press-tsentr/v-germanii-nachalsya-sudebnyy-protsess-nad-rossiyankoy-elenoy-kolbasnikovoy-obvinyaemoy-v-propagande/?sphrase_id=3344; The organizer of large pro-Russian actions searched in Germany. RIA Novosti, 27 March 2023 <https://ria.ru/20230327/obysk-1861092501.html>; A pro-Russian activist fined in Germany. Lenta. RU 7 June 2023 <https://lenta.ru/news/2023/06/07/germany/>; A court in Cologne sentenced pro-Russian activist Yelena Kolbasnikova. The Fund to Support and Protect the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad. 7 June 2023 https://pravfond.ru/press-tsentr/sud-kyelna-vynes-prigovor-prorossiyskoy-aktivistke-elene-kolbasnikovoy/?sphrase_id=3344

international human rights organizations provide an objective assessment of the gross ideologically motivated actions of the German authorities.¹⁹⁵⁷

Yelena Kolbasnikova's husband Maxim Schlund is also being persecuted. Because of his participation in pro-Russian rallies, he was first denied access to his place of work because his employer allegedly had reason to doubt his trustworthiness, then suspended from work, and in March 2023 he was fired. The activist has been attempting to defend his rights in courts, to obtain financial compensation from his former employer and get reinstated.

Double standards and various methods of pressure were applied by the German authorities to the Russian media active in Germany. After the start of the Special Military Operation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine and protect the DPR and the LPR, the Russian media outlets RT DE and SNA News (formerly Sputnik Deutschland) fell under EU-wide sanctions, which ban their activities in all European Union member states. SNA News took the decision to fully terminate broadcasting in Germany and closed its official web portal and social networks accounts. Broadcasting of the TV channel RT DE is officially blocked in Germany, but its programs were available on some external network platforms. The channel's home page on the Internet was subjected to massive DDoS-attacks. On 17 March 2022, Berlin Administrative Court rejected the appeal of RT DE, in which the Russian media tried to challenge the fine of 25,000 euro, imposed on it by the media regulator of Berlin and Brandenburg for allegedly failing to comply with the ban on linear broadcasting in Germany. RT DE was charged with an additional fine of 40,000 euro.

It should be noted that targeted attacks on the part of social, political and journalistic circles at the Russian media active in Germany, first of all at the TV channel Russia Today (RT DE) and its affiliated video agency Ruptly, have taken place earlier as well, since 2020. A toxic background had been carefully created

1957 ICRC and IARL adopted a Statement in connection with the criminal prosecution in Germany of Elena Kolbasnikova, a German citizen. The International Council of Russian Compatriots 8 June 2023
<https://www.msrs.ru/news-orb/item/609-2023-047>

around RT DE: the German press disseminated unfounded insinuations about its political prejudice and bias, and attempts to sow discord in the German society, etc. In May 2021, Commerzbank announced the closing of the accounts of RT DE and Ruptly and stopped rendering financial services to them without explaining the reasons. Under the pressure from Berlin, the Luxembourg authorities denied appropriate license to the Russian TV channel for broadcasting in German in the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany (although the TV channel's application had been drawn up in compliance with the Luxembourg and general EU legislation and submitted on the same grounds on which a number of other media, including from the states located beyond the territory of the European Union, who had been earlier certified by the Luxembourg authorities without any impediment). The pinnacle of the campaign was the announcement by representatives of the German intelligence agency that they were officially "monitoring" the activities of RT DE.

Just a few days after the launch of the TV channel (16 December 2021) based on a license issued by the Serbian authorities in compliance with the European Convention on Transfrontier Television of 5 May 1989, the media regulator of the federal lands of Berlin and Brandenburg succeeded the termination of its broadcasting from the European telecommunications satellite EUTELSAT 9 and also started the process for further limiting of RT DE's broadcasting in the territory of Germany. On 2 February 2022, the Berlin-based broadcaster received official notification from the media regulator which stopped its linear broadcasts via Internet, satellite, and third-party media platforms and applications.

Human rights activists are concerned about the growing problem of anti-Semitism in Germany. Police statistics show a steady increase in the number of crimes on this basis (considered as politically motivated crimes by the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA)). In 2022, there were 2,638 such offenses (2,351 in 2020), 88 of which were violent. 31 people were injured during the assaults. 1,597 suspects were identified. Among the most common anti-Semitic crimes are

incitement of national discord, use of symbols of anti-constitutional organizations, property damage, insults, and desecration of burial places.

Despite the increase in the number of anti-Semitic crimes, according to the Anti-Defamation League, there has been a decline in the number of people in Germany who share anti-Semitic attitudes to a greater or lesser extent. In 2023, almost 8,400,000 people or 12 per cent of the country's total population shared such attitudes (in 2019 – 15 per cent or 10,200,000 people).¹⁹⁵⁸

A separate AOHR report on manifestations of anti-Semitism in 2011-2021 noted that in 2021, 3,027 anti-Semitic offenses were recorded in Germany, with 1,194 of them committed in the Internet. In 27 per cent of cases there was damage to property, 25 per cent of offenses were the dissemination of hate materials, and 9 per cent were directly related to incitement to hatred. 64 of the recorded anti-Semitic incidents were violent.¹⁹⁵⁹

Experts recognize that this is the "tip of the iceberg" without taking into account "domestic" incidents which are not prosecuted. Relevant NGOs provide a more complete view of the situation. For example, the Federal Association of Research and Information Centers on Anti-Semitism (RIAS) recorded 2,480 incidents on this ground in its 2022 report (published in June 2023). 1,912 of them involved offensive language or writing of a relevant nature. There were 186 cases of property damage, 72 cases of threats, and 56 attempts to use physical violence which posed a serious threat to life and health (such offenses included arson, as well as shooting at Jewish communal properties).¹⁹⁶⁰

In Berlin alone, RIAS Berlin recorded 450 anti-Semitic incidents in the first half of 2022.¹⁹⁶¹ According to this NGO, more than a third of the incidents (843) occurred online, 426 at public events, 94 at cultural institutions, and 76 at schools.

1958 ADL Global 100. Germany. <https://global100.adl.org/country/germany/>

1959 The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report on anti-Semitism in the European Union in 2011-2021 https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-antisemitism-overview-2011-2021_en.pdf

1960 Bundesverband RIAS e. V. Federal Association of Departments for Research and Information on Antisemitism. Annual Report. Antisemitic incidents in Germany 2022. 27 June 2023 https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/Antisemitic_incidents_in_Germany_Annual-Report_Federal_Association_RIAS_2022.pdf

1961 Antisemitische Vorfälle in Berlin Januar bis Juni 2022. Ein Bericht der Recherche- und Informationsstelle Antisemitismus Berlin (RIAS Berlin). https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/rias_berlin_antisemitische_vorfaelle_jan_jun_2022.pdf

In terms of the number of anti-Semitic episodes among the German federal states, Berlin (848), Bavaria (442) and Thuringia (237) recorded the highest number. Experts point to the reluctance of many victims to seek help from the police because they fear retaliation from their attackers or lack confidence in the work of law enforcement agencies, which results in a significant number of incidents not coming to the attention of the police. It is also noted that the motives for anti-Semitic offenses are becoming increasingly diverse. In addition to the rise in right-wing extremist sentiment, the rise of Islamism, especially among migrants from the Middle East and North Africa, spread of other extremist ideologies (including an increase in the number of supporters of the Turkish "gray wolves" in Germany), and the growing popularity of various "conspiracy theories" account for such offenses. In three out of four cases, victims are unable to determine what caused the incident. In addition, when presenting the report, Benjamin Steinitz, chairman of the board of the Center for Research and Information on Anti-Semitism, pointed out that anti-Semitism has a direct impact on the daily lives of Jews in Germany, many of whom hide their nationality and do not wear religious symbols due to their fears.

In addition, Islamophobic attitudes in Germany are on the rise, and they have significantly spread in broad segments of German society and in all spheres of public life. Report of the independent expert group on combating Islamophobia under the Ministry of the Interior of the Federal Republic of Germany (established in September 2020 "following" the racist terrorist attack in Hanau on 19 February 2020) noted strengthened Islamophobic sentiments, as well as their significant spread in broad segments of German society and in all spheres of public life. Among other things, the report notes that every second German resident has Islamophobic attitudes and stereotypes. For example, 45 per cent of respondents would not want their municipality to be headed by a Muslim. 38 per cent of respondents said that because of the large number of Muslims living in Germany, they feel like "strangers in their own country". 46 per cent are of the opinion that there are many Islamist fanatics among Muslims living in Germany. 49 per cent of

respondents disagree with the opinion that Muslim migrants integrate well into German society. 29 per cent approve of the demand for a ban on immigration for Muslims. 30 per cent favored restricting the practice of Muslim religion in Germany. 42 per cent favor a ban on the construction of mosques in Germany. 43 per cent believe that the Muslim community should be under the state control. The study also noted that in Germany there is a widespread attitude towards Islam as a backward archaic religion which is not compatible with modern traditions and religious teachings. There is also a widespread perception that Islam promotes violence and restricts women's rights. In this spirit, adherence to religious rituals is often interpreted as fundamentalism and those who demonstrate adherence to this religion are perceived as a threat.

The Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (AC FCPNM) in 2022 noted with concern the deformation of the general atmosphere of tolerance in Germany. In particular, it pointed out that public consensus about Germany as a country of immigration with an ethnically, linguistically and religiously diverse society is being eroded by activist calling against such diversity. According to the AC FCPNM, this was due in part to the growing popularity of extreme right-wing parties. In addition, since politicians had begun to publicly express such xenophobic, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic views., this ideology had begun to permeate mainstream political discourse through public debate. Consequently, the polarization between those who favor openness to diversity and those who oppose it, fueled by social media, has intensified. With reference to two 2019 studies on anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, the AC FCPNM noted that anti-Semitism (according to a related case study, more than a quarter of respondents agreed with a number of anti-Semitic statements and stereotypes about Jews) and Islamophobia had reinforced in German society. According to the second study, Islam was perceived as a threat by about a half of the survey participants. The German media, which often portray Islam negatively, contributed to this.¹⁹⁶²

1962 Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

The migration situation is closely linked to manifestations of Islamophobia. Experts point out that the situation in this area may become more complicated as the number of migrants grows further, while the German authorities continue to pursue a policy of attracting migrants. According to the media, in 2022 Germany received 19,000 migrants, which is 57 per cent more than in 2021. The government has been developing plans to attract workers and specialists, and German business and trade unions call for a comprehensive course in this area and simplification of the procedure for acquiring citizenship. In the fall of 2022, the government decided on the key provisions of a new immigration law for skilled workers. It is assumed that non-EU citizens without recognized qualifications will also be allowed to enter the country. Selection criteria must include professional experience or a connection to Germany.¹⁹⁶³

The majority of migrants are from the Middle East and North Africa. At the same time, the inflow of refugees from Ukraine decreased in 2023. According to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, more than 160,000 asylum applications were registered in the first half of 2023, of which 44,000 were from citizens of Syria, 28,000 – from Afghanistan, 19,000 – from Turkey and 20,000 – from natives of African countries. By the end of 2023, according to experts, the number of such applications may exceed 300,000, thus reaching the level of 2015 with the largest number of refugees and migrants.

In addition, the decisions of German migration authorities on granting the right of residence do not take into account the real capacity of municipalities to accommodate and integrate refugees. In most German cities, the initial reception centers are overcrowded. In addition, the stay of asylum seekers in temporary accommodation centers is protracted, often for months. The fact that many of those who have arrived are unable to find any housing (and therefore continue to live in temporary accommodation centers) does not contribute to solving the problem of

(fifth monitoring cycle) on Germany. Adopted on 3 February 2022, published on 14 June 2022

<https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-germany-en/1680a6e008>

1963 "Mit offenen Armen empfangen". Wirtschaft fordert mehr Zuzug nach Deutschland - und begrüßt Ampel-Pläne. FOCUS Online. 26 December 2022 https://www.focus.de/finanzen/news/mit-offenen-armen-empfangen-wirtschaft-fordert-mehr-zuzug-nach-deutschland-und-begruesst-ampel-plaene_id_181328595.html

migrants. In particular, 25 per cent of asylum seekers who arrived in Germany in 2015 and received permission to stay in Germany find themselves in this situation. They are still unable to find their own accommodation and continue to stay in migration centers. In addition, migrants and refugees have problems with receiving medical services as well as with enrolling their children to kindergartens and schools.

Migrants also face discrimination on the German labor market. The situation with Ukrainian refugees is illustrative in this respect. According to a sociological survey by the Nuremberg Institute for Employment Research, the majority of migrants had difficulties in finding a job, and in many cases the job obtained was low-skilled. In particular, 68 per cent out of 6,000 survey participants had higher education, and about 16 per cent had specialized training. Only 18 per cent of respondents were able to find a job. The average wage which this category of people receives is 1,000 euro below the national average (2,550 euro). At the same time, favorable conditions are created in Germany for natives of Ukraine – they are not subject to a ban on labor activity, they do not need to obtain asylum, and in addition, this category of people has the right to receive financial support from the German authorities.

Anti-migrant sentiments are widespread in German society. A YouGov study published at the end of December 2022 shows that in recent years German citizens have had a negative attitude toward migrants: Two-thirds of those surveyed see nothing positive in the permanent reception of refugees.¹⁹⁶⁴

Migrants' issues have come to the attention of multilateral human rights monitoring mechanisms. For example, HRC experts pointed out restrictions on family reunification due to quotas imposed by the German authorities, the negative practice of deporting migrants without providing procedures for individual evaluation of each case, poor living conditions in migration centers, which are also located in geographically remote areas, which limit the access of residents to basic

1964 Deutsche sind besonders skeptisch gegenüber Flüchtlingen und Asyl. WELT. 26 December 2022
<https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/plus242857561/Umfrage-zu-Asyl-Deutsche-im-internationalen-Vergleich-besonders-skeptisch.html>

services.¹⁹⁶⁵

In September 2022, the Committee on the Rights of the Child pointed out discrimination against disadvantaged children, including asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children, Roma and other minority children, children with disabilities, and children from social and economically disadvantaged families.¹⁹⁶⁶

In addition, the Committee drew attention to a number of problems in the educational sphere. In particular, the experts expressed concern about the shortage of teachers in German schools and the high level of stress faced by students due to pressure from teachers and the widespread practice of bullying. In addition, it has been recorded that a large number of children with disabilities drop out of school before they receive their high school diploma.

This concern of the human rights structures is also supported by studies in this area published by the media. According to a study by a group of experts presented at the conference of education ministers in early December 2022, the level of education in German schools has declined. There has been a noticeable decline in the performance of schoolchildren: one in five German fourth-graders does not speak German properly and does not know elementary mathematics.¹⁹⁶⁷ Most of the students who fall behind are children of migrants and from disadvantaged families. Insufficient funding for education and a shortage of teachers in schools and kindergartens are also pointed out.

Human rights bodies and representatives of migrant associations point to widespread "domestic" racism in Germany, which manifests itself in discrimination against people of foreign origin in the labor market, in health care, when seeking housing, etc., as well as to "institutional" racism in government and

1965 Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the seventh periodic report of Germany. November 2021. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/357/48/PDF/G2135748.pdf?OpenElement>

1966 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Germany. September 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FDEU%2FCO%2F5-6&Lang=en

1967 Der Tag "Alarmierenden Befunde": Experten sehen dringenden Handlungsbedarf an Grundschulen. N-TV.

9 December 2022 https://www.n-tv.de/der_tag/Alarmierenden-Befunde-Experten-sehen-dringenden-Handlungsbedarf-an-Grundschulen-article23773012.html

administration, including the practice of racial profiling.¹⁹⁶⁸

It should be noted that both multilateral human rights monitoring mechanisms and human rights organizations have drawn attention to the prevalence of racial profiling in German law enforcement agencies. In 2019, The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance highlighted this problem, as well as the lack of effective support mechanisms for victims of racial profiling. In this regard, ECRI called on the German authorities to take appropriate measures to remedy the situation.¹⁹⁶⁹

Moreover, in 2022, after examining the follow-up information provided by Germany, ECRI pointed out that the German authorities had not implemented its recommendation to develop and put into practice measures to combat racial profiling.¹⁹⁷⁰ According to the Commission, a number of studies have been planned for this purpose, including a study by the German Police College on motivations, attitudes (including political attitudes) as well as the use of violence against vulnerable groups in the daily work of German police officers. Another study of racism is expected to examine the phenomenon as a threat to social cohesion in the context of individual institutional areas of society. It will be conducted by an interdisciplinary association of 11 German universities and research institutes. The overall study on racism is expected to be completed in 2024, but at the time of ECRI's consideration, it was only at the methodological stage. In this regard, the Commission noted that none of the studies reported by the German authorities made explicit reference to racial profiling and that the most important component of the second one was only examined on the example of two German cities and not at the state or even more so at the federal level.

In November 2021, the Human Rights Committee also expressed concern about racial profiling practiced by German police officers. The Committee called

¹⁹⁶⁸ Alltagsrassismus in Deutschland: Wenn der Hass krank macht. Tagesspiegel. 4 December 2019 <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/wissen/alltagsrassismus-in-deutschland-wenn-der-hass-krank-macht/25295914.html>

¹⁹⁶⁹ The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Germany (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 10 December 2019, published on 17 March 2020 <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-report-on-germanv-sixth-monitoring-cycle-/16809ce4be>

¹⁹⁷⁰ ECRI conclusions on the implementation of recommendations in respect of Germany subject to interim follow-up. Adopted on 29 June 2022, published on 30 September 2022. <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a807d2>

on Germany to provide training to law enforcement officials to raise their awareness of the need to conduct themselves in a manner that does not lead, even unintentionally, to acts of racial profiling, and to monitor the effectiveness of such activities.¹⁹⁷¹

The problem of racial profiling in Germany was also brought to the attention of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Commission for the Protection of National Minorities in February 2022. Among such manifestations are references by police officers to the alleged ethnic origin of suspects while registering crimes; investigations based on general suspicions; and cases of police violence against ethnic minorities. The Committee emphasized, in particular, that in addition to the individual harm caused to victims of discriminatory police treatment, racial profiling stigmatizes groups of people who are already under public suspicion, creates among them a sense of humiliation, injustice and resentment, and results in a direct loss of trust in the police on their part. Minorities who do not trust the police for these reasons, according to the Committee, will be reluctant to turn to law enforcement agencies when they have been victims of racist crimes, which in turn means that such crimes may go unnoticed and unpunished.¹⁹⁷²

In the course of sociological research, it has been confirmed that people of non-German appearance are disproportionately subjected to control measures by the police. Many respondents complained about racist and Islamophobic remarks from police officers.¹⁹⁷³ According to the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights, although the German authorities claim to have developed and implemented measures to combat racial profiling among police officers, such efforts are not systematic and are mostly undertaken on an individual level. There was an isolated case of an administrative court in Dresden declaring unlawful the detention and

1971 Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the seventh periodic report of Germany. November 2021. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/357/48/PDF/G2135748.pdf?OpenElement>

1972 Fifth opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Germany. Adopted on 3 February 2022, published on 14 June 2022 <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-germany-en/1680a6e008>

1973 Studie zum Arbeitsalltag. Wie tickt die Polizei? Tagesschau. 4 April 2023 <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/studie-polizei-101.html>

search of a Guinean because of his skin color.¹⁹⁷⁴

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in May 2023 noted with concern the increasing racism against migrants and Roma in Germany, including by right-wing extremists and police officers. It also pointed to the continued discrimination against members of these communities (with a focus on women and girls) in all areas of public life, noting education and social security. German authorities were encouraged to take effective measures to combat racism against migrants and Roma, including through police training programs and awareness-raising campaigns together with the media in order to prevent cross-discrimination.¹⁹⁷⁵

The EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights pointed out in its regular report published in June 2023 that Roma in Germany face discriminatory treatment due to widespread prejudice, especially large families when looking for housing.¹⁹⁷⁶

The AC FCPNM also drew attention to the problems of the Roma community in Germany, noting in particular the increasing number of crimes against members of this community, as well as the continuing practice of negative portrayals of this national minority in the mainstream German media, which promotes anti-Roma stereotypes among the majority of the population. In addition, it was noted that the Central Council of Roma and Sinti in Germany has repeatedly lodged complaints with the regulatory authorities of the states regarding the publication of such biased news stories on German television programs. However, after reviewing such complaints, these authorities rarely adopt even any recommendation to remedy the situation, let alone impose sanctions on the offenders.¹⁹⁷⁷

1974 EU Agency for Fundamental Rights 2023 report https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

1975 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the ninth periodic report of Germany. May 2023
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FDEU%2FCO%2F9&Lang=ru

1976 EU Agency for Fundamental Rights 2023 report https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

1977 Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

Croatia

In the Republic of Croatia, manifestations of nationalist ideologies are generally condemned at the official level. However, sympathy for figures of the collaborationist fascist Independent State of Croatia (ISC) of the World War II period is occasionally reflected in the statements of some representatives of the Croatian Catholic Church, politicians and journalists.

The speeches of Bishop V. Košić of Sisak are particularly noteworthy in this regard. The clergyman, for example, expressed the opinion that the collaborators were "fighters for freedom and independence" and exaggerated in every possible way the "crimes" committed by the partisans.¹⁹⁷⁸

Attempts to canonize Archbishop A. Stepinac of Zagreb, convicted for collaboration with the Ustasha regime during the ISC period, continue unabated. Thus, on 6 February 2020, this issue was once again raised by Croatian Prime Minister A. Plenković during his meeting with Pope Francis.

There have been occasional attempts to distort historical facts about the infamous Jasenovac concentration camp. On 17 January 2019, the presentation of J. Pečarić's book *Jasenovac – A Lie Uncovered* denying the Ustasha's involvement in the deaths of the prisoners of the ISC's largest concentration camp, was held at a Catholic Church in Zagreb. On 13 March 2019, the presentation of the book took place at the central Catholic Church of Sisak.

There are also cases of whitewashing Nazi accomplices and collaborators. In April 2019, former military dictator of the ISC, A. Pavelić, was called a "fighter against the Belgrade violence" on the central HRT television channel in the daily cultural and information programme "Calendar". It should be noted that the Croatian Liberation Movement party¹⁹⁷⁹, founded by him in 1956 in Argentina, was registered in the Republic of Croatia in February 1992 and is still active today.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), which

¹⁹⁷⁸ Some of his statements may be found on the pages of leading Croatian periodicals and Internet portals such as www.index.hr/mobile/clanak.aspx?category=viiesti&id=819812, <https://www.24sata.hr/tagovi/vlado-kosic-47839>, <https://m.vecernii.hr/viiesti/dobio-sam-tri-pretnie-lievicari-bi-ubiiali-i-nakon-7Q-godina-1194822>
¹⁹⁷⁹<https://registri.uprava.hr/tf!stranka-detalii/veMBAAEAAAaa8SeAAAAAAAZgBAAAAAQEBcmVnJvalNOcmFua-UCAA>

operates within the framework of the Council of Europe, has pointed to an increasing number of revisionist materials on social networks. It noted, among other things, that there were dozens of cases in 2015 where photos of people wearing Ustasha uniform were posted on Facebook.¹⁹⁸⁰

Internet portals such as www.poglavnik.wordpress.com (dedicated to the life and legacy of A. Pavelić), www.otporas.com (dedicated to the Ustasha movement), www.domobranzd.com (dedicated to the memory of the armed forces of the ISC) operate freely in the country. The magazines *Hrvatski tjednik* and *Hrvatski domobran*, which periodically publish articles glorifying the Ustasha, are issued with the financial support of a number of specialized state structures (the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Veterans' Affairs). Controversial historical essays and pseudo-studies aimed at creating a negative image of the Yugoslav partisans¹⁹⁸¹ and attributing to them the crimes that they have never committed¹⁹⁸² are publicly available.

The problem of spreading hate speech online remains a significant challenge for Croatia. Hate comments and posts on the Internet against members of national minorities receive a large number of views and quickly spread in society, which poses a threat to the security of members of some diasporas. In order to counter the spread of such publications, a possibility to regulate at the legislative level the official information portals where hateful comments attract particularly high public attention, was being discussed.

The rise of radical nationalism in Croatia which has had a negative impact on the ability of certain population groups to fully enjoy their rights has been highlighted by the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee of the Framework

1980 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Croatia (fifth monitoring cycle) adopted on March 21, 2018 and published on May 15, 2018 <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-croatia/16808b57be>

1981 For example, B.Matković, R.Topić *Zločini Jugoslavenske armije i komunistička represija u Lici i gradu Gospiću 1945. godine: Dokumenti, svjedočanstva i grobišta*, Hrvatska družba povjesničara Dr. Rudolf Horvat (2019), B.Matković *Croatia and Slovenia at the end and after the Second World War (1944-1945), Mass crimes and human rights violations committed by the communist regime*, BrownWalker Press, USA (2017), V.Geiger, S.Pilić, *Partizanska i komunistička represija i zločini u Hrvatskoj*, Documenti, Dalmacija, Hrvatski institut za povjest, Zagreb (2011), S.Pilić, *Jasenovačka Posavina između dva svjetska rata*, Tkalčić (2014), S.Pilić, B.Matković *Posljertatni zarobljenički logor Jasenovac prema svjedočanstvima i novim arhivskim izvorima*, Radove Zavoda za povjesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru, No. 56, str. 323- 408.

1982 Lovac na naciste prozvao vladu zbog knjige o Jasenovcu: Zabranite to! INDEXHR. 10 January 2019.

www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/lovac-na-naciste-prozvao-vladu-zboE-kniiRe-o-iasenovcu-zabranine-to/2055399.aspx

Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The document also specifically noted that historical revisionism affected the Serb, Roma and Jewish national minorities.¹⁹⁸³

In the case of overtly neo-fascist offenses, the initiators and perpetrators of such acts are brought to justice in a selective manner.¹⁹⁸⁴

Attempts are also being made to whitewash the collaborationist regimes of the World War II period. In 2003, the initiative of a number of parliamentarians to introduce a new article on Glorification of Fascist, Nationalist and Other Totalitarian Ideologies and Promotion of Racism and Xenophobia into the Criminal Code of the Republic of Croatia failed. Despite the fact that this amendment was adopted by the Croatian Parliament and entered into force, on 27 November 2003, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia annulled it, citing a procedural error in its adoption as justification.¹⁹⁸⁵

In 2018, the Council for Dealing with the Consequences of the Rule of Non-Democratic Regimes under the Government of the Republic of Croatia in its conclusion¹⁹⁸⁶, in fact, equalled the Ustasha regime in the ISC to the socialist system of the former Yugoslavia. A draft law on the prohibition of symbols of totalitarian regimes which is supposed to enshrine the ban, including with respect to the Red Star, is under development.

The situation with the preservation and restoration of anti-fascist and partisan monuments in Croatia remains rather tricky. The State Register of Protected Cultural Objects lists 75 monuments dedicated to World War II (including three monuments to Soviet soldiers). The number of monuments razed

1983 The fifth opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Croatia, adopted on February 1, 2021.

<https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-croatia-en/1680a2cb49>

1984 Statement by Croatian Ombudswoman L. Vidović of 20 October 2018.

<http://ombudsman.hr/hr/dis/cld/1484>

1985 Zakon o izmjenama i dopunama Kaznenog zakona.

https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2003_07_111_1496.html

1986 Dokument dijaloga: Temeljna polazišta i preporuke o posebnom normativnom uređenju simbola, znakovlja i drugih obilježja. Vlada Republike Hrvatske. 7 March 2018.

<https://vlada.gov.hr/dokument-dijaloga-temeljna-polazista-i-preporuke-o-posebnom-normativnom-uredjenju-simbola-znakovlja-i-drugih-obiljezja/23424>

to the ground or desecrated between 1991 and 2000 is 2964.¹⁹⁸⁷ But official statistics regarding the desecration of monuments for the period since 2001 is not available in the public domain.

Croatian authorities have made some efforts to maintain anti-fascist monuments in proper condition. Thus, in 2019, the administration of the Primorsko-Goranska županija allocated 250 thousand kuna (about 2.5 million rubles) for the restoration of the Partisan monument in Kastva.

There are also some positive examples of respect for the memory of Soviet soldiers. In 2018, the remains of a Soviet soldier were discovered on the territory of Baranja-Sremska županija. The Croatian side covered all expenses related to the exhumation and burial of the remains in the mass grave of the Victory Memorial in Batina.

In 2019, Croatian local authorities reported that a mass grave of alleged Soviet soldiers (with the remains of about 200 persons) had been discovered in the Čakovec area.

At the same time, a number of cases of desecration of anti-fascist monuments in Dalmatia (Split, Cetinska Krajina, Vodice, Bukovica, Zrmanja) were registered during this period. Thus, the head of the Gračac municipality administration drafted a decision to demolish the monument commemorating the memory of 1,826 victims of fascist terror and 816 fallen partisans. Due to the protests of local residents, the demolition was suspended. On 27 March 2019, the Dudik memorial complex was desecrated in the suburb of Vukovar.¹⁹⁸⁸ In May 2019, vandals painted the monument to the people's hero of Yugoslavia, leader of the Kordun people's uprising, and former mayor of Zagreb V. Holevec in the Croatian capital with swastikas and nationalist abbreviations. In 2020 and the first half of 2021, the monument to Holocaust victims (Varaždin) was desecrated with a Nazi cross and Ustasha symbols; the monument to Croatian anti-fascist liberators (Zadar) was dismantled under the pretext of fighting against non-democratic

1987 Rušenje antifašističkih spomenika u Hrvatskoj 1990-2000, Zagreb 2002, XII

1988 Devastiran Spomen-park Dudik. Novosti. 30 March 2020.

www.portalnovosti.com/devastiran-spomen-park-dudik

regimes.¹⁹⁸⁹ On 22 June 2023, an anti-fascist monument in Zagreb dedicated to prominent women partisans who perished in the Second World War, was desecrated.¹⁹⁹⁰

The consecration of the monument to the Russian-Serbian suffering and brotherhood during the Second World War in the Jasenovac monastery on 13 September 2021 was a notable event attended by Metropolitan Isidor of Smolensk and Dorogobuzh, Patriarch Porfiry of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Ioannikije of Montenegro and Primorye, M. Dodik, Serb member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Ambassador A. Vraneš of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Russian Embassy and the Coordination Council of Organizations of Russian Compatriots Living in Croatia also carry out a number of activities aimed at perpetuating the memory of the war period. The Russian Embassy gives priority to repairing and refurbishing Soviet war graves, especially since some of them are classified as objects of historical and architectural heritage of Croatia (e.g., in Batina, Ilok, Vukovar, Beli Manastir, Gunja, Borovo Naselje, Aljmaš). The administrations of the above-mentioned towns show respect for the burial sites of the Soviet Army soldiers, maintaining them in a proper condition and organizing a series of commemorative events to mark Victory Day.

At the same time, the Croatian Ministry of Veterans' Affairs is the main sponsor of erecting memorials in honour of "war and post-war victims" (referring primarily to the victims among Croatian nationalists in April-September 1945). Eighty one monuments of this kind have been erected at the expense of the state budget since 1998 to the present day, including those openly glorifying the ISC regime.

Thus, in 2019, with the financial support of the municipal authorities of

1989 Gradonačelnik Dukič uklonio posljedni spomen osloboditeljima I graditeljima grada Zadra. Antifašistički vjesnik.3 November 2020.

<http://www.antifasisticki-vjesnik.org/hr/komentari/4/Gradonacelnik-Dukic-uklonio-posljedni-spomen-osloboditeljima-i-graditeljima-grada-Zadra/418/>

1990 Duh vandalizma nad antifašizmom. Savez antifašističkih boraca I antifašista Republike Hrvatske.

<https://sabh.hr/duh-vandalizma-nad-antifasizmom>

Valpovo, a memorial was erected in honour of "all Croatian soldiers who gave their lives for the Independent State of Croatia". A commemorative plaque in the shape of the borders of the ISC was placed on the building of the local administration of Zadar, featuring the coat of arms of the collaborationist state.

As part of the policy of "condemnation of all totalitarian regimes" the Croatian authorities officially support the events held to commemorate the "victims of the Yugoslav regime and Tito's partisans"¹⁹⁹¹. On 25 August 2019 (2020-2021 were skipped due to the pandemic), on the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of All Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes, Croatian Prime Minister A. Plenković, together with Minister of Interior D. Božinović and Minister for Veterans' Affairs T. Medved laid wreaths at the monument in honour of the defeated Ustasha army which was erected in 1994 at the central cemetery of Zagreb.¹⁹⁹² The monument features soldiers dressed in the Ustasha uniform, the ISC coat of arms, and the inscription: "To the Croatian victims on the Bleiburg field and the Way of the Cross in 1945".

Under the auspices of the Croatian Sabor (Parliament), commemorative events of this kind are also held on the Bleiburg field itself (Austria).¹⁹⁹³ The controversial nature of these events, attended by top officials of the Republic of Croatia and representatives of the Croatian Catholic Church¹⁶, has always attracted attention of the Austrian authorities and the public. For example, in 2019, the Catholic Church of Carinthia (Austria) withdrew its permission to hold another church service at the Bleiburg field, which provoked a very harsh negative reaction from official Zagreb. On 14 March 2019, the Croatian Foreign Ministry accused Austrian media of "misinterpreting" the commemorative events in Bleiburg, calling the Black Legion marches, the use of Ustasha symbols and salutes during the official part of the events, and the glorification of A. Pavelić and his henchmen,

¹⁹⁹¹ Statement by Croatian Ombudswoman L. Vidović of 20 October 2018.

<http://ombudsman.hr/hr/dis/cld/1484>

¹⁹⁹² Croatian Government Pays Tribute to Fascist Ustasha Regime. Antifasistički Vjesnik. 27 August 2019.

<https://www.antifasisticki->

[vjesnik.org/hr/vijesti/3/Croatian_Government_Pays_Tribute_to_Fascist_Ustasha_Regime/377/](https://www.antifasisticki-vjesnik.org/hr/vijesti/3/Croatian_Government_Pays_Tribute_to_Fascist_Ustasha_Regime/377/)

¹⁹⁹³ In May 1945, Yugoslav partisan troops penetrated into the Austrian territory, into Carinthia, and near Bleiburg – not far from the present-day border between Austria and Slovenia – organized a mass killing of the Croatian Ustasha and Slovenian collaborators who had fled to Austria.

"isolated cases".¹⁷ However, on 9 July 2020, the Domestic Policy Committee of the Austrian National Council (lower house of parliament) unanimously adopted a resolution against holding commemorative events in Bleiburg due to the fact that the demonstrations involved groups of nationalists and fascists from Croatia who used Ustasha symbols.¹⁹⁹⁴ Previously, an expert group formed under the Austrian Interior Ministry had assessed the "memorial ceremonies" near Bleiburg as the largest gathering of neo-Nazis in Europe. It was noted that Croatian representatives violated Austrian laws by using Ustasha symbols and glorifying Nazi ideas. As a result, the Austrian Parliament decided to dismantle all Croatian symbols at the Bleiburg field in 2022.

The problem of using the greeting "Za dom spremni!" (or "ZDS" – "For the Homeland – Ready!", a World War II Ustasha salute analogous to the German "Sieg Heil") remains unresolved. Despite numerous protests by human rights organizations and court rulings that the use of the greeting is unlawful because of its direct link to the ISC¹⁹⁹⁵, the exclamation continues to be used with the tacit approval of the Croatian authorities. Under the pretext that the slogan is not legally prohibited, legal entities using it in their statutes or emblems are being officially registered.¹⁹⁹⁶

The greeting is chanted during public events, especially at the concerts of M. Perković (Thompson)¹⁹⁹⁷, popular contemporary Croatian singer whose songs contain references to the ISC and related subjects, as well as the aforementioned "ZDS" greeting. M. Perković participated in mass celebrations in the centre of Zagreb on the occasion of Croatia's second place in the 2018 FIFA World Cup. According to the media, he was invited to perform at the request of Croatian team captain Luka Modric who himself is known for his controversial behaviour. According to Z. Puhovski, political observer and professor at the University of Zagreb, such

1994 Odbor austrijskog parlamenta usvojio rezoluciju protiv Bleiburga. Večernji list. 9 August 2020.

<https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/odbor-austrijskog-parlamenta-usvojio-rezoluciju-protiv-bleiburga-1415553>

1995 Decision of the Administrative Court of Zagreb of 8 December 2015 PpJ-4877/13, Decision of the High Administrative Court of the Republic of Croatia of 27 January 2016 Jž-188/2016, Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia of 8 November 2016 U-III-2588/2016, Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia of 25 May 2016 U-III-1296/2016.

1996 Statement by Croatian Ombudswoman L. Vidović of 20 October 2018. <http://ombudsman.hr/hr/dis/cld/1484>

1997 The concerts of nationalist M. Perković Thompson are the highest-grossing concerts in Croatia. His lyrics, which contain racist, xenophobic and pro-fascist appeals and slogans, are widely quoted by nationalist youth.

sentiments are manifested in Croatia in a specific right-wing radical manner. In addition, in his opinion, this demonstrates that many Croats do not consider the Ustasha past and its symbols as problematic. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the opinion of one of the members of the Croatian football team, Ivan Ergić (a Croatian Serb), who noted that players have "minimal political sensibilities" and therefore follow populist ideas and expectations of the masses, and pointed out that the peoples who used to live in the same country "are mainly directing the hate towards one another, and we see the continuation of "war by other means""¹⁹⁹⁸.

It is also indicative that former Croatian President K. Grabar-Kitarović is favourable to M. Perković's work and has always supported his performances, naming him among her favourite artists. She also publicly expressed support for the Ustasha ideology. In particular, she is known for her statement that "there should be a debate on whether the exclamation 'ZDS' is an old Croatian greeting or not". Besides, she invited Croatian politicians openly sympathetic to the Ustasha, including the well-known right-wing TV host Velimir Bujanec (known to be photographed with a swastika on his arm and wearing a German Nazi uniform), to her inauguration. She also met with Ustasha descendants in Argentina and Croatia.¹⁹⁹⁹

There is information in the media that concerts of various performers with a small number of attendees are an important way of establishing contacts between far-right organizations in Europe. Information about them is usually disseminated in closed groups and chat rooms on social networks. In Croatia, one of such events is the annual "Despa Memorial" concert which is held in memory of right-wing activist Goran "Despa" Despik, who died in a car accident in 2014 and whom the Croatian branch of Blood and Honour called its "brother". According to the mentioned structure, the 2022 concert was attended by "about 70 people from Croatia, Germany, England, Hungary, Slovenia and Switzerland". The neo-Nazi orientation of these events is known. For example, photos from the first such

¹⁹⁹⁸ In Croatia, Nazi Sympathizers Are Welcome to Join the Party. Foreign Policy. 31 July 2018. https://foreignpolicy-com.translate.googleusercontent.com/2018/07/31/in-croatia-nazi-sympathizers-are-welcome-to-join-the-party-thompson-ustashe-fascism/?x_tr_sl=en&x_tr_tl=ru&x_tr_hl=ru&x_tr_pto=wapp

¹⁹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

concert published in 2015 on the portal "Voice of Patriots – Voice of Croatian Patriots" showed people displaying Nazi salutes.²⁰⁰⁰

The media also periodically draw attention to the fact that souvenirs with the abbreviation ZDS are freely available in the centre of the Croatian capital.²⁰⁰¹ For example, on 5 August 2020, during the events commemorating the 20th anniversary of Operation Storm (1995, against the Republic of Serbian Krajina), dozens of participants wore clothes with the ZDS symbol and shouted the Ustasha greeting.²⁰⁰² According to the Anti-Fascist Council of the Republic of Croatia, ZDS is an integral feature of all events commemorating Croatia's victories in the 1991-1995 conflict. In August 2023, numerous groups of football fans chanting the ZDS greeting marched through the streets of Knin and Vukovar. In June 2023, graffiti with the Ustasha symbols appeared on the fence of an Orthodox church in the centre of Zagreb.²⁰⁰³

Manifestations of neo-Nazism by football fans have also been reported. For example, in February 2019, during a football match in Poljud, fans stretched a banner with the pro-Ustasha inscription "Max's Butchers" (Vjekoslav "Max" Luburić was the head of the network of concentration camps of the ISC, including the Jasenovac concentration camp). On 11 June 2020, more than 10 fans of the football club Dinamo (Zagreb) with Nazi and Ustasha symbols on their clothes and flags, stretched a banner calling for the rape of Serbian women and children and shouted the slogan "Kill the Serb".²⁰⁰⁴

On 12 April 2020, a female reporter was beaten on the outskirts of Split after witnessing the holding of a Mass in violation of the country's strict epidemiological

2000 Music Mobilisation: The Concerts Connecting Neo-Nazis in Croatia. Balkan Insight. 14 November 2022. <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/11/14/music-mobilisation-the-concerts-connecting-neo-nazis-in-croatia/>

2001 U centru Zagreba prodaju se maske 'Za dom spremni'; Vlasnik: 'Nema tu ništa protuzakonito'. Jutarnjilist. 9 July 2020.

<https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/zagreb/u-centru-zagreba-prodaju-se-maske-za-dom-spremni-vlasnik-nema-tu-nista-protuzakonito-15007319>

2002 Skejo došao u Knin, njegovi HOS-ovci urlali ustaški pozdrav. INDEXHR. 5 August 2020.

<https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/skejo-dosao-u-knin-njegovi-hosovci-urlali-ustaski-pozdrav/2203092.aspx>

²⁰⁰³ Ustaški grafiti uz pravoslavnu crkvu u Zagrebu. Savez antifašističkih boraca I antifašista Republike Hrvatske.

<https://sabh.hr/ustaski-grafiti-uz-pravoslavnu-crkvu-u-zagrebu>

2004 Objavljujemo nove snimke sramotnog divljanja navijača na zagrebačkoj kustošiji Susjedi zgroženi: 'Urlali su 'Ubij Srbina'. Užas! Je li to normalno?'. Jutarnjilist. 12 June 2020.

<https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/crna-kronika/objavljujemo-nove-snimke-sramotnog-divljanja-navijaca-na-zagrebackoj-kustosiji-susjedi-zgrozeni-urlali-su-ubij-srbina-uzas-je-li-to-normalno-10398235>

measures. During the attack, the four perpetrators were holding the flag of the ISC and were shouting "Za dom spremni", referring to the media representatives as "the reds".²⁰⁰⁵ On 29 January 2020, a member of the Dubrovnik Legislative Assembly wrote an open letter to the Dubrovnik mayor calling for the removal of the widespread graffiti with Nazi and Ustasha symbols in the city.²⁸ In June 2020, print media drew attention to the images of Nazi symbols and hanged Serbs that appeared in Zagreb.³¹

By its decision U-II-6111/2013 of 10 October 2017, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia recognized that the ISC and everything related to it was illegal and contrary to the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia. Earlier, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia by its decision U-III-2588/2016 of 8 November 2016 defined the Ustasha slogan "Za dom spremni" as a symbol of racist rhetoric and declared it unconstitutional. On 14 August 2019, the High Arbitration Court of the Republic of Croatia confirmed the slogan's illegitimacy due to the fact that it provokes hatred on the basis of religion, race and nationality. However, on 3 June 2020, the High Court of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Croatia fully disregarded the established judicial practice in Croatia, and, as noted by some publications and politicians, thus effectively legitimized the Ustasha greeting.²⁰⁰⁶

In 2021, an attempt was made to supplement the Criminal Code of the Republic of Croatia with the provisions on the prohibition of fascist and Ustasha symbols, but it failed. The Croatian Sabor discussed the draft law on supplementing the Criminal Code of the Republic of Croatia with a new article that would prohibit the use of symbols, slogans, greetings, as well as other means of identification of fascists, Ustasha and Chetniks. However, the discussion did not lead to any significant results, and the initiator of the project, head of the

2005 Napadačima prijete pet godina zatvora, župnika štiti kanonski zakonik Sociolog: 'Biskupi peru ruke od don Josipa jer se boje etikete jugokomunista'. Jutarnjilist. 4 April 2020.

<https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/napadacima-prijete-pet-godina-zatvora-zupnika-stiti-kanonski-zakonik-sociolog-biskupi-peru-ruke-od-don-josipa-jer-se-boje-etikete-jugokomunista-10204585>

2006 Odluka o ustaškom pozdravu sramota je za Visoki prekršajni sud i novi udarac pravnoj državi. Večernji list. 7 June 2020.

<https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/odluka-o-ustaskom-pozdravu-sramota-je-za-visoki-prekršajni-sud-i-novi-udarac-pravnoj-drzavi-1407918>

Coordination Committee of the Jewish Communities in Croatia O. Kraus declared that the proposal had to be postponed until 2022. In April 2023, the *Law on Offenses against Public Order* was amended to provide for fines of up to 4,000 euros for the use of symbols of hatred or hate speech.²⁰⁰⁷

Given such tolerant attitude in Croatia towards Nazi collaborators, it is not surprising that the Croatian delegation, in line with the common position of the EU Member States, abstained until 2021 from voting in the UN General Assembly on the resolution initiated by Russia and other co-sponsors on "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance". However, in December 2022, following the EU, Croatia voted against this initiative condemning contemporary manifestations of Nazism and other discriminatory ideologies.

Regarding the situation with the spread of various forms of intolerance in the country, in recent years the international human rights community has also highlighted the unsatisfactory state of affairs with respect to ensuring the rights of national minorities.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2022 noted with concern the de facto discrimination in Croatia against ethnic minority children, particularly Serb and Roma children, children with disabilities, and migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children, especially in the areas of education and health care services. The authorities were encouraged to ensure full implementation of the legislation prohibiting discrimination and to strengthen public awareness-raising campaigns to address negative societal attitudes towards children from ethnic minorities.²⁰⁰⁸

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in its 2022 report, citing data from the Croatian Ombudsperson, noted an increase in the number of

²⁰⁰⁷ Zakon o prekršajima protiv javnog reda i mira NN 41/77, 55/89, 05/90, 30/90, 47/90, 29/94, 114/22, 47/23 na snazi od 11.05.2023.

<https://www.zakon.hr/z/279/Zakon-o-prekr%C5%A1ajima-protiv-javnog-reda-i-mira>

2008 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Croatia. June 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FHRV%2FCO%2F5-6&Lang=ru

complaints about discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity (based on the comparison of the figures for 2021 and 2020).²⁰⁰⁹ A similar trend is noted in the FRA report published in June 2023.²⁰¹⁰

ECRI pointed to the increasing role of the media in spreading hate speech and inciting inter-ethnic hatred. Regional print media portray national minorities, mainly Serbs and Roma, in a negative and stereotypical manner.²⁰¹¹

The FCNM Advisory Committee, in its turn, also noted in February 2021 an increase in the use of hate speech in social media and political discourse, the formation of prejudicial attitudes, in particular towards Serbs and Roma. Print, audio-visual and other media resources, according to the monitoring body, replicate negative stereotypes about persons belonging to national minorities. Although such practices are condemned and even prosecuted, the existing response measures have very limited effect in reality. Representatives of ethnic minorities hardly ever appear on Croatian radio or television programmes. At the same time, insufficient human and financial resources of media companies make it impossible to create the necessary number of quality products oriented to the needs of national minorities.²⁰¹²

The Human Rights Committee (HRC) in March 2015 expressed concern about racist attacks against members of ethnic minority groups, in particular Roma and Serbs, and noted that proper investigations were not carried out and perpetrators were not brought to justice.²⁰¹³

Ethnic Serbs living in Croatia tend to be the most frequent targets of ethnically motivated attacks. According to the Serb National Council (SNV)

2009 The 2022 report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf;

Ured pučke pravobraniteljice (2021) <https://www.ombudsman.hr/hr/izvjesca-puckog-pravobranitelja/>

2010 The 2023 report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights

. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

2011 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Croatia (fifth monitoring cycle)

adopted on March 21, 2018 and published on May 15, 2018. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-croatia/16808b57be>

2012 Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Croatia, adopted on February 1, 2021.

<https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-croatia-en/1680a2cb49>

2013 Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee upon consideration of the 3rd periodic report of Croatia. March 2015.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fHRV%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

annual report, there were 506 incidents of hate speech against the Serbian population in 2021, the highest number in the last several years. Particularly noteworthy is the multiple increase in the number of offensive graffiti on walls calling for violence against Serbs: from about 10-40 graffiti per year in the previous reporting periods to 297 in 2021. According to SNV head M. Pupovac, in most cases vandals leave them in crowded areas: on the walls of schools, universities, kindergartens and at bus stops. This, in turn, has a negative effect on the younger generation cultivating intolerance towards Serbs from childhood and glorifying certain members of the Ustasha movement. In this regard, a public action was held in the city of Rijeka this spring to remove such inscriptions from city facades. At the same time, the policies of the city authorities of Zagreb, Vukovar, and Knin who do not pay due attention to solving this problem, were sharply criticized.

