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REASONS FOR THE RUPTURE OF THE UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH WITH THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE 2022

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Annotation

The object of the study is provided by the conflict of interests of the Ukrainian society and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-(MP) against the backdrop of the 2022 full-scale Russian war against Ukraine. The article considers the impact of new legislative initiatives aimed at minimizing the destructive Russian influence, including on the religious area. The main content and contradictions of certain points of the Decree of the Council of the UOC (MP) dated May 27, 2022, as a result of which the religious denomination declared independence from the Moscow Patriarchate, are analyzed. The main reasons for the rejection of the Moscow Patriarchate by the UOC and their influence on the decisions of church leaders are identified. Also included are the independent decisions of more than 400 UOC parishes to transfer to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. In the context of illustrating the reasons for the refusal and contradictions, certain facts of the destruction by the Russian army of churches in Ukraine subordinate to the UOC-MP (friendly fire) are pointed out. This study is aimed at establishing the motives, results, and consequences of rethinking the subordination of one's own religious activity to a denomination that, despite its dependence on the Moscow Patriarchate, is actively functioning in Ukraine during the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war.

Key Words: The Orthodox Church of Ukraine, the ideology of the Moscow Patriarchate, the religious confrontation between Ukraine and Russia, the reasons for Ukraine's rejection of the Russian Patriarchate.

Formulation of the Problem

On May 27, the 93rd day of Russia's war against Ukraine, a Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) was held to deal with the issues of “church life that arose as a result of the military aggression of the Russian Federation against

Ukraine.”¹ As a result, a number of conceptual theses were adopted, interpreting the church's attitude toward the war in Ukraine, the issues of patronage of the Moscow Patriarchate, the organization's vision of its own independence, etc. This event is due to a wide public outcry, which is the result of a conflict of interests caused by activities of a religious denomination in Ukraine in the context of the current war with Russia. However, some decisions from the resolution seem contradictory, the causal relationships of which should be considered in detail. The issue of an organization subordinated to Moscow functioning in Ukraine and the reasons for the separation of the UOC from the Moscow Patriarchate require a separate study in order to establish complex causations, as well as the motives, results, and consequences for society due to such declarative decisions of the UOC-MP against the backdrop of the current war in Ukraine.

Analysis of Recent Publications

The issue of the causes and consequences of the separation or transition of the UOC-MP from the Moscow Patriarchate has so far been only indirectly studied in the context of related thematic areas, because in the pre-war period there were no such rapid tendencies in this regard. However, the works of scholars who have studied related issues indicate the appearance of preliminary symptoms of this phenomenon. For example, S. Kahamlik notes that “Russia's military and ideological aggression has become a marker of the social identity and civilizational choice for Christian denominations.” The author defines the role of the UOC-MP as “a structural part of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC).”² This indicates that scholars were aware of the signs of ideological and socio-cultural bias, which spread through confessional channels. A. Kiridon points to “the changes that confessional identity undergoes depending on political and social events.” According to her, “the inter-Orthodox confrontation in Ukraine has not only not disappeared, but has become even more aggravated, given the multidimensional jurisdictional status of Ukrainian Orthodoxy.”³ M. Gordieno quite rightly

¹ “Постанова Собору Української Православної Церкви від 27 травня 2022 року,” *Українська Православна Церква*, 2022, <https://news.church.ua/2022/05/27/postanova-soboru-ukrajinskoji-pravoslavnoji-cerkvi-vid-27-travnja-2022-roku>. [“Resolution of the Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church dated May 27, 2022,” *Ukrainian Orthodox Church*, 2022,]

² С. Кагамлик, “Церква в Україні в умовах сучасних загроз: реакція на Російську військову агресію,” *Українознавчий альманах*, no. 29 (2021): 82. [S. Kagamlyk, “Church in Ukraine under conditions of modern threats: reaction to Russian military aggression,” *Ukrainian Studies Almanac*, no. 29 (2021): 82.]

