

**Regarding the Situation with the Glorification of Nazism
and the Spread of Neo-Nazism and Other Practices That Contribute
to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination,
Xenophobia and Related Intolerance**

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List of abbreviations found in the text

AdG – Alternative for Germany Party

ADL (Anti-Defamation League) – Non-Governmental Organization

ATO – Antiterrorist operation (official designation of the internal armed conflict in the East of Ukraine by Kiev authorities)

AUR – "Alliance for the Union of Romanians" Party

BfV – (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz) – internal security and counter-intelligence service of the Federal Republic of Germany

BNP – British National Party

BNU – "Bulgarian National Union" Movement

CAT** – Committee against Torture

CCR – Commissioner for Civil Rights in Poland

CCRC –Coordination Council of Organizations of Russian Compatriots

CEDAW* – Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

CEPOL (Collège européen de police) – European Police College

CERD* – Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

CESCR** – Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

CHR** – Committee on Human Rights

CIDI (Centrum Informatie en Documentatie Israel) – Information and Documentation Center in Israel

CIM – NGO "Comité International de Mauthausen"

CMAC – "Centre for the Monitoring and Antisemitism Countering" NGO (Romania)

CoE – Council of Europe

CPT* – European Committee for the Prevention of Torture or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

CRC** – Committee on the Rights of the Child

C-REX (The Center for Research on Extremism) – Center for the Study of Right-Wing Extremism, Hate Crimes, and Political Violence

CSCE – Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe

DFGR – Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania

DHS – United States Department of Homeland Security

ECCAR – European Coalition of Cities against Racism

ECHR – Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

ECRI* – European Commission against Racism and Intolerance

ECRI* – European Commission against Racism and Intolerance

ECSR* – European Committee of Social Rights

ECtHR – European Court of Human Rights

EKRE – Conservative People's Party of Estonia

ELAM – "National Popular Front" Party (Cyprus)

EP – European Parliament

EU – European Union

EU MIDIS II – Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey

FCNM Advisory Committee* – Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

FDP – Free Democratic Party of Germany

FIS – Federal Intelligence Service of Switzerland

FPA – Freedom Party of Austria

FRA – EU Agency for Fundamental Rights

GRETA* – Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

GRRCL – Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania

HRC – UN Human Rights Council

ILO – International Labour Organization

IPN – Institute of National Remembrance (Poland)

ISC – Independent State of Croatia

KAPO – Estonian Security Police

KSF – "Kosovo Security Force"

LSNS – People's Party Our Slovakia

MCA – "Mauthausen Committee Austria" NGO

NDPG – National Democratic Party of Germany

NM – "National Movement" Party (Poland)

NRM – "Nordic Resistance Movement"

OCU – Orthodox Church of Ukraine

OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OHCHR – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

OHCR – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

OSCE ODIHR – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe

OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

OUN – Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists

PACE – Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

PEGIDA (Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes) – "European Patriots Against Islamization of the West"

RMX – Remain in Mexico program (United States)

ROC – Russian Orthodox Church

RTCL – Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania

SABNOR – Association of Societies of Anti-Fascists and Veterans of the People's Liberation War (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

SIAN (Stopp islamiseringen av Norge) – Organization "Stop the Islamization of Norway"

SMO – special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine

SNBO – Council of National Security and Defense of Ukraine

SNC – Serb National Council

SOBNOR – Union of Veterans of Former Yugoslavia

SOC – Serbian Orthodox Church

SUBNOR – Union of Veterans and Antifascists of Montenegro

SUPO – Finnish Security Police

UCC – Ukrainian Canadian Congress

UCCRC – All-Ukrainian Coordination Council of Organizations of Russian Compatriots

UINM – Ukrainian Institute of National Memory

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UOC – Ukrainian Orthodox Church (canonical)

UPA – Ukrainian Insurgent Army

UPR – Universal Periodic Review (procedure under the UN Human Rights Council)

UVAPLS – Union of Veterans' Associations in Support of the Values of the People's Liberation Struggle in Slovenia 1941-1945

WHO – World Health Organization

* Operates within the Council of Europe

** Operates within the UN

Introduction

This report has been prepared as a follow-up to the Ministry's efforts to draw attention to the manifestations of various forms of glorification of the Nazi movement, Neo-Nazism, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in foreign countries.

It should be noted that this year, the situation in this area has drastically deteriorated. In a number of states, campaigns have increased to distort history and falsify the USSR's role in securing the Victory over Nazism and building the modern system of international relations. The current phase witnesses an increased level of historical revisionism and revenge-seeking, a total substitution of concepts, with the aggressors who unleashed the war and inspired the ideology of racial purity being cynically put into the place of the state that opposed them, for political convenience.

It has now become crystal clear how historical concepts have been transformed over years, from comparisons made between the Nazi regime and the "totalitarian" Soviet regime through to attempts to shift the blame for the war onto the Soviet Union and declare it "an even worse criminal than the Third Reich." For this reason, inter alia, the significance, and, more importantly, the substance, of the verdict of the International Military Tribunal established to try and punish the main war criminals of the European Axis countries (the Nuremberg Tribunal) is being so blatantly obscured. As a reminder, this verdict put everything in its proper place, by outlawing war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Nazis and their minions, and condemning the leaders of the Nazi regime. It was at the Nuremberg Trials that the world became aware, in detail, of the horrors of National Socialism and the atrocious crimes committed by its followers. And it is precisely for this reason that the verdict of the Nuremberg Tribunal is an obstacle for today's proponents of a "rules-based world order." Many observers note that history is repeating itself,

and the patterns devised by Nazi Germany are being put back into practice today.

A number of states can be singled out that are already vigorously implementing the said policy driven by external forces. There is another category of countries, whose leaders turn a blind eye to such manifestations and at the same time seek to retouch the unpleasant scenes from their own past, the racist treatment of their own colonies, and the extermination of indigenous populations. In practice, such attitude encourages a steady increase in racist incidents, various manifestations of xenophobia and ethnic and religious intolerance.

In the former Soviet Baltic states and Ukraine, collaborationists who supported the Nazis have been declared members of national liberation movements who fought for the "independence" of their states. A number of educational and outreach activities are being developed and implemented, and, more broadly, attempts are being made to reconfigure public thinking. Curricula and cultural projects serve to glorify the "feat" of volunteer members of the national SS legions who fought for Nazi Germany and were involved in numerous massacres of civilians. The authorities' encouragement has unleashed radical nationalists and right-wing extremists, who are often the main perpetrators of the cynical "war" against monuments to Soviet soldiers liberators. For their achievements in fighting the "Russian world" and Soviet memorial heritage, the nationalists are privileged to preach the idea of the "right patriotism" to the society as a whole. No measures are taken by the national authorities to put a stop to this debauchery in most cases. Protests expressed by Russian diplomatic missions remain vastly without response.

Beside Ukraine, the most threatening situation in this area is in the Baltic states, Poland, and the Czech Republic. In 2022, these countries plunged into a kind of Russophobic frenzy around the celebration of May 9. Before May 9, the authorities in Riga closed the Monument to the Liberators for the public and

used special vehicles to remove a huge pile of flowers brought by citizens individually. Alexander Dubiago, a 19-year-old Russian-speaking resident of Riga, was arrested and prosecuted for taking part in activities to defend the right to commemorate the Red Army heroes in front of this great monument. All the three former Soviet Baltic states have launched a campaign for an early demolition of all Soviet-era monuments.

The demolition of the monument to Marshal Ivan Konev, who commanded the troops that fought for the liberation of Prague, and his deprivation of the title of honorable citizen of Prague in May 2022 constitute the most prominent "achievement" of the Czech Republic in its "fight" against the Soviet-era heritage.

On 9 May 2022, in Warsaw, Ambassador of the Russian Federation Sergey Andreyev was doused with red paint as he arrived for a flower-laying ceremony at the memorial cemetery of Soviet soldiers. The same day saw attempts to disrupt a similar event with the participation of Russian Consul General in Gdansk Sergey Semyonov. Of late, Poland has been showing particular cynicism, demolishing Red Army memorials in front of officials and with live coverage on local TV. By the way, a number of monuments in the above-mentioned countries that are working so zealously to remove them, bear titles "To the Liberators" or "Monument of Gratitude."

Active efforts by the authorities of certain states to shape mono-ethnic societies based on titular ethnic groups and the increasing glorification of Nazi accomplices as part of the "new" national history that is being crafted significantly aggravate the situation with the protection of the rights of national minorities and ethnic groups, first of all in terms of language and education. Their members are being subjected to multiple discrimination. The situation is most disturbing in the Baltic states and Ukraine where the authorities do their best to completely squeeze the Russian language and culture out of all spheres of public life. Moreover, fearful perhaps of the infiltration of the Russian culture

from abroad, the Baltic states, acting as if on cue, have initiated an active campaign to shut down the European Union for Russian citizens.

Political elites of the vast majority of European and North American "democratic" states, for their part, are pursuing the cynical double standards policy. In line with their closed-door precepts, they seek by all means to conceal the Nazi nature of the regime in Kiev from the international community. It even has come as far as overtly whitewashing the followers of neo-Nazism – the fighters of the "Azov" radical nationalist battalion and other similar Ukrainian extremist formations who openly express their ideology. Any mentions of their involvement in numerous violent crimes committed in Donbass are carefully removed from the information space.

This year, such "activities" have been given additional impetus and excuse – after the Russian Federation launched the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civil population of Donbass – blossoming into a sickeningly barbaric total discrimination and stigmatization of Russians, including diplomats. The discriminatory situation, in which Russian citizens and compatriots abroad, who have not felt quite comfortable even before, find themselves today, has been carefully examined in the Foreign Ministry's separate thematic report "On Violations of Rights of Russian Citizens and Compatriots Abroad."

The report builds on the provisions of the traditional profile resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, Neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" annually submitted for consideration of the UN General Assembly by Russia together with a wide range of co-authors. The text of the resolution and the table reflecting the results of the voting at the 76th UNGA session are included as annexes.

We consider it important to remind you, with regard to this resolution, that the world community by an absolute majority has sided with the Russian

approach towards the glorification of Nazism and justification of racism. In 2021, 59 states including Russia became the co-authors of the resolution adopted at the 76th UN General Assembly session on 16 December 2021. The resolution was supported by the overwhelming majority of 130 countries. As in previous years, only the delegations of the US and Ukraine voted against, with 49 countries (including the EU member states) abstaining during the voting.

Furthermore, just to remind you the thematic focus of the document, the resolution condemns the glorification of the Nazi movement and former Waffen-SS members, including by erecting monuments and memorials and holding public demonstrations in the name of the glorification of the Nazi past, the Nazi movement and neo-Nazism. It specifically emphasizes that the erection of monuments to commemorate SS-members, the conduct of marches and other similar activities desecrate the memory of the countless victims of fascism, negatively influence the growing generation and are absolutely incompatible with the obligations of UN member states. The co-authors of the resolution cannot disregard the fact that in certain countries those who fought against the anti-Hitler coalition or collaborated with the Nazis are being persistently raised to the rank of national or national liberation movement heroes. The Russian Federation and the like-minded nations are convinced that this is has nothing to do with political correctness: it is blatant cynicism and sacrilege towards those who liberated the world from the scourge of National Socialism.

The provisions of international human rights treaties, first of all of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, provide the major regulatory framework for combating these adverse phenomena and the basis for the development of multilateral cooperation. The overwhelming majority of UN member states, including countries that vote against the Russian initiative or abstain, are parties thereto.

In line with Article 4, the States Parties to the Convention undertake, inter alia, to:

- Condemn all propaganda and all organizations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form;
- Declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred;
- Declare illegal and prohibit organizations, and also organized and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognize participation in such organizations or activities as an offence punishable by law.

Article 4 is a key provision of the Convention. It is important, primarily, because it establishes a clear distinction between acts punishable by law and the rights to freedom of assembly and association as well as freedom of opinion and its expression. That is why claims by certain states that marches of Waffen-SS veterans, various collaborationists, instances of erection of monuments to Nazis or other manifestations are but the implementation of the above liberties are unfounded. In this regard, we are convinced that it is imperative that the states promptly withdraw reservations to this treaty, including reservations to Article 4.

Based on data from international and national sources the document summarizes the factual information on new manifestations in all forms of the glorification of the Nazi movement, Neo-Nazism, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in focal countries. It also takes into account recommendations of international and regional human rights mechanisms, in particular treaty bodies (committees) and regional (especially European) law enforcement institutions to the states in question. Besides, the report draws on the relevant research by the civil society organizations. Therefore, thorough

work to identify former members of Nazi units and collaborationist structures remains instrumental.

As part of the efforts to establish the Victory as a common heritage of UN member states, and prevent, in line with the provisions of the UN General Assembly resolution to combat the glorification of Nazism, the destruction and desecration of monuments and memorials dedicated to fighters against Nazism, this report traditionally focuses on the treatment by European countries of statues, monuments and memorial complexes dedicated to the Red Army soldiers who liberated Europe from the Brown Plague, antifascist warriors and members of the Resistance Movement, as well as their preservation. Increased focus on this issue is also due to a sharp rise in attempts by several countries, first of all Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Estonia, to settle a historical score with Russia by blasphemously destroying monuments to Soviet soldiers liberators.

The report further highlights the problem of the discrimination of national minorities, as well as Russian and Russian-speaking population, especially in the Baltic states and Ukraine. This includes persecution of national communities in public life, hindering them from preserving their national culture and using their native language, harassment of the media, etc. As noted above, in 2022 this kind of discriminatory practice was given a major impetus by the "cancel Russia" campaign in European countries.

As for all sorts of pseudo-historical concepts, "historical aggressions" and falsifications of historical facts, we would like to make it clear: Russia will always remember that the crucial role of the Soviet Union and all its peoples in winning the Victory over Nazism. The importance of this historic event for all mankind can hardly be overestimated. There is no need to explain the significance of the Victory in our country. We will always remember it as the Great Patriotic War. Its horrors and hardships impacted every single family in Russia.

The above-mentioned trends and manifestations confirm Russia's thesis that such manifestations of racial discrimination and glorification of Nazism pose a direct threat to the fundamental values of true democracy and human rights and a serious challenge to international and regional security and stability. However, there seems to be no urge for unification and meaningful cooperation in the interests of sustainable development and equal partnership on the part of certain states so far. The recent events of this year have been increasingly reminiscent of the "values" of the superiority of one race or nation over other peoples and cultures that were in force over half a century ago.

Australia

Australian society has a fairly objective view of the events and outcomes of World War II. National authorities have shown no intention to belittle the Red Army's contribution to the defeat of Nazism or justify the aggression of Germany and its allies. Military memorial complexes that commemorate the troops the anti-Hitler coalition as well as memorial plaques in Sydney and Melbourne are protected by the state, no desecration instances have been registered.

Government encourages activities of various associations of veterans and victims of the Nazi aggression, including those organized by descendants from the USSR. For instance, the Association of World War II Veterans from Ex Soviet Union founded in 1982 in Melbourne was registered by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission, which has been in charge of regulating activities of such structures and allocating grants to them since 2012. According to official reports, in 2020, the Association received USD 15,000 in funding, 96% of which came from the government of the state of Victoria. There have been no instances of preventing such organizations from holding commemorative events on the part of either authorities or radical groups.

The issues of counteracting Nazism, neo-Nazism, racism and xenophobia in Australia are governed by the 1995 Racial Hatred Act,¹ which outlaws any action that offends people on the ground of race, colour or national or ethnic origin, as well as the bearing of Nazi symbols and its public display, racist rhetoric in the society. The law provides for administrative liability in the form of a fine and public apology for such acts. Australia's 1995 Criminal Code does not contain articles pertaining to the manifestations of Nazism, racism and xenophobia.² Racial discrimination is prosecuted only in Western Australia³ under regional legislation.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2004A04951>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00235>

In June 2022, Parliament of Victoria passed the first regional law in the country to ban the use of the swastika in public places, punishable by a fine of up to USD 17 thousand and/or a prison sentence of up to 12 months. The document includes clauses recognizing the historical importance of the swastika in Buddhist, Hindu and other religions, as well as the exceptions for the demonstration of the symbol for educational and artistic purposes. The ban does not apply to the online display of the swastika.

However, Australia keeps abstaining from voting in the UN General Assembly on the draft resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" submitted annually by Russia jointly with other co-sponsors.

However, right-wing nationalist associations within the Ukrainian community, first of all the Australian Association of Ukrainian Organisations led by S.I.Romaniv, who is at the same time a leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (Banderites) and the NGO "Ukrainian Democratic Initiative", are working to justify the crimes committed by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army.

Despite an increased media focus on the Ukrainian crisis, Australia carefully disregards the fact that the regime in Kiev is backed up by neo-Nazi military formations, none of which have been recognized as extremist in Australia. The police therefore do nothing to curb the display of the "Right Sector" symbols during anti-Russian picketing.

Certain toponyms in Australia refer to the Nazis' accomplices. A street the town of South Penrith⁴ in New South Wales was named after Stefan Bandera. According to archive records, the initiative was sponsored by a

³ The Racial Hatred Act: What is the racial hatred act? Australian Human Rights Commission
<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/racial-hatred-act-what-racial-hatred-act>

⁴ The Secret of Bandera Road. Bandera Lobby Blog. 19 April 2021
<https://banderalobby.substack.com/p/the-secret-of-bandera-road>

Ukrainian-born businessman G.Borets (UPA veteran), who made considerable investments in the development of the town.

No regular contacts between Australian groups and right-wing nationalist forces in western Ukraine have been reported. A number of articles in local media inform of several right-wing radicalized Australians who fought in Ukrainian national battalions. A resident of Queensland I.Tilling was involved in military action as a combat member of the Georgian National Legion in 2018. Before that, he had been a member of the Brisbane branch of the Australian Right Wing Resistance organization for six months. According to the activist, he left the cell (which had numbered three members) before leaving for Ukraine. According to media reports, J.Bennett from Victoria, who had served for five years in the Australian Royal Air Force, fought in eastern Ukraine in 2016 as a member of the "Right Sector" group.

According to the national broadcasting corporation, ABC, since the beginning of the Russian special military operation in Ukraine, approximately 200 mercenaries with Australian citizenship went to fight there.⁵

In general, right-wing sentiments in Australia have been taking shape since the establishment of the federal state in the early 20th century. A package of legislative measures was adopted at the time to encourage the influx of pure Europoids into the country. Such selectivity with regard to immigration was based on hostility towards Asian and Pacific Islanders prevailing in Australian society at the time, as well as the strong influence of local labour unions, which sought to prevent the emergence of a competitive workforce.

Even though the White Australia policy has given way to the principles of multiculturalism in modern Australian society, hostility toward descendants from Asia and Middle East persists. Sociological surveys have revealed⁶ that

⁵ Days before dying in Ukraine, Australian man Michael O'Neill told a reporter of the need to 'eradicate' Russian 'bullies'. ABC News. 16 June 2022.

⁶ Report 2021 by Scanlon Foundation Research Institute. https://scanloninstitute.org.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/Mapping_Social_Cohesion_2021_Report_0.pdf.

43% of respondents have negative attitudes towards Australians of Chinese origin, more than a half – towards natives of Iraq and Sudan, and 32% – towards Muslims. At the same time, 40% of people of Asian descent have reported being subjected to discrimination in everyday life, which increased during the pandemic.

Over the last few years, nationalist sentiments in Australian society have been given new impetus. The 2014 hostage-taking at the Lindt Café in Sydney by H.Moniz, a refugee of Iranian origin, became one of the triggers. Two civilians were killed in the terrorist attack. This sparked criticism of the government's immigration policy. The November 2016 election of Donald Trump, whose election campaign featured right-wing views, as US President also had an influence. Another upswing of nationalism in Australia was associated with the August 2017 racist rallies in Charlottesville, USA, and a terrorist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, committed by an Australian national B.Tarrant in 2019.

The rise in racism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia, including in political debates and the media, most often targeting migrants, especially Arabs, Muslims, and people of African descent, as well as indigenous peoples, was noted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) upon consideration of the combined 18th to 20th periodic reports of Australia,⁷ as well as by the Human Rights Committee (HRC) in its consideration of the 6th periodic report in October 2017.⁸

Currently, there are about 70 organizations, political parties, or registered protest movements supporting right-wing radical views operating in the country.

⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 18th to 20th periodic reports of Australia. November 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fAUS%2fCO%2f18-19&Lang=ru

⁸ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 6th periodic report of Australia. October 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fAUS%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

Many of them strive to gain access to the political decision-making process in the top government echelons through federal parliamentary elections. Yet, the only right-wing party represented in the legislative branch is Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party, which won two senate seats in the May 2022 general election.

Three socio-political groups adhering to right-wing radical ideas can be roughly identified in Australia. These are patriots, nationalists and racists.

Members of the civic patriot movement adhere to ideas and concepts that are shared by the majority of Australian citizens. For example, they advocate the sustainable development of a secular society, its civic institutions and moral and social values, with citizenship (rather than race, ethnicity or religion) remaining a fundamental element and identity marker. The proponents of this movement allow for the possibility of non-Europeans and non-Christians immigrating to Australia, provided that they are assimilated into the Australian system of social values. At the same time, the civic patriots unanimously agree that Islamic fundamentalists, being unable to integrate into secular society due to their traditional religious affiliation, are a "fifth column" seeking to Islamize Australia. Some members of the movement take a firmer stance, denouncing Islam in general as an imperialist and totalitarian ideology that infringes on the rights of non-Muslims. At the same time, the civic patriots are not anti-Semites, rather calling Israel the only "bastion of free Western civilization" in the Middle East.

Such parties as the "Party for Freedom," "Rise Up Australia Party", "Reclaim Australia Protest Movement," as well as organizations such as the "European Australian Civil Rights League," "Love Australia or Leave," "Restore Australia," "Nationalist Republican Guard" consider themselves part of the patriotic movement.

A more right-wing radical force is presented by the nationalist movement, which is both Islamophobic and anti-Semitic. Nationalists prioritize race and

ethnicity over citizenship. Although the nationalists place the main focus in their activities on confronting Muslims, their ideology also includes rejection of other national and religious minorities, although it is not expressed too publicly and openly for fear of losing popularity and supporters.

The main actors of the nationalist movement in Australia are the protest movements "Nationalist Alternative," the National Democratic Party of Australia, "Christian Identity" and "Patriot Blue."

The "United Patriots Front" and the "Australian Defence League" are among organizations of this movement that have some kind of international connections.

The United Patriotic Front expressed solidarity with the Greek far-right nationalist Golden Dawn Party. According to the organization's website, in 2017, it was restructured and renamed the "Lads Society," without any identified international ties.

The Australian Defence League was founded in Sydney in 2009 and is a branch of the English Defence League operating in Great Britain.

The most radical right-wing views in Australian society are expressed by the racist movement, which sees belonging to the Caucasian race as a key determinant of identity. Australian racists embrace the idea of social Darwinism, a concept that divides people of different races and ethnicities into different grades within an established hierarchical chain based on their moral, physical and psychological compatibility. Australian racists are hostile to all immigrants of non-European origin. Jewish community is seen as the main threat. At the same time, unlike the previous two groups, racists are not always negative towards Muslims, which reflects the historical fact that Nazi Germany collaborated with some Islamic state leaders during World War II. This political spectrum in Australia mainly includes neo-Nazis who adhere to ideas of anti-Semitism and white supremacy, and embraces the concept of the "white genocide."

"Battalion 88," Club "Nation," "Expel the Parasites," "Australians Resistance Network," "National Socialist Network" make part of this movement.

The following racist movement groups have international affiliation of varying intensity: "Blood&Honour," "Soldiers of Odin," "Women for Aryan Unity," "Right Wing Resistance."

"Blood&Honour" is a low-activity Australian branch of the namesake British organization.

The "Soldiers of Odin" organization was registered as a NPO at the state of Victoria in 2016. It is an Australian branch of a similar structure established in northern Finland in 2015, which is also present in Belgium, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Estonia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Portugal, and Spain. Open sources claim that the Australian "Soldiers of Odin" have been inactive since 2016.

"Women for Aryan Unity" is a grouping established in 1990 in the US with branches in Australia, Argentina, Italy and Spain.

"Right Wing Resistance" is a New Zealand-based organization operating in Australia.

Recently, the "Antipodean Resistance" movement has been the key racist group in Australia; it is the only one in the country to overtly use Nazi symbols and call for the legalization of the murder of the Jewish population. Established in, the group is inspired by actions of well-known right-wing radical groups: the "British National Action", the "Nordic Resistance Movement" in Scandinavia, and the "Atomwaffen Division" in the United States. It is unclear whether it maintains any direct ties with them.