The problems faced today by the members of the Serbian national minority in Croatia are the result of the 1991-1995 armed conflict. According to the authorities and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, by January 2017, 134,000 Serbs had returned to Croatia (more than half of those who fled the country before 1995). While the overall conditions conducive to return are positive, ECRI notes that returnees continue to experience problems in accessing their rights, especially in the areas of housing and health care, as well as in issues relating to legal status and access to legal aid. In Slavonia, their access to public services such as electricity, gas and water is intermittent, and investments to rebuild the severely damaged infrastructure have not been provided for a long time already. Serb returnees have had to assume the financial burden of obtaining citizenship or regularizing their residence status.²⁰¹⁴

In its report, ECRI drew attention to reports of sixteen cases of violence, including attacks against journalists and human rights activists, and several cases of property damage, mostly concerning bilingual signs featuring Cyrillic scripts,

2014 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Croatia (fifth monitoring cycle) adopted on March 21, 2018 and published on May 15, 2018
<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-croatia/16808b57be>

religious buildings and cemeteries.²⁰¹⁵ A tattoo in the Serbian language caused the beating of a young Croatian man in Split in July 2018. In September 2018, leader of Croatian Serbs M. Pupovac was attacked in the center of Zagreb.

On 7 January 2019, the son of one of the Croatian MPs, I. Đakić, on his Facebook page "congratulated" Serbs on Orthodox Christmas with a picture of an Ustasha holding the severed head of a Serbian man.

There are manifestations of discrimination against the Roma minority in employment, services, and education. At the same time, this population group formally has the greatest support from the authorities, as its problems are actively addressed by Roma parliamentarian V. Kajtazi. As part of measures aimed at supporting the Roma community, the 2021-2027 National Strategy for the Integration of Roma was adopted in 2021, which envisages not only funding for cultural projects, but also support for countering discrimination and ensuring the full integration of the members of the diaspora into society. In addition to the abovementioned manifestations of discrimination against Roma in Croatia, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights' 2022 sociological study of 10 EU countries with the largest Roma communities indicated that Croatia had the largest differences in attitudes towards Roma and other groups. However, Roma men experienced discrimination to a greater extent than Roma women.²⁰¹⁶

The Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2022 also highlighted the problems of Roma children. In particular, it indicated that girls from the Roma community are more likely to be victims of trafficking and recommended that Croatian authorities improve the identification of potential child victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking, allocate sufficient funding for this purpose, and provide adequate assistance to victims. The Committee also noted the increasing inequality in access to quality preschool education, especially for children of unemployed parents, Roma children and children with disabilities. It was

2015 Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Croatia (fifth monitoring cycle) adopted on March 21, 2018 and published on May 15, 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-croatia/16808b57be>

2016 Roma in 10 European Countries. Main results of the survey. The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights' report. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-roma-survey-2021-main-results2_en.pdf

concerned at the persistently high school dropout rates of Roma children, particularly girls, and recommended that the Croatian authorities ensure the full integration of Roma children into mainstream education and introduce effective measures to prevent early dropout.²⁰¹⁷

The problem worth special mentioning is the implementation of the *Law on Languages of National Minorities*, according to which a national minority language is introduced as a second language for use in those administrative and territorial units where members of this minority constitute at least one third of the population. Despite the fact that in July 2019 the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia ruled the actions of the Vukovar authorities who decided to prohibit the use of the Serbian language in the city illegal, the Serbian language is still not used in official documents and on signposts, markings and address names. Referring to the most recent Croatian census, which reported that the percentage of Serbs among the inhabitants of Vukovar was less than one third (29.73 percent), in December 2022 the Vukovar City Council amended the City Statute and prohibited the use of the Cyrillic alphabet and Serbian language for official purposes.²⁰¹⁸ The HRC also highlighted the difficulties faced by members of national minorities in exercising the right to use their mother tongues, in particular languages based on the Cyrillic alphabet, back in 2015.²⁰¹⁹

The attitude of the Croatian population towards members of the Jewish minority, according to the Eurobarometar analytical centre data for 2021, is at a satisfactory level and does not cause concern. However, this characterization of the state of affairs is not compatible with the fact that leaders of Jewish communities in Croatia have refused for several years in a row to jointly participate in events at

2017 Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Croatia. June 2022.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FHVRV%2FCO%2F5-6&Lang=ru

²⁰¹⁸ U Vukovaru ukinuta ćirilica I zvanična upotreba srpskog jezika. N1 info. 29 December 2022.

<https://n1info.rs/region/u-vukovaru-ukinuta-cirilica-i-zvanicna-upotreba-srpskog-jezika/>

2019 Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee upon consideration of the 3rd periodic report of Croatia. March 2015.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fHRV%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

the Jasenovac memorial site due to disagreements with the representatives of the parliament on a number of issues related to national identity.

It is noted that there is a tendency in Croatia to classify hate crimes as administrative offenses (rather than crimes).²⁰²⁰ Moreover, due to the lack of public trust in law enforcement, the percentage of complaints to the police or the Ombudsman in this category of cases is very low.

According to former Croatian Ombudswoman L. Vidović²⁰²¹, the quality of training and retraining of government officials and law enforcement officers on issues related to the fight against Nazism, racism and the protection of human rights needs to be improved³³.

The above-mentioned facts clearly indicate that there are serious problems in the Republic of Croatia with the spread of neo-Nazi ideology, to which there is no real resistance at the level of the official authorities. At the same time, the increase in manifestations of intolerance on national grounds indicates that xenophobic attitudes in society, in particular towards Serbs and Roma, remain among the most pressing issues in the country's human rights dossier.

2020 Centar za mirovne studije. Antidiskriminacijska politika u Hrvatskoj 2011-2016, p. 17.

2021 T. Šimonović Einwalter has held this position since 19 March 2021.

Montenegro

Montenegro maintains a fairly strong anti-fascist tradition. The memory of partisan soldiers who died for the liberation of Montenegro is treated with due respect. The date of 13 July – the day when an uprising broke out in 1941 against the Nazi occupiers, which later developed into the People's Liberation War in Yugoslavia – is enshrined in the legislation as a public holiday.

There are two veteran organizations operating in the country (the Union of Veterans and Antifascists of Montenegro, SUBNOR, and the Union of Veterans of the Former Yugoslavia, SOBNOR), which seek to preserve the historical truth about the Second World War. In early October 2020, ceremonies were held in Podgorica to award commemorative medals "75 Years of Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945" to veterans of the People's Liberation War in Yugoslavia, members of SOBNOR and SUBNOR.

About 40 state-protected memorial sites (including partisan common graves) are dedicated to the People's Liberation War of 1941-1945, as well as to national heroes and outstanding personalities of Montenegro who made a significant contribution to the fight against the Nazi occupiers.

Due to the fact that there were no military operations involving Soviet Army units in the territory of Montenegro during World War II, there are no registered Soviet war graves. On 9 December 2020, however, a bust of Marshal Georgy Zhukov, four-time Hero of the Soviet Union, holder of many Soviet and foreign awards, was unveiled in Berane on the initiative of the local authorities.

Hostility to fascist and Nazi ideology is deeply rooted in Montenegrin society. There have been no cases in Montenegro over the past year of glorifying neo-Nazism in any form, disseminating Nazi ideology, including on the Internet, holding neo-Nazi demonstrations, banning Soviet symbols, or obstructing the activities of veterans' organizations. Cases of desecration of monuments to fighters against Nazism are extremely rare. Certain incidents involving damage to such sites (the most common is graffiti sprayed by young people, including fascist

symbols) are unequivocally condemned by socio-political circles, civil society organizations and anti-fascist veterans.

There is no evidence of monuments to the Nazis and their accomplices being erected in the territory of Montenegro, public demonstrations held by neo-Nazis, or members of Nazi organizations and collaborators declared as participants in national liberation movements.

Until 2021 inclusive, Montenegro, acting in line with the "EU solidarity", annually abstained when voting on the draft UN General Assembly resolution on "Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", submitted by Russia together with other co-sponsors from all regions of the world. In 2022, Montenegro, following suit of other EU countries, voted against the resolution for the first time, thus in fact publicly expressing its support for neo-Nazism.

Meanwhile, Montenegro itself continues to face a number of challenges in promotion and protection of human rights, including with regard to combating racial discrimination. For example, there is evidence of discrimination and unequal treatment of citizens on the grounds of national origin, membership of different social groups, gender inequality and family violence. As in previous years, members of certain groups of the population, including persons with disabilities, persons of Roma ethnic origin and other ethnic minorities, as well as women, have faced various types of violations of their rights and freedoms, in particular violations of the right to employment. The Committee against Torture pointed to the prevalence of domestic violence in Montenegro, and the low level of prosecution and leniency of sentencing for perpetrators of this.²⁰²²

International human rights organizations draw attention to the persistent problems of the Roma community in Montenegro related to discrimination in the socio-economic, educational and healthcare sectors, poor living conditions and

²⁰²² Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the third periodic report of Montenegro. May 2022.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fMNE%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

lack of adequate housing for displaced Roma. For example, this issue was raised in observations on Montenegro by the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities²⁰²³, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance²⁰²⁴, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination²⁰²⁵, and the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, Maria Giammarinaro, following her visit to Montenegro in 2019.

Montenegro remains a transit country for persons subjected to trafficking and sale for sexual exploitation and forced labour. According to the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, Mama Fatima Singhateh, only a small number of cases of sexual violence against children reach the relevant authorities. Among other things, this leads to underreporting and under-identification of victims. The culture of silence or tolerance towards such crimes in Montenegro, and the fact that children are often disbelieved or blamed by the competent authorities for having provoked the perpetrators to violence by their behaviour, makes it very difficult to address the problem.²⁰²⁶

The issue of overcoming inter-ethnic intolerance in Montenegro, and the use of church issues to foment hostility and settle domestic political scores, remains unresolved. Church issues and legislative initiatives in this area in recent years have led to increased public discontent and have been used for regime change in the country, as was the case in 2020. For example, the Law on Freedom of Religion and Belief and the Legal Status of Religious Communities, adopted in late

²⁰²³ Third Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Montenegro. Adopted on 7 March 2019. Published on 2 October 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/3rd-op-montenegro-en/168096d737>

²⁰²⁴ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Montenegro (5th monitoring cycle). Adopted on 20 June 2017. Published on 19 September 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/second-report-on-montenegro/16808b5942>

²⁰²⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 2nd periodic report of Montenegro. July 2017. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fMNE%2fCO%2f2&Lang=ru

²⁰²⁶ Preliminary observations on the visit to Montenegro by the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, Mama Fatima Singhateh 8-16 September 2021. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2021/09/preliminary-observations-visit-montenegro-un-special-rapporteur-sale-and-sexual>

December 2019, had the potential for conflict by requiring religious organizations to prove ownership of buildings and churches prior to 1918. This was perceived as a basis for a possible seizure in favour of the State of a significant part of the property of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) which remains the largest religious group in Montenegro. According to opponents of the law, its true purpose is to strengthen the position of the "Montenegrin Orthodox Church" (an unrecognized schismatic structure). Riots accompanied the September 2021 protests by supporters of the "Montenegrin Orthodox Church" over the enthronement of Metropolitan Joannikij of the Serbian Orthodox Church of Montenegro and Primorje.

Montenegro has not been spared from the Russophobic campaign that has been actively fomented in Europe since the Russian Armed Forces launched a special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilian population of the Donbass Republics. This was fuelled by Podgorica's ever-increasing policy of unconditional adherence to the line of Washington and EU Brussels. In June 2022, for example, Montenegro's operator "Mtel" switched off all Russian TV channels operating in the country, including "Russia Today", "RT Documentary", "RTR-Planeta" and "Rossiya 24".

In the context of the aforementioned Russophobic campaign, are noteworthy the activities of the Ukrainian Embassy in Montenegro, whose leadership, after Russia had launched a special military operation, held several "protests" in Podgorica using extremist and neo-Nazi symbols. Some representatives of the Ukrainian diplomatic mission (including on social networking sites) also made aggressive and racist remarks about the Russian military, employees of the Russian Embassy and representatives of the Russian diaspora. There were no reports that the Montenegrin authorities had suppressed such hateful activities or disassociated themselves from them.

A number of discriminatory acts have been reported in the media, which is also a source of concern for human rights defenders, including the Montenegrin Ombudsman. It has also been noted that expression of hatred and intolerance

towards different opinions is most frequently observed, according to the Ombudsman, in digital media and on the Internet. There have also been cases of attacks or threats of violence against journalists and publishing enterprises.

The situation regarding the exercise of social and economic rights by Montenegrin citizens remains difficult. A significant number of persons, mainly in the northern regions of the country, continue to live in poverty. The issues of employment, increase of wages, improvement of living conditions remain relevant for many citizens. Such circumstances have an adverse impact on social and economic situation in the country. The situation of the unemployed, the elderly and people with disabilities has been highlighted as particularly difficult by a national human rights organization. In addition, the European Committee on Social Rights has found that Montenegro is in violation of the European Social Charter on the ground that not all non-resident foreign nationals in need who are lawfully present in the territory are entitled to emergency social assistance.²⁰²⁷

Montenegro is facing problems of slow and inefficient work of the authorities, and excessive length of time taken to resolve cases in the judicial system. This is evidenced in particular by the fact that most of the appeals of Montenegrin citizens to the Defender have concerned the work of public administration bodies and government agencies, including those that led to violations of the rights and freedoms of citizens, as well as the failure of government entities to take decisions within the time limits established by law. As before, the main reasons for applicants' complaints about the functioning of the judiciary were the lengthy consideration and review of court decisions. In addition, Montenegrin citizens were dissatisfied with the work of the prosecutor's office, as prosecutors often failed to take the necessary action on complaints of crimes and offences, and to inform victims about the progress of the investigation of cases initiated on such complaints. Complaints were also caused by the violation of victims' rights in court and pre-trial proceedings.

²⁰²⁷ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Fundamental Rights Report 2023. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

There are also recorded violations of the rights of persons in custody in Montenegro. The Montenegrin Ombudsman, for example, received complaints from persons temporarily detained in police stations or in detention centres about the actions of the Police Directorate and the Administration for the Execution of Criminal Sanctions. The complaints by this category of citizens concerned mainly restrictions on contact with the outside world and freedom of movement, denial of qualified medical assistance, inhuman and degrading treatment, unlawfulness of court decisions against them.

The persistence of this problem was highlighted by the Committee against Torture in May 2022²⁰²⁸, which noted that its recommendations to the Montenegrin authorities in this regard had been only partly implemented. Among other things, it was pointed out that, owing to the existing definition of torture in the Criminal Code (which includes situations in places of deprivation of liberty), acts of torture or ill-treatment are not punishable by penalties commensurate with their grave nature, and that the statute of limitations for the offence of torture remains in force, making it difficult to prosecute the perpetrators of such offences. The Committee also noted that Montenegro's Criminal Code allowed the police to detain suspects for up to 24 hours before bringing them before the public prosecutor, and it was during this initial period that the majority of alleged violations occurred. Detainees face, inter alia, physical and psychological ill-treatment or torture by the police at the time of questioning with a view to extracting confessions or obtaining information. Against this background, the ineffectiveness of investigations (notably with regard to the identification of alleged perpetrators) of such cases is noted. Law enforcement officials are not suspended while they are under investigation for this type of offence. Among other things, the Committee noted that investigations into alleged acts of torture or ill-treatment could be carried out by the same prosecutor tasked with investigating charges against the detainee who

²⁰²⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the third periodic report of Montenegro. May 2022.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fMNE%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

made the allegations. In addition, courts impose lenient sentences in such cases, including the use of suspended sentences.

This is a particular concern as regards effective access to legal counsel and to medical examination, and as regards providing notification to a relative or other person of the detainee's choosing. Experts also drew attention to the persistent problem of overcrowding in prisons.

Czech Republic

The situation around glorification of Nazism and racial discrimination in Czech Republic remain concerning. One of the reasons – Prague's consistent "drift" towards a blatantly Russophobic course which took an aggressive form of a "war" with monuments to Soviet soldiers in the country and open whitewashing of Nazi collaborators. This takes place against the background of increased attempts to promote in Czech social and political space the concept of "equal responsibility" of totalitarian regimes for unleashing WWII. Equating the symbols of the USSR and Red Army to Nazi swastika with a view to ban them in the future, glossing over the liberating role of the Red Army (including through dispersion of the myth of self-liberation of Prague with the assistance of the Vlasovites) and tarnishing the Soviet soldiers and military commanders are among the goals of this campaign. When the Russian Federation launched the special military operation to de-Nazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilians in Donbass, Prague openly and actively advocated the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev (along with its nationalist battalions) by supplying it with various weaponry.

Such support of neo-Nazi forces beyond the borders of Czech Republic fully demonstrates the double standards applied by the Czech authorities. Czech Ministry of Interior's 2020 report on manifestations of extremists categorically indicated that the risk of a neo-Nazi movement remained, while absurdly connecting it with "narratives from the Russian Federation"²⁰²⁹.

Given the Czech authorities sympathy to Nazi collaborators as well as disrespect to the memory of Red Army soldiers who gave their lives for liberation of the Czech Republic from Nazism, it comes as no surprise that up until 2021 Czech Republic's delegation, in line with the position of EU Member States was abstaining from the vote (except for one time when it voted "against") in the UN General Assembly on the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, Neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of

²⁰²⁹ Report of the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic on manifestations of extremism and hatred, I half of 2023. (Pololetní zpráva MV o extremismu)
<https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/pololetni-zprava-mv-o-extremismu-556073.aspx>

racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" initiated by Russia and co-sponsors. However, in December 2022, Czech Republic took a step further and, following the EU, voted against this initiative which condemns modern manifestations of Nazism and other discriminating ideologies.

Since 2020 the Czech neo-Nazis have become active on the Internet, which the experts explain by the restrictive measures taken by the country's authorities due to COVID-19. The law enforcement agencies noted that this tendency will grow further yet.

In May-June 202 the attention of the Czech society was drawn to the cases of using the neo-Nazi sentiments for profit. Czech publisher "Naše vojsko" released a calendar with photos of the Third Reich leadership, occupational administration in the territory of the Czech Republic and other Nazi criminals (it had already offered similar "memorabilia" earlier). "Guidemedia" publishing house released a book containing denial of the Holocaust (prior to that, it had published Adolf Hitler's speeches and anti-Semitic articles).

The representatives of the Czech non-governmental organizations – Federation of Jewish Communities (FJC) and Holocaust Victim Compensation Fund (HVCF) reported to the police on "propaganda of the movement oriented on suppressing human rights and freedoms". Consequently, searches were conducted at the premises of the said publishers. Czech Ministry of Interior terminated the warehouse lease contract with one of them. German and Israeli Ambassadors to Prague initiated a public discussion condemning the publications in "Naše vojsko".

So far the publishers managed to avoid the responsibility under the pretext that it was not the matter of propaganda of Nazism, but the matter of commercial activities. In this regard, FJC President M. Klima called upon the Czech MPs to introduce amendments to the national legislation that would directly ban the sales of such products as a form of propaganda.

It is noteworthy, that the said publishing house continued being involved in the unlawful activity of releasing the banned or morally controversial articles. In April 2021, "Naše vojsko" publisher was fined and its director E. Drtina given a

suspended sentence for distributing the book advocating inhalant abuse. As for the case of spreading the Nazi symbols, it was returned by the court for further investigation.

On 2 November 2021, a set of historical photos of Nazis in the occupied Soviet territories were published on the Czech "Reflex" magazine's website to demonstrate, according to the authors' idea, benevolent attitude of Hitlerites towards local residents.

There are also facts of installment (or restoration) in Czech Republic of monuments and memorials in honour of the Nazis. For example, in 2011, at the Štěpánka Lookout in the village of Kořenov (Liberec Region) in the Jizera Mountains, "Iron Cross" granite memorial was restored. It honours the local residents who fought in the ranks of Wehrmacht and Waffen SS and serves as a pilgrimage destination for European neo-Nazis. It is known, in particular, that on 6 February 2021, members of Czech "Young Nationalists" organization held an event there and declared the intent to carry on with their "gatherings".

FJC was also concerned over the release of "Sudety Soldierzz" music album by Czech rap singers "Dvojlitrbojz" containing references to the Third Reich's ideology. Earlier the visitors of this band (as well as some other performers of the same genre) raised their hands in Nazi salute. According to FJC's estimates, such practice contributes to "creeping legitimization" of extremist views and such marginal manifestation could become acceptable.

At the same, it is noteworthy that certain steps to combat the manifestations of neo-Nazism were indeed taken in the country: in 2020, Czech Prosecutor's Office had decided to re-investigate the case of earlier acquitted neo-Nazi organization "National resistance". It was charged with holding the events commemorating the SS fighters and "white power" music concerts.

Unfortunately, lately, previously observed Czech residents' careful and respected attitude towards the memorials of Red Army soldiers and victims of Nazism gives place to Czech authorities' "combatting" the Soviet memorial sites. The most obnoxious of them – dismantling in 2017 by the Prague's Mayor's Office

of the memorial plaque from the town hall in the main square which was dedicated to the liberation of the city by the troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front²⁰³⁰; dismantling of the monument to Soviet tankmen (in the form of IS-2 tank which was removed from the pedestal and repainted in pink); placing of the "explanatory plaques" in 2018 on the monument to Marshal Ivan Konev (under his command the troops of the red Army fought to liberate the city) on the Interbrigade Square (in Prague-6 city district). This monument was repeatedly vandalized as well as the monument to Red Army soldiers in the vicinity of Prague Castle.

The pinnacle of this cynical campaign took place in early April 2020 with the removal of the monument to Ivan Konev, carried out by the administration of Prague-6 district, in violation of Russian-Czech Treaty of Friendly Relations and Cooperation 1993. The statue of Konev was put in a depository and its pedestal destroyed. While committing this sacrilegious act both calls of society to preserve the historically significant landmark and condemnation from country's President Miloš Zeman were ignored. Besides, according to head of Prague-6 district Ondřej Kolář, the state of emergency, previously imposed due to COVID-19, and limitations on free movement in the city, were deliberately used to conduct the dismantling without the public protests.

Yet the Czech Russophobes didn't stop at that. On 26 May 2022, upon decision of the Prague city authorities, Marshal Ivan Konev was deprived of the title of honorary citizen of Prague. On 21 June 2022, legislative assembly of Prague-3 voted for renaming the Konev Street which is located in this district²⁰³¹. The corresponding decision was adopted by Prague City Council on 19 June 2023²⁰³².

Pursuing the course of falsification of WWII history and demonization of the USSR and Russia, Czech Republic puts considerable effort into whitewashing

²⁰³⁰ Despite the initial assurances of the Mayor's Office to put the plaque back to its place after the restoration in 2019 the new city leadership refused to return the plaque.

²⁰³¹ Koněvova ulice by se měla přejmenovat na Hartigovu, změnu podpořili zastupitelé Prahy 3. 21 June 2022. <https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/domaci/3510373-konevova-ulice-se-mela-prejmenovat-na-hartigovu-zmenu-podporili-zastupitele-prahy-3>

²⁰³² Proč Hartigova? Historie Koněvovy ulice <https://www.praha3.cz/hartigova/proc-hartigova>

the image of Russian Liberation Army of Andrey Vlasov, aiming, in particular, at ascribing the decisive role in liberation of Prague from Nazism in May 1945 to this criminal formation. Such public attempts have become more frequent in the country over the last years. Such steps appear to go in parallel with the measures to "combat" the Soviet monuments. For example, on 30 April 2020, in Prague's Rzeporye District, at the initiative of its odious head P. Novotny, a monument was erected in honour of the Vlasovites. On 7 May 2022, a commemorative wreath-laying ceremony was held at this "installation". It is also noteworthy that there is a Russian Liberation Army memorial at the Olšany Cemetery where similar events are held on regular basis.

There are also other acts of vandalism against Soviet monuments. For example, in December 2020, unidentified perpetrators vandalized the monument to the red Army soldiers located in Ostrava-Zábřeh area in the Eastern Czechia.

Such incidents became especially frequent last year. In 2022, there were 9 cases of vandalism in the territory of the Czech Republic against the memorial sites dedicated to the Soviet soldiers who had liberated the Czechoslovakia from Nazism. In March 2022, in the city of Příbyslav, upon the decision of local authorities, a sculpture of the Red Army soldier was detached²⁰³³ from the monument to those who had fallen in WWI and WWII and then placed in a depository. In March 2022, in the city of Olomouc, swastikas²⁰³⁴ were painted on the monument to the Red Army soldiers, in September 2022 – "UA" letterings²⁰³⁵. The vandals defiled the monument to the Red Army soldiers in the city of Litoměřice in October 2022²⁰³⁶ and August 2023²⁰³⁷. Similar acts were committed

²⁰³³ Příbyslav odstraní kvůli napadení Ukrajiny sochu rudoarmějce se samopalem. iDNES.cz. 4 March 2022 https://www.idnes.cz/jihlava/zpravy/valka-ukrajina-socha-pribyslav-vojak-samopal-pomnik-pamatka.A220304_653780_jihlava-zpravy_mv

²⁰³⁴ Památník Rudé armády v Olomouci pomaloval sprejer hákovými kříži. Novinky .cz. 17 March 2022 <https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/krimi-pamatnik-rude-armady-v-olomouci-pomaloval-sprejer-hakovymi-krizi-40390780>

²⁰³⁵ Sprejer pomaloval památník Rudé armády v Olomouci. Novinky .cz. 26 September 2022 <https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/domaci-sprejer-pomaloval-pamatnik-rude-armady-v-olomouci-40409823>

²⁰³⁶ Rudoarmějce v Litoměřicích obarvili červeně a postavili na pračku Novinky.cz. 25 October 2022 <https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/krimi-rudoarmejece-v-litomerich-obarvili-cervene-a-postavili-na-pracku-40412689>

²⁰³⁷ Náš pomník oslavuje okupaci, ne osvobození, tvrdí v Litoměřicích. Město ho neodstraní. Aktuálně.cz. 22 August 2023 <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/foto-litomerice-spor-o-rusky-pomnik/r-0a3b961a40b111eeb1f50cc47ab5f122/>

in the city of Přeřov in October 2022, city of Příbor in March 2023 and city of Děčín in May 2023. Illustrative are the facts of Czech side's denial to invite the representatives of Russia to partake in the commemorative events dedicated to anniversaries of liberation of Czech cities by the Red Army²⁰³⁸.

The majority of the descendants of Russian emigrants of the "first wave" – the "Russian tradition" society as well as their allies among the compatriots' communities that are unsympathetic to Russia, with the support of the Czech Russophobes are deeply involved in whitewashing the Nazi collaborators.

"Russian tradition" stands as one of the key organizers of the International conference dedicated to the proclamation of Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia's manifesto by Andrey Vlasov in 1944. There is a Russian Liberation Army memorial at the Olšany Cemetery where the said groups of compatriots hold commemorative events on regular basis.

Russian-language magazine "Russian Word" released in Czech Republic by "Russian tradition" society with the financial support from the Czech Ministry of Culture regularly publishes articles aimed at justification of Vlasovites – Nazi collaborators.

It is also noteworthy that a book about Emil Hácha, "state President of Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia" in 1939-1945 (he was arrested by the authorities of Czechoslovakia in May 1945 on the charges of collaboration during the war, died before the trial). Local historians note that the historical analysis in that book is replaced with an emphasis on his "human" qualities and representation of him as almost a member of the anti-Fascist resistance. Czech nationalists were declared in the said book as "patriots" and the regime that had been established by Nazi invaders as "non-standard concept of democracy".

After Russia launched the special military operation to demilitarize and de-Nazify Ukraine and protect the civilians of DPR and LPR in February 2022, the discrimination, fuelled by the statements of Czech officials, against Russian

²⁰³⁸ Oslavy osvobození začínají. Bez Rusů. Novinky. cz. 28 April 2023
<https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/domaci-oslavy-osvobozeni-zacinaji-bez-rusu-40429936>

citizens and compatriots in Czech Republic has significantly intensified. In June 2023 President of the Czech Republic Petr Pavel urged to establish surveillance over all Russians residing in the West, while referring to such practice that existed in the US during WWII-era in relation to population of Japanese origin.²⁰³⁹ Czech Republic's Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky says that the Russian special services are allegedly using the Russian minorities abroad to achieve their goals²⁰⁴⁰. Against this background, the phenomenon of "individual sanctions" against people of Russian origin in various areas of life (banks, food service industry, education institutions).

The events in Ukraine became a pretext for adopting "individual sanctions" against people of Russian origin in various areas of public life in Czech Republic. In some of the cafes in Prague there were written announcements that Russians will not be served or will be served only on the condition that they condemn Russia's foreign policy and leadership (including in written form) and apologize for events in Ukraine. The cases of refusal to render medical aid were also made public. On top of that, there are also recorded incidents in the area of education when individual professors refused to teach or administer exams to the students of Russian origin, as well as to cooperate with Russian scientists. Besides, it is known that Czech universities have terminated the cooperation agreements with their Russian counterparts. In various banks Russians faced refusals to open or maintain their accounts. The banking sector had no common approach towards Russians: some banks have only expanded the list of required documents for clients of Russian origin and dragged out the procedures, others gave a complete refusal with no explanation.

Many Czech companies showed discriminatory attitude towards Russian citizens. Thus, "Pytloun Hotels" hotel chain (includes 14 city and mountain hotel) declared its refusal to receive guests with Russian and Belarussian citizenship until

²⁰³⁹ We should monitor all Russians living in the West, Czech leader says. Politico.eu. 15 June 2023
<https://www.politico.eu/article/petr-pavel-russia-czech-republic-surveillance/>

²⁰⁴⁰ Ruská menšina v Česku může být nástrojem politiky Kremle, varuje ministr zahraničí. HlídacíPes.cz. 4 July 2023
<http://hlidacipes.org/ruska-mensina-v-cesku-muze-byt-nastrojem-politiky-kremle-varuje-ministr-zahranici/>

the conclusion of the special operation in Ukraine. In its official press-release "Central Group", the country's largest building company, announced that it would not sell real property to the citizens of Russia. It said that the exceptions were only possible if the clients distanced themselves in written from Russia's policy in Ukraine.

Not only ordinary citizens of Russian origin, but also diplomatic representatives have faced aggression in Czech Republic. On 24 February 2022, unidentified perpetrators have assaulted the Russian Embassy in Prague. The assaulters tried to force their way into the territory of the mission and threw various objects at the building. As Czech Prosecutor General Igor Stříž said in February 2022, public support of Russian leadership and Russia's actions in Ukraine might entail criminal responsibility and imprisonment. According to data of Czech Prosecutor General's Office, as of March 2023, the courts have already rendered nine guilty verdicts, charges were laid against dozens of people, 90 criminal investigations were started²⁰⁴¹.

In line with the EU's approach, the Czech side, in accordance with the Decree of Czech Government № 130 of 25 February 2022, have suspended the issuing of visas and residence permits to Russian citizens including against the application that had been submitted prior to the said Decree's entry into force. The exceptions are only possible if there is a foreign political interest for Czech Republic. Alongside with that, it was also declared that visas will be issued in humanitarian cases. While commenting on Czech Republic's position on this matter, its Minister of Interior Vít Rakušan explained that humanitarian case is understood as reunification of families or threat of prosecution in Russia. Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs has extended that list: "A humanitarian visa is issued to an individual whose life is endangered by repression or due to their resistance or criticism of the regime as well as in case of a threat of prosecution on political or other grounds". Even the need of medical assistance or death of a close relative are

²⁰⁴¹ Nejvyšší státní zastupitelství: Za schvalování ruské agrese padlo devět trestů. Česká justice.cz. 15 March 2023 <https://www.ceska-justice.cz/2023/03/nejvyssi-statni-zastupitelstvi-za-schvalovani-ruske-agrese-padlo-devet-trestu/>

not considered by Czech authorities as strong reasons for issuing a visa. On 2 March 2022, the Czech Government issued a Decree depriving Belarussian nationals of their rights as well.

In June 2023, the Czech Government banned Russian and Belarussian athletes from participating in competitions in the territory of the country²⁰⁴². The concert of Russian opera singer Anna Netrebko in Prague which had been scheduled for October 2023 was cancelled due to pressure of Czech capital's leadership that gave the organizers a corresponding "recommendation" after holding consultations with Ukrainian Embassy in Czech Republic.²⁰⁴³

In Czech Republic, aside from discriminatory attitude towards Russians, there are repressions against reasonable citizens of this country who dared to publicly express their opinion. For example, Czech language teacher from one school in Prague who, in April 2022, gave an evaluation of events in Ukraine that contradicted the line of Czech leadership. Her own students reported on her. They secretly recorded her words on a cell phone. Only in June 2023 Prague-6 District Court ruled to terminate the criminal prosecution of the teacher, in relation to whom the prosecutor demanded to punish by suspended prison sentence.²⁰⁴⁴

Not only have the manifestations of discrimination against Russian citizens been recorded in Czech Republic. Over the last year, the Russophobic listing of Czech authorities, which is an open interference into domestic affairs and is aimed at supporting the unlawful activities, has strengthened significantly. For example, in July 2022, Prague provided a platform for representatives of Russian radical non-systemic opposition. The participants of "Free Nations of Postrussia Forum" called for coup d'etat in Russia and to ethnicity- and region-based separatism (*de-*

²⁰⁴² Vláda souhlasila se zákazem účasti ruských sportovců na soutěžích v Česku. Novinky.cz. 28 June 2023 <https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/domaci-vlada-souhlasila-se-zakazem-ucasti-ruskych-sportovcu-na-soutezich-v-cesku-40436306>

²⁰⁴³ Nětřebková si stěžuje na cenzuru. Novinky.cz. 17 August 2023

<https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/kultura-netrebko-si-stezuje-na-cenzuru-40440983>

²⁰⁴⁴ Učitelka před dětmi popírala, že Kyjev hoří. Soud ji osvobodil. SeznamZpravy.cz. 22 June 2023

<https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/domaci-kauzu-necitim-se-vina-ucitelka-ktera-popirala-rusky-utok-prisla-k-soudu-232901>

facto dismemberment of the Russian Federation). Following the Forum, they have adopted the "Declaration of decolonization of Russia".²⁰⁴⁵

There are also manifestations of racism and hatred ideology which are not directly related to glorification of Nazis and their collaborators in Czech Republic. In particular, in the first half of 2023, Czech Ministry of Interior recorded 69 criminal cases of hate crimes. 43 people were accused of committing the crimes based on race, national or other kinds of hatred.²⁰⁴⁶

According to estimates of Czech law enforcement agencies, the ultra-right groups, despite their efforts, cannot attract considerable number of members. Among these marginal structures specialists note "Working Party of Social Justice" (Dělnická strana sociální spravedlnosti), "Working Youth" (Dělnická mládež) and "National Democracy" (Národní demokracie).

Multilateral universal and regional human rights supervising organizations have repeatedly highlighted the situation with manifestations of racism in Czech Republic. They also recorded the spread of racist ideas and prejudices, race-based crimes, in particular, offences against property, threats to Romani, Jews, migrants and activists representing the national minorities and assaults on them. Among other things, they noted that the majority of victims were afraid to inform of the crimes committed against them which entails the lowering of the corresponding numbers in police reports.

For example, the Committee against Torture (in May 2018)²⁰⁴⁷, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (in August 2019)²⁰⁴⁸ and

²⁰⁴⁵ "De-imperialization and de-Putinization": Free Nations of Postrussia Forum was held in Prague: Radio Prague International.

²⁰⁴⁶ Report of the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic on manifestations of extremism and hatred, I half of 2023. (Pololetní zpráva MV o extremismu)

<https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/pololetni-zprava-mv-o-extremismu-556073.aspx>

²⁰⁴⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the 6th periodic report of the Czech Republic. May 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fCZE%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

²⁰⁴⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 12th and 13th periodic reports of the Czech Republic. August 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCZE%2fCO%2f12-13&Lang=ru

the Committee for Human Rights (in October 2019)²⁰⁴⁹ expressed concern about the extent to which racist and hateful ideas, prejudices and stereotypes, and hate speech were disseminated among the general public, mainly through the Internet and social media. CERD indicated that such rhetoric was used by Czech politicians and public figures, including members of Parliament, city mayors and members of the Government. The media plays no small role in spreading racist stereotypes and prejudices against minority groups. It often comes to the point where journalists trying to independently and impartially cover migration issues are faced with threats and pressure from radicals. CHR noted that the media is used to reinforce stereotypical prejudices based on ethnicity or religion.

Similar concerns were expressed by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in October 2020. In particular, ECRI noted that hate speech against Muslims, migrants and Jews was widespread in the country, and that Islamophobia and migrant-phobia had become hallmarks of political discourse over the past five years. Despite the fact that the Czech Republic has seen neither terrorist attacks by Islamist terrorist organizations nor the aftermath of the 2015 migration crisis, there is a low level of tolerance towards these two groups of people in the country.²⁰⁵⁰

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (AC FCPNM) in 2021 also expressed concern about the increase in hate speech against national minorities and migrants in the Czech Republic. It noted that some Czech politicians, including at the highest level, are reinforcing stereotypes in certain parts of society against national minorities, Roma and migrants, including Muslims. In the view of the AC FCPNM, this may be detrimental to the general climate of tolerance and respect and may also provoke

²⁰⁴⁹ Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 4th periodic report of the Czech Republic. October 2019.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/CZE/CO/4&Lang=Ru

²⁰⁵⁰ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on the Czech Republic (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 1 October 2020, published on 8 December 2020
<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-6th-report-on-the-czech-republic/1680a0a086>

spillover effects on those national minorities who are currently generally tolerated.²⁰⁵¹

The March 2022 Concluding Observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights also pointed to persistent discrimination, hate speech, prejudice and stereotypes against certain individuals and marginalized groups in the Czech Republic, which included persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Among others, the Committee noted that education in minority languages does not include all national minorities and cover the entire country²⁰⁵².

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) noted that "odious incidents" of racial hatred and xenophobia, primarily against migrants and ethnic minorities, were reported in the country in 2017. Examples cited included large-scale campaigns "against the dominance of Roma and migrants" in Brno, Ostrava and other major Czech cities, which, it was noted, often ended in riots, clashes with the police, followed by numerous detentions of protesters.

In terms of manifestations of discrimination against a certain ethnic group, particularly Russians, the controversial case of the refusal in 2014 by the owner (with Ukrainian roots) of the Brioni Hotel in Ostrava to accommodate citizens of the Russian Federation due to the reunification of Crimea with Russia was illustrative. Later, the hotel management as a condition for accommodation began to require Russian customers to sign a statement condemning the "annexation" of the peninsula. The case was referred to the Czech courts and reached the Constitutional Court, which sided with the hotel owner and overturned the decisions of lower courts and the Supreme Administrative Court, stressing that entrepreneurs should not be politically neutral. The verdict does not comply with the Czech Republic's international legal obligations, including those under the

²⁰⁵¹ Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (5th cycle) on the Czech Republic. Adopted on 31 May 2021, published on 6 October 2021. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-czech-republic-en-restricted/1680a2b3d6>

²⁰⁵² Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 3rd periodic report of the Czech Republic. March 2022. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fCZE%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Czech experts criticized the decision, saying it was not legally correct. It is noteworthy that the Chairman of the Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic, P. Rykhetski, expressed categorical disagreement with the final decision and recommended that the case be referred to the EU Court in Luxembourg²⁰⁵³, which, in his opinion, could "deal with this phenomenon".

The Human Rights Council of the Czech Government also drew attention to this case by including it in its review in the section on discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnic origin. The Council tried to explain the final decision of the Constitutional Court, which had justified with freedom of enterprise the businessman's desire to express his political views and on that basis to draw the line between clients, by the fact that, according to the Czech legal framework, citizenship is not considered grounds for discrimination. At the same time, the Council stipulated that the list of these reasons is specified, but not limited, and "it remains unclear how this case would have ended" if nationality had been named as the reason instead of "citizenship," as these concepts are related.

Anti-Semitism has also been documented in the Czech Republic. FRA, inter alia, citing data from the Federation of Jewish Communities of the Czech Republic, confirms a significant increase in anti-Semitic incidents in 2021 – 1,128 (by comparison, 694 such incidents were recorded in 2019, and 874 in 2020). Moreover, this "positive" trend has been observed for at least the last 10 years. The vast majority of cases (1,119) involve anti-Semitic manifestations on the Internet and in the media. Official data from the authorities on recorded anti-Semitic crimes also show an upward trend, with 37 anti-Semitic offences recorded in 2021, in 2020 – 27, in 2019 – 23.²⁰⁵⁴

The Czech Republic continues to face problems around the Roma community (this minority is considered the largest in the country: according to the

²⁰⁵³ The highest instance of the Court of Justice of the EU, whose decisions cannot be appealed.

²⁰⁵⁴ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. Overview of antisemitic incidents recorded in the European Union. 2011-2021.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-antisemitism-overview-2011-2021_en.pdf

Czech government's data for 2020, approximately 150-300 thousand Roma currently live in the Czech Republic, that is, from 1.4 to 2.8 percent of the population). According to the office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Czech Republic, the number of socially disadvantaged areas (ghettos) in the country has almost tripled over the last period. The Czech government's policy in this area is almost invariably criticized by international and national specialized organizations, pointing to the lack of inclusiveness in Czech society.

According to the December 2020 report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on the situation in the Czech Republic, there is a relatively low rate of racially motivated hate incidents in the country. At the same time, "hate speech" against Roma, Muslims, migrants and members of sexual minorities is very common, including in the speeches of even high-level politicians. There is a growing trend towards xenophobic and anti-Semitic populism, however, they do not enjoy strong sentiments of support.²⁰⁵⁵

ECRI mentioned the long-standing problem of the "vicious circle" in which a large part of the local Roma population lives: lack of education leads to a lack of employment, living in disadvantaged areas, which negatively affects access to social security and health care. Roma children face discrimination in education: segregated schools are widespread. About 20 percent of Roma children attend primary schools, where more than half of the pupils are Roma. In 13 such schools, Roma pupils make up more than 90 percent. ECRI highlighted a high profile court case involving an elementary school in Ostrava where one building was allocated to Roma children and another one to all others. The question of compensation for members of the Roma minority who were forcibly sterilized in the Czech Republic (the last incident, according to local human rights activists, occurred in the mid-1990s) has not yet been resolved either. It is very symptomatic that the Commission highlighted in December 2022 that the Czech authorities had failed to implement recommendations to combat the segregation of Roma children in

²⁰⁵⁵ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on the Czech Republic (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 1 October 2020, published on 8 December 2020
<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-6th-report-on-the-czech-republic/1680a0a086>

schools. It was noted that this negative trend persisted and that the efforts of the authorities to address the problem have had no results. There are, for example, 77 Czech schools in which Roma children make up the majority of pupils, although only in a small number of these cases can such a concentration be explained by the percentage of Roma pupils living in the relevant catchment area.²⁰⁵⁶

In addition, on 23 November 2020, the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) issued a decision on a complaint filed in 2017 by the European Roma Rights Centre and the Mental Disability Advocacy Centre. The petitioners pointed to the local practice of "institutionalizing children" under the age of three (predominantly Roma and disabled) by placing them in social welfare institutions instead of providing family forms of care. According to the United Nations Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, D. Puras, ECSR found Prague in violation of Article 17 of the European Social Charter of 1961 which provides for the right of mothers and children to social and economic protection.

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities noted in 2021 that the groups most affected by racist hate speech were Roma and Muslims, with the focus of recent years shifting from hatred against Roma towards anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric. In general, however, it was stated that public expressions anti-gypsyism were still occurring frequently, and it notably increased in social media. The negative attitudes are also supported by statements by some Czech politicians, including at the highest level. ACFC therefore reported that this attitude raises serious concerns and frustration among national minorities.²⁰⁵⁷

Roma discrimination in the Czech Republic and the segregation of Roma children in schools (they study either in separate schools or special schools for children with disabilities) were pointed out with concern by the universal human

²⁰⁵⁶ Conclusions of the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance on the Implementation of the Recommendations in Respect of the Czech Republic Subject to Interim Follow-up (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 7 December 2022, published on 10 March 2023. <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendation-in-respec/1680aa6865>

²⁰⁵⁷ Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (5th cycle) on the Czech Republic. Adopted on 31 May 2021, published on 6 October 2021. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-czech-republic-en-restricted/1680a2b3d6>

rights treaty bodies, i.e. the Committee against Torture in May 2018²⁰⁵⁸, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in August 2019²⁰⁵⁹, the Committee for Human Rights in October 2019²⁰⁶⁰ and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in March 2022.²⁰⁶¹ For example, CESCR, noting the lack of reliable data on the situation of Roma in the Czech Republic, expressed concern that members of this community face stigmatization, poverty and endemic discrimination in the areas of healthcare, education, employment and housing. According to the Committee, a very high number of Roma children are placed in special school establishments alongside children with disabilities. According to the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, educational segregation affects roughly one in two Roma children in Czechia, 49 percent. Moreover, the existence of segregation of Roma in Czech educational institutions was recognized by the Czech Supreme Court in 2022 (decision № 25 Cdo 473/2021).²⁰⁶²

CESCR also addressed the issue of compensation for Roma women who had been forced to undergo sterilization between 1966 and 2012. While welcoming the adoption in 2021 of a law regulating the provision of payments, the Committee pointed out that the statutory period of three years to apply for compensation may be too short for victims to receive proper information about it and to formalize payments.

According to the opinion of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights of 27 February 2023, following her visit to the Czech Republic, the

²⁰⁵⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the 6th periodic report of the Czech Republic. May 2018

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fCZE%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

²⁰⁵⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 12th and 13th periodic reports of the Czech Republic. August 2019

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCZE%2fCO%2f12-13&Lang=ru

²⁰⁶⁰ Concluding Observations of the Human Rights on the 4th periodic report of the Czech Republic. October 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/CZE/CO/4&Lang=Ru

²⁰⁶¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 3rd periodic report of the Czech Republic. March 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fCZE%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

²⁰⁶² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2023.

http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

Roma minority faces discrimination in virtually every area of life, including education, housing, employment, as well as in their interaction with the police. The problem of segregation of Roma children in Czech educational institutions was particularly highlighted. She pointed to the ongoing problems that many Roma women victims of 1970s forced sterilization in the Czech Republic face in effectively accessing the compensation mechanism, as well as the discriminatory approach of local authorities to Roma refugees from Ukraine.²⁰⁶³

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in its 2023 report also pointed out that Ukrainian Roma face discrimination in the Czech Republic, especially when looking for housing.²⁰⁶⁴ It also noted, citing data from human rights NGOs, that this group of people face refusals when trying to receive medical care.

In addition, according to the Agency, trust in the police in Czechia among Roma has been dropping since 2016 (33 percent), reaching its lowest level of 19 percent in 2021. At the same time, the average level of trust among the country's population is 75 percent.

The European Commission has also drawn attention to discrimination against Roma children in education, initiating a related procedure against the Czech Republic.²⁰⁶⁵

The UN human rights treaty bodies have also paid attention to the problems related to the detention of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in the Czech Republic in special camps. Criticism has been expressed about the conditions in these detention centres, as well as the length of time migrants remain in them. This has been, inter alia, highlighted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee against Torture, the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. HR Committee noted with concern that senior Czech officials encouraged the public perception that

²⁰⁶³ Breakthrough necessary to ensure the equality and dignity of Roma people and people with disabilities in the Czech Republic. Press release of the Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatović following her five-day visit to the Czech Republic. 27 February 2023.

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/breakthrough-necessary-to-ensure-the-equality-and-dignity-of-roma-people-and-people-with-disabilities-in-the-czech-republic>

²⁰⁶⁴ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2023.

http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

²⁰⁶⁵ Ibid.

migration was a threat to public security, and that the media was used to instil fear of migrants and asylum-seekers. The Committee also referred to the low number of positive asylum applications, noting a possible correlation between these statistics and statements by Czech senior public officials.²⁰⁶⁶

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights pointed out that Czech landlords are reluctant to rent to migrants who also face above-market rents for low-quality accommodation.²⁰⁶⁷

In September 2022, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances drew attention to gaps in Czech legislation relating to the expulsion and extradition of foreign nationals (the latter affecting also migrants). For example, the Committee pointed to the lack of clear criteria applied to evaluate and verify any claim regarding the danger of being subjected to enforced disappearance if the person is expelled, returned, surrendered, or extradited to another State. The Committee was also concerned about the lack of effective safeguards in Czech legislation against refoulement in the context of the execution of an expulsion sentence, since the lodging of an application for international protection did not have an automatic suspensive effect on the execution of the deportation order.²⁰⁶⁸

The discriminatory situation of refugees from Ukraine in general, not just Ukrainian Roma, has also come to the attention of international monitoring mechanisms. For example, the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights noted in its 2023 report the significant problems of this group in finding employment. The results of a survey published in June 2022 show that, while some 45 percent

²⁰⁶⁶ Concluding Observations of the Human Rights on the 4th periodic report of the Czech Republic. October 2019. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/CZE/CO/4&Lang=Ru

²⁰⁶⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 3rd periodic report of the Czech Republic. March 2022. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fCZE%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

²⁰⁶⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances on the initial report of the Czech Republic. September 2022. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CED%2fC%2fCZE%2fCO%2f1&Lang=ru

of adult beneficiaries of temporary protection have a university degree, about 80 percent of those who are employed work in low-skilled occupations.²⁰⁶⁹

²⁰⁶⁹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2023.

http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

Switzerland

According to the official position of the Swiss authorities, the country had no links with the Nazi regime during the Second World War and strictly adhered to a policy of neutrality. However, there is ample evidence to the contrary. As early as June 1940, shortly after the Nazi Germany invaded France and the latter surrendered, Swiss President Marcel Pilet-Golaz made a radio address calling on Switzerland to adapt to the new situation in Europe. This gesture was one of the steps towards closer cooperation between Bern and the Axis powers.