³ Алла Киридон, “Релігійно-конфесійна ідентичність: динаміка процесів у православному просторі України (2018-2021),” in *Актуальні проблеми сучасної філософії та науки: виклики сьогодення* (Житомир: Видавець О.О. Євенок, 2021), 38. [Alla Kyridon, “Religious-denominational identity: dynamics of processes in the Orthodox space of Ukraine (2018-2021),” in *Current problems of modern philosophy and science: challenges of today* (Zhytomyr: Publisher O.O. Evenok, 2021), 38.]

believes that some “reasons for not moving from the UOC-MP can be divided into emotional and logical.”⁴ However, these two categories lack a specific definition as far as the root of this decision. The issue is a powerful information campaign, which the aggressor country has long been methodically promoting in the Ukrainian religious sphere. I. Solyar and A. Krasivsky note that “the Russian-Ukrainian war has become one of the factors that forced the society to overestimate the importance of the church in the process of the national-patriotic awareness of the people (with a corresponding reflection in the political plane).”⁵ However, scholars do not focus on the variations and factors of such a social and confessional reassessment towards the functioning of the UOC-MP in Ukraine. Foreign scholars M. Ohle, R. Cook, S. Jovanović, and Z. Han concluded that “Russia manipulated the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and used it as part of what can be described as a dynamic offensive of soft power acting in its interests.” They note that this kind of information campaign “is aimed at reconciling the interests of potential subordinates with the interests of Moscow through the Christian Orthodox Church.”⁶ Here the authors aptly connect the ROC with the levers of global influence in Ukraine⁷: that, first of all, it is about the UOC-MP. Similar theses are supplemented by C. Beggs, stating that “Christianity in political discourse and government policy in Russia after 1991 acts as part of the formation of the country's national identity. This has led to the fact that the ROC has acquired the notable significance of a privileged position in Russian society.” And additionally, there are “contradictory involvements in the latest military conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine.”⁸ The above analysis of recent publications contextually involved in the stated problem demonstrates the general focus of scholars regarding this phenomenon. However, the reasons for the separation of the UOC from the Moscow Patriarchate have not yet been comprehensively investigated. The purpose of this study is to identify and study the derivative causes and motives for the declaration of independence of the UOC from the Moscow Patriarchate.

⁴ М. Гордієнко, “Причини непереходу вірян УПЦ (МП) до ПЦУ” (Кваліфікаційна робота бакалавра, наук, 2021), 10. [M. Gordienko, "Reasons for non-transfer of believers of the UOC (MP) to the OCU" (Bachelor's qualification thesis, sciences, 2021), 10.]

⁵ І. Соляр and О. Красівський, “Трансформація державно-церковних відносин в Україні (1989 – 2021),” *Izdevnieciba Baltija Publishing*, 2021, 52–84, doi:[10.30525/978-9934-26-211-1-3](https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-211-1-3). [I. Solyar and O. Krasivskyi, "Transformation of state-church relations in Ukraine (1989 - 2021)," *Izdevnieciba Baltija Publishing*, 2021, 52–84.]

⁶ M. Ohle et al., “Russia’s Architecture of Hegemony,” : *Christian Orthodox Subordination Strategies in Russia’s Peripheral Zone. Europe-Asia Studies* 74, no. 3 (2022): 382–401.

⁷ Kilp, Alar and Pankhurst, Jerry G. (2022) "Soft, Sharp, and Evil Power: The Russian Orthodox Church in the Russian Invasion of Ukraine," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*: Vol. 42, Iss. 5, Article 2.

⁸ C. Beggs, “Soft Power, Hard Times: Russian Influence in the Post-Soviet Space during Periods of Military Conflict” (A dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 2021), 33.