The right-wing movement in Australia is neither large nor consolidated. The vast majority of organizations that identify themselves as patriots, nationalists or racists number no more than a few hundred members. Besides, these entities have no sufficient administrative or financial resources, so their

activities are mainly limited to sporadic protests, which are mostly verbal without active violent or other unlawful actions. For example, the biggest right-wing event of late was the large-scale nationalist strike held in April 2015 in 16 Australian cities (including Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane) and called "Reclaim Australia." However, the number of protesters at the event did not exceed even one thousand people. In most cases, right-wing extremist behaviour is manifested in the media, social networks and specialized nationalist forums engaged in the active dissemination of right-wing views and ideas.

In particular, Facebook is widely used to lobby and encourage protest actions. In 2014, nationalists used it to collect signatures to call off the construction of a mosque in Bendigo, Victoria. The media resources of the Australian-American far-right forum "The Daily Stormer" and "The Base" information portal are actively exploited, introducing the Internet audience to neo-Nazi narratives. The "Iron March," which had been the most popular website until recently, was blocked in 2017 because of its extremely reactionary views and mass calls for violence.

Although right-wing radical movements in Australia do not constitute a single whole and cannot pose a serious threat to public and state law and order, the country has seen a certain upsurge in their activities. For example, in February 2020, the National Socialist Network convention held at an Australia Day celebration in a park near Melbourne received media coverage. About 40 people in paramilitary uniforms displayed Third Reich symbols and greeted passers-by with a Nazi salute. In the same month, the leader of the said organization, T.Sewell, started a scuffle at the editorial office of a TV channel that had previously shown his associates in a news program. In November 2020, P.Galea was sentenced to 12 years in prison for preparing a terrorist attack against left-wing NGOs in Melbourne. In March 2021, unidentified people posted pro-White Australia campaign posters at the Australian National University. In October 2021, the flag of Nazi Germany was hung out of a

window in a house adjacent to a synagogue. In April 2022, unidentified individuals drew the swastika symbols on election posters of some candidates.

These activities are a matter of concern for the country's authorities. In February 2020, Director of the Australian Security Intelligence Organization M.Burgess, said that right wing extremists were posing a growing threat in Australia. According to the agency, about a half of its counter-terrorist efforts are targeting right-wing radical activities (in 2016, these accounted for only 10 to 15 per cent). This was echoed by Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, R.Kirshaw in July 2020. Such messages increasingly appear in security officials' statements highlighting the rise in right-wing radical activities against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In late 2020, the Australian Parliament initiated hearings in the Joint Security and Intelligence Committee on the growing threats posed by extremist organizations, including radical far-right groups. On March 2, 2021, Victoria's specialized parliamentary committee recommended that the use of Nazi swastikas be banned by law throughout the region. This decision was supported by Premier of the state D. Andrews, and his government had earlier requested assistance of the Embassy and the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation in obtaining information on legal details of the prohibition of Nazi symbols in Russia. The requested data was transmitted to the Australian partners on 4 February 2021.

In March 2021, Australian Minister of Home Affairs P.Dutton announced that the British neo-Nazi group "Sonnenkrieg Division" was included in the national list of terrorist organizations, becoming the first right-wing radical entity to be put on this list. The Australian Home Affairs Department website specifies that Australians have not been directly involved in its activities and it does not pose a direct threat to the country. However, its ideology, which is hostile to multicultural societies, can encourage local extremists, and its terrorist attacks are potentially dangerous for Australian citizens abroad. Becoming its

member, affiliating with it or providing financial support to the organization would constitute a criminal offence punishable by up to 25 years in prison. The expert community and the opposition Australian Labor Party welcomed the step, but pointed to the need to add to the list of banned organizations those groups that are active directly throughout Australia.

Next on the list of terrorist organizations appeared the American entity "Base", which tried to recruit supporters among local nationalist associations in 2019 and 2020. In 2022, the "National Socialist Order" group (former "Atomwaffen Division") was included in the list.

Of particular significance to Australian society is the issue of public attitudes toward Aboriginal people. The reinstatement of Aboriginal rights is high on the domestic political agenda of major parties in Australia. Targeted efforts are being made to bring Indigenous populations to the modern level of civilization. The Government's Closing the Gap Programme seeks to improve access of the indigenous population to pre-school, secondary and higher education, includes steps to increase life expectancy, minimize infant mortality and combat unemployment. However, indigenous people remain the poorest and most disadvantaged part of society⁹ and are de facto subjected to discrimination. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities noted in its concluding observations following the consideration of Australia's combined 2nd and 3rd periodic reports that persons with disabilities within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities expressed suicidal ideation due to lack of support, poverty and isolation.¹⁰

The Closing the Gap initiative has been criticized by human rights activists for its lack of practical proposals to remedy the situation. The experts

⁹ Report of the Australian Human Rights Commission for the Third Universal Periodic Review. www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/legal/submission/australias-third-universal-periodic-review.

¹⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the combined 2nd and 3rd periodic reports of Australia. October 2019. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fAUS%2fCO%2f2-3&Lang=ru

are also frustrated by the refusal from engaging in its implementation Aboriginal-led organizations, such as the Australian Indigenous Education Fund. There is a general need to develop models of decision-making with increased participation of local communities. The focus is on the need to address the indigenous appeal to the Australian leadership ("Uluru Statement from the Heart," 2017, calling for the enshrinement in the Australian Constitution of the Aboriginal right to be represented in the country's parliament). However, the ruling coalition has steadfastly refused to give the go-ahead to this initiative.

There remains a persistent bias against indigenous populations on the part of law enforcement officials. Although Aboriginal peoples constitute only 3% of the country's population, they account for more than a quarter of the total number of adult prisoners. Instances of disproportionate use of violence by police officers are not uncommon.

There occurs a dismissive attitude of businesses toward aboriginal sites of worship. For instance, in May 2020, Rio Tinto company's mining activities caused the destruction of the Juukan sacred site, provoking a public outcry.

The dire situation of indigenous Australians, including issues of political participation, lack of protection of their right to land, socio-economic discrimination, disproportionate violence against indigenous women, and the overrepresentation of this category, especially children, in the criminal justice system, have also been highlighted by CERD¹¹ and the HRC¹². The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in addition to the above-mentioned issues, expressed concern at the high level of disadvantage of indigenous

¹¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 18th to 20th periodic reports of Australia. November 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fAUS%2fCO%2f18-19&Lang=ru

¹² Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 6th periodic report of Australia. October 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fAUS%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

peoples across all socio-economic indicators and at the insufficient compliance with the principle of free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples when developing policies with regard to extractive activities on lands traditionally used by indigenous peoples.¹³

Driven by the mass protests in the United States over the murder of African-American G.Floyd, thousands of people rallied in major Australian cities in June 2020 against manifestations of racism, including racism against the country's indigenous populations.

Thus, systemic discrimination against Aboriginals currently remains the most challenging issue in the area of combating intolerance and xenophobia in Australian society. At the same time, in recent years, incidents related to racism and nationalism have increasingly appeared on the agenda, reflecting the rise of extreme right-wing attitudes in society. This trend undoubtedly calls for utmost attention of the national government, which fosters the culture of multiculturalism as a pillar of Australians' national identity.

¹³ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 5th periodic report of Australia. May 2017.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fAUS%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en

Austria

After the end of World War II, Austria, which had been liberated from the Nazi occupation, faced an urgent issue of establishing effective legal mechanisms that could prevent the resurgence of fascism. The primary goal was to prevent the resumption of fascist, Nazi or neo-Nazi associations and parties, or other forms of Nazism, in the country.

Vienna's international legal obligations to combat Nazism arise from the provisions of the State Treaty for the Re-establishment of an Independent and Democratic Austria of May 15, 1955, which, in Articles 9 and 10, obliged the state to eliminate from Austrian political, economic and cultural life all traces of Nazism, to ensure that the above-mentioned organizations are not revived in any form, and to prevent all Nazi and militarist activity and propaganda in Austria's territory.

The Provisional Government of the Republic of Austria, in its first statement upon its establishment in April 1945, introduced the criminal prosecution of the crimes of the Nazi regime. To that end, as early as May 8, 1945, the Constitutional Law on the Prohibition of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) (the "Prohibition Act") was adopted, followed by the Constitutional Law on war crimes and other atrocities of the National Socialists (the "War Criminals Act") of June 26, 1945. These laws still remain in force, with some amendments introduced as the national post-war legislation evolved.

According to the Prohibition Act, "the NSDAP, its military formations (SS, SA and others), organizational structures and affiliated associations, all without exception National Socialist organizations and institutions, as well as the resumption of their activities shall be prohibited." Their property shall be alienated in favor of the state.

Paragraph 3 of the aforementioned law specifies that all kinds of activities in the name of the NSDAP are to be prohibited, even if they are actually

performed outside this organization. Those who continue to be members of the party or support its goals are declared guilty of a crime punishable by death and confiscation of all property. If there are serious mitigating circumstances, the death penalty may be commuted to imprisonment for 10 to 20 years and confiscation of all property.

In 1992, the Prohibition Act was amended to increase criminal liability for any attempt to revive or support the activities of banned Nazi organizations. The threshold for punishment was lowered. The amendments increased penalties for the propaganda of Nazi ideology through dissemination of publications or works of art, and criminalized a new offence – the denial of Nazi genocide and crimes against humanity or adherence to the ideas of National Socialism.

The provisions of the War Criminals Act can also be applied to Nazi criminals. According to information from Austrian sources, in the post-war period, there were 13,607 convictions under the Act, 43 of them punishable by capital punishment and 29 by life imprisonment. However, Jewish associations in Austria claim that the law is ineffective and criticize the authorities for not having punished a single Nazi criminal in the past 30 years.

Austrian legislation does not contain specific regulations on countering extremist manifestations. The national legal practice does not clearly define the term "extremism". Therefore, criminal offences that could fall under this definition are regulated by the aforementioned Prohibition Act and the Insignia Act, as well as the Criminal Code and the Code of Administrative Offences.

The most frequent right-wing extremist activities in Austria are covered by the 1960 Law on Insignia. This legal act does not allow for the public use of symbols (insignia, emblems, uniforms, etc.) of banned fascist and Nazi organizations, including similar symbols that can be used as a substitute. This is an administrative offence punishable by a fine of up to EUR 4,000 or arrest for up to one month (except for theatre performances and works of art, as well as

exhibition items and printed matter, provided that the use of such symbols is not an essential element thereof and does not aim to propagate or encourage Nazism. Since March 2019, symbols of 13 organizations recognized by Vienna as extremist organizations have been banned in Austria; these include the Croatian fascists, the Ustaša, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Hezbollah organization and political party, Hamas, the Kurdistan Workers' Party, and the Grey Wolves, a Turkish nationalist organization. The offence is penalized by a fine of EUR 4,000, and up to EUR 10,000 in case of a repeat offence.

Article 283 of the Austrian Criminal Code criminalizes extremist acts (incitement to violent acts, causing injury, threatening life or health, etc.) and other acts (e.g. damaging property) against persons, a group of persons, a religious or ecclesiastical association on the grounds of racial, linguistic, national, religious, ideological, state affiliation, ethnic, gender, age or sexual identity.

Pursuant to Article 33 of the Austrian Criminal Code, racist manifestations (primarily those referred to in Article 283) are regarded as an aggravating circumstance when committing unlawful acts.

If certain extremist acts are not criminalized due to the absence of serious negative consequences for society or insignificance of damage inflicted, the provisions of the Code of Administrative Offences apply. In particular, Section III, Article 1, Paragraph 4, establishes a monetary penalty for dissemination of national-socialist ideas.

Austria's official authorities have made significant efforts to monitor, prevent, and suppress the activities of destructive right-wing forces. Since 2013, the state has been implementing the National Action Plan to combat right-wing extremism, which provides for a comprehensive approach to countering various right-wing extremist and neo-Nazi manifestations.

The issue of the so-called Hitler's birthplace house located in Braunau am Inn (Upper Austria) is nearing its final resolution. In 2016, the Republic of

Austria passed a special law by which it nationalized the building where Hitler was born in order to prevent it from becoming a "place of worship" for neo-Nazis (before that, starting in 1972, the Austrian Interior Ministry had rented it for 5 thousand euros a month). The woman who had been the owner of the building was awarded a compensation of 812,000 euros. In 2020, following a lengthy public debate involving politicians, civil society, historians, and construction experts, it was decided to reconstruct the building for it to accommodate a police station. The work, with an estimated cost of 6.5 million euros, is expected to start in autumn 2022 and be completed in the second quarter of 2023.

Every once in a while the press and the general public raise the issue of the appropriateness of Austrian cities' street and square names with National Socialist references. The work to put up explanatory signs at the beginning and at the end of such streets in Graz (Federal State of Styria) has been commenced as a follow up to the studies conducted in 2016-2019 by a special commission headed by professor Carner (co-chair of the Russian-Austrian Commission of Historians).

Owing to historical background, Austria pays particular attention to combating neo-Nazism and preventing the rehabilitation of Nazism. The state memorial complex on the territory of the former Mauthausen concentration camp plays an important role in educating the population, especially young people, as a measure of preventing neo-Nazism.

Established in January 2017, the Mauthausen Memorial Federal Institution, the International Mauthausen Committee (IMC) NGO and the Austrian Mauthausen Committee co-organize annual commemoration events (in May) on the occasion of the anniversary of the camp's liberation with the participation of Austrian authorities, members of the public, foreign guests and the Vienna diplomatic corps – the so-called Festival of Joy in Vienna as well as a procession of national delegations to lay wreaths in Mauthausen proper.

By conducting research and awareness-raising work and publishing relevant thematic materials on their online resources, the Austrian Resistance Documentary Archive and the Austrian Mauthausen Committee make a significant contribution to monitoring neo-Nazi activity in Austria. The latter regularly updates its brochure entitled "Right-Wing Extremism," which is meant first and foremost to inform publishers on forbidden Nazi symbols and insignia. The Committee's official website offers the option of anonymously reporting cases of right-wing extremism.

The rare incidents and manifestations of neo-Nazism are thoroughly analysed, discussed and, in the vast majority of cases, condemned by Austrian political circles, the public and the media. The most recent example is the 10-month suspended sentence handed down in early July 2022 to a non-commissioned officer of the Austrian army for distributing Nazi symbols in his unit (a search of his flat also revealed numerous household items with swastikas and other Nazi paraphernalia).

However, neo-Nazism and racial intolerance persist in some spheres. Despite protests of Austrian anti-fascist organizations, annual "commemoration events" are organized in Austria by church institutions or local NGOs associated with right-wing radicals. The so-called Bleiburg Massacre of 1945 (the mass executions by Yugoslav partisans, led by Josip Broz Tito, of the Croatian Ustasas and Slovenian collaborators who had fled to Austria) is still a matter of public debate. For example, in March 2022, after the domestic affairs committee of the Austrian National Council (the lower house of parliament) reviewed the expert opinion of the Interior Ministry concerning the relevant commemoration events, the authorities publicly declared their intention not to allow the events to take place in the future. Starting from the 1950s and until 2019, the event was held every year in May on the Loibach Field in Bleiburg (Federal State of Carinthia); it was not held in 2020 and 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic. It was occasionally attended by high-ranking Croatian

politicians, clergymen and prominent public figures (e.g., prime minister Ivica Račan in 2002, and his successor Ivo Sanader in 2004).

On several occasions, organized groups arrived in Bleiburg, wearing Ustasha insignia and shouting Nazi salutations. After the police took a strong action, the number of radical participants dropped sharply and such incidents became rare. In spring 2022, following the publication of the aforementioned expert report, the event was reduced to a commemorative service in a local church and individual wreath laying at the main monument, and the organizers (church institutions and local NGOs) were forced to remove the Croatian Ustasha coat of arms with the 13th Waffen-SS Division symbols from the memorial stone on the Loibach Field.

The topic of the so-called Lienz tragedy remains the bottleneck in dealing with the issue of whitewashing of WWII Nazi collaborators in Austria. Every year (in late May/early June) commemorations are held in Lienz (Federal State of Tyrol) to mark the events of 1 June 1945, when the British occupation authorities extradited Cossacks who had served in the 15th SS Cavalry Cossack Corps to the Soviet Union. The commemorative events were attended by city authorities, the Austrian Black Cross NGO and clerics from the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR). In 2020, due to the pandemic, the memorial service was cancelled, but an online memorial exhibition organized by two professors from the University of Innsbruck was displayed at www.dolomitenbank.at, describing the "dire plight of those who strived for freedom."

Topics related in one way or another to the Nazi past continue to be periodically discussed in Austrian society. In November 2018, the Memory Gaps art group suggested "reinterpreting" "Hitler's balconies" preserved in Vienna (besides the famous balcony on Heldenplatz, from which the Führer spoke 3 days after the "Anschluss" of Austria in March 1938, a balcony to the Vienna City Hall was constructed personally for him). In December 2018,

Austrian NGOs demanded that one of the most famous local red grape varieties, "Zweigelt," be renamed because its developer, F.Zweigelt, was a "fervent Nazi" (even though the breeder himself called the new variety "Rotburger" and the renaming did not occur until 10 years after his death, in 1975).

The various manifestations of right-wing extremism in everyday life remain a prominent social problem in Austria. According to a report by the human rights NGO called ZARA ("Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit" – "Civil Courage and Anti-Racism Work"), 1977 racially motivated human rights violations were recorded in 2021 (representing a decrease of 35% as compared to the record-high number of 3,039 recorded in 2020; 1950 cases in 2019; 1920 in 2018), with more than 57% of them occurring online, and 14% in public places. There were 112 cases of discrimination on the part of civil servants, 102 on the part of law enforcement officials, and 84 on the part of politicians and the media. In 78% of cases, offences (including in the online environment) were reported by eyewitnesses or other third parties and only 22% were reported by the victims themselves.

The right-wing extremist environment in the country is very uneven, differing in the number of participants, composition, resource base and ideological focus (anti-democratic, racist, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic and revisionist movements). The 2022 report by the State Protection and Intelligence Services Directorate of the Austrian Interior Ministry, which is responsible, among other things, for countering manifestations of extremism and neo-Nazism, notes that the activities of right-wing radical groups pose a potential threat to public order and national security.

As for the organizational structure, right-wing forces are usually united into so-called "ideological" parties, unions, "clubs of like-minded people" or "fellowships" and may include individual revisionist activists who deny Germany's responsibility for the outbreak of World War II and the Holocaust and seek to understate other crimes of the National Socialist regime. To this

end, the "works" of pseudo-historical revisionists from Germany, the United States, Canada and Great Britain are used as the "ideological base". Since such campaigning is prohibited by the national legislation, it is carried out from abroad, including through the active use of the Internet.

The other segment of the right-wing extremist spectrum is represented by youth "subculture" (mainly regional) groups, neo-Nazi "associations" (including virtual ones), the skinhead movement, individual activists from marginal social groups, and well-organized associations of sports fans. The ideological component plays a secondary role in these structures, but they display a high mobilization potential and a pronounced propensity for violence.

Right-wing extremist associations in Austria include the "Austrian Identitarian Movement" (Identitäre Bewegung Österreich) – part of the European movement which originated in France to oppose the unification of traditional "indigenous" cultures, multiculturalism policies and globalization processes, as well as capitalism and American dominance. The Austrian branch, which is close to the right-populist Austrian Freedom Party (AFP), has been organizing annual anti-migration campaigns since 2014, including protests and Internet propaganda, calling to abandon integration policies, repatriate migrants and refugees, enshrine the "leading culture" in the Constitution and pursue the policy of protecting family values and traditional ethnocultural groups in Austria. It maintains a close affiliation with "partner" organizations in Germany, France and Italy.

After it was discovered in 2019 that B.Tarrant, the terrorist responsible for the shooting at the Christchurch mosques in New Zealand, had been funneling donations to this Austrian movement, Austrian Chancellor S.Kurz authorized an inquiry into the judicial grounds for its prohibition. In 2020, major social networks blocked the Identitarians from posting their content. Identitarians' symbols were banned as part of tougher measures against terrorism and religious extremism that followed the November 2020 terrorist

attack in Vienna. Against this background, in early 2021, an attempt was made to transform the movement: its leader M.Sellner founded a conservative patriotic civil platform "Die Österreicher – DO5" (a reference to the Austrian resistance movement against Nazism called O5), whose agenda replicates that of the Identitarians.

Another right-wing extremist association, the Working Community for Democratic Politics (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für demokratische Politik/AFP) is registered as a political party, although it does not participate in elections. It consists of a small number of activists and is seen as a platform for establishing contacts between activists on the Austrian right-wing extremist scene and their sympathizers abroad.

The Working Community has a youth wing called "Bund freier Jugend"/"Junge Aktion" ("Free Youth Union"/"Youth Action"), which is secretly operating in Upper Austria. It also brings together persons of nationalist views, in particular National Socialists, who hate foreigners on the grounds of nationality and race.

The sentiments against the coronavirus restrictions brought into existence such movements as "Querdenken," "Bewegung 2020," and "Platform Respekt" to oppose harsh anti-COVID measures and demand respect for basic constitutional rights and freedoms. Although these groups claim to be politically unengaged and committed to democratic values, they in fact serve as a magnet for other far-right actors. A case in point is a mass anti-government rally held on 16 January 2021 (according to the Austrian Ministry of the Interior, over 10,000 people took part in it) involving many right-wing extremists, from the Identitarians and AFP to soccer ultras, members of neo-Nazi groups, and former members of the National Democratic Party banned in Austria.

Right-wing student unions ("Olimpia", "Arminia Chernivits", etc.), which are considered to be far-right by local NGOs, enjoy certain influence in Austria. Their membership includes federal and regional political figures from the AFP.

There also exist a few regional right-wing radical cells: the "Kameradschaft Deutsch-Österreichische Blutsbrüder" ("German-Austrian Blood Brotherhood"), "Widerstand Braunau" ("Braunau Resistance"), "Objekt 21" ("Object 21", illegal since 2013), and "Freie Kameradschaften" ("Free Fellowships"). Members of these associations hold 20 out of the 51 AFP seats in the National Council. According to the Austrian Resistance Documentary Archive, this is "a record figure in the history of the Second Austrian Republic."¹⁴

To propagate their ideas, right-wing extremists hold rallies, protests and street marches, often not sanctioned by the authorities. They use print media outlets, such as The Assembly Hall, Phoenix, New Order, Heute, Ekkart, etc., as a media platform for disseminating their right-wing radical narratives. Internet and social networks are increasingly utilized by right-wing extremist groups to promote their "ideas." Local NGOs consider such "alternative" Internet portals as "unzensuriert.at" and "alles roger?" to be right-wing radical. Neo-Nazi musical records available on the Internet are actively used to indoctrinate the target audience, especially the youth.

The Austrian right-wing extremist community maintains ties with the far-right forces in Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Norway, Sweden, and Belgium. Organized groups and individual activists regularly participate in demonstrations and marches in other countries, especially in Germany.

However, the Austrian right-wing extremists have no real political chances in the current circumstances. Their active supporters are few in number, and their main concerns ("dominance of migrants," "Islamization," etc.) are traditionally addressed in Parliament within the agenda of the AFP as a party representing the opposition.¹⁵ The latter received only 16.2% of the vote in the

¹⁴ "Identity and Democracy": The Far Right in the European Parliament/translation from English by A.Kolgashkin; ed. by V.Krasheninnikova. – Moscow: Institute for Foreign Policy Research and Initiatives, 2019. – (Real Politics).

¹⁵ Ibid.

early parliamentary elections on 29 September 2019, which is 10% less than in the previous election in 2017 (26.5%).

Experts have highlighted the growing aggressiveness and "militarization" of extremist groups in recent years. In December 2020, Austrian law enforcement authorities in a joint special operation with their German colleagues discovered a weapons cache owned by local neo-Nazi groups and intended for the creation of illegal armed formations in Germany.

Criticism of human rights NGOs is mainly provoked by the insufficient efforts of official authorities to combat racism which is becoming systemic. Specifically, in the field of migration, the need for equal treatment of all refugees regardless of their nationality is pointed out.

Experts note that certain law enforcement actions, in particular the Luxor counter-terrorism operation to capture adherents of radical Islam following the November 2020 terrorist attack in Vienna, have contributed to a marked aggravation of inter-ethnic tensions and the already generally negative public perception of Muslims living in Austria. Against this background, human rights activists have urged the government to develop a comprehensive national strategy against racism, similar to the "anti-Semitic" strategy, including measures to combat its Islamophobic manifestations (there were 1,061 cases in 2021, and 1,402 in 2020).

