



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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### UKR101806.E

Ukraine: Alternative military service available to Pentecostals (2005 - 2006)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

A law entitled On Alternative (Non-Military) Service was adopted in December 1992 (Ukrainian News 2 Mar. 2004; see also Ukraine 18 Feb. 1999), and amended in February 1999 (ibid.). The law stipulates the criteria that conscripts must meet in order to avoid regular military service (Ukrainian News 2 Mar. 2004). Alternative service is administered by the Ukrainian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (CPTI 6 June 2006).

Several media sources report that only those conscripts who belonged to a select group of religious denominations that "conform to the legislation, and whose confessional beliefs do not allow them to use arms and serve in the military force" were permitted to apply for alternative service as conscientious objectors on religious grounds (CPTI 22 June 2006; QCEA Apr. 2005; KHPG 13 Dec. 2002). Conscripts must submit a document from their religious organization that certifies that they are a member of that faith (RISU 27 Mar. 2006).

The law On Approval of Normative Legal Acts Regarding the Application of "The Law of Ukraine on Alternative (Non-Military) Service," or Resolution No. 2066/1999, lists the 10 religious organizations [translation] "whose doctrine does not admit use of weapons," including:

[translation]

1. Adventists-Reformists
2. Seventh Day Adventists
3. Evangelical Christians
4. Evangelical Christians-Baptists
5. "The Penitents" - the Slavic Church of the Holy Ghost;
6. Jehovah's Witnesses;
7. Charismatic Christian Churches (and churches assimilated to them according

to registered statutes);

8. Christians of Faith Evangelical (and churches assimilated to them according to registered statutes);

9. Christians of Evangelical Faith;

10. Society for Krishna Consciousness. (Ukraine 10 Nov. 1999)

In a footnote in the official Ukrainian to English translation of this law, a translator from the Multilingual Translation Directorate, Translation Bureau, Public Works and Government Services Canada, explains that the official English name of Christians of Faith Evangelical (mentioned above) is the "Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith - Pentecostals," but that the name listed above is a more literal translation from Ukrainian (ibid.).

In an article on the history of Ukrainian Pentecostals, the Lviv-based Religious Information Service of Ukraine (RISU) notes that the All-Ukraine Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith - Pentecostals was revived in May 1990, but that "[t]here also exists the Union of Independent Communities of Christians of the Evangelical Faith - Pentecostals, and individual autonomous Pentecostal communities" (n.d.).

Further information indicating which Pentecostal denominations were or were not eligible for alternative non-military service in Ukraine could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In November 2001, the Human Rights Committee of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) stated its concern that "conscientious objection to military service is accepted only in regard to objections for religious reasons and only with regard to certain religions, which appear in an official list" (UN 12 Nov. 2001, para. 20). The Committee suggested that Ukraine allow conscripts the right to conscientious objection irrespective of their religious denomination (ibid.).

In May 2006, the Ministry of Justice reportedly proposed a law that would widen the eligibility criteria for alternative service, allowing young men to perform alternative service because of moral convictions, and not only for religious reasons (RISU 12 May 2006; Ukrainian News 5 May 2006; UHHRU 7 July 2006).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### References

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#### Additional Sources

**Oral sources, including:** The Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations (Pentecostal) [Kyiv], Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada [Mississauga].

**Internet sites, including:** Amnesty International (AI), Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO), European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Forum 18, Freedom House, Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF), *Journal francophone d'Ukraine* [Kharkiv], Legislationline, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Ukrainian Ministry of Defence, Ukrainian Ministry of Justice, Ukrainian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, United States Department of State, War Resisters' International (WRI), World News Connection (WNC), *Zerkalo Nedeli* [Kyiv].

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