Central Argument of the Article

The Russian war on Ukraine, which began in 2014, became a catalyst for the changes that have taken place with Ukrainian Orthodoxy since 2018 and that are taking place now. The general trend indicates a transitional stage of the social paradigm in the direction opposite the course of Russian ideology. Ukrainians and Russians both have communities of related religions among them. However, the differences between the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) are fundamental; see more about it in the preliminary study published in OPREE.⁹ In short, the UOC-MP is by all indications a Ukrainian branch of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). Against this background, with the start of a full-scale war by Russia against Ukraine in 2022, claims from Ukrainian society regarding non-religious subversive activities by Russia within Ukraine began to be actively expressed against this religious denomination. On March 5, 2022, in the interests of the national security of Ukraine, “The Draft Law on Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on the Prohibition of Political Parties” was adopted. The explanatory note of the law refers to “prohibiting the activities of such political parties that carry out anti-Ukrainian activities or promote collaborationism,” expressing the idea that such restrictions “will be an effective means of protecting democracy in Ukraine and its independence and sovereignty.”¹⁰ This step is natural during the active stage of the war with Russia. Further, based on this law, “ten pro-Russian political parties were banned in court, and seven additional remain in line.”¹¹ These and other steps are aimed at limiting the internal subversive anti-Ukrainian activities that Russia has been deliberately implementing for a long time. Obviously, the political sphere of influence is not the sole player in this struggle. The cultural realm is no less important. Therefore, it did not take long to “restrict the public use of the musical product of the aggressor state,”¹² and “renaming city objects whose names are

⁹ B. Synchak, M. Balaklytskyi, and V. Dudarets, “Non-Religious Influence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate on Ukrainian Society,” *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* 42, no. 4 (2022): 47–60.

¹⁰ “Проект Закону про внесення змін до деяких законодавчих актів України щодо заборони політичних партій,” *Верховна Рада України*, 2022, <https://itd.rada.gov.ua/billInfo/Bills/Card/39307>. [“Draft of the Law on Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding the Prohibition of Political Parties,” Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2022,]

¹¹ “В Україні заборонили вже 10 проросійських партій, на черзі є ще сім – Мін’юст,” *Радіо Свобода*, 2022, <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-ukraine-zaborona-10-prorosijski-partii/31908143.html>. [“10 pro-Russian parties have already been banned in Ukraine, seven more are on the way - Ministry of Justice,” Radio Svoboda, 2022,]

¹² “Проект Закону про внесення змін до деяких законів України щодо підтримки національного музичного продукту та обмеження публічного використання музичного продукту держави-агресора 7273-д від 29.05.2022,” *Верховна Рада України*, 2022, <https://itd.rada.gov.ua/billInfo/Bills/Card/39702>. [“Draft of the Law

associated with the Russian Federation and its satellites,” for which more than 6.5 million Ukrainians voted.¹³ An equally significant degree of restriction of Russian influence in Ukraine is happening in the religious field, in particular through the revision of the legality of the free activity of the UOC, which is directly subordinate to the Moscow Patriarchate. Numerous parishes (over 400) of this church organization have already arbitrarily transferred their subordination to the OCU. In response to this process, the UOC-MP organized a council at which the leaders of the organization declared their independence from Russian subjugation and condemned the war. To establish the reasons for the rupture of the UOC from the MP, it is necessary to consider in detail certain points of this resolution that cause conflict (see Table 1).

Table 1. The main content and contradictions of individual paragraphs of the Decree of the Council of the UOC (MP) dated May 27, 2022¹⁴

№	Decrees	Contradictions
1	“The council condemns war as a violation of God's commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill!’ (Ex. 20:13) and expresses condolences to all who suffered in the war.”	Nowhere in the Decree does it say what kind of war the UOC condemns. There is no clear gradation for the Russian-Ukrainian war initiated by the Russian Federation and the war in general.
2	“The Council appeals to the authorities of Ukraine and the authorities of the Russian Federation with a request to continue the negotiation process and the search for a strong and reasonable word that could stop the bloodshed.”	Only the exit of the Russian military from the territories of an independent state would “stop the bloodshed.” Therefore, this statement is more speculative than practical. However, we are well aware that the above presentation may not be entirely accurate; bloodshed can also end by the total capitulation of one of the parties at war, or even by a negotiated peace.

on Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine Regarding the Support of the National Musical Product and Restriction of the Public Use of the Musical Product of the Aggressor State 7273-d dated 05/29/2022,” Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2022,]

