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Responses to Information Requests

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Ukraine: Information on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate, including structure and hierarchy; information on the dispute between the Kyiv and Moscow Patriarchates (2012-April 2013)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Overview

Sources indicate that there are three main Orthodox Churches in Ukraine: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP) [also spelled as Kyivan Patriarchate (RISU 26 June 2012) and Kiev Patriarchate (Berkley Center n.d.; BBC 18 Jan. 2013)], the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP), and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UOAC) (US 30 July 2012, 1; RISU n.d.d). The *International Religious Freedom Report for 2011* published by the US Department of State reports that, according to a national opinion poll conducted by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation and Ukraine Sociology Service in 2011, about 31 percent of Ukrainians identified with the UOC-KP, about 26 percent with the UOC-MP and 2 percent with the UOAC (US 30 July 2012, 1). The *Ukrainian Pravda* newspaper reports that, according to the Razumkov Centre, a Kyiv-based non-governmental think tank (Razumkov n.d.), approximately 40 percent of Ukrainians identify themselves with the UOC-KP and approximately 30 percent with the UOC-MP (*Ukrainian Pravda* 4 Feb. 2013). According to the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), the UOC was dissolved and integrated into the Moscow Patriarchate in 1930 until the collapse of the Soviet Union (CNEWA 10 July 2007). In 1990, the "UOC was formed on the basis of the Kyivan exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) according to the decision of the Hierarchal Council" of the ROC and "it was given the rights similar to those of the autonomous church" (RISU 17 June 2011). However, it remained under the "ecclesiastic jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate" (ibid.).

1.1 Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP)

BBC reports that the Kyiv Patriarchate "broke away" from the Moscow Patriarchate in the early 1990s (BBC 28 July 2009). Two sources state that UOC-KP was formed after Ukraine's independence [24 August 1991 (Curanović 20 Nov. 2007, 304)] (Berkley Center n.d.; US Dec. 2001, 392). According to the website of the Religious Information Service of Ukraine (RISU), a project of the Institute of Religion and Society of the Ukrainian Catholic University (RISU n.d.a), the UOC-KP was formed in 1992 by Metropolitan Filaret [given name Mykhaylo Denysenko (RISU n.d.e)] and his supporters from the UAOC (RISU n.d.b). The website of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs of Georgetown University also indicates that the UOC-KP was formed by Filaret and a minority of bishops (Berkley Center n.d.). Sources state that the UOC-KP has been headed by Filaret since 1995 (US Dec. 2001, 392; RISU n.d.b). Three sources report that Filaret has the title of Patriarch of Kyiv and All Rus-Ukraine (RISU n.d.b; US Dec. 2001, 392; UOC-KP n.d.).

Sources explain that Metropolitan Filaret attempted to gain the status of autocephaly from the Moscow Patriarchate, but did not succeed and established an independent communion (Berkley Center n.d.; Mitrokhin 25 Aug. 2010, 177). In her research paper entitled the *Attitude of the Moscow Patriarchate Towards Other Orthodox Churches*, Alicja Curanović, who specialized in religious issues in the post-Soviet area and the Balkans (University of Warsaw n.d.), also indicated that "Metropolitan Filaret kept struggling for autocephaly, especially after Ukraine gained independence" (Curanović 20 Nov. 2007, 304). The request of Metropolitan Filaret was not granted by the council of hierarchs of the ROC and Filaret was "deprived of his status" (RISU n.d.c). Curanović also notes that in 1992, after ROC refused to change the status of the Ukrainian church, "Filaret was deprived of the title of Metropolitan of Kiev and

expelled from the priesthood" (Curanović 20 Nov. 2007, 304). After Filaret became the Patriarch of the UOC-KP in 1995, he was subsequently "excommunicated" by the Moscow Patriarchate (ibid.; CNEWA 10 July 2007). In his research paper entitled *Aspects of the Religious Situation in Ukraine*, Nikolai Mitrokhin, who specializes in the late Soviet Union and the Russian Orthodox Church (University of Bremen n.d.), states that Filaret was "anathematised by the Bishops' Council of the ROC in 1997" (Mitrokhin 25 Aug. 2010, 177). According to RISU, Filaret did not acknowledge the validity of the act of "excommunication" and said that "he has simply left one national Church and chosen another" (RISU n.d.e).