Overall, Austria has been complying in good faith with its obligations concerning the maintenance of Soviet soldiers' burial sites, most of which are in good condition. The Federal Ministry of the Interior, in cooperation with the authorities of states, continues maintenance works on Red Army memorials in need of renovation, within the available budget. For example, on 10 August 2021, the Russian Embassy held a ceremony in the restored Soviet section of Vienna's Central Cemetery on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of its opening. On 3 December 2021, a wreath-laying ceremony was held at the cleaned-up burial site in the Vienna district of Aspern. Similar activities were

held upon the completion of renovation works on the Soviet memorials in the Lower Austrian towns of St. Pölten and Mistelbach (February and June 2022 respectively).

Unfortunately, there have been cases of the desecration of Soviet war memorial sites located on Austrian territory. However, such incidents are extremely rare and receive a proper prompt reaction from Austrian law enforcers. Thus, in September and November 2021, vandals spray-painted graffiti on the Soviet War Memorial in the Schwarzenbergplatz square in Vienna. The damage done by these acts of vandalism was later removed, and the Viennese police pledged to ensure round-the-clock surveillance of the memorial.

The need for increased vigilance over Soviet graves became apparent with the launch of Russia's special military operation (SMO) to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine and the growing anti-Russian sentiment fuelled by pro-Ukrainian activists.

Two cases of vandalism and desecration at Red Army Memorials were recorded in the spring of 2022: in April, writings condemning the SMO were found on the gates of the Church of St. Michael the Archangel in Laa an der Thaya (Lower Austria), and on 25 May unknown persons painted the symbols of Ukraine's "Azov" battalion (a mirror image of the emblem of the SS Panzer Division "Reich", which existed during World War II) on a wall (privately owned) behind the Soviet War Memorial in Vienna's Schwarzenbergplatz that had previously been provocatively painted in the colours of the Ukrainian flag. After the Embassy lodged a protest, the symbol was promptly removed.

On the whole, Austrian authorities, political forces and social movements are tolerant towards our commemorative events and do not impede their organization. In 2022, members of the Coordinating Council of Organizations of Russian Compatriots (KSORS) organized a series of events in Vienna on the occasion of the 77th anniversary of Victory Day and Day of Remembrance and

Sorrow (concerts, Immortal Regiment procession), which were a great success. During the international Garden of Remembrance and Candle of Remembrance events organized with the participation of the Russian Embassy, the authorities provided adequate infrastructure support, particularly in terms of security.

No illegal exhumations/transfers of the remains of Red Army and anti-fascist soldiers in the Austrian territory have been recorded.

At the same time, when it comes to the international arena, Austria chooses to adhere to the EU's common line as regards combating neo-Nazism. For example, Austria regularly abstains in the vote on the UN General Assembly resolution on "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" sponsored by Russia. The 16 December 2021 vote on the document was no exception.

According to the Austrian Interior Ministry, 853 hate-motivated offences were recorded in 2020 (922 in 2019). There was a decrease in the number of right-wing extremist crimes (697; 797 in 2019), with an increase in the number of racist (104; 15 more cases compared to the previous period), anti-Semitic (36; 6 more cases) and Islamophobic (16; 9 more cases) crimes.

The official figures provided by the government are much lower than those reported by human rights organizations.

According to the human rights NGO ZARA, 1,950 racially motivated human rights violations were recorded in 2019 (1,920 in 2018; 1,162 in 2017), with more than half of them occurring online. In 2020, cases of online racism doubled compared to 2019.¹⁶ Of the 62,864 posts on social media about foreigners/migrants, 30,884 contained hate speech.¹⁷

The results of a survey conducted in late 2020 by BanHate showed a 76% increase in the number of online hate messages compared to 2019 (an increase

¹⁶ Austria, ZARA (2021), Racism report 2020, Vienna, ZARA.

¹⁷ 2022 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

of more than 3,000 messages). A significant proportion of these have right-wing extremist overtones, usually associated with xenophobic (22%), national socialist (21%) and anti-Semitic views (9%).

On 1 January 2021, as part of the fight against online hate speech, a package of legal acts entered into force in Austria to significantly restrict the publishing of relevant content on the Internet.

There is a certain polarisation of attitudes in society towards the migration issue. According to public opinion polls (as of March 2018), 67% of respondents said that Austria should help refugees, while 74% agreed with the statement that a parallel migrant society exists in the country. In the opinion of human rights activists, the fact that the Freedom Party of Austria, being part of the Austrian Federal Government (December 2017 – May 2019), actively used the concept of zero tolerance for migrant offenders played a major role in the increase of such manifestations.

The level of integration of foreigners in general and refugees in particular remains an extremely important indicator for the Austrian authorities and local society. Against the background of unabated migrant-phobia, the police have also recorded an increase in offences committed by the local population, primarily targeting temporary accommodation centres for migrants (damage to property, arson, etc.).

International human rights monitoring bodies have also pointed out the problems related to the situation of migrants. Thus, in July 2019, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)¹⁸ expressed concern about hate crimes and attacks against refugees and asylum-seekers, including women and girls.

¹⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 9th periodic report of Austria. July 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fCO%2fAUT%2fCO%2f9&Lang=ru

In October 2015, the Human Rights Committee expressed concern that, despite the measures taken by the Austrian authorities, migrants, foreigners and ethnic minorities, especially the Roma, faced the problem of intolerance and discrimination. In particular, it noted an increase in the propaganda of racial or religious hatred towards migrants and asylum seekers, as well as Roma, Muslims, and Jews; an increased number of incidents of hate speech by political figures, which had not always been followed by proper reaction, and propaganda of hatred against people of other confessions by radical Islamist preachers. An increased incidence of hate speech on the Internet and online forums was also pointed out. In this regard, the Committee also highlighted the low representation of ethnic minorities in the political and public life of the country, including in the legislative and executive bodies.¹⁹

The Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) noted in its 2020 report that, in recent years, political speech in Austria had taken on highly divisive and antagonistic overtones, particularly targeting Muslims and refugees, which indicated a high level of Islamophobia in the country.²⁰

On 12 May 2022, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe Dunja Mijatović published a report²¹ following her visit to Austria from 13 to 17 December 2021, which contains recommendations on improving reception and integration of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, as well as on promoting the rights of women and gender equality. The Commissioner states that the attitude towards reception of migrants prevailing in the country progressively became less welcoming – sometimes even hostile – following the

¹⁹ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 5th periodic report of Austria. October 2015 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fAUT%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en

²⁰ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Austria (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted on 7 April 2020 and published on 2 June 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-austria-6th-monitoring-cycle-/16809e826f>

²¹ Report by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe following her visit to Austria. Published on 12 May 2022 <https://rm.coe.int/commdh-2022-10-report-on-the-visit-to-austria-en/1680a6679a>

reception crisis of 2015-2016. The report confirms the above-mentioned concerns voiced by the Human Rights Committee and the ECRI and points out the growing incidence of hate speech and hate crimes. According to the report, a number of NGOs drew the Commissioner's attention to the rise in racist incidents targeting people of Asian descent following the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commissioner also notes a sharp rise in the number of right-wing extremist crimes in 2021 (1,053) compared to 2020 (895).

According to a 2018 study by the Vienna Institute for Empirical Social Research commissioned by the Austrian Parliament, 10% of Austrians are "persistent anti-Semites," with anti-Semitic sentiments being especially common among Turkish and Arabic-speaking residents of the country (from 50% to 70% of them).

In May 2021, the state-funded Political Islam Documentation Centre (established to combat anti-Semitism, especially among migrants), together with the Ministry for Integration and the University of Vienna created an interactive "Map of Islam"²² containing information on the location of 623 mosques and other Muslim religious associations in Austria. This prompted a negative reaction from the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Antisemitic and Anti-Muslim Hatred and Hate Crimes, who stated that Austria's Map of Islam was seen by many Muslim believers as a sign of general prejudice against Islam and could contribute to anti-Muslim sentiment and endanger the security of Muslims. According to a statement issued by the Council of Europe on 31 May 2021, the map is counterproductive, increases discrimination against the religious group and should be removed.

Muslim human rights activists say the "Map of Islam" is a demonstration of the government's open intention to stigmatise all Muslims as a potential threat.²³

²² <https://islamnews.ru/natsionalnaya-karta-islama-obespokoila-musulman-astrii>

²³ <https://islamnews.ru/natsionalnaya-karta-islama-obespokoila-musulman-astrii>

According to a study on the spread of anti-Semitism in the country commissioned by the Austrian National Council in early 2019, about 10% of the population support anti-Semitic attitudes. According to the Austrian Institute for Empirical Social Research, anti-Semitism is more prevalent among Turkish and Arabic speakers. While a total of 10% of all respondents agreed with the statement "if the State of Israel disappears, then peace in the Middle East will be established," for the Arabic-speaking and Turkish-speaking population the number of people supporting the statement reached more than 70% and 50% respectively. According to a study by the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights (FRA), 24% of Jewish respondents consider anti-Semitism to be a very serious problem in Austria, while 49% consider it a relatively serious problem.²⁴

The results of a joint study by the Forum Against Anti-Semitism NGO and the Jewish Community of Vienna showed that the number of incidents with anti-Semitic overtones was increasing every year: in 2019 it rose to 550, which represents an increase of 10% compared to 2017 (503). A noticeable increase in the number of incidents was recorded at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, when the Jewish population was accused of spreading COVID-19. Most of the incidents involved: abusive treatment, primarily online (239 cases); damage to property (78); attacks (6), most of which were committed by right-wing radicals or members of the Islamic community.

In April and May 2019, the Vienna open-air exhibition dedicated to victims of the Holocaust was attacked by vandals three times. In October 2019, a member of the Jewish Community Council was attacked in Vienna by a local motorist, who, allegedly, while shouting anti-Semitic insults, hit the victim in the face several times. In August 2020, a few days apart, unknown assailants attacked the president of the Graz Jewish Community, E. Rosen, and sprayed graffiti on the walls and broke the windows of the city's synagogue.

²⁴ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Austria (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted on 7 April 2020 and published on 2 June 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-austria-6th-monitoring-cycle-/16809e826f>

During the working meeting of Austria's Minister for the European Union and Constitution K.Edtstadler with E.Rosen, which took place in the wake of the incidents, a draft "road map" for combating anti-Semitism was discussed. In addition to adopting a National Anti-Semitism Strategy in the future, they agreed to establish a special unit within the Federal Chancellor's Office to monitor such violations and maintain closer coordination with the country's Jewish communities.

In accordance with the decision of the Austrian government, starting from 1 September 2020, Jews deported from the territory of Austria during the Second World War (more than 100 thousand people) and their descendants can apply for Austrian citizenship without the need to renounce the existing one (dual citizenship is granted in Austria only in exceptional cases). Authorities expect to receive more than 50,000 applications at the first stage. Head of Austria's Jewish community Oskar Deutsch called the decision "not a gift, but a formal correction of an injustice."

According to Dokustelle Wien, the number of cases of Islamophobia reached 1,051 in 2019 (540 in 2018). According to the "integration barometer" of the Austrian Integration Fund, the attitude of Austrian citizens towards the Muslim part of the population is getting worse every year. Of 1,000 respondents, 62% thought living together with Muslims could be characterized as "bad." This sentiment is confirmed by the findings of a regular report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on Austria, according to which "there are high levels of Islamophobia and the public discourse has become increasingly xenophobic, particularly targeting Muslims and refugees."²⁵

According to CEDAW, the decision of the authorities to ban face-covering clothing in public places has a discriminatory impact on Muslim women residing in Austria and migrant women and girls coming to the country.

²⁵ Ibid.

This legislative provision, according to experts, restricts the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion of members of this population group who wear certain religiously influenced clothing, as well as contributes to their social isolation.²⁶

Criticism was provoked by a number of incidents that occurred since the beginning of the 2019/2020 school year in Vienna's schools. Since the entry into force in May 2019 of the ban on wearing Muslim niqab headscarves in primary schools until the end of November 2019, 8 cases of violation were recorded. In all cases, the parents, after receiving legal advice, had to accept the authorities' decision (in case of refusal, they faced a fine of up to 440 euros). In January 2020, the Austrian Islamic Community filed a complaint with the Austrian Constitutional Court against this restrictive measure, believing that it violates fundamental human rights such as the freedom of religion and the right to parenting.

It is noteworthy that the ban itself was formulated in the School Education Act in broad terms: students under the age of 10 should not wear clothes covering their heads that reflect religious or ideological beliefs. However, the parliamentary subcommittee on education subsequently issued an explanatory commentary in this regard, explaining that only those headdresses that hide either the entire hair or most of it are subject to the restriction. Thus, the wearing of yarmulkes and patkas – children's headdresses of Sikhs – was removed from the scope of the law. This makes it even more obvious that this step is directed against Muslim girls, which, according to ECRI experts, may result in the marginalization of this group of students and negatively affect their exercise of the right to education.²⁷

²⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 9th periodic report of Austria. July 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fAUT%2fCO%2f9&Lang=en

²⁷ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Austria (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted on 7 April 2020 and published on 2 June 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-austria-6th-monitoring-cycle-/16809e826f>

There have been cases of racial profiling by police officers of certain individuals on the basis of their physical appearance, color and ethnic origin.²⁸ Thus, in January 2019, two police officers beat a 28-year-old Chechen during a routine identity check in Vienna's Favoriten district. Six law enforcement officers who were nearby watched these unlawful actions indifferently. Only after the victim provided video evidence of the incident, an internal check was initiated against the police officers, as a result of which they were suspended from duty. The case is currently being looked into by the Federal Anti-Corruption Office.

According to the ECRI, despite the legal prohibition on racial profiling in Austria, only two cases in which this issue was raised have been settled in court so far. There is also no data on complaints of such treatment being considered by the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman in Austria, despite the fact that the topic of racial profiling is within its competence.²⁹

According to the statistics from the SORA Institute, persons with a migratory background or Islamic religious affiliation experience discrimination twice as often (62% and 78%) than persons without a migratory background (37%) or those of Christian faith (39%). According to a sociological survey cited in the FRA report, 45% of those surveyed in Austria believe that Muslims should not have the same rights as everyone else in the country.³⁰

The complexity and fragmented nature of the anti-discrimination legislation remains a problem specific to the Austrian legal system. The reason for this lies in the division of competence between the federal government and the provinces. Differences between the Equal Treatment Law and the laws of

²⁸ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 5th periodic report of Austria. October 2015 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fAUT%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en

²⁹ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Austria (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted on 7 April 2020 and published on 2 June 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-austria-6th-monitoring-cycle-/16809e826f>

³⁰ 2020 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-report-2020_en.pdf

each province, which provide different degrees of protection depending on the grounds of discrimination, lead to legal uncertainty and confusion in the application of regulations.³¹

In March 2020, the Committee on the Rights of the Child welcomed the measures taken by Austria to combat hate speech and expressions of neo-Nazism, racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, such as the creation of special units in prosecutors' offices to investigate incidents of incitement to hatred and the inclusion of issues of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance in the curricula of Austrian schools.³²

All in all, it should be noted that the considerable number of right-wing radical groups in the country has to do with its Nazi past, but their real influence on Austria's domestic political agenda is insignificant. At the same time, certain forms of intolerance such as racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and migrant-phobia continue to exist. No progress has been made in resolving these problems in recent years, despite the repeated comments and recommendations made by international monitoring bodies in this regard.

The situation for Russian people in Austria, which used to be generally calm, has changed dramatically since the start of Russia's special military operation to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine. As the cancel culture has been gaining ground, everything Russian and associated with Russia is becoming subject to stigmatization and discrimination.

The Austrian authorities have taken a pronounced anti-Russian stance. On 25 February 2022, Federal Chancellor Karl Nehammer, speaking to the press following a meeting of the Austrian Security Council, stated that the rights of

³¹ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Austria (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted on 7 April 2020 and published on 2 June 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-austria-6th-monitoring-cycle-/16809e826f>

³² Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Austria. March 2020. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fAUT%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en

Russian businessmen to freedom of movement and private ownership should be restricted.

Russian compatriots in Austria face pressure, threats and harassment for their pro-Russian statements.

Massive attacks on the websites of Russian compatriot organizations have been recorded. For example, after refusing to publish fake Ukrainian videos, the "Russian-speaking Vienna" Facebook group (one of the largest groups for Russian compatriots on the social network with more than 30,000 subscribers) was subjected to a large-scale "troll attack" and subsequently blocked. There have also been calls to block another major online community "Russian Austria – Russisches Österreich". The reason was that the community administrators did not publish anything on the events in Ukraine except neutral messages about organizing aid collection for Ukrainian refugees.

Discrimination against Russian citizens and compatriots in Austria has spread beyond the Internet. The Russian Embassy has received reports of cases of bias against Russian children in schools and kindergartens. Besides, our compatriots have noted that educational institutions provide one-sided information about Russia and events in Ukraine.

Acts of vandalism against cars with Russian number plates have also been reported.

Austrian banks, including major ones such as Erste Bank and Raiffeisenbank, block the accounts of Russians living in the country without any warning or refuse to open accounts for them. For instance, Erste Bank, referring to "internal instructions," verbally refused to open an account for an employee of the Russian Trade Representation who had been in Austria for less than six months. As a result, Russian people in Austria are unable to pay for basic needs, including utilities, rent, medical services, etc.

Austrian cultural and educational institutions have also joined the campaign to "cancel Russia". In February 2022, for example, the Linz

Brucknerhaus concert hall broke off its arrangements with the St. Petersburg Music Hall and cancelled the so-called musical Russian Tuesdays for the current season and for 2022/23.

On 1 March 2022, the Salzburg Festival declared that it saw no reason for creative cooperation with institutions and individuals from Russia. Furthermore, in early March 2022, the director of the Vienna Concert Hall (Konzerthaus), Matthias Naske, announced his intention to stop cooperating with those "who do not support Ukraine in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict". A statement published on the concert hall's website notes that its management, as before, will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether the views of individual artists are in line with those of the Konzerthaus. On 16 March 2022, the rector's offices of the University of Innsbruck and the University of Salzburg announced on their websites that they had terminated their contracts with the Russkiy Mir Foundation and intended to reformulate and substantially change the concepts of the Russian Centres functioning at the two universities.

The Austrian side refused to allow the Russian Ambassador and diplomats from the Embassy to participate in commemorations marking the 77th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe (a solemn ceremony at the Federal Chancellery on 8 May and a commemorative event at the Mauthausen memorial site on 15 May).

Albania

During World War II, Albania was occupied by fascist Italian and then Nazi German troops; the Albanians managed to liberate the territory of their State in 1944 without resorting to direct foreign assistance. For the next over than 40 years, the country remained under the Communist dictatorship. Wishing to demonstrate to its Western allies and to the Albanian public that it has nothing in common with its predecessors, the socialist government is increasingly talking today about the need to review the history of the Albanian people's struggle against fascism.

A governmental commission has been established to develop a new version of the Albanian history for the educational institutions with German experts being responsible for editing the section devoted to the events of 1940-1950. Publications are printed in the country showing the pro-Western one-dimensional interpretation of the war time events.

Antifascist veterans treat negatively such latent authorities' propaganda and consider it an attempt of the reactionary forces to belittle the patriots' achievements in liberating the country, strike out the role of the communist guerilla warriors from the history, and whiten the Albanian Nazi helpers.

In 2005–2013, the then-ruling Democratic Party promoted the idea of "equal responsibility of totalitarian regimes" for World War II outbreak. One of the most striking examples of the revisionist activities was the renaming of topographic sites bearing the names of Communist fighters against fascism.

In late 2018, the remains of "national hero" Midhat Frasheri, leader of the collaborationist Balli Kombëtar, or National Front, anti-communist organization, which was in power during the military occupation of Albania, were reburied in the centre of Tirana. The authorities paid no attention to the members of the Organization of Veterans of the Antifascist National Liberation War of the Albanian People and the Organization of Families of Patriots who gave their Lives for their Homeland, condemning this act.

There were no visible manifestations of Nazism or neo-Nazism noticed in Albania in 2021-2022. No neo-Nazi marches or rallies conducted, or efforts applied for the heroification of the Italian fascists and German Nazis that occupied Albania from April 1939 till end November 1944.

Therefore, on one side the ideas of Nazism, Fascism or neo-Nazism has no wide support among the population, but on the other side the Albanian authorities (socialists and democrats) consistently pursue a line aimed at re-evaluating the events of World War II and reviewing its outcomes.

Against this background, the position taken by the delegation of Albania when considering the annual draft resolution submitted by Russia and other co-sponsors to the UN General Assembly on "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" is not surprising. As a candidate to the European Union, Albania has lined up with the EU and abstained at the voting (last time – on 16 December 2021).

There was no either substantial change in the situation with the spread of far-right ideologies or discriminatory practices in 2021-2022.

The only rather big far-right formation was the Red-Black Alliance, a civic association created by several groups of football fans. In 2012, it was transformed into a political party with its ideology based primarily on Greekophobia and appeals to create "Great Albania" by hooking-up the Albanians-inhabited lands of the neighboring countries. Ringing always the bell with a considerable part of the population, this aspiration was decided to be adopted by the leaders of the Alliance for the electoral purposes. Nevertheless, the 2013 Parliamentary elections turned into a failure for the Red-Black Alliance with only 0.59 per cent of votes given to the party by the voters³³ (although there were 14 per cent of interviewees ready to support them in

³³ https://civic-nation.org/albania/society/incitement_of_hatred/

December 2021). Afterwards, the activities of the Red-Black Alliance, including in the Internet, began to fade away significantly.

This notwithstanding, on 2 June 2014 the party was noticed through its rallies aimed at arguing against a representative of the Serbian Orthodox Church being present at the ceremony of the opening of an Orthodox Church in Tirana.³⁴ The protesters displayed banners on the church fence saying "Serbian Patriarch is anti-Albania". The demonstration was dispersed by the police.³⁵ The nationalist appeals were heard during the action organized by the party in the capital, which was dedicated to the memory of Prince Skanderbeg, leader of the anti-Osman rally who united the Albanians in the XV century.³⁶ In 2017, the party did not take part in the parliamentary elections.³⁷

Initially, standing for fight against Italian and German armies and switching in 1943 to the collaboration with the occupants, the nationalist and anti-Communist organization Balli Kombëtar (or National Front, founded in 1939 without own representation in the Parliament nowadays) continue to be active in the country. The members of Balli Kombëtar participated in the occupation by the Axis countries of Greece and Yugoslavia; in particular, they served in such German military unions as 21st SS Skanderbeg division, Lyuboten battalion and Kosovo regiment.

In 2021-2022, local newspapers released some documents to explain mainly the ideology followed by Balli Kombëtar during World War II and reasons of disagreements with Albanian communists headed by [Enver Hoxha](#) in their antifascist fight.

There have been no attempts recently to heroize the "ballists" but the circumstances under which the locals rather joined the communist teams than

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ https://www.ru.civic-nation.org/albaniya/vlast/zakonodatelstvo/zakonodatelstvo_prepyatstvuyushchee_borbe_s_diskriminatsiy_i_natsional-radikalizmom/

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

that of nationalist ballists are referred in almost every detail to the judgment of the Albanian community.