In particular, their extensive economic cooperation is well known. In August 1940, the Nazis were granted most-favoured-nation status for trade and transit, including military cargo, and a loan of 150 million Swiss francs. In October 1940, an agreement was signed for the transfer of Swiss military equipment to Hitler's regime. Six months later, the Confederation granted Berlin a further loan of 165 million Swiss francs and committed itself to a monthly supply of 150,000 tonnes of coal. The Swiss Federal Banking Commission approved the purchase of gold bullion from Germany. The proceeds were used by the Third Reich to buy resources and armaments. All this has led many historians, including in Switzerland itself, to argue that the Confederation paid the Nazis off during the Second World War.

In addition, the Swiss Federal (Departments) Ministries of Justice and of the Interior did not hinder recruitment activities on their territory, as a result of which more than 2,000 Swiss citizens joined the Waffen-SS as volunteers. It is worth noting that Pilet-Golaz visited Berlin on 1 July 1941 and that the Confederation later sent several units of military doctors and technicians to the Eastern Front.

Since the spring of 2023, the Western media have been actively discussing the collaboration of the Swiss bank Credit Suisse with the Third Reich. The bank is accused of managing the accounts of Nazi Party members, even after they had fled to Argentina. According to observers, this vicious practice allegedly continued until 2020²⁰⁷⁰.

²⁰⁷⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/18/us/credit-suisse-nazis.html>

Switzerland does not prohibit the existence and activities of right-wing extremist groups, which often adhere to neo-Nazi ideas (this would require a specific government decree based on a UN or OSCE resolution). As early as 2009, a cross-party consensus was reached in the Swiss Federal Parliament on the need to strengthen the legal framework in order to combat radicalisation more effectively, but to date this idea has not been implemented and no changes have been made to the legal framework.

According to the Swiss Federal Intelligence Service (FIS), despite the self-dissolution in February 2022 of the only right-wing political party, the Party of Nationally Oriented Swiss, which officially existed since 2000, the local extremist strengthens its positions. This is evidenced by the increasing number of violent incidents involving right-wing extremists.

The right wing of the Swiss People's Party, the largest party in the Confederation, is promoting ideas that border on radicalism. As a rule, such initiatives are directed against migrants and relate to restricting their access to the country and tightening the state's migration policy as a whole.

In January 2021, a month-long law enforcement operation resulted in the arrest of six activists of the neo-Nazi group Iron Youth, aged between 18 and 20, who staged a public action during an online lecture at the Zurich University of the Arts on Hitler's birthday, 20 April 2020, and spread racist and anti-Semitic ideas via their Telegram channel. In addition to Nazi literature and symbols, an impressive arsenal of small arms and ammunition was seized from the young Swiss men. In the end, the neo-Nazis were only given suspended fines for "racial discrimination", "damage" and "illegal possession of weapons", which will only have to be paid if they violate the probationary period of two years, plus court costs. Following these events, Iron Youth was disbanded.

The Swiss right-wing extremist movement National Action Front, under the aegis of which the largest neo-Nazi youth group, Young Action, was founded in the autumn of 2020, continues to exist. Its members' professionally produced videos have received up to 30,000 views on the Internet, including on the group's

Telegram channel, which has 6,000 subscribers. The group also maintains a website containing far-right slogans without direct reference to Nazi ideology.

A small but active Swiss "branch" of the neo-Nazi Kombat 18 group (a paramilitary unit of the international neo-Nazi Blood and Honour network, which originated in Britain), banned in Germany, exists on the Internet.

Other neo-Nazi movements include Brigade 8 and the Morgenstern Association in central Switzerland; the Homeland Loyal Association in the cantons of Schwyz and St. Gallen; the international Hammerskins group; Iron Lucerne and the "Avalon Community". In total, according to the Tages-Anzeiger newspaper, as of June 2022, there were about 400 violent activists in the Confederation.

In June 2022, Swiss law enforcement officers dispersed a large gathering of neo-Nazis from Germany and Switzerland (more than 50 people) in Rüti (canton of Zurich), organised under the guise of a mountain hikers' meeting.

Previously, a local branch of the international neo-Nazi group Misanthropic Division, which was founded in Ukraine in 2013-2014, operated in the country. In 2017, it was discovered that four of the neo-Nazi supporters had served in the Swiss army. As reported by the Tages-Anzeiger newspaper, in March 2022, there were calls on social media from Swiss right-wing radicals to join the neo-Nazi Azov regiment to take part in combat operations.

The right-wing extremist newspaper Expresszeitung continues to be published. It is owned by Swiss nationals R. Buchwalder and A. Barmettler. The editorial staff is made up of German nationals, including G. Wisniewski, well-known proponent of "alternative facts" and conspiracy theories. The paper is printed in Zurich in a printing house owned by Tamedia, one of the largest Swiss media groups.

Previously, right-wing extremists had openly used Nazi symbols and gestures during rallies against anti-coronavirus restrictions. On 20 March 2021, during a demonstration in Liestal, a group of radicals beat up a journalist who was taking photos. A similar rally in Bern in September 2021, at which a participant raised his hand in a Nazi salute, was the subject of a prosecution order by the

Federal Prosecutor's Office. This was successfully challenged in court on the grounds of "lack of legal basis".

In addition, the right-wing activists have been actively involved in the discussions of the so-called coronasceptics, who spread conspiracy theories, including anti-Semitic and racist nature, on the Internet and urge citizens not to agree to vaccination.

The period of global quarantine to contain the new disease has also been preceded by high-profile cases of neo-Nazi manifestations. For example, on 30 November 2019, a large gathering of supporters of radical ideas took place in Galgenen (canton of Schwyz) - an event called People's Forum, organised by the National Action Front. More than a hundred people attended the "forum", including the well-known German neo-Nazi F. Kremer and the representative of the Avalon Community A. Segessenmann. According to journalists, the authorities were aware of the meeting and even stopped Kremer's car at the German-Swiss border for inspection, but did not prevent him from travelling to Switzerland or from holding the "forum" itself.

In the summer of 2019, it became known that the head of the Swiss company Roviva Roth & Cie, P. Roth, was linked to the neo-Nazi D. Nikitin (Kapustin), who has Russian roots, and that the Swiss company cooperated with the brand White Rex, which produces clothing with extremist and Nazi symbols. As it turned out, in 2017, P. Roth founded the company Fighttex AG, which still supplies such products to Western Europe. At the same time, its director is the former chairman of the above-mentioned Party of Nationally Oriented Swiss, F. Gerber. In September 2019, following the scandal, P. Roth was forced to resign from the Board of Directors of his company Roviva Roth & Cie.

Despite the fact that around 90 per cent of all extremist manifestations currently take place on social networks and the internet, law enforcement officials do not rule out the possibility that individual local neo-Nazis will attempt to carry out terrorist attacks in the future, similar to those that have taken place in Germany, New Zealand and other Western countries. The Swiss FIS estimates that

there are between 300 and 400 right-wing extremists in the country who are prepared to commit acts of violence.

In an article published on 4 March 2020, the *Tages-Anzeiger* pointed to the intensification of right-wing extremist propaganda in major Swiss cities (Zurich, Bern, Geneva, Lausanne), where stickers with texts asserting the superiority of the white race (e.g. "Look around, white people built all this") and a QR code, which when scanned opens the website of the extremist media group Red Ice, have started to appear in public places.

The public display of Nazi symbols is not prohibited in the Confederation, as long as it is not intended to spread racist propaganda or to attract third parties to this ideology. Their 'mere' use by individual citizens has been regarded as freedom of expression. It is not uncommon for antique shops to openly sell Nazi uniforms, insignia, etc.

For example, at the end of November 2021, a legislative initiative by the MP M. Binder-Keller was submitted to the Federal Council (government) of the Swiss Confederation to ban appropriate gestures, slogans, forms of greeting and distinctive signs in public and digital space. It was rejected on 2 February 2022 on the grounds of alleged impracticability. Preventive measures were preferred to criminal restrictions.

On 15 December 2022, the Swiss Federal Office of Justice, in a report commissioned by the government, concluded that "a total ban on Nazi and racist symbols as a whole is possible, but such a law would face significant legal obstacles". It pointed out that it was already possible at cantonal level to ban the use of such symbols and to impose fines for infringements. At the same time, however, it was noted that it would be difficult to draw up a complete list of prohibited Nazi and extremist symbols.

On 12 January 2023, the Legal Commission of the National Council (lower house of parliament) declared the need for more active measures against the use

and dissemination of Nazi symbols and proposed a separate law to prohibit their use in public spaces, including appropriate sanctions for violations of the new rules.

In early May 2023, the National Council voted overwhelmingly in favour of M. Binder-Keller's initiative to ban the use of Nazi symbols in public space. It is currently being examined by the Council of Cantons (the upper house of parliament).

Switzerland abstains from voting in the United Nations General Assembly on the annual resolution introduced by Russia and other co-sponsors entitled "Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance". In explaining its position, the Swiss side refers to the inadmissibility of restricting the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association.

The Confederation lacks specific legislation to combat racist manifestations. At federal level, there is no legal definition of direct and indirect racial discrimination or provisions explicitly prohibiting racial profiling, and the Criminal Code does not include the commission of a racially motivated hate crime as an aggravating circumstance. This has been criticised by experts from the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)²⁰⁷¹.

The Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has also pointed out that Switzerland's national legislation against discrimination against national minorities is inadequate. This leads to a blurring of their legal status and inequality due to different standards at cantonal level²⁰⁷².

2071 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Switzerland. December 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/CHE/CO/10-12&Lang=ru

2072) European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Switzerland (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 10 December 2019. Published on 19 March 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-report-on-switzerland-sixth-monitoring-cycle-/16809ce4bd>

The legal basis for the fight against racism is currently provided by Article 8 paragraph 2 of the Constitution (prohibition of discrimination based on origin, race, sex, age, language, social status, religious and political convictions or disability) and Article 261bis of the Swiss Criminal Code. Calls for racial, ethnic or religious discrimination, the public dissemination of such ideology, the organisation, promotion and participation in propaganda activities, public insults and manifestations of discrimination, the denial of genocide and other crimes against humanity and the refusal to provide public services on racial grounds are punishable by a prison sentence of up to three years or a fine.

In February 2023, the experts of the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (AC FCNM) again expressed concern about reports of an increase in racist and intolerant behaviour in Switzerland during the reporting period. These included in particular anti-Roma sentiments, anti-Semitism, racism against Muslims and blacks²⁰⁷³.

In December 2021, CERD experts also noted an increase in the number of racist offences, while legal action in this area is scarce. In addition, the monitoring of this type of crimes remains insufficiently effective due to the fact that registration of such crimes is not carried out on a uniform basis and is not mandatory²⁰⁷⁴.

CERD was concerned by reports of a growing number of incidents, involving racial hate speech directed, in particular, at Roma, Jews, people of African and Asian descent, Muslims, refugees and asylum-seekers, on the Internet and by public figures and politicians. The experts noted that the use of hate speech has intensified during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic²⁰⁷⁵.

The use of xenophobic and hate speech by some Swiss political parties is

²⁰⁷³ Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Switzerland. Adopted on 13 February 2023. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-switzerland-en/1680ab9e02>

²⁰⁷⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Switzerland. December 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/CHE/CO/10-12&Lang=ru

²⁰⁷⁵ Ibid.

highlighted in the report of the OSCE/ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission to observe the Swiss parliamentary elections scheduled for 22 October 2023, published on 13 September 2023²⁰⁷⁶.

According to a survey published in February by the Federal Statistical Office, one third of all permanent residents in Switzerland have experienced discrimination and violence, 50 per cent of them because of their nationality (citizenship), 19 per cent because of their skin colour and physical differences, 17 per cent because of their religion and 15 per cent because of their ethnic origin. 60 per cent of respondents considered racism to be a current and serious problem in Switzerland.

Despite regular recommendations by UN experts and human rights defenders, Switzerland has not yet organised sufficient and accessible remedies for victims of racial discrimination, including in civil and administrative law.

Even after the Federal Assembly passed the law establishing a national human rights institution on 1 October 2021, CERD expressed doubts about its effectiveness in addressing the problem, as the institution does not have a mandate to receive and consider individual complaints and reportedly would not have sufficient financial resources. The current Federal Commission against Racism lacks the financial resources to fully implement its mandate. A lack of financial and human resources is also a problem for the cantonal counselling centres, whose task is to register racist incidents and facilitate victims' access to support and legal advice²⁰⁷⁷.

Russia's launch of a special military operation to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine on 24 February 2022 led to an intensification of anti-Russian sentiment in Switzerland, including among representatives of the country's political elite. On 5 March 2022, the co-presidents of the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland, S. Wermuth and M. Meyer, sent an open letter to the Federal Council with the idea of creating a special interdepartmental commission to check the assets of both

²⁰⁷⁶ ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report on Swiss Confederation Federal Assembly Elections. 22 October 2023, p.10. <http://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/e/551816.pdf>

²⁰⁷⁷ Ibid.

sanctioned and other wealthy Russian citizens in order to uncover a network of front men and to prevent "further financing of the war in Ukraine" from the territory of the Confederation. It was also suggested that the residence permits issued to this group of people in Switzerland should be re-examined²⁰⁷⁸.

According to information received by the consular section of the Russian Embassy in Switzerland, Swiss banks have begun a massive review of the grounds for opening accounts for Russian clients residing in Switzerland who are not subject to sanctions and who do not hold additional Swiss or EU citizenship.

During rallies in support of the Kiev authorities in February-March, mayors of major Swiss cities made statements that were offensive and hateful towards the Russian leadership.

The right to freedom of opinion and expression was also violated. In March 2022, the largest cable network operators in Switzerland (Swisscom, Sunrise UPC, Teleboy, Salt) decided to stop broadcasting the RT and Sputnik channels²⁰⁷⁹.

There are also some attempts to "cancel" Russian culture. In February 2022, the Verbier Classical Music Festival announced the termination of its cooperation with the world-famous Russian conductor and artistic director of the Mariinsky Theatre, V.A. Gergiev, and the Neva Foundation, which was one of the main sponsors of this annual event.

Between February and March 2022, a Swiss citizen and his Ukrainian-born wife publicly and repeatedly disseminated hate speech in Russian on various social media pages against Russians and Belarusians, including those in the country, up to and including death wishes. In April 2022, the Russian Embassy in Switzerland asked the prosecutor's office to investigate whether the couple had violated the Swiss Criminal Code (public incitement to hatred or discrimination against a person or group of persons because of their race or ethnicity). In August 2022, the Public Prosecutor's Office confirmed to the Embassy that criminal proceedings had been initiated against the couple under four articles, which carry a penalty of up to

²⁰⁷⁸ <https://www.sp-ps.ch/publikationen/rote-linien/den-oligarchen-im-umfeld-von-wladimir-putin-gezielt-das-handwerk-legen>

²⁰⁷⁹ Ukraine Krieg: Swisscom & Co. sperren russische TV-sender. Nau.ch. 28 February 2022. <https://www.nau.ch/news/wirtschaft/ukraine-konflikt-swisscom-co-sperren-russische-tv-sender-66119183>

three years' imprisonment or a fine. On 11 October 2022, the Lenzburg-Aargau Public Prosecutor's Office confirmed that the court decision of 8 September to prosecute the Ukrainian-born woman (suspended fine of CHF 14,700, real fine of CHF 2,000, court and police costs of CHF 1,821.5) had entered into force. Her husband was found not guilty.

In some cases, Russian children studying in schools have faced domestic racism and bullying. However, the authorities prefer not to comment on these problems.

Before the start of Russia's special military operation to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine, there were isolated cases of violations of the rights of Russian citizens and compatriots in Switzerland. In particular, the extradition of the Russian businessman V. Klyushin at the request of the United States authorities on 18 December 2021 received public resonance. The extradition request was based on charges of organised conspiracy, fraud by electronic means, illegal intrusion into computer systems and securities fraud. It is worth noting that a "competing" request from the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation was rejected by the Swiss side in August 2021, with reference to the absence of a criminal penalty in the national legislation of the Confederation for the act for which extradition was requested (fraud on a particularly large scale). The arguments of V. Klyushin's lawyers about the political background of the prosecution and the use of illegal methods of evidence gathering by the US side were ignored by the courts of appeal and cassation. As a result, in September 2023, V. Klyushin was sentenced to nine years in prison by a court in Boston.

Anti-Semitism continued to be observed in Switzerland. In addition to online and real-life insults and insinuations against the Jewish community, including by members of the Party of Nationally Oriented Swiss, in January 2021 there were cases of pig meat being thrown under the doors of synagogues in Lausanne and Geneva. In February 2021, images of swastikas were painted on the walls of a synagogue in Biel. Half of the 487 members of the Jewish community surveyed in 2020 by the Zurich University of Applied Sciences had experienced anti-Semitism

in the past five years, particularly on social media and in messenger groups.

E. Tendayi Achiume, Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Human Rights Council on contemporary forms of racism, has drawn attention to the rather high level of anti-Semitism and acts of violence against Jews (particularly among the French-speaking population of Switzerland). It also highlighted the rise of right-wing extremist groups, which it said posed a serious threat to Jewish communities²⁰⁸⁰.

The AC FCNM also noted repeated incidents of violence against the Jewish community. In 2017, for example, there were 189 incidents targeting Jews, including six physical assaults and the hanging of banners on bridges calling for the extermination of Jews²⁰⁸¹.

Negative sentiments towards Muslims persist, accompanied by acts of vandalism in cemeteries and offensive graffiti in mosques.

In addition, some Islamic figures consider the constitutional ban on the construction of new minarets, imposed after the referendum of 29 November 2009, to be a violation of the rights of their community.

As the Zurich Imam M. Begovic noted in December 2020, many members of the Balkan diaspora in Switzerland (around 500,000 people in total) are increasingly exposed to xenophobic manifestations, which have intensified in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, they are accused of "importing" coronavirus infections from the former Yugoslav republics.

In March 2021, a legislative initiative to ban face coverings in public places was put to a general vote. The main purpose of the new measure was to enable law enforcement agencies to deal more decisively with masked perpetrators, including at demonstrations and sporting events. In addition, according to the Public Committee that initiated the referendum, "concealing one's face in public places is contrary to the liberal spirit of living together".

²⁰⁸⁰ Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. A/HRC/38/53. Thirty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council. June 2018. <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/38/53>

²⁰⁸¹ Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Switzerland. Adopted on 31 May 2018. <https://rm.coe.int/4th-advisory-committee-opinion-on-switzerland-english-language-version/16809002ca>

The proposed changes to the law were passed by 51.21 per cent to 48.79 per cent. This automatically banned the traditional clothing of Muslim women - burqas and niqabs - which can now only be worn in places of religious worship. Naturally, this innovation caused discontent among people who profess Islam. The Central Islamic Council of Switzerland declared that the result of the referendum had caused "deep disappointment among Muslims born and raised in this country". A number of NGOs, for their part, stated that the fundamental rights of the religious minority in the state had been violated.

In this context, it is interesting to note the position of the federal government, which proposed a more lenient alternative to the above draft, requiring that the face be uncovered only if the authorities insist on it in order to establish the person's identity²⁰⁸².

A major problem for the nomadic Roma peoples of the Yenish and Sinti/Manush is the lack of areas in which they can camp, which contributes in no small part to the prejudice and hostility they face. Roma of non-Swiss origin were often not allowed to stop in certain places at all. This increases xenophobic attitudes and leads to conflicts between different population groups²⁰⁸³.

There are cases of local residents demonstrating against the organisation of Roma car parks. The protesters support their protest with posters with expressions and images insulting and humiliating the dignity of members of this population group.

Discriminatory treatment of Roma was noted in October 2019 by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The experts of this UN expert mechanism expressed concern that the measures taken by the authorities are not sufficient to promote the traditions, culture and languages of this people. There

²⁰⁸² Switzerland has banned wearing burqa and niqab in public places. TASS. 7 March 2021. <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/10854143>

²⁰⁸³ Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Switzerland. Adopted on 31 May 2018. <https://rm.coe.int/4th-advisory-committee-opinion-on-switzerland-english-language-version/16809002ca>;

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Switzerland. December 2021. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/CHE/CO/10-12&Lang=ru

is also a lack of support for the education of children belonging to the named minority²⁰⁸⁴ .

The AC FCNM, for its part, noted the lack of influence of Yenish and Sinti/Manush organisations on political and legislative processes, in particular at the cantonal level, and regretted the absence of a permanent mechanism for consultation with national minorities at all levels of government to take into account their views on issues affecting them.

At the same time, Roma remain concerned that school curricula and teaching materials contain very little information about the history of their people, including how they have been affected by the tragedy of the Holocaust. An application on behalf of the Roma people for recognition as a national minority had been rejected. Despite this, however, this population group claims full integration into Swiss society and protection under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities²⁰⁸⁵ .

According to experts from the AC FCNM, repeated instances of public expressions of hostility towards Yenish and Sinti/Manush, as well as towards members of the Jewish or Muslim community, clearly amount to hate speech. This phenomenon has reached particularly large proportions on social media. However, public and immediate condemnation of such actions is not systematic²⁰⁸⁶ .

At the same time, the AC FCNM commended some preventive measures taken by the authorities, in particular the Federal Commission against Racism, including the campaign for tolerance and intercultural dialogue.

²⁰⁸⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fourth periodic report of Switzerland. October 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fCHE%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru

²⁰⁸⁵ Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Switzerland. Adopted on 13 February 2023. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-switzerland-en/1680ab9e02>

²⁰⁸⁶ Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Switzerland. Adopted on 31 May 2018. <https://rm.coe.int/4th-advisory-committee-opinion-on-switzerland-english-language-version/16809002ca>

In December 2019, ECRI found an increase in public manifestations of intolerance against Muslims, the practice of police profiling of people of African and Roma origin²⁰⁸⁷ .

In March 2021, a court acquitted a police officer who shot and killed E. Mandundu, a native of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Bey (canton of Vaud) during a control in 2016. In the same year, in Lausanne, police officers severely beat a jogging Cape Verdean whom they mistook for a drug dealer. However, no officers were punished as a result of the investigation. In 2018, also during a police raid in Lausanne, a forty-year-old Nigerian national, M.B. Peter, died of a heart attack while trying to resist. The case is still under investigation.

According to CERD, in addition to black people, Roma (Yenish, Sinti/Manush and Roma) and non-Swiss citizens are also victims of violence by law enforcement officials. However, the number of cases in which the prosecution of police officers for such treatment has resulted in a judgement in favour of the complainant remains low.²⁰⁸⁸ .

In response to persistent cases of racial profiling during police stops, a majority of the Zurich City Parliament approved an initiative in November 2022 to require local police to issue receipts for stops to individuals upon request, to be verified by the local executive authorities.

At the same time, experts say that amendments to the federal law on the use of DNA profiles in criminal proceedings and the identification of unknown or missing persons could further exacerbate racial profiling and the stigmatisation of people on the basis of their race, skin colour and ethnicity. The amendments envisage authorising police officers to analyse DNA from crime scenes for external features (DNA phenotyping)²⁰⁸⁹ .

In January 2022, the UN Human Rights Council Working Group on People

²⁰⁸⁷ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Switzerland (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 10 December 2019. Published on 19 March 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-report-on-switzerland-sixth-monitoring-cycle-/16809ce4bd>

²⁰⁸⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Switzerland. December 2021. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/CHE/CO/10-12&Lang=ru

²⁰⁸⁹ Ibid.

of African Descent paid an official visit to Switzerland. During the visit, human rights defenders travelled to Bern, Zurich, Geneva and Lausanne. At the end of the visit, the experts noted that black people are forced to face systemic racial discrimination in various aspects. The problem of racial profiling and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment was once again highlighted. Such behaviour on the part of the police, as the experts noted in their statement, only fuels negative racial stereotypes existing in society.

However, the experts of the Working Group welcomed a number of positive developments, namely the raising of the topic of racism against black people in public discourse, the dialogue between the State and civil society on the use of racist and colonial symbols in public spaces, and the involvement of civil society in combating racial profiling and police brutality²⁰⁹⁰.

One of the most high-profile and horrific examples of the discriminatory attitude of the Swiss judiciary and penitentiary system towards people of African descent was the story of B. Keller, a Confederate citizen of mixed Swiss-Cameroonian descent. He was first charged with arson in 2005 at the age of ten. At that time he was interrogated by the Zurich police and detained in a closed institution for about a month²⁰⁹¹.

As was later learnt, the allegations against the child turned out to be false. However, the consequence of this traumatic experience was that in the following year B. Keller actually embarked on the path of committing crimes, for which he was repeatedly sentenced to imprisonment or compulsory treatment in psychiatric institutions. At the age of 12, he faced solitary confinement for the first time. He was subsequently handcuffed to medical wheelbarrows, forced to sleep on a concrete floor, and forcibly injected with medical drugs.

In 2011, while in pre-trial detention, he attempted suicide twice. As of 2021, when the case of B. Keller first came to the attention of the then Special

²⁰⁹⁰ Statement to the media by the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, on the conclusion of its official visit to Switzerland (17-26 January 2022). <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/01/statement-media-United-nations-working-group-experts-people-african-descent>

²⁰⁹¹ My name is Brian: the prisoner whose treatment put Switzerland on trial. The Guardian. 19 July 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/19/brian-keller-switzerland-prisoner-isolation-racism>

Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment N. Meltzer, the Swiss had spent more than half of his life in penitentiary institutions and had been in solitary confinement for three years. The Special Rapporteur was then forced to find that the Confederation had violated the relevant Convention²⁰⁹² and demanded that the country's official authorities immediately stop keeping their citizen in isolation²⁰⁹³.

The lack of centralised racial profiling training for the judiciary and, where it does take place, the voluntary nature of the training is not conducive to improving the situation. Police training, which includes specific anti-discrimination training, has also been found to be insufficient to eradicate racial profiling²⁰⁹⁴.

In solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, very large anti-racist rallies, despite Covid restrictions, were organised in June-July 2020 in Zurich, Geneva, Bern and other cities of the Confederation.

At the same time, anti-racist public initiatives in Switzerland are often of a purely symbolic nature and are presented by their opponents as absurd (the most famous one is to ban the use of the historical name "Moor's head" (Mohrenkopf in German) for cakes, cafés, etc. everywhere).

CERD notes that, in addition to prejudicial and often intolerant attitudes towards members of certain ethnic groups, irrespective of their nationality, discrimination against foreigners takes place in Switzerland and manifests itself in various ways. In particular, the Committee has information about acts of violence against asylum-seekers, including children, by security personnel in federal centres intended to accommodate this vulnerable category of persons.

Victims of domestic violence of non-Swiss origin are often in a difficult situation. Formally, their rights are guaranteed by the Federal Act on Foreigners and Integration. In particular, it allows victims to remain in the country. In

²⁰⁹² Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

²⁰⁹³ Switzerland: Solitary confinement of Brian K. violates Convention against Torture, UN expert says.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/06/switzerland-solitary-confinement-brian-k-violates-convention-against-torture>

²⁰⁹⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Switzerland. December 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/CHE/CO/10-12&Lang=ru

practice, however, its provisions are only applied when domestic violence is systematic or have reached a 'serious level'. This discourages foreign victims from seeking help for fear of losing their residence permit. The same motivations drive non-EU citizens not to seek social assistance.

Another problem is the restriction on freedom of movement for those who have been granted a temporary permit (Permis F). This makes it difficult for them to change their canton of residence and to travel abroad.

Unaccompanied migrant children are regularly denied school enrolment, despite the state-guaranteed right to free primary education²⁰⁹⁵.

Experts from CERD and the Committee on the Rights of the Child have criticised the fact that Swiss citizenship for new-born children is dependent on the status of their parents. It is also not guaranteed at a later stage. As a result, children born to Swiss parents find themselves in a situation of statelessness²⁰⁹⁶.

The clearly embellished image of the Swiss Confederation as a model country in terms of respect for human rights has also been damaged by the situation surrounding the illegal adoption of children from Sri Lanka by Swiss families in the 1970s and 1990s. The existence of this problem, which had previously only been of interest to a limited number of NGOs and individual research institutions, was recognised by the Federal Assembly in December 2000. At the same time as the publication of the Special Thematic Report, the authorities issued an official statement regretting the errors and irregularities in the work of the competent authorities during that period, which had allowed the mass placement of foreign children in foster families. The government promised to help adopted children find their biological parents²⁰⁹⁷.

²⁰⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁹⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Switzerland. October 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fCHE%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en;

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Switzerland. December 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/CHE/CO/10-12&Lang=ru

²⁰⁹⁷ Adoptions au Sri Lanka: le Conseil fédéral regrette les manquements des autorités. Le Conseil fédéral. 14 December 2020. <https://www.admin.ch/gov/fr/accueil/documentation/communiques.msg-id-81577.html>

In conclusion, Switzerland is currently witnessing a number of worrying trends in the spread of racial discrimination and xenophobic attitudes. In many respects, they are based on the peculiarities of federal legislation, which allows open discrimination on national or religious grounds. During the reporting period, the "traditional" problems of fully guaranteeing the rights of Jews, Roma, Muslims, people of African descent, migrants and foreigners were joined by Russophobia, which is encouraged at the level of official authorities, contrary to the country's international legal obligations.

Sweden

During World War II, Sweden formally maintained a neutral status and at the same time made significant concessions to Nazi Germany by providing resource support and territory for the transit of Hitler's troops to the Eastern Front.

In Sweden, the fact of Soviet troops entering the Baltic States and Eastern Europe is currently widely accepted as "occupation", the expansionist nature of the Soviet-Finnish war of 1939-1940 is emphasized, and Nazism and Communism are equated to "totalitarian regimes". At the same time, the decisive contribution of the Soviet Union to the victory over Nazism is deliberately downplayed, while the role of the USSR's allies, led by the United States, is magnified.

Double standards are also observed with regard to Nazi collaborators. The Swedish authorities have not initiated any investigation of the 270 Swedes who fought as part of the Waffen-SS, many of whom, according to research in recent years, were implicated in the Holocaust. Swedish law does not allow for the prosecution of World War II criminals who have found refuge in the country, including those of Swedish origin.

Double standards are visible in Sweden's attitude to today's manifestations of neo-Nazism and racism. The Swedish leadership has a very ambiguous attitude towards condemning the glorification of Nazism in the Baltic States. Official Stockholm publicly repented for extraditing a group of Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians who had fought on the side of Nazi Germany to the USSR in 1945, and is also turning a blind eye to radical statements on the falsification of World War II by the current authorities of these states. Cases of glorification of Nazism, acts of vandalism and the dismantling of monuments to Soviet soldiers-liberators in several European countries (primarily in Poland, the Baltic States, Ukraine and the Czech Republic) also remain unaddressed by the Swedish leadership and do not receive any noticeable coverage in the Swedish media.

Similar permissive approaches are also applied to neo-Nazi manifestations in Ukraine where, in 2014-2016, more than 30 Swedish ultra-rightists travelled freely to participate in combat operations as members of the nationalist battalions Azov

and Aidar as part of the so-called Anti-Terrorist Operation in the Donbass. During the current crisis in Ukraine, the Swedish authorities are also silent about the Nazi nature of the Kiev regime and the crimes committed by Ukrainian national radicals. The Swedish mercenaries involved in the Ukrainian national battalions (at least 400 persons) are referred to as employees of humanitarian organizations.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that in December 2022 Stockholm, which had been consistently following a common EU approach, voted against the Russia-sponsored UN General Assembly resolution on Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (along with EU member states, it abstained from voting on the initiative condemning neo-Nazism and other contemporary manifestations of racism).

At the same time, Swedish municipal authorities are diligently monitoring the condition of Soviet military burials located on their territory. Due to the efforts of Swedish activists, for instance, research was conducted to determine the fate of Soviet servicemen interned in the Buringe camp (Södermanland).

Right-wing radical and neo-Nazi movements are still active in Sweden.

The primary source and main conductor of right-wing extremist ideology in Swedish society is the Nordic Resistance Movement (Nordiska motståndsrörelsen, NRM), a far-right organization with about 200-300 active members (NGOs cite a higher number), which extends its influence to neighboring countries Norway and Finland. The NRM operates in Sweden in a completely legal basis and has "non-partisan" supporters. In particular, representatives of the country's main anti-migrant parliamentary party, the Sweden Democrats (SD), were reported to be explicitly sympathetic to neo-Nazis and even to be members of this organization in the past.

The NRM has its roots in the Swedish Resistance Movement, established in 1997 through the merger of several right-wing extremist structures operating in the second half of the 20th century. In 2015, it changed its name to the NRM, bringing

together the four Northern European branches – Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Finnish. The NRM remains centered in Sweden, which is home to its headquarters (Grängesberg, Dalarna County) and the majority of its members. Since the same year, the organization has been headed by Simon Lindberg.

The NRM chose the Tiwaz rune (or Tyr rune) as its symbol, which also was used by Nazi structures, including the Hitler Youth. This is not the only borrowing from Nazi Germany. There are reports that regular trainings and educational seminars organized for NRM members include films glorifying Hitler and propaganda of the works of "classics" of fascism.

Experts note that in 2014-2019, the NRM pursued a strategy of maximum expansion. Presumably, in 2019, it began to refocus its efforts on building a strong group of active members who would effectively manage the organization.

There have been reports that the NRM has its own publishing house, Nationellt Motstånd (National Resistance), which publishes propaganda literature and a newspaper, Nationellt Motstånd (National Resistance).

In its report of May 2022, the Anti-Defamation League, an NGO, highlights three distinctive features of the NRM: (1) fanatical Nazi ideology with cult-like elements, coupled with a declared goal of revolution by any means necessary; (2) a strong emphasis on violence and violent methods of achieving goals, also complemented by a paramilitary structure of the organization; and (3) a rigid hierarchy and an established bureaucratic organizational structure, which has evolved to maintain the group's coherence even as it has expanded to encompass all of Scandinavia²⁰⁹⁸.

The centrepiece of the NRM ideology is antisemitism; the movement is also continually engaging new supporters of the theory of white supremacy in its ranks. According to experts, the movement will further support this attitude by using antisemitic rhetoric as a "key theory" that can explain any other line of far-right extremist thinking. The Anti-Defamation League points out that the objective of

²⁰⁹⁸ The Nordic Resistance Movement. Report. The Anti-Defamation League. 5 March 2022 . <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/nordic-resistance-movement>

the NRM "is to carry out a revolution to overthrow democracy and replace it with a Nazi dictatorship to encompass all of Scandinavia and the Nordic region".

According to Sharon S. Nazarian, ADL Senior Vice President of International Affairs: "What is so alarming about the Nordic Resistance Movement is its obsession with violence and its antisemitic core beliefs". They have held hundreds of combat training sessions in preparation for what they claim will be "the overthrow of European democracies," and teach their supporters to use paramilitary tactics in street fighting and clashes with the police"²⁰⁹⁹.

The Swedish Security Service's assessment is that the NRM has both the capacity for terrorism and the intent to commit crimes against the country's constitutional order. There is evidence that over half of NRM members have been convicted (some more than once) of crimes (including murder and attempted murder, violence, theft, incitement to hatred against specific groups, vandalism of religious institutions, and violations of anti-drug legislation). Law enforcement agencies also point to the fusion of the country's neo-Nazi community with organized crime²¹⁰⁰.

In November 2021, Swedish police arrested a 25-year-old NRM supporter at a farm outside of Gothenburg. Stockpiled homemade bombs, semi-automatic weapons and parts manufactured with a 3D printer, as well as a huge cache of ammunition were found in his house. The detainee was active in chat rooms of neo-Nazi forums and was also interested in organizing mass shootings in schools²¹⁰¹.

Since the second half of the 2010s, other neo-Nazi movements have also become active in the country. Notable online platforms include Mutgift (this former information resource of the nationalist Party of Swedes is believed to consolidate the country's nationalists), Det fria Sværje, Ingrid ok Karlqvist, the

²⁰⁹⁹ <https://stmegi.com/posts/97379/shvedskie-neonatsisty-iz-nrm-eksportiruyut-fanatichnyy-antisemitizm-v-drugie-strany/>

²¹⁰⁰ The Nordic Resistance Movement. Report. The Anti-Defamation League. 5 March 2022. <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/nordic-resistance-movement>

²¹⁰¹ Investigators find mass arsenal, preparations for terrorism, inside Swedish neo-Nazi's farmhouse. Daily COS. 1 June 2022. <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2022/5/31/2101511/-Swedish-neo-Nazi-s-farmhouse-contained-arsenal-of-weapons-preparations-just-like-Breivik-s>

Swedish Nationalist Youth movement, and the Soldiers of Odin. These resources and movements were particularly popular in 2015-2016.

Experts note that the extreme right-wing structures from various states are expanding their activities to the international level and intensifying contacts between them. Thus, thanks to this trend, a branch of the American far-right organization "Alt-right" – Northern European Alternative Right Sector – has been formed in Sweden. Regular "exchanges of experience" between Swedish neo-Nazis and their associates in the Netherlands, Hungary, Poland and other countries are also known.

Neo-Nazis are active initiators of campaigns aimed at inciting interethnic and interreligious discord (on average, they hold about 3,000 events annually in the country, often back-to-back with Holocaust commemoration ceremonies, May Day demonstrations, pacifist and anti-fascist rallies).

In most cases, these are usually individual statements or actions of individuals who profess ultra-right-wing ideology. Many of them have been prosecuted. On 5 November 2019, a case was brought against two students from Skara Municipality (Västra Götaland County, Southwest Sweden) after their statements insulting Jews and saluting Adolf Hitler²¹⁰². On 27 November 2019, Tobias Malvo, a member of the NRM, was tried in Malmö on charges of antisemitism, racial hatred and glorifying Hitler (he was sentenced to probation and a fine)²¹⁰³. On 9 March 2020, Anders Jonsson, another NRM member, was sentenced to six months in prison for making numerous antisemitic appeals and honoring Hitler²¹⁰⁴.

On 9 April 2020, a 60-year-old woman was prosecuted for repeatedly expressing hatred against migrants and welcoming Hitler²¹⁰⁵.

²¹⁰² Elever åtalas för hets mot folkgrupp – hyllade Hitler. SkLT. 5 November 2019. <https://www.skaraborgslanstidning.se/2019-11-05/elever-atalas-for-hets-mot-folkgrupp--hyllade-hitler>

²¹⁰³ Känd nazist dömd - hyllade Adolf Hitler. Expressen. 27 November 2019. <https://www.expressen.se/kvallsposten/krim/kand-nazist-domd-hyllade-adolf-hitler/>

²¹⁰⁴ Dömd nazist fortsätter att sprida judehat. EXPO. 3 March 2020. <https://expo.se/2020/03/nazist-sprida-judehat>

²¹⁰⁵ Kvinna i 60-årsåldern hyllade Hitler. KT Kuriren. 9 April 2020. <https://www.kt-kuriren.se/2020/04/09/kvinna-i-60-arsaldern-hyllade-hitler-eaadf/>

In recent years, in most cases, the police issue permits to neo-Nazis to hold demonstrations, bringing violators of law and order to justice only after the fact.

The provocative burning of the Koran in front of the Turkish Embassy in Stockholm in January 2023 by Rasmus Paludan, leader of the Swedish-Danish neo-Nazi Stram Kurs (Hard Line) party, caused a wide public resonance²¹⁰⁶. The Swedish police later denied holding similar events in February 2023 following strong criticism from members of the Islamic world²¹⁰⁷. It is noteworthy that the ban exclusively applies to the abuse of the holy book of Islam.

This extremist behavior has also led to a crisis in Sweden's relations with the Islamic world. On 31 July 2023, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation held an extraordinary meeting in connection with the incidents.

Against the backdrop of a complicated negotiation process with Türkiye on Sweden's accession to NATO, human rights organizations accuse Stockholm of making concessions and getting closer to "undemocratic" Ankara²¹⁰⁸.

It should be noted that the country has previously had cases of migrants organizing protests to express insulting attitudes towards Islam, including some of a rather aggressive nature. For instance, in August 2020, a nationalist Koran-burning rally sparked protests in Malmö that soon escalated into aggressive clashes with the police. After about seven hours of protests, involving the burning of cars and stores, the police managed to bring the situation under control. Several persons were detained²¹⁰⁹.

The statistics on hate crimes are alarming (6,000-7,000 cases per year). About 70% of them have xenophobic and racist implications. Most of the risks come from right-wing extremists driven by neo-Nazi and anti-migrant sentiments, as well as radical Islamists. Consequently, the most frequent victims of racially motivated hate crimes are ethnic minorities professing Islam, particularly those of

²¹⁰⁶ Paludan får bränna koran utanför Turkiets ambassad. Aftonbladet. 20 January 2023. <https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/MoPQb5/paludan-far-branna-koran-utanfor-turkiets-ambassad>

²¹⁰⁷ Polisen nekar tillstånd till ny koranbrännin. Dagens Nyheter. 8 February 2023. <https://www.dn.se/sverige/polisen-nekar-tillstand-till-ny-koranbranning/>

²¹⁰⁸ <https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/human-rights-watch-kritiserar-sveriges-narmanden-till-turkiet>

²¹⁰⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53959492>

African descent. However, as the investigation practices of such cases show, the offender faces real punishment for such offenses only in 3-5% of cases²¹¹⁰.

The situation is aggravated by the fact that Sweden has no legal ban on racist organizations on the pretext of the need for absolute respect for fundamental freedoms. Despite calls from most Swedish political parties, efforts to introduce such a ban have been delayed. So, in 2017, the government announced that it had begun work to introduce a ban on the use of Nazi symbols (including the NRM emblem, the Tyr rune), but no concrete results have been achieved.

There are cases of creating registers of citizens on the basis of their nationality, ethnicity, gender (although such registration is legally prohibited in the country). Concerns about the high incidence of police profiling of visible minorities, in particular people of African descent, Muslims and Roma, were expressed by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in May 2018²¹¹¹.

In January 2019, Kalla Fakta, a Swedish TV4 program engaged in journalistic investigations, announced that over the previous few months, about 100 cases of groundless police detentions of non-Swedish looking citizens. In 2021, the Committee against Torture expressed its concern by the remaining practice of ill-treatment and excessive use of force by police officers in Sweden²¹¹².

The EU Fundamental Human Rights Agency (FRA) noted in its 2019 report that surveys of police officers and people affected by bias against particular ethnicities revealed that 24% of all respondents of African descent had been stopped by the police. Among them, 4 in 10 (41%) described such incidents as racial profiling. Men of African descent are stopped by the police three times more

²¹¹⁰ Hatbrottsstatistik, Brottsförebyggande rådet. <https://bra.se/statistik>, October 2023.

²¹¹¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Sweden. May 2018. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

²¹¹² Concluding Observations of the Committee against Torture on the eighth periodic report of Sweden. November 2021 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/381/20/PDF/G2138120.pdf?OpenElement>

often (22%) than women (7%)²¹¹³. FRA notes in its 2022 report, with reference to a content study of academic publications, articles, books and reports published in Sweden, that racism in the public sphere had increased between 2016 and 2021²¹¹⁴.

Experts of the International Independent Expert Mechanism to advance racial justice in the context of law enforcement and human rights, following their visit to Sweden in early November 2022, called on Stockholm to step up efforts to fight systemic racism and focus on strategies to restore trust between the police and minority groups. They also expressed concerns that the Swedish authorities may be addressing legitimate security challenges, including growing gang criminality, through a response which focuses on over policing, surveillance and undue deprivation of liberty²¹¹⁵.

International human rights monitoring bodies and mechanisms regularly draw attention to persistent manifestations of hatred in Sweden. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concern about the presence of racist and extremist organizations in the country and their public demonstrations, as well as the spread of hate speech in the country, including during election campaigns and in the media, particularly emphasizing that the establishment of organizations that promote and incite racial hatred is allowed by the State²¹¹⁶.

Similar concerns regarding Sweden's record of hate speech against Afro-Swedes citizens, Jews, Muslims and Roma, in particular during election campaigns, but also in the media and online, and the persistence of racially motivated violence in the country, were expressed by the Committee against

²¹¹³ EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights Report 2019.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-fundamental-rights-report-2019_en.pdf

²¹¹⁴ EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

²¹¹⁵ Sweden should step up efforts to fight systemic racism, UN Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice says after 5-day visit. OHCHR website. Press release. 4 November 2022. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/11/sweden-should-step-efforts-fight-systemic-racism-un-mechanism-advance-racial>

Its mandate, in accordance with the founding resolution 47/21, is to study the systemic racism experienced by Africans and people of African descent, the excessive use of force against them, the causes of this phenomenon, as well as to compile statistics and make recommendations for further transformations aimed at achieving racial justice and equality in the context of law enforcement worldwide.

²¹¹⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Sweden, May 2018. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

Torture in November 2014²¹¹⁷, the Human Rights Committee (HRC) in March 2016 (while reiterating the Committee's previous concern in this regard)²¹¹⁸ and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in June 2016²¹¹⁹. It is noteworthy that, despite the explanations provided by Sweden to the HRC on the situation with regard to combating racism, the experts still have concerns about the issue.²¹²⁰ The Committee against Torture also expressed its concern by remaining threats to minorities and marginalized individuals in the Swedish society despite measures taken to combat hate crime and racism, and police measures to protect religious buildings and communities. Committee encouraged Stockholm to make efforts to prevent and prosecute criminal acts motivated by discrimination, intolerance, hatred or negative stereotypes, and to carry out effective investigations with a view to prosecuting and punishing perpetrators²¹²¹.

In its report on Sweden, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) within the Council of Europe also highlighted an increase in racist and xenophobic hate speech targeted at migrants, Muslims, people of African descent and Roma. The Commission found the law enforcement response to such cases to be insufficient and the number of hate crime cases prosecuted to be low. According to ECRI data, the number of registered cases relating to defamation, expression of racially motivated prejudice has remained at the same level (643 in 2011 and 635 in 2015). However, the number of cases related to threats increased by 20% (1,650 in 2011 and 1,972 in 2015), campaigning against certain groups

²¹¹⁷ Concluding Observations of the Committee against Torture on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Sweden. November 2014. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f6-7&Lang=ru

²¹¹⁸ Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee on the seventh periodic report of Sweden. March 2016. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f7&Lang=ru

²¹¹⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the sixth periodic report of Sweden. June 2016. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fSWE%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

²¹²⁰ Follow-up decision issued by the Human Rights Committee on 1 April 2019. CCPR/C/SR.3239 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/SWE/INT_CCPR_FUD_SWE_34519_E.pdf

²¹²¹ Concluding Observations of the Committee against Torture on the eighth periodic report of Sweden. November 2021. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/381/20/PDF/G2138120.pdf?OpenElement>

grew by 39% (396 in 2011 and 552 in 2015), and infliction of damage/graffiti increased by 138% (296 in 2011 and 703 in 2015)²¹²².

In its 2022 report, the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights noted that racism in Sweden was manifested in all public institutions. As evidence, a study based on a review of more than 500 scientific articles, books, monograph chapters and scientific reports published in Sweden between January 2016 and May 2021 was cited. In addition, in 2021 the European Commission pointed out that Swedish national laws do not fully or accurately incorporate EU rules on combating racism and xenophobia and initiated relevant infringement proceedings against Stockholm²¹²³.

In addition to the aforementioned issues, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted in 2018 a significant difference between the number of reported cases of hate speech and hate crimes and the number of their investigations and criminal prosecutions of offenders. According to the Committee, the most frequent victims of racially motivated hate crimes were ethnic minorities, especially those from Africa. The Committee called on the Swedish authorities to effectively identify, register and investigate cases of racist hate speech or incitement to racial hatred and racially motivated violence and prosecute those responsible. Stockholm was also recommended to publicly condemn and distance itself, including in online media, from racist hate speech and xenophobic statements made by public officials and politicians. CERD called on the Swedish authorities to expand the example of national contact points and special hate crime groups throughout the country²¹²⁴.

Human rights defenders point out that there are "dark spots" in keeping statistics on hate crimes, as many victims do not turn to law enforcement for lack of funds to finance trials, or simply for fear of "revenge" from their persecutors.

²¹²² European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Sweden (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 5 December 2017, published on 27 February 2018 <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-sweden/16808b5c58>

²¹²³ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

²¹²⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Sweden. May 2018 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=en

One of the most vulnerable national groups in Sweden is the Jewish community. The situation in Malmö (southern Sweden) is particularly worrying. Representatives of the Jewish diaspora in this city complain that they often face manifestations of aggression from opponents of Israel's policy, whose activity is growing against the background of the traditional pro-Palestinian line of Sweden, the first in the EU to officially recognize the independence of Palestine, and also criticize the local authorities for not paying enough attention to the problem of antisemitism. In 2018, a wave of antisemitic protests and demonstrations swept across Sweden as a result of US President Donald Trump's unilateral decision on the status of Jerusalem. Due to the incessant threats, the Jewish community of Umeå (northeastern Sweden) was dissolved in the same year.

Antisemitic campaigns are regularly carried out by the NRM not only in Sweden, but also in other Nordic countries. Thus, actions organized in October 2020 in nearly 20 different cities in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Iceland included demonstrations in front of synagogues, placing antisemitic posters in public places, and distributing relevant leaflets. Neo-Nazis publish information about this on their websites. The actions by neo-Nazis caused indignation of international Jewish organizations. Ronald Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress, condemned the coordinated brutal campaign of hatred against Jews in Northern Europe unleashed by the modern-day successors to the Nazis of the NRM. The Simon Wiesenthal Center Director for International Relations Shimon Samuels also sent a letter of concern to the Swedish leadership, urging Stockholm to follow Finland's example of banning the NRM in September 2020, and to take action against the organizers of the anti-Semitic campaign²¹²⁵.