¹³ “Понад 6,5 мільйонів голосів громадяни України віддали в рейтинговому електронному голосуванні щодо перейменувань міських об’єктів, назви яких пов’язані з російською федерацією та її сателітами,” *Київська міська рада*, 2022, <https://kmr.gov.ua/uk/content/ponad-65-milyoniv-golosiv-gromadyany-ukrayiny-viddaly-v-reytingovomu-elektronnomu>. [“Over 6.5 million votes were cast by the citizens of Ukraine in the rating electronic voting regarding the renaming of city objects, the names of which are associated with the Russian Federation and its satellites,” Kyiv City Council, 2022,]

¹⁴ “Постанова Собору Української Православної Церкви від 27 травня 2022 року,” *Українська Православна Церква*, 2022, <https://news.church.ua/2022/05/27/postanova-soboru-ukrajinskoji-pravoslavnoji-cerkvi-vid-27-travnja-2022-roku>. [“Resolution of the Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church dated May 27, 2022,” Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 2022,]

3	<p>“We express our disagreement with the position of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia regarding the war in Ukraine.”</p>	<p>To express disagreement, antitheses must be contrasted and substantiated. They are not obviously presented here for ideological reasons. However, in the midst of intertwining emotions, deaths, losses, and a variety of primary and vital causes, better and more objective perspective may be more possible in the future.</p>
4	<p>The Council adopted appropriate additions and amendments to the Statute on the Administration of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, testifying to the complete independence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.</p>	<p>These adjustments have already been labeled "cosmetic" by niche media. The new statute may have legally separated the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from the Moscow Patriarchate, but in spirit it has not changed anything significant.¹⁵ However, the former canonical submission of UOC-MP is radically different from the newly declared independence, which is an expression of the national spirit and the desire to completely separate oneself from those who hurt the whole nation.</p>
5	<p>“The Orthodox Church cannot leave her faithful without spiritual care, she must stand by their side in their trials and organize church communities in the Diaspora. It is necessary to further develop the mission abroad among Orthodox Ukrainians in order to preserve their faith, culture, language and Orthodox identity.” And at the same time, it should be added that now no</p>	<p>According to the religious scholar Y. Kotsyuba, such a decision is “pro-Moscow,” because “the majority of Ukrainian citizens left for the countries of Western and Eastern Europe, which are the canonical territories of autocephalous churches: Polish, Bulgarian, Romanian, Constantinopolitan, and others.” That is, it can be interpreted as the expansion of Russian spheres of influence on the West.</p>

¹⁵ “Косметичні зміни. З’явився текст нового статуту УПЦ МП,” *Релігійна правда*, 2022, <https://religionpravda.com.ua/?p=82497>. [“Cosmetic changes. The text of the new statute of the UOC MP appeared,” Religious Truth, 2022,]

	one can force believers to do anything without their consent. No one can force Ukrainians in exile to attend this or that church.	
6	<p>“Realizing its special responsibility before God, the Council expresses deep concern for the lack of unity in Ukrainian Orthodoxy.” ... “The recent actions of the Patriarch of Constantinople in Ukraine, which resulted in the formation of the «Orthodox Church of Ukraine», only aggravated misunderstandings and led to physical confrontation.”</p>	<p>Any religious denomination is responsible not only to God, but also to society. In fact, this paragraph directly duplicates “Moscow’s narratives about the ‘illegality’ of the autocephaly of the OCU, granted by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.”¹⁰ The irony of these theses lies in the fact that it is precisely such non-recognition that causes public misunderstanding and opposition. However, when people die and a country is destroyed daily in front of its citizens, the interests of society play a very strong role. Today, Ukrainian society wants peace and tranquility at any cost, but not at the cost of losing its identity and freedom.</p>
7	<p>In order for the dialogue to take place, the OCU representatives need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stop forcible seizures of churches and forced transfers of parishes of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. - realize that their canonical status, as it is fixed in the “Charter of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine,” is in fact non-autocephalous and significantly inferior to the freedoms and opportunities in the 	<p>Recall the presumption of innocence when it comes to accusations of force and coercion. According to the speaker of the OCU, Archbishop of Chernigov and Nizhyn, E. Zarya, as of the end of May, “since the Russian invasion, the UOC-MP more than 400 parishes have departed.”¹⁶ The statement about the need to rethink ideological positions based on documented and generally recognized documents (<i>Tomos</i> on autocephaly of the OCU, 2019) is nothing more than a repetition of Kremlin narratives that do not recognize the</p>