Certain manifestations of neo-Nazism have been recorded in the country among the fans of the Tirana football club, in particular among the members of the Tirana Fanatics and Capital Crew associations. Both openly demonstrate their hatred of the Communists, especially through matches between Tirana and Partizan (Tirana). In 2014, Albanian Deputy Prime Minister Erion Brace described the fans shouting anti-Communist chants and brandishing a poster addressed to the opposing team, reading "We will reopen Auschwitz for you", as fascists. The Albanian public for the most part condemned this act. However, some Internet users, in comments on articles covering these events, expressed the view that Germany had in fact always been an ally of the Albanian state, and the 21st SS mountain division formed by Albanian collaborators, which was named after the national hero Skanderbeg, had fought for ethnic Albania.³⁸

Moreover, Capital Crew regularly posts images of Nazi or fascist symbols on its Facebook page. One of the images depicted two people with tattooed swastikas and Celtic crosses, beating a man bearing a hammer and sickle tattoo. Photos of fans giving the Roman salute are also common. They also use the image of the eagle as a symbol of the Third Reich, printing it on T-shirts. In turn, members of Tirana Fanatics use a flag with the white double-headed eagle on a black background that is barely different from that of the SS Skanderbeg division.³⁹

As it follows from the 2022 report of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency⁴⁰ a number of reports published by the state agencies of Albania in 2021 record an increase in the incitement of hatred via the Internet.⁴¹

³⁸ <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/01/03/do-albanians-like-fascism-an-iconographical-investigation-on-social-media-material/>

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Bogdani, M., Faloppa, F. and Karaj, X. (2021), Beyond definitions. A call for action against hate speech in Albania, Tirana, Council of Europe

⁴¹ The Fundamental Rights Report 2022 of EU Fundamental Rights Agency
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

According to the experts of the Civic Nation⁴², an Internet platform for studying xenophobia, radicalism and problems of intercultural communication, the radicalization of citizens, primarily young adults, via Internet (the presence of radical Islamist groups in Albania has not been recorded by observers) since 2012 and through 2019 led to the young people of Albania travelling to Syria to join Islamist groups.⁴³ Among the main reasons people find radicalization and extremism tempting are called: poverty, unemployment, lack of access to the "blessings of civilization" in rural and remote areas of the country as well as corruption which has spread in the society to the point when people openly talk about "price tag" to get certain jobs. All this, according to the Civic Nation experts, leads young people to seek the truth in Islam, including in its most radical forms and promotes interest to the "Islamic State." However, police action and ISIS failures in the Middle East have led to a near zero number of potential fighters by 2019.⁴⁴

While the problem of the far-right movement in Albania is not that pressing at the moment, the existing legal and regulatory framework does not allow eliminating it completely. It does not outlaw racist organizations and does not establish criminal liability for participation in them. This was pointed out namely by the profile Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) established in accordance with the International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in December 2018.⁴⁵

At the same time, Article 9, paragraph 2 of the country's Constitution prohibits the establishment of parties whose activities incite racial, religious, regional or ethnic hatred. According to Article 3 of the Constitution, the state

⁴² An Internet project of the European Center of Democracy Development (the expert body registered in Latvia as a non-governmental organization) dedicated to the creation and strengthening of the Civic nation in European countries

⁴³ https://civic-nation.org/albania/society/incitement_of_hatred/

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 9th to 12th periodic reports of Albania. January 2019.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fALB%2fCO%2f9-12&Lang=ru

undertakes to respect and protect national equality, religious co-existence, co-existence and mutual understanding between Albanians and national minorities. The equality of all religions is further enshrined in Article 10. Article 20 addresses the rights of national minorities, establishing the right of representatives of non-titular nations to express their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity, to teach and study in their native language, to unite in organizations and societies to protect their interests and their identity.

According to Article 18 of the Constitution, discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, religion, nationality and other similar grounds is prohibited in Albania. However, Section 3 of this Article contains a reservation according to which this prohibition is only effective if "there are no reasonable and objective reasons" for non-compliance therewith.

Albania's Criminal Code also contains a number of provisions against discrimination and intolerance. It criminalizes discrimination by government officials on the grounds of origin, gender, health status, religious or political values, trade union activities, or because of belonging to a particular ethnic group, country or religion. In accordance with Article 253 of the Criminal Code, this act is punishable by a fine or imprisonment for up to five years.

Besides, Article 265 ("Incitement to hatred or enmity") and Article 266 ("Calls to incite ethnic hatred") are dedicated to combating xenophobic crimes. Pursuant to Article 50, paragraph j, the commission of a crime motivated by racial hatred, as well as on the grounds of intolerance to people of a certain colour, ethnicity and other similar characteristics, is an aggravating circumstance.

In addition, the Law of Albania on Protection against Discrimination was adopted in 2010. This legal act contains a detailed list of potential grounds for discriminatory treatment, including, in addition to nationality, race, skin colour and other traditional characteristics, pregnancy, marital status, health status, genetic predisposition, etc.

Albania pursues a policy of deliberately withholding statistics related to hate crimes. CERD drew attention to this fact, expressing concern over the lack of reliable information on the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions in cases concerning acts of racial discrimination. The Committee also voiced criticism over the continued use of hate speech by state officials and public figures in their public statements.⁴⁶

As regards the racial, national or religious discrimination, Albania remains a pioneer and is recognized a rather tolerant country.

No infringement of the rights of believers of any confessions represented in the country has been recorded. A steadily high level of cultural and religious tolerance sustains. Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination is among those charged with monitoring the compliance with those principles. There are State Committee on Cults (operational since 1999) and Interreligious Council of Albania (established in 2007) among them.

According to the information from 2022 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, before the 2021 Parliamentary Elections in Albania the No Hate Alliance NGO together with the Central Electoral Commission has developed a code of conduct to prevent incitement of hatred.⁴⁷ All the political parties taking part in the elections were obliged to abide by that document.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, according to the Amnesty International NGO the female candidates faced after all the insulting verbal attacks during the electoral campaign in March 2021.⁴⁹

A certain set of problems in Albania is related to the ethnical hatred. Discrimination of the representatives of national minorities stays among the worst challenging aspects of the country's human rights dossier.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ 2022 Report of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

⁴⁸ Albania, 'Kodi i Sjelljes së Partive Politike në Shqipëri', 12 April 2021

⁴⁹ https://civic-nation.org/albania/society/hate_crime_violence_and_terrorist_attacks/attacks/

The most vulnerable group is the Roma, who face discrimination in access to employment, education, health care, housing and various services.

A report prepared by Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatovic following her visit to Albania from 21 to 25 May 2018 notes that vulnerable groups still have difficult access to justice.⁵⁰ A 2017 UN Development Programme study on the issue showed a high level of legal illiteracy, especially among Roma, and a lack of confidence in the justice system among Albanians. According to the study, it is much more difficult for the Roma, the poor, people with low education levels, the disabled, victims of domestic violence and children from residential institutions to achieve justice than for the average Albanian citizen. Many of them become victims of multiple discrimination and experience financial difficulties, which makes it impossible for them to get better services. As a result, some of them give up all attempts to resolve their legal issues.⁵¹

According to the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (AC-FCNM), the Law of Albania on the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania adopted in 2017 contains declarative provisions aimed at protecting, preserving and developing the cultural identity and languages of national minorities. It defines the scope of application listing relevant groups of persons and the rights of those belonging to national minorities. As noted by the AC-FCNM, this legal act is very general and programmatic in nature. In many important areas, it delegates the resolution of specific issues to the Council of Ministers. However, in order to make the legislative provisions effective, it is necessary to ensure the adoption of secondary legislation in the form of decisions of the Council of Ministers. No such decisions were taken within the

⁵⁰ <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-albania-from-21-to-25-may-2018-by-dunja-mijatov/16808d2e22>

⁵¹ Report by Dunja Mijatović Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe following her visit to Albania from 21 to 25 May 2018
<https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-albania-from-21-to-25-may-2018-by-dunja-mijatov/16808d2e22>

six-month period established by law, which deprived the persons belonging to national minorities of access to their rights. Moreover, the Council of Ministers' decisions are of subordinate legal status, which leads to a lesser degree of protection of rights.⁵²

In 2018, the said law was amended: a quota of 20 per cent of the population living in municipalities was established for national minorities to receive school education in their native language.

However, the AC-FCNM, in its opinion on Albania, noted the lack of progress in providing education in national minority languages or teaching of national minority languages. Greek-language schools continue to operate in Gjirokastra, Saranda, Delvina and Korçë, and Macedonian-language education is provided in schools in Korçë. In addition to the limited teaching of the Romani language, teaching in or of other national minority languages has not been introduced. The new law on national minorities provides opportunities for instruction in the languages of all national minorities in Albanian schools. At the same time, draft decisions of the Council of Ministers set out restrictive criteria for creating relevant classes in educational establishments.⁵³

Many members of minorities – Roma and Balkan Egyptians – are being forcibly evicted as part of major infrastructure projects, such as the construction of a ring-road around the capital. While welcoming a number of measures to ensure the right to housing, including the adoption of the Law of Albania on Social Housing, CERD noted with concern the need for full implementation of the guarantees introduced by this new law in the context of planned evictions.⁵⁴

⁵² Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Albania (fourth cycle), adopted on 11 October 2018 and published on 19 March 2019.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-albania-en-/168093903b>

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 9th to 12th periodic reports of Albania. January 2019,

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fALB%2fCO%2f9-12&Lang=ru

Operating under the European Union, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in its Report on Albania (sixth monitoring cycle) for 2020 recommended the country's authorities to assist local authorities in finding workable solutions to address the segregation of Roma and Egyptian pupils in schools as well as expand vocational training activities and employment programmes for Roma and Egyptians, including to those who only completed primary education or have no education at all.⁵⁵

According to the European Roma Rights Center, in February 2020, two Egyptians were insulted by Roma and physically assaulted by police officers.⁵⁶

Women and children from the Roma community make up a disproportionately larger number of victims of human trafficking, especially for the purposes of sexual and labour exploitation, as well as forced begging.⁵⁷ In addition, Roma and Ashkali women still have limited access to primary health care and services related to sexual and reproductive health, and often are not even aware that such services exist. They also face obstacles to participation in political and public life, including the exercise of their right to vote. Access to the official labour market for such women is also limited. All of these issues were highlighted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in July 2016.⁵⁸ In addition, the experts expressed concern about the limited access to education for Roma and Ashkali girls owing to poor school infrastructure and lack of teachers.⁵⁹

In its Evaluation Report on Albania at the end of the third monitoring round (Access to justice and effective remedies for victims of human

⁵⁵ Report on Albania by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted on 7 April 2020 and published on 2 June 2020, <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-albania-6th-monitoring-cycle-/16809e8241>

⁵⁶ https://civic-nation.org/albania/society/hate_crime_violence_and_terrorist_attacks/attacks/

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 4th periodic report of Albania. July 2016 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fALB%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru

⁵⁹ Ibid.

trafficking) published on 15 December 2020, the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), a monitoring structure under the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, stated that children from Roma and Egyptian communities are especially subdued to the risk of becoming victims of trafficking in human beings and exploitation.⁶⁰

The fact that the country's authorities are making efforts to remedy the situation should be taken positively. In Albania, there are institutions of the public defender and the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination. Following the entry into force of the Albanian Law on the Protection of National Minorities, the State Committee for Minorities received a new mandate and is being recomposed, and a fund for national minorities is being created.⁶¹

The 2022 report of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights emphasizes that in late 2021 within the framework of the implementation of the EU strategy on Roma for the period up to 2023 (launched by the European Commission in October 2020⁶²) Albania, as a member candidate to the European Union, together with its Member States submitted to the European Commission a revised national Roma strategy.⁶³

The above mentioned GRETA Evaluation Report stated that the Albanian authorities organize regularly the awareness-raising activities aimed at children and vulnerable groups of population.⁶⁴ For instance, on 14-16 June 2017, the Ministry of the Interior together with the Association for the Social Support of

⁶⁰ <https://rm.coe.int/greta-2020-09-fgr-alb-en/1680a0b84f>.

⁶¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 9th to 12th periodic reports of Albania. January 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fALB%2fCO%2f9-12&Lang=ru

⁶² European Commission (2020), A union of equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation, COM(2020)620 final, Brussels, 7 2020.

⁶³ EU Fundamental Rights Agency 2022 Report

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

⁶⁴ <https://rm.coe.int/greta-2020-09-fgr-alb-en/1680a0b84f>

Youth (ARSIS) NGO and the Child Protection Unit of the Municipality of Tirana organized two awareness-raising meetings with the representatives of the Roma and Egyptian communities in the areas of Selita and Yzberisht in Tirana in order to raise awareness of the phenomenon of human trafficking, forms of trafficking, ways and indicators for identifying possible victims of trafficking, assistance, and reporting avenues such as national helpline 116006 and a free Raporto! Shpëto! (Report! Save!) smartphone application.⁶⁵

There are approximately 4,900 stateless persons or persons at risk of statelessness in Albania, many of whom are Roma with no identity documents, as well as Roma children or children born abroad who lack birth registration. Another group at risk of statelessness is Albanian emigrants who have gone abroad and voluntarily renounced their citizenship and/or did not obtain citizenship of the destination country.⁶⁶ The revised Law on the Status of Citizens precluded the possibility for children to receive the status of a "non-citizen."

Albania qualifies Russia's actions to protect Donbass as an "unjustified aggression" against Ukraine, stands for maintaining territorial integrity of the latter, bringing the Crimea back to Kiev, etc.; it supports the EU sanctions against our country. Judging from what the Albanian authorities have done in general, Albania has been ascribed by the Russian Side to unfriendly States.

In their assessments of Russia's actions, the Albanian authorities associated themselves in full with the collective West after the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation started the Special Military Operation (SMO) to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, and protect peaceful population of Donbass.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Report by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe following her visit to Albania on 21-25 May 2018
<https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-albania-from-21-to-25-may-2018-by-dunja-mijatov/16808d2e22>

Although refraining from adopting any legislation or bylaw aimed at restricting the rights of Russians or Russian-speaking citizens of the country or citizens of Russia, the country's authorities joined anti-Russia sanctions.

At the same time the Albanian authorities demonstrate full support to the activities of the Ukrainian Embassy that organized with the participation of the representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora a number of anti-Russia rallies and meetings in front of the building of Russia's Diplomatic Representation. Those events attracted also students of the Tirana State University and notably, as is known, that the agitation campaigns among them were held, inter alia, by the professors coming from Ukraine. All those rallies were widely broadcast in the Albanian media.

The Russophobe cases in Albania include, among others, anti-Russia attacks of the Albanian leadership within the SMO context in Ukraine, numerous anti-Russia materials in mass media, rallies in front of the building of Russian Embassy that took place in March 2022, as well as individual cases of "persecution" of our compatriots via Internet. Street events were initiated mainly by the Ukrainian Embassy, although with a wide support from the local authorities as well.

Belgium

Belgium is one of the countries where the problems of glorification of Nazism and revision of the results of World War II are not acute.

The Law on the Prevention of Acts Motivated by Racism and Xenophobia (1981), Law on the Prevention of Denial, Minimization or Justification of Genocide Perpetrated by the German Regime during World War II (1995), and Law on Combating Certain Forms of Discrimination (2007) provide the legal basis for countering manifestations of neo-Nazism, racism and xenophobia.

In practical terms, the coordination of activities of the law enforcement agencies for combatting discrimination and intolerance is carried out based on the circular dated 17 June 2013 of the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior and College of Public Prosecutors. It provides for, in particular, that a contact magistrate is to be designated in each court district to investigate such type of crimes as a priority matter.

An important fundamental rights oversight tool is the Committee P that operates under, and is responsible to the Belgian Chamber of Representatives, and exercises control over the police activities. Citizens that think themselves to the constraint in their rights by the police structures can turn directly to that Committee. Any claims related to the abuse of power, non-fulfillment of obligations, including unfair investigation of racial intolerance, become subjects of corresponding examinations.

In July 2022, the Belgian government approved the national plan of actions to combat racism in accordance with the decisions of the World Conference against Racism held in Durban (SAR) in 2001. The document contains 70 measures aimed at combating racial discrimination in employment, services, public governance, shelter, migration, justice, law enforcement and other areas.

Monitoring over the racial discrimination is the responsibility of the interregional Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (UNIA). At the end of 2020, the Center had pending 956 cases related to racism (0.5 per cent higher than in 2019), and in 2021 – 2,379 cases. The cases touched on mainly the racial discrimination in the areas of labor and employment, provision of services, as well as human hatred rhetoric in the Internet, primarily Facebook and Twitter.

The exit of Flanders from UNIA is envisaged on 2023. The body will not have competencies to assist those suffered from discrimination in the areas of regional responsibility of that body. There are plans to establish a Flemish human rights and discrimination fight agency instead.

With the COVID-19 pandemics there are case of hatred in Belgium occurring more often against Asian-origin persons in particular. There are more straight cases of anti-Semitic and Islamophobic nature as well as tougher rhetoric towards migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in the Internet and social networks.

The far-right forces enjoy more popular appeal, as recorded in the regular security reports of the special services. At the same time, the now active neo-Nazi groups (as a rule, bringing together a small number of supporters) are non-mainstream and do not exert any visible influence on the internal political situation. Their moves are criticized by the representatives of the country's authorities and come onto the radars of the law enforcement.

The situation with Russian students getting educated in Belgium has significantly deteriorated amid the Special Military Operation conducted by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Ukraine. Upon the request of the Ukrainian Minister of Education Sergey Shkarlet, Flemish Minister of Education Ben Weyts (representing the New Flemish Alliance party) decided to stop with providing grants to Russian students wishing to study in the regional higher education institutions. This means that Russian candidates lose their

opportunity to take part in the Mastermind programme providing for the provision of grants (up to 8,400 euro per study year) to foreign bachelor students wishing to upgrade their professional level within the Master units of Flemish universities.

Among the blatant cases of Nazism glorification in Belgium one should note the installation of a monument in memory of Latvian Waffen-SS members in September 2018 in Zedelgem (West-Flanders) at the site of the former British camp for the prisoners of war where the Latvian SS-men were kept after World War II. That act was made possible with the cooperation with the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia. In response to the request of the volunteers from the Belgium Federation of Russian-speaking organizations addressed to the municipality authorities burgemeester Annemieke Vermeulen said that the monument had been installed taking into account the "historical ties" between this Belgian town and Latvia in order to remember the former SS members from a purely human viewpoint and popularize modern art. The campaign launched to remove the monument under the leadership of the Belgians Remember Them non-profit organization and deputy of the Chamber of Representatives of Belgium, former Belgian Defense Minister André Flahaut led to the monument being disassembled in May 2022 by the decision of the municipal authorities to bring about a heightened feedback from Latvian authorities.

The carnival in the Flemish Aalst in February 2020 turned into a scandal because of some participants' making a mockery of the Jewish community. The incident raised the tide of public discontent over the obvious signs of anti-Semitism. The Belgian authorities condemned the trick. The UNIA acted as a mediator between Aalst administration and Jewish communities on the matter. In view of the incident UNESCO excluded the carnival in Aalst from the List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for anti-Semitism.

In March 2019, proceedings concerning a high-profile crime against members of the Jewish community in Belgium were brought to a close

(4 people were killed in the attack on 24 May 2014 at the Jewish Museum in Brussels; the crime caused a wave of indignation, outrage and sympathy for the country's Jewish community both among the Belgian population and throughout Europe). The jury sentenced the perpetrator to life imprisonment. In its decision, the court also noted the anti-Semitic nature of the attack.⁶⁷

Another example of public disapproval of such practices is the situation around the Shield and Friends movement. A criminal case was instituted against its founder, member of the Federal Parliament Dries Van Langenhove, on suspicion of violating the legislation on weapons possession and justification of Nazi crimes. On 18 March 2021, his parliamentary immunity was lost.

An alarming symptom is that flea markets in Belgium sell military paraphernalia with Nazi symbols. Minister of the Interior Jan Jambon, back in 2014-2018, acknowledged in this regard that the Belgian Criminal Code did not contain provisions prohibiting such practices. The prosecution, including criminal, was only envisaged for active expression of adherence to the ideas of Nazism, denial of the Holocaust, and propaganda of unlawful discrimination.

There is a trend towards deterioration of relations between various ethnic and religious groups of the Belgian population. The debates over wearing headscarves are a visual illustration of the existing tensions. Despite the fact that the State Council reversed the decision to completely ban them in higher education institutions, no fundamental changes in practice followed. The internal regulations that forbid the wearing of religious symbols have been kept in force by universities, regardless of the special situation in a particular institution.

In their report (2019), experts of the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recommend that the authorities ensure that decisions taken by schools and higher education

⁶⁷ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Belgium (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 12 December 2019 and published on 18 March 2020
<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-sixth-report-on-belgium-/16809ce9f0>

establishments regarding the wearing of religious symbols or clothing respect the principle of lawfulness and are free of any form of discrimination.⁶⁸

The Human Rights Committee subjected to criticism the legislation on wearing full veils in public places. According to the experts, the fact that it imposed sanctions in the form of a fine or imprisonment constituted a disproportionate infringement on the freedom to manifest one's religion or belief. The Committee was concerned about the prohibition on wearing religious symbols at work, in certain public bodies and by teachers and students at public schools, which could result in discrimination and marginalization of certain persons belonging to religious minorities.⁶⁹

There are cases of racial discrimination on behalf of the law enforcement officers towards ethnical minorities recorded in the country. This problem was already noted as being in place in the EU Fundamental Rights Agency Report for 2020 with reference to the data of the research conducted by the Antwerp University in June 2019. According to the said report, the young people with an ethnic minority background are three times more likely to be stopped by the police than other citizens. The study concludes that this practice undermines trust in law enforcement among this population group.⁷⁰

The arrest of a Congolese migrant woman in Liège in March 2021 sparked another wave of public discontent and resulted in a demonstration in defense of persons of African descent under the slogan "Black Lives Matter". The woman accused the police of racism and violence. A spontaneous protest that began peacefully ended in clashes with the police.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 6th periodic report of Belgium. December 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fBEL%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

⁷⁰ 2020 Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-report-2020_en.pdf

⁷¹ Noise and Fury in Liège. Rossiyskaya Gazeta. 14 March 2021

<https://rg.ru/2021/03/14/v-lezhe-demonstraciia-v-zashchitu-prav-temnokozhih-vylilas-v-pogromy.html>

Earlier that year, in January 2021, a similar situation took place in Brussels, where riots broke out after a 23-year-old man of Guinean origin was killed in a police station. He was arrested after he refused to produce documents to the police and attempted to flee. At the station, he felt unwell, lost consciousness and died.⁷²

On 11-12 April 2020, mass demonstrations also took place in Andrélecht, migrant neighbourhood of Brussels. The riot was provoked by the death of a young man killed in a collision with a car while trying to escape from a police patrol. Clashes with the police ended with the use of water cannons and mass arrests.

In September 2020, the Apache Internet edition discovered in Facebook a closed racist community of active and former law enforcement officers. Head of the Belgian Federal Police Marc de Mesmaeker threatened the officers of the police with an official investigation unless the group was removed.

There is a high rate of unemployment and employment in lower-status jobs among people of African descent. This category of the population is subject to racial discrimination not only in employment, but also in education and housing; besides, it is underrepresented in administration, the media, cultural settings, the scientific community and academia.⁷³

In general, Belgium shows respect to the memory of Resistance fighters and victims of Nazism, and duly tends to memorials in their honour and cemeteries where, among others, Soviet soldiers died in Belgium during World War II are buried. The largest memorials are the Breendonk Fort, a former Nazi concentration camp near Mechelen, where thousands of prisoners were held

⁷² Protesters set a police station on fire in Brussels. Rossiyskaya Gazeta. 14 January 2021 <https://rg.ru/2021/01/14/v-stolice-belgii-protestuiushchie-podozhgli-policejskij-uchastok.html>

⁷³ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 20th to 22nd periodic reports of Belgium. May 2021. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fBEL%2fCO%2f20-22&Lang=ru

before being deported to Auschwitz, and the Holocaust Museum at the Dossin barracks, located nearby.

In March 2019, a plaque commemorating major Evgeny Dotsenko, a Belgian resistance hero, was put up in Comblain-au-Pont at the suggestion of the local military history club. In October 2019, in Rebecq, a national memorial by the grave of Vladimir Talda, a Red Army member of the Resistance movement, was inaugurated in honour of all Soviet fighters who fought in the ranks of the Belgian partisans. The ceremony was attended by Belgian officials, including the governor of the Walloon Brabant province, Gilles Mahieu.

There are events organized in the country to mark the end of the World War II and liberation of the country from Nazi. The biggest acts are organized in Brussels, Liège and Antwerp with the participation of the city administrations, officials from regional and federal authorities, as well as the Royal Palace.

The Belgian authorities demonstrate a constructive approach to the commemorative events organized by the Russian Embassy in Belgium, including flower laying ceremonies at the graves of fallen soldiers and the Immortal Regiment march. In June 2022, with the permission of the Belgian Minister of Defense an official memorial act to commemorate the Day of Remembrance and Sorrow near the Wall of the Executed national memorial in the Citadel of Liege was organized.

Civil society has expressed disagreement with the EU-wide course towards diluting the role of the Red Army and the USSR in the victory over Nazism. Prominent Belgian historians and publicists in major newspapers criticized the text of the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 19 September 2019 "On the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe", pointing to obvious distortions of facts, attempts to rehabilitate the Nazi regime and the imposition of a revisionist interpretation of history.

Though declaring rejection of the ideas of Nazism, neo-Nazism and hate ideology, the official Brussels follows the line of the EU and abstains from voting in the UN General Assembly on the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", annually adopted at the initiative of Russia and its other co-sponsors.

Bulgaria

Extreme nationalism, neo-Fascism and xenophobia are not uncommon in Bulgaria. In this context it is not surprising that the official Sophia fits in with the EU and abstains from voting in the UN General Assembly on the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance."