In July 2019, in Visby, in the south of the country, NRM activists blocked the entrance to an exhibition on Holocaust survivors organized by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute together with photographer Sanna Sjösvärd, and then entered

²¹²⁵ Neo-Nazi Nordic Resistance Movement targets Jews on Yom Kippur. The Jerusalem Post. 30 September 2020. <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/neo-nazi-nordic-resistance-movement-targets-jews-on-yom-kippur-643809>

the grounds, where they chanted anti-Semitic slogans. Arrived at the scene of the incident, the police did not detain the radicals, who left the building unhindered²¹²⁶.

In late March 2021, baby dolls splashed with red paint were hung outside the synagogue in Norrköping along with a banner describing the Pesach as the Jewish celebration of the death of Egyptian children. The NRM published a photograph of the installation on its website. The Swedish police initiated an investigation into the alleged commission of a hate crime²¹²⁷.

According to Haaretz, in 2021, Sweden recorded an increase in online hate speech, especially in social media. The spread of anti-Semitic rhetoric in social media is most noted among schoolchildren and young people. This resulted in acts of aggression with anti-Semitic overtones against children of Jewish origin. To a large extent such manifestations occur in Malmö.²¹²⁸

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) pointed to an increase in the number of anti-Semitic statements. In particular, the Commission noted a doubling in the number of cases of anti-Semitic propaganda, from 54 in 2011 to 102 in 2015, and threats against Jews, from 77 to 127 over the same period. However, according to ECRI estimates, these figures can be significantly higher, as representatives of the Jewish community do not always contact the police, doubting the effectiveness of law enforcement.²¹²⁹

The seriousness of the situation is confirmed by the fact that in its second monitoring study on anti-Semitism (2018) FRA included Sweden in the top three European countries (along with the United Kingdom and Germany) with the most tense situation for Jews, indicating that 82 per cent of representatives of this nationality in the country characterize anti-Semitism as

²¹²⁶ Swedish neo-Nazis disrupt exhibition of Holocaust survivors' portraits. The Times of Israel. 3 July 2019. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/swedish-neo-nazis-disrupt-exhibition-of-holocaust-survivors-portraits/>

²¹²⁷ Baby dolls splashed with red paint strung outside Swedish synagogue. The Times of Israel. 1 апреля 2021 г. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/baby-dolls-splashed-with-red-paint-strung-outside-swedish-synagogue/>

²¹²⁸ As Israel and Hamas Fight in Gaza, Antisemitism Explodes Online in Sweden. Haaretz. 20 May 2021. <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/europe/.premium-as-israel-and-hamas-fight-in-gaza-antisemitism-explodes-online-in-sweden-1.9828015>

²¹²⁹ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Sweden (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 5 December 2017, published on 27 February 2018 <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-sweden/16808b5c58>

a "serious problem"²¹³⁰ (for comparison in 2013 – 60 per cent of respondents chose this answer).

The FRA's data on the crimes with an anti-Semitic motive recorded by Swedish law enforcement agencies are significant. In 2020, 170 incidents were reported. A great difference of data for 2018 - 287 incidents - is explained by changes in data collection methodology in 2020.²¹³¹

In February 2021, the European Commission called on official Stockholm to fulfil its obligations under the 2008 EU Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia.

The ever-growing Muslim community in the country also faces discrimination. Hidden Islamophobia is a very common phenomenon in the media and in various spheres of public life (especially access to work and social services), which shows the shortcomings of the state that carefully hides this problem.

Violence against Muslims, especially Muslim women in traditional dress, is not uncommon. According to ECRI, the number of cases of Islamophobic threats/attacks doubled between 2011 and 2015 (123 and 247 cases, respectively), Islamophobic defamation increased from 38 to 68 cases, damage from 16 to 76 cases (375 per cent), and anti-Muslim propaganda from 45 to 102 cases (127 per cent).²¹³²

Of special concern is the situation in Malmö (south of Sweden) – the third largest city in the country which is home to a considerable portion of Muslim refugees as well as to the third largest Jewish community in Sweden. In view of this, right-wing extremist movements have been traditionally strong in the city. Representatives of the Jewish diaspora complain that they often face manifestations of aggression from opponents of Israel's policy, whose activity is

²¹³⁰ 2019 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-fundamental-rights-report-2019_en.pdf

²¹³¹ Overview by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Human Rights of anti-Semitic incidents recorded in the European Union Member States in 2011-2021 http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-antisemitism-overview-2011-2021_en.pdf

²¹³² European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Sweden (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 5 December 2017, published on 27 February 2018 <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-sweden/16808b5c58>

growing against the background of the traditional pro-Palestinian line of Sweden, the first in the EU to officially recognize the independence of Palestine, and also criticize the local authorities for not paying enough attention to the problem of anti-Semitism.

The Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination drew attention to the problems of discrimination based on religion in March 2016 and in May 2018, respectively, in particular, the HRC expressed concern about a large number of episodes of religious intolerance in Sweden, including physical violence against persons belonging to religious minorities, in particular Muslims and Jews, and attacks on their places of worship, and the fact that law enforcement agencies did not register all such cases.²¹³³ CERD pointed out the difficulties faced by Swedish Muslims, in particular people of African descent, in gaining access to work and housing outside their areas of compact settlement, which can be equated with de facto segregation. Besides, their economic segregation and difficulty accessing health care and education were noted. CERD experts were further concerned about attacks against mosques in Sweden as well as the lack of funds for their protection. The Committee also drew attention to the widespread practice of stereotyping Muslims in the media and by politicians in Sweden.²¹³⁴

In the context of religious communities' protection, CERD raised the issue of the selectivity of the Swedish law enforcement agencies' response to racist offenses.²¹³⁵ According to experts, the Law on Combating Terrorism (which is also seriously criticized by human rights defenders for violations of citizens' rights) is aimed mainly at the persecution of Muslims, while crimes committed by other

²¹³³ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 7th periodic report of Sweden. March 2016 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f7&Lang=ru

²¹³⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 22nd and 23rd periodic reports of Sweden. May 2018 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

²¹³⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 22nd and 23rd periodic reports of Sweden. May 2018 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

groups, including neo-Nazi structures, are not considered by Swedish law enforcement agencies as terrorist acts. The HRC also expressed concern about this practice of "stigmatization of persons" of foreign origin or from among ethnic and religious minorities.²¹³⁶

The situation of Swedish Roma, who suffer from deep-rooted prejudices, leaves much to be desired. There are multiple reports of cases of discrimination against members of this minority in public places (in cafes, shops, hotels, hospitals, transport, etc.), labour and housing markets. Biased decisions on depriving Roma people of their parental rights and baseless denial of access to education are quite common.

According to FRA, as of 2019, 20 per cent of Roma children experienced hunger.²¹³⁷

The Human Rights Committee in March 2016²¹³⁸, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in June 2016²¹³⁹ and CERD in May 2018²¹⁴⁰ pointed out the chronic discrimination of Roma in Swedish society, the difficulties of representatives of this people, including citizens of other European Union countries from among the Roma, in obtaining education, employment and health, housing and basic social services, and access to justice. CERD and CESCR also expressed concern about the increasing number of cases of forced evictions of certain groups of Roma living in informal settlements, as well as the fact that hate crimes continue to be committed against them.

²¹³⁶ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 7th periodic report of Sweden. March 2016
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f7&Lang=ru

²¹³⁷ Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights. 2021
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-fundamental-rights-report-2021_en.pdf

²¹³⁸ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 7th periodic report of Sweden. March 2016
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f7&Lang=ru

²¹³⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 6th periodic report of Sweden. June 2016
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fSWE%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

²¹⁴⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 22nd and 23rd periodic reports of Sweden. May 2018
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

FRA also notes that Sweden has a high level of discrimination against Roma and travellers. According to the research on the situation of Roma conducted by FRA in 2019 in five Western European countries (Belgium, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden) and the UK, every second representative of this national minority faced discrimination in the year preceding the research, 44 per cent of respondents faced manifestations of aggression motivated by racial hatred, and one in ten respondents was profiled by police.²¹⁴¹

In its 2022 report, FRA also cites the launch of a project in Malmö aimed at combating the segregation of Roma in housing (by disseminating information on their rights and advice on building a dialogue with local authorities on this issue).²¹⁴² However, there is no evidence yet of its effectiveness.

In Sweden, the situation of migrants or their descendants in the second generation, mainly of African or Asian origin, is also very unfavourable. This category of the population has a lower level of education than the national average, and unemployment, especially among young people, is higher. There is de facto segregation in the study of the Swedish language, and then in educational institutions and, as a result, in the labour market. According to ECRI, this leads to the development of "parallel societies", which, in turn, further hinders the integration of immigrants and their children.²¹⁴³ Afro-Swedes tend to have low-status and low-paid jobs compared to the rest of the population, despite their level of education. It is more difficult for this category of population than other citizens of Sweden to move up the career ladder.²¹⁴⁴

According to the research, people of African and Asian origin more often face unemployment.²¹⁴⁵ Besides, sociological studies have revealed that the risk

²¹⁴¹ Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights. 2021 https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-fundamental-rights-report-2021_en.pdf

²¹⁴² 2022 Report of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Human Rights https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

²¹⁴³ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Sweden (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 5 December 2017, published on 27 February 2018 <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-sweden/16808b5c58>

²¹⁴⁴ 2019 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-fundamental-rights-report-2019_en.pdf

²¹⁴⁵ Arbetslöshet - utrikes födda. Ekonomifakta.

<https://www.ekonomifakta.se/fakta/arbetsmarknad/integration/arbetsloshet-utrikes-fodda/>

of being bullied for foreign-born workers is almost four times higher than for natives.²¹⁴⁶

Since 2015, violations against refugees have increased due to the worsening migration crisis. Many migrants, waiting for their asylum applications to be processed for a long time, are housed in ultra-compact concentrations in isolated "ghetto areas", being cut off from education and health systems, as well as from integration and employment opportunities. The Swedes have also been criticized for the persistence of severe restrictions in national migration policy, despite a decrease in the intensity of refugee flows in 2017-2018.

International human rights organizations have criticized Sweden for "extraordinary" legal provisions that make family reunification difficult, the "inhumane" practice of undifferentiated expulsion of Afghans (even if there are threats to their safety at home), the deteriorating mental state of unaccompanied children and adolescents (apathy and suicide attempts due to long waiting for asylum decisions), refugee trafficking (sexual, labour and criminal exploitation, slavery).

The practice of withdrawing protection status from asylum seekers has also been criticized. According to FRA, Sweden has the second highest number of withdrawals of refugee status after Germany in 2021 (1349 and 3690 cases respectively).²¹⁴⁷

The practice of Swedish law enforcement agencies of forcibly removing migrants and asylum seekers and detaining them before doing so was highlighted by the Committee against Torture in November 2014²¹⁴⁸ and December 2021²¹⁴⁹,

²¹⁴⁶ 2023 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-report-2020_en.pdf

²¹⁴⁷ 2022 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

²¹⁴⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the combined 6th and 7th periodic reports of Sweden. November 2014

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f6-7&Lang=ru

²¹⁴⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the eighth periodic report of Sweden. December 2021

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f8&Lang=en

the Human Rights Committee in March 2016²¹⁵⁰ and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in June 2016²¹⁵¹. Despite further information provided by the Swedish authorities to the HRC on this issue, experts remained concerned about the situation.²¹⁵² In March 2018, N. Muižnieks, then Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, pointed out Sweden's overly strict legal provisions making family reunification difficult, the "inhumane" practice of undifferentiated expulsion of refugees (that is, even when their safety at home is threatened); long periods of unaccompanied children and young people in detention, which worsen the mental health of new arrivals; and human trafficking.

In 2021, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ruled on an individual complaint, stating that expulsion of a person of Afghan origin back to Afghanistan, despite existing threats to his life, violates Sweden's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In 2023, the Committee on the Rights of the Child was deeply concerned about the impact of the 2021 amendments to the Aliens Act (2005) restricting family reunification and eligibility for permanent residence permits and social security. The HRC also expressed fears that the reforms envisaged in the Tidö Agreement will further restrict the rights of asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children.

The Committee recommended the Swedish authorities to prevent the detention of children on the basis of their or their parents' migration status, and pointed out the disparities in access to quality education and discrimination, harassment and bullying in schools primarily faced by migrant children and children from socioeconomically disadvantaged families.²¹⁵³

²¹⁵⁰ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 7th periodic report of Sweden. March 2016 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f7&Lang=ru

²¹⁵¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 6th periodic report of Sweden. June 2016 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fSWE%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

²¹⁵² The decision adopted by the Human Rights Committee on 1 April 2019. CCPR/C/SR.3239 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/SWE/INT_CCPR_FUD_SWE_34519_E.pdf

²¹⁵³ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 6th and 7th periodic reports of Sweden. February 2023

FRA, with reference to the corresponding sociological studies, confirms that there is a discriminatory treatment of parents of foreign origin by Swedish school authorities and personnel. According to one of such studies published in 2022, when a total of 3430 Swedish elementary school principals were contacted by sociologists who pretended to be parents with Arabic- or Swedish-sounding names or with low- or high-SES professions. The results show clear signs of discrimination, particularly in regard to ethnic minority aliases.²¹⁵⁴

Local Christians, including representatives of the Russian Orthodox community, who are sometimes forced to avoid advertising their religious symbols, have been feeling uneasy against this background lately.

Since the start of Russia's special military operation to demilitarize and denationalize Ukraine and protect civilians in Donbass, violations of the rights of Russian compatriots living in Sweden (unless 20,000 people) have increased. Not only have there been cases of discrimination against our citizens by the Swedish authorities or an extremely Russophobic atmosphere in the local media, but also beatings for speaking in Russian, dismissals from jobs without explanation and bullying of children. Traditionally, the attitude of the Social Service toward Russian compatriots remains predatory, as migrant families are a priori classified as socially disadvantaged and as a result are put "under control" by the local competent authorities. There is also a near exclusion of managers and employees of small and medium-sized enterprises and NGOs connected to Russia.

The media and social networks strongly promoted the thesis that Russian citizens and compatriots should publicly distance themselves from the policy of Russian President Vladimir Putin in Ukraine. Dissenters received various threats: from resignation to physical violence. Russian speaking children were subjected to bullying in Swedish schools.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FSWE%2FCO%2F6-7&Lang=ru

²¹⁵⁴ Larsson Taghizadeh, J. (2022), 'Are more affluent parents treated more favorably by elementary school principals? Socioeconomic discrimination among local Swedish public officials', *Local Government Studies*, doi:10.1080/03003930.2021.1986391. //2023 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

Russian-language children's educational centres were among the first victims of Sweden's caveman Russophobia. In fact, they were held hostage to the attitude of their leaders to the events that were taking place: everyone was required to publicly dissociate themselves from the actions of the Russian armed forces and, even better, to condemn Russian President Vladimir Putin personally. In addition, virtually all Russian-speaking children in schools were subjected to ethnically motivated violence and harassment. Swedish teenagers, "freely expressing their opinion in a free country", simply humiliated Russian-speaking children, demanding their expulsion, in the worst case, they were beaten up. Children not only from Russia, but also from other former Soviet republics were harassed. Attempts by parents to appeal to the management of educational institutions to prevent harassment have not always resulted in a resolution of the situation.

The activities of compatriots' organizations, including the Union of Russian Associations in Sweden (Stockholm), the Alliance of Russian Associations in Sweden (Göteborg), Sputnik (Luleå), have been seriously impeded. Swedish authorities on the pretext of "undemocratic" activity of these associations did not only refuse them budget financing, which they received, but also demanded the return of 2022-2023 grants.²¹⁵⁵

Aftonbladet, the biggest Swedish trade union, suspended cooperation with these associations; it had provided them with rent-free premises.

The incoming Ukrainian refugees are also discriminated, inter alia, being forced into prostitution.²¹⁵⁶ Besides, FRA claimed that the level of financial support even for this category of refugees was insufficient to ensure an adequate standard of living.²¹⁵⁷

In Sweden, problems related to the protection of children's rights, moreover of racist nature, were reported. In addition to the situation of migrant children and underage girls from Muslim families (they are taken abroad for female

²¹⁵⁵ Svenska skattebetalare finansierade Putinpropaganda – nu stoppas pengarna. Dagens Nyheter. 25 September 2023 www.dn.se

²¹⁵⁶ Ukrainska kvinnor tvingas sälja sex i Sverige. Aftonbladet. 12 December 2022

<https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/VPg1Rp/krig-da-koper-svenska-mannen-sex-av-ukrainskor-200-sekunder>

²¹⁵⁷ 2023 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-report-2020_en.pdf

circumcision and forced to marry), pedophilia and child prostitution issues were reported. The return of children of fighters who fought on the side of terrorist organizations in Syria has not been easy for Swedish society either. There have been no reports on the measures to solve these problems.

The question of the situation and status of the Sámi – the country's indigenous population living up north – remains a specific human rights problem for Sweden, given the historical conflict between the Sámi and the Swedish state (Sámi used to be forcibly converted to Christianity and subjected to racial experiments, with their culture and language being deliberately suppressed). Industrial and urban development continues to claim Sámi lands, and military exercises in northern territories create obstacles to reindeer herding and their traditional livelihoods.

The proposals made by the special commissions that operated in Sweden from 1997 to 2019 to settle the "land" conflict between the state and the Sámi have not been implemented in practice. According to experts, the reason for this is that they primarily affect areas of special economic interest to state and commercial mining corporations or "reserved" for the location of energy infrastructure.²¹⁵⁸

According to the Living History Forum, Amnesty International and other NGOs, discrimination and racism against the Sámi remain a problem in Sweden in relation to their traditional livelihoods. Often members of national minorities have to defend their right to reindeer herding, hunting, gathering, and shooting predators that threaten the free grazing of livestock and their livestock in years-long legal proceedings.

In particular, in January 2020, in an unprecedented ruling (spanning more than 10 years), the Supreme Court of Sweden found in favour of the inhabitants of a Sámi village in Ellivare, northern Sweden, regarding their exclusive right to hunt and fish in their traditional habitat, inter alia, granting it to third parties without

²¹⁵⁸ The gaps in legal protection of Sámi land use rights in Sweden and their vulnerability to these kinds of problems are examined using the situation around the Kallak mining projects (one of the biggest undeveloped iron ore deposits in Europe) in the province of Norrbotten in northern Sweden, where a large part of the Sámi population lives. See A. Tsiouvalas. Indigenous rights to defend land and traditional activities: a case study of the Sámi in Northern Sweden // *Revista de Direito da Faculdade Guanambi*. 2018, Volume 5, Nº 1.

state approval. However, since the Supreme Court's verdict, threats have been made against the Sámi community, even violence and sabotage have been reported (such incidents were mentioned in a joint article by the Norwegian, Finnish and Swedish line ministers in February 2022).

However, individual Sámi victories in the "court field" do not solve the problem of displacement of the indigenous population from their historical homeland. The main culprits are extractive industries and green energy, which have had a negative impact on the environment and the traditional livelihoods of the Swedish Sámi.

A key episode in this track is the concession granted by the government on 22 March 2022 to a local company, Jokmökk Iron Mines AB, to mine iron ore in the country's largest undeveloped deposit in the municipality of Jokmökk. The application was submitted as early as 25 April 2013, but due to widespread criticism from a number of Swedish authorities, NGOs and international organizations, the review process has been delayed for many years. In particular, the State Office for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the regional authorities of Norrbotten county and UNESCO recommended that the project should not be implemented in the light of environmental and cultural and humanitarian aspects.

Independent UN experts have also voiced their concerns. In particular, on 10 February 2022, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, H.F. Kali Tzai, and the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, D.R. Boyd, issued a joint statement calling on the Swedish authorities not to grant an iron ore mining license for the deposit in question. They have pointed out that a mine in the Sámi area will generate huge amounts of pollutants and toxic waste and threaten the protected ecosystem of the nearby World Heritage Site of Laponia and reindeer migration.²¹⁵⁹

In January 2023, after unveiling government plans and those of the

²¹⁵⁹ Sweden: Open pit mine will endanger indigenous lands and the environment – UN expert. HRC Special procedures' press release. 10 February 2022
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/02/sweden-open-pit-mine-will-endanger-indigenous-lands-and-environment-un>

mining LKAB unit to develop the largest rare earth metals deposit in Kiruna (northern Sweden), representatives of Sámi organizations have severely criticized this decision due to serious environmental risks as well as violation of the rights and interests of indigenous peoples of the North.²¹⁶⁰

Not surprisingly, over the past decades, Sweden has repeatedly been the target of criticism by international bodies (including the UN Human Rights Council, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the ILO, the HRC Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Issues, and numerous NGOs) regarding the rights of national minorities (especially the Sámi); but there has been no real progress on the issue.

The range of problems faced by the Swedish Sámi was pointed out, in particular, by the Human Rights Committee in March 2016²¹⁶¹, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in June 2016²¹⁶², the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in April 2018 and ECRI in December 2017. In the conclusion of ECRI, referring to the opinion of representatives of the Sámi community, it is noted that discriminatory manifestations against them continue to take place in everyday life, especially in cities. In some cases, the Sámi are forced to hide or deny their ethnic origin to avoid hostile and reprehensible attitude.²¹⁶³

²¹⁶⁰ Samiska protester mot gruvnäringen i Kiruna: "Greenwashing på elitnivå". SVT Nyheter. 13 January 2023 <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/norrboten/sameprotest-mot-gruvnaringen-i-kiruna-sveriges-jakt-pa-grona-metaller-ar-skamlos>

²¹⁶¹ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 7th periodic report of Sweden. March 2016 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f7&Lang=ru

²¹⁶² Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 6th periodic report of Sweden. June 2016 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fSWE%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

²¹⁶³ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Sweden (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 5 December 2017, published on 27 February 2018 <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-sweden/16808b5c58>

Estonia

In the Republic of Estonia (RE), over the whole period of the country's "independence", the nationalist circles in power have imposed systematically and persistently a distorted interpretation of the common history of Russia and Estonia, implicated in nationalist ideology and Russophobia. The Soviet period, which is presented by modern Estonian historiography as the "occupation of 1940-1991", and the events of the Great Patriotic War on the territory of the country, is subjected to the greatest extent of falsifications.

Until recently the legalization of Nazis in Estonia rested upon poorly concealed support of the government and virtually no pushback from the population. Since 2022 the Estonian authorities ceased to conceal the fact and openly took the path of supporting Nazism and glorifying its accomplices. This causes a serious increase in the political weight of right-wing nationalist forces, more frequent manifestations of xenophobia, anti-Semitism, neo-Nazism, cases of desecration of monuments to soldiers of the Red Army and high activity of right-wing radical groups.

The country actively whitewashes Estonian collaborators and justify their crimes. For this purpose a myth about "freedom fighters" who fought against "Soviet aggressors" in the ranks of the 20th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Estonian Legion),²¹⁶⁴ security and punitive units and anti-Soviet gangs is constructed. Estimates are being made that the presence of the Nazis on the Estonian territory was a "lesser evil" than the "Soviet occupation", which allegedly prompted the titular population to voluntarily join the Nazis to resist the "return of the Soviets". The organization "Union of Former Forest Brothers of Estonia", which also works to glorify "partisans", operates without any hindrance.

At the same time, not only do they cover the crimes committed by Estonian collaborators and Forest Brothers, their active participation in the massacres of civilians in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, mass extermination and torture of concentration camp prisoners and Soviet prisoners of war, as well as mass murder

²¹⁶⁴ Waffen-SS is recognized as criminal by the Nuremberg Tribunal.

of Jews, but they also glorify such "activists" as heroes of "the fight for independence". Thus, since 2007, after the amendment to the law on holidays adopted by the Estonian Parliament, the day of the liberation of Tallinn from Nazi troops (celebrated on 22 September) has been declared a Day of Resistance. The attitude of the Estonian authorities to Victory Day is similar. Consequently, the Estonians who fought in the ranks of the Red Army and liberated the territory of the ESSR are secretly deleted from the local "pantheon of heroes" and are given out as accomplices of the "Soviet occupiers".

Recently Russia has been investigating the crimes of the Estonian punishers on the USSR territory. Among other things, documents have been declassified, testifying to the crimes committed by Estonian Nazi accomplices on the territory of the Pskov region, where they destroyed entire villages along with their inhabitants. In August 2021, The Pskov Regional Court recognized the established and newly revealed acts committed in 1941-1945 by the Nazis on the territory of the former Estonian concentration camp in Moglino – as well as in various areas of the Pskov region – as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide of national and ethnic groups living in the USSR.

Besides, the Investigation Committee of the Russian Federation is investigating cases on memorials erected in memory of the Red Army soldiers killed in battles with the Nazis being destroyed.

In recent years Estonia, following the collective EU course, abstained from voting on the United Nations General Assembly resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" that is submitted by Russia together with a number of co-authors (the exception was made in 2011 when the Estonian delegation in the UNGA voted against the resolution). However, in December 2022 while voting on yet another document, which condemns the glorification of the Nazi movement and former members of the SS organization, including the Waffen-SS units, as well as destruction of monuments and memorials in honour of fighters against Nazism and

fascism by individual countries, Estonia spoke against it without any attempts to conceal its support for neo-Nazism.

Various events devoted to the memory of Estonian SS members are also held openly, with participation of representatives of Estonian state authorities. The Estonian authorities are attempting to falsify history at the highest level, in order to smear the Soviet Union and the actions of the Red Army that liberated Europe, and to obscure their own unsightly pages of the history linked with cooperation with the Nazis. Thus, for this purpose on 7 May, 2020, the Presidents of Lithuania (Gitanas Nausėda), Latvia (Egils Levits) and Estonia (Kersti Kaljulaid) adopted a joint statement on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. The video message of the heads of the three Baltic states published in June 2021 on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the deportations from these countries (14 June, 1941) also contains interpretations that distort the real history.²¹⁶⁵ These documents promote talking points about the identity of the Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, their equal accountability for having waged the war and the idea that after the liberation of the Baltic States one occupation was replaced by another.

The annual ceremony commemorating the victims of the Soviet air raid on the headquarters of Hitler's command in the center of Tallinn in March 1944, which in Estonia is presented not as a military operation, but "a manifestation of hatred for pro-Western Estonians" and "the desire to destroy the European appearance of the Estonian capital" is of the same rank. Texts of event messages are written in the respective manner. While depicting the event, they stress that there were casualties among civilians; they try to omit the fact that it is the Nazis who were the target.

Supporters of the ultranationalist Fatherland Party and Conservative People's Party of Estonia (CPPE) are the main political forces in Estonia who glorify Nazism.

²¹⁶⁵ The Baltic presidents again came out with lies about Soviet deportations. Website of the project "Remembrance, Research and Justice: Heritage of WWII in the 21st Century" 15 June 2021. <https://remembrance.ru/2021/06/15/pribaltijskie-prezidenty-vnov-vystupili-s-lozhju-o-sovetskih-deportacijah/> (in Russian)

The CPPE youth movement Blue Awakening can be found frequently among organizers of events that glorify Nazis.

Annual gatherings of former SS members and their contemporary admirers (held at the end of July) on the heights of Sinimäe (Ida-Viru county), where in 1944 the Red Army fought bloody battles with Estonian, Belgian and Dutch Waffen SS units, is one of the key neo-Nazi events. Usually this event is attended by representatives of the legislative and executive branches of government as well as representatives of the Estonian Church and members of ultranationalist and neo-Nazi groups.

For example, on 27 July 2019, Riigikogu MPs from the EKRE and Fatherland party, representatives of the Ministry of Defense and the Defence League (people's militia) took part in this event.²¹⁶⁶ Members of the Estonian parliament also participated in neo-Nazi get-together at Sinimäe in 2021, while in 2020 the coronavirus pandemic prevented the event. The symbols of the criminal Hitler organizations are traditionally openly displayed at such gatherings. Human rights activists point out that this event is financed from the state budget. The regular gathering of the Waffen-SS Estonian division veterans and their followers in Sinimäe on 30 July, 2022 was rather modest, without participation of politicians and other prominent figures of the country. About a hundred people gathered there.²¹⁶⁷ In 2023 a similar event of former SS members was held on 30 July, though the media didn't report the participation of politicians in the event. It started from the performance of the anthem of the Estonian Republic, meanwhile, the Ukrainian flag was placed next to the Estonian flag.²¹⁶⁸ Then different organizations and individuals (total in up to 100 people) laid wreaths at the memorial stones whereas a pastor from the Estonian Church held a memorial service.

²¹⁶⁶ https://ee.sputniknews.ru/estonian_news/20190727/17357965/pamjati-Estonia-esesovtsy-Sinimae-pochtili-deputaty-i-voennyje.html (in Russian)

²¹⁶⁷ <https://rossaprimavera.ru/news/8db1bfa4> (in Russian)

²¹⁶⁸ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20230730/v-estonii-proshel-ezhegodnyy-slet-byvshikh-voennykh-ss-pishut-smi-29818035.html?ysclid=lmx4777aa3962840809> (in Russian)

Public events are also held on the territory of Estonia where various souvenirs with Nazi symbols, propaganda posters of the Third Reich, uniforms and insignia of the Wehrmacht and the Waffen-SS, books about the SS unit and its members, Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, memoirs of former SS members, etc. are openly sold. For instance, the media published information about a fair of Nazi souvenirs and genuine military uniform items found in the course of excavations on the territory of the military propaganda museum in Valga (used, among other things, for NATO events) in 2019.²¹⁶⁹ According to the media, such fairs and sales of Nazi products are held at the museum almost every month.²¹⁷⁰ A similar exhibition, in the course of which Forest Brothers were also celebrated, took place on 19-20 August, 2022 in the framework of the XIV "International Festival of Military History," which, among other organizers, included local bodies of "freedom fighters".

Annually, a hike along the route of the Erna reconnaissance and sabotage group, which was composed of Estonians and Finns and sent to operate deep behind the Soviet Army lines in summer 1941. The final point of the hike is Kautla settlement, where a decisive battle took place between the saboteurs of "Erna" and the NKVD fighters on 31 July, 1941.²¹⁷¹ In 2019, the "anniversary" 20th "military patriotic hike", organized by the NPO "Estonian Scout Association" with direct support of the Estonian Ministry of Defense and Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, brought together 26 teams, including those composed of NATO member-states military contingent soldiers stationed in the republic.

Fans of the Estonian SS members are united by the NPO "Friends Club of the Estonian Legion", which has a page on the social network "Facebook" and its own website www.eestileegion.com. These sources have a detailed description,

²¹⁶⁹ "The market for "Nazi symbols" was revealed at the NATO base in Estonia." Sputnik.Estonia, 29 July 2019. https://ee.sputniknews.ru/estonian_news/20190729/17393648/Na-baze-NATO-v-Estonii-raskryli-rynok-natsistskoy-produktsii.html (in Russian).

²¹⁷⁰ "A magnet with a Nazi's smile and beer with the smell of swastika: a dangerous path of the Baltic states" Sputnik.Latvia, 29 July 2019. <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/Baltics/20190728/12144422/Magnitik-s-ulybkoy-natsista-i-pivo-s-zapakhom-svastiki-opasnyy-put-stran-Baltii.html> (in Russian)

²¹⁷¹ "Erna" Hiking Campaign – Estonian youth will again follow the footsteps of Hitler's saboteurs." Sputnik.Estonia 31 July 2019. https://ee.sputniknews.ru/estonian_news/20190731/17413874/pohod-Erna--estonskaja-molodjozh-projdet-sledy-diversanty-Hitler.html (in Russian)

written in positive terms, of the "heroic path" of the Estonian formations within the Waffen-SS, as well as the history of this unit, and deny the crimes of the Holocaust.

Another torchlight procession that took place on 24 February in the centre of Tallin on the occasion of the anniversary of the declaration of independence of the Estonian Republic confirms the overall sentiment in the Estonian ruling circles to glorify Nazism. It follows the traditional route from Freedom Square (Vabaduse) through the Old City back to the starting place. As a rule, the organizer of the event is the CPPE youth organization "Blue Awakening" or CPPE itself. During the 2020 event, which brought together a significant number of participants from Estonian neo-Nazi groups, the symbols of the Waffen-SS and Nazi Germany were openly demonstrated, and nationalist and xenophobic slogans were chanted. In 2021, due to the restrictions imposed in regard to the spread of the coronavirus infection, the event was of a limited scope. In 2022 the organizers provided all comers with a free-of-charge torchlight.²¹⁷²

Information is available that some of the photos of Nazi criminals on the websites of the Russian online campaign "Immortal Regiment" were posted from the territory of Estonia, among others, in May 2020. Having established the IP addresses from which the pictures of Nazis had been uploaded, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation instituted legal proceedings on these facts under the article "Rehabilitation of Nazism".

Honoring the Estonian SS members remains a common practice in Estonia, which includes describing the Nazis as "fighters for independence" and giving them state awards. On 31 August, 2020, Minister of Justice Raivo Aeg held a regular ceremony of presenting the Oak Wreath of Freedom badge, timed to coincide with the 26th anniversary of the withdrawal of Russian troops from the country. Along with the members of the Estonian Legion, the awards were given to former Forest Brothers, members of various underground groups that opposed the Soviet authorities,

²¹⁷² <https://regnum.ru/news/3517553?ysclid=lmx52arleh905144633> (in Russian)

and court historians who presented the mythology of the Estonian "liberation movement" in an ideologically verified manner.

In Estonia, there is a steady trend to proliferate books and publications that portray Nazi henchmen in a positive way. Thus, the "Culture and Life" magazine is still being published, despite the fact that its each issue contains materials which represent positively the period of Nazi occupation, glorify Estonian Nazi collaborators and Waffen-SS members, and denigrate the Soviet period. The magazine has its own web-site. In 2019, in addition to the aforementioned fair in Valga, the re-issue of Hitler's "Mein Kampf" in Estonian by Matrix Publishing was very successful in Estonian bookstores.

Monuments are being erected in Estonia to the direct participants of the Nazi formations. Another similar action took place in August 2020 in the village of Luulupe on the island of Saaremaa, during which a monument was unveiled to one of the most famous "forest brothers" commanders in Estonia E. Ilp and his "comrades-in-arms" R. Thomson and F. Tuuling. The ceremony was attended by the then-speaker of the Estonian Parliament Henn Pylluaas (CCPE), who called the Nazi collaborators "freedom fighters".

In presenting Elmar Ilp as a hero, the Estonian ultra-right activists remain silent about the fact that in reality he committed criminal offenses, terrorized and killed civilians for the sake of robbery, and tortured women and the elderly. Between the end of 1944 and 1946, Ilp's gang killed 456 local citizens and five Red Army officers. These figures clearly show who the bandits were really "fighting" against.²¹⁷³

In October 2020, Lääne-Viru county held a "theme day on the ambiguous and tragic history of the Forest Brothers", and as soon as in November, in the same county, their restored bunker and a memorial plaque were unveiled with great pomp. The work was carried out by the Society of Friends of Väike-Maarja Museums at the suggestion of the Union of Former Forest Brothers of Estonia. Similar sites are to be opened all over the country.

²¹⁷³ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3666989.html> (in Russian)

On 22 August, 2021, members of the Union of Former Forest Brothers inaugurated a monument to the Forest Brothers in the village of Hyuti (Myniste rural municipality, Võru county) on the territory of the Estonian House memorial complex. Estonian then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Urmas Reinsalu, Valga Rural Municipality Elder Monika Rogenbaum, Rõuge Rural Municipality Elder Rein Loik, Estonian Memory Institute Board Member Martin Andreller and Valga War Museum Director M. Kivi participated in the ceremony.²¹⁷⁴

The same month, the bunker of the "Forest Brothers" Ennuksemäe was rebuilt in Viljandi county.

The scale of the Estonian authorities' work to propagate the heroic myth of the "forest brothers" is shown by the fact that in May 2021 Estonia and Latvia created a map and brochure of military-historical tourist sites, which aimed at glorifying these armed formations. The mentioned map includes more than 150 places – well-kept "former military facilities" with an extensive exposition, as well as "natural sites" – battlefields, trenches and bunkers of "forest brothers". The organizers propose to combine their visit with walks in the woods and nature trails.

On 7 August, 2022, on Saaremaa Island, the Estonian "Society of Freedom Fighters" organized a reconstruction of the "last battle" of the "Forest Brothers" gang led by Ilp with NKVD officers of the USSR. It was announced at the event that a three-meter oak cross would be erected in memory of this criminal.²¹⁷⁵

On 10 August, 2022, a military-sports game of reconnaissance patrols named after Admiral J.Pitka took place, in which 27 teams from 12 countries participated. Among these teams, there was one joint team, which included people from the United States, Estonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina – all representatives of the Allied battle group deployed in Estonia.

The media have published plans to recreate once again a memorial to a soldier in an SS uniform with a German automatic rifle in his hands in Lihula in western Estonia to commemorate "the Estonians who fought against Bolshevism

²¹⁷⁴ In Estonia, a monument to the "Forest Brothers" was unveiled in the presence of the former Foreign Minister Reinsalu. EurAsia Daily. 23 August 2021 <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2021/08/23/v-estonii-v-prisutstvii-eks-glavy-mida-reynsalu-otkryli-pamyatnik-lesnym-bratyam> (in Russian)

²¹⁷⁵ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3666989.html> (in Russian)

and for the restoration of Estonian independence in 1940-1945." The monument to the soldiers of the 20th Estonian SS division appeared back in 2002, when a memorial sign with a bas-relief of a soldier in the form of a Wehrmacht with an iron cross on his chest and a "Schmeiser" pointing east in his hands was installed in one of the parks of the resort town of Pärnu. Then in 2004 it was moved to Lihula rural municipality, but after a few days it was torn down.²¹⁷⁶ The original of the last dismantled stone with inscriptions is in a museum near Tallinn.²¹⁷⁷

On 8 December, 2022, in Kose, Harju county, a monument to "forest brothers" who died in "battles" against NKVD units was unveiled. The remains of the tree of them (L. Kivilo, J. Priska, L. Kaun) were reburied "with honours" during a "memorial service". The ceremony was attended by Military Museum archaeologist A. Unt, Kose Mayor D. Voss, Riigikogu MP E.-N. Kross.²¹⁷⁸

On 19 December, 2022, Riigikogu MP representing Conservative People's Party of Estonia Urmas Reitelmann posted about "the victory of the white" on social media after the final of the 2022 Football World Championship in Qatar.²¹⁷⁹

On 2 February, 2023, on the occasion of the 102nd anniversary of the Treaty of Tartu, Conservative People's Party of Estonia organized a torchlight procession in Tartu. Some participants of the march used Nazi symbols, the SS skull insignia on headgear in particular. The appearance of a H. Karu with Hitler-like moustache and hairstyle provoked a response even in the local media. This former member of the party and a current Friends Club of the Estonian Legion member turned out to have appeared multiple times in a Nazi uniform at the "like-minded people" get-togethers where the Estonian Waffen-SS members were celebrated. President of the mentioned organization Marko Mihkelson (Riigikogu MP, a former Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee) rushed to reassure the public, explaining the behaviour

²¹⁷⁶ <https://topwar.ru/146030-v-es-fashizma-net-no-v-jestonii-vosstanavlivajut-pamjatniki-nacistam.html> (in Russian)

²¹⁷⁷ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/v-estonii-vosstanavlivayut-pamtnik-esesovczam> (in Russian)

²¹⁷⁸ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7667704/galereya-na-kladbishche-koze-s-pochestyami-perezahoronili-treh-lesnyh-bratev> (in Russian)

²¹⁷⁹ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7673538/kolonka-zhurnalista-rasistskiy-vypad-deputata-riygikogu-portit-druzhu-estonii-s-franciey-i-ugodil-v-mirovoy-kontekst> (in Russian)

of H. Karu with the phrase "we shouldn't be ashamed of the Estonian national pride and of the deeds of its forebears."²¹⁸⁰

On 3 February, 2023, Riigikogu MP from the Estonian Reform Party E.-N. Kross appeared on a pre-electoral billboard, on which he models on the background of Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Tallin with a "Mauser" rifle, which gang formations members of the Estonian nationalist underground – the very "forest brothers" – were armed with after the Great Patriotic War.²¹⁸¹

Efforts to impose a distorted perception of historical events, glorification of Nazi accomplices, and search for new "enemies" of Estonia have also been observed in the educational sphere. Thus, the regular report of the Security Police (KAPO), published in 2021, describes the celebration of Victory Day over Nazism by Russian schoolchildren as hostile activity towards Estonia.

Currently, patriotic education of the Estonian Defense Forces and the Kaitseliit militia is being built on the example of the "exploits of the forest brothers" and the Estonian SS members. Human rights activists also noted that they received reports that Russians serving in the Estonian army were forced to learn the song of the "forest brothers" as a drill.

The Estonian media often publish materials aimed at falsifying the history of the Great Patriotic War and equating the exploits of the Soviet people with the misanthropic intentions of Nazi Germany. Such publications are often timed with memorable dates of that War, especially before Victory Day or on the anniversary of Nazi Germany's attack on the USSR. On the eve of 9th of May, 2021, several Estonian media made marks with such actions. On 7 May, the news website DELFI published a Russophobic article on the 76th anniversary of the Allied Victory over Nazi Germany and its satellites. By placing this "opus" on the main page of the portal, the publication thus showed solidarity with the position of the author.²¹⁸²

²¹⁸⁰ <https://limon.postimees.ee/7705482/on-opyat-za-svoe-mestnyy-adolf-gitler-zamechenny-na-fakelnom-shestvii-vozbudil-narod> (in Russian)

²¹⁸¹ <https://rus.delfi.ee/statja/120138966/s-ruzhem-napereves-na-toompea-predvybornaya-kampaniya-reformista-erika-niylesa-krossa-vyzvala-negotovanie> (in Russian)

²¹⁸² Russian diplomats were outraged by the Russophobic lampoon of the Estonian edition on the eve of 9 May.

Also in early May the Rus.Postimees.ee portal published an article about the opinions the youth about this holiday, which was accompanied by a photo of the "Bronze Soldier" monument put upside-down. Immediately after the release of the response of the Russian embassy to the article on Facebook, the editorial board of the portal changed the photo that caused complaints in the article, however, on the Estonian Internet version of the newspaper, as well as in the paper edition, there was still an upside-down "Bronze Soldier".²¹⁸³

On 22 June, 2021, on the 80th anniversary of Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, which marked the beginning of World War II, the Estonian newspaper "Eesti Päevaleht" published an article titled "80 Years of the 'Summer War': Why Hitler attacked Stalin." The article also contains unsubstantiated revisionist claims that Nazi aggression was a "preventive measure by Germany" because "Hitler did not want a big war, but Stalin did" and "in July 1941, the Soviet leadership was preparing to attack Germany."

Located in Tallinn, a private "Museum of Occupations & Freedom" has made maintaining a negative perception of the Soviet period of history its key task. In the exposition of this museum, episodes related to Stalinist repressions and deportations are emphasized, and Estonia's time as part of the USSR is presented in a biased manner, without mentioning the socio-economic, scientific or cultural achievements of the Soviet period.

On 19 July, 2022, "Postimees" published a praiseworthy review of an article by Henrik Prunsveld, which positively assessed the activities of Karl Litzmann, head of the Estonian Generalbezirk Estland of the Reichskommissariat Ostland and the SS Obergruppenführer. At the same time, the note concealed important moments in the biography of this "activist". In particular, it says that Litzmann was one of the organizers of massacres of the peaceful population of the Estonian SSR during the Great Patriotic War as a result of which 61 thousand civilians and 64

Sputnik Meedia. 8 May 2021. https://sputnik-meedia.ee/Estonian_news/20210508/421738/diplomaty-rf-vozmutilis-rusofobsnij-paskvil-estonskoje-izdaniye-kanun-9-may.html (in Russian)

²¹⁸³ The ground has slipped from the feet: the Russian Embassy commented on a Postimees publication Sputnik Meedia. 12 May 2021. https://sputnik-meedia.ee/Estonian_news/20210512/445352/Pochva-ushla-iz-pod-nog-Posolstvo-RF-prokomentirovalo-publikatsiyu-Postimees.html (in Russian)

thousand Soviet prisoners of war were killed.²¹⁸⁴

Along with glorification of Nazism and the formation of the cult of the Forest Brothers in Estonia, the thesis of "suffering from the Communist regime" is actively promoted. For this purpose, matching "cultural objects" are created. Thus, Memorial to the Victims of Communism, whose concept is based on commemorating victims of "crimes committed by the Soviet communists" in 1940-1941, has been working in Tallin since August 2018. In 2019, an exhibition titled "Communism is a prison" was opened in the building of the former Patarei Prison in the Estonian capital. There are plans to turn the exhibition into an international museum in the memory of victim of communism by 2026.

Attempts to glorify Nazi accomplices, which have become an integral part of state policy, are directly related to the increased manifestations of anti-Semitism and the desecration of monuments to Soviet soldiers killed on the territory of Estonia in battles with the Nazi invaders. In June 2019, vandals destroyed several tombstones at the Tallinn Jewish cemetery (for the first time in 110 years, including the period of Nazi occupation), including the grave of the former head of the Tallinn veteran association Vladimir Metelitsa.

At the same time, the official Estonian statistics note that in the period from 2015 to 2018, not a single incident of an anti-Semitic nature was recorded in the country. In 2019, only two such cases were registered. In 2020, the official statistics do not register any manifestations of anti-Semitism. In 2021, one such incident was registered.²¹⁸⁵

It is with regret that we have to state that the leaders of the Jewish community of Estonia diligently ignore the above-mentioned incidents and phenomena, focusing exclusively on commemorating the victims of the Holocaust.

In the same year, new cases of desecration of the graves of Red Army soldiers during the Great Patriotic War were reported – in the city of Kuressaare (an inscription with aerosol paint was written on the monument), in the village of

²¹⁸⁴ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3666989.html> (in Russian)

²¹⁸⁵ The review of anti-Semitism manifestations in the European Union in the period 2011-2021. The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-antisemitism-overview-2011-2021_en.pdf

Tehumardi (gravestones were doused with engine oil). The local police conducted administrative proceedings, but the perpetrators were not found.

On 2 March, 2021, unknown persons desecrated the T-34 tank monument in Narva, established in memory of the crossing of the Narva River by Soviet troops on 25-26 July, 1944, during the offensive operation of the Leningrad Front. The monument was graffitied with "fallen heroes of the amphetamine war ... 2018."²¹⁸⁶

In early April 2021, a monument to the victims of fascism was desecrated in Rahumäe Cemetery in Tallinn. According to the local police, on 3 April unknown persons put chicken eggs on the monument. The birds that broke the eggs stained the tombstone. Traces of vandalism were not found by the police. A criminal case was initiated over the desecration of the monument.²¹⁸⁷

On April 7, 2021, vandals toppled the memorial stone in Raeküla, which had been established at the site of the execution of Red Army soldiers in July 1941. After an appeal from the Russian Embassy to the chairman of the Pärnu City Assembly, the monument was restored to its original location.

The fact that even before 2022 not only were monuments to Red Army soldiers killed in battles for the liberation of Estonia from Nazism vandalized, but any monuments erected in the honour of soldiers who fought and were killed in the Soviet uniform were under attack of vandalism, confirms the actual sentiment of Estonian radicals. On the eve of municipal elections on 17 October, 2021 the monument erected in Tondiloo park on Kivila Street in Lasnamäe city district in honour of the Soviet soldiers killed in Afghanistan in 1980s was desecrated. The memorial, erected in 2006 to commemorate not only Russians but also Estonian "Afghans," was sprayed with paint by unknown assailants.²¹⁸⁸

The Estonian authorities joined the "struggle" of vandals against monuments to Soviet soldiers long before the massive campaign of 2022 to destroy memorials:

²¹⁸⁶ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/02032021-posolstvo-rf-v-estonii-potrebovalo-nayti-vandalov-oskvernivshikh-tankpamyatnik-pod-narvoy/> (in Russian)

²¹⁸⁷ A monument to the victims of the Nazis in Tallinn was smeared with chicken eggs. RuBaltic. 10 April 2021. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/10042021-pamyatnik-zhertvam-fashistov-v-talline-izmazali-kurinymi-yaytsami/> (in Russian).

²¹⁸⁸ <https://www.rim Eurasia.org/news--2021-10-22--sovetskie-pamjatniki-v-estonii-nenavistny-vandalam-gosudarstvennym-i-chastnym-56993> (in Russian)

the process of demolition of monuments and desecration of burial places of participants of the Great Patriotic War had continued in all Baltic countries by that time for many years. One of the first and most symbolic steps in this direction was the relocation of the monument to the fallen in the Great Patriotic War, set up in Tallinn on Tõnismägi hill on 22 September, 1947, which got the unofficial name of the Bronze Soldier. In April 2007 the Estonian Cabinet of Ministers decided to relocate the memorial and the remains of soldiers to a military cemetery on the outskirts of Tallinn. This decision provoked unrest involving thousands of people. The most tragic episode of those events was the murder of Russian citizen Dmitry Ganin.

Despite the relocation, the memorial retained its central role in the celebration of Victory Day. Every year on 9 May (day the Great Patriotic War ended), tens of thousands of Tallinners gathered at the Bronze Soldier to commemorate the fallen heroes. Moreover, representatives of the Estonian Defense Forces also laid a commemorative wreath at the monument with the permission of their commanders. However, the memorial still continued to be attacked by vandals.

Russian compatriots were widely outraged by the desecration of this monument on 22 June, 2019, when unidentified persons pinned a leaflet depicting a skull on the monument. The Estonian police did not bring the perpetrators to justice, letting the investigation of the incident go unnoticed and referring to the "poor quality of surveillance camera footage."

