

Presentation by Expert on Legal Issues of Public Organization
"Antifascist Human Rights League" SVETLANA NOVITSKA
At the Plenary Session
OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
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(SUBJECT: TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION)

The "Antifascist Human Rights League" monitors facts of violations of rights and freedoms in Ukraine.

Ukraine since gaining independence in 1991 had not determined yet what sort of state it is creating. Before referendum, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic authorities generously handed out promises to all national and ethnic groups living in Ukraine on protection of their rights and interests, on preservation of cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious identity of all indigenous peoples and national minorities of Ukraine.

On October 13, 1991, the founding congress in Lviv decided to establish a Social-Nationalist Party of Ukraine. The founders of this party were not confused with the similarity of their party's name with another party, which activity people of the world condemned during the Nuremberg trial. This party (it later transformed into the All-Ukrainian Union "Freedom") advocated freedom only for "the titular Ukrainian nation", offering other national and ethnic groups in Ukraine the role of those who had to "join the titular nation".

In 2012, the European Parliament had even called pro-democratic political forces elected to the new convocation of Ukrainian parliament to abstain from forming a coalition with "Freedom" party, due to fact that this political force propagated racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic views that contradicted fundamental values and principles of EU.

However, Ukraine since 2014 enjoys a renaissance of neo-Nazi parties and movements - many of them simply "embedded" into the state bodies of power.

Thus, the neo-Nazi group "C14" - a right-wing paramilitary group - is listed in the database of Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium (TRAC) as a terrorist organization. However, this fact does not prevent its leader - Eugene Karas - from being a member of supervisory boards of governmental agencies such as the National Bureau of Investigation of Ukraine, from receiving funding from state and local self-government budgets as a public organization. And in his interviews this character talks about his organization's partnership with State Security Service of

Ukraine SBU: "If we have information - we pass it to the SBU. If they have information - sometimes they pass to us. For instance, if there is a separatist rally – then they inform us - not only us, but also “Azov”, “The Right Sector” and so on”.

Over the past five years, the group “glorified” itself by attacks on markets (whose owners were not of Ukrainian ethnic origin) and by attacks on Roma. Besides that, the “C14” is used by the SBU to apply pressure on courts, which review cases of journalists, bloggers, opinion leaders, such as K. Vyshinsky, R. Katsaba, V. Muravitsky, P. Volkov, O. Sagan et al. Under the guise of active citizens, representatives of this group clad in camouflage come to court trial. They impede justice in court proceedings by threatening panels of judges and participants of court hearings. There were actions with application of force, associated with seizure of courtrooms, with obstruction of justice, with attempts to ban judges and other participants of court hearings to leave court premises. They demanded verdicts from judges that “C14” group considers fair.

Since some of “C14” representatives participated in Donbass conflict as members of voluntary territorial battalions, they were integrated into the structures of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine (the National Guard). They have official IDs of employees of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. Therefore, when participants of court hearings summon police, the law enforcement officers never respond to neo-Nazi activities undertaken by people with MIA official IDs.

No less notorious neo-Nazi organization is called "Azov" – it transformed from a military unit into a neo-Nazi political force.

Back in 2015 the US Congress passed an amendment drafted by Congressman John Conyers that prohibited US instructors from train fighters of Ukrainian battalion “Azov” as they are representatives of "openly neo-Nazi and fascist organizations" that use neo-Nazi symbol Wolfsangel (Wolf's hook) on its banner, while the battalion members are racists and anti-Semites".

However, representatives of "Azov" (like their colleagues from “C14”) are embedded into the law enforcement system of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. The neo-Nazi unit is a part of the National Guard: it is armed not only with firearms, but also with self-propelled guns, tanks and artillery.

"Azov" is a network organization – it has subsidiaries all over Ukraine. “Azov” representatives give lectures dedicated to “patriotic upbringing” in schools and other educational institutions. Besides that, this organization in its so-called “summer camps” teaches kids and teenagers fist fighting and knife fighting along with the “patriotic upbringing lessons”. One can only imagine what sort of patriotic education can offer people mouth plastered with the Wolfsangel hooks and fed with

the theory created by "Azov" leader Beletsky - the so-called "White Chief of the white race".

Taking into account that European Parliament MPs responded to manifestations of neo-Nazism in Ukraine, taking the relevant resolutions, for three times already, I ask to adopt a proposal on abolishment of laws on glorification of the Third Reich officers and their associates addressed to the state of Ukraine and add it to the corresponding resolutions that will be adopted on the outcomes of this Meeting.

All participants who wish to get a copy of monitor report on violations of human rights and freedoms in Ukraine and on access to justice can apply after completion of the Plenary Meeting.