There are several entities in the country that openly promote the ideas of National Socialism, including racial hatred and intolerance towards the country's ethnic minorities (ethnic Roma, Turks, Jews, etc.). Those include the "Bulgarian National Union" (BNU, the leading neo-Nazi movement in Bulgaria established in 2001 and registered as an NGO, positioning itself as the successor of the Union of Bulgarian National Legions), the Bulgarian branch of the "Blood and Honour" (an international neo-Nazi organization founded in the UK in 1987) in Plovdiv, "National Resistance" (a far-right organization founded in 2008) and the Nationalist Party of Bulgaria (founded in 2013). On 21 April 2019, Sofia hosted the founding congress of the "Fortress Europe", attended by members of far-right European NGOs. Bulgaria was represented by the BNU members there.

The BNU is at the forefront of this process. This very NGO is the organizer and thought leader of the Lukov March in Sophia to honour General Hristo Lukov (1887-1943) – Bulgarian Nazi ideologist during World War II, supporter of the Alliance with fascists, and leader of the Union of Bulgarian National Legions.⁷⁴ Participants in the march wear military uniforms, use corresponding nationalist symbols and slogans. In 2005, at their initiative, a commemorative plaque was placed on the facade of the building where Lukov had lived. The BNU⁷⁵ and "Lukov March"⁷⁶ websites are the major leading

⁷⁴ A fascist organization active in Bulgaria in 1932–1944.

⁷⁵ www.bgns.net

voices of neo-Nazi in Bulgaria. In particular, the far-right online lectures can be found there. Facebook social network is in active use for propaganda and crowdfunding activities.

The representatives of Bulgarian nationalist organizations have low chances of entering the legislative or executive bodies. At the same time the insufficiency of efforts applied by official Sophia to combat the spread of the neo-Nazi ideas by the above organizations is evident.

Notwithstanding numerous attempts by the capital administration to prohibit the Lukov March, the Bulgarian courts always take sides with the nationalists being guided by the provisions of the Law of the Republic of Bulgaria on Assemblies, Rallies and Manifestations. In 2021, mayor of Sofia Yordanka Fandakova issued an order banning the torchlight procession in the center of the capital on 13 February 2021⁷⁷, which was confirmed by decision of the Supreme Administrative Court of Bulgaria. Nevertheless, those wishing to honour the Nazi collaborator's memory were only allowed to gather at the site of Lukov's death. In 2022, the city administration's ban on that event was cancelled again in the court proceedings. On 12 February 2022, the march took place in the center of the Bulgarian capital.

On 10 February 2020, Sophia's Municipal Prosecutor's Office filed a legal claim to Sophia's Municipal Court asking to cancel BNU's registration. The Bulgarian justice rejected the claim with reference to the absence of anti-constitutional statements, incitement of hatred or violence on behalf of the Bulgarian National Union. That judgment was further (on 13 April 2022) also supported by the Court of Appeals. The latter emphasized, in its turn, that the organization shared the idea of Bulgarian nationalism, which per se did not lead to incitement of hatred or hostility.⁷⁸ In July 2022 already, the nationalists

⁷⁶ www.lukovmarsh.info

⁷⁷ It was also banned in spring of 2020

⁷⁸ The Bulgarian court refused to ban the march of neo-Nazi. 14 April 2022
<https://balkanist.ru/lukov-marsh/>

provided themselves with a spacious central office located in the center of the Bulgarian capital.

Torchlight processions are held to honour another Bulgarian Nazi collaborator, military pilot Dimitar Spisarevski. They take place annually on 20 December in the village of Dolni-Pasarel, Sofia region.

Every year on 30 April 2019 (the anniversary of Hitler's death), flyers praising the Nazi are pasted up in the streets of Sofia and across the region. Graffiti with swastikas and SS insignia often appear on buildings. Souvenirs with Nazi insignia, Hitler's "Mein Kampf" and works of foreign and Bulgarian Holocaust deniers, such as B.Stankov as well as R.Harwood, A.Panayotov, etc., are freely available in market.

Nazi symbols are regularly found in stadiums during football matches between national clubs, some of whose fans do not hide their affiliation with far-right movements. For example, in October 2019, during the Euro 2020 qualifier match between Bulgaria and England, Bulgarian fans were chanting racist slogans and defiantly extending their arms, imitating a Nazi salute. The incident sparked a massive outcry in Europe. As a result, the Bulgarian Football Union top officials were forced to resign.

It is remarkable that the national legislation places the dissemination of the fascist ideologies under the same article with the overthrow of the constitutional order (Article 108 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Bulgaria) however, there were no cases of criminal prosecution on this basis.

Despite all the above, the government in Sofia never hesitates to accuse the Russian Federation of "falsifying historical events" of the war period. In particular, in 2020, on the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II Bulgaria joined the declaration of the US and a number of Eastern European States which provides for a shared responsibility of the USSR and Hitler's Germany for unleashing the conflict. Later that year, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ekaterina Zakharieva, when discussing the issue of borders and

reparations to Bulgaria, tried to downplay the efforts of Soviet diplomacy at the 1946 Paris Peace Conference.

The situation with the preservation of Soviet memorial places is of concern. Since the beginning of the special military operation of the Armed Forces of Russia in Ukraine the cases of desecration of World War II monuments and memorials have significantly increased. There are about 15 acts of vandalism recorded from February till June 2022.

In Sophia, the city monument dedicated to the Bulgarians combatting against fascists was painted, the mass grave sculptural composition and majestic monument to the Soviet Army were repeatedly covered with anti-Russia slogans. The latter was also covered in blue and yellow using an UAV. The soldier burials in Dobrich were exposed to disruptive practices twice. The paint was spilled on the monument to the Soviet soldier-liberator in Plovdiv (Alyosha). Shortly before the Victory Day the ceramic portraits on the monument to the marine officers in Pomorie were broken, the memorial in Radomir soiled, funeral wreaths on the burials in Pernik burnt, and the plate on the Zhukov statue in Strelcha damaged.

Consequences of the incidents are promptly addressed by Russophile organizations, anti-Fascist non-profit organizations and Embassy of Russia in Bulgaria. Perpetrators manage to avoid punishment as a rule. The police actions as regards the perpetrators are often recognized as contradicting the legislation. Therefore, Sophia District Court released the fringe group arrested on 25 February 2022 while attempting to write "Save Ukraine" on the monument to the Soviet Army having recognized this act a form of protest against Russia's aggression in Ukraine and the group's arrest illegal.

Right before the Victory Day, starting from 4 May 2022, a group of anti-Russia individuals tried to wrap the monument to the Soviet Army with Ukrainian flags and to soil and cover it with paint again. A 24-hour guard was arranged by Russophiles to save the monument from being desecrated.

Major Soviet military memorials in Bulgaria repeatedly became victims of vandals before as well. Thus, on the night of 13 January 2020, the police thwarted an attempt by two schoolgirls to put drawings on the monument to the Soviet Army, and on the night of 30 January 2020, the side of the Alyosha monument and the exposition with a bas-relief in front of it were stained with red paint and daubed with the words "We have not forgotten and We will not forgive".

On 13 February 2020, another act of vandalism was reported following a routine inspection of the mass grave of Soviet soldiers in Sofia's Lozenets: the noses of two warriors in the bas-relief group were chipped and their heads damaged. In May 2020, on the eve of Victory Day, head of the local administration K.Pavlov suggested that the memorial be removed from the site altogether.

On the night of 9 April 2020, an act of vandalism was committed against the monument on the mass grave of 45 Soviet officers and soldiers in the city park of Dobrich. On the 7-meter sculpture and 12-meter pylon vandals daubed in blue the words "Death to USSR", "Death to Russia", "Bulgaria on its own", "Death to invaders", "Death to Alyoshas", "Death to Communism and Enough with self-abasement".

On the night of 11 August 2020, the monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia was desecrated again: the words "Boyko, Lukashenko out" were sprayed across the central plaque reading "For the liberator Soviet Army from the grateful Bulgarian people". Two months later, on 13 October, the SS double zig rune and under it the number 700, which stands for the SS anti-tank brigade comprised of 700 Bulgarian volunteers, were written in black on the same plaque. On 17 February 2021, the mass grave in Lozenets was once again desecrated and painted with various symbols.

In 2022, in view of the risk of possible provocations the representative of Bulgarian special services addressed the Immortal Regiment organizers to ask

them to refrain from holding the event. However, the march was successfully conducted in Sophia, Burgas, Varna, Plodiv, and other Bulgarian cities. Special attention was given by the organizers to ensuring safety of the participants to the events.

At the same time, it should be noted that there have been no instances of illegal exhumation or transfer of the remains of Soviet soldiers in Bulgaria. Neither have there been attempts to prosecute Bulgarian veterans who had fought on the side of the Bulgarian National Army⁷⁹, partisan detachments, battle groups or the Resistance Movement, or any accounts of the prohibition of the Red Army and USSR symbols and insignia, obstruction of commemorative events on the occasion of victory in the Great Patriotic War, or opposition to the activities of local veterans' organizations and NGOs fighting against neo-Nazism and the glorification of Nazism.

The beginning of the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine was used as grounds to inflate Russophobia by the Petkov-headed Bulgarian government that actively engaged into the aggressive campaign unleashed by the West. Russia Today and Sputnik news agency broadcasting was ceased together with their associated resources, and there were cases of blocking access to the news Internet resources and Russian bank applications. Employees of the Russian foreign mission were provocatively expelled on a mass basis.

At the same time there were almost no visible cases of discrimination of Russians or Russian-speaking persons identified on behalf of the Bulgarian population.

Speeches of intolerance towards national minorities living in the territory of the country are heard mainly at the mundane level, although certain cases of hatred speech, mostly of anti-Semitic nature, were recorded during electoral

⁷⁹ Formed in the fall of 1944

campaigns as well.⁸⁰ Still, the media release focused reports on strong nationalistic statements by individual politicians, mainly concerning the growing levels of crime and illiteracy among the Roma ethnic group.

International monitoring bodies, in particular such UN human rights treaty bodies as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination⁸¹ and the Human Rights Committee⁸², have raised concerns about reports of an increase in hate speech and hate crimes against Turks, Roma, Muslims, Jews, people of African descent, migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

In the meantime, according to the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights the Bulgarian legislative system does not provide for the crimes committed on grounds of racial hatred and xenophobia in all cases being qualified as an aggravating circumstance.⁸³

Experts point to insufficient efforts by the authorities to integrate the Roma minority. In 2019, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stated that its representatives continued to face discrimination in employment, housing, healthcare and education and that such discrimination got deeper as prejudice were getting stronger in relation to them.⁸⁴

The widespread Roma stigmatization and discrimination was pointed to by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of

⁸⁰ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights 2022 Report

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

⁸¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 20th to 22nd periodic reports of Bulgaria. May 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fBGR%2fCO%2f20-22&Lang=ru

⁸² Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 4th periodic report of Bulgaria. November 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fBGR%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru

⁸³ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights 2022 Report

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

⁸⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the sixth periodic report of Bulgaria. March 2019.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/086/16/PDF/G1908616.pdf?OpenElement>

National Minorities operating under the Council of Europe.⁸⁵ Experts think that such situation lead to corresponding violence and hatred speech.

Biased attitude towards this population group has been revealed in its every colour during the coronavirus pandemic. The Roma communities found themselves disproportionately covered by the introduced restrictions during the first wave.⁸⁶

According to the experts of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Roma-girls are in the most vulnerable situation. Although there is a law to prohibit marriages before 16, they often become victims of the persisting practice of forced marriages.⁸⁷

It is deplorable that persons belonging to national minorities have not been granted the right to use their native language when interacting with the executive authorities and that no measures have been taken to assess the demand for its use in such situations.

The ACFC also noted that traditional local topographical indications in Bulgaria were not duplicated in minority languages. Moreover, in 2018, the Stara Zagora local council decided to replace local toponyms of Turkish-Arab origin with Bulgarian translations or neologisms.⁸⁸

At the same time, there are parties and NGOs operating smoothly in the country which protect the interests of Turkish and Roma population.

The official authorities refuse to enter into dialogue with persons identifying themselves as Macedonians and requesting recognition as a national minority. A 2019 judgment by the Sofia Court of Appeal confirmed once again

⁸⁵ Opinion of Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Bulgaria (fourth cycle), adopted on 26 May 2020
<https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-albania-en-/168093903b>

⁸⁶ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights 2022 Report
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

⁸⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the eighth periodic report of Bulgaria. March 2020
<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/062/21/PDF/N2006221.pdf?OpenElement>

⁸⁸ Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Bulgaria (fourth cycle), adopted on 26 May 2020
<https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-albania-en-/168093903b>

the position adopted by Bulgaria 20 years ago that there is no "Macedonian ethnos" in its territory.⁸⁹

There are known difficulties in the functioning of religious institutions. Spiritual leaders of Islam report to feel their rights being infringed. Initiatives to build religious schools in order to educate children about Islam and to publish Muslim literature have been ignored at the local level. Amendments to the Religious Denominations Act have significantly limited the sources of foreign funding for religious organizations. Another approved regulation prohibits wearing all kinds of "thick or semitransparent fabric that covers or conceals the face", including scarves, masks, and other garments in public places. An exception is made only for those who cover their faces due to their profession or health issues. Everyone else is allowed to wear the burqa and niqab only in religious institutions and at home.

There have also been cases of vandalism against places of worship. Investigations of such cases rarely lead to the identification and prosecution of those responsible.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) recognizes the importance of the Victory over Nazism, the victory that gave freedom to the peoples of Europe. The country generally holds the memory of the victims of World War II. In both entities, the Republic of Serbia and the BiH Federation – they celebrate the victory Day as well as observe other memorial dates related to the resistance of the Yugoslavian partisans to the occupants. Primarily, in focus are the Battle of Suteska (15 May – 15 June 1943), the Battle of the Neretva (16 February – 15 March 1943), the Igman March (January 1942), the liberation of Sarajevo, Banja Luka and the Yasenovac concentration camp (April 1945).

Anti-Nazi sentiments generally prevail within the country's authorities and society. This fact is provided for, inter alia, by BiH being supportive of the UN General Assembly resolution entitled "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" adopted annually upon the initiative of Russia and co-sponsors.

In 2021, the BiH permanent representative to the OSCE joined the common statement of permanent representatives of 11 participating States to this Organization on the occasion of the 76th anniversary of the Victory in World War II.⁹⁰

During the reporting period there were no facts of glorification of Nazi movement, encouragement and propaganda of neo-Nazism or erection of monuments and memorials to Nazis and their helpers recorded at the national level. There were no public demonstrations or events in their memory in the country, nor were there cases of illegal exhumation or transfer of the remains of antifascist warriors, or persecution of anti-fascist veterans.

⁹⁰ Statement by the Permanent Representatives of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Armenia, Republic of Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russian Federation, Republic of Serbia, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan to the OSCE on the occasion of 76th Anniversary of Victory in World War II
https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4722028

Organized activity of nationalist or far-right groups is not registered in BiH. Some of them operate via Internet, through social media profiles, such as the so-called "Bosnian National Pride Movement"⁹¹ formed back in 2010, which remains largely inactive to this day.

Yet, in February 2020, a group of ultra-nationalist local Croatian football fans attacked a parade dedicated to the anniversary of the liberation of Mostar from Nazi invaders.⁹²

The activities of World War II veteran associations in BiH draw on the traditions of being part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Successors of the Yugoslav SUBNOR of the Socialist Republic of BiH (Union of Societies of Veterans of the People's Liberation War) – SABNOR BiH (Union of Societies of Anti-Fascists and Veterans of the People's Liberation War) and SUBNOR RS – united all primary veteran organizations after the 1992-1995 armed conflict and now have an extensive network of offices throughout the country, acting almost on a voluntary basis.

There have been cases of vandalism against monuments to Yugoslav partisans. For instance, almost every year on 10 April (the anniversary of the establishment of the pro-fascist Independent State of Croatia, or ISC), neo-Nazis destroy monuments in the Partisan cemetery in Mostar (Croatian part of BiH Federation) and draw insulting graffiti on them. Besides, in the night of 14-15 June 2022 all 700 tombstones to the memory of the killed in action liberator warriors from among the members of the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia were destroyed. Political representatives of the three BiH state-forming peoples strongly condemned the assault of the memorial,

⁹¹ Neonacisti u Bosni i Hercegovini. Radiosarajevo.ba 11 February 2010
<https://radiosarajevo.ba/metromahala teme/neonacisti-u-bosni-i-hercegovini/20514>

⁹² Хулигани у Мостару бакљама и боцама гађали чланове антифашистичких удружења. News Front. 15 February 2020
<https://srb.news-front.info/2020/02/15/huligani-u-mostaru-bakljama-i-bocama-gadjali-clanove-antifasistickih-udruzenja-video/>

announced the need to conduct a thorough investigation and search for the perpetrators as well as allot funds for the restoration works.

Nevertheless, on the whole, the situation with the maintenance of the memorials to the victims of the national liberation struggle in the territory of BiH can be considered satisfactory. Local veterans' organizations and authorities make efforts to take care of them. There are no monuments to Red Army soldiers in the country.

However, the state-forming nations living in BiH (Serbs, Croats and Muslim Bosniaks) still cannot find consensus on what contribution each of the representatives of those nations made to save the world from the brown plague, nor can they agree on how much sacrifice was made. This "fragmentation" of historical memory comes as a consequence of the armed conflict in BiH between 1992 and 1995.

For example, representatives of the Bosniak political elite promote the narrative of fighting against the invaders and "external aggression" both during the war and in the 1990s. They emphasize that in both cases the Bosniaks managed to keep Bosnia and Herzegovina "united and indivisible." Local Serbs remember the victims of the ISC concentration camps (1941-1945).⁹³ They emphasize the decisive contribution of the Serbian people to the fight against the Nazis and often rank the other two peoples among Nazi collaborators.⁹⁴ In turn, the Croats tend to underestimate the number of Serbian and Jewish casualties during the war, while emphasizing the need to remember all Croats who lost their lives, both partisan fighters and the ISC supporters. In doing so, they fiercely criticize the "bloodthirsty regime of Josip Broz Tito" for the crackdown on the latter at the end of the war. The Croatian ruling elite

⁹³ By various estimates, between 600,000 and 800,000 people, mostly Serbs but also Roma and people of other ethnicities who took part in the anti-fascist movement, were exterminated in Jasenovac, the most horrific "death camp."

⁹⁴ For example, the statement of the Director of the Institute for the Study of the Suffering of the Serbian People (Belgrade) M. Ivanisevic; Drugi svjetski rat u BiH je odnio 904.000 zivota. RTV BN. 4 February 2015 <https://www.rtvbn.com/332446/Drugi-svjetski-rat-u-BiH-je-odnio-904000-zivota>

regularly take part in relevant commemorative events. For example, in May 2020, upon the initiative of Head of the Catholic Church in BiH archbishop of Vrhbosna, cardinal Vinko Puljic a mass was held in Sarajevo's Cathedral of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to commemorate the executed members of the Ustasha. This caused an outcry among other nations in the country and veteran organizations. The current President of the Jewish Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jakob Finci, condemned the glorification of war criminals.⁹⁵ Metropolitan Hrizostom of Dabro-Bosnia, in his turn, announced the end of cooperation with cardinal Puljic.⁹⁶

There have been attempts in the Muslim-Croatian Federation of BiH (FBiH) to "whitewash" Nazi collaborators, with the connivance of the local political elite. For example, a number of streets in Mostar were renamed in the 1990s in honour of the Ustasha criminals – M. Budak⁹⁷, J.Francetic, A.Vokic, I.Zelenike and D.Spuzevic. Moreover, local Croats have plans to build a "peace memorial" in the suburb of Mostar in the area of Bili, where they want to install several thousand crosses with the names of Croats from Herzegovina who died during World War II, including those who supported the ISC.⁹⁸

In the aftermath of the armed conflict in BiH, a number of streets were also renamed in honour of Nazi henchmen in towns with predominantly Bosniak populations. In Sarajevo, 152 names were changed. When the city was part of the Republic of Yugoslavia, all these streets were named after Yugoslav partisans and anti-fascists.⁹⁹ At the same time, a number of streets were named

⁹⁵ Sarajevska misa za «bleiburške zločince». Deutsche Welle. 13 May 2020

<https://www.dw.com/bs/sarajevska-misa-za-bleibur%C5%A1ke-zlo%C4%8Dince/a-53422443>

⁹⁶ Mitropolit Hrizostom: Zbog mise za Blajburg prestaje saradnja Mitropolije dabrobosanske i Vrhbosanske. Oslobođenje. 11 May 2020

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/mitropolit-hrizostom-zbog-mise-za-blajburg-prestaje-saradnja-mitropolije-dabrobosanske-i-vrhbosanske-nadbiskupije-555699>

⁹⁷ Bio glavni ideolog ustaškog pokreta, a i danas "živi" u Mostaru. Oslobođenje. 13 February 2021

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/bio-glavni-ideolog-ustaskog-pokreta-a-i-danas-zivi-u-mostaru-629637>

⁹⁸ Postavljanje križeva žrtvama Drugog svjetskog rata i poraća na Groblju mira na Bilima. Jabuka.tv. 10 December 2019

<https://www.jabuka.tv/postavljanje-krizeva-zrtvama-drugog-svjetskog-rata-i-poraca-na-groblju-mira-na-bilima/>

⁹⁹ Uklanjanje s tabli protivnike antifašizma. Oslobođenje. 6 April 2021

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/uklanjajte-s-tabli-protivnike-antifasizma-644952>

after ideologues of the Young Muslims pan-Islamic movement M.Busuladzic¹⁰⁰, A. Serdarevic¹⁰¹ and V.Curcic, commander of the ISC units during the occupation of Sarajevo S.Pačariz¹⁰², chairman of the Merhamet Muslim Charitable Society and later commander of the Muslim unit M.Panja¹⁰³, and director of the Croatian National Theatre during the ISC period A.Nametak¹⁰⁴. In June 2016, a secondary school in Gorazd (Federation of BiH) was named in honour of Imam Hussein Efendi Jozo¹⁰⁵, a member of the SS Hajar division, which was comprised mainly of Bosniak Muslims and was famous for its punitive raids in the Balkans during World War II. In 2018, a school in Sarajevo was named after Mustafa Busuladzic, which attracted widespread media coverage. All of the above were sentenced to death by Yugoslav military tribunals after the war.

In late 2020, Damir Arnaut, an MP of the Nasa Stranka (Our Party), put forward an initiative to rename streets and other sites named after Nazi collaborators.¹⁰⁶ The Bosniak newspaper Oslobođenje, which positions itself as a guardian of "anti-fascist traditions", supported the initiative, dedicating a series of articles to the crimes committed by the collaborators during World War II, and accused the Sarajevo canton authorities of bogging the initiative down.

¹⁰⁰ Nije samo Mustafa problem, i Fuad je. Oslobođenje. 18 January 2021

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/dosjei/kolumne/nije-samo-mustafa-problem-i-fuad-je-621370>

¹⁰¹ Strijeljali ga partizani 1944. u Vitezu: Da li je to dovoljno da se ulica po njemu zove? Oslobođenje. 3 February 2021

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/strijeljali-ga-partizani-1944-u-vitezu-da-li-je-to-dovoljno-da-se-ulica-po-njemu-zove-626411>

¹⁰² Pukovnik NDH u Sarajevu: Ko je bio Sulejman Pačariz? Oslobođenje. 26 January 2021

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/pukovnik-ndh-u-sarajevu-ko-je-bio-sulejman-pacariz-623855>

¹⁰³ I on ima svoju ulicu... / Slijedio je put Hitlera i Pavelića. Oslobođenje. 2 February 2021

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/i-on-ima-svoju-ulicu-slijedio-je-put-hitlera-i-pavelica-626097>

¹⁰⁴ Alija Nametak je djelovao u periodu NDH: Bio je sluga okupatora. Oslobođenje. 29 January 2021

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/alija-nametak-je-djelovao-u-periodu-ndh-bio-je-sluga-okupatora-625032>

¹⁰⁵ Ulica Huseina Ef. Doze. Oslobođenje. 16 February 2021

<https://bhdani.oslobodjenje.ba/bhdani/kolumne/ulica-huseina-ef-doze-617675>

¹⁰⁶ Uklanjajte s tabli protivnike antifašizma. Oslobođenje. 6 April 2021

<https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/uklanjajte-s-tabli-protivnike-antifasizma-644952>

The Jewish Community of BiH and its culture association Benevolencia, located in the Federation of BiH, have always been strong upholders of anti-fascist traditions in the country and regularly organize events to reinforce a truthful narrative of the war years and to educate new generations in the spirit of humanism. In 2020, the Jewish Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo) in cooperation with Russia held the Roads of Victory exhibition devoted to the liberation of South-Eastern Europe by the Red Army with support from national liberation movements against the Nazi occupation in 1944–1945.