¹⁶ “З моменту вторгнення Росії УПЦ МП покинули понад 400 парафій. BBC News Україна,” *BBC News Україна*, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-61549903>. [“Since the invasion of Russia, more than 400 parishes have left the UOC-MP. BBC News Ukraine,” BBC News Ukraine, 2022,]

	<p>implementation of church activities, which are provided for by the Charter on the management of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.</p> <p>- resolve the issue of the canonicity of the OCU hierarchy, because, for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, as well as for most Local Orthodox Churches, it is quite obvious that, in order to recognize the canonicity of the OCU hierarchy, it is necessary to restore the apostolic succession of its bishops.</p>	<p>identity of the Ukrainian religious persuasion.</p> <p>Thus, this provision declares the “desire for dialogue,” while not offering any compromises or concessions, which is typical only for an ultimatum position.</p>
8	<p>The Council lifts a prayer of thanksgiving to the Merciful Lord for the opportunity of fraternal communion and expresses hope for an end to the war and reconciliation of the warring. According to the holy apostle and evangelist John the Theologian, may there be “grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love” (2 Jn. 1:3).</p>	<p>Between the lines of this paragraph, one can see the repetition of another Russian narrative about “fraternal peoples,” and the only religious plane for Russians and Ukrainians. This contradicts the real state of affairs. References to the words of John the Theologian about “truth and love” are also quite ironic against the background of that Russian propaganda, which has nothing to do with the truth, and even more so the hatred of Ukrainians.</p>

Table 1 conveys the quintessence, the main content of those definitions that should testify to the independence of the UOC from the MP. However, the contradictions that arise during a detailed consideration of certain provisions indicate the formality of this procedure, because, in terms of ideological connotation, declarative independence from the MP does not change the pro-Russian vector of the essence of the activities of the UOC-MP. Thus, such statements cannot be considered a serious revision of the ideology that is destructive for Ukrainian statehood, which brings only Russian terror to Ukrainians. Consideration of the

immediate reasons prompting the UOC-MP to such legal and cosmetic decisions is the next necessary element to establish the motives and consequences of the formal separation of the UOC-MP from the MP (see Fig. 1).

