

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE 1083rd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

17 December 2015

**Regarding violations of freedom of religion and rights of
believers in Ukraine**

(Reference material)

In December 2014, so-called Aidar battalion volunteers robbed a church shop in Trokhizbenka. On the pretext of checking the books, they took the church cash box, a video camera and church members' mobile telephones.

On 18 December 2014 in Pisky in the Donetsk region, people in Ukrainian armed forces uniform robbed the Iverskiy Convent, taking all the valuable property, and even the nuns' personal effects.

On 3 March 2015 at the Nikolo-Vasilevskiy Monastery in Nikolskoye, Volnovakha district, Donetsk region, Father Feofan was abducted by members of the Ukrainian security services. He was tortured during interrogation.

On 3 March in Sumy, members of nationalist organizations beat up a cathedral security guard during a service; they threatened Archbishop Yevlogy of Sumy and insulted churchgoers.

On 9 March 2015 in Kyiv, unknown persons wearing masks and military uniforms abducted and beat up a priest from Kramatorsk who had come to visit family.

In 2015, seizures of places of worship belonging to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate continued.

On 30 January, during a village council meeting in Chernyatin, Zhmerin district, Vinnits region, a group of nationalists threatened the local deputies with violence, demanding that they hand over the village church to them.

On 7 February, with the support of the local authorities, the Mikhailov Church in Novosyolki, Zdolbunov district, Rivne region, was seized.

On 12 February, Right Sector nationalists violently seized the Church of the Exaltation of the Cross in Bolshaya Sevastyanovka, Khristinovsk district, Cherkassa region.

On 1 March, the Paraskev Church in Chudnitz, Goshchan district, Rivne region was seized by members of the Kyiv Patriarchate. Female parishioners were beaten up.

On 18 March, members of the Kyiv Patriarchate occupied the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Church in Milch, Duben district, Rivne region, with the support of the local authorities.

On 22 March in Stenka, Buchats district, Ternopil region, members of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic church tried, with the help of masked armed militants, to break into the grounds of the local Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Church.

On 8 April, the most recent attempt was made to seize the Uspensk church in Ptichya, Rivne region.

On 26 April, supporters of the Kyiv Patriarchate, backed by nationalist militias, tried to seize churches in Bashuki and Kolosovo in the Ternopil region. On 14 May the church in Bashuki was seized from the Moscow Patriarchate anyway.

On 21 June in Katerinovka in the Ternopil region, members of the Kyiv Patriarchate, with the support of masked militants, attempted to seize a church. During the clashes, a crucifix was torn from a priest, blows were struck against church members, and militants threatened parishioners with knives and fighting dogs. The police force on the scene did not arrest the perpetrators of the violence.

Acts of vandalism have been committed.

On 2 January in the Nikolaev region, two memorial crosses were knocked down.

On the night of 26 January, Molotov cocktails were thrown at the Church of Consolation of all the Afflicted in the Babi Yar Park in Kyiv, causing severe damage to the building.

On the night of 27 January, the Church of the Martyr Tryphon in Troeshchine was set on fire in Kyiv.

On 12 February at the cathedral in Kovel in the Volynsk region, the church doors were broken down by unknown persons.

On 7 March two memorial crosses were chopped down and burnt in the Nikolaev region; extremist pamphlets were found at the scene of the crime.

In May and June, repeated acts of vandalism against churches of the Moscow Patriarchate in Vasilkov in the Kyiv region were recorded.