Neither the government nor the population of Republika Srpska nor the Bosnian-Serbian population of BiH show tendency toward revisionism or revision of the results of World War II; they actively promote the ideas of anti-fascism. The Immortal Regiment and St. George's Ribbon campaigns grow increasingly popular every year in the Bosnian-Serbian entity. At the initiative of the Republika Srpska Government, since the 2018/2019 academic year, the educational programmes of the entity include extended lectures on crimes and genocide against Serbs and the Holocaust in the ISC. In 2019, on the initiative of Serbian entity authorities, the 7 February 1942 Society was established, the purpose of which is to gather information about the Ustasha's crimes against the civilian Serbian population in the villages of Drakulic, Sagovac and the Rakovac mine, where more than 2.3 thousand people were killed with particular cruelty in a single day.

At the same time, local Serbs have a special perception of the role of Serbia in World War II and particularly that of the government in exile and its armed forces in the Balkans. In June 2019, a monument was erected in Bilecha to the leader of the Chetniks movement, D.Mikhailovic, who fought not only against the Nazis but also against partisans of the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia. A similar monument is expected to appear in Bijeljina (Republika Srpska). The initiative was negatively received by the Bosniaks, who viewed it as "a provocation in a city that has a 30-thousand Bosniak population".

In addition, every year, on the day of D.Mikhailovic's arrest (10 March 1946), supporters of the Chetniks movement organize commemorative events in Visegrad.

As for the hate speech against people belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, it is expressed primarily in negative comments under news stories on Bosnian media websites (for example, klix.ba and faktor.ba – major online news outlets operating in the Federation of BiH) but for now does not go beyond the Internet space.

Education remains an area of concern, as ethnic segregation in this field has not yet been addressed. The practice of "two schools under one roof", where children of different nationalities (Muslim-Bosniaks and Croats) study not only under different programmes but also on different shifts, is still common in certain areas of the BiH Federation with a mixed population.

In December 2019, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) operating under the Council of Europe indicated again to the insufficiency of efforts made by the national authorities in this direction. The ECRI representatives took note of the data made available to them on the work to create a unique educational programme for all pupils in certain cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, such activities are still mainly of pilot nature. Besides, the ECRI urged to rule out the use in the school environment of any symbols that demonstrate a biased attitude toward representatives of certain ethnos or religion¹⁰⁷. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its concluding observations on the third periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina pointed to the persisting problem of the "two schools under one roof" system¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁷ Conclusions of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on the Implementation of the Recommendations in respect of Bosnia and Herzegovina subject to Interim Follow-up. Adopted on 10 December 2019. Published on 19 March 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/16809cde0e>

¹⁰⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 3rd periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina. November 2021.

Although the criticism of BiH on the part of international monitoring human rights agencies never stops, it should be noted that there have been no new cases of opening such segregated educational institutions observed. At present, their number obviously tends to go down.

The problem of naming and teaching the national language of the Muslim Bosnians in Serbian entity schools of the country is of the same rank. The Bosniak language used when naming the subject in Bosnian-Serbian students' books is provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia and does not satisfy students' parents who stand for their right to teach a "Bosnian" language. In other cases the discussions spread over choosing the adjective "Bosniak" instead of "Bosnian", which is also seen by the returning refugees as violation of their rights. By the way, such an approach has not cover, until recently, certain cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina itself. In May 2018, the Constitutional Court of that entity decided to replace "Bosniak" on "Bosnian" in official written documents and formally restored the Dayton constitutional rights of the Serbs, the Serbian language and Serbian Cyrillic alphabet.

Experts of the Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights in their final conclusions informed that the three official languages and two alphabets were not recognized by certain cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has led to a high incidence of discrimination based on language and disruption of education.¹⁰⁹

According to the Croatian community members, there is a continued trend of discriminatory attitude from the Bosniak majority towards the legal rights of the Croatian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is noted that, according to the results of the general election held in autumn 2018, Bosnian

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fBIH%2fC.O%2f3&Lang=ru

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

Croats again did not get their legitimate representative in the Presidium of the country.

The situation is also not easy with the national minorities. The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was part of the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement and focused on the settlement of relations between the three constituent peoples, does not allow members of other ethnic groups, united in the category "other citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina", cannot be elected to the highest State authority (the three-member Presidency) and the upper house of the Bosnia and Herzegovina's Parliamentary Assembly.

In 2006, social activist D. Sejdic (Roma by nationality) and President of the Jewish Community Jakob Finci filed a lawsuit in the European Court of Human Rights against Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to end discrimination and ensure the right of other citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to stand for election in the Presidency and the House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In December 2009, the ECtHR ruled in their favour and ordered Bosnia and Herzegovina to provide a mechanism for the participation of national minorities in elections to these governmental structures by making appropriate changes to the Constitution and electoral legislation. The process of implementing the ECtHR's decision has not brought any results so far due to the lack of consensus between the country's leading political forces on this issue. According to a study by the European Academy for Education and Social Research (NGO), there are more than 100 laws in Bosnia and Herzegovina with similar restrictive wording.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) also noted that the Constitution and electoral laws in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as respective acts at entity level, still have discriminatory provisions, despite the ECtHR ruling in the case of *Sejdic-Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, which prevent "the rest" from running as candidates for membership in the

Presidency and the House of Peoples. Furthermore, the Committee noted with concern the remaining discriminatory provisions in some laws and regulations granting special privileges to the constitutive peoples in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska over "the rest".¹¹⁰

In this regard, CERD recommended BiH to take specific measures aimed at promoting a more integrated society based on the values of equality and non-discrimination, and where all citizens take part, irrespective of their ethnic, ethno-religious or national affiliations.¹¹¹

Human Right Protection organizations emphasize difficulties in ensuring rights of a major Roma community (up to 30 thousand people) in the country. This segment of the population is rather hard to be involved in the educational process. As much as 1.5 per cent of Roma children attend pre-school institutions, 69 per cent attend elementary school, and only 22.6 per cent – secondary school. Roma remain the most marginalized group in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and there have been no efficient mechanisms of the social integration found so far. The rights of this group on freedom of national self-determination, creation of organizations and assemblies to express and protect their cultural, religious and other rights are not being implemented in practice, as it is guaranteed by the legislation. For example, Roma and other national minorities do not have a right de facto to use their native language, including in socio-legal relations, in those areas where they account for over one third of the population or a right to secondary education in their native languages in those municipal communities where the national minorities account for over one third of the Population (when it accounts for over one fifth of the population, the education in native language is optionally available). In case there is a sufficient

¹¹⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 12th and 13th periodic reports of Bosnia and Herzegovina. August 2018
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fBIH%2fCO%2f12-13&Lang=ru

¹¹¹ Ibid.

number of children of certain ethnical background in a certain residential community, the educational institutions fail to provide corresponding teachers.

There are other problems indicated in the Committee's final report, which are faced by Roma and other limited ethnoses in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They include, inter alia: chronical and omnipresent stigmatization, increase in their-centered hate speeches and hatred-based crimes, discrimination in housing and utility services (significant number of Roma families live in illegal dwellings or in informal settlements without security of tenure and also do not have access to basic services and utilities).¹¹²

To draw a conclusion based on the analysis of the situation with different types of practices instigating to the escalation of modern forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and their associated intolerance, it is worth noting that Bosnia and Herzegovina has a strong anti-Nazi stance. However, there have been instances of disagreement in Bosnian society regarding the role of the various Yugoslav peoples in World War II, which leads to attempts to whitewash individual Nazi criminals and their collaborators, as well as to glorify them as fighters for national independence and freedom. Certain difficulties are observed in ensuring the equality of the representatives of three State-forming nations and national minorities.

¹¹² Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 3rd periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina. November 2021
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fBIH%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

United Kingdom

The nationalist movement in the United Kingdom has deep roots going back to the historical past of this nation. The first organisations of extreme right-wing views – including those of anti-Semitic nature – appeared in the country as early as 1930-ies. Although all of them were banned at the beginning of WWII, they were soon replaced by new groups. For example, founded by the famous British nationalist Oswald Mosley (leader of the British Union of Fascists) in 1947 the Union Movement merged more than 50 smaller far-right outfits.

Some British monarchs were also noted for their ultra-right leanings (including connections with the Nazis). In 1937, King Edward VIII paid a visit to Adolf Hitler. A photograph of him performing the Nazi salute is known.

The collapse of the colonial system that resulted in "pervasiveness" of migrants was an important milestone in the shaping of the British Nationalist ideology. The desire to preserve the traditional way of life of the British became the focus of the attention of the far right and remained an important aspect of the ideology from that time onwards. Moreover, the far right who call themselves "the true conservatives" continue to advocate for the unity of the United Kingdom as a territorial, cultural, and racial successor of the British Empire, which is very appealing to a significant proportion of Britons.

In recent years, an ongoing debate about Britain's membership in the European Union, culminating with the referendum on the UK's exit from the EU on 23 June 2016, became yet another contributing factor.

Modern British political correctness largely prefers to ignore the painful issue of neo-Nazi groups being active in the country. Despite the similarity of ideas, the far-right flank of the British political landscape is hardly united. British far right and nationalist organisations are mostly marginal, and fail to exert significant influence on social and political processes in the country. Their membership usually does not exceed a few hundred people. They mostly focus

on online activities, but they also organise high-profile public events in major cities such as London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Belfast. Some of them tried abandoning. As they vied to integrate into the political establishment, some of these groups tried abandoning their most radical slogans to appeal to a wider demographic, only to face an exodus of radicalised supporters.

The most prominent far-right organisation, the British National Party (BNP) was established in 1982 by its leader John Tyndall. Throughout its history, the party opposed mass immigration and strongly criticised the emergence of the "federal super-state in Europe" referring to the European Union. Unification of the global, primarily European, far right, conservation of the "White British family" values, complete closure of borders for migrants and repatriation of those who had already entered the country were among BNP's declared goals. It was not uncommon for its members to make anti-Semitic statements, including calling the Holocaust a historical mystification.

Although BNP vied for leadership among the British far right, due to internal disagreements its registered membership dropped from 13.5 thousand in 2009 to 600 persons in 2021. However, according to BNP, the number of its supporters exceeded 3,000 people in 2020-2021.

Since its establishment, BNP has never been elected to Parliament. At the 2019 general election, their only candidate got as few as 510 ballots. Their most prominent electoral achievement was receiving two mandates to the European Parliament in 2009. These were lost, however, in the 2014 general election.

Britain First is another British neo-Nazi party established by BNP's Jim Dowson in 2011. It opposes "Islamisation" and mass migration to the UK. It proclaims the goal of protecting the traditional British way of life, ethno-cultural heritage and Christian faith. Its members advocated for a speedy Brexit to "save their society from the dominating political correctness and

multiculturalism madness". Britain First has a "combat wing" in its structure, which calls itself the "party defence forces".

The party drew publicity in 2014 with a number of provocative actions against Muslims in London, Glasgow and Luton: attacks on mosques, distribution of anti-Muslim propaganda leaflets, organised protests by the houses of Muslim community leaders. Also, "Christian patrols" of up to 12 activists were set up in London to "counter Islamic extremism" (their actions were condemned by clergy representing both the Muslim community and the Anglican Church).

In 2016, the organisation was accused of involvement in the assassination of Jo Cox, a Labour Party MP. The 52-year-old Thomas Mair, a former patient of a treatment centre, reportedly cried out "Put Britain first" at the time of his attack. The right-wing group issued a statement denying their involvement in the murder.

On a number of occasions, the BNP leadership was prosecuted for nationalist statements and insulting religious groups. In October 2019, Paul Golding, the leader of Britain First, was detained by the police on the charges of terrorism when he arrived at Heathrow from Russia, where he had met members of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia at the State Duma. The reason for his detention was the fact that he had refused to give access to the electronic devices in his luggage. In May 2020, he was found guilty of an offence under the Terrorism Act, despite absence of compelling evidence.

Recently, the English Defence League has been rapidly gaining political weight. It appeared spontaneously in the form of a street demonstration in March 2009 opposing the marches of Al Muhajiroun, an Islamic group, against Luton parades of British servicemen returning home from Afghanistan. Tim Ablitt, a far-right activist, leads the group. It is an informal movement predominantly made up of the youth that openly opposes "Islamisation" of the nation. The main form of its activity is holding marches and demonstrations,

organising public protests against the construction of new mosques and any attributes of Islamic culture being "imposed" on the British.

Researchers of right-wing radical movements in the UK note that, since around 2020, traditional far-right groups have given way to groups with more flexible ideologies that are able to adapt to the changing situation, not least due to the death of the most influential figures in the world of neo-Nazism: former BNP vice-chairman Richard Edmonds and neo-Nazi political activist Eddy Morrison. With their departure, the "National Front", "Blood and Honour" and "Combat 18", which had once posed a serious threat to the country's security, virtually ceased their activities in the UK.

Since 2020, the "Patriotic Alternative" established by a former BNP functionary Mark Collett has been gaining popularity. Experts believe that it has become a major player in the world of far right-wing organisations.¹¹³ It primarily targets teenagers and young people and uses the internet and modern technology: the communication between members happens in social networks and messengers, violence-promoting computer games are used to recruit new members. Experts believe that throughout most of 2020 and in the first quarter of 2021 minors were especially susceptible to such negative influence as schools switched to distance learning.

In one case in 2020, the content posted on social networks by Scottish supporters of the "Patriot Alternative" inspired a series of attacks on people of Asian descent. Among other things, radicals vandalized storefronts held by Asian people by drawing Nazi symbols and writing racist slogans.¹¹⁴

The "Patriotic Alternative" opposes "leniency" towards the Black people. In particular, members of the organisation have held unsanctioned rallies with the slogan "White Lives Matter" in response to Black Lives Matter marches. In

¹¹³ State of Hate 2021. Backlash, Conspiracies & Confrontation. Hope not Hate. March 2021
<https://hopenothate.org.uk/2021/02/20/state-of-hate-2021-backlash-conspiracies-and-confrontation/>

¹¹⁴ Neo-Nazis active in Scotland use Instagram and Telegram to recruit youngsters. The Ferret. 21 March 2021
<https://theferret.scot/neo-mazis-instagram-telegram-recruit-scotland/>

June 2020, more than 100 far-right demonstrators showed up at a London anti-racist rally with Nazi flags, staged a riot and assaulted several police officers.¹¹⁵

The same tactic was used by the Democratic Football Lads Alliance, which held as much as 26 protest rallies against Black Lives Matter.¹¹⁶

In May 2020, Stand Up X (SUX), a far-right movement was launched. It brought together far-right activists (such as Jeff Wyatt from Wales) anti-Semites (such as David Icke, who popularised the anti-Zionist idea that 5G masts contributed to the spread of the coronavirus) and conspiracy theorists (such as Piers Corbin). SUX saw a growing number of supporters after a series of public disinformation campaigns that unfolded during the pandemic, marked by unsanctioned protest rallies throughout the UK. At the time when its Facebook page was blocked, the movement had 40,000 online followers. According to Hope Not Hate, a human rights organisation, the group is predicted to remain active in the coming years, holding street rallies and attracting new supporters and public figures to its ranks.¹¹⁷

The "British Movement", a neo-Nazi organisation founded in 1968 (a political party until 1983), retains its position. This group also makes an emphasis on online activity, recruiting new members on Facebook, Instagram, and Telegram and spreading disinformation with their help. It is one of the few National Socialist groups still openly operating in the United Kingdom. The movement has active units in London, Kent, South Wales, the East Midlands, Yorkshire, Humberside, as well as in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Its members keep close ties with the notorious "Nordic Resistance Movement". The group is known, among other things, for publishing its own regular

¹¹⁵ Over 100 arrested as UK far-right groups clash with police. Deutsche Welle. 13 June 2021 <https://www.dw.com/en/over-100-arrested-as-uk-far-right-groups-clash-with-police/a-53796903>

¹¹⁶ State of Hate 2021. Backlash, Conspiracies & Confrontation. Hope not Hate. March 2021 <https://hopenothate.org.uk/2021/02/20/state-of-hate-2021-backlash-conspiracies-and-confrontation/>

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

newsletter, containing information aimed to undermine the credibility of the national government.¹¹⁸

In the UK, some far-right organisations¹¹⁹ have been listed as banned under the 2000 Terrorism Act.¹²⁰

Among these, National Action, a racist neo-Nazi group established in 2013 and banned in December 2016, has gained notoriety. Its ideology is based on the idea of an imminent "race war" in Great Britain and the use of violence against ethnic minorities and perceived "race traitors". National Action's online propaganda material, disseminated via social media, condones and glorifies terrorism and the crimes perpetrated by the far right.

The Home Office believes that Scottish Dawn, NS131 National Socialist Anti-Capitalist Action and System Resistance Network should be treated as alternative names for the already banned National Action (and therefore proscribed as well).

In April 2021, a 22-year-old Met Police officer was found guilty on charges of terrorism. The young man had been a member of National Action for a number of years, possessed information material that could have been used for preparation of terrorist acts and failed to declare those when he joined the police. At the same time, it has been noted that the corresponding job application form only mentioned the legalised BNP. According to a spokesperson of the Metropolitan Police Counterterrorism Office, this is the first time a police officer has been officially recognised as a follower of such an ideology.¹²¹ The case prompted a discussion among members of British law enforcement agencies regarding a possible revision of the national security vetting procedures.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/901434/2020_17_Proscription.pdf

¹²⁰ Terrorism Act 2000 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/contents>

¹²¹ London Police Officer Convicted of Membership in Neo-Nazi Group. The New York Times. 1 April 2021 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/01/world/europe/london-metropolitan-police-neo-nazi.html>

In December 2021, Ben Raymond, a co-founder of National Action, was sentenced to eight years in prison with the right to parole two years before the end of his term. In addition to his active involvement in the development of the neo-Nazi group, the court also found that he had kept the Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik's manifesto and instructions for making explosives at home. Ben Raymond became the 17th member of National Action to be prosecuted for membership in this proscribed organisation.¹²²

According to Hope Not Hate, an advocacy group, a total of 18 young people who support extreme right-wing ideas were convicted of terrorist crimes in 2021 (twice as many as in 2020). Six of them were teenagers. Since 2017, 76 extremists have been sanctioned under anti-terrorist legislation (in the preceding five years, only 15).¹²³

Sonnenkrieg Division (SKD), a white supremacist group with the characteristically German-sounding name, a splinter group and largely a successor of National Action, was proscribed in February 2020. In 2019, several members of the group were convicted on charges of terrorism and possessing material that might be used for the preparation of terrorist attacks.

In July 2020, the "Feuerkrieg Division" (FKD) was proscribed. Based on a similar ideology, FKD is a group with an international footprint.

In April 2020, the "Atomwaffen Division" (AWD, also known as "National Socialist Order"), a white supremacist group based in the US and emulated by the British far right, was put on the proscribed organisations list.

One of the most striking manifestations of neo-Nazism in recent years has been the scandalous situation with the use of Nazi symbols by the Royal Marines in June 2019. During an initiation, they put a Swastika on the chest of one of their fellow officers, and then posted photos of him on social media. It is

¹²² National Action: Ben Raymond jailed for eight years. BBC News. 3 December 2021 <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-wiltshire-59519211>

¹²³ State of Hate 2022: On The March Again. Hope not Hate. March 2022 <https://hopenothate.org.uk/2022/02/09/state-of-hate-2022-on-the-march-again/>

noteworthy that this is not the first time that members of the British armed forces have demonstrated Nazi symbols: in 2013, two British soldiers serving in Afghanistan were photographed posing against the background of their country's flag with their hands raised in a Nazi salute.

British law does not criminalise the activities of far-right organisations. Their existence can be terminated only if they are recognized as terrorist in accordance with the Terrorism Act. This can happen if the British authorities believe that such an organisation is "involved in terrorist activities", namely, "commits or participates in terrorist acts, prepares for the commission of a terrorist act, promotes and encourages terrorist sentiments (including illegal glorification of terrorism) or is otherwise associated with terrorist activities". From the moment an organisation is recognized as prohibited, belonging to it (or admitting such affiliation), providing assistance (making a call for assistance), as well as displaying the symbols of such an organisation (including clothing) are crimes and are punishable by imprisonment for a period of 6 months to 10 years and/or a fine.

In its policy paper titled *Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*¹²⁴, published in March 2021, the British government recognized the far-right ideology as a serious terrorist threat. A Home Office statistic¹²⁵ shows that, as at 31 December 2020, there were 209 persons in custody for terrorism-connected offences in Great Britain; of those in custody, 42 were categorised as holding far right-wing ideologies (18% more than in 2019), while 159 were categorised as holding Islamist-extremist views. for the third consecutive year since 2018,

¹²⁴ *Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*. Policy Paper.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-britain-in-a-competitive-age-the-integrated-review-of-security-defence-development-and-foreign-policy/global-britain-in-a-competitive-age-the-integrated-review-of-security-defence-development-and-foreign-policy>

¹²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/operation-of-police-powers-under-the-terrorism-act-2000-quarterly-update-to-december-2020/operation-of-police-powers-under-the-terrorism-act-2000-and-subsequent-legislation-arrests-outcomes-and-stop-and-search-great-britain-year-ending>

Those of White ethnic appearance accounted for the most of terrorist-related arrests – 89 out of 185 (48,1%). their proportion has increased against the previous year (117 out of 282 persons arrested, 41.5%), despite a decrease in the absolute numbers.

The UK has attempted to extend responsibility for extremism to activities that do not involve physical violence. On 7 October 2019, the UK Government's Commission for Countering Extremism published the report titled *Challenging Hateful Extremism*, which defined a new category of extremist behavior – hateful extremism – in addition to terrorism and violent extremism. The term hateful extremism refers to behaviours that can incite and amplify hate, or engage in persistent hatred, or equivocate about and make the moral case for violence; and that draw on hateful, hostile or supremacist beliefs directed at an out-group who are perceived as a threat to the wellbeing, survival or success of an in-group; and that cause, or are likely to cause, harm to individuals, communities or wider society.¹²⁶

The trend for an increase in the number of radical ideology followers is mostly driven by the influx of young people. In 2020 alone, 12 young people were arrested in the United Kingdom on charges of terrorist crimes inspired by neo-Nazi ideology.¹²⁷

In this context, the following high-profile case is especially worthy of mentioning. In March 2021, a 16-year-old boy was given a two-year rehabilitation order for possessing and distributing "right-wing materials"; he was the suspected leader of the British branch of the mentioned Feuerkrieg Division (it was established that he was engaged in the illegal activity since the age of 13). The judge's decision to spare the boy from jail was explained by the fact he had expressed the desire to pursue a better path, causing a backlash from

¹²⁶ Xenophobia, Radicalism and Hate Crimes in the OSCE Space, 2018-2020, Moscow, 2021. 188 pp.

¹²⁷ State of Hate 2021. Backlash, Conspiracies & Confrontation. Hope not Hate. March 2021
<https://hopenothate.org.uk/2021/02/20/state-of-hate-2021-backlash-conspiracies-and-confrontation/>

members of the Muslim community, saying that a Muslim would have been jailed in a similar situation.

At the same time, according to a report by Hope Not Hate, published in March 2022, the following major trends have been documented within the far right so far.

In 2021, radical movements and groups have significantly increased their offline activity. Their supporters hold demonstrations, often in proximity of asylum seeker accommodation, distribute leaflets and display banners with their symbols and slogans in public places.

The extreme right also remains active online, despite national regulator's efforts to block their access to the most popular social platforms. Radicals seek out alternative unregulated platforms to promote their ideas and views. For example, Stephen Lennon (better known as Tommy Robinson), the most well-known apologist of the ideology (57% of the British know his name), has 180 thousand subscribers in GETTR, 155 thousand in Telegram and 28 thousand on the BitChute video sharing platform.

The COVID-19 pandemic, emergence of conspiracy theories and the rise of and anti-government sentiment in this context, the living wage debate, and the lack of trust in the political system have been some of the reasons for the continuing spread of extreme right-wing ideas in the reporting period.

There has been a sharp decline in public confidence in democratic institutions. More than half of those surveyed by NGOs were dissatisfied with the way democracy is exercised in the United Kingdom. Approximately three-quarters of those surveyed believe that politicians do not listen to the people.

A key aspect of the far-right activities has been the promotion of healthy lifestyle and fitness. By presenting Fascism as a way of self-development, these groups and movements have become increasingly popular and attracted new members.