Several sources indicate that the UOC-KP lacks canonical recognition (Mitrokhin 25 Aug. 2010, 177; Berkley Center n.d.; RISU n.d.b). RISU reports that it is not recognized by other Orthodox churches (RISU 16 Nov. 2011). According to the Berkley Center, "although it lacks canonical recognition from other Orthodox churches, it maintains the adherence of a substantial portion of Ukrainian Orthodox Christians, and has a strong presence in Kiev and the Western half of the country" (n.d.). The *International Religious Freedom Report for 2001* also reported that 60 percent of UOC-KP parishes were in the western part of the country (US Dec. 2001, 392). Two sources state that the UOC-MP is the only canonically recognized Orthodox Church in the country (ibid.; Fagan and Shchipkov 25 Aug. 2010, 198).

In a June 2012 article, RISU reported that as of January 2011, the UOC-KP had the following communities in Ukraine: 4371 registered and 301 non-registered centres, 34 governing bodies, 48 monasteries, 27 missions, 11 brotherhoods, 147 monks and nuns, 3021 pastoral ministers, 16 educational institutions and 1248 Sunday schools (RISU 26 June 2012). According to Filaret, who was quoted by the BBC in January 2013, the UOC-KP "has some 15m faithful, 4,500 congregations and 40 bishops in Ukraine" (BBC 18 Jan. 2013). The website of the UOC-KP provides a list of Metropolitans, Archbishops and Bishops in Ukraine (UOC-KP n.d.). According to the website of the UOC-KP in the United States and Canada, the UOC-KP has parishes in Germany, Greece, Moldova and other countries in Europe, as well as in the United States and Canada (n.d.b). The website provides a list of clergy representing UOC-KP in the United States and Canada (UOC-KP US and Canada n.d.a).

Further information on the hierarchy and the structure of the UOC-KP could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Information on the Dispute Between the Kyiv and Moscow Patriarchates (2012-2013)

BBC reports that in January 2013,

the head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kiev Patriarchate, Filaret (Denysenko), asked the heads of national churches to consider autocephalous status for his church during the next Ecumenical Council. Filaret believes that the council cannot be held without considering this issue because the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kiev Patriarchate is a large Orthodox church. (18 Jan. 2013)

The secretary of the ROC's external relations department replied that

"[n]o head of national church will discuss any clerical issues with the so-called Kiev Patriarchate because its head has been outside ecclesiastical communication as he was anathematised. There have been canonical abnormalities in the history of world Christian Orthodoxy but they happened in difficult historical circumstances. Filaret opted for the split seeking personal power, therefore we cannot talk about any recognition of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kiev Patriarchate. The only thing which can be discussed with him is his personal repentance." (BBC 18 Jan. 2013)

In a January 2013 article, BBC reports that "preparations for the 8th Ecumenical council are under way. The previous one was held in the year of 787" (ibid.). According to the BBC, the "council is attended by the heads of all Orthodox churches who address clerical and political issues" (ibid.).

Further information on the Ecumenical council and the dispute between UOC-KP and UOC-MP could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

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 sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact academics and representatives at the following organizations were unsuccessful: Kyiv Orthodox Theological Academy, Saint Paul University in Ottawa, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, Ukrainian Orthodoxy Church-Kyiv Patriarchate, Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate, Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyivan Patriarchate in the United States and Canada, and University of Toronto.

Internet sites, including: Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral, Ottawa; BBC; Center for

Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies, Stanford University; *Christian Science Monitor*; Democratic Initiative Foundation; ecoi.net; European Dialogue; Factiva; *Gazeta.com.ua*; Interfax Ukraine; Kyiv Orthodox Theological Academy; Munk School of Global Affairs and Petro Jacyk Program, University of Toronto; *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*; *Obozrenie*; Orthodoxy in America; Orthodox Christian Information Center; True Orthodox and Ecumenical News; The Providence Journal; Razumkov Centre; RIA Novosti; Russian Orthodox Church; rbc.ua; Religious Information Service of Ukraine; religion.in.ua; religio.ru; Religion and Law Consortium; Russian in Global Affairs; Saint Paul University; Ukrainian Orthodox Church; Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada; Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate; United Nations – Refworld.

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