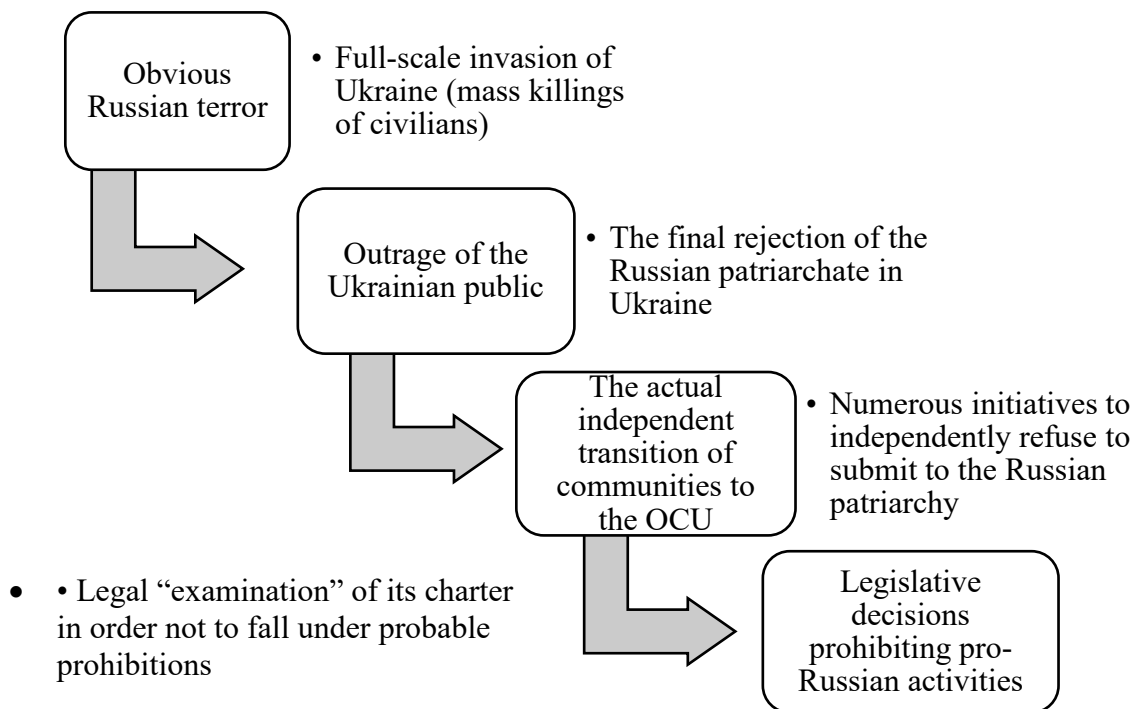


Figure 1. The main reasons for the separation of the UOC from the Moscow Patriarchate

Figure 1 shows the main reasons for the departure of the UOC from the Moscow Patriarchate. The first criterion is an argument that cannot be ignored, because, according to the Office of the Prosecutor General alone, during the first 100 days of a full-scale war in Ukraine, more than 22,500 crimes committed by Russians on Ukrainian soil were registered. In particular, of these were “1037 for high treason, 923 for collaboration activities, and 36 for complicity with the aggressor state,”¹⁷ among which there are some committed by persons involved in the UOC-MP. Such aggressive activities of Russia against Ukraine cannot but cause a conflict of interest related to the subordination of a religious denomination to the Moscow Patriarch Kirill, who publicly blesses the Russian military for the war in Ukraine and supports chauvinistic Russian narratives regarding the non-recognition of Ukrainian identity.¹⁸

¹⁷ “За сто днів повномасштабної війни в Україні правоохоронці зафіксували понад 22,5 тисячі злочинів, які вчинили росіяни,” *ZMINA*, 2022, <https://zmina.info/news/za-sto-dniv-povnomasshtabnoyi-vijny-v-ukrayini-pravoohoronczy-zafiksuvaly-majzhe-23-tysyachi-zlochyniv-yaki-vchynily-rosiyanu/>. [“For one hundred days of full-scale war in Ukraine, law enforcement officers recorded more than 22,500 crimes committed by Russians,” *ZMINA*, 2022]

¹⁸ В. Червоненко, “Патріарх Кирило благословив війська РФ на війну проти України. Як це сталося,” *BBC News Україна*, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-60720034>. [V. Chervonenko, “Patriarch Kyrylo

Consequently, the position of any such organization in Ukraine must be different from the position of the aggressor. Against this background, despite the assurance of abstracting the religious plane from the political plane, a significant part of Ukrainian society is naturally dissatisfied with the legitimate functioning of the subordinate organization from which the war criminals came. This situation also cannot be ignored by the leadership of the UOC-MP, as it has been since 2014.

Table 1 shows data on the independent transition of more than 400 parishes of the UOC-MP to the OCU. Despite the accusations which mentioned “forcible seizures” of churches and forced transfers of parishes to the OCU, there are objective arguments that could probably induce the majority of parishes to take such a step. Visual observation of all the criminal actions that the Russian army is committing in Ukraine makes people reconsider their own worldview and attitude towards everything Russian, the church in particular. But, even in the religious area, the so-called “friendly fire” is tendentiously claimed, when Russian artillery shelled the parishes of the UOC-MP (see Table 2). According to the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience, during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, “at least 28 buildings of spiritual significance have already been damaged,”¹⁹ some of which are parishes subordinated to the Moscow Patriarchate. However, even such actions of the Russian army in Ukraine do not motivate the leadership of the UOC-MP to organize a religious denomination truly independent from Russian influence.