Radicals remain focused on countering migration. In the year preceding the publication of the study by the advocacy group, the "migrant hunters" had made 125 hotel raids.¹²⁸

Another distinctive feature of the far-right ideology development has been the spread of the so-called "green nationalism". Its followers, the ecofascists, essentially justify traditional neo-Nazi attitudes by environmentalist causes. In particular, they advocate for reducing the world's population on racial and national principles for the sake of preserving humanity and preventing a shortage of natural resources. This approach to environmental problems is convergent, in particular, with the ideology of Sonnenkrieg Division, who view refugee flows as a "great replacement" of the White race.¹²⁹

In general, the British nation keeps the memory of its alliance with Russia during WWII, recognizes the decisive contribution of the Soviet people to the defeat of Nazism. In recent years, special recognition has been given to the Soviet-British military cooperation in the Arctic convoys of WWII. In Great Britain, like in other Western countries, stereotypes about 'equal responsibility of Germany and the USSR for unleashing the war' and 'an agreement to divide Poland' have spread. At the same time, the unseemly role of Britain itself in the events leading to the war is widely recognized. The overwhelming majority of local professors prefer not to engage in public revision of historical events associated with World War II, and to revise its results.

There have been no registered cases of the authorities prohibiting the holding of commemoration events or public actions organised by Russian NGOs (Volunteers of the Victory, Heirs of the Victory, The Immortal Regiment), Russian compatriots or diaspora.

¹²⁸ State of Hate 2022: On The March Again. Hope not Hate. March 2022
<https://hopenothate.org.uk/2022/02/09/state-of-hate-2022-on-the-march-again/>

¹²⁹ Over 100 arrested as UK far-right groups clash with police. Deutsche Welle. 13 June 2021
<https://www.dw.com/en/over-100-arrested-as-uk-far-right-groups-clash-with-police/a-53796903>

At the international level, the UK delegation abstains in the vote on the annual resolution by the United Nations General Assembly "Combatting glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance".

Since 24 February 2022, the Ukrainian national-patriotic greeting "Glory to Ukraine" has been frequently heard from representatives of British political elites as they have voiced their support of Kiev; Prime Minister Boris Johnson has used on a number of occasions, for example in a Twitter post on 25 February, in his address to Ukrainian parliament on 3 May and during his visit to Kiev on 17 June 2022.

The slogan "Glory to Ukraine" was also by uttered UK's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dame Barbara Woodward as she made her closing remarks at the UN General Assembly on 28 February; also, by UK Permanent Representative to the UN Simon Manley in his speech on 12 May and Senior Military Advisor at the UK's OSCE Delegation Ian Stubbs during his speech on 6 April 2022.

On 25 March 2022, the Soviet War Memorial Foundation in London reported that the traditional ceremony dedicated to celebrating Victory Day (the Embassy held on its own initiative a wreath laying ceremony at the Soviet War Memorial with the participation of military attachés and ambassadors of CIS countries, and the Russian diaspora).

On 24 February 2022, Glasgow suspended its town twinning agreement with Rostov-on-Don in solidarity with Ukraine.

On 22 March, Coventry City Council suspended its twinning relationship with Volgograd to explore options for twinning with Mariupol.

On 24 February, Tom Tugendhat, a Conservative MP and the then Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Parliamentary Committee suggested the UK could expel all Russians (including the Russian Ambassador) to protect the

interests of British people and international partners. His position got the support of Roger Gale, another Conservative MP, who on 28 February called to "send home" every Russian living in the UK.

In their publications, top British media habitually whitewash and rehabilitate Ukrainian neo-Nazis, including members of the Azov battalion, describing them as defenders and patriots of Ukraine. Since the start of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, the following materials have been published. BBC, 18 May: "Mariupol's Azovstal fighters: What next for Ukraine's captured soldiers"¹³⁰, "Mariupol: Wife of fighter still inside Azovstal steel plant speaks to BBC"¹³¹, 27 February: "Ukraine: Azov battalion fighters defend Mariupol"¹³²; The Times, 30 March: "Azov battalion: 'We are patriots – we're fighting the real Nazis of the 21st century'"¹³³, 30 June: "Heroes of Azovstal freed as Russian missiles rain down"¹³⁴. The Telegraph, 18 March: "Inside Azov, the far-Right brigade killing Russian generals and playing a PR game in the Ukraine war"¹³⁵, 15 May: "Azov wives: 'Every goodbye could be the last goodbye – we are always ready to learn that they are dead'"¹³⁶.

Against this background, it is not surprising that the coverage of the Russian special military operation to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine should, in the opinion of Ofcom, be exclusively pro-Western. The refusal to describe

¹³⁰ Mariupol's Azovstal fighters: What next for Ukraine's captured soldiers. BBC News. 18 May 2022

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61493182>

¹³¹ Mariupol: Wife of fighter still inside Azovstal steel plant speaks to BBC. BBC News. 18 May 2022.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-61485135>

¹³² Ukraine: Azov Battalion fighters defend Mariupol. BBC News. 27 February 2022

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-31657354>

¹³³ Azov Battalion: 'We are patriots – we're fighting the real Nazis of the 21st century'. The Times. 30 May 2022

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/azov-battalion-we-are-patriots-were-fighting-the-real-nazis-of-the-21st-century-sdccc0w9t>

¹³⁴ Heroes of Azovstal freed as Russian missiles rain down. The Times. 30 June 2022

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/heroes-of-azovstal-freed-as-russian-missiles-rain-down-8sz28pt7m#~:text=Ukraine%20says%20144%20of%20its,start%20of%20the%20Russian%20invasion>

¹³⁵ Inside Azov, the far-Right brigade killing Russian generals and playing a PR game in the Ukraine war. The Telegraph. 18 March 2022

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/03/18/inside-azov-neo-nazi-brigade-killing-russian-generals-playing/>

¹³⁶ Azov wives: "Every goodbye could be the last goodbye – we are always ready to learn that they are dead".

The Telegraph. 15 May 2022

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/05/15/azov-wives-husbands-betrayed-ukrainian-traitors/>

the events as an "invasion of a sovereign state" cost RT its broadcasting licence in the United Kingdom. To justify its decision, Ofcom cited 29 simultaneous investigations into the media outlet in order to verify the "due impartiality" of its reporting on the events in Ukraine.¹³⁷

However, Russian journalists and media workers have faced persecution for years.

In July 2015 due to EU's introduction of personal sanctions against International Information Agency Russia Today Dmitry Kiselev, Barclays, a British bank, froze the account of the RIA Novosti London Office. Explanations (included those provided by lawyers) that Mr Kiselev was not the owner of this media outlet were ignored. At present, representatives of RIA Novosti in the UK still have no access to their corporate account, so the correspondent bureau is unable to function properly.

Since February 2016, Channel One correspondent Timur Siraziev has not been able to open an account at NatWest Bank or any other bank upon his arrival in the UK. He was not given any reasons for the refusal. So far, the problem has not been solved, which significantly hampers the correspondent's work in the country.

In February 2016, without any explanation, HSBC closed the corporate account of the British office of Rossiya 1 TV channel, as well as the personal account of correspondent chief Alexander Khabarov.

Since December 2018, Ofcom initiated legal proceedings into the work of the RT news channel citing an alleged violation of the principle of "impartiality" of the Broadcasting Code. The inquiry looks into seven programmes that aired between March 17 and April 26, 2018 (two of them were dedicated to the Salisbury incident, the others to glorification of Nazism in Ukraine and military operations in Syria).

¹³⁷ Ofcom revokes RT's broadcast licence. Ofcom. 18 March 2022
<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/news-centre/2022/ofcom-revokes-rt-broadcast-licence>

Without waiting for the decision of the High Court in London, Ofcom published the results of its investigation into the RT materials and imposed a flagrantly high penalty of GBP 200,000. In an appeal prepared with the help of British lawyers against the actions of the media regulator, RT presented extensive arguments refuting Ofcom's accusations. The main point of RT's appeal was that the UK media regulator failed to fulfill its obligations under Paragraph 3 of the UK Human Rights Act of 1998, according to which Ofcom should interpret and apply the principle of "due impartiality" in full accordance with Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, in particular ensuring the freedom of citizens and the media "to receive and impart information and ideas without interference from public authorities and independent of any public authority or national borders". Furthermore, RT pointed out that Ofcom did not take into account the fact that in its coverage of the Salisbury incident, the British media acted in line with the dominant narrative, which initially assumed that the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal was committed "on the instructions of the Kremlin". In this regard, RT did not consider it necessary to further explain the position of the British authorities on the Salisbury incident in its newscasts, and focused on explaining the position of the Russian side on the case.

Having considered the appeal in June 2019, the High Court in London found that RT's lawyers had presented "a provable set of arguments that should be fully analysed" and allowed RT to challenge the regulator's decision in further proceedings. However, in late March 2020, the same court dismissed RT's claim that the GBP 200,000 penalty imposed by Ofcom was unlawful. Lord Justice Dingemans, Court of Appeal Judge, called RT's argument regarding the "dominant media narrative" "vague". The court also dismissed the argument of the broadcaster that the requirement to be impartial interfered with its right to freedom of expression. The Judge mentioned that "the only

requirement was that, in the programme as broadcast, RT provided balance to ensure that there was "due impartiality".

In April 2020 RT filed a second appeal to the High Court of London in an attempt to overturn the Ofcom ruling and gave further clarification of its position, only to be dismissed at the end of 2021. At present, the management of RT plans to continue challenging the ruling and is preparing to file a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

The Sputnik news agency also faces restrictions in the UK. The Sputnik, like the correspondents of RT, were denied accreditation to cover the Global Conference for Media Freedom in July 2019. Foreign Office citing Ofcom's accusations explained the exclusion with the "active role of RT and Sputnik in spreading misinformation". The then Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt publicly supported the ban of RT and Sputnik from joining the event, calling them "not free media, but mouthpieces of the Russian state".

A similar situation occurred in December 2019, when an RT employee was accredited but subsequently not allowed to attend the NATO summit. Having arrived at the media centre, an RT representative was detained by the local security service, after which police officers searched the journalist, checked his documents and equipment, and said that his accreditation had been cancelled. The police cited the Terrorism Act to justify their actions. RT's inquiries with the organising committee of the NATO summit and the organisation itself were left without response.

Russian media in the UK continue to face difficulties, mainly due to a constant pressure from the country's authorities. Our correspondents experience difficulties in obtaining information and establishing contacts. There have been cases when Russian journalists were made to wait for long periods of time for the British authorities to extend their working visa, which effectively bound them to one location and prevented them from normal journalist work. What is

more, representatives of the Russian media are facing difficulties with initial issuance of UK visas.

Since February 2022, cases of harassment of Russian and Russian-speaking citizens have been registered across the country. the Russian Embassy in the UK continues to receive emails with relevant complaints. Leaflets with the slogan "GOOD Russian = DEAD Russian" were widely used by the owners of public places. Social networks are flooded with Russophobic comments with threats both against Russia's leadership and ordinary ethnic Russians and even people with indirect ties to Russia or the territory of the former Soviet Union.

The premises Consular Section of the Russian Embassy were attacked, when "activists" pelted it with eggs and broke windows of the visitors' hall. In breach of the UK's international legal obligations, Russian diplomats' rights to work, to fair and favorable working conditions, to access any place or service intended for the use of the general public, and to security of person and protection by the state were compromised. In particular, these include restriction of access to the Embassy's bank account, BMW's decision not to renew the contract for the service of the Embassy's car fleet, the disabling of the so-called alarm button in the Embassy and the Residence of the Russian Ambassador, as well, intrusion into the premises of the Embassy's country house and damage to its property.

Anti-Russian hysteria has not escaped the spheres of culture and sports. For example, British auction houses Christie's, Sotheby's, and Bonhams refuse to hold auctions of Russian art.¹³⁸ The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire has banned a Russian graduate from participating in a music competition in Dubai.¹³⁹ The Cardiff Philharmonic Orchestra refused to house a recital

¹³⁸ Sotheby's, Christie's and Bonhams call off Russian art auctions in response to war in Ukraine. The Art Newspaper. 16 March 2022

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2022/03/15/sothebys-christies-call-off-russian-art-auctions-ukraine-war>

¹³⁹ Controversy as young Russian pianists banned from international music competitions. Classic FM. 10 March 2022

<https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/instruments/piano/young-russians-banned-international-competitions/>

dedicated to the work of Tchaikovsky. Cardiff Philharmonic Orchestra announced on its website that they "feel the previously advertised programme including the 1812 Overture to be inappropriate at this time".¹⁴⁰ The Royal Opera House has cancelled the Bolshoi Ballet's London tour.¹⁴¹ London's National Gallery decided to rename the painting Russian Dancers by Edgar Degas as Ukrainian Dancers at the request of Ukrainian artist Mariam Nayyem.¹⁴²

Russian teams and individual racers were banned from participating in any competitions in the UK. Nikita Mazepin, a Russian Formula One racing driver, was suspended from participation in the British Grand Prix.¹⁴³ Russian tennis players were also threatened that they would be suspended from tournaments. Daniil Medvedev was asked to publicly condemn the Russian special operation if he wished to participate in Wimbledon.¹⁴⁴ Ultimately, all representatives of Russia and Belarus were suspended from the tournament.

In Oxford, looters plundered the Church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker. The altar was vandalized, holy relics, altar vessels, and the crucifix were stolen. The church bookstore and the donations collected by the congregation for refugees from Ukraine, were taken. The Police opened an investigation into the case.¹⁴⁵

The authorities of Warrington attempted to close a Russian school that educated children from Latvia, Lithuania, and Ukraine, among others.

¹⁴⁰ Cardiff Philharmonic removes Tchaikovsky performance over Ukraine conflict. The Guardian. 9 March 2022 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/09/cardiff-philharmonic-orchestra-removes-tchaikovsky-over-ukraine-conflict>

¹⁴¹ Bolshoi Ballet run cancelled by Royal Opera House. The Times. 26 February 2022 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/bolshoi-ballet-run-cancelled-by-royal-opera-house-mk5vsftqh>

¹⁴² London's National Gallery renames Russian Dancers. Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 5 April 2022 https://rg.ru/2022/04/05/londonskaia-nacionalnaia-galereiia-pereimenovala-russkih-tancovshchic.html?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop

¹⁴³ Motorsport UK announces actions in response to the situation in Ukraine. Motorsport UK. 2 March 2022 <https://www.motorsportuk.org/news/motorsport-uk-announces-actions-in-response-to-the-situation-in-ukraine/>

¹⁴⁴ Daniil Medvedev could be banned from Wimbledon unless he denounces Vladimir Putin. Independent. 16 August 2022

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/daniil-medvedev-putin-russia-wimbledon-b2037376.html>
¹⁴⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/StNOrthodox/posts/4911983808877140>

Nevertheless, a petition to preserve the educational space helped prevent the closure.¹⁴⁶

Restrictions have been imposed to cut off wealthy Russians' access to UK banks including GBP 50,000 limits on bank accounts.¹⁴⁷

The fight against racial discrimination and xenophobia in the UK is carried out based on the Public Order Act 1986. It prohibits incitement to racial hatred and provides for a penalty of 6 months to 7 years of imprisonment and/or a fine for intentionally committing this act against a racial group, distributing racist materials, making inflammatory speeches, creating racist websites on the Internet, or distributing information against a person or ethnic group with the purpose of spreading racial discontent.

The Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 also places offences related to "inciting hatred against persons for racial and religious reasons" in the legal framework. A special feature of this legal act is that it introduces into British law the concept of offences related to incitement of hatred for religious reasons (punishable by up to 7 years of imprisonment and/or a fine). The provisions of this law apply if verbal language, behaviour, written materials, video and audio recordings, or programs "pose a threat" or "are aimed to incite religious hatred". Discriminatory actions based on religious beliefs in the workplace may also constitute an offence under this act in certain circumstances.

Another legal instrument aimed at combating discrimination is the 2010 Equality Act. It prohibits insults, harassment, and any form of discrimination in the workplace, including that on the grounds of race or religious belief.

In this regard, of particular interest are the results of an Opinion survey by among members of ethnic minorities and published by the Guardian

¹⁴⁶ https://www.change.org/p/stop-closing-schools-for-teaching-russian-to-children?recruiter=870918672&recruited_by_id=d00a7980-40f6-11e8-b3e5-a7d7d17dbdf4&utm_source=share_petition&utm_campaign=share_petition&utm_term=psf_combo_share_initi al&utm_medium=coppylink&utm_content=cl_sharecopy_32672193_en-GB%3A6

¹⁴⁷ Foreign Secretary imposes UK's most punishing sanctions to inflict maximum and lasting pain on Russia. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-imposes-uks-most-punishing-sanctions-to-inFLICT-maximum-and-lasting-pain-on-russia>

published in May 2019, according to which 71 per cent of respondents faced racial discrimination (58 per cent in January 2016). What is more, one in four employees of African, Asian or other ethnic origin has witnessed racially motivated harassment or bullying by superiors in the past two years.¹⁴⁸

According to a study by Fawcett Society and the Runnymede Trust, three-quarters of women of non-European descent (about 2,000 women from this group participated in the study along with 1,000 women of European descent) experience racism in the workplace, and just over a quarter faced racist hate speech. More than 60% of non-White respondents reported having to hide their ethnicity by changing their hairstyles, clothing style, eating habits, and way of speaking. Women of Indian descent also reported changing their names. 42 percent of non-indigenous British women say their superiors prioritize White employees when making decisions on promotion. One third of women of Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi ancestry say their promotion was not only discouraged, but also prevented. By comparison, only 20 percent of British women of European descent reported such negative experience. More than half of the women in the first group had also experienced discrimination in hiring.¹⁴⁹

In February 2021 the Government's Commission for Countering Extremism published a report titled *Operating with impunity. Hateful extremism: the need for a legal framework*,¹⁵⁰ which stated that the current legal framework is not sufficient for combatting hate crime effectively (including that inspired by far-right ideology). The report acknowledges that full protection against hateful extremism is impossible due to the "risks of over-reach" that would result in potential restrictions on free speech. However, the paper makes

¹⁴⁸ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2019

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-fundamental-rights-report-2019_en.pdf

¹⁴⁹ Broken Ladders: the Muth of Meritocracy for Women of Colour in the Workplace

<https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/broken-ladders>

¹⁵⁰ *Operating with Impunity. Hateful extremism: The need for a legal framework.*

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963156/CCE_Operating_with_Impunity_Accessible.pdf

a case for updating and tightening the rules in this area (not least due to the development of the digital space).

At the supranational level, the United Kingdom is a member of the 1995 CoE Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) (ratified in 1998). Official London declares "respect for the rights of ethnic minorities living in the country", state about "constant efforts to eradicate discrimination, support the development of ethnic culture and identity", emphasise "government guarantees of their rights and freedoms, including access to education and the media, protection of minority languages, and minorities participation in public life".

However, contrary to official declarations, people from African and Asian countries, ethnic minorities and Roma face racial discrimination in exercising their right to healthcare, employment, education, social security, by way of detentions and searches, and in the administration of criminal justice. These population groups face a high level of unemployment and occupational segregation, when they are restricted to mainly unsafe and low-paid jobs.

In August 2016, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, CERD, highlighted that these communities continue to face exclusion and are subject to negative stereotypes and stigmatisation in the media. The Committee noted continued discrimination against persons belonging to ethnic minorities in terms of access to health services and the quality of medical care provided. It is also noted that the mentioned categories of the population continue to be "disproportionately targeted throughout the criminal justice system". Furthermore, the ethnic composition of the majority of the police forces in the State party is not representative of the communities that

they serve, particularly in Scotland. In addition, CERD pointed to the existence of racist bullying and harassment in UK schools.¹⁵¹

In October 2020, Office for National Statistics published data showing that people of African descent are 18 times more likely to subject to racial profiling. What is more, the UK is the first European country to face the issue of institutional racial profiling by the police due to test trials of facial recognition technology.¹⁵²

The debate on race, as well as the nation's colonial heritage grew especially heated in 2020, largely due to the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement. The debate, however, has much deeper roots. It is noteworthy that the discussion happens in the spirit of uncompromising criticism of any (even purported) manifestations of "White supremacy" and in the form of mass manifestations, protests, and demolitions of monuments to historical figures suspected of having links with the slave trade. Some institutions (primarily educational) and place names are being changed if they carry the names of such figures. University professors and schoolteachers have been removed where hints of racism were found in their speech (in a number of high-profile cases, it happened specifically on suspicions of anti-Semitism). In general, disciplinary measures (dismissal, suspension from work) against persons who have allegedly made racist or other offensive statements that due to their insignificance cannot be considered as offenses, have become more common in the UK.

Against this backdrop, on 16 March 2021, the final report of an independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities¹⁵³ was presented. The commission was made up of prominent figures from fields spanning education,

¹⁵¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 21st and 23rd periodic reports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. August 2016. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fGBR%2fCO%2f21-23&Lang=ru

¹⁵² Xenophobia, Radicalism and Hate Crimes in the OSCE Space, 2018-2020, Moscow, 2021. 188 pp.

¹⁵³ Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities: The Report. March 2021. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974507/20210331_-_CRED_Report_-_FINAL_-_Web_Accessible.pdf

science, business, healthcare and law enforcement; on the recommendation of Prime Minister Boris Johnson, 9 out of 10 contributors, including the chairperson, represented ethnic minorities.

In contrast to the report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities prepared on the request of the UK government in 2016, which painted a bleak picture as regards ethnic and racial disparities, the new document offers a more optimistic view. It concludes that, although a post-racial society is yet to be achieved, the UK has become a beacon to other predominantly White countries in minority rights issues due to a significant progress in reducing inequality in education and economy. The authors conclude that they "no longer see a Britain where the system is deliberately rigged against ethnic minorities". The remaining disparity in many spheres is explained not by racial bias but rather by geography, family composition, socio-economic status, culture and religion.

The document recognizes that outright racism still exists in the UK, which has migrated to the internet. It is noted that members of ethnic minorities are hardly ever found at top jobs in some sectors. At the same time, the report sends a message that non-White British people should strive to play an active role in ensuring their participation in all the social spheres. What is more, the authors drew attention to "an increasingly strident form of anti-racism thinking" that seeks to explain all minority disadvantage through the prism of racism, and noted that the BLM movement might have pushed away the less political public from dialogue.

The conclusions implying a decrease in the significance of racist sentiments in the life of the nation caused an extremely negative reaction in some circles, above all ethnic minorities' organisations.

The UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent and the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism E.Tendayi Achiume failed to agree with the report's conclusions. The experts were outraged by the

Commission's failure to acknowledge "the pervasive role that the social construction of race was designed to play in society, particularly in normalizing atrocity".¹⁵⁴

In terms of specific numbers, the situation is indeed contradictory. For example, according to official data of the British Police (records are maintained separately for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), between April 2020 and March 2021, there was an increase in the number of hate crimes reported to the police. A total of 131.391 such offenses were recorded during this time (for 2019-2020 – 111.9 thousand, for 2018-2019 – 103.7 thousand). The vast majority of them were committed on the grounds of racial hatred. At the same time, the observed increase in registered crimes may not necessarily be related to a growing number of such actions. This may be due to a greater willingness of victims to report crimes committed against them than before, as well as the readiness of the police to register such reports.

Diminished health outcomes among ethnic minority groups have been another aspect of racial and ethnic disparity that became especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Office for National Statistics¹⁵⁵, a number of ethnic minority groups (of African, South Asian and Caribbean descent) were 1.5-2 times more likely to die from coronavirus than White Britons. What is more, the highest infection rate was registered in London Boroughs of Brent, Barnet and Harrow mostly populated by Black population. As a rule, these people are underpaid for their labour and have no adequate access to healthcare. A number of high-profile political figures urged the British government to immediately initiate an independent inquiry into the causes of the "abnormally high mortality" from coronavirus among ethnic minorities. The imbalance was highest among the male population – males of Black African ethnic background had 2.7 times higher chance of dying from

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27004&LangID=E>

¹⁵⁵ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/updatinggethniccontrastsindeathsinvolvingthecoronaviruscovid19englandandwales/deathsoccurring2marchto28july2020>

COVID-19-related causes than White males. A similar trend was registered among those of African Caribbean and Bangladeshi descent. Females of Black Caribbean ethnic background had the highest rate (twice the number of White females) followed by females of Black African and Pakistani ethnic background. It is worth noting that after adjustment for geography, socio-economic status (level of income, education), and other factors, the statistical disparity in the mortality factor decreases but remains visible. Analysts offer various explanations to it, including racial discrimination.

On 5 April 2020, it became known that the counter-terrorism unit of the London police was investigating attempts by British far-right groups to use the critical situation with coronavirus in the country to incite hatred against the Muslim population.

For example, founder and former leader of the English Defence League Tommy Robinson published a video on social media that showed a group of Muslims leaving a "secret mosque" in Birmingham at the height of the epidemic, despite the demands of the British authorities not to gather in groups. The video quickly gained more than 10 thousand views and negative comments. The police later denied the time of the footage, noting that it was taken before the lockdown was imposed.