In July 2019, the memorial and burial place of the Red Army in Taebla, Lääne-Nigula rural municipality, were dismantled. The "relocation" of the burial ground was initiated by the management of a school being reconstructed nearby, which was allegedly disturbed by the Soviet obelisk. According to the museum of armed forces which was responsible for realization of such works, remains of 11 people were exhumed at this place (however, according to the archival data, 26 people were buried there). According to a representative of the rural municipality

administration, the monument is kept on the territory of a local gymnasium, but no photos were provided.

On 25 October, 2019, the Russian Ambassador to Estonia, Alexander Petrov, sent a note to the Undersecretary for Political Affairs, Pait Teesalu, requiring official explanations of the incident. However, no meaningful response was ever received. Further attempts to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Estonian side also failed. The Estonian authorities refer to the provisions of the Law on the protection of military graves of 10 January, 2007, according to Article 8 of which "remains are subject to reburial if the military burial is located in an inappropriate place". This wording has a rather broad interpretation. It is obvious that such vague provisions allow, if necessary, to recognize any memorial of this kind as "inappropriate".

On 21 April, 2022, the Estonian Parliament adopted the law banning open demonstration of symbols "used at commission of an act of aggression, genocide, crime against humanity or war crime, to support or justify such crimes." The law also introduced penalties of up to five years in prison for "joining the armed forces of a foreign state committing an act of aggression or another armed association of a foreign state taking part in an act of aggression; taking part in the commission or preparation of an act of aggression or knowingly supporting an act of aggression by a foreign state, including its financing."

The Estonian authorities created obstacles to the celebration of Victory Day by the Russian-speaking population in Estonia. Head of Central Criminal Police of the Police and Border Guard Board Aivar Alavere stated on 24 March, 2022 that the attitude of law enforcement officers towards appearance of St. George Ribbon in the public space had to be reconsidered because this symbol was worn by Russian soldiers who "kill Ukrainian citizens."

Elmar Vaher, head of the Police and Border Guard Board, voiced the same position on TV broadcasts of Estonian State TV and Radio ERR, saying that the Estonian police would take increased measures to counter the display of Russian military symbols (including Soviet army uniforms and St. George Ribbons) on 9

May, because "the situation is not comparable to previous years". He also expressed the hope that the Estonian Parliament will make some amendments to the law by the 9th of May in order to give a free hand to the police in respect to those who openly demonstrate such symbols.

The Estonian police officially banned from 26 April to 10 May public gatherings associated with Bronze Night and Victory Day that expressed support for the "aggressor country" and used military symbols, including Soviet and Russian flags, St. George Ribbons, and Soviet military uniforms. At first the ban was imposed in Tallinn, Harjumaa and Ida-Virumaa, and later it was extended to the whole country. On the eve of 9 May, police control (including social media control) was enhanced: On this day, "provocative" symbols were recorded in various regions of Estonia, about thirty persons were detained because of that, fines were imposed on 12 "habitual offenders".

In July 2022, the Estonian government ordered the removal²¹⁸⁹ of all monuments to Soviet soldiers killed in World War II and the reburial of the remains of soldiers under military monuments by the end of the year. According to Prime Minister Kallas, specific decisions were made concerning the war monuments, which stipulated that the remains of soldiers underneath the monuments should be reburied gradually, step by step, and the monuments themselves should be relocated.²¹⁹⁰ All in all, this demolition campaign focused on about 400 Soviet monuments.

The same month, a special commission on the dismantling of Soviet monuments has been formed,²¹⁹¹ whose task was to prepare a list of memorials subject to demolition and destruction. However, the entire composition of the commission was classified. So far, only the name of its head, Asko Kivinuk, who used to work in the Estonian state center of defense investments, is known.

²¹⁸⁹ In the spring of 2023, the country's President Alar Karis rejected the law to dismantle the Soviet monuments, noting that the ban is formulated "vaguely", and the first article of the law is "legally unclear" and contradicts the country's Constitution. On 27 September, 2023, the Estonian Parliament refused to adopt the law for the second time.

²¹⁹⁰ <https://ren.tv/news/v-mire/1003115-v-estonii-do-kontsa-goda-snesut-vse-pamiatniki-sovetskim-voinam> (in Russian)

²¹⁹¹ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7579463/pamyatnik-istoriya-propaganda-i-element-landshafta> (in Russian)

It is noteworthy that the commission, having considered the cases of the demolition of monuments and cemeteries that had already taken place, approved of them completely. It only recommended in some cases to "remove the tombstone part of the monument but to keep the sculpture if possible." Besides, in a number of cases the commission demanded to replace even tombstones – they were considered to ostensibly not be "neutral" in some places. For example, the commission members did not like that at the foot of the mass grave monument in Kehtna park a memorial plate was established with the following text: "To the Soviet Army soldiers killed during the Great Patriotic War."²¹⁹²

On 10 November, 2022, the Estonian authorities adopted a set of amendments to the building code, the building code enforcement act, the planning act, and the state property act. The aim was to create the legal framework to demolish Soviet military monuments that were deemed "not fit for public spaces." The document cynically states that building parts, monuments, sculptures and other structures visible to the public cannot express incitement to hostility, support or justify "the occupation regime, acts of aggression, genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes."²¹⁹³

In November 2022, the mentioned working group on Soviet military memorials presented a report which states that 322 "red" monuments had been found in Estonia, 244 out of which are subject to demolition in whole or in part,²¹⁹⁴ and mass graves that are located in "inappropriate" places (parks, squares in front of schools, in the centre of any populated area) are to be relocated to cemeteries, coordinated with local authorities. A catalogue, published on the Government Office web-site,²¹⁹⁵ was also presented that contained photographs and descriptions of the monuments (type – a monument, a mass grave, an individual soldier's grave; coordinates of the location; form of property; a brief history) as well as "recommendations" for what to do to them next (demolish, replace or keep).

²¹⁹² <https://regnum.ru/article/3768343?ysclid=ln6gp8apl2892174706> (in Russian)

²¹⁹³ <https://ria.ru/20221110/pamyatniki-1830494289.html?in=t> (in Russian)

²¹⁹⁴ <https://rus.err.ee/1608792445/komissija-goskanceljarii-78-iz-322-sovetskih-monumentov-mogut-byt-sohraneny-na-nyneshnem-meste>

²¹⁹⁵ <https://riigikantselei.ee/monumendid>

The public was presented with a sample of a "neutral sign" (a stone plate with the inscription "Victims of World War II"),²¹⁹⁶ designed to replace monuments and tombstones containing words "to Soviet soldiers", "during the Great Patriotic War" or Soviet symbols (the star, the hammer and sickle etc.).

Answers to "citizen's typical questions" are noteworthy as well. Thus, among the list of reasons to get rid of military monuments, it is stated that they do this for "ensuring domestic security", since the monuments "once again have come to be symbols of active terror" and also "were established by the countries that occupied Estonia; they do not commemorate the memory of the fallen soldiers but bear a wider anti-humanist ideology." They particularly stress that "social tensions are rapidly growing around memorials of the occupation authorities."²¹⁹⁷ An answer to the question why memorials to soldiers who fought in SS are not being taken down is notable: "there is an agreement signed between Estonia and Germany to preserve military graves which stipulates that the dead soldiers of the German army are buried in neutral graves that do not contain any Nazi symbols, so there is no need to remove the tombstones. "

On 15 February, 2023, Riigikogu approved a bill on amendments to the State Property Act, the Building Code Enforcement Act, the Planning Act, as well as to the Building Code,²¹⁹⁸ which will require land owners, including municipalities where monuments with "the forbidden symbols" on are located, to bring the appearance of the monuments into line with new standards (must not "inscite hostility, support the occupation regime, genocide and war crimes"). This is to be done within six months, otherwise the Ministry of Justice will assume responsibility for the work in question. The same month the President of Estonia signed the bill. The adopted law simplifies and simultaneously expedites the procedure to demolish monuments to Red Army soldiers killed in the battles for liberation of Estonia from Nazism. Meanwhile, as it was stated earlier, on 27 September, 2023, the Estonian Parliament "refused to adopt without amendments"

²¹⁹⁶ <https://tribuna.ee/tribuna/society/nadgrobija-sovetskaja-simvolika-zamenjat-nejtralnymi/>

²¹⁹⁷ <https://riigikantselei.ee/ru/monumenty>

²¹⁹⁸ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7713483/riygikogu-prinyal-zakonoproekt-o-snose-sovetskih-pamyatnikov>

the law on the demolition of the Soviet era monuments. Earlier, in March 2023, it was turned down by the Estonian President Alar Karis.²¹⁹⁹

In spring 2023, the Estonian authorities introduced a fine of EUR 1200 for celebrating Victory Day on 9 May. The Estonian residents were prohibited to gather in groups on this day, to use the Soviet symbols of the Great Patriotic War period, and even to play the music of the war and post-war years that was declared "aggressive."²²⁰⁰

We also should remember that, after the beginning of the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine, and to protect Donbass civilians by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in February 2022, the anti-Russian hysteria provoked a surge in acts of vandalism. According to the Russian Embassy to Estonia, 78 memorials have been dismantled on the territory of the country since 2022, together with 28 memorials, from under the mass graves of which remains of buried Red Army soldiers were exhumed.

The dismantled monuments include:

1) plates and a monument on the grave in Mihkli cemetery in the village of Emmu;²²⁰¹

2) a monument to Red Army soldiers killed during the Great Patriotic War, installed on the mass grave in the centre of Otepää,²²⁰²

3) a monument to the Soviet commander Major General P.A.Potapov, installed on the place of his death on Kindralimägi Hill on the way to Etsaste village;²²⁰³

4) a monument on the mass grave of Soviet Army soldiers in the village of Lümanda on Saaremaa Island;²²⁰⁴

²¹⁹⁹ <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2023/09/27/21378877.shtml?ysclid=ln6gox9oij124568211&updated> (in Russian)

²²⁰⁰ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230803-korichneveyut-na-glazakh-vlasti-estonii-perestali-skryvat-svoi-politicheskie-predpochteniya/> (in Russian)

²²⁰¹ <https://rus.err.ee/1608600292/v-volosti-ljajeneranna-s-kladbiwa-propal-pamjatnik-sovetskim-voinam>

²²⁰² <https://novayagazeta.ee/articles/2022/06/29/mertvye-dolzhny-byt-na-kladbishche-tolko-gde-oni-eti-mertvye> (in Russian)

²²⁰³ <https://baltija.eu/2022/06/30/v-estonii-unichtozhen-pamyatnik-general-majoru-potapovu-kotoryj-spas-gorod-elva-video/>

²²⁰⁴ This incident was reported to the Embassy by veterans' organization representatives.

5) a monument on the grave of soldiers, fallen during the Great Patriotic War, in the battles for liberation of Estonia from Nazi invaders in the village of Simuna;²²⁰⁵

6) the Tank T-34 monument in Narva;²²⁰⁶

7) a memorial stone and a memorial sign to the troopers of the 260th independent brigade of the Red-Banner Baltic Fleet marine infantry in the village of Meriküla;²²⁰⁷

8) a memorial in the memory of the Hero of the Soviet Union I.A. Grafov at the highway Narva – Narva-Jõesuu;²²⁰⁸

9) memorial plates on Peter's square in the city of Narva;²²⁰⁹

10) an obelisk on the Soviet military burial in the castle park at the entrance of the Narva Castle;²²¹⁰

11) the memorial "Three bayonets" and the bas-relief of Soviet soldiers on the 9th kilometer of the highway Narva – Narva-Jõesuu;²²¹¹

12) a five-pointed star and a memorial plate on the mass military burial of Soviet soldiers, prisoners of war and victims of fascism between the Narva River and the Victoria Bastion;²²¹²

13) a monument on a mass grave of the Red Army soldiers died during the Great Patriotic War at the crossroad Iide- Torgu in the village of Iide on Saaremaa Island;²²¹³

14) a monument on a mass grave of Soviet soldiers in the village of Tuudi;²²¹⁴

15) a mass grave monument to Soviet soldiers in the village of Hanila;²²¹⁵

²²⁰⁵ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7580333/galereya-v-simuna-razrushen-sovetskiy-pamyatnik>

²²⁰⁶ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7585813/kak-eto-bylo-demontazh-pamyatnika-tank-a-v-minutnom-video>

²²⁰⁷ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7585385/ne-tolko-tank-kakie-eshche-sovetskie-pamyatniki-segodnya-snesli>

²²⁰⁸ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7585385/ne-tolko-tank-kakie-eshche-sovetskie-pamyatniki-segodnya-snesli>

²²⁰⁹ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7585385/ne-tolko-tank-kakie-eshche-sovetskie-pamyatniki-segodnya-snesli>

²²¹⁰ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7585385/ne-tolko-tank-kakie-eshche-sovetskie-pamyatniki-segodnya-snesli>

²²¹¹ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7585385/ne-tolko-tank-kakie-eshche-sovetskie-pamyatniki-segodnya-snesli>

²²¹² <https://rus.postimees.ee/7585501/galereya-v-narve-snyali-pyatikonechnuyu-zvezdu-i-pamyatnuyu-dosku-s-ocherednogo-sovetskogo-monumenta>

²²¹³ This case was reported to the Embassy by veterans' organization representatives.

²²¹⁴ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7595836/sovetskie-pamyatniki-volosti-lyaeneranna-otpravleny-v-muzey>

- 16) a mass grave monument to Soviet soldiers in the village of Varbla;²²¹⁶
- 17) a mass grave monument to Soviet soldiers in the village of Kirbla;²²¹⁷
- 18) a mass grave monument to Soviet soldiers in the village of Lihula;²²¹⁸
- 19) a mass grave monument to Soviet soldiers in the village of Karksi-Nuia;²²¹⁹
- 20) tombstones at the Maarjamäe memorial complex commemorating Soviet army units that liberated Tallinn from Nazi invaders;²²²⁰
- 21) a monument to the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army soldiers who defended the Hiiumaa island in 1941;²²²¹
- 22) a mass grave monument to Soviet prisoners of war and victims of fascism on the southern shore of the Viljandi lake;²²²²
- 23) a mass grave monument to Soviet soldiers in the town of Tapa;²²²³
- 24) a mass grave monument to Soviet soldiers in the village of Tamsalu.²²²⁴
- 27 memorial sites, from the mass graves under which the remains of Red Army soldiers were exhumed, are located in:
- 1) the central part of the town of Rakvere;²²²⁵
 - 2) the village of Viisu;²²²⁶
 - 3) the village of Noo;²²²⁷
 - 4) the Old Park in the town of Parnu;²²²⁸
 - 5) the town of Suure-Jaani;²²²⁹
 - 6) the village of Emmaste;²²³⁰

²²¹⁵ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7595836/sovetskie-pamyatniki-volosti-lyaeneranna-otpravleny-v-muzey>

²²¹⁶ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7595836/sovetskie-pamyatniki-volosti-lyaeneranna-otpravleny-v-muzey>

²²¹⁷ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7595836/sovetskie-pamyatniki-volosti-lyaeneranna-otpravleny-v-muzey>

²²¹⁸ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7595836/sovetskie-pamyatniki-volosti-lyaeneranna-otpravleny-v-muzey>

²²¹⁹ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7614331/sovetskiy-pamyatnik-v-karksi-nuyya-ischez-zagadochnym-obrazom>

²²²⁰ <https://rus.err.ee/1608739984/na-maarjamajaje-idet-demontazh-plit-s-simvoliko-krasnoj-armii>

²²²¹ <https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/635aa8b39a79472ca3f9051f>

²²²² <https://rus.postimees.ee/7644306/foto-i-video-rano-utrom-byl-snesen-sovetskiy-obelisk>

²²²³ <https://tribuna.ee/tribuna/society/pamjatnik-tapa-vandalizm/>

²²²⁴ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7660229/sovetskie-pamyatniki-ischezli-iz-tapa-i-tamsalu>

²²²⁵ <https://baltija.eu/2022/07/13/v-rakvere-nachalis-raskopki-na-meste-bratskoj-mogiloj-krasnoarmejczev/>

²²²⁶ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7564580/pamyatnik-i-mogilu-v-vyuzu-likvidirovali-tak-zhe-bystro-kak-nakanune-v-rakvere>

²²²⁷ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7573031/galereya-ocherednaya-bratskaya-mogila-sovetskogo-vremeni-ischezla-tiho-i-nezametno>

²²²⁸ <https://rus.err.ee/1608678916/v-pjarnu-ubrali-sovetskiy-pamjatnik>

²²²⁹ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7640312/iz-bratskih-mogil-izvlekli-ostanki-polusotni-pavshih-sovetskih-soldat>

²²³⁰ <https://rus.err.ee/1608710476/na-hijumaa-poka-perenesli-tolko-odin-sovetskiy-voennyj-pamjatnik>

7) the Raadi park in the town of Tartu;²²³¹

8) the village of Viiratsi;²²³²

9) the village of Suislepa;²²³³

10) the village of Karstna;²²³⁴

11) the village of Vohma;²²³⁵

12) the village of Pilstvere;²²³⁶

13) the town of Viljandi;²²³⁷

14) the town of Elva.²²³⁸

13 monuments were desecrated (five of which – twice, and one – four times):

1) a monument erected in the central part of the town of Rakvere on the mass grave to World War II soldiers (twice^{2239 2240});

2) a mass grave monument in the town of Tapa (twice^{2241 2242});

3) a mass grave monument to Soviet Army soldiers fallen in the Great Patriotic War erected in the centre of the town of Otepaa;²²⁴³

4) a monument to Soldiers Liberators at the Tallinn Military Cemetery (twice^{2244 2245});

5) tombstones at the mass graves of Soviet soldiers at the Tallinn Military Cemetery²²⁴⁶;

²²³¹ <https://rus.err.ee/1608749356/ostanki-soldat-i-grazhdanskih-lic-iz-mogily-v-raadi-perezahoronili-v-raznyh-koncah-kladbiwa>

²²³² <https://rus.err.ee/1608749356/ostanki-soldat-i-grazhdanskih-lic-iz-mogily-v-raadi-perezahoronili-v-raznyh-koncah-kladbiwa>

²²³³ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7648140/galereya-ostanki-iz-sovetskoy-bratskoy-mogily-perezahoronili-v-kolga-yaani>

²²³⁴ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7648140/galereya-ostanki-iz-sovetskoy-bratskoy-mogily-perezahoronili-v-kolga-yaani>

²²³⁵ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7640312/iz-bratskih-mogil-izvlekli-ostanki-polusotni-pavshih-sovetskih-soldat>

²²³⁶ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7640312/iz-bratskih-mogil-izvlekli-ostanki-polusotni-pavshih-sovetskih-soldat>

²²³⁷ <https://rus.err.ee/1608780928/v-viljandi-nachalis-raskopki-voinskih-zahoroneniij>

²²³⁸ <https://rus.err.ee/1608782674/v-jelva-pristupili-k-raskopkam-voinskogo-zahoroneniija-rjadom-so-shkoloj>

²²³⁹ <https://baltija.eu/2022/03/06/vandaly-oskvernili-zahoronenie-sovetskih-soldat-v-estonskom-rakvere/>

²²⁴⁰ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7558063/fotofakt-kto-raskolol-v-rakvere-klumby-na-mogile-sovetskih-soldat>

²²⁴¹ <https://tribuna.ee/tribuna/society/pamjatnik-tapa-vandalizm/>

²²⁴² The second case of desecration was reported to the Embassy by representatives of a veterans' organisation.

²²⁴³ <https://rus.err.ee/1608561364/v-otepja-pamjatnik-vtoroj-mirovoj-vojni-razukrasili-v-cveta-ukrainskogo-flaga>

²²⁴⁴ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7514398/chelovek-spilivshiy-orden-s-bronzovogo-soldata-mne-bolno-videt-v-gorode-russkogo-soldata>

²²⁴⁵ The second incident of desecration was reported by Embassy diplomats during an inspection of the Cemetery.

²²⁴⁶ This incident was reported by Embassy diplomats during an inspection of the cemetery.

6) a mass grave monument to Soviet soldiers in the village of Luga (four times^{2247 2248});

7) a tombstone at Valery Nosik's single grave in the village of Ansekula on the Saaremaa island²²⁴⁹;

8) a mass grave monument in the village of Tehumardi²²⁵⁰;

9) a mass grave monument in the Raadi Park in the town of Tartu (twice^{2251 2252});

10) a memorial stone erected at the site where Soviet troops crossed the Emajõgi River in September 1944²²⁵³;

11) a monument in the village of Vosu to officers of the Red-Banner Baltic Fleet, Red Army soldiers, and Soviet activists, killed in combat against German invaders;²²⁵⁴

12) a monument to the fallen during the liberation of Estonia from Nazi invaders in the years of the Great Patriotic War, erected at the mass grave of Soviet soldiers in the old cemetery of Tueri (twice^{2255 2256});

13) a mass grave monument to Soviet soldiers at the Pauluse cemetery²²⁵⁷.

The confrontation between Estonia's authorities and residents of Narva over the T-34 tank Monument became in fact the main symbol of a new stage in the Estonian authorities' fight against Soviet monuments. The Estonian government's decision to demolish all memorials and monuments to Red Army soldiers was met with hostility by some citizens of Narva who were in favour of keeping the monument in the town. The Estonian leadership expectedly expressed its

²²⁴⁷ <https://rus.err.ee/1608579605/zhertvoj-vandalov-stal-ewe-odin-pamjatnik-vtoroj-mirovoj-voyny>

²²⁴⁸ Three other cases of desecration were reported to the Embassy by representatives of a veterans' organisation.

²²⁴⁹ This case was reported to the Embassy by representatives of a veterans' organisation.

²²⁵⁰ This case was reported to the Embassy by representatives of a veterans' organisation.

²²⁵¹ <https://rus.delfi.ee/statja/96597931/vandal-oskvernivshiy-memorial-pavshim-vo-vtoroy-mirovoy-voyne-v-tartu-dobrovolno-sdalsya-vlastyam>

²²⁵² The second case of desecration was reported to the Embassy by representatives of a veterans' organisation.

²²⁵³ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7520074/eshche-neskolko-pamyatnikov-podverglis-aktam-vandalizma>

²²⁵⁴ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7528311/foto-v-vyazu-razrisovali-pamyatnik-sovetskim-voinam>

²²⁵⁵ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7541828/foto-akt-vandalizma-sovetskiy-voenny-pamyatnik-okrasili-v-cveta-ukrainskogo-flaga>

²²⁵⁶ <https://rus.err.ee/1608687016/na-kladbiwe-v-tjuri-pamjatnik-na-mogile-pavshih-krasnoarmejev-raskrasili-v-sine-zheltye-cveta>

²²⁵⁷ <https://rus.postimees.ee/7580721/vandala-oskvernivshego-pamyatnik-krasnoarmeycam-zhdet-ugolovnoe-nakazanie>

opposition to it stressing that monuments like the T-34 tank in Narva were causing a divide in Estonian society in the context of the Russian special military operation. Nevertheless, on 8 August 2022, at the meeting of the governing coalition in the city municipality it was decided to call a meeting of the City Council to instruct the City Government to dismantle the Narva tank and move it to a closed and secure location within the city²²⁵⁸.

The Narva authorities held a local public opinion survey on the fate of the tank monument to Soviet warriors. According to then-Mayor Katri Raik, two-thirds of the three thousand respondents supported the tank to be kept in the town and stored in a closed area. She said that the majority in the City Council also voted to keep it, as this exact standpoint was adopted during the inter-faction consultations.²²⁵⁹

On 16 August 2022, at an extraordinary government press conference in Tallinn, it was announced that seven Soviet monuments in Narva and Narva-Jõesuu will be relocated. On the same day, the dismantling of the T-34 monument in Narva and its subsequent transfer to the Estonian War Museum in Viimsi began. Also, in Narva, plaques were moved from Petrovskaya Square, as well as a monument to Red Army soldiers in the park near the castle and a memorial sign to Hero of the Soviet Union Igor Grafov who died in the liberation of Narva in 1944. The `Three bayonets` monument and a monument to the Meriküla landing force were moved to Narva-Jõesuu. Soviet symbols were removed from a mass grave tombstone of those killed in the Great Patriotic War located between the Narva River and the Victoria Bastion. To protect themselves against possible local protests, the authorities deployed additional police force in Narva blocking the access roads to the monuments to be dismantled.

In 2023, Estonian authorities continued their fight against the Narva monument while trying to legalise their actions to demolish the monument. On 4 January, the Chancellery sought the Narva authorities'; consent to remove from

²²⁵⁸ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/080822-pravyashchaya-koalitsiya-v-narve-prinyala-reshenie-o-perenose-sovetskogo-pamyatnikatanka/>

²²⁵⁹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/11082022-izvestny-rezultaty-oprosa-zhiteley-narvy-o-dalneyshey-sudbe-sovetskogo-pamyatnikatanka/>

public space two other monuments with Soviet symbols. One of these is a memorial plaque with the names of residents of Prinarovye died between 1941 and 1945 at the hands of the Nazis, which is located in Voidu Park near the former Vasily Gerasimov Palace of Culture. The second is a tombstone in the Dark Garden marking the burial place of Communists and Red Army soldiers fallen in the battles for Narva in November 1918. The Chancellery also sought the Sillamae authorities' consent to remove a Soviet monument to the unknown soldier erected in 1975.²²⁶⁰ In April 2023, Minister of the Interior Lauri Läänemets signed an order, under which the land in Narva, the former site of the T-34 tank monument, should be expropriated. The declared intention was to convert it to a surveillance position to monitor Russia.²²⁶¹

Besides, Narva residents were forbidden to celebrate the 79th anniversary of the town's liberation from Nazi invaders. Estonia's police imposed an official ban on any public gatherings in Narva from 26 July to 2 August 2023. Estonia's law enforcers did not even allow a group of former juvenile prisoners of Hitler's concentration camps to lay flowers on a mass grave to Soviet soldiers. There was a police presence at all potential venues for commemorative events. Ideological affinity between Estonia's authorities and the Nazis was illustrated by the head of the Narva police station, Indrek Püvi, saying that "laying flowers on the day the Red Army marched into Estonia supports Russia's propaganda narratives."²²⁶²

The Russian Embassy sent Notes of Protest to the Estonian Foreign Ministry regarding all the above acts of vandalism against war memorials, as well as similar barbaric episodes that took place earlier. In August 2022, the Russian diplomatic mission made an attempt to inquire as to the legal basis for the authorities' actions and whereabouts of the dismantled monuments, dates and sites of reburial of the remains (photographs of the new graves, their size, layout, geographical coordinates, address, number of buried persons), as well as whether the remains

²²⁶⁰ <https://regnum.ru/article/3768343?ysclid=ln6gp8apl2892174706>

²²⁶¹ <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2023/05/27/20535590.shtml>

²²⁶² <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obschestvo/20230803-korichneveyut-na-glazakh-vlasti-estonii-perestali-skryvat-svoi-politicheskie-predpocheniya/>

were identified during the exhumation and what the results were. No response has been received.

On 9 February 2023, at a government press conference, Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu announced that 64 "red" monuments were removed from public space and about 150 more remained.²²⁶³

According to the Estonian Ministry of Defense, the government is covering the related costs, which are estimated at EUR 1.42 million.²²⁶⁴ Estonia's authorities continue to finance it despite the economic crisis the country has faced.

In September 2023, the Russian Investigative Committee reported that it was investigating 16 criminal cases involving 143 cases of desecration, destruction or damage to war graves, monuments and memorials to Soviet soldiers. A total of 173 foreign nationals, including citizens of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland and Ukraine, were prosecuted in absentia for the offences in question²²⁶⁵.

The Embassy's major efforts to protect the memory of the Great Patriotic War, preserve memorials and graves of Soviet soldiers and officers, as well as strong response to attempts to glorify the Nazis and their accomplices were widely supported by enthusiasts from the Russian community and certain organisations of compatriots, primarily uniting veterans, former residents of besieged Leningrad and juvenile prisoners of the Fascist concentration camps.

Along with this fight against Soviet monuments, the total censorship created in the country is primarily directed against Russian state and private media resources, as well as Estonian alternative media platforms that go against the official agenda. Accordingly, the Estonian authorities continue to cleanse the country's public and political space, silencing all alternative voices. For this purpose they stir up spy mania and anti-Russian hysteria. To this end, Estonian security services are using various methods of pressure on politicians, public figures, human rights defenders and journalists, as well as civil society activists

²²⁶³ <https://rus.delfi.ee/statja/120140868/video-perehod-na-estonskiy-yazyk-rossiyskaya-propaganda-sovetskie-pamyatniki-pravitelstvo-rasskazalo-o-svoih-novyh-resheniyah>

²²⁶⁴ <https://rus.err.ee/1608878522/ministerstvo-oborony-prosit-vydelit-1-42-mln-evro-na-demontazh-sovetskih-pamjatnikov>

²²⁶⁵ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/12092023-sk-rossii-zaochno-obvinil-grazhdan-stran-baltii-i-polshi-v-oskvernenii-sovetskikh-pamyatnikov/>

who are disloyal to the authorities and express position on the internal and foreign policy of the country and its history that differ from the official one. An NPO, Legal Information Centre for Human Rights, constantly appears in the KaPo yearbook, which lists "threats to national security." An NPO, Russian School of Estonia, receives similar public attention with the same regularity.

In this regard, an illustrative example is an interview given to Delfi information portal on 1 June 2020 by Arnold Sinisalu, the Estonian Security Police Director, during which he directly pointed to the "non-loyalty" of the Estonian Legal Information Centre for Human Rights NPO (the oldest organization in the country promoting legal assistance to Russian and Russian-speaking community), as well as declared that staying in Estonia for those who disagree with violations of the rights of national minorities is undesirable.

Launching criminal investigations under far-fetched pretexts is one of the methods used by security services to put pressure on dissenters. Before 2018, for example, criminal proceedings related to the "provision of incorrect data" and "forgery" were under way against Alexander Kornilov, the editor-in-chief of the compatriot information portals Baltija and Baltnews, called in the 2014 KaPo yearbook "Kremlin's propagandist and agent" (the case was settled by paying a heavy fine). February 2019 saw the entry into force of a court verdict convicting Andrey Krasnoglazov, a prominent Estonian specialist in Russian philology and Director of Tallinn Pushkin Institute NGO, on charges of funds embezzlement and forgery. In July 2019, head of the Kitez human rights NGO and the Russian School of Estonia Mstislav Rusakov was detained by police and subjected to hours of interrogation. A civil lawsuit over internal disagreements in the United Left Party of Estonia brought against him was used by security forces to seize all technical data carriers and communication tools from him. In March 2020, the case against him was closed but, in April 2021, Mr. Rusakov faced a tax authorities' investigation.

At the end of March 2021, media reported the detention of human rights defender and lawyer Sergei Seredenko in connection with a crime against the

Republic of Estonia (in August 2021, the case was brought to the court). It is noteworthy that Estonian authorities concealed the information about his arrest for almost a month²²⁶⁶.

Estonian human rights activists, as well as their colleagues from other Baltic countries, note that the reason for these unlawful acts was the active work of Sergei Seredenko and other Russian activists in Estonia aimed at preserving Russian-speaking education and protecting monuments to Red Army soldiers killed in the battles for liberation of Estonia from Nazism (including the Night Watch movement). For a long time, Sergei Seredenko served as Estonia's Russian ombudsman on a voluntary basis. Also, the Estonian media brainwash the public opinion in order to create a negative impression about the human rights defender. Moreover, many instances of using pressure against him were deliberately concealed: for example, it was not mentioned that Seredenko, who has two higher educations, recently had to work as a janitor at the Maardu High School, as he could not exercise his profession because he was mentioned in the KaPo yearbook. Sergei Seredenko also provided free legal help to human rights activists and activists of Russian communities in Latvia and Lithuania²²⁶⁷.

The arrest of Sergei Seredenko was a high-profile case in the Baltic States. NGOs representing Russian-speaking community of Estonia, members of the United Left Party of Estonia²²⁶⁸, representatives of the Russian Union of Latvia (RUL) and other activists held demonstrations in his support. Members of the European Parliament Tatiana Zhdanok (Latvia)²²⁶⁹ and Yana Toom (Estonia)²²⁷⁰ raised the issue of Seredenko's prosecution. In particular, Tatiana Zhdanok noted that Sergei Seredenko took part in hearings in the European Parliament on the persecution of dissidents in the Baltic states. This refers to Algirdas Paleckis, Alexander Gaponenko, Vladimir Linderman and other human

²²⁶⁶ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/world/20210330/15422485/estonia-arestovan-russkoyazychnyy-pravozaschitnik.html>.

²²⁶⁷ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3236502.html>

²²⁶⁸ https://sputnik-meedia.ee/Estonian_news/20210421/334498/V-Talline-proshel-uzhe-vtoroy-piket-Svobodu-pravozaschitniku-Sergeyu-Seredenko.html

²²⁶⁹ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/Latvia/20210408/15467802/Latviya-ugrozhaet-a-Estoniya-uzhe-sazhaet-v-Rige-trebuyut-osvobodit-pravozaschitnika-Seredenko.html>

²²⁷⁰ https://sputnik-meedia.ee/Estonian_news/20210409/278143/Evrodeputat-Yana-Toom-prizvala-vnesti-yasnost-po-delu-Sergeya-Seredenko.html

rights activists who allowed themselves to freely express their own opinions. According to the MEP, the arrest of the human rights defender two years after those hearings in the European Parliament is an indication that the situation got worse²²⁷¹. Yana Toom pointed out that Seredenko's arrest was a very disturbing message to those believing that Estonia is a state based on an open government and the rule of law. Many representatives of the Russian-speaking community are treated with arrogance and disrespect here. It is truly inconceivable that such deafening silence would occur during the arrest of an Estonian-speaking political activist²²⁷².

The NGO "Russian School of Estonia" in the context of the Seredenko case called the PACE to pay attention to the persecution of citizens for dissent in the country and mentioned the practice of launching baseless criminal investigations against people who disagree in any way with the generally accepted correct opinion²²⁷³.

The representatives of the Russian community of the Baltic States, European Parliament, Riigikogu and Riga City Council sent an appeal to Estonia's President Kersti Kaljulaid to stop politically motivated persecution of human rights activist Sergei Seredenko, as reported by the "Russian Union of Latvia" party. Among those who signed the open letter are MEP Tatyana Zhdanok, Riga City Council deputies Miroslav Mitrofanov, Yakov Pliner, Vladimir Buzayev and Aleksandr Kuzmin, as well as Mihhail Stalnuhhin, the Estonian MP²²⁷⁴.

On 22 September 2022, the Estonian court sentenced Sergei Seredenko to five and a half years in prison. The trial was held behind closed doors, so the details of the case remained unknown for a long time. A month after the verdict, Sergei Seredenko got in touch with journalists and gave the details about his "crime". According to him, there were five different prosecution versions, which

²²⁷¹ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/Latvia/20210408/15467802/Latviya-ugrozhaet-a-Estoniya-uzhe-sazhaet-v-Rige-trebuyut-osvobodit-pravozaschitnika-Seredenko.html>

²²⁷² https://sputnik-meedia.ee/Estonian_news/20210409/278143/Evrodeputat-Yana-Toom-prizvala-vnesti-yasnost-po-delu-Sergeya-Seredenko.html

²²⁷³ https://m.sputnik-meedia.ee/Estonian_news/20210426/360171/Russkaya-shkola-Estonii-prizvala-PASE-dat-otsenku-arestu-Sergeyu-Seredenko.html?mobile_return=no

²²⁷⁴ <http://ruskiymir.ru/news/287171/>

were changed during the investigation. The Estonian prosecutor's office could not detect the criminal activity of the human rights defender. That's why the hearing was closed. Finally, Sergei Seredenko was charged under section 1 of Article 235 (1) of the Estonian Penal Code – Conspiracy against Republic of Estonia in favour of a foreign state. Russia was appointed as such. The article is extremely vague and thus allows for broad interpretations. The lawyer of Sergei Seredenko filed an appeal against the decision of the court of the first instance, but it was rejected²²⁷⁵.

On 3 September 2022, the Center Party expelled Riigikogu MP and Narva City Council member Mihhail Stalnuhhin from the party with a wolf-ticket for calling Estonia's officials "Nazis" and "fascists" over their decision to clean up Narva from the Red monuments. A video was uploaded on Youtube channel Slavia²²⁷⁶.

On 16 January 2023, Dimitri Klenski was expelled from the Estonian Association of Journalists for harsh criticism over destroying the Soviet war memorial legacy in Estonia and expressing neo-Nazi sentiments in the Estonian society, as well as violating the rights and interests of the Russian-speaking population of the country²²⁷⁷.

Another favorite method used by the Estonian secret services to deal with the unwanted is lodging financial claims. For example, Andrei Krasnoglazov, the director of the NPO Tallinn Pushkin Institute, was forced to leave Estonia after his office was searched in June 2021 by the Tax and Customs Department (under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance).

Russian media in recent years had to operate in Estonia under constant pressure from local authorities who consider them agents of "hostile propaganda." Since 1 January 2020, the Estonian office of the Russian news agency Sputnik was closed down under the threat of criminal prosecution against the staff to be conducted by the Money Laundering Data Bureau. Labour relations with this

²²⁷⁵ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221024-zhertva-rusofobskogo-rezhima-pravozashchitnika-posadili-za-pravdu-ob-unizhenii-russkikh-v-estonii/>, <https://rus.err.ee/1608724240/sergej-seredenko-poluchil-5-5-let-tjurmy-po-obvineniju-v-antigosudarstvennoj-dejatelnosti>

²²⁷⁶ <https://rus.delfi.ee/statja/120062948/foto-mihaila-stalnuhina-isklyuchili-iz-centristskoy-partii>

²²⁷⁷ <https://baltija.eu/2023/01/30/dimitrij-klenskij-kak-menya-isklyuchali-iz-soyuza-zhurnalistov-estonii/>

media outlet were declared a violation of EU sanctions against Dmitry Kiselev, the general director of the Rossiya Segodnya news agency. Due to these restrictions, 35 employees (including three Russian citizens) lost their jobs. These actions were taken despite the fact that back in December 2019, Harlem Desir, then-OSCE representative on Freedom of the Media, noted that no sanctions had been imposed on Sputnik agency in the territory of the European Union. He urged the Estonian authorities "to refrain from unnecessary restrictions on the work of foreign media, which may negatively affect the free flow of information".

Since 20 March 2020, under pressure from government and law enforcement agencies, production of the daily news program "News of Estonia" on the First Baltic Channel (Russia's First Channel franchise) was ceased.

A few remaining Russian journalists accredited in the country have been denied access to official events without any explanation. State and municipal officials avoid contacts with them under formal pretext. The Estonian authorities pointedly ignore requests and appeals from representatives of the Russian media accredited in the country, such as Interfax, RIA-Novosti, TASS, and VGTRK. Journalists do not receive newsletters and press releases from Estonian government agencies and are not allowed into government institutions. Financial pressure is also exerted to them. Under the pressure from security services, banks refuse to provide services to them (accounts closure, unilateral termination of contract obligations without providing the reasons thereof, etc. are practiced).

The Russian Federation's special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect civilians in Donbass was a serious catalyst for cleansing the Estonian information space of "Kremlin disinformation and propaganda." The Estonian authorities a priori consider Russian media instruments of influence.

As a result, in 2022, all the methods of pressure on journalists practiced by the Estonian secret services were used with renewed vigor. Aggressive propaganda was unleashed in the country against everything related to Russia. The Estonian information space was completely closed off to alternative points of view, any

"dissent" was interpreted as war propaganda and disinformation, Russian media were censored/closed down, criminal cases were fabricated against unwanted journalists, and social networks, including the accounts of Russian diplomatic and consular missions in the country, were closely monitored. For example, in early March 2022, Sputnik Meedia²²⁷⁸, an Internet news portal, announced the termination of work because of pressure and restrictions from Estonian banks and authorities, and threats to its employees. During the year, banks in Estonia have been freezing employee salaries and closing Sputnik's accounts based on suspicions of "money laundering, financing of terrorism, illegal sale of alcohol." In addition, many newsmakers have recently refused to cooperate with the portal, and the editor-in-chief and staff have been receiving direct threats from unknown people.

On 6 April 2022, Sputnik Meedia editor-in-chief Elena Cherysheva was detained in Tallinn by the Estonian Money Laundering Data Bureau on suspicion of violating sanctions. She was facing up to five years in prison, but her defense succeeded in having the case evidence declared illegal. On 10 May 2022, the Harju County Court ruled that the seizure of property without a warrant during the search of Elena Cherysheva's house and, accordingly, the evidence obtained thereby, was illegal. On 7 July 2022, the Tallinn District Court did not satisfy the appeal of Chief State Prosecutor Taavi Pern.

As a result of the efforts of Estonian authorities, by May 2022, more than 40 Russian and Russian-language TV channels (including First Baltic Channel, which rebroadcasts Russian First Channel in the Baltic States, STS, REN TV, Rossiya 24, NTV+, etc.) were banned in the country. More than 50 Web sites (including TASS, RT, RBC, and Sputnik) were also blocked. Publishing and selling print publications (Komsomolskaya Pravda in Northern Europe) became impossible.

Russian journalists are currently banned from professional activities in Estonia. An attempt to run a story about the removal of the T34 tank monument in

²²⁷⁸ The Sputnik Meedia portal was created by former employees of the Sputnik Estonia news agency, which was closed down two years ago due to strong pressure from the Estonian police.

Narva led to the detention and expulsion of Izvestia employees Ksenia Soldatova and Dmitry Timofeev on 17 August 2022.

The Estonian authorities continue cancelling residence permits (by reason of a threat to the national security) and expelling Russian citizens permanently residing here, as well as banning them from entering the Schengen area for five years.

For opposing a blasphemous act of relocating the Warrior-Liberator monument during the "Bronze Night" in 2007, Maxim Reve's residence permit was revoked. He was also banned from entry into the Schengen area for 10 years on security grounds (threat to the constitutional order, terrorist crime or other serious crime).

On 27 April 2022, Russian citizen Sergei Chaulin, one of the organizers of the "Immortal Regiment" events, was detained on suspicion of organizing illegal public actions. He came to Tõnismägi (the Bronze Soldier memorial site before relocation) with flowers and candles. On 9 May 2022, activist of Russian-speaking community Yulia Kalinina was detained.

On 6 December 2022, the Police and Border Guard Board (under the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Estonia) sent a notice to Aleksandr Kornilov, editor-in-chief of baltija.eu portal and member of the Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots of Estonia.

A similar measure was applied to Sergei Neprimerov, chairman of the board of the Narva Union of Chernobyl Accident Liquidators (expelled on 30 September 2022), activist from Narva Andrei Sushev who was declared a "Kremlin provocateur" (expelled on 21 September 2022), activist of the Russian Union in Tartu, former leader of the South-Estonian Union of Afghan War Veterans Ramil Usmanov (expelled on 14 June 2022), and Alexey Yesakov, member of the board of NPO "Russian compatriots in Europe", one of the organizers of "Immortal regiment" in Tallinn (expelled on 4 May 2022).

In addition, expulsions are also applied to Russian citizens with criminal records under the formal ground of a "country of origin." They do not take into

account their lack of strong ties with Russia (housing, jobs, relatives, etc.), so they end up in vulnerable economic situation.

As a punitive measure, Estonia bans entry into the Schengen Area to "undesirable" third-country citizens, usually using it against undesirable Russian politicians, journalists, historians, publicists, and public figures. Their visas are revoked and entry bans are imposed for long periods of time. In the case of the victims' attempts to protect their violated rights, the Estonian courts, which are formally independent, rule against them with reference to "national security interests." This practice was tightened after amendments to the Law on Entry and Departure were adopted in the fall of 2017 due to "significant changes in the current environment and security architecture." A number of Russian politicians and journalists fell under these restrictions, including Russian State Duma deputy Konstantin Zatulin, journalists P.Kostrikov, E.Erofeeva, A.V.Zakharov, St. Petersburg activists A.Koveza, S.Khristenko, M.Pirogov, and A.Malikov. From 13 September 2023, after the EU has developed another set of restrictions aimed directly at Russian citizens, Estonia banned Russian-registered cars from entering the country.²²⁷⁹

Estonian law enforcement and security agencies are taking measures to identify pro-Russian citizens. On 8 March 2022, the Police and Border Guard Board urged social media users to promptly report "questionable publications" (i.e., pro-Russian publications) to web police to check them for "incitement to war and hate speech." The next day, the KaPo specified that "egregious cases" of social media activity should be promptly reported to the special service.

Inciting Russophobia stirs up hatred across the country in general: increase in the political weight of the right-wing nationalist forces being nurtured by authorities to fight against Soviet legacy fuels xenophobia, antisemitism, neo-nazism, and triggers far-right groups. This issue has been repeatedly raised by human rights activists defending the rights of the country's Russian-speaking population.

²²⁷⁹ <https://www.gazeta.ru/auto/news/2023/09/13/21276224.shtml?updated>

The country is witnessing a surge in xenophobic sentiments, particularly among ethnic Estonians. A significant contribution to incite hatred against migrants and national minorities is made by EKRE activists who do not hide their racist views. In February 2021, Head of the conservative faction in the Tallinn City Council Mart Kallas, on his Facebook page, called the opponents of the removal of the memorial to the Warrior-Liberator from the center of Tallinn in 2007 and compatriots sympathizing with them a human trash with Soviet mentality.

The EKRE newspaper called "Uued Uudised" (Fresh News) publishes daily articles inciting hostility against people of African and Asian descent and other "foreigners", and hyping around threats to displace indigenous population. As a consequence, there has been an increase in public insults and physical attacks against people from Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Inter-ethnic and inter-racial hate speech is increasingly visible on social networks, but in practice the authorities do not take any steps to reduce inter-ethnic tensions.

Those xenophobic sentiments among EKRE activists were mentioned by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). In particular, the Commission noted that, since 2017, public discourse in Estonia became less tolerant, and politicians in their speeches began to ethnically divide the country's population more and pit groups against each other. This particularly affected refugees and migrants, ethnic and religious minorities. It was also noted that at the 2019 general elections EKRE publicly announced its plan to combat displacement of Estonians. This allowed the party to win almost 18% of the vote and become part of Estonia's government. Besides, ECRI has noted cases of racist speech by EKRE members, including their publications in social media. For instance, during the 2019 election campaign, the EKRE candidate called the mayor of Tallinn "that unfit Asian." ECRI has also noted that EKRE members made derogatory public remarks about the Russian-speaking population, particularly in the context of minority education policies and the ongoing debate about Russian-language schools in the country. The attention was also drawn to anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic

and anti-migrant statements by the party members, mainly in the form of verbal abuse in public places.²²⁸⁰

Human rights activists note that there is a high degree of Russophobia among Estonians. 50% of Russians maintain contacts with Estonians, while among Estonians this figure reaches only 30%.

It is very noteworthy that Ukrainian labor migrants also fall victims of nationalists. In March 2021, adviser to the EKRE parliamentary faction Yury Kukk, in a note for the party's news website "Uued Uudised", complained that Ukrainian construction workers "make the public space of our national state too Russian". The threat of Russification of Estonia, according to him, "comes not only from Putin, but also from the Ukrainian labor force". At the same time, Conservative leader Martin Helme stated in the autumn of 2020 that the Language Inspectorate (the Language inspection before 1 August 2020), a special supervisory and punitive body that monitors the purity of the Estonian linguistic space and is not subject to parliamentary and public control, should be involved in the identification of illegal migrants, primarily from neighboring Russian-speaking countries. Its functions are limited solely to the identification of insufficient knowledge or use of the Estonian language, followed by the imposition of sanctions and heavy fines on individuals and legal entities.

It should be noted that the spread of extreme right-wing ideologies and increasing manifestations of hatred in Estonia, as well as the reluctance of the authorities to take measures to combat these phenomena, have come to the attention of multilateral universal and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms. For example, in August 2014, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concern about the lack of a ban on racist organizations in the Criminal Code as well as the criminalization of hate speech and incitement to hatred. In addition, according to the Committee, excessively lenient measures (a fine of EUR 100) were provided in 2011 under Section 151(1)

²²⁸⁰ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Estonia (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 29 March. 2022, published on 9 June 2022 <https://rm.coe.int/6th-ecri-report-on-estonia/1680a6d5e6>

of the Estonian Criminal Code for posting comments on the Internet that are recognized as hate speech and incitement to violence²²⁸¹. In particular, the Committee noted that the Penal Code does not fully prohibit racist organizations, the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or racial hatred, neither does it punish racially motivated hate speech and incitement to hatred. The Committee reiterated its concern at the lenient penalties for the cases provided for in the law. It is also noted that there are political parties and public figures who use hate speech. The use of such rhetoric goes unchecked and is not investigated by the competent authorities, and the perpetrators are not brought to justice. The Committee has also expressed its concern that hate crimes in Estonia were often not recorded or investigated as such. This is confirmed by the low number of reports on the use of hate speech and hate crimes in Estonia.²²⁸²

The Human Rights Committee pointed out in March 2019 that Estonian law does not provide equal protection against discrimination on all grounds prohibited under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in all areas of life. The HRCtee was most concerned that current Estonian legislation does not provide comprehensive protection against hate speech and hate crimes, due to the rather lenient penalties and strict requirements for imposing them for crimes of incitement to hatred, violence or discrimination (in such cases, Article 151 of the Estonian Criminal Code requires "threats to the life, health or property" of the victim). However, other offenses, such as public denial, approval or justification of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, or propaganda of hatred of a racist nature, or otherwise inciting discrimination, are not prohibited by law.[1868] Against this background, it is not surprising that the Committee has observed frequent instances of hate speech, including by politicians and opinion-makers, as

²²⁸¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 10th and 11th periodic reports of Estonia. August 2014.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2f10-11&Lang=ru

²²⁸² Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 10th and 11th periodic reports of Estonia. Апрель 2022 г.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FEST%2FCO%2F12-13&Lang=ru

well as hate crimes²²⁸³.