Table 2. Separate facts of the destruction by the Russian army of churches in Ukraine subordinate to the UOC of the Moscow Patriarchate¹⁹

1	St. George's Church, built in 1873, is subordinate to the UOC-MP	3	The All-Saints Skete of the Svyatogorsk Lavra is subordinate to the UOC-MP
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blessed the troops of the Russian Federation for the war against Ukraine. How it happened," BBC News Ukraine, 2022,]

¹⁹ “Російське вторгнення несе руйнування церквам, мечетям, синагогам і релігійним освітнім закладам у різних регіонах України,” *Державна служба України з етнополітики та свободи совісті*, 2022, <https://dess.gov.ua/rosiyske-vtorhnennia-nese-ruynuvannia-tserkvam/>. ["Russian invasion brings destruction to churches, mosques, synagogues and religious educational institutions in different regions of Ukraine," State Service of Ukraine for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience, 2022,]

			
2	The 160-year-old wooden Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is subordinate to the UOC-MP	4	The Church of the Holy Blessed Queen Tamara is subordinate to the UOC-MP
			

For clarity, Table 2 illustrates only a few photographs with church buildings that are subordinate to the UOC-MP. This makes it difficult for conscious Ukrainians to respect any Russian influence in the field of religion. The formalized approach to the issues of organizing the independence of the UOC from the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian ideology destructive for the Ukrainian statehood testifies to the bias of this organization. Despite all the

apparent contradictions that are contained in the media, there is a list of positive aspects that should be highlighted in the departure of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from the Moscow Patriarchate:

1. The decisive separation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from the influence of the religious ideology of Moscow has become a clear indication that the Ukrainian nation has managed to form as a separate people and can independently act in matters of religious choice.

2. In a short time, she completely abandoned the destructive ideological influence of the Kremlin, having shown total resistance to the violation of the commandment "Thou shalt not kill." In this context, it appears that Moscow blesses murder, while Kyiv asks God to protect the Ukrainian people. All this takes place in plain sight.

3. While the Moscow Patriarchate has become a symbol of religious terror and an instrument that blesses violence, the refusal of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has helped decisively preserve the Ukrainian Church's worthy reputation.

4. Before the start of a full-scale war in Ukraine, the parishioners of the Ukrainian Moscow Patriarchate did not pay attention to the church's belonging to Moscow; it gained significance after the start of the war.

5. The decisive refusal of and withdrawal from the Moscow Patriarchate reduced the risks of a split in the Ukrainian nation based on religious beliefs. At the same time, it helped to neutralize the destructive ideological influence of the Moscow Patriarchate on society through the media.

7. In the future, injecting funds into the development of only one Ukrainian Orthodox Church will help strengthen the status of the Orthodox denomination in society, provided that victory is on the side of Ukraine.

8. The move strengthened the national and religious spirit due to the increased interest in religious life on the part of the President's office.

9. The Armed Forces of Ukraine are supported by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church through the help and care of the soldiers of military chaplains, priests and monks.

10. The split allowed the residual return of jurisdiction over the national monuments of Ukraine, which, until then, were subordinate and belonged to the Moscow Patriarchate, since they were leased to the Kremlin for life.

Conclusions

In a preliminary study of the non-religious influence of the UOC-MP in Ukraine, it was found that the activity of this denomination "needs a thorough review in order to eliminate

contradictions related to state interests.” Since that time, legislative changes have taken place in Ukraine aimed at depriving Russia of internal levers of ideological influence on Ukrainian society. As the last 30 years of Ukraine's independence show, such initiatives should have been implemented with the beginning of gaining independence but were not. After all, the difficult situation which Ukraine now faces is, in part, the result of the active work within the country of the so-called “fifth column.” One of the weighty planes of Russian destructive influence on Ukrainian society remains the UOC-MP, which by all indications used to be characterized as a branch of the ROC in Ukraine. This organization had a lot of time to remove the reasons of distrust on the part of Ukrainian society. However, the Decree of the Council of the UOC (MP) dated May 27, 2022, does not demonstrate a sincere desire to be a socially useful church that contributes to the improvement of Ukraine. This approach to the removing the subordination to the Moscow Patriarchate is formalized by a combination of factors and does not change the negative essence of the Russian ideology, which, among other things, is actively spreading in Ukraine via the UOC-MP. Under such conditions, the prohibition of the activities of the UOC-MP on the territory of a belligerent state remains likely.

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