However, not all manifestations of xenophobia against the background of the spread of coronavirus infection are the result of organised activities of radical groups. The commission of crimes motivated by national and racial hatred in many cases is caused by panic among the population and the desire to hold certain social groups responsible for what is happening.

Despite active public censure and widespread media coverage of anti-Semitism in the UK, human rights activists assess the situation in this area as extremely negative. According to a report by Community Security Trust, the record for the number of anti-Semitic incidents was broken in 2018. In total, 1,652 cases of anti-Semitism were registered during the period, which is

16 per cent more than in 2017. The vast majority of incidents occurred in London and Manchester, where UK's largest Jewish communities live.¹⁵⁶

A report by Labour against Anti-Semitism, a human rights NGO, submitted to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, is made an overview of anti-Semitic incidents caused by members of the Labour party.¹⁵⁷

However, it should be noted that Labour leadership has clearly expressed unequivocal condemnation of anti-Semitism. On 27 January 2020, in his Holocaust Memorial Day statement published on Facebook, the then Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said that "the loss of social unity today allows racist political movements to turn some social groups against others". He stressed that the Holocaust Memorial Day is an occasion to "reflect on the horrors of the past, the evils of Nazism, genocide and anti-Semitism".¹⁵⁸

The scale of the problem of anti-Semitism in the country was pointed out by Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council on contemporary forms of racism E.Tindayi Achiume in her report to the 74th session of the UN General Assembly on contemporary manifestations of racism and the fight against the glorification of Nazism, prepared in compliance with UN General Assembly resolution 73/157.¹⁵⁹

Ms. Siobhán Mullally, HRC Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, has expressed concern about the United Kingdom's policy towards asylum seekers. For example, in June, she criticized the arrangement made in April 2022 to transfer asylum-seekers to Rwanda. Special Rapporteur Mullally said that such a practice breaches the

¹⁵⁶ Anti-Semitic incidents report 2018 (2019).

<https://cst.org.uk/publications/cst-publications/antisemitic-incident-reports>

¹⁵⁷ UK Labour Party now facing 15,000 page dossier on antisemitism claims. The European Jewish Congress. 6 May 2019.

<https://eurojewcong.org/news/communities-news/united-kingdom/uk-labour-party-now-facing-15000-page-dossier-on-antisemitism-claims/>

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/JeremyCorbynMP/posts/10157068378103872>

¹⁵⁹ Report of the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism E.Tindayi Achiume A/74/253, in accordance with the resolution 73/157 of the UN GA. October 2019
<https://undocs.org/ru/A/74/253>

international law principle of non-refoulement and does nothing to prevent or combat human trafficking. UN human rights expert urged the United Kingdom to halt plans of forcible transfer of asylum seekers to third countries.¹⁶⁰

Not only human rights defenders slammed this decision as inhumane, but also Theresa May, ex-Prime Minister (2016-2019) and Home Secretary (2010-2016). She voiced her displeasure with the new migration policy and doubted its "legality and efficacy". The hierarchs of the Anglican Church were among the critics, as well as Prince of Wales, who commented on the new policy in a private conversation.

Practical implementation of the arrangement has so far been prevented due to the pro-active position of the asylum-seekers to be deported to Kigali, as well as human rights advocates who have undertaken to file necessary complaints with the judicial authorities. The first "deportation" flight to Kigali was scheduled for June 2022, but was cancelled just before departure on the decision of the European Court of Human Rights to take interim measures against one of the passengers on board. However, British authorities have not given up trying to enforce the measure and are reportedly making preparations for a second transfer.

In January 2022, Ms Siobhán Mullally also expressed concerns over the Nationality and Borders Bill, whose provisions, according to Ms Mullally, promote discrimination and serious human rights violations. In particular, the document does not require the state to ensure the protection of migrants and children seeking asylum, while specific norms raise the risk of increasing the number of persons without nationality.¹⁶¹ Despite criticism, including by domestic experts, the Bill was adopted by British Parliament in April 2022. The Act essentially deprived foreigners of the right to seek asylum from the British

¹⁶⁰UN expert urges UK to halt transfer of asylum seekers to Rwanda. 17 June 2022

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/06/un-expert-urges-uk-halt-transfer-asylum-seekers-rwanda>

¹⁶¹ UK Borders Bill increases risks of discrimination, human rights violations, say human rights defenders.

14 January 2022

<https://news.un.org/ru/story/2022/01/1416912>

authorities if they have arrived in the UK illegally and not directly from the state where their "life and freedom were threatened". The measure is aimed against illegal migrants, who arrive in the UK in small vessels through the English Channel (28.5 thousand people in 2021, over 10 thousand in the first half of 2022), who after travelling across France and other countries of continental Europe by default fail to satisfy the criterion of arriving directly from a "dangerous" country.

In general, British society promotes diversity. Ethnic minorities are well represented in government offices: Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak is of Indian origin, Home Secretary Priti Patel comes from a family of Indian migrants from Uganda, and Deputy Foreign Minister, Kwasi Kwarteng, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, is a son of Ghanaian parents, Mayor of London Sadiq Khan was born to a family of Pakistani immigrants.

UK's state sector adheres to the policy of hiring ethnic minorities. Since 1999, the British police have been trying to employ more people of ethnic minority background so that the ethnic composition of the law enforcement agencies is representative of the population they serve. Nevertheless, while ethnic minorities make up 14 per cent of the population in the UK, in 2020 only 7.3 per cent of police officers were from ethnic minority background. A certain parity has been achieved only in Lincolnshire, where minorities account for 2.3 per cent of the police force and 2.4 per cent of the population. The largest disparity has been found in London, with minorities constituting 15.5 per cent of the Met Police employees and 40 per cent of population. In England and Wales, the percentage of top police officers of ethnic minority background is lower than among general staff, however, it continues to rise in recent years: from 3.7 per cent in 2018, to 4 per cent in 2019 and 4.3 per cent in 2020.¹⁶²

¹⁶² <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/workforce-and-business/workforce-diversity/police-workforce/latest#by-ethnicity-and-rank-over-time-police-officers>

Members of law enforcement agencies complain that the progress is extremely slow. According to the Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council Sara Thornton, progress on this issue will not be seen until 2052 at best.¹⁶³

The legal status of the media is regulated by a number of legislative acts, with the 2003 Communications Act being the main one. It prohibits the use of the media, as well as social networks owned by the media, for the dissemination of hate speech, propaganda of racial discrimination, xenophobia and other types of intolerance. The main body regulating the work of local TV and radio outlets is the formally independent Office of Communications (Ofcom), headed by Melanie Dawes. Most print media are regulated by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) and the Independent Monitor for the Press (IMPRESS).

At the government level, media activities fall within the purview of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Secretary of State The Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP). In the government relations with the media are within the remit of the Downing Street Press Secretary (Rosie Bate-Williams since April 2021).

At the same time, as noted above, social media, messengers and the internet have become the environment most actively used by far-right organisations and individuals to spread their ideology. The abovementioned 2021 Report¹⁶⁴ of the Commission for Countering Extremism recognizes that the nature and scale of extremist materials (racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Islamic) in UK's digital space are "shocking", and that it is impossible to combat their dissemination in absence of relevant legislation. In this connection, the

¹⁶³ Police leader calls for laws to allow positive race discrimination. The Guardian.
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/feb/22/police-leader-calls-for-laws-to-allow-positive-race-discrimination>

¹⁶⁴ Operating with Impunity. Hateful extremism: The need for a legal framework. Commission for Countering Extremism.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963156/CCE_Operating_with_Impunity_Accessible.pdf

Commission recommends the Government to develop UK's legal framework accordingly.

Also, in recent years, manifestations of what can be described as reverse discrimination have taken place. The starkest example is a series of cases when inquiries into grave crimes committed by ethnic minority criminal gangs remained incomplete, while law enforcement agencies and local authorities were reluctant to cooperate with the investigation. The findings of a trial launched by the municipality of Telford, Shropshire, and published in June 2022 relating to a series of decades-long crimes involving the sexual exploitation of minors in the area drew considerable publicity. The investigation revealed that some 1,000 adolescent girls had been victims of a sex trafficking scheme, but authorities and law enforcement agencies in the town had long refrained from prosecuting the defendants, who were from the Pakistani diaspora. Moreover, even after the crimes were made public, local authorities apparently tried to draw public attention away from the perpetrators' origin, fearing that "racial tensions" would escalate.

The United Kingdom, therefore, should be viewed as one of the nations that face deep xenophobic sentiments. Prejudice against certain ethnic and religious groups, the tendency towards glorification of the white race is deeply entrenched in society and has roots in the historical past of the nation. Despite the fact that the British far-right formations, due to their weak organisational structure and fragmentation, do not have real political power, the number of their supporters today is growing exponentially. This is due to their high social activity in the form of rallies and campaigns, misinformation endeavours and recruitment of new members through social networks. Nevertheless, the official London prefers glossing over the existing problems to finding effective solutions.

Hungary

The right-conservative Hungarian leadership has been consistent in its hard line against any kind of xenophobia, including the spread of Nazi ideology, anti-Semitism and any other form of religious intolerance. Since 2010, there has been a significant decrease in anti-Semitism as experienced by the local and international Jewish community. Monitoring reports by key international human rights organisations on manifestations of xenophobia in Hungary have noted that anti-Semitic (as well as Roma-phobic) incidents appeared to be sporadic and mostly in the form of neighbour disputes, and did not involve physical violence or mass actions by right-wing radical groups.¹⁶⁵ This was reflected in the most recent Overview on anti-Semitic incidents in the European Union 2010-2020 issued by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, among others.

No torch marches or rallies of former Waffen-SS soldiers have taken place in the country. No cases of prosecution of veterans of the Red Army have been registered. The governing right-wing conservative Fidesz-KDNP alliance has generally been effective in preventing racially motivated intolerance.

Neo-Nazi organisations and the use of their symbols are prohibited by law and the Hungarian government does not support them in any way. Groups like "Blood and Honour", "Betyársereg" (Army of outlaws), the "National Guards of the Carpathian Homeland", the "National Self-Defence movement", the "Hungarian National Guard" and the "For a Better Future" movement and other smaller ones were dissolved by a court judgment.

Another prominent far-right organization, the Sixty-Four Counties movement (which refers to the number of regions that constituted the Kingdom of Hungary before 1918), when faced with a real threat of dissolution, promptly changed its charter, got rid of legally prohibited symbols (Arrow Crosses, swastikas and the SS lightning bolt logos) and currently positions itself as a

¹⁶⁵ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Anti-Semitism. Overview of antisemitic incidents recorded in the European Union. 2010-2020. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-antisemitism-overview-2010-2020_en.pdf

"sports and patriotic movement for the preservation of traditions". In fact, it is the Sixty-Four Counties movement that has absorbed the bulk of neo-Nazi youth, including those from the aforementioned banned groups.

It is to be noted that Hungary's specific feature is the constitutionalised idea of the interruption of the state sovereignty from 19 March 1944 (the entry of Hitler's troops as part of Operation Margarethe, the establishment of the regime controlled by the Arrow Cross Party and headed by Ferenc Szálasi) to 2 May 1990 (the formation of the first government after the change of regime), i.e., "double occupation" of the country first by Nazi Germany and then by the USSR. At the official level, the message of the complete identity of the communist and Nazi regimes in terms of 'guilt for crimes against humanity' is persistently cultivated. The public wearing of the red star, the hammer and sickle is prohibited along with the swastika, SS logo and Arrowed crosses.

At the same time the Fidesz-KDNP government downplays the issue and in every possible way tries to bring closer Russian and Hungarian assessments of the history of the war and post-war periods in an attempt to avoid inexpedient politicization of the topic of the historical past. There have been rare practices of controversial nature, however, they have a sporadic character and appear to happen on the personal initiative of individuals.

The official authorities do not object to holding Victory Day celebrations or other commemoration events related to the liberation of the country from Nazi invaders.

There are no concerns about Russian military memorial sites belonging to different historical periods which are located in Hungary. At present, their legal status is regulated by the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on Perpetuating the Memory of Fallen Servicemen and Civilian Victims of War and on the Status of Burial Sites of 6 March 1995. The mechanism for direct implementation of the Agreement – the Joint Russian-Hungarian Intergovernmental Commission on

War Graves – is working successfully. In 2021 and the first half of 2022, no cases of desecration or unauthorized demolition of Soviet military memorial sites were known of.

No acts of aggression against other monuments related to Russia and Russian-Hungarian friendship have been registered, to the exception of an act of vandalism against a memorial stone placed in front of the Moscow Tree planted in Budapest in 1972 as part of an international campaign. Russian Embassy forwarded a complaint to Mayor of Budapest and urged to take measures to restore the monument, which was passed on to the administration of the relevant district. Russian diplomatic mission awaits action from the local authorities.

In terms of racism and racial discrimination, international human rights bodies have criticised the Hungarian authorities on the situation of the Roma population, who are largely underprivileged and may be subject to various forms of discrimination. Human rights organisations have noted that only one in four able-bodied Roma has more or less permanent employment. Reports by the Hungarian Ombudsman have also repeatedly highlighted the dire living conditions of the Roma and called on the government to take real steps to improve the situation, as the Roma are unable to break the cycle of poverty on their own. It has also been stressed that, in recent decades, about one hundred Roma ghettos have formed in some parts of Hungary, especially in the north-east, that are not fully controlled by the authorities and do not contribute to either improved living standards or social inclusion of the Roma. The problems of the Roma community have been highlighted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child¹⁶⁶, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination¹⁶⁷,

¹⁶⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the 6th periodic report of Hungary. February 2020

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC/C/HUN/CO/6&Lang=En

¹⁶⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 18th to 25th periodic reports of Hungary. June 2019

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fHUN%2fCO%2f18-25&lang=ru

the Human Rights Committee¹⁶⁸ as well as the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance¹⁶⁹ and the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM).¹⁷⁰

A general analysis of the human rights situation in Hungary shows that, in recent years, Budapest has made tangible progress in preventing xenophobia and racism and in promoting the rights of national minorities to use and learn their native languages. Positive developments in the field of wide access to and use of mother tongues, including in communication with the executive and the judiciary, as well as efforts by the authorities to provide teaching staff, have been pointed out, *inter alia*, by the FCNM Advisory Committee.¹⁷¹

International and human rights bodies and NGOs continue to condemn decisive measures taken by Viktor Orbán's cabinet to counter the influx of refugees via the Balkan route. Hungary's unremitting refusal to take in migrants as a matter of principle is irritating for the EU leaders. Brussels periodically threatens that it will impose punitive sanctions on Hungary in connection with this, as well as a number of other issues.¹⁷² At the same time, many human rights monitoring bodies have acknowledged the large-scale influx of refugees and asylum seekers into Hungary and the fact that this has provoked a crisis in the country.

¹⁶⁸ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 6th periodic report of Hungary. March 2018 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fHUN%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

¹⁶⁹ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Hungary (fifth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 21 March, 2018, published on 15 May, 2018 <https://rm.coe.int/interim-follow-up-conclusions-on-hungary-5th-monitoring-cycle/16808b57f9>

¹⁷⁰ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) opinion on Hungary (fifth cycle). Adopted on 26 May 2020, published on 12 October 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-hungary-en/16809eb484>

¹⁷¹ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) opinion on Hungary (fifth cycle). Adopted on 26 May 2020, published on 12 October 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-hungary-en/16809eb484>

¹⁷² At the same time, it should be noted that in recent years, the official Budapest, because of its independent policy, has been subjected to pressure from the EU bodies. Thus, Hungary, along with Poland, were challenged on the issue of compliance with EU law. What is more, in July 2021, the European Commission criticised Budapest for its law prohibiting the promotion of homosexuality among minors adopted a month earlier, calling it discriminatory.

The independent policies of the Hungarian authorities who prioritize the country's interests is a serious irritant for European bureaucrats. It is not only Budapest's anti-migrant position that is a source of resentment for Brussels officials. The tension rose with the adoption of Hungary's new constitution, which demonstrated once again that Budapest has no desire to follow pan-European norms of tolerance, which, in practice, boil down to promoting non-traditional relationships and imposing similar neoliberal values on society. It is telling that liberal politicians and the media have called the new Hungarian constitution "homophobic".

The case was taken to Court of Justice of the EU, as the European Commission sued Hungary in July 2022 for passing a law in June 2021 prohibiting the inclusion of same-sex relationships and information on sex reassignment in educational materials and television shows designated for children.¹⁷³ The European Commission described the sovereign right of the nation state to uphold socially accepted moral standards, as expressed in the Hungarian law, as constituting blatant discrimination against persons on the basis of their sexual orientation and contrary to the fundamental values of the EU. At the same time, the European Commission decided to challenge in court the decision of the Hungarian authorities not to renew the licence of Klubrádió, an opposition radio station.

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán gives a balanced assessment of the situation in Europe and relations between Russia and the West in light of the Ukrainian crisis. Thus, in July 2022 he noted that the EU's policy of sanctions against Russia, which was unleashed with the beginning of the Russian Armed Forces' special military operation to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine, had the opposite effect and affected the countries that had imposed the restrictions. Because of this, he said, the European economy is suffocating.

¹⁷³ <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/15/07/2022/62d107b89a794755075280b2>

Thus, despite having supported the EU sanctions against Russia Hungary is the only EU country to admit at a high level that these sanctions are counterproductive, which prompted Brussels to put pressure on Budapest, seeking to impose its approaches. According to media reports, the European Commission gave Budapest one last month "to address the European Commission's concerns regarding the rule of law". The Commission believes that due to the corruptive practices during tenders, EU's money in Hungary is at risk. If Hungary fails to meet the conditions set by Brussels, the latter will ask EU governments to freeze some of the funds Hungary was supposed to receive from the EU budget for the 2021-2027.¹⁷⁴ Essentially, the EU leadership is blatantly blackmailing the Hungarian authorities by threatening to withdraw money under the pretext of corruption and other domestic issues.

¹⁷⁴ <https://russian.rt.com/world/article/1029209-vengriya-orban-zapad-rossiya-gas>

Greece

In Greece, there have been no cases of glorification of Nazism, distortion or rewriting of the history of the Second World War and its results by the official authorities.

At the start of the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect civilians in Donbas, in the heat of an unprecedented anti-Russian campaign, the Greek leadership not only turned a blind eye to the massive presence of right-wing radicals in the armed formations of the Kiev regime, but also provided them with a public platform: on 17 April 2022 at the initiative of the ruling New Democracy party, a video address by Vladimir Zelensky was broadcast in Greek Parliament, which also included addresses by two fighters of the neo-Nazi "Azov" battalion.

On 19 March 2022, in Callithea district of the Athens, unidentified persons spray-painted the name and symbols of the Ukrainian "Azov" battalion on the Monument to Soviet soldiers who fell for freedom and independence of Greece in 1941-1944. The Greek Foreign Ministry condemned their actions and local law enforcement authorities launched an investigation into the crime, but so far without results.

On 25 March 2022, The Memorial of Admiral Fyodor Ushakov in Corfu Island was spattered with paint and the Russian national flag was torn off the monument. Also, in March 2022, the Monument to Russian sailors of the squadron of Count Alexei Orlov on the island of Lemnos was vandalized. Local law enforcement authorities launched an investigation into these incidents, with no results so far.

The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation initiated relevant investigations.

The Greek leadership has embarked on a policy of winding down bilateral cooperation, including in cultural and humanitarian areas.

On 1 March 2022, the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sport announced the decision to "postpone all events involving Russian cultural organisations, cooperation with them and discussion of any joint plans". The Russia-Greece Year of History under the patronage of President of the Russian Federation and Prime Minister of Greece was terminated. A number of cultural events were cancelled, including concerts of the Moscow Soloists chamber ensemble led by Yuri Bashmet in Athens and Thessaloniki in late March 2022.

An unprecedented campaign to discredit Russia, fuelled by anti-Russian statements of officials, was launched in the Greek media. The access of the Greek public to objective information about the events in Ukraine and Russia's approaches has been seriously impeded, and the media space is dominated by a fierce Russophobic narrative. The outreach work of the Russian Embassy in Athens and the Consulate General in Thessaloniki is under attack. Access to Sputnik Greece, a news website, Rossiya 24 television channel and other Russian information resources has been cut off in the country.

Russians and Russian-speaking citizens face harassment and bullying, mostly by nationalist natives of Ukraine.

On 3 April 2022, a group of Ukrainians attacked participants of the rally "For Peace! For Russia! For Greece!" in the Athens. A seven-year-old girl from Russia was injured in the attack. The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation started a criminal investigation into case.

On 24 April 2022 on a beach in the Athens a woman of Russian nationality was beaten.

In a Greek school a sixth-grade schoolgirl was beaten by her classmates and was hospitalized.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ Violations of the Rights of Russian nationals and Compatriots Abroad during the Events in Ukraine in March-April 2022. Monitoring review by the Moscow Bureau for Human Rights

There have been cases of discrimination against Russians living in Greece by local banks. The accounts of Russian nationals living in Greece were blocked without explanation.

When the Resolution on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance introduced annually by Russia and other co-sponsors (last time in 2021) is being considered at the UN General Assembly, the Greek delegation abstains as it follows the consolidated position of the European Union member states.

According to public opinion surveys, over 65% of Greeks do not tolerate neo-Nazism and oppose the spread of neo-Nazi ideas in their country. The sentiment stems from the living memory of the occupation of Greece by the "Axis" powers in 1941-1944, which took many lives and caused enormous material damage, prompting Athens to keep raising the issue of compensations with Berlin.

A landmark event in the fight against the spread of hate ideology was the conclusion in October 2020 of the trial against the leadership of the "Golden Dawn" nationalist party and its activists (60 in total), charged with, inter alia, murder and illegal possession of weapons, which lasted since 2013. The organisation was found to be a criminal group operating under the guise of a political party and was effectively banned, and its top members were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

According to experts, the law enforcement agencies' successful crackdown on "Golden Dawn" brought about a 17 per cent drop in anti-Semitism in the country.¹⁷⁶

A long-term project is underway in Thessaloniki to create a Holocaust Memorial Museum and Human Rights Education Centre, aimed at tackling racism and religious discrimination in Greece, among other things.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Xenophobia, Radicalism and Hate Crimes in the OSCE Space, 2018-2020, Moscow, 2021. 188 pp.

In November 2021, the premiere of the Greek-German film *Echoes of the Past* (Kalavryta 1943) depicting the atrocities perpetrated by Nazi invaders in the town of Kalavryta on the northern side of Peloponnese, caused a negative public reaction. In late 1943, Nazis destroyed the town and executed, according to historians' estimates, about 1,500 local residents. The Association of Survivors and Victims of the Kalavryta Massacre accused the creators of the film of falsifying historical facts. In particular, the organisation was outraged by a scene in which a German soldier frees people trapped inside a house that had been set on fire by the executioners.

The country retains a number of right-wing radical parties and organisations which, with the collapse of "Golden Dawn", have had a chance to strengthen their position on the Greek political scene. These include, among others, the following.

The Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) is the oldest Greek nationalist party, founded in 2000. The party's supporters advocate the forced repatriation of refugees not needed by the Greek economy.

The Popular Greek Patriotic Union (LEPEN) is a party founded in 2016 by former members of "Golden Dawn" and led by Christos Rigas. It actively promotes anti-migrant and anti-Islamic ideas, which includes organising mass rallies against refugees.

The National Popular Consciousness (ELASYN) is a far-right party founded in 2019. It is mainly composed of former members of "Golden Dawn". It shares the ideals of LEPEN. In December 2020, it announced its merger with this organisation.

Patriotic Radical Union (PATRIE) is an ultranationalist party founded in 2018 by former "Golden Dawn" member and Member of the European Parliament Eleftherios Synadinos. Its merger with LAOS was announced in 2019.

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.holocausteducentre.gr/executive-summary/>.

Greeks for the Fatherland is a far-right party founded in April 2020. This is one of the most recently established organisations founded by former "Golden Dawn" activists. It actively opposes multiculturalism and advocates neo-fascism.

The New Right is a far-right nationalist party founded in 2016 by Failos Kranidiotis after his expulsion from the New Democracy party. It also openly opposes Islam, immigrants and refugees. The party leader positions himself and his organisation as fighters against the "Islamic colonization" of Greece and Europe.

Greek Socialist Resistance (ESA) is a neo-Nazi organisation. It uses the emblem of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF).¹⁷⁸

Relevant offences are identified as a separate group of crimes in Law 4285/2014 on Combating Certain Forms and Expressions of Racism and Xenophobia by Criminal Law Provisions. The act increased penalties for incitement to xenophobia or violence against