On 30 October 2020, the European Commission notified Estonia about its decision to start proceedings concerning non-compliance of Tallinn with its obligations to implement EU legislation. One of the issues was the lack of qualification of racist and xenophobic motives as aggravating circumstances in the criminal legislation, evasion of Estonian authorities from criminalization of such obvious manifestations of racism and xenophobia as public justification, denial or downplaying of international crimes and Holocaust crime, public calls for violence and inciting hatred against certain groups (Estonia remains one of two EU countries without legislative prohibition of such activities). In addition, it is noted that Estonian law does not take into account racist and xenophobic motives for committing crimes as aggravating circumstances²²⁸⁴.

With reference to the European Commission, the EU Agency for fundamental human rights drew attention to these aspects in its next report on human rights in the European Union for 2021.²²⁸⁵

In 2022, the CERD also pointed to worrying trends in the spread of hatred in Estonia, thus confirming the views of the Human Rights Committee. Thus, with reference to data from Estonian officials, in particular the Ministry of Justice, it was noted that in most cases of incitement to hatred in Estonia, Article 151 (incitement to hatred) of the Criminal Code is applied, and the punishment under this article is rather mild – a fine or detention (up to 30 days). According to official statistics, between 2016 and 2020, not a single case handled by the prosecutor's office under this article went to criminal prosecution. In 2016, 2 cases of incitement to hatred were recorded, in 2017 – 5, in 2018 – 1, none were recorded in 2019 and 2020. At the same time, NGO provides for selected data: citing Internet monitoring reports by the NGO OpCode, it says that a total of 100 incidents were reported as illegal content on Facebook. The number of officially registered cases

²²⁸³ Concluding observations of the Committee for Human Rights on the 4th periodic report of Estonia. March 2019. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2f4-11&Lang=ru

²²⁸⁴ <https://news.err.ee/1153405/european-commission-launches-infringement-proceedings-against-estonia>

²²⁸⁵ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2021. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-fundamental-rights-report-2021_en.pdf

of hate-motivated violence is also low: of which, 15 occurred in 2016, 4 occurred in 2017, 6 occurred in 2018, 10 occurred in 2019 and 3 occurred in 2020.²²⁸⁶

Estonia remains a very fertile ground for right-wing groups. The local cell of the Finnish nationalist, racist organization "Soldiers of Odin", established in 2016, is highly active here. Its activists keep in touch through closed Facebook groups and attend mass events dedicated to the glorification of Nazi collaborators. Via website www.soldiersofodin.ee new supporters of the group are actively and openly recruited. The fact that this structure organizes actions inciting hatred on racial and religious grounds was pointed out by ECRI.²²⁸⁷

In recent years, radicalization has also become visible on the Internet, through which young people are increasingly being drawn into radical ideology. In January 2020, the Estonian Internal Security Service (KaPo) identified a 13-year-old teenager who was one of the leaders of a large international network of neo-Nazi groups "Feuerkrieg Division". He actively recruited new people via social media and spread anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi materials on the Internet. However, due to the juvenile age of the neo-Nazi, the law enforcement authorities were unable to bring him to justice, reporting only that some measures had been taken. It is noteworthy that this story was published in the April 2021 yearbook of the KaPo, thus the Estonian "security service" recognized the presence of right-wing radical groups in the country as a threat to national security (although the notorious "hand of the Kremlin" remains the main threat, of course).

In addition, human rights activists note that activities of the Estonian human rights protection bodies, in particular the Chancellor of Justice and the Gender Equality & Equal Treatment Commissioner, in combating racial discrimination are ineffective. The decisions of the Equality Ombudsman are of an advisory nature. In addition, the consent of a person suspected of discrimination is required in order to initiate a conciliation procedure regarding racial discrimination against individuals. According to activists, no cases of consent to this procedure have been recorded so

²²⁸⁶ Fifth opinion of the European Commission against racism and intolerance on Estonia. Adopted on 29 March. 2022, published on 9 June 2022 <https://rm.coe.int/6th-ecri-report-on-estonia/1680a6d5e6>

²²⁸⁷ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Estonia (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 29 March. 2022, published on 9 June 2022 <https://rm.coe.int/6th-ecri-report-on-estonia/1680a6d5e6>

far. There are also no positive examples of protection from racial discrimination in judicial practice.

The infringement of the rights of national minorities in Estonia, primarily Russian-speaking, which, according to human rights activists, makes up more than 30% of the country's population, remains an acute problem. The mother tongue education is an issue of great concern. In Estonia, ethnic Estonians, their language and culture^[2288]] enjoy institutionalized supremacy over other ethnic groups living in the country, so they are not able to exercise their political, social, economic and cultural rights in full. The Estonian Ministry of Education and Research prepared an Estonian language development plan 2021-2035, which completely eliminates education in Russian, starting in preschools.

Estonian ruling elite have been transparent about their intentions to eliminate Russian-language space in the country. Top-level Estonian officials have called for the elimination of Russian-language education. In December 2019, then President Kersti Kaljulaid publicly stated "we have actually decided to switch to a unified Estonian-language education system." On 24 February 2021 in her address on the occasion of Estonia's Independence Day, she said that sending Russian children to Estonian schools is not just the right of Russian parents, but also their obligation.²²⁸⁹ On 28 December 2022, after the completion of her mandate (on 11 October 2021 Alar Karis took office as President of the Estonian Republic), Kersti Kaljulaid tried to whitewash Estonian authorities' actions to dismantle Russian-language education system and stated that it was a matter of security for a small State that everyone existed in one information space and there could be no situation when Russian-speaking people received worse education and therefore had less opportunities. At the same time, she gave out official Tallinn's real motive, pointing out that students who receive education in Russian probably have "an entirely different worldview".²²⁹⁰

²²⁸⁸ The Preamble of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Estonia stipulates that "the state... must guarantee the preservation of the Estonian people, the Estonian language and the Estonian culture through the ages".

²²⁸⁹ <https://www.president.ee/ru/official-duties/speeches/16451-2021-02-24-16-28-05/index.html>

²²⁹⁰ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/28122022-premer-estonii-dlya-bezopasnosti-strany-nuzhno-otkazatsya-ot-russkoyazychnogo-obrazovaniya/>

To date, all opportunities to receive education in Russian have been eliminated in the country. Estonian authorities continue to disregard The Hague Recommendations regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities prepared on the initiative of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in October 1996 and containing references to fundamental international documents in this area: the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (Art. 4); UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (Art. 5); Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE (Paragraph 34); Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Art. 14).

The Russian language is almost completely excluded from the higher education system. The only option of Russian-language instruction available in Tallinn University and the University of Tartu is partial Russian-language instruction for those majoring in Russian Philology (Bachelor's degree) and Slavic Languages and Cultures (Master's degree). Russian-language programmes are still available at the private Estonian Business School and the Estonian Academy of Art. As a consequence, the rate of Russian-language high school graduates entering Estonian universities barely reaches 30%, while the proportion of those of Estonian-language schools exceeds 50%.

The systematic Estonianization of upper and vocational secondary education (10-12 grades) and preschool education continues. Current Estonian law establishes a maximum of 40% of subjects that can be taught in Russian in upper secondary schools. But soon even this option will no longer be available. On 19 December 2022, the President of Estonia approved the amendments to the Law on Basic School and Upper Secondary School. Under the amended act, from 1 September 2024, first and fourth grade pupils and pre-schoolers will have to be taught in Estonian. Teachers will be required to obtain level C1 Estonian language proficiency certificates by 1 August 2024, and headmasters, by 1 August 2023. The compliance with the act is to be verified by the Language Department, which can impose a fine of up to 9600 Euros on the employer. The 10th to 12th grades

will be allowed to continue to stick to the 60/40 pattern (with no more than 40% of subjects taught in Russian) until school year 2029/2030. After that, schools must switch to teaching exclusively in the official language within three years. On 16 December 2022, shortly before this amendment was passed, a plan of action up to 2030 had been approved for Russian schools to switch to teaching in Estonian.²²⁹¹

The remaining formal reservations that allegedly allow for "native language and culture" lessons, are insufficient to meet the educational needs of Russian-speaking children. The measures developed by the Estonian authorities discriminate Russian school teachers: those who fail to pass the Estonian language proficiency exam by August 2023 will be fired, even though there is no one to replace them in the country.²²⁹²

In addition to that, the Estonian government is implementing a program of merging Russian-language and Estonian-language secondary and upper secondary schools under the pretext of "optimization" and economy, as well as transferring control over them from local governments to the Estonian Ministry of Education and Science. As a result, newly formed educational institutions teach exclusively in Estonian (in Keila, Tartu, Rakvere, Haapsalu, Viljandi, Kohtla-Järve, Põlva, Võru, etc.) in disregard of the interests of Russian students and their parents.

This approach can be vividly illustrated by the merger in 2019 of the Russian and Estonian grammar schools in Kohtla-Järve (with ethnic Russian accounting for 75% of the city's population) into a fully Estonian-language public upper secondary school without any discussion of this step with the Russian-speaking community. From their first days at this school, Russian-speaking pupils have faced blatant language-based and ethnic discrimination on the part of the administration and Estonian teachers. Similar reform was scheduled to take place as soon as by 2022 at Russian educational institutions in Narva (where more than 90% of the population is Russian-speaking) and Mustvee rural municipality.

²²⁹¹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/17122022-ministr-obrazovaniya-estonii-utverdil-plan-perevoda-russkikh-shkol-na-estonskiy-yazyk/>

²²⁹² <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/22122022-zakharova-vlasti-estonii-obyavili-voynu-vsemu-russkomu/>

The same happened to the school in Kallaste (Peipsiääre rural municipality, the town is inhabited by descendants of Russian Old Believers), which was moved to Kolkja, and to the school in Kiviõli (Lüganuse rural municipality, Ida-Viru county). First, both schools were transformed from upper secondary schools to secondary schools. As for the Kallaste school, it was decided to move it to the village of Kolkja, where there was also a Russian school. On 1 July 2021, the Russian school in Kallaste was closed. Earlier, as a result of the 2017 administrative reform, which envisaged merging rural municipalities, the rural municipalities inhabited by the descendants of the Old Believers of Lake Peipus region were dissolved and merged with Estonian ones. As a result, the newly formed municipalities became predominantly Estonian, and the descendants of the Russian Old Believers lost their self-government. This has enabled the authorities to make decisions without taking into account the opinion of the Russian population.²²⁹³

The alarming situation with Kiviõli school arose in 2021 and followed the same pattern. As a result of the administrative reform to unite Kiviõli with the surrounding villages populated by Estonians, the rate of Estonian population in the new municipality increased. As a consequence, local authorities plan to merge the school with the Estonian-speaking school as part of the reform of the local school network, but they do not discuss the process with the school administration. The school staff has resented such negligent attitude on the part of the authorities and the fact that their inquiries as to the nature and the process of the reform have been disregarded.²²⁹⁴

Basic schools (grades 1-9) can still teach 100% of the curriculum in Russian, but the "optimization" programme is being implemented here as well. In November 2019, the municipal authorities of Keila used this particular pretext to close the only Russian-language school in the town, despite the opposition of parents and their rallies for preserving the Russian-language school. At the town

²²⁹³ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3338792.html> (in Russian).

²²⁹⁴ <https://sputnik-meedia.ee/society/20210303/120400/Vozmuschaet-otnoshenie-russkij-direktor-shkola-reforma-estonski-Ida-Virumaa.html> (in Russian).

assembly meeting where the decision to close down the Russian school was adopted, the mayor said that it was closed to create a single Estonian community in the town (civic activists say, this was recorded in the minutes of the meeting).²²⁹⁵

In February 2021, Tallinn circuit court dismissed the appeals of students' parents and upheld the decision of 19 August 2020 of the administrative court refusing to overturn Keila's authorities' decision to reorganize the town's school system. On 21 June 2021, the Estonian Supreme Court also dismissed the appeal challenging this decision to close the school. The plaintiffs declared that they intended to appeal this decision to the ECHR.

Furthermore, the dismantlement of the system of training and professional development for Russian-speaking teachers in 1990s has had a very negative impact on Russian-speaking schools. As a consequence, the number of Russian-speaking secondary schools has decreased from 96 to 76 within the last 10 years.

Civil activists in Estonia who defend the right to preserve Russian-language education have noted that the making Russian children switch to learning in Estonian reduce their academic competitiveness. This thesis is supported by a science-based opinion. In their study "Foreign-speaking child in Estonian school" (Institute of Psychology, Tallinn University, Tallinn, 2012), Professor Alexander Pulver and Professor Aaro Toomela acknowledge that Russian-speaking children studying in Estonian schools cannot fulfill their potential performing a level lower than they would if taught in their native tongue. Children with high abilities are average academically. Children of average ability perform poorly. This does not happen when children are taught in their native language: in this case, children develop and perform normally. The difficulties faced by Russian-speaking children in Estonian schools undermine their self-esteem. On the contrary, children studying in their native language maintain their confidence. Thus, one can hardly say that equal opportunities for education have been created in Estonia. Performing below their abilities, Russian children have limited opportunities of receiving

²²⁹⁵ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3338792.html>; <https://dokole.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/29.10volikoguprotokoll.pdf> (in Estonian).

education and in continuing it at a higher level (upper secondary school and university).²²⁹⁶

Public activists also point out that the main problem in the integration of Russian-speaking students is not their poor command of Estonian, but rather the inability of Estonian authorities to provide quality teaching of the official language after all the years of the country's independence. Estonian textbooks and Russian-speaking teachers of Estonian are lacking. Estonian teachers are extremely reluctant to work in Russian schools and upper secondary schools.

As a result, as Tallinn is pursuing a course towards the Estonianization of all spheres, primarily education, Russian-speaking children are not merely assimilated, but are also deprived of the right to receive education in their native language, which automatically limits their access to quality education.

The Russian School of Estonia non-profit organization continues to work actively to protect Russian-language schools. Its representatives met with OSCE High Commissioner on the Rights of National Minorities Kairat Abdrakhmanov in Tallinn on 10 November 2022 and informed him about the situation with Russian-language education in the country and of other serious problems, including the preservation – to the country's discredit – of the institute of "non-citizens", and the criminal prosecution of human rights activist Sergey Seredenko.

With regard to the situation with education in the Russian language in Estonia one should also take in consideration the recent years' active media campaign to promote the idea of the "need and demand" for the transition to "unified school" and "single educational system" allegedly intended to benefit Russian population, the worse social and economic situation of which is supposedly connected with lack of official language proficiency. Such vision suggests that there will be no separate Estonian and Russian schools and kindergartens, but institutions teaching in Estonian and offering students from non-

²²⁹⁶ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3338792.html> (in Russian); <https://dokole.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/29.10volikoguprotokoll.pdf>

majority communities some optional opportunities to maintain their spoken native language.

The issue of discrimination in Estonia on the basis of proficiency in the official language has become the focus of international human rights monitoring mechanisms, which in most cases did nothing but contribute to legalizing Estonian authorities' efforts aimed at forced assimilation of Russian-speaking community. However, even these mechanisms could not ignore the blatant violations of the rights of Russians residing in Estonia, In August 2014, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted with concern the differences between employment and income levels between the Estonian and non-Estonian population, depending on their language skills.²²⁹⁷ In 2022, the Committee reiterated its concern with the situation in this area, noting that while the Equal Treatment Act currently in force in Estonia prohibited discrimination against an employee or a potential employee based on criteria such as nationality and ethnic origin, different treatment based on Estonian language proficiency (or rather lack of it) was not considered discrimination in practice. The Committee also pointed at the discrepancies between the employment and income levels of the Estonian and non-Estonian populations, including as a result of language proficiency.²²⁹⁸

In 2015, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance drew attention to problems related to discrimination on the grounds of language in Estonia. The Commission noted, among other things, that Estonian legislation (especially the Equal Treatment Act) did not provide protection against discrimination on the basis of language and citizenship, and that the requirements for national minorities to pass the Estonian language were excessively high.²²⁹⁹

²²⁹⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined tenth and eleventh periodic reports of Estonia. August 2014.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2fI0-11&Lang=en

²²⁹⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twelfth and thirteenth reports of Estonia. April 2022.
<https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhsq90DTob4ikPW5%2fswlCWY%2bsTv4D7bkEbOqgPC2IgX%2bZhrsC0LVGMdazwZw%2bHIR%2fVTCJQsvj7Oir%2bNS5aIn%2fwOjl1b8cVSIHQNH4Mj4oNamJOXsczsRWStBIDLusa5FiBnA%3d%3d>

²²⁹⁹ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Estonia (fifth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 16 June 2015, published on 13 October 2015. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-estonia/16808b56f1>

ECRI focused on this problem again in 2022. It noted that during the contact visit of its delegation to a number of Estonian regions, representatives of the Russian-speaking population had expressed concerns about the implementation of the 60% quota of teaching in Estonian in high (upper secondary) schools. It also noted the difficulties experienced by a number of Russian-speaking pupils and students in acquiring mastery in core subjects that were taught only in Estonian, in particular in high school; shortages of teachers having the required linguistic qualifications in Russian-speaking schools and the lack of flexibility in the implementation of the 60% quota. ECRI noted with concern the persisting performance gap between Estonian and Russian schools, which, in its opinion, was worsening regional disparities and hindering mobility across the country because of the language barrier. It was also mentioned that the situation of the Russian-speaking population remained characterized by higher levels of social exclusion.²³⁰⁰

In January 2017, the Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern about the language policy in secondary education, which often prevented Russian-speaking students from acquiring mastery in core subjects. It also highlighted general discrimination against children belonging to ethnic minorities in accessing education.²³⁰¹

In February 2019, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) expressed concern about the lack of flexibility in the implementation of the 60% quota for teaching in Estonian in the Russian-speaking secondary schools. The Committee's experts believed that often made it difficult for Russian-speaking students in Russian-speaking schools to acquire mastery in core subjects that were taught only in Estonian and, in the case of vocational schools, led to an insufficient number of qualified teachers capable of teaching the specialized subjects. The situation is exacerbated by the punitive approach of the

²³⁰⁰ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Estonia (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 29 March 2022, published on 9 June 2022. <https://rm.coe.int/6th-ecri-report-on-estonia/1680a6d5e6>

²³⁰¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined second to fourth periodic reports of Estonia. January 2017. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2f2-4&Lang=en

Estonian authorities to enforcing the Language Law, including through the mandate and functions of the Language Inspectorate.²³⁰²

The Human Rights Committee expressed concern about the impact of language policies and practices, which continued to frustrate the full enjoyment of rights by the Russian-speaking minority on an equal basis with the rest of the population. It also supported CESCR's opinion as to the lack of flexibility in the implementation of applying a quota for teaching in Estonian.²³⁰³

The lack of constructive dialogue between Estonian authorities and the communities of national minorities about language-related developments and the role of the Language Inspectorate was also emphasized by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) as far back as 2015.²³⁰⁴ In 2022, the ACFC paid considerable attention to the issue of teaching in Russian in Estonia once again. The Advisory Committee pointed out that the education system, in dividing into Russian-language schools and Estonian-language schools, was not conducive to promoting intercultural dialogue, but rather enforced dividing lines between communities, risking the creation of parallel societies. This is also relevant for the Roma and other Russian-speaking minorities who attend the Russian-language schools. It stressed that there was a strong wish among the Russian minority to maintain Russian as a medium of instruction for a substantial part of the curriculum, in addition to Estonian. It was also concerned about the Russian-speaking students' tendency to give up studies due to the lack of proficiency in Estonian. The Committee also cited the opinion of the organizations protecting the rights of the Russian-speaking community on Estonian studies allegedly showing that attendees of Russian-language schools were 1-1.5 years behind their Estonian-school attending counterparts in terms of

²³⁰² Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the third periodic report of Estonia. February 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fEST%2fCO%2f3&Lang=en

²³⁰³ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the fourth periodic report of Estonia. March 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2f4&Lang=en

²³⁰⁴ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Fourth Opinion on Estonia. Adopted on 19 March 2015. Published on 21 October 2015.

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168047d0e5>

education outcomes. It was pointed out that these results were a consequence of the increased prominence of Estonian in public schools since 2007 putting students with Russian as a first language at disadvantage, rather than a fault in the system itself. The ACFC was concerned about the unequal learning outcomes for Russian-speaking students compared to the majority and called for an independent research into the causes of these disparities. In this context it emphasized that both the Advisory Committee, and the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe have previously raised these concerns with the Estonian authorities when the transition to Estonian as a language of instruction began. It warned then that the lack of analysis of the quality of education raised questions about the compatibility of the transition with the right to education for students studying at Russian-language schools. Besides, the Advisory Committee noted that due to the low presence of minorities in school curricula, the general population in Estonia knew very little about national minorities. Among other things, the ACFC pointed out that the restricted scope of subjects taught in Russian at "integrated" secondary schools did not appear sufficient, nor reflective of the full richness of Russian culture. The Advisory Committee believed that classes in advanced Russian language or broader Russian culture – even if elective – could help remedy this situation. In its opinion, this step would provide Russian minority students and Estonian students alike with a richer curriculum and consequently a broader understanding of Russian culture.²³⁰⁵

Difficulties in using the Russian language are not confined to the sphere of education; they are encountered in various spheres. Estonia, which ratified the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in late 1990s, evades implementing the provisions of its Article 11, which expressly bind the Parties to recognize the patronyms of national minorities,

²³⁰⁵ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Fifth Opinion on Estonia. Adopted on 3 February 2022. Published on 9 June 2022. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-estonia-en/1680a6cc9e>. It should also be noted that the analysis of the situation and the Committee's visit preceded the complete elimination by Estonian authorities of every opportunity to receive education in Russian. Guided by such formal approach, the Committee managed to avoid giving any assessment to Tallinn's recent steps aimed at the dismantlement of Russian-language education and to confine itself to mentioning that while implementing the ongoing school reform the authorities should maintain the dialogue with national minorities and that national minorities should be guaranteed possibilities to use their native tongue in education that would not affect the quality of education.

and refuses to enter this data in national identity documents issued to its Russian-speaking residents. Furthermore, Estonian authorities disregard the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to officially recognize the patronyms of Russian-speaking residents. In particular, in February 2019, the CESCR noted that administrative barriers against the use of patronyms in official personal documents, which Estonian authorities put up, restricted certain national minorities from enjoying their right to protect their cultural identity.²³⁰⁶

There are also cases of infringement of rights and interests of Russian-speaking residents of Estonia in social and economic sphere. According to statistical data, the unemployment rate is twice as high for the Russian-speaking population as for the Estonian. There is a clear imbalance in the civil service, where the number of non-Estonians does not exceed 3% (while the share of non-Estonian population is about 30%). This problem was highlighted in February 2019 by the CESCR, which subjected Estonian authorities to criticism for the persistent discrimination against the non-Estonian-speaking population, which faced systemic discrimination in all areas of public life due to their lack of proficiency in the Estonian language. This, according to CESCR experts, is evidenced by the high unemployment and poverty rates among the non-Estonian-speaking population.²³⁰⁷

This issue was also highlighted by ECRI and the ACFC. ECRI noted that the unemployment rate of Russians was still significantly higher (9.4%) than Estonians (5.8%) in 2020. 29.3% of persons living in the Ida-Viru county, which the ECRI delegation visited during its contact visit, was at risk of falling below the poverty line in 2019. Furthermore, the Commission stressed that Russians occupied the most disadvantaged positions in the labor market and faced a number of problems

²³⁰⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the third periodic report of Estonia. February 2019.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fEST%2fCO%2f3&Lang=en

²³⁰⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the third periodic report of Estonia. February 2019.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fEST%2fCO%2f3&Lang=en

in education because of the language of instruction. The Commission noted that the Covid-19 crisis had had an adverse impact on employment rates of the Russian-speaking population, as often their jobs did not allow remote working. In addition, for the fear of losing jobs many of them refused to reveal symptoms of illness.²³⁰⁸

The ACFC also noted a higher unemployment rate among the Russian population than among Estonians. The Advisory Committee pointed out that in Ida-Viru county, the unemployment rate increased by more than the national average, reaching 12.3% in 2020 (up from 8.7% in 2019). Across the country, "non-Estonians" also saw a larger increase in unemployment than Estonians (3% v 2%).²³⁰⁹

The problem of unequal representation of majority and minority communities in local authorities, especially in Tallinn, remains unsolved. Based on the principle of proportional representation, in the Estonian capital, which has about 350 thousand voters, one member of the City Assembly (79 seats) should be elected from about 4,430 eligible citizens. However, under Estonian law on local elections, the capital's largest and Russian-speaking district Lasnamäe (over 100 thousand voters) has only 16 seats in the City Assembly, while mostly Estonian-speaking district Piritä (a little over 13 thousand voters) is represented by 6 members of the Assembly. Thus, to elect one member of the City Assembly, the "Russian" district needs about 6 thousand votes, and the "Estonian" district needs only 2 thousand.

The problems faced by the Russian-speaking population and national minorities in Estonia were highlighted in April 2022 by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.²³¹⁰ In particular, the Committee was concerned about the lack of balance between the measures adopted by the country's authorities to impose the Estonian language and promote proficiency in Estonian,

²³⁰⁸ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Estonia (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 29 March 2022, published on 9 June 2022. <https://rm.coe.int/6th-ecri-report-on-estonia/1680a6d5e6>

²³⁰⁹ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Fifth Opinion on Estonia. Adopted on 3 February 2022. Published on 9 June 2022. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-estonia-en/1680a6cc9e>

²³¹⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twelfth and thirteenth reports of Estonia. April 2023. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FEST%2FCO%2F12-13&Lang=en

and minorities' opportunities to enjoy the right to use their native languages, which was reflected, among other things, in the authorities' goal to transition to predominantly Estonian-language school education in the following 15 years. CERD also stressed that Estonian authorities continued to rely on punitive elements in their approach to the promotion of the official language, particularly in the realm of employment. The Committee discussed that issue in detail, emphasizing that while the Equal Treatment Act prohibited discrimination against an employee or a potential employee based on criteria such as nationality and ethnic origin, different treatment based on Estonian language proficiency was not considered discrimination in practice. The Committee was also concerned at the discrepancies between the employment and income levels of the Estonian and non-Estonian populations, including as a result of language proficiency. It was noted that the Language Act restricted the use of minority languages in public administration only to local governments. In addition, minorities' need for self-identification was not sufficiently addressed, including due to inability to use patronyms.

In this context, it was recommended that Tallinn should reconsider the best balance between its recognition of diversity and the degree to which it made the Estonian language a condition for employment and other essentials of its non-Estonian-speaking citizens. To eliminate discrimination of national minorities in the field of employment, CERD reiterated its recommendation that Estonia ensured that language requirements in relation to employment were based on objective criteria and were linked to the needs for the performance of each individual job, and that it continued to be mindful of indirect discrimination effects of public policies on vulnerable groups. The Committee also reiterated its recommendations to intensify the efforts to address the persistent disadvantages faced by minority groups with regard to rates of employment and remuneration based on language proficiency. In addition to the above, Estonia was recommended to review its legislation to allow a wider scope for the use of minority languages in public administration and to address minorities' need for self-identification.

In August 2023, the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on minority issues Fernand de Varennes, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights Alexandra Xanthaki, and Special Rapporteur on education Farida Shaheed said that as a result of Estonian authorities' education reform minority language was effectively eliminated as a medium of instruction. In their joint statement they noted with concern that the amendments adopted in December 2022 envisaging transition to Estonian-language education severely restricted education in Estonia's minority languages and virtually eliminated minority language education. They expressed particular concern about how the new provisions could affect members of the Russian linguistic minority, who made up a significant proportion of the country's population. It was also noted that despite protests from Russian-speaking parents and children, a number of Russian-language schools had been closed in previous years.²³¹¹

Human rights activists also note in this regard that the Russian residents of Estonia are almost excluded from many important sectors of the economy. This is facilitated by the authorities' policy of "integration" of the non-Estonian population, while social and economic integration is not given due attention. For example, it is much more difficult for a Russian entrepreneur to obtain a loan than for an Estonian one. Moreover, even Russians who know Estonian cannot compete with Estonians. As a result, inequality between ethnic communities in the country continues to increase. The unemployment rate among Estonians is 5.8%, and among Russians, 9.4%. The largest number of unemployed is recorded in the regions inhabited by Russians (mainly in the Ida-Viru county).

Regardless of the economic situation, the regional units of the country with predominantly Russian population receive less government funding. As a result, the poorest municipalities in Estonia are those populated by Russians. Estonia's poorest cities include the cities of Narva, Kohtla-Järve, Sillamäe situated in Ida-Viru county, and the town of Maardu near Tallinn.

²³¹¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/08/estonia-new-law-banning-mother-tongue-education-minorities-may-violate-human>

A drastic deterioration in the situation of the Russian-speaking population is evidenced by the report on the results of integration monitoring published by the Estonian Ministry of Culture on 10 May 2021. These results confirm that the government's integration reform in Estonia has virtually failed. Forced Estonianization does not contribute to the harmonious amalgamation of national minorities into Estonian society. Thus, 29% of non-Estonians believe that they "are not welcome there" (as compared to 16% in 2016). 38% of non-Estonians feel that they are "second-class" in Estonia (against 21% in 2016), and 26% say that they have faced intolerance (10% in 2016). Up to 70% of people from the target group believe that they are not capable of influencing the development of society and the state in any way, another 73% – that their career prospects are obviously worse than those of ethnic Estonians. There remains a strong dependence of socio-economic and career advancement on ethnic origin and language, and ethnic discrimination in terms of wages persists, with non-Estonian being on the average paid 15% less. 50% of students studying in a non-native Estonian language have difficulties with studying and experience serious stress.

The Estonian authorities continued their open and determined course towards depriving Russian-speaking residents of their civic rights in 2022. On 18 March 2022, the Estonian Labor Inspectorate issued an explanatory note, which advised employers if seeing an employee wearing a St. George's ribbon, a "Z" symbol or using the Russian flag in social media, to bear in mind that "incitement to war and hate speech are criminalized by Estonia's Penal Code, and entitle employers to terminate employment for loss of trust based on Article 88 (1), paragraph 5, of the Employment Contracts Act".

This recommendation justifies the local managers who have proactively operated in this way. To cite but one example, the head of Elron (government-owned passenger train operator) Lauri Betlem, as early as on 1 March 2022, informed his employees about inadmissibility of expressing "support to the Russian criminal regime" in social media. He noted that those who do it will have

their labour contracts terminated for "loss of trust and damaging the employer's reputation".

Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (EOC-MP) and its Primate Metropolitan of Tallinn and All Estonia Eugene have been subjected to continuous pressure by the Estonian Ministry of the Interior. After the Special Military Operation began, the nationalists censured the EOC-MP for "channeling the voice of Moscow". On 27 September 2022 Estonian Minister of the Interior Lauri Läänemets stated that he expected Metropolitan Eugene to condemn the words of Patriarch Cyrill and added that "no church calling on Russians to kill Ukrainians could operate in the country". He also threatened to withdraw the Metropolitan's residence permit unless the latter expressed his position publicly before 12 October. On that day Metropolitan Eugene issued a letter to the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Justice saying that he did not share what the Patriarch said in his sermon on 25 September 2022. He also assured that EOC-MP "did not engage in any propaganda of war and incitement of hate" in its parishes.

The most egregious manifestations of the state policy of discrimination on linguistic and ethnic grounds include the preservation of the practice of mass statelessness, including in the form of such a category as "non-citizens".²³¹² As of 1 January 2022, there were 66,592 stateless persons, which amounts to about 5% of the population (as compared to 68,992 people, or 6%, a year before); Russian compatriots and their descendants formed the overwhelming part of these stateless population. Estonia remains among the top ten countries in the world with the highest number of stateless persons.

"Grey passport holders" are significantly limited in their civil rights.²³¹³ They are not allowed to vote or be elected in Estonian parliamentary elections or European Parliament elections; they are not allowed to join political parties, hold state and municipal leadership positions, or serve in the armed forces and security services. In 2016, stateless persons were granted the right to vote in local elections,

²³¹² "Non-citizens" are officially named "persons with undetermined citizenship" in Estonia. Non-citizen's passport is called the "alien's passport".

²³¹³ The name refers to the colour of the cover of such passports.

but they cannot be elected to local governments. However, even this right of stateless persons can be abolished by the Estonian authorities. On 21 April 2022 members of the Fatherland faction of the Riigikogu (the Estonian parliament), used the "disloyalty" of foreigners (referring primarily to Russian citizens and stateless persons) as a pretext and introduced a bill depriving these groups of the country's population of the right to vote in local elections.

According to the Estonian Law on Ratification of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, "non-citizens" are not eligible for protection under this instrument. For this category alone, registration at the place of residence is requisite for the exercise of their social and economic rights. Besides, "grey passport holders" experience serious difficulties during international travel.

In 1992, the residents of the country (mostly Russians) who did not have citizenship of the pre-war Estonian Republic (1920-1940) or who were not descendants of its citizens were declared as "non-citizens". The Estonian authorities justify this by the fact that "non-citizens" themselves or their parents were "brought" to Estonia during the "Soviet occupation". This decision adopted by Estonia had grossly violated the norms and principles of the Treaty on the Foundations of Interstate Relations of 12 January 1991 between the RSFSR and the ER, in particular, the provisions of Article 3, which stipulates as follows: "The Parties shall provide the opportunity to obtain citizenship of their countries to all the permanent residents of the respective territories in accordance with their freely expressed desire". Accordingly, the stateless persons' children born in Estonia have also become stateless.

Despite regular criticism from international organizations, including the UN, the OSCE and the EU (represented by the European Parliament), as well as human rights NGOs, the Estonian authorities, following the course laid down in 1991 to build a mono-ethnic and mono-lingual state, refuse to grant full civil status to this category of residents of the country, requiring them to pass advanced exams to confirm their proficiency in the Estonian language.

The 1995 Law on Citizenship stipulates that a person can be a citizen of Estonia by birth only in case at least one of their parents was an Estonian citizen at the time of birth. The rest are offered "naturalization," that is, obtaining citizenship by acquisition.

Currently, a person aged over 15 has to meet following requirements to become a citizen: to have a long-term residence permit or the right of permanent residence; to have resided in Estonia for at least eight years – with the last five permanently – by the time of application; to have a registered place of residence in the country; to have proficiency in the Estonian language at level B1;²³¹⁴ to know the Constitution of Estonia and the Law on Citizenship; to have permanent legal income, to be "loyal to the Estonian State"; to swear allegiance to the Estonian constitutional order.

Reproduction of "non-citizens" stopped only on 1 January 2016, after an amendment to the Law on Citizenship came into force, allowing children of "grey passport holders" born in Estonia to acquire Estonian citizenship if the parents had legally resided in the country for at least 5 years by the time of their birth. As an additional "indulgence", since 2018 "non-citizens" have been given the opportunity to attend the courses of Estonian at public expense in order to subsequently pass the citizenship exam. The number of "non-citizens" declines – like in neighboring Latvia, where this shameful phenomenon still persists – mainly due to natural causes.

A certain progress was made with the entry into force in February 2020 of amendments to the Law of the Republic of Estonia on Citizenship, which facilitated the procedure of application for citizenship for minors born in Estonia who had a "grey-passport" parent or grandparent who had lived in the country before 20 August 1991, with the other parent being a foreign citizen. However, if a minor applying for Estonian citizenship is a citizen of another state, they must renounce that citizenship in advance. There are about 1,500 children under the age

²³¹⁴ Since 1 July 2015, persons who passed Estonian language exam are eligible for the reimbursement of the language tuition fee.

of 18 living in Estonia entitled to the simplified application procedure. However, most of them (about 1,300) have Russian citizenship, whereas Russian legislation does not allow them to renounce it and get another passport before coming of age.²³¹⁵ Thus, the vast majority of persons covered by the amendments cannot actually take advantage of the exemptions.

It is also indicative that Estonia has not yet acceded to key international documents in this area (the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and the 1997 European Convention on Nationality).

International human rights monitoring mechanisms pay considerable attention to the problem of statelessness in Estonia. In January 2017, the Committee on the Rights of the Child noted the limited nature of the amendments to the Law on Citizenship and urged the Estonian authorities to ensure the accelerated naturalization of children of non-citizens.²³¹⁶ Following her visit to Estonia (11-15 June 2018), CoE Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatović raised the issue of easing the conditions of naturalization for persons over 65, pointing out that many Russian-speaking elderly people cannot obtain Estonian citizenship due to their inability to learn the Estonian language.²³¹⁷

In February 2019, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern in this regard (according to the Committee, as of 1 January 2019, non-citizens accounted for 5.5% of the total population). At the same time, CESCR criticized the 2015 amendments to the Law on Citizenship, which, in its opinion, were of a limited nature and do not apply to a number of categories of children.²³¹⁸ In April 2019 the Human Rights Committee expressed concern

²³¹⁵ Article 9 of the Federal Law on Citizenship of the Russian Federation stipulates that "the citizenship of the Russian Federation of a child cannot be ended if a child becomes stateless as a result of the termination of their citizenship". This provision serves as a legal guarantee aimed at preventing statelessness.

²³¹⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined second to fourth periodic reports of Estonia. January 2017
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2f2-4&Lang=en

²³¹⁷ <https://rm.coe.int/report-of-the-council-of-europe-commissioner-for-human-rights-dunja-mi/16808d77f4>

²³¹⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the third periodic report of Estonia. February 2019.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fEST%2fCO%

concerned at the limited scope of the amendments insofar as they excluded certain categories of stateless children; the stringent language requirements that formed part of the naturalization tests; and the adverse impact of the "undetermined citizenship" status on the right of stateless persons to political participation, and recommended to take measures to address these gaps.²³¹⁹

In April 2022, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination highlighted a special issue: members of national minorities and 'non-citizens' are sentenced to imprisonment more often as compared to other residents of Estonia. In particular, the Committee pointed out the high number of non-Estonians and "non-citizens" among the prison population. It was also concerned about reports of incidents where prison authorities refused to accept and translate complaints from prisoners that were not written in the official language. CERD experts stressed that this practice limited the opportunities of inmates of minority origin to file complaints. In this context, the Committee reiterated its recommendation that Estonia eliminated discrimination against prisoners on the basis of their lack of proficiency in the Estonian language and that prisoners are not penalized with regard to administrative and disciplinary matters because they do not have a sufficient understanding of the Estonian language.²³²⁰

The comments and recommendations mentioned above have been ignored by the Estonian party. At the same time, right-wing nationalist politicians from the ruling parties do not hide their hopes to solve the problem of "non-citizens" in a natural way (that is, through their attrition, migration, etc.).

²³¹⁹ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2f4&Lang=en

Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the fourth periodic report of Estonia. March 2019.

²³²⁰ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2f10-11&Lang=en

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 10th and 11th periodic reports of Estonia. August 2014.

Japan

In the context of manifestations of neo-Nazism and the glorification of Nazism, Tokyo has consistently pursued a line of rewriting history. As official approaches to interpreting the beginning, progress and results of World War II evolve, a revanchist bias toward whitewashing the aggressive expansionist policy of militarist Japan in Southeast Asia and the Pacific becomes increasingly clear.

The events of those years are often presented as a separate story that has no direct connection with the confrontation between the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition and Nazi Germany in the European theater of war. At the same time, the issues related to Japan's tripartite alliance with Hitler and Italian fascists and the provision by the Japanese of various military-technical and logistical assistance, aimed primarily against the USSR, to Berlin, are consistently silenced.

Behind such trends in Japan lies a process of systematic drift towards the restoration of the positions lost as a result of the defeat in World War II by political forces that promote nationalist Shinto ideas – a set of local pagan beliefs based on the concept of the divine origin of the Emperor and the Japanese people. The extent of the influence of Shinto circles on Tokyo politics is evidenced by their close ties with the country's ruling elite. For example, the largest association in the Legislative Assembly of Japan, the Shinto Parliamentary Association, which counts about 300 deputies in its ranks, lobbies for the interests of the Shinto Political Union, a key political organ of the Shintoists. The second largest group (about 280 deputies) supports the largest right-wing nationalist organization, the Japan Council (Nippon Kaigi), also based on Shinto ideology. Moreover, 15 of the 20 members of F. Kishida's current Cabinet of Ministers, including the Prime Minister himself, are members of at least one of the aforementioned parliamentary bodies.

As noted by Japanese experts, these forces have successfully promoted the idea of revising the restrictions imposed on the country after the war: Shinto conservatives gradually achieved the return of the system of chronology based on the epoch of the reign of the emperors, the restoration of some traditional national

holidays of the pre-war period, in particular the birthday of Emperor Hirohito, under whose leadership Japan entered into an alliance with Nazi Germany and unleashed the war in the Pacific Ocean.

One of the notable revanchist manifestations that disregard the national interests and feelings of the peoples of neighbouring Asian states aggressed by Japan in the 1930s and 1940s is the regular trips by members of Parliament and Government representatives to Yasukuni shrine which commemorates the souls of all those who died for the country in the wars, including Class A war criminals hanged under the sentence of the Tokyo Tribunal. These kinds of group "pilgrimages" of the Japanese political circles are usually made in conjunction with the beginning of the traditional fall (October) and spring (April) festivals, as well as the country's annual commemoration of the anniversary of the end of World War II on August 15.

In April 2023, the shrine was visited by 87 lawmakers belonging to the relevant parliamentary association, and the aforementioned August event was attended by current cabinet member S. Takaichi, Minister in charge of Economic Security. Prime Minister F. Kishida, in accordance with the established practice, refrains from visiting the temple to avoid complications with China and the Republic of Korea, but continues to send regular donations and offerings at his own expense as the LDP Chairman.

These circumstances, coupled with Japan's strong dependence, including in terms of ensuring national security, on its key ally – the United States – create fertile ground for the government, experts and journalists to interpret certain pages of the history of World War II in a one-sided and at times blatantly Russophobic way. In particular, the press, with the tacit approval of the authorities, regularly publishes odious materials containing distorted speculations about the allegedly equal responsibility of the USSR and Hitler's Germany for unleashing the war, articles about "the invasion of Soviet troops in Poland" and "the forcible capture of the three Baltic states after the conclusion of a secret agreement with Berlin."

In January 2021, the Jerusalem Post published a joint article by Foreign Ministers of Japan and Lithuania, T. Motegi and G. Landsbergis, on the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, which clearly demonstrated that most Japanese political elites held predominantly incorrect perceptions about the beginning of World War II. This material refers to the "occupation" of Poland and Lithuania by the Soviet Union and draws unacceptable parallels between the actions of the USSR and the policy of Hitler's Germany which invaded many Eastern European countries. At the same time, the publication predictably blurred the criminal role of Japan itself in World War II and its alliance with the Nazi regime.

There is a clear two-facedness in the statements of official Tokyo concerning the events of August-September 1945. Thus, there is virtually no mention of the responsibility of the United States for the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki either in the annual speeches by the Prime Minister and heads of regional administrations on the occasion of the anniversary of this tragedy or in the relevant analytical materials. At the same time, the media's deliberate highlighting of the topic of the USSR's entry into the war against Japan, on the contrary, clearly demonstrates the country's deep-rooted unwillingness to recognize the objective results of the Second World War that are enshrined in the UN Charter.

The campaign to distort history intensified in 2020-2022 in the context of the 75th anniversary of the beginning of the Manchurian Strategic Offensive Operation on August 9, 1945, as well as August 15 which is considered in Japan as the date when Tokyo ended its hostilities. Publications in the national media, including such major news agencies and newspapers as Jiji, Iomiuri, Asahi, Sankei, or Hokkaido, aggressively replicated Japanese interpretations and abounded in biased, ideologically charged descriptions of the events of that time.

The coverage of the history of the war years in textbooks is done in a revisionist way. In a number of them, information about the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is included into a subsection vaguely entitled "Atomic Bombings and

the Entry of the USSR into the War", which can create a distorted associative pattern.

The results of the work on the approval of the content of school textbooks to be republished and used in high schools since 2023 that were made public by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Culture in March 2022 are also eloquent in this regard. It was reported that all publishers had fully complied with the government's requirement for the "exhaustive coverage" of the "ancestral ownership" by Japan of the "Northern Territories" (the Southern Kurils) and the disputed islands of Takeshima/Dokdo and Senkaku/Diaoyu in the textbooks for the advanced optional courses of Geography and Political Economy.

At the same time, the report negatively assesses the "superficial" handling of official approaches to these problems in the textbooks for the subjects "History of Japan", "World History", "History and Geography" and "Social Science", for which ideological prescriptions of the Ministry are still advisory. It criticizes the "lack" of references to the "continuing illegal occupation" of the Southern Kurils which is described as one of the factors detrimental to Japan's interests and the integrity of its foreign policy, and which leads to the "worrisome risks" of a flawed perception of the importance of defending national sovereignty in the minds of students.

In addition, based on the results of the examination, it is noted with satisfaction that new editions of textbooks on "History and Geography", "World History" and "Social Science" include passages clearly emphasizing Russia's "annexation" of Crimea in 2014. Among other things, they now contain references to Moscow's "violation" of international law, arguments about the Kremlin's attempts to "legitimize the seizure" of the peninsula through "propaganda of a tendentious historical narrative", primarily relying on the fact that Prince Vladimir and his cohorts were baptized in these lands (Chersonesos/Korsun).

The Government's support for the annual "Northern Territories Day" on February 7 also speaks volumes. Traditionally, its central event is a "national rally" with the participation of the country's leadership, parliamentarians and public

figures, and the proclaimed goal is the "return" to Tokyo of the Southern Kurils allegedly illegally seized by the USSR in 1945. Far-right nationalist organizations regularly hold pickets near Russian missions abroad demanding the "return of the Northern Territories". They conduct particularly large, noisy and sometimes aggressive actions, for example, involving cars and buses painted with provocative propaganda slogans and equipped with loudspeakers, on such "important" dates as February 7, August 9 and August 15. The mailboxes of the Embassy and Consulates General are flooded with petitions with the usual set of accusations regarding historical and "island" matters.

The hysterical Russophobic propaganda campaign that was launched in government, journalistic and expert circles in the context of Russia's special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine is yet another manifestation of the Japanese government's line to interpret the results of World War II in a revanchist way in order to justify Tokyo's expansionist militarist policies of those years.

Under the guise of slogans of "ideological solidarity" and adherence to international law, the Kishida administration and major Japanese media regularly voice and publish theories questioning the neo-Nazi and anti-Russian character of the Kiev regime and its longstanding crimes against the Russian-speaking population of Donbass. The public is offered a deliberately distorted picture of events, in which numerous fascist statements and open calls for the genocide of Russians by Ukrainian officials are completely ignored. Instead, an emotionally charged narrative is planted about the alleged crimes committed by the Russian military after the start of the special military operation and about "resistance to the invader" by the Ukrainian armed forces, fighters of the "Azov" nationalist battalion and other similar formations prohibited in Russia. In this context, the decision of the country's competent authorities in April 2022 to remove any reference to Azov as a neo-Nazi organization from the 2021 International Terrorism Review speaks volumes.

An equally eloquent example is the supply to the Armed Forces of Ukraine of military equipment (bullet-proof vests, helmets, etc.) and armoured vehicles (cars and transport all-terrain vehicles) from the arsenals of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces in 2022-2023, which, according to many local experts, may violate the national legislation prohibiting the provision of military and technical assistance in conflict regions.

There have been repeated attempts to exploit the Ukrainian issue in order to satisfy Tokyo's illegitimate territorial claims to the Southern Kurils: Japanese media actively implant the idea that Russia aims to "solve problems by force," drawing parallels between the "invasion of Ukraine" (beginning with the "annexation of Crimea" in 2014) and the "illegal occupation of the Northern Territories by the Soviet troops" in 1945, and that there is no other alternative but to stand in solidarity with the Zelensky regime in order to achieve progress in the "return" of the Russian islands.

In line with the Russophobic campaign launched by the Kishida administration under the pretext of "the Russian aggression against Ukraine," Tokyo's distortion of facts has become unprecedented. Thus, the Hiroshima memorial ceremony on August 6, 2022, from an event dedicated to the memory of the victims of American barbarism, in fact, turned into a propaganda meeting aimed at smearing Russia: a false thesis about a "nuclear threat from Moscow" was being promoted, with organizers making an unprecedented decision to refuse the traditional invitation of Russian representatives to the ceremony.

Another example of direct support for the neo-Nazi ideology is the holding in Tokyo at the parliamentary complex on 1-2 August 2023 of the regular congress of the so-called "Forum of Free Peoples of Post-Russia", a Polish NGO whose activities were recognized as undesirable by the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation in March 2023 and whose members were included in the Russian register of extremists and terrorists. Members of the Japanese parliament who took part in the event signed the final "document" containing calls for the abolition of Russia's statehood and violation of the territorial integrity of our

country. The activists of the "forum" were given a public platform to broadcast hate speech and open calls for terrorist attacks on the Russian territory.

Against this background, it is not surprising to see Tokyo's position during the vote at the UN General Assembly on the resolution on Combating Glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other Practices that Contribute to Fueling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Having abstained over the past years in the vote on this document, which is presented annually by Russia and other co-sponsors, Japan changed its approach in November 2022 and voted again against it.

As for racism, xenophobia and other manifestations of intolerance in Japanese society, they are mainly directed against representatives of other nationalities living in the country. Japan, with a population that is 97 per cent ethnic Japanese, does not have a regulation prohibiting discrimination on racial, national or religious grounds. The lack of comprehensive legislation in this area was highlighted in September 2018 by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), established under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, in its concluding observations on the combined 10th and 11th periodic reports of Japan.²³²¹

International monitoring structures and a significant number of human rights NGOs have consistently criticized Tokyo for the continuing gap in living standards between the indigenous peoples – the Ainu and Ryukyuan – on the one hand and the state-forming nation on the other hand. There are cases of harassment of the representatives of these small ethnic groups both in the labour market and in terms of access to education and a number of social programmes. At the same time, the rights of the Burakumin²³²², descendants of the medieval "impure" caste, continue to be infringed in the areas of employment, housing and marriage.

In the context of the implementation of the May 2019 Law on Promoting the Policy of Public Respect for the Ainu Heritage, it is now recognized that this ethnic

²³²¹ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/287/65/PDF/G1828765.pdf?OpenElement>

²³²² https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fJPN%2fCO%2f10-11&Lang=ru

group still faces biased and discriminatory attitude in everyday life. According to surveys conducted in 2020, about a quarter of people who identify themselves as the Ainu say they have experienced such problems firsthand, and another 13 per cent are aware of such cases among acquaintances. Public discrimination against the Ainu is quite common, including in the mainstream media²³²³, in particular by Japan's largest public broadcaster NHK. Various Ainu and human rights organizations continue to criticize the opportunistic nature of the Law, which, in their opinion, was adopted without sufficient consideration of the viewpoint of the Ainu people and "actually involves the exploitation of their cultural and historical heritage". It is noteworthy that doubts about the usefulness of the central authorities' efforts periodically appear in the expert-journalistic community as well.

The Cabinet is accused of embellishing the positive effect of the proposed socio-economic measures, since the real beneficiaries of the allocated financial injections are the Hokkaido Prefecture and its administrative-territorial entities, and not the Ainu community itself. The need to supplement the basic course with provisions detailing the steps to ensure the rights of small people to traditional methods of fishing and forestry for religious ceremonies is emphasized. For example, since November 2020 the Sapporo District Court (Hokkaido Prefecture) has been hearing a lawsuit filed by the Ainu Raporo Nation group demanding recognition of river fishing as their inalienable right based on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the lifting of the ban on salmon fishing imposed by the Japanese regulations. This is the first litigation of that kind in Japan's judicial practice.

The situation of the indigenous inhabitants of the Ryukyu archipelago, to whom official Tokyo denies any benefits or measures to support their cultural identity, is not easy. International non-governmental organizations note the distortion of school educational courses which contain little or no information about the identity and ethnic and linguistic uniqueness of the Ryukyuan.

2323 <https://www.asahi.com/sp/ajw/articles/14367406>

Cases of manifestation of ethnic hatred and hate crimes against ethnic minorities have been recorded. Even public officials do not shy away from offensive remarks. However, neither governmental officials nor individual persons have yet been brought to justice for racially motivated hate speech or hate crimes.

The latest scandal erupted in December 2022. Derogatory comments were found on the personal blog of M. Sugita, parliamentary vice-minister for internal affairs and communications, with regard to women dressed in traditional costumes attending a meeting of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Under public pressure, the offending politician had to apologize, but her forced "repentance" was not convincing, according to local observers.²³²⁴ The fact that she was removed from her post by Prime Minister F. Kishida only a month later following the opposition's demands, while retaining her parliamentary mandate, caused particular outrage.

People of Korean descent living in the country often become the target of overt discrimination.²³²⁵

For example, the head of the largest cosmetics and diet supplements company DHC, Y. Yoshida, has repeatedly (most prominently in 2016, 2020, and 2021) declared, including on the brand's official website, that the "overrepresentation of Koreans" in the bureaucracy, political circles, and media industry is unacceptable because it "threatens Japanese statehood"²³²⁶. Limited boycott actions, suspended cooperation with the corporation and other forms of public reaction have only temporarily dampened the hostile rhetoric of the DHC leadership. No meaningful legal action against the businessman has ever been taken in Japan.

The adoption in June 2016 of the Law on the Promotion of Efforts to Eliminate Unfair Discriminatory Speech and Behaviour against Persons with Countries of Origin other than Japan was a positive step toward eliminating hate speech.

²³²⁴ <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14783372>

²³²⁵ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-10-17/koreans-in-japan-hate-speech-case-highlights-workplace-racism>

²³²⁶ <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/05/01/national/media-national/hate-speech-in-japan/>

At the same time, critics note that the normative act contains limited legal remedies for ethnic minorities²³²⁷ as its scope of application is narrowed to the actions vis-a-vis persons "legally" residing in the state, and there is no description of specific measures to punish violators.

Japan's General Police Department (GPD) published a report in November 2022 evaluating the performance of law enforcement agencies in 2021, according to which there were six cases of ethnic or racial profiling by local law enforcement officers during the reporting period.²³²⁸ These incidents involved police officers from the Capital District, Kanagawa Prefecture, Miyagi Prefecture, and Osaka Prefecture. Inappropriate behaviour included the attempts to inquire about "nationality" instead of "citizenship," checking of the contents of personal belongings of a young man with African and Japanese roots, and prejudicial comments ("it's rare to see a foreigner driving"), etc. The head of the police department claimed that the officers "did not have discriminatory intent based on racial or ethnic bias". Plans were announced to provide necessary training and instructions to police officers so that their interaction with citizens is carried out in an appropriate manner.

The reason for a detailed review of this aspect by the GPD was the warning to American citizens posted on Twitter on December 6, 2021 by the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo about cases of racial profiling by the Japanese police.²³²⁹ However, experts call the figures cited in the report understated. According to the Tokyo Bar Association, nearly 63 per cent of the 2,094 foreigners interviewed in 2022 faced persistent questioning by law enforcement officials, and 85 per cent of them believed that their physical difference from the Japanese was the reason for it.²³³⁰

In general, the situation in Japan with regard to combating various forms of intolerance can be characterized as unfavourable and gradually deteriorating. In addition, ineffective domestic policies to eliminate discriminatory attitudes toward

2327 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fJPN%2fCO%2f10-11&Lang=ru

2328 https://www.npa/gp/jp/policies/evaluation/04jigo-hyouka/jisseki_hyouka/r4_jizen_bunseki.pdf

2329 <https://twitter.com/ACSTokyo/status/1467629914857816065>

2330 <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20221217/p2a/00m/0na/010000c>

non-titular ethnicities living in the country have contributed to growing interethnic tension.

An upsurge of Russophobia in everyday life was noted in the context of the launch of the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect civilians in Donbass, as well as the anti-Russian hysteria stirred up in the media at the instigation of the Kishida administration. Official authorities are taking consistent steps to instil in the public consciousness the imperative thesis of "total solidarity with the collective West and commitment to condemnation and cancel culture with respect to Russia". Such Russophobic sentiments are projected onto the daily lives of Russian citizens in Japan and lead to violations of their social and economic rights. The Russian visa centre located in the Akasaka district of Tokyo regularly receives anonymous threats and demands that our compatriots "get out of Japan".

There have been cases of denial of employment on the grounds of Russian citizenship. A number of Japanese companies have created a work environment in which their Russian employees, for fear of being fired, do not openly express their opinions about the events happening in our country. On March 3, 2022, there was a case of vandalism when the Red Square Russian goods store in Tokyo was damaged. Other disturbing examples include attempts by a number of hotels to deny accommodation to Russians (February-March 2022; the incidents were promptly resolved after direct intervention by city administrations), public "doubts" by the head of the political council of the opposition Democratic Party for the People, K. Otsuka, about the advisability of placing Russian-language inscriptions on road signs in northern Hokkaido prefecture "in light of the situation in Russia" (when faced with accusations of xenophobia from his followers, he hastily deleted the tweet).²³³¹ The episode with the attempt to hide Russian-language signs at Tokyo's Ebisu station in April 2022 allegedly due to complaints from passengers who found them inappropriate in the context of the situation in Ukraine was quite illustrative (the signs were returned a week later after a wave of

2331 <https://mainichi.jp/articles/20220520/k00/00m/010/411000c>

criticism against the management of the transportation company JR East).

Consular offices of the Russian Federation receive complaints from Russian women testifying about domestic violence by their Japanese spouses, as well as insults and humiliation on the grounds of nationality.

It should be noted that official Tokyo has made certain efforts to curb discrimination against Russians in the Japanese society qualifying such phenomena as "unacceptable and inappropriate" through the mouth of Chief Cabinet Secretary H. Matsuno and Foreign Minister Y. Hayashi.²³³²

In the course of the Russophobic campaign, at the obvious instigation of the official authorities, Japan's political, business and public circles have fully suspended contacts with the Russian ambassador to Tokyo who effectively found himself in "informational isolation", which makes it difficult for him to perform his official duties. An outrageous act of protocol discrimination was the refusal (for the first time in almost 50 years) to invite the head of the Russian diplomatic mission to the memorial ceremonies on the occasion of the anniversary of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

2332 <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/04/20/national/yoshimasa-hayashi-russian-discrimination-concerns/>

Kosovo²³³³

After the decay of Yugoslavia, the Kosovo-Albanian scientific and civic circles turned to make efforts to level down the scale of crimes committed by the collaborators during the Second World War against local residents, to portray the Fascist and Nazi associates as “involuntary followers” of the occupational Italian and then German authorities, which were said to be not supportive of their ideology and made it a goal only to protect the Albanian “ethnos” from the “hostile elements” the Serbs were primarily meant under²³³⁴.

The details of biographies of the prominent epoch-making personalities associated with rendering assistance to the Nazi regime are being carefully “erased” and suppressed so that to support the “national-liberation” paradigm. Discussions and printed materials emphasize the “patriotic” nature of their activities.

The aspiration to “dissociate” to the uttermost from Serbia and “Yugoslavian heritage” results in radical developments. The latter include – the destruction and desecration of dozens of memorials to the fighters against Nazism and Fascism in the time of the Second World War in Kosovo (it resulted in only 11 memorials of the Federative People’s Republic of Yugoslavia and Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia left in the region). At the same time, after 1999, over 1,600 various objects honouring the militants of the terrorist “Kosovo Liberation Army”²³³⁵ emerged.

The Albanian sources use the term “volunteers” (vullnetari) when referring to the Fascist and Nazis’ accomplices out of the Kosovo Albanians. The publications mention that they performed the so-called subsidiary function in securing public order, defending residential towns and border-crossing points in

²³³³ After the NATO aggression against Serbia in 1999, the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija does not fall under control of Belgrade. At the same time, the UN SC resolution 1244 confirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia as regards Kosovo.

²³³⁴ See, for example, «Milicia popullore myslimane antikomuniste» e Sanxhakut 1941-1944! Dardaniapress. 21 July 2022

<https://dardaniapress.net/uncategorized/milicia-popullore-myslimane-antikomuniste-e-sanxhakut-1941-1944/>

²³³⁵ Militsa Chubriilo-Philipovich. “Zhizn s obmanutymi ozhidaniyami” (“Living with Frustrated Expectations”). “Vreme” Serbian Weekly Magazine, No. 1675-76 dated 9 February 2023. P.10.

areas of compact settlement of their ethnos and fought solely against “communists” and Serbian nationalists – the Chetniks.

At the same time, the non-Albanian historians point out that the Kosovars armies attacked Serbian fighters²³³⁶ and provide numerous registered facts of destruction of the Serbian and Montenegrin settlements by the “volunteers”, as well robberies and killings of residents in Kosovo and beyond²³³⁷. At the time of withdrawal of the German troops in 1944-1945, these Kosovo-Albanian groups were used as a covering rear-guard, and after that their members were scattered in the mountain villages of Kosovo and north-east Albania²³³⁸. The most famous commanders of the above mentioned groups were Riz Umeri from the village of Rugova, and Šabana Poluže who acted in the area of Drenica.

It is illustrative that at the end 1990s, the Kosovo Liberation Army under the lead of Hashim Thaçi had as its part the so-called Drenica Group notorious for its atrocious crimes against the Serbs, Roma and political opponents. In view of this, a number of researchers conclude that Drenica is a cradle of the Albanian irredentism.

A separate chapter in the history of collaboration of the Albanians with the Nazi regime stays the creation of SS Skanderbeg division in March 1944, the fact which, as interpreted by the Albanian sources, was dictated by the need to “protect the unarmed Albanian population” from the “dozens of armed groups of Croatian Ustashe and Serbian Chetniks.” The formation of the division was initiated, among others, by a signatory of the Declaration of Independence of Albania in 1912 Bedri Pejani. The command and officer corps included German military personnel; arming, training and support were carried out according to Wehrmacht standards.

As a justification, the Albanian historians mention that the division existed for a short time – only till November 1944 and consisted of not more than 6.5 thousand military men. Over one thousand people enlisted in its ranks “only to

²³³⁶ Dushan Batakovich. Kosovo and Metokhia: zhizn v anklave. (Kosovo and Metokhia: Living in the Enclave). Institute of the Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, 2007. P.55.

²³³⁷ Miranda Vickers. Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo. Hurst & Co, 1998. P.134.

²³³⁸ George Borozan. Albanians in Yugoslavia during the Second World War. Centre of Political Research, Zagreb, 2012. P.367.

receive uniforms and weapons,” after which, they say, they immediately deserted²³³⁹.

Enshrining the collaborationists in the regional toponymy was a component contributing to the “perpetuation of the memory” of them. In such a ways, the streets in Pristina, Uroševac and the city park in Srbica received the name of Poluže; a memorial house, listed as architectural heritage of Kosovo, was opened in his birthplace – the village of Glogovac. A secondary school in Pecs has the name of Pejani.

The most odious example of the glorification of Nazism encouraged by the Kosovo authorities is the reconstruction project of the house of one of the main Nazi henchmen during the Second World War, Xhaferr Deva, who, as mayor of Kosovska Mitrovica, was involved in the persecution of Serbs, Jews, Roma and other non-Albanians. Later, he was the “Minister of the Interior” in the puppet Nazi government in Albania, and was at the forefront of creation of the SS Skanderbeg division. At the end of war, Deva migrated to the United States where he died in 1978.

Written appeals from Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture and Information of Serbia Maja Gojkovic to the leadership of the EU and the UN Development Program in February 2022 led to the fact that these structures, which had previously promised support for the project within the framework of the EU Cultural Heritage as a Driving Force for Intercommunity Dialogue and social cohesion Program, announced that their financing was “frozen.” The idea of glorifying a Nazi collaborator was condemned by the German Ambassador to Pristina Jörn Rohde and the German rapporteur on Kosovo in the European Parliament Viola von Cramon.

In connection with the scandal that erupted in the public space, the “Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports” of Kosovo stated that the building had high architectural value as the first example of Western European style in Kosovska

²³³⁹ Collection of documents of the German institutions about Albanian history of 1941-1944 edited by H. Bajrami. Pristina, 1998. Pp.260-261.

Mitrovica, and for this reason should be protected and restored in any case regardless of which historical figures had lived there. The “Government” of Kosovo remained blind to the protests of Belgrade and Kosovo Serbs and included the corresponding article in the draft budget for 2023 presented to the “Assembly” on 31 October 2022. It provided for the allocation of 300 thousand euros for the “conservation and restoration” of a building in Kosovska Mitrovica. It is envisaged to spend a total of 643 thousand euros for these purposes until 2026. On 15 December 2022, the “Parliament” of Kosovo approved the document in the second reading. The Western structures did not respond to this event at all.

On 4 January 2023, Director of the Museum of Genocide Victims (Serbia) Dejan Ristic sent letters to the ambassadors of Israel, the United States, Germany and Sweden accredited in Belgrade, as well as the head of the EU Delegation, in which he pointed out the negative long-term consequences of the glorification of a Nazi criminal and characterized the ongoing as an extremely dangerous precedent for the Balkans and Europe as a whole. According to his position, such a project *de facto* legitimizes the crimes committed against Serbs, Roma, Jews and other non-Albanian peoples in Kosovo during the Second World War and also indicates that the representatives of national minorities today are also undesirable elements on these lands²³⁴⁰. According to Ristic, the initial idea of the Western curators to open a cultural centre in the renovated building that would deal with the issues of interethnic reconciliation looks especially blasphemous towards the victims²³⁴¹.

The public condemnation of what is going on happening has been repeatedly heard from Efraim Zuroff, Head of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre (Israel), who believes that the condescending attitude of the West towards the historical role of Xh. Deva is explained by the latter’s many years of cooperation with the CIA during his years in the United States²³⁴².

Valdet Deva (descendant of a Kosovo collaborator) announced on 11 January 2023 that he had filed a defamation lawsuit in one of the Berlin courts

²³⁴⁰ Serbian Daily Newspaper “Politika” No. 39192 dated 5 January 2023. P.7.

²³⁴¹ Serbian Daily Newspaper “Kurier” No. 3205 dated 22 January 2023. P.5.

²³⁴² Serbian Daily Newspaper “Politika” No. 39214 dated 28 January 2023. P.7.

against the German Ambassador to Pristina Rode for “disseminating defamatory information” about his ancestor.

There is a graffiti depicting Xh. Deva in the southern (Albanian) part of Kosovska Mitrovica. Three streets in the region were named after him (in Kosovska Mitrovica, Urosevac and Pristina).

One of the key problems of the human rights dossier of the autonomous region, which is not controlled by Belgrade, remains the pronounced discriminatory attitude of the Albanian majority towards the Serbian population. At the same time, instead of looking for the ways to solve the existing problems, the Kosovo authorities are consciously and consistently pursuing a policy of the forced “Albanization” of the region by displacing national minorities.

By the resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted on 3 July 2019 regarding the implementation in Kosovo and Metohija of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities developed in pursuance of the recommendations of UN Mission in Kosovo, the local authorities were advised to take urgent steps to improve the interethnic dialogue and encourage tolerance at the central and local levels; condemn attacks on national minorities by organizing their prompt investigation; make the implementation of the legislation related to the protection of vulnerable ethnic groups more effective; establish work to overcome unequal access to justice for Albanians and representatives of other peoples; guarantee the use of the Serbian language in judicial and administrative documents, etc.²³⁴³

However, with the ultra-nationalist Self-Determination Party led by Albin Kurti coming to power in Kosovo in February 2021, the anti-Serbian course of the provisional bodies of self-government in Pristina intensified many times. During 2022, the number of ethnically motivated incidents increased (150 in total; 128 in 2021), living conditions of the indigenous Serbian population steadily worsened. Due to aggressive provocations of the Kosovo leadership, the situation in the

2343 Resolution CM/ResCMN(2019)11 on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Kosovo. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 July 2019.
https://search.coe.int/cm/pages/result_details.aspx?objectid=090000168095da70

region was teetering on the brink of open conflict, forcing the Serbs to take collective action in order to defend their basic rights and freedoms.

Meanwhile, the Serbs remain the largest national minority in Kosovo (more than 100 thousand people, or approximately 6 per cent of the population) and retain a quota of 10 out of 20 parliamentary mandates assigned to national minorities in the 120-seat unicameral “Assembly” (“Parliament”) of Kosovo. The remaining 10 places are shared by the representative of six other ethnic groups recognized by Pristina as national minorities: Bosniaks, Turks, Goranians, Gypsies (Roma), Ashkali, Egyptians.

At the legislative level, it is necessary for the national minorities to approve any initiatives in the Assembly that affect their interests (the so-called “double majority” principle). However, the Kosovars often bypass this rule. In particular, we mean “pushing” through the “Parliament” the decision to create a Kosovo “Army” based on the “Kosovo Security Force” (KSF) contrary to UN Security Council Resolution 1244. Without consent from the Serb List and failing to achieve the desired “double majority” in the Assembly, the Kosovars began to build up the military component within the KSF itself without formally changing its name. On 14 December 2018, three laws were adopted by a simple majority: on KSF, on Service in the KSF and on Ministry of Defense of Kosovo. Thus, the body, originally intended to eliminate the effect of natural and man-made disasters, was endowed with the functions of protecting the “sovereignty and territorial integrity” of the region. Starting from 2022, the NATO countries (Türkiye, Great Britain, and the United States) considerably increased arms supplies to Kosovo by creating an additional threat to the stability in the region.

The implementation of the accord enshrined in the Brussels agreements between Belgrade and Pristina of 2013 and 2015 to establish the Community of Serb Municipalities of Kosovo (CSMK) with executive powers remains an outstanding issue. The Kosovars refuse to discuss this issue within the framework of a dialogue with Belgrade through the mediation of the European Union. After the resumption of the negotiation process in July 2021, Kosovo leaders stated that

the CSMK could be formed exclusively in accordance with the decision of the regional “constitutional court” in the format of a non-governmental organization completely controlled by Pristina. The “agreement on ways to normalize” relations with Pristina, imposed on Belgrade by Western mediators, does not mention the CSMK.

There were attempts to restrict the freedom of movement of the Serbian population of the region. On 29 June 2022, the “Government” of Kosovo adopted the decision of the forces re-registration of the automobile vehicles owned by local Serbs to replace the status-neutral license plates provided by the Serbian authorities since 1999 by the license plates of the “Republic of Kosovo”. The vehicles that failed to undergo the procedure within the established deadline should be expropriated for the benefit of the Kosovo “state”. After mass protests organized by the unsatisfied Serbs, Kurti, under pressure from the West, postponed the introduction of new rules several times. On 23 November 2022, with the assistance of the EU, the parties reached an agreement, according to which Belgrade undertook to no longer issue license plates with the designation of Kosovo municipalities, and Pristina - to cease all further actions to re-register cars.

On 5 November 2022, in response to the removal from office of the head of the Kosovo “police” in the northern municipalities Nenad Djuric (Serb), who refused to comply with the decision to re-register vehicles, the regional Serbs announced their withdrawal from the “state institutions”. The “minister” in the “government”, “deputies of parliament”, heads of four “municipalities”, more than 450 police officers, more than 100 employees of the “border service”, 150 employees of the “court” and “prosecutor’s office” resigned. Taking advantage of the resulting power vacuum, Kurti, on 14 December 2022, authorized the forceful seizure of the “municipal council” of North Mitrovica, where all the seats without any democratic procedures were occupied by Kosovo Albanians and Muslim Bosniaks. Earlier, on 1 December 2022, without any foreseen consultations with the Serbs in the “parliament”, the leader of the Progressive Democratic Party Nenad Rasic, loyal to Pristina, was introduced into the “cabinet” of Kosovo.

On 10 December 2022, in protest against the unjust detention of the former Serb “police” officer Dejan Pantic for the alleged involvement in an attack on the “Central Electoral Commission” the employees in Kosovo Mitrovica, the Serbs, in an attempt to defend their rights, began to build barricades from trucks on the main roads in the north of the region (the were completely dismantled on 5 January 2023).

There were reported cases of discrimination in the electoral area. Contrary to the previous long-term practice, despite calls from the international presences, leadership of the EU and Western countries, Pristina disrupted the holding of voting in the Serb-populated areas of the region on 16 January 2022 in a referendum on amending the Serbian Constitution and on 3 April 2022 - in the general elections in Serbia. Only a smaller part of the electorate could leave for the Central Serbia to vote.

On 23 April 2023, the extraordinary “municipal elections” were held in four Serb-populated communities in the north. The largest party of regional Serbs, the Serb List, refused to participate until Pristina creates conditions for the return of the Serbs to the “government bodies” (formation of the CSMC, withdrawal of special forces “police” from the north). Only 13 Serbs came to the polling stations, the turnout including Albanian voters was 3.5 per cent. The “winners” Albanians received from 100 to 519 votes, depending on the municipality, and were sworn in as new “mayors” in May.

On 26 May 2023, the placement, as directed from Pristina, of fictitious “mayors” in the municipal buildings of Zvečan, Zubin-Potok and Leposavić caused protests from residents and sharply aggravated the situation. To disperse the Serb protesters, the “police” used tear gas and stun grenades, many of them were injured. On 29 May, the attempt to disperse the demonstrators’ crowd in Zvečan was made by the NATO contingent military to result in harsh fistfights using the fire arms. Dozens of Serbs and NATO soldiers were injured. “Mayors” who do not represent the local Serb population continue to lead municipalities. One of the de-escalation requirements of Belgrade and the West is to repeat elections in the

North.

The Serbs in Kosovo are regularly subjected to illegal economic pressure, and unlawful seizures of property. On 8 December 2022, in Velika Hoča (Orahovac Municipality), the Kosovo «police» with the NATO contingent enforcement support, collected 42 thousand litres of wine from the private winery owned by the Serbian family of Petrovič. It has become regular to confiscate land parcels from the Serbs in the North of the region to create their Kosovo «police» facilities. In June 2023, Pristina blocked again the import of goods from the central Serbia, including medical goods and drugs, which resulted in the threat of humanitarian crisis in the Serb-populated communities. Persecutions of the Serbian business multiplied, large-scale withdrawals of licences from enterprises, including strategic ones, are done: in August 2023, the activities of “Telekom Serbia” – a daughter company of “MTC” LLC - were terminated.

Demonstrative “surprise inspections to combat crimes”, which in reality are actions of intimidation, remain one of the tools to exert pressure on Serbs. In 2022, heavily armed Special Forces of the Kosovo "police" (ROSU) carried out a series of "anti-drug" operations in Zvečan, Izvor, Leposavić and Zubin-Potok. Searches and withdrawals of goods in stores and pharmacies took place in a number of “municipalities” under the excuse of “combating trafficking”. In October 2021, in Zvečan and Kosovska Mitrovica, such assaults resulted in large-scale disturbances; small arms were used against the protesters. Similar “operational activities” were carried out in May 2022 in Gračanica, Ranilug and Štrpce. In 2023, the presence of Pristina security forces in the north of Kosovo has increased significantly; illegal arrests of Serbs have become more frequent; cases of infringement of their collective rights, and the declaration of their civil associations as terrorist organizations.

Against the backdrop of the Kosovo “authorities” building up an atmosphere of hatred towards the non-Albanian population, attempts of physical reprisal against the Serbs have resumed. On Christmas Eve, 6 January 2023, in the municipality of Štrpce, two Serbs – cousins: Stefan (11 years old) and Milos (21

years old) Stojanovič - were injured by the shooting opened by a local Albanian – a security officer Kurtai. In the night on the 7th of January, in the Klokot Municipality, a group of Albanians beat a Serb Tomič (18 years old) who was coming back home from the Christmas service. On 17 June 2023, in Zvečan, Kosovar police officers beat two Serbian teenagers of 16 and 18 years old.

The problem of the use of languages of national minorities in Kosovo is underestimated due to various reasons. By recognizing its presence, a number of experts name an extreme shortage of qualified professionals able to provide quality translations of various documents of Kosovo institutions from Albanian into Serbian (both languages are considered to be official under the regional “Constitution”). In fact, the Kosovo authorities continue to force the Serbian as well as other national minorities’ languages out of all areas of social life.

Errors in translations are often made intentionally. In particular, the name of the self-proclaimed “Republic of Kosovo” in the Serbian version of naming various “public” institutions is provided Albanian-style (“Kosova”). Serbian journalists covering the work of the Kosovo “Parliament” regularly encounter the absence of simultaneous translation of meetings into Serbian. Language discrimination has become particularly acute during the COVID-19 pandemic: Kosovo Serbian reporters complained that key public health decisions and announcements by authorities were communicated to the population only in Albanian.

The topic of interethnic tension in Kosovo has come into the focus of attention of international intergovernmental human rights organizations. The fourth opinion on Kosovo published on 2 January 2018 by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities operating within the Council of Europe, prepared taking into account the comments of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, refers to the insufficient efforts of the Pristina “authorities” in implementing rights of national minorities²³⁴⁴.

²³⁴⁴ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities Opinion on

Another problem of the region is the discrimination in the area of religion. To date, no changes have been made to the law on Freedom of Religion that would allow religious organizations to obtain the status of legal entities, conduct business activities, own property, open bank accounts and enjoy tax benefits. It was also assumed that the amendments would regulate the status of some religious groups requiring recognition as separate religious communities.

The restoration of the Church of St. Nicholas on the territory of the Monastery of the Holy Archangels in Prizren, the Church of Our Lady of Ljeviš, included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, is not moving forward, as well as the completion of the construction of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Pristina, despite the existing decision of the Kosovo court in favour of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC). In January 2020, Pristina University filed a lawsuit in the municipal court of the first instance demanding to cancel the decision of the Serbian Government dated 1991 to provide the SOC with the land property for the construction of the mentioned cathedral. If successful, the authorities will be free to remove the cathedral as far as it is allegedly prohibits the extension of the above mentioned educational institution.

It is illustrative that immediately after that, on 26 February 2020, the Court of Appeal of Kosovo ruled in favour of the Catholic Church, recognizing its right to a plot of 7.5 thousand square meters, adjacent to the building of the Cathedral of Mother Teresa in the city centre - not far from the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. Here comes also a year-long confrontation between the municipality of Pristina and the Jewish community of Kosovo over the location of the future synagogue, permission in principle for the construction of which was received back in 2016. Local authorities are denying the right to construct a facility in the centre of the city, demanding it to be moved to the periphery, which causes reasonable indignation among the Jews.

Publications and appeals of the SOC note acts of vandalism against religious

sites (churches, monasteries, cemeteries), during which buildings are damaged and threats are heard against believers. There are often cases of desecration of the Serbian orthodox cemeteries and monuments.

In June 2022, the Kosovo “police”, under a far-fetched pretext, prevented the organization of the liturgy on the occasion of the Ascension Day in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Pristina. Those facts are confirmed, *inter alia*, by the international presence: in July 2022, the head of the OSCE mission in Pristina Michael Davenport (Great Britain) presented a report on the Protection of the Cultural Heritage in Kosovo in which he documented 247 incidents happened to the cultural and religious sites in 2014-2020²³⁴⁵.

The law on the Protection of Specially Protected Areas, which provides for a special regime in relation to cultural and historical sites, is constantly violated. In August 2020, there was another attempt to resume the construction of the highway to Montenegro (Dečani – Plav) started as far as in 2018 through the territory adjacent to Visoki Dečani Monastery – a XIV-century site included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Regardless the efforts by the international mediators, who were lucky to temporarily suspend the works, the head of the local municipality stated that he did not have any intention to go backwards and counted on getting support from the Kosovo “Constitutional Court”. The authorities are not going to implement the decision of this Court dated 20 May 2016, which assigned the Visoki Dečani Monastery the right to own two plots of 24 hectares, refusing to register them as the property of the Monastery in the municipal land registry.

In 2021-2022, the European cultural heritage protection organization “Europa Nostra”, after visiting Kosovo, indicated that there were threats remaining concerning Visoki Dečani²³⁴⁶ and other SOC sites, which caused a negative reaction from the Kosovars, accusations that the NGO was biased and “working for

²³⁴⁵ Protection of Cultural Heritage in Kosovo. OSCE Mission in Kosovo. July 2022
<https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/e/b/522892.pdf>

²³⁴⁶ See, for example,
Europa Nostra and EIB Institute announce Europe’s 7 Most Endangered heritage sites 2021. Europa Nostra. 8 April 2021
<https://www.europanostra.org/europa-nostra-and-eib-institute-announce-europes-7-most-endangered-heritage-sites-2021/>

the interests of Belgrade.”

Annexes

List of Annexes:

1. Text of United Nations General Assembly resolution 77/204 "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" (Russian)
2. Text of United Nations General Assembly resolution 77/204 "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" (English)
3. List of cosponsors of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 77/204 "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance"
4. Results of voting when adopting draft United Nations General Assembly "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" on 15 December 2022

**Резолюция, принятая Генеральной Ассамблеей
15 декабря 2022 года**

[по докладу Третьего комитета (A/77/461, пункт 31)]

77/204. Борьба с героизацией нацизма, неонацизмом и другими видами практики, которые способствуют эскалации современных форм расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости

Генеральная Ассамблея,

руководствуясь Уставом Организации Объединенных Наций, Всеобщей декларацией прав человека²³⁴⁷, Международным пактом о гражданских и политических правах²³⁴⁸, Международной конвенцией о ликвидации всех форм расовой дискриминации²³⁴⁹ и другими соответствующими документами по правам человека,

ссылаясь на положения резолюций Комиссии по правам человека 2004/16 от 16 апреля 2004 года²³⁵⁰ и 2005/5 от 14 апреля 2005 года²³⁵¹ и соответствующих резолюций Совета по правам человека, в частности резолюций 7/34 от 28 марта 2008 года²³⁵², 18/15 от 29 сентября 2011 года²³⁵³ и 21/33 от 28 сентября 2012 года²³⁵⁴, а также резолюций Генеральной Ассамблеи 60/143 от 16 декабря 2005 года, 61/147 от 19 декабря 2006 года, 62/142 от 18 декабря 2007 года, 63/162 от 18 декабря 2008 года, 64/147 от 18 декабря 2009 года, 65/199 от 21 декабря 2010 года, 66/143 от 19 декабря 2011 года, 67/154 от 20 декабря 2012 года, 68/150 от 18 декабря 2013 года, 69/160 от 18 декабря 2014 года, 70/139 от 17 декабря 2015 года, 71/179 от 19 декабря 2016 года, 72/156 от 19 декабря 2017 года, 73/157 от 17 декабря 2018 года, 74/136 от 18 декабря 2019 года, 75/169 от 16 декабря 2020 года и 76/149 от 16 декабря 2021 года по этому вопросу и своих резолюций 61/149 от 19 декабря 2006 года, 62/220 от 22 декабря 2007 года, 63/242 от 24 декабря 2008 года, 64/148 от 18 декабря 2009 года, 65/240 от 24 декабря 2010 года, 66/144 от 19 декабря 2011 года, 67/155 от 20 декабря 2012 года, 68/151 от 18 декабря 2013 года, 69/162 от 18 декабря 2014 года, 70/140 от 17 декабря 2015 года, 71/181 от 19 декабря 2016 года, 72/157 от 19 декабря 2017 года, 73/262 от 22 декабря 2018 года, 74/137 от 18 декабря 2019 года, 75/237 от 31 декабря 2020 года и 76/226 от 24 декабря 2021 года, озаглавленных «Глобальный призыв к конкретным мерам, направленным на ликвидацию расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости и всеобъемлющее осуществление и принятие последующих мер по выполнению Дурбанской декларации и Программы действий»,

учитывая другие важные инициативы Генеральной Ассамблеи, направленные на

²³⁴⁷ Резолюция 217 А (III).

²³⁴⁸ См. резолюцию 2200 А (XXI), приложение.

²³⁴⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 660, No. 9464.

²³⁵⁰ См. Официальные отчеты Экономического и Социального Совета, 2004 год, Дополнение № 3 (E/2004/23), гл. II, разд. А.

²³⁵¹ Там же, 2005 год, Дополнение № 3 (E/2005/23), гл. II, разд. А.

²³⁵² См. Официальные отчеты Генеральной Ассамблеи, шестьдесят третья сессия, Дополнение № 53 (A/63/53), гл. II.

²³⁵³ Там же, шестьдесят шестая сессия, Дополнение № 53А и исправление (A/66/53/Add.1 и A/66/53/Add.1/Corr.1), гл. II.

²³⁵⁴ Там же, шестьдесят седьмая сессия, Дополнение № 53А (A/67/53/Add. 1), гл. II.

повышение степени осведомленности о страданиях жертв расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости и дискриминации в различных формах, в том числе в исторической перспективе, в частности в память о жертвах рабства и трансатлантической работорговли,

ссылаясь на Устав Нюрнбергского трибунала и приговор Трибунала, который признал преступными, в частности, организацию СС и ее составные части, включая «Ваффен СС», в лице официальных членов СС, причастных к совершению или знавших о совершении военных преступлений и преступлений против человечности, связанных со Второй мировой войной, а также на другие соответствующие положения Устава и приговора,

памятуя об ужасах Второй мировой войны и подчеркивая в этой связи, что победа над нацизмом во Второй мировой войне способствовала формированию условий для создания Организации Объединенных Наций, призванной предотвратить будущие войны и избавить грядущие поколения от бедствий войны,

отмечая, что неонацизм не сводится лишь к героизации движения, существовавшего в прошлом, а представляет собой современное явление, которое поощряют субъекты, кровно заинтересованные в расовом неравенстве и готовые пойти на многое ради того, чтобы заручиться широкой поддержкой своих необоснованных притязаний на расовое превосходство,

ссылаясь на соответствующие положения Дурбанской декларации и Программы действий, принятых 8 сентября 2001 года Всемирной конференцией по борьбе против расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости²³⁵⁵, в частности пункт 2 Декларации и пункты 84-86 Программы действий, а также на соответствующие положения итогового документа Конференции по обзору Дурбанского процесса от 24 апреля 2009 года²³⁵⁶, в частности пункты 11, 13 и 54,

будучи встревожена распространением во многих частях мира различных экстремистских политических партий, движений, идеологий и групп расистского и ксенофобского толка, включая группы неонацистов и «бритоголовых», и тем, что эта тенденция привела к принятию дискриминационных мер и политики на местном и национальном уровнях,

с обеспокоенностью отмечая, что даже в тех случаях, когда неонацисты или экстремисты формально не входят в состав правительства, присутствие в нем ультраправых идеологов может привести к включению в процесс управления и политический дискурс тех же самых идеологических концепций, которые делают неонацизм и экстремизм столь опасными,

будучи встревожена распространением песен и видеоигр, пропагандирующих расовую ненависть и подстрекающих к дискриминации, вражде или насилию,

будучи обеспокоена тем, что группы, пропагандирующие ненависть, используют онлайн-платформы для планирования публичных мероприятий, включая митинги и демонстрации, нацеленные на пропаганду расизма, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости, а также насильственные акции, и для распространения информации о них и мобилизации средств на их проведение,

памятуя о той роли, которую может играть Интернет в содействии равенству, инклюзивности и недискриминации как составляющей укрепления демократии и уважения прав человека,

испытывая серьезную обеспокоенность в связи с тем, что неонацистские группы, а также другие группы и отдельные лица, исповедующие идеологию ненависти, все активнее работают с восприимчивыми лицами, главным образом детьми и молодежью,

²³⁵⁵ См. A/CONF.189/12 и A/CONF.189/12/Согг.1, гл. I.

²³⁵⁶ См. A/CONF.211/8, гл. I.

используя специально созданные веб-сайты для их идеологической обработки и вербовки,

будучи глубоко обеспокоена всеми недавними проявлениями насилия и терроризма, спровоцированными воинствующим национализмом, расизмом, антисемитизмом, дискриминацией на основе религии, убеждений или происхождения, в том числе исламофобией, христианофобией и афрофобией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью, в том числе во время спортивных мероприятий,

с глубокой обеспокоенностью констатируя вызывающее тревогу продолжение увеличения числа случаев дискриминации, нетерпимости и насильственного экстремизма, мотивируемых антисемитизмом, религией или убеждениями, в том числе исламофобией и христианофобией, и предубеждениями против лиц, имеющих иное этническое происхождение, исповедующих иные религии или придерживающихся иных убеждений,

обращая особое внимание на отсутствие единообразия среди существующих норм, касающихся защиты свободы слова и выражения мнений и запрета расовой дискриминации, а также пропаганды национальной, расовой или религиозной ненависти, представляющей собой подстрекательство к дискриминации, вражде или насилию,

с обеспокоенностью отмечая в этой связи, что в силу различия национальных стандартов, запрещающих язык ненависти, некоторые страны могут служить убежищем для распространителей неонацистских, экстремистских, агрессивных националистических, ксенофобских или расистских идей, поскольку многие неонацистские и близкие к ним экстремистские группы расистского и ксенофобского толка действуют на транснациональном уровне, опираясь на поставщиков Интернет-услуг или платформы социальных сетей,

подчеркивая, что цель борьбы с языком ненависти заключается не в том, чтобы ограничить или запретить свободу слова, а в том, чтобы предотвратить подстрекательство к дискриминации и насилию, которое должно быть запрещено законом,

выражая обеспокоенность тем, что экстремистские и разжигающие ненависть группы, включая неонацистские группы, используют цифровые технологии, чтобы распространять свою идеологию, и признавая при этом, что цифровые технологии имеют большое значение для осуществления прав человека и борьбы с расизмом, расовой дискриминацией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью,

1. *подтверждает* соответствующие положения Дурбанской декларации и итогового документа Конференции по обзору Дурбанского процесса, в которых государства осудили попытки сохранить и возродить неонацизм, неофашизм и агрессивные националистические идеологии, основанные на расовых и национальных предубеждениях, и заявили, что эти явления никогда не могут заслуживать оправдания – ни в каких случаях и ни при каких обстоятельствах;

2. *ссылается* на положения Дурбанской декларации и итогового документа Конференции по обзору Дурбанского процесса, в которых государства признали, что осуществление права на свободу выражения мнений, в частности средствами массовой информации и с помощью новых технологий, включая Интернет, и полное уважение права свободно искать, получать и распространять информацию могут внести позитивный вклад в дело борьбы с расизмом, расовой дискриминацией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью;

3. *принимает к сведению* доклад Специального докладчика по вопросу о современных формах расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости, подготовленный в соответствии с просьбой, содержащейся в ее резолюции 76/149²³⁵⁷;

4. *с тревогой отмечает*, что Российская Федерация пытается оправдать свою территориальную агрессию против Украины мнимым предлогом искоренения

²³⁵⁷ A/77/512.

неонацизма, и подчеркивает, что использование неонацизма в качестве предлога для оправдания территориальной агрессии серьезно подрывает подлинные попытки борьбы с неонацизмом;

5. *выражает признательность* Верховному комиссару Организации Объединенных Наций по правам человека и Управлению Верховного комиссара Организации Объединенных Наций по правам человека за их усилия по борьбе с расизмом, расовой дискриминацией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью, в том числе за ведение Управлением Верховного комиссара базы данных о практических способах борьбы с расизмом, расовой дискриминацией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью;

6. *выражает глубокую обеспокоенность* по поводу героизации в любой форме нацистского движения, неонацизма и бывших членов организации «Ваффен СС», в том числе в форме сооружения памятников и мемориалов и проведения публичных демонстраций в целях прославления нацистского прошлого, нацистского движения и неонацизма, а также посредством объявления или попыток объявить членов указанной организации и тех, кто боролся против антигитлеровской коалиции, сотрудничал с нацистским движением и совершал военные преступления и преступления против человечности, участниками национально-освободительных движений, а также переименования улиц в целях их героизации;

7. *призывает* ко всеобщей ратификации и эффективному осуществлению Международной конвенции о ликвидации всех форм расовой дискриминации и настоятельно призывает те государства-участники, которые еще не сделали этого, рассмотреть вопрос о том, чтобы сделать заявление в соответствии с ее статьей 14, и тем самым признать компетенцию Комитета по ликвидации расовой дискриминации принимать и рассматривать сообщения от отдельных лиц или групп лиц, находящихся под их юрисдикцией, которые утверждают, что они являются жертвами нарушения государством-участником каких-либо прав, закрепленных в Конвенции;

8. *настоятельно призывает* государства ликвидировать все формы расовой дискриминации всеми соответствующими средствами, в том числе, сообразно обстоятельствам, законодательно, обеспечив при этом, чтобы закрепленное в законодательстве определение расовой дискриминации соответствовало определению, содержащемуся в статье 1 Конвенции;

9. *рекомендует* тем государствам, которые сделали оговорки к статье 4 Конвенции, серьезно рассмотреть вопрос об отзыве таких оговорок в первоочередном порядке, как было подчеркнуто Специальным докладчиком по вопросу о современных формах расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости;

10. *признает*, что дискриминация по признаку расовой, этнической или религиозной принадлежности или убеждений во всех ее формах и проявлениях, включая неонацизм, исламофобию, христианофобию и антисемитизм, представляет угрозу для социальной сплоченности в целом, а не только для тех расовых и этнических групп, против которых она направлена непосредственно;

11. *напоминает* о том, что любые законодательные или конституционные меры, принимаемые в целях противодействия экстремистским политическим партиям, движениям, идеологиям и группам расистского и ксенофобского толка, включая группы неонацистов и «бритоголовых», и подобным им экстремистским идеологическим движениям, должны быть сообразны соответствующим международным обязательствам в области прав человека, в частности сформулированным в статьях 4 и 5 Конвенции и статьях 19-22 Международного пакта о гражданских и политических правах;

12. *призывает* государства разработать и осуществлять национальные планы действий по ликвидации расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости, с целью обеспечить, в частности, тщательное отслеживание

проявлений нацизма, неонацизма и отрицания Холокоста, как, например, торжественные чествования нацистского режима, его союзников и связанных с ними организаций;

13. *рекомендует* государствам – участникам Конвенции принять надлежащие меры для приведения их законодательства в соответствие с их обязательствами по Конвенции, в том числе по статье 4;

14. *подчеркивает*, что обеспечение права на свободу выражения мнений, проведение мирных собраний и свободу ассоциации имеет важное значение для поддержки борьбы с расизмом, расовой дискриминацией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью во всем мире;

15. *вновь особо отмечает* рекомендацию Специального докладчика в адрес государств запретить «любые торжественные чествования – как официального, так и неофициального характера – нацистского режима, его союзников и связанных с ними организаций»²³⁵⁸, особо отмечает также, что подобные виды практики оскорбляют память бесчисленных жертв Второй мировой войны и оказывают негативное влияние на детей и молодежь, и подчеркивает в этой связи, что государствам необходимо принять в соответствии с международным правом прав человека меры по противодействию любому чествованию нацистской организации СС и всех ее составных частей, включая «Ваффен СС», и что отсутствие эффективного противодействия со стороны государств подобным видам практики несовместимо с обязательствами государств — членов Организации Объединенных Наций по ее Уставу;

16. *выражает глубокую обеспокоенность* участвовавшими попытками и случаями осквернения или разрушения памятников, воздвигнутых в честь тех, кто боролся против нацизма в годы Второй мировой войны, а также незаконной эксгумации или переноса их останков и в этой связи настоятельно призывает государства в полной мере выполнять их соответствующие обязательства, в частности по статье 34 Дополнительного протокола I к Женевским конвенциям 1949 года²³⁵⁹;

17. *решительно осуждает* инциденты, связанные с героизацией и пропагандой нацизма, как то: акты нанесения граффити и рисунков пронацистского содержания, в том числе на памятники жертвам Второй мировой войны;

18. *приветствует* усилия государств-членов по сохранению исторической правды, в том числе путем строительства и сохранения памятников и мемориалов, посвященных тем, кто сражался в рядах антигитлеровской коалиции;

19. *выражает тревогу* по поводу использования экстремистскими группами, включая неонацистские группы, и отдельными лицами, исповедующими идеологию ненависти, информационных технологий, Интернета и социальных сетей для вербовки новых членов, в особенности для обращения к детям и молодежи, в том числе для усиления воздействия распространяемых ими идей ненависти, признавая при этом, что Интернет можно также использовать для борьбы с такими группами и для оказания противодействия этим группам;

20. *призывает* государства принять соответствующие меры для противодействия новым и возникающим угрозам, связанным с ростом числа террористических атак, инспирируемых расизмом, ксенофобией и проявлениями нетерпимости в иных формах или совершаемых во имя религии или убеждений;

21. *с обеспокоенностью отмечает* значительное число инцидентов расистского характера по всему миру, включая активизацию групп «бритоголовых», причастных ко многим из этих инцидентов, а также всплеск насилия на почве расизма и ксенофобии, направленного, в частности, против лиц, принадлежащих к национальным или этническим, религиозным и языковым меньшинствам, или на какой-либо иной

²³⁵⁸ A/72/291, п. 79.

²³⁵⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1125, No. 17512.

почве, включая поджоги домов и акты вандализма и насилия в школах и местах отправления культа и на кладбищах;

22. *подтверждает*, что такие акты могут при определенных обстоятельствах быть квалифицированы как подпадающие под действие Конвенции, что они не могут быть оправданы как акты осуществления свободы мирных собраний, свободы ассоциации или свободы выражения мнений и что они будут зачастую подпадать под действие статьи 20 Международного пакта о гражданских и политических правах и в отношении них могут вводиться определенные ограничения, предусмотренные статьями 19, 21 и 22 Пакта;

23. *рекомендует* государствам принять надлежащие конкретные меры, в том числе в законодательной области и в сфере образования, в соответствии с их международными обязательствами в области прав человека, с тем чтобы предотвратить пересмотр истории и итогов Второй мировой войны и отрицание преступлений против человечности и военных преступлений, совершенных во время Второй мировой войны;

24. *призывает* государства принимать активные меры для обеспечения того, чтобы в системах образования были подготовлены необходимые материалы, точно отражающие историю, а также поощряющие толерантность и другие международные принципы в области прав человека;

25. *ссылается* на вынесенную Специальным докладчиком рекомендацию о том, что просвещение, направленное на то, чтобы не дать прорасти семенам расизма, посеянным националистическим популизмом, должно включать в себя точное и репрезентативное изложение национальной истории, отдающее должное расовому и этническому многообразию и разоблачающее лживые попытки вычеркнуть этнические группы из национальной истории и самосознания нации в целях сохранения этнонационалистических мифов о «чистоте» нации в расовом или этническом отношении²³⁶⁰;

26. *безоговорочно осуждает* любое отрицание или попытку отрицания Холокоста, а также все проявления религиозной нетерпимости, подстрекательства, преследования или насилия в отношении отдельных лиц или общин по признаку этнического происхождения или религиозных убеждений;

27. *подтверждает свою глубокую приверженность* исполнению долга памяти и приветствует призыв Специального докладчика активно сохранять те связанные с Холокостом объекты, которые использовались нацистами в качестве лагерей смерти, концентрационных лагерей и лагерей принудительного труда и тюрем, а также его обращенный к государствам призыв принять меры, в том числе законодательные, правоохранительные и образовательные, с тем чтобы положить конец любому отрицанию Холокоста²³⁶¹;

28. *ссылается* на сделанный Специальным докладчиком вывод о том, что ревизионизм и попытки фальсифицировать историю могут при определенных обстоятельствах подпадать под предусмотренный в статье 4 а) Конвенции запрет использования языка ненависти, которое государства обязаны объявить караемым по закону преступлением²³⁶², и что предпринимаемые неонацистами при вербовке попытки пропагандировать экстремистскую идеологию или расовую, этническую или религиозную ненависть и нетерпимость могут подпадать под действие статьи 4 b) Конвенции;

29. *призывает* государства продолжать принимать все надлежащие меры, направленные на предупреждение и пресечение использования языка ненависти, в том

²³⁶⁰ A/73/305 и A/73/305/Corr.1, п. 56.

²³⁶¹ A/72/291, п. 91.

²³⁶² A/HRC/38/53, п. 15.

числе в Интернете, и подстрекательства к насилию против лиц, находящихся в уязвимом положении, в том числе в рамках организации собраний и сопряженных с насилием акций протеста, сбора средств и совершения других действий;

30. *выражает серьезную озабоченность* в связи с попытками запретить на законодательном уровне символику, ассоциируемую в государствах с победой над нацизмом;

31. *выражает глубокую обеспокоенность* по поводу попыток распространения коммерческой рекламы, спекулирующей на страданиях жертв военных преступлений и преступлений против человечности, совершенных нацистским режимом во время Второй мировой войны;

32. *подчеркивает*, что память необходимо уважать и что описанные выше виды практики оскорбляют память бесчисленных жертв преступлений против человечности, совершенных во время Второй мировой войны, в частности преступлений, совершенных организацией СС и теми, кто боролся против антигитлеровской коалиции и сотрудничал с нацистским движением, и могут оказывать негативное влияние на детей и молодежь и что отсутствие эффективного противодействия со стороны государств подобным видам практики несовместимо с обязательствами государств – членов Организации Объединенных Наций по ее Уставу, включая обязательства, относящиеся к целям и принципам Организации;

33. *подчеркивает также*, что все виды такой практики могут вести к эскалации современных форм расизма, расовой дискриминации, антисемитизма, дискриминации на основе религии или убеждений, включая исламофобию и христианофобию, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости и способствуют распространению и умножению числа различных экстремистских политических партий, движений и групп расистского и ксенофобского толка, включая группы неонацистов и «бритоголовых», и призывает в этой связи к повышению бдительности;

34. *выражает обеспокоенность* в связи с тем, что угроза правам человека и демократии со стороны экстремистских политических партий, движений и групп носит всеобщий характер и что от нее не застрахована ни одна страна;

35. *особо отмечает* необходимость принятия соответствующих мер для борьбы с описанными выше видами практики и призывает государства и все другие заинтересованные стороны принимать при полном уважении международного права прав человека более эффективные меры по предупреждению подобных явлений и формирования экстремистских движений расистского и ксенофобского толка, создающих реальную угрозу демократическим ценностям, и борьбе с ними, а также повышать бдительность и инициативно добиваться признания этих проблем и эффективно их решать;

36. *обращает особое внимание* на то, что надежные дезагрегированные данные и статистическая информация о преступлениях на почве расизма и ксенофобии имеют большое значение для квалификации совершенных правонарушений, выявления характерных признаков жертв и преступников и установления возможных связей последних с экстремистскими движениями или группами, улучшения понимания этого явления, определения эффективных мер борьбы с преступлениями на почве расовой неприязни и ксенофобии и оценки воздействия этих мер, и напоминает в этой связи о принятых в Повестке дня в области устойчивого развития на период до 2030 года²³⁶³ обязательствах в отношении данных, мониторинга и подотчетности, включая сбор данных в разбивке по параметрам, значимым для стран;

37. *рекомендует* государствам принимать дальнейшие меры в поддержку подготовки сотрудников полиции и других правоохранительных органов по вопросам,

²³⁶³ Резолюция 70/1.

касающимся идеологий экстремистских политических партий, движений и групп, апологетика которых представляет собой подстрекательство к насилию на почве расизма и ксенофобии, укреплять свой потенциал в деле борьбы с преступлениями на почве расизма и ксенофобии и предупреждать практику расового профилирования, выполнять свою обязанность привлекать к ответственности виновных в таких преступлениях и бороться с безнаказанностью;

38. *выражает глубокую обеспокоенность* по поводу увеличения числа мест, занимаемых представителями экстремистских партий расистского или ксенофобского толка в ряде национальных и местных парламентов, и особо отмечает в этой связи, что все демократические политические партии должны разрабатывать свои программы и строить свою деятельность на основе принципа уважения прав человека и свобод, демократии, верховенства права и благого управления и осуждать любые заявления, пропагандирующие идеи расового превосходства или ненависти и преследующие цель эскалации современных форм расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости;

39. *напоминает* об обеспокоенности Специального докладчика по поводу возрождения неонацизма в современную эпоху и расширения поддержки и принятия неонацизма и связанной с ним идеологии во все большем числе стран²³⁶⁴;

40. *с удовлетворением отмечает* в этой связи обращенный к политическим лидерам и партиям призыв Специального докладчика решительно осуждать подстрекательство к расовой дискриминации или ксенофобии, утверждать идеалы терпимости и уважения и воздерживаться от формирования коалиций с экстремистскими партиями расистского или ксенофобского толка²³⁶⁵;

41. *приветствует* рекомендацию Специального докладчика продолжать принимать в рамках национального законодательства и в соответствии с международным правом прав человека меры, направленные на предупреждение использования языка ненависти и подстрекательства к насилию, и прекратить оказывать поддержку – будь то финансовую или какую-либо иную – политическим партиям и другим организациям, которые прибегают к неонацистскому или иному языку ненависти, и принимать меры по роспуску организаций, которые несут ответственность в тех случаях, когда целью использования такого языка ненависти является подстрекательство к насилию или когда есть основания предполагать, что оно приведет к нему²³⁶⁶;

42. *призывает* государства увеличивать многообразие кадрового состава правоохранительных органов и настоятельно призывает их принимать все надлежащие меры для облегчения подачи жалоб и для введения надлежащих санкций в отношении находящихся на государственной службе лиц, признанных виновными в совершении актов насилия на почве расовой неприязни или уличенных в использовании языка ненависти;

43. *выражает глубокую обеспокоенность* по поводу увеличения числа сообщений о случаях проявления расизма, антисемитизма, дискриминации на основе религии, убеждений или происхождения, включая проявления исламофобии, арабофобии, афрофобии и ксенофобии во время спортивных мероприятий, в том числе со стороны экстремистских групп расистского и ксенофобского толка, включая группы неонацистов и «бритоголовых», и призывает государства, международные организации, спортивные федерации и другие соответствующие заинтересованные стороны усилить меры по борьбе с такими инцидентами, приветствуя при этом шаги, предпринятые многими государствами и спортивными федерациями, клубами и группами болельщиков для

²³⁶⁴ A/HRC/38/53, п. 16.

²³⁶⁵ A/72/291, п. 83.

²³⁶⁶ A/HRC/38/53, п. 35 с).

искоренения проявлений расизма на спортивных мероприятиях, в том числе предоставление возможностей для занятий спортом без какой бы то ни было дискриминации и в духе олимпийских идеалов взаимопонимания, терпимости, инклюзивности, справедливости и солидарности;

44. *напоминает* о рекомендации Специального докладчика, касающейся включения в национальное уголовное законодательство положения, согласно которому совершение преступления с расистскими или ксенофобскими мотивами или целями является отягчающим обстоятельством, влекущим за собой более суровые меры наказания²³⁶⁷, и призывает те государства, в законодательстве которых нет подобных положений, рассмотреть возможность выполнения этой рекомендации;

45. *отмечает* меры, принятые государствами в целях предотвращения дискриминации в отношении, в частности, лиц, принадлежащих к национальным или этническим, религиозным и языковым меньшинствам, лиц африканского происхождения, цыган, мигрантов, беженцев и просителей убежища и обеспечения их интеграции в общество, настоятельно призывает государства обеспечить полное и эффективное осуществление правовых, политических и институциональных мер по защите этих лиц и групп, включая женщин и девочек, и рекомендует государствам твердо гарантировать всем, без какой бы то ни было дискриминации, их права человека, в том числе связанные с защитой и безопасностью, доступ к правосудию, адекватную компенсацию и надлежащее информирование об их правах, а также обеспечить, сообразно обстоятельствам, судебное преследование и надлежащее наказание тех, кто совершил в их отношении преступления расистского и ксенофобского характера, включая возможность требовать возмещения материального и морального ущерба, причиненного в результате таких преступлений;

46. *призывает* государства повысить степень информированности общественности о доступных национальных и других средствах правовой защиты в случае нарушения прав человека на почве расовой дискриминации и расизма;

47. *обращает особое внимание* на то, что экстремизм обусловлен множеством причин, устранение которых требует адекватных мер, таких как просвещение, повышение уровня осведомленности и развитие диалога, и в этой связи рекомендует активизировать работу с молодежью по разъяснению опасности идеологий и деятельности экстремистских политических партий, движений и групп;

48. *подтверждает* в этой связи особую важность дополнения законодательных мер просвещением во всех формах, в том числе по вопросам прав человека, и призывает государства продолжать вкладывать средства в образование в рамках как традиционных, так и нетрадиционных учебных программ, в частности с целью изменения взглядов людей и развенчания представлений о расовой иерархии и идей расового превосходства и противодействия их негативному влиянию, а также способствовать утверждению идеалов недискриминации, равенства и уважения всех людей, как это отмечено Специальным докладчиком;

49. *признает* важнейшую роль просвещения в деле поощрения прав человека и основных свобод и в борьбе против расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости, в особенности в утверждении принципов терпимости, недискриминации, инклюзивности и уважения этнического, религиозного и культурного многообразия и в предупреждении распространения экстремистских расистских и ксенофобских движений и пропаганды;

50. *решительно осуждает* использование в образовательном процессе образовательных материалов и риторики, пропагандирующих расизм, дискриминацию, ненависть и насилие на основе этнического происхождения, национальности, религии или

²³⁶⁷ A/69/334, п. 81.

убеждений;

51. *особо отмечает* представленную Специальным докладчиком Генеральной Ассамблее на ее шестьдесят четвертой сессии рекомендацию, в которой он отметил важность уроков истории, посвященных драматическим событиям и человеческим страданиям, ставшим результатом становления идеологий нацизма и фашизма²³⁶⁸;

52. *подчеркивает* важность других позитивных мер и инициатив, направленных на сближение общин и предоставление им пространства для подлинного диалога, например в форме круглых столов, рабочих групп и семинаров, в том числе учебных семинаров для государственных должностных лиц и работников средств массовой информации, а также различных мероприятий по повышению информированности общественности, особенно мероприятий, организуемых по инициативе представителей гражданского общества и требующих постоянной поддержки со стороны государства;

53. *обращает особое внимание* на позитивную роль, которую могут играть в вышеупомянутых областях соответствующие органы и программы Организации Объединенных Наций, в частности Организация Объединенных Наций по вопросам образования, науки и культуры;

54. *подтверждает* статью 4 Конвенции, согласно которой государства-участники осуждают всякую пропаганду и все организации, основанные на идеях или теориях превосходства одной расы или группы лиц определенного цвета кожи или этнического происхождения или пытающиеся оправдать или поощряющие расовую ненависть и дискриминацию в какой бы то ни было форме, и обязуются немедленно принять позитивные меры, направленные на искоренение всякого подстрекательства к такой дискриминации или актов дискриминации, и с этой целью, действуя в соответствии с принципами, провозглашенными во Всеобщей декларации прав человека, и правами, ясно изложенными в статье 5 Конвенции, в частности:

а) объявляют караемым по закону преступлением всякое распространение идей, основанных на расовом превосходстве или ненависти, всякое подстрекательство к расовой дискриминации и все акты насилия, направленные против любой расы или группы лиц другого цвета кожи или этнического происхождения, и подстрекательство к таким актам, а также предоставление любой помощи для осуществления расистской деятельности, включая ее финансирование;

б) объявляют противозаконными и запрещают организации, а также организованную и всякую другую пропагандистскую деятельность, которые поощряют расовую дискриминацию и подстрекают к ней, и признают участие в таких организациях или в такой деятельности преступлением, караемым законом;

в) запрещают национальным или местным органам государственной власти или государственным учреждениям поощрять расовую дискриминацию или подстрекать к ней;

55. *подтверждает также*, что, как подчеркивается в пункте 13 итогового документа Конференции по обзору Дурбанского процесса, всякое выступление в пользу национальной, расовой или религиозной ненависти, представляющее собой подстрекательство к дискриминации, вражде или насилию, должно быть запрещено законом, что всякое распространение идей, основанных на расовом превосходстве или ненависти, или подстрекательство к расовой дискриминации, а также все акты насилия или подстрекательство к совершению таких актов должны быть объявлены преступлениями, караемыми по закону, в соответствии с международными обязательствами государств и что такого рода запреты согласуются с правом на свободу мнений и их свободное выражение;

²³⁶⁸ A/64/295, п. 104.

56. *ссылается* на Стратегию и План действий Организации Объединенных Наций по борьбе с языком ненависти, которые представляют собой стратегическое руководство для системы Организации Объединенных Наций по борьбе с ненавистнической риторикой на национальном и глобальном уровнях;

57. *признает* ту позитивную роль, которую осуществление права на свободу мнений и их свободное выражение и полное уважение свободы искать, получать и распространять информацию, в том числе через Интернет, могут играть в борьбе с расизмом, расовой дискриминацией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью;

58. *призывает* государства улучшать ситуацию с осуществлением права на свободу выражения мнений, реализация которого может иметь решающее значение для продвижения демократии и противодействия расистской и ксенофобской идеологии, основанной на идеях расового превосходства;

59. *призывает также* государства, которые несут главную ответственность за противодействие дискриминации и использованию языка ненависти, и всех соответствующих субъектов, включая политических и религиозных лидеров, поощрять инклюзию и единство в реагировании на пандемию коронавирусного заболевания (COVID-19) и предотвращать расизм, ксенофобию, использование языка ненависти, насилие, дискриминацию и стигматизацию, высказываться против этих явлений и принимать решительные меры по борьбе с ними;

60. *выражает обеспокоенность* в связи с все более широким использованием цифровых технологий для пропаганды и распространения идей расизма, расовой ненависти, ксенофобии, расовой дискриминации и связанной с ними нетерпимости и в этой связи призывает государства – участники Международного пакта о гражданских и политических правах противодействовать распространению вышеупомянутых идей, памятуя при этом о своих обязательствах согласно статьям 19 и 20 Пакта, в которых гарантируется право на свободное выражение мнений и изложены основания, позволяющие ограничивать по закону осуществление этого права;

61. *считает* необходимым поощрять использование новых информационно-коммуникационных технологий, включая Интернет, для содействия борьбе с расизмом, расовой дискриминацией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью;

62. *признает* позитивную роль, которую средства массовой информации могут играть в борьбе против расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости, в утверждении культуры терпимости и инклюзивности и в отражении многообразия многокультурного общества;

63. *рекомендует* государствам, гражданскому обществу и другим соответствующим заинтересованным сторонам использовать все возможности, в том числе возможности, предоставляемые Интернетом и социальными сетями, для противодействия в соответствии с международным правом прав человека распространению идей расового превосходства или ненависти и для утверждения идеалов равенства, недискриминации, многообразия и демократии;

64. *рекомендует* национальным правозащитным институтам там, где они существуют, разработать соответствующие программы, направленные на утверждение идеалов терпимости, инклюзивности и уважения ко всем, и осуществлять сбор соответствующей информации по этой теме;

65. *отмечает* важность укрепления сотрудничества на региональном и международном уровнях в целях противодействия всем проявлениям расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости, в частности применительно к вопросам, затронутым в настоящей резолюции;

66. *подчеркивает* важность тесного сотрудничества с гражданским обществом и международными и региональными правозащитными механизмами для эффективного

противодействия всем проявлениям расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости, а также экстремистским политическим партиям, движениям и группам, включая группы неонацистов и «бритоголовых», и другим подобным им экстремистским идеологическим движениям, которые подстрекают к расизму, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости;

67. *напоминает* о том, что Комиссия по правам человека в своей резолюции 2005/5 просила Специального докладчика продолжить проработку этого вопроса, сформулировать соответствующие рекомендации в будущих докладах и запросить и принять к сведению в связи с этим мнения правительств и неправительственных организаций;

68. *предлагает* государствам рассмотреть вопрос о включении в свои доклады для универсального периодического обзора и в доклады соответствующим договорным органам информацию о шагах, предпринимаемых для борьбы против расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости, в том числе в порядке выполнения положений настоящей резолюции;

69. *просит* Специального докладчика подготовить для представления Генеральной Ассамблее на ее семьдесят восьмой сессии и Совету по правам человека на его пятьдесят третьей сессии доклады об осуществлении настоящей резолюции и рекомендует Специальному докладчику уделить особое внимание пунктам 6, 13, 15, 16, 17, 21, 29, 30, 31, 49 и 51 выше с учетом мнений, собранных в соответствии с просьбой Комиссии, упомянутой в пункте 67 выше;

70. *выражает признательность* тем правительствам и неправительственным организациям, которые предоставили информацию Специальному докладчику при подготовке ею своего доклада Генеральной Ассамблее;

71. *рекомендует* государствам и неправительственным организациям сотрудничать со Специальным докладчиком, в том числе предоставляя информацию о событиях, которые имеют отношение к затрагиваемым в настоящей резолюции вопросам, в целях содействия подготовке будущих докладов Генеральной Ассамблее;

72. *подчеркивает*, что такая информация важна для обмена опытом и передовыми методами противодействия экстремистским политическим партиям, движениям и группам, включая группы неонацистов и «бритоголовых», а также другим экстремистским идеологическим движениям, которые подстрекают к расизму, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости;

73. *рекомендует* правительствам увеличить объем ресурсов, выделяемых на подготовку и распространение информации об успешных конструктивных мерах по предупреждению расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости и противодействию этим явлениям в дополнение к применению санкций за любые нарушения, в том числе путем предоставления в соответствующих случаях средств правовой защиты пострадавшим;

74. *рекомендует* правительствам, неправительственным организациям и соответствующим субъектам как можно шире распространять информацию о содержании настоящей резолюции и изложенных в ней принципах, в том числе через средства массовой информации и по другим каналам;

75. *постановляет* продолжать заниматься этим вопросом.

15 декабря 2022 года

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 15 December 2022

[on the report of the Third Committee ([A/77/461](#), para. 31)]

77/204. Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

The General Assembly,

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,²³⁶⁹ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,²³⁷⁰ the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination²³⁷¹ and other relevant human rights instruments,

Recalling the provisions of Commission on Human Rights resolutions 2004/16 of 16 April 2004²³⁷² and 2005/5 of 14 April 2005²³⁷³ and relevant Human Rights Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 7/34 of 28 March 2008,²³⁷⁴ [18/15](#) of 29 September 2011²³⁷⁵ and [21/33](#) of 28 September 2012,²³⁷⁶ as well as General Assembly resolutions [60/143](#) of 16 December 2005, [61/147](#) of 19 December 2006, [62/142](#) of 18 December 2007, [63/162](#) of 18 December 2008, [64/147](#) of 18 December 2009, [65/199](#) of 21 December 2010, [66/143](#) of 19 December 2011, [67/154](#) of 20 December 2012, [68/150](#) of 18 December 2013, [69/160](#) of 18 December 2014, [70/139](#) of 17 December 2015, [71/179](#) of 19 December 2016, [72/156](#) of 19 December 2017, [73/157](#) of 17 December 2018, [74/136](#) of 18 December 2019, [75/169](#) of 16 December 2020 and [76/149](#) of 16 December 2021 on this issue, and its resolutions [61/149](#) of 19 December 2006, [62/220](#) of 22 December 2007, [63/242](#) of 24 December 2008, [64/148](#) of 18 December 2009, [65/240](#) of 24 December 2010, [66/144](#) of 19 December 2011, [67/155](#) of 20 December 2012, [68/151](#) of 18 December 2013, [69/162](#) of 18 December 2014, [70/140](#) of 17 December 2015, [71/181](#) of 19 December 2016, [72/157](#) of 19 December 2017, [73/262](#) of 22 December 2018, [74/137](#) of 18 December 2019, [75/237](#) of 31 December 2020 and [76/226](#) of 24 December 2021, entitled “A global call for concrete action for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action”,

Acknowledging other important initiatives of the General Assembly aimed at raising awareness about the suffering of victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and forms of discrimination, including in the historical perspective, in particular regarding commemoration of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade,

²³⁶⁹ Resolution [217 A \(III\)](#).

²³⁷⁰ See resolution [2200 A \(XXI\)](#), annex.

²³⁷¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 660, No. 9464.

²³⁷² See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 3 (E/2004/23), chap. II, sect. A*.

²³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 2005, *Supplement No. 3* and corrigenda ([E/2005/23](#), [E/2005/23/Corr.1](#) and [E/2005/23/Corr.2](#)), chap. II, sect. A.

²³⁷⁴ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 53 (A/63/53), chap. II*.

²³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, *Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 53A* and corrigendum ([A/66/53/Add.1](#) and [A/66/53/Add.1/ Corr.1](#)), chap. II.

²³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, *Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 53A (A/67/53/Add.1), chap. II*.

Recalling the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal, and the Judgment of the Tribunal which recognized as criminal, inter alia, the SS organization and its integral parts, including the Waffen SS, through its officially accepted members implicated in or with knowledge of the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity connected with the Second World War, as well as other relevant provisions of the Charter and the Judgment,

Mindful of the horrors of the Second World War, and stressing in this regard that the victory over Nazism in the Second World War contributed to the establishment of the conditions for the creation of the United Nations, designed to prevent future wars and save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,

Noting that neo-Nazism is more than just the glorification of a past movement, it is a contemporary phenomenon with strong vested interests in racial inequality and an investment in gaining broad support for its false claims of racial superiority,

Recalling the relevant provisions of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance on 8 September 2001,²³⁷⁷ in particular paragraph 2 of the Declaration and paragraphs 84 to 86 of the Programme of Action, as well as the relevant provisions of the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference of 24 April 2009,²³⁷⁸ in particular paragraphs 11, 13 and 54,

Alarmed at the spread in many parts of the world of various extremist political parties, movements, ideologies and groups of a racist or xenophobic character, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and at the fact that this trend has resulted in the implementation of discriminatory measures and policies at the local or national level,

Noting with concern that, even where neo-Nazis or extremists do not formally participate in government, the presence therein of extreme right-wing ideologues can have the effect of injecting into governance and political discourse the same ideologies that make neo-Nazism and extremism so dangerous,

Alarmed at music lyrics and video games that advocate racial hatred and incite discrimination, hostility or violence,

Concerned by the use of Internet platforms by groups that advocate hatred to plan, fundraise and circulate information about public events aimed at promoting racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, such as rallies, demonstrations and acts of violence,

Mindful of the role that the Internet can play in promoting equality, inclusion and non-discrimination as part of strengthening democracy and respect for human rights,

Seriously concerned that neo-Nazi groups, as well as other groups and individuals espousing ideologies of hatred, have increasingly targeted susceptible individuals, mainly children and youth, by means of specifically tailored websites with the aim of their indoctrination and recruitment,

Deeply concerned by all recent manifestations of violence and terrorism incited by violent nationalism, racism, antisemitism, discrimination based on religion, belief or origin, including Islamophobia, Christianophobia and Afrophobia, xenophobia and related intolerance, including during sports events,

Recognizing with deep concern the continued alarming increase in instances of discrimination, intolerance and extremist violence motivated by antisemitism, religion or belief, including Islamophobia and Christianophobia, and prejudices against persons of other ethnic origins, religions and beliefs,

Underlining the existing lack of uniformity of norms regarding protected speech and expression and prohibited racial discrimination and advocacy of national, racial or religious

²³⁷⁷ See [A/CONF.189/12](#) and [A/CONF.189/12/Corr.1](#), chap. I.

²³⁷⁸ See [A/CONF.211/8](#), chap. I.

hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence,

Noting with concern, in this regard, that the variation in national standards prohibiting hate speech may provide safe havens for neo-Nazi, extremist, violent nationalist, xenophobic or racist speech owing to the fact that many neo-Nazi and relevant extremist groups of a racist or xenophobic character operate transnationally by relying on Internet service providers or social media platforms,

Stressing that the purpose of addressing hate speech is not to limit or prohibit freedom of speech, but to prevent incitement to discrimination and violence, which shall be prohibited by law,

Expressing its concern about the use of digital technologies by extremist and hate groups, including neo-Nazi groups, to disseminate their ideology, while recognizing that digital technologies are of great importance for the enjoyment of human rights and for combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance,

1. *Reaffirms* the relevant provisions of the Durban Declaration and of the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, in which States condemned the persistence and resurgence of neo-Nazism, neo-Fascism and violent nationalist ideologies based on racial and national prejudice and stated that those phenomena could never be justified in any instance or in any circumstances;

2. *Recalls* the provisions of the Durban Declaration and of the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, in which States recognized the positive contribution that the exercise of the right to freedom of expression, in particular by the media and new technologies, including the Internet, and full respect for the freedom to seek, receive and impart information can make to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

3. *Takes note* of the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, prepared in accordance with the request contained in its resolution [76/149](#);²³⁷⁹

4. *Notes with alarm* that the Russian Federation has sought to justify its territorial aggression against Ukraine on the purported basis of eliminating neo-Nazism, and underlines that the pretextual use of neo-Nazism to justify territorial aggression seriously undermines genuine attempts to combat neo-Nazism;

5. *Expresses its appreciation* to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for their efforts to fight racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including the maintenance by the Office of the High Commissioner of the database on practical means to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

6. *Expresses deep concern* about the glorification, in any form, of the Nazi movement, neo-Nazism and former members of the Waffen SS organization, including by erecting monuments and memorials, holding public demonstrations in the name of the glorification of the Nazi past, the Nazi movement and neo-Nazism, declaring or attempting to declare such members and those who fought against the anti-Hitler coalition, collaborated with the Nazi movement and committed war crimes and crimes against humanity participants in national liberation movements, as well as by the renaming of streets glorifying them;

7. *Calls for* the universal ratification and effective implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and urges those States parties that have not yet done so to consider making the declaration under its article 14, thus providing the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination with the competence to receive and consider communications from individuals or groups of individuals within their jurisdiction claiming to be victims of a violation by a State party of any of the rights set forth in the Convention;

²³⁷⁹ [A/77/512](#).

8. *Urges* States to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination by all appropriate means, including legislation as required by circumstances, while ensuring that the definition of racial discrimination set out therein complies with article 1 of the Convention;

9. *Encourages* those States that have made reservations to article 4 of the Convention to give serious consideration to withdrawing such reservations as a matter of priority, as stressed by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

10. *Acknowledges* that discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion or belief in all its forms and manifestations, including neo-Nazism, Islamophobia, Christianophobia and antisemitism, is a threat to social cohesion, not just to those racial and ethnic groups that are their direct target;

11. *Recalls* that any legislative or constitutional measures adopted with a view to countering extremist political parties, movements, ideologies and groups of a racist or xenophobic character, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups and similar extremist ideological movements, should be in conformity with the relevant international human rights obligations, in particular articles 4 and 5 of the Convention and articles 19 to 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

12. *Encourages* States to develop and implement national action plans for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, with a view to, inter alia, monitoring closely the phenomenon of Nazism, neo -Nazism and Holocaust denial, such as commemorative celebration of the Nazi regime, its allies and related organizations;

13. *Encourages* States parties to the Convention to take appropriate measures to ensure that their legislation is in accordance with their obligations under the Convention, including those under article 4;

14. *Stresses* that the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association are important in supporting the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance worldwide;

15. *Emphasizes once more* the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur that “any commemorative celebration of the Nazi regime, its allies and related organizations, whether official or unofficial, should be prohibited” by States²³⁸⁰ also emphasizes that such manifestations do injustice to the memory of the countless victims of the Second World War and negatively influence children and young people, and stresses in this regard that it is important that States take measures, in accordance with international human rights law, to counteract any celebration of the Nazi SS organization and all its integral parts, including the Waffen SS, and that failure by States to effectively address such practices is incompatible with the obligations of States Members of the United Nations under its Charter;

16. *Expresses deep concern* about increased frequency of attempts and activities intended to desecrate or demolish monuments erected in remembrance of those who fought against Nazism during the Second World War, as well as to unlawfully exhume or remove the remains of such persons, and in this regard urges States to fully comply with their relevant obligations, inter alia, under article 34 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1949;²³⁸¹

17. *Firmly condemns* incidents that glorify and promote Nazism, such as acts involving pro-Nazi graffiti and paintings, including on monuments dedicated to victims of the Second World War;

18. *Welcomes* efforts by Member States to preserve historical truth, including through constructing and preserving monuments and memorials dedicated to those who fought in the ranks of the anti-Hitler coalition;

²³⁸⁰ [A/72/291](#), para. 79.

²³⁸¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1125, No. 17512.

19. *Expresses alarm* over the use by extremist groups, including neo-Nazi groups, and individuals espousing ideologies of hatred, of information technologies, the Internet and social media to recruit new members, especially targeting children and young people, and to disseminate and to amplify their hate-filled messages, while recognizing that the Internet can also be used to counteract these groups and their activities;

20. *Calls upon* States to take appropriate measures to address the new and emerging threats posed by the rise in terrorist attacks incited by racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief;

21. *Notes with concern* the significant number of racist incidents worldwide, including the rise of skinhead groups, which have been responsible for many of these incidents, as well as the resurgence of racist and xenophobic violence targeting, inter alia, persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, or on any other grounds, including arson attacks on houses and vandalization of and violence in schools and places of worship and cemeteries;

22. *Reaffirms* that such acts may, in certain circumstances, be qualified as falling within the scope of the Convention, that they may not be justifiable as exercises of freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association and freedom of expression and that they will often fall within the scope of article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and may be subject to certain restrictions, as set out in articles 19, 21 and 22 of the Covenant;

23. *Encourages* States to take appropriate concrete measures, including legislative and educational ones, in accordance with their international human rights obligations, in order to prevent revisionism in respect of the Second World War and the denial of the crimes against humanity and war crimes committed during the Second World War;

24. *Calls upon* States to take active measures to ensure that education systems develop the necessary content to provide accurate accounts of history, as well as promote tolerance and other international human rights principles;

25. *Recalls* the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur that education that seeks to undercut the racist effects of nationalist populism should include accurate and representative accounts of national history that give voice to racial and ethnic diversity and that expose the untruths of those who attempt to write ethnic groups out of national histories and identities in order to sustain ethnonationalist myths of racially or ethnically “pure” nations,²³⁸²

26. *Condemns without reservation* any denial of or attempt to deny the Holocaust, as well as any manifestation of religious intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities, on the basis of ethnic origin or religious belief;

27. *Affirms its deep commitment* to the duty of remembrance, and welcomes the call of the Special Rapporteur for the active preservation of those Holocaust sites that served as Nazi death camps, concentration and forced labour camps and prisons, as well as his encouragement to States to take measures, including legislative, law enforcement and educational measures, to put an end to all forms of Holocaust denial;²³⁸³

28. *Recalls* the conclusions of the Special Rapporteur that revisionism and attempts to falsify history may, in certain circumstances, fall under the prohibition of hate speech under article 4 (a) of the Convention, which States are required to declare as offences punishable by law,²³⁸⁴ and that neo-Nazi recruitment attempting to mainstream extreme ideologies or racial, ethnic or religious hatred and intolerance may fall under article 4 (b) of the Convention;

29. *Calls upon* States to continue to take all appropriate measures aimed at preventing and countering hate speech, including on the Internet, and incitement to violence

²³⁸² [A/73/305](#) and [A/73/305/Corr.1](#), para. 56.

²³⁸³ [A/72/291](#), para. 91.

²³⁸⁴ [A/HRC/38/53](#), para. 15.

against persons in vulnerable situations, including the organization of meetings and violent protests, fundraising and engagement in other activities;

30. *Expresses serious concern* regarding attempts to prohibit, at the legislative level, symbols associated in States with the victory over Nazism;

31. *Expresses deep concern* about attempts at commercial advertising aimed at exploiting the sufferings of the victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the Second World War by the Nazi regime;

32. *Stresses* the need to respect the memory and that the practices described above do injustice to the memory of the countless victims of crimes against humanity committed in the Second World War, in particular those committed by the SS organization and by those who fought against the anti-Hitler coalition and collaborated with the Nazi movement, and may negatively influence children and young people, and that failure by States to effectively address such practices is incompatible with the obligations of States Members of the United Nations under its Charter, including those related to the purposes and principles of the Organization;

33. *Also stresses* that all such practices may fuel contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, antisemitism, discrimination based on religion or belief, including Islamophobia and Christianophobia, xenophobia and related intolerance and contribute to the spread and multiplication of various extremist political parties, movements and groups of a racist or xenophobic character, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and in this regard calls for increased vigilance;

34. *Expresses concern* that the human rights and democratic challenges posed by extremist political parties, movements and groups are universal and no country is immune to them;

35. *Emphasizes* the need to take appropriate measures necessary to counter the practices described above, and calls upon States and all other stakeholders to take more effective measures, while fully respecting international human rights law, to prevent, counter and combat those phenomena and extremist movements of a racist or xenophobic character, which pose a real threat to democratic values, and to increase their vigilance and be proactive in strengthening their efforts to recognize and effectively address those challenges;

36. *Underlines* the importance of reliable disaggregated data and statistics on racist and xenophobic crimes for identifying the types of offences committed, the profiles of victims and of perpetrators and whether the latter are affiliated with extremist movements or groups, thus enhancing better understanding of the phenomenon, identifying effective measures to address such racist and xenophobic crimes and assessing the impact of these measures, and recalls in this regard the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development²³⁸⁵ on data, monitoring and accountability, including collecting data disaggregated by characteristics relevant in national contexts;

37. *Encourages* States to adopt further measures to support training for the police and other law enforcement bodies on the ideologies of extremist political parties, movements and groups the advocacy of which constitutes incitement to racist and xenophobic violence, to strengthen their capacity to address racist and xenophobic crimes and prevent racial profiling practices, to fulfil their responsibility for bringing to justice the perpetrators of such crimes and to combat impunity;

38. *Expresses deep concern* about the increased number of seats occupied by representatives of extremist parties of a racist or xenophobic character in a number of national and local parliaments, and emphasizes in this regard the need for all democratic political parties to base their programmes and activities on respect for human rights and freedoms, democracy, the rule of law and good governance and to condemn all messages disseminating ideas that are based on racial superiority or hatred and that have the objective of fuelling contemporary forms

²³⁸⁵ Resolution [70/1](#).

of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

39. *Recalls* the concern of the Special Rapporteur regarding the resurgence of neo-Nazism in contemporary times and growing support for and acceptance of neo-Nazism and related ideology in an increasing number of countries;²³⁸⁶

40. *Notes with appreciation*, in this regard, the call of the Special Rapporteur upon political leaders and parties to strongly condemn incitement to racial discrimination or xenophobia, to promote tolerance and respect and to refrain from forming coalitions with extremist parties of a racist or xenophobic character;²³⁸⁷

41. *Welcomes* the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur to continue to take steps through national legislation, in accordance with international human rights law, aimed at preventing hate speech and incitement to violence, to withdraw support – financial and otherwise – from political parties and other organizations that engage in neo-Nazi or other hate speech and to take steps to dismantle responsible organizations where such hate speech aims, or can reasonably be expected, to incite violence;²³⁸⁸

42. *Encourages* States to improve diversity within law enforcement agencies, and urges them to take all appropriate measures to facilitate the filing of complaints about and to impose appropriate sanctions against those within the public service found to have committed racially motivated violence or to have used hate speech;

43. *Expresses deep concern* about the increase in reported cases of racism, antisemitism, discrimination based on religion, belief or origin, including Islamophobic, Arabophobic, Afrophobic and xenophobic manifestations during sports events, including those committed by extremist groups of a racist or xenophobic character, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and calls upon States, international organizations, sports federations and other relevant stakeholders to strengthen measures to address such incidents, while also welcoming the steps that many States and sports federations, clubs and fan groups have taken to eliminate racism at sporting events, including through sport practised without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which require human understanding, tolerance, inclusion, fair play and solidarity;

44. *Recalls* the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur to introduce into national criminal law a provision according to which committing an offence with racist or xenophobic motivations or aims constitutes an aggravating circumstance, allowing for enhanced penalties,²³⁸⁹ and encourages those States whose legislation does not contain such provisions to consider that recommendation;

45. *Notes* measures taken by States to prevent discrimination against, in particular but not limited to, persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, people of African descent, Roma, migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, and to ensure their integration into society, urges States to ensure the full and effective implementation of legal, policy and institutional measures protecting these individuals and groups, including women and girls, and recommends that States effectively guarantee to everyone, without discrimination of any kind, their human rights, including those related to safety and security, access to justice, adequate reparation and appropriate information about their rights, and pursue prosecution and adequate punishment, as appropriate, of those responsible for racist and xenophobic crimes against them, including the possibility of seeking reparation or satisfaction for damages suffered as a result of such crimes;

46. *Calls upon* States to increase awareness about available national and other remedies for human rights violations based on racial discrimination and racism;

²³⁸⁶ [A/HRC/38/53](#), para. 16.

²³⁸⁷ [A/72/291](#), para. 83.

²³⁸⁸ [A/HRC/38/53](#), para. 35 (c).

²³⁸⁹ [A/69/334](#), para. 81.

47. *Underlines* that the roots of extremism are multifaceted and must be addressed through adequate measures such as education, awareness-raising and the promotion of dialogue, and in this regard recommends the increase of measures to raise awareness among young people of the dangers of the ideologies and activities of extremist political parties, movements and groups;

48. *Reaffirms*, in this regard, the particular importance of all forms of education, including human rights education, as a complement to legislative measures, and calls upon States to continue to invest in education, in both conventional and non-conventional curricula, inter alia, in order to transform attitudes and counteract ideas of racial hierarchies and superiority, and counter their negative influence, and to promote the values of non-discrimination, equality and respect for all, as outlined by the Special Rapporteur;

49. *Recognizes* the paramount role of education in promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms and combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, especially in promoting the principles of tolerance, non-discrimination, inclusion and respect for ethnic, religious and cultural diversity and preventing the spread of extremist racist and xenophobic movements and ideas;

50. *Strongly condemns* the use in educational settings of educational material and rhetoric that promulgate racism, discrimination, hatred and violence on the basis of ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief;

51. *Emphasizes* the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur presented at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, in which he emphasized the importance of history classes in teaching the dramatic events and human suffering which arose out of the adoption of ideologies such as Nazism and Fascism;²³⁹⁰

52. *Stresses* the importance of other positive measures and initiatives aimed at bringing communities together and providing them with space for genuine dialogue, such as round tables, working groups and seminars, including training seminars for State agents and media professionals, as well as awareness-raising activities, especially those initiated by civil society representatives, which require continued State support;

53. *Underlines* the positive role that relevant United Nations entities and programmes, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, can play in the aforementioned areas;

54. *Reaffirms* article 4 of the Convention, according to which States parties condemn all propaganda and all organizations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form, and undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination and, to this end, with due regard to the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rights expressly set forth in article 5 of the Convention, inter alia:

d) Shall declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, and incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof;

e) Shall declare illegal and prohibit organizations, and also organized and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognize participation in such organizations or activities as an offence punishable by law;

f) Shall not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination;

55. *Also reaffirms* that, as underlined in paragraph 13 of the outcome document of

²³⁹⁰ [A/64/295](#), para. 104.

the Durban Review Conference, any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence should be prohibited by law, that all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, or incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts, shall be declared offences punishable by law, in accordance with the international obligations of States, and that these prohibitions are consistent with freedom of opinion and expression;

56. *Recalls* the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, which sets out strategic guidance for the United Nations system to address hate speech at the national and global levels;

57. *Recognizes* the positive role that the exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, as well as full respect for the freedom to seek, receive and impart information, including through the Internet, can play in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

58. *Calls upon* States to strengthen freedom of expression, which can play a crucial role in promoting democracy and combating racist and xenophobic ideologies based on racial superiority;

59. *Also calls upon* States, which have the primary responsibility to counter discrimination and hate speech, and all relevant actors, including political and religious leaders, to promote inclusion and unity in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and to prevent, speak out and take strong action against racism, xenophobia, hate speech, violence, discrimination and stigmatization;

60. *Expresses concern* about the increased use of digital technologies to promote and disseminate racism, racial hatred, xenophobia, racial discrimination and related intolerance, and in this regard calls upon States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to counter the dissemination of the abovementioned ideas while respecting their obligations under articles 19 and 20 of the Covenant, which guarantee the right to freedom of expression and outline the grounds on which the exercise of this right can be legitimately restricted;

61. *Recognizes* the need to promote the use of new information and communications technologies, including the Internet, to contribute to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

62. *Also recognizes* the positive role that the media can play in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, promoting a culture of tolerance and inclusion and representing the diversity of a multicultural society;

63. *Encourages* States, civil society and other relevant stakeholders to use all opportunities, including those provided by the Internet and social media, to counter, in accordance with international human rights law, the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred and to promote the values of equality, non-discrimination, diversity and democracy;

64. *Encourages* national human rights institutions, where they exist, to develop appropriate programmes to promote tolerance, inclusion and respect for all and to collect relevant information in this regard;

65. *Notes* the importance of strengthening cooperation at the regional and international levels with the aim of countering all manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in particular regarding issues raised in the present resolution;

66. *Stresses* the importance of cooperating closely with civil society and international and regional human rights mechanisms in order to counter effectively all manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, as well as extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and other similar extremist ideological movements that incite racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and

related intolerance;

67. *Recalls* the request of the Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 2005/5, that the Special Rapporteur continue to reflect on this issue, make relevant recommendations in future reports and seek and take into account in this regard the views of Governments and non-governmental organizations;

68. *Invites* States to consider including in their reports for the universal periodic review and their reports to relevant treaty bodies information on the steps taken to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including with the aim of implementing the provisions of the present resolution;

69. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur to prepare, for submission to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session and to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-third session, reports on the implementation of the present resolution, and encourages the Special Rapporteur to pay specific attention to paragraphs 6, 13, 15, 16, 17, 21, 29, 30, 31, 49 and 51 above, based on the views collected in accordance with the request of the Commission, as recalled in paragraph 67 above;

70. *Expresses its appreciation* to those Governments and non-governmental organizations that have submitted information to the Special Rapporteur in the course of the preparation of her report to the General Assembly;

71. *Encourages* States and non-governmental organizations to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur, including by providing information on developments with regard to the issues raised in the present resolution in order to contribute to the preparation of future reports to the General Assembly;

72. *Stresses* that such information is important for the sharing of experiences and best practices in the fight against extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and other extremist ideological movements that incite racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

73. *Encourages* Governments to invest more resources in building and sharing knowledge on successful positive measures to prevent and counter racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in addition to sanctioning any violations, including by providing remedies to victims of violations, as appropriate;

74. *Encourages* Governments, non-governmental organizations and relevant actors to disseminate, as widely as possible, information regarding the contents of and the principles outlined in the present resolution, including through the media, but not limited to it;

75. *Decides* to remain seized of the issue.

15 December 2022

**List of cosponsors of the resolution of the 77th session
of the UN General Assembly "Combating glorification of Nazism,
neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary
forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia
and related intolerance"
(without Russia)**

1. Armenia
2. Azerbaijan
3. Belarus
4. Cambodia
5. Central African Republic
6. China
7. Cuba
8. Democratic Republic of Korea
9. Equatorial Guinea
10. Eritrea
11. Ethiopia
12. Kazakhstan
13. Kyrgyzstan
14. Lao People's Democratic Republic
15. Malawi
16. Mali
17. Nicaragua
18. Nigeria
19. Pakistan
20. Philippines
21. Senegal
22. South Africa
23. Sri Lanka
24. Sudan
25. Syrian Arab Republic
26. Tajikistan
27. Turkmenistan
28. Uzbekistan
29. Venezuela
30. Vietnam
31. Zimbabwe

Voting results
on draft resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism
and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms
of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance"
at the plenary meeting of the 77th session
of the United Nations General Assembly
on 15 December 2022

<p>"Affirmative votes (Y)" 120</p>	<p>"Dissenting votes (N)" 50</p>	<p>Abstained 10</p>
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<i>N</i>	Australia	Y	Dominican Republic	Y	Maldives	<i>N</i>	Slovakia
<i>N</i>	Austria	Y	Egypt	<i>N</i>	Malta	<i>N</i>	Slovenia
Y	Azerbaijan	Y	Zambia	-	Morocco	<i>N</i>	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
<i>N</i>	Albania	Y	Zimbabwe	<i>N</i>	Marshall Islands	<i>N</i>	United States of America
Y	Algeria	Y	Israel	Y	Mexico	Y	Solomon Islands
Y	Angola	Y	India	<i>N</i>	Micronesia (Federated States of)	Y	Somalia
<i>N</i>	Andorra	Y	Indonesia	Y	Mozambique	Y	Sudan
Y	Antigua and Barbuda	Y	Jordan	<i>N</i>	Monaco	Y	Surinam
Y	Argentine	Y	Iraq	Y	Mongolia	-	Sierra Leone

Y	Armenia	-	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	A	Myanmar	Y	Tajikistan
A	Afghanistan	N	Ireland	Y	Namibia	Y	Thailand
Y	Bahamas	N	Iceland	Y	Nauru	Y	Timor-Leste
Y	Bangladesh	N	Spain	Y	Nepal	Y	Togo
Y	Barbados	N	Italy	Y	Niger	-	Tonga
Y	Bahrain	Y	Yemen	Y	Nigeria	Y	Trinidad-Tobago
Y	Belarus	Y	Cape-Verde	N	Netherlands	Y	Tuvalu
Y	Belize	Y	Kazakhstan	Y	Nicaragua	Y	Tunisia
N	Belgium	Y	Cambodia	N	New Zealand	Y	Turkmenistan
-	Benin	Y	Cameroon	N	Norway	A	Turkey
N	Bulgaria	N	Canada	Y	United Republic of Tanzania	Y	Uganda
Y	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Y	Qatar	Y	United Arab Emirates	Y	Uzbekistan
N	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Y	Kenia	Y	Oman	N	Ukraine
Y	Botswana	N	Cyprus	Y	Pakistan	Y	Uruguay
Y	Brazil	N	Kiribati	A	Palau	Y	Fiji
Y	Brunei-Darussalam	Y	China	A	Panama	Y	Philippines
-	Burkina-Faso	Y	Columbia	A	Papua New Guinea	N	Finland
Y	Burundi	-	Comoros	Y	Paraguay	N	France
Y	Bhutan	Y	Congo	Y	Peru	N	Croatia

-	Vanuatu	Y	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	N	Poland	Y	Central African Republic
N	Hungary	Y	Costa Rica	N	Portugal	Y	Chad
-	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Y	Côte d'Ivoire	A	Republic of Korea	N	Montenegro
Y	Vietnam	Y	Cuba	N	Republic of Moldova	N	Czech Republic
Y	Ghabon	Y	Kuwait	Y	Russian Federation	Y	Chile
Y	Haiti	Y	Kyrgyzstan	Y	Ruanda	A	Switzerland
Y	Guiana	Y	Lao People's Democratic Republic	N	Romania	N	Sweden
Y	Gambia	N	Latvia	Y	Salvador	Y	Sri Lanka
Y	Ghana	Y	Lesotho	A	Samoa	A	Ecuador
Y	Guatemala	N	Liberia	N	San Marino	Y	Equatorial Guinea
Y	Guinea	Y	Lebanon	-	Sao Tome and Principe	Y	Eritrea
Y	Guinea-Bissau	Y	Libya	Y	Saudi Arabia	Y	Eswatini
N	Germany	N	Lithuania	N	North Macedonia	N	Estonia
Y	Honduras	N	Lichtenstein	-	Seychelles	Y	Ethiopia
Y	Grenada	N	Luxembourg	Y	Senegal	Y	South Africa
N	Greece	Y	Mauritius	Y	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	-	South Sudan
N	Georgia	Y	Mauritania	Y	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Y	Jamaica

<i>N</i>	Denmark	Y	Madagascar	Y	Saint Lucia	<i>N</i>	Japan
Y	Democratic Republic of Congo	Y	Malawi	Y	Serbia		
Y	Djibouti	Y	Malaysia	Y	Singapore		
-	Dominica	Y	Mali	Y	Syrian Arab Republic		

Symbol "-" means that delegation of the country has not participated in the voting.

Countries are listed in accordance with the alphabet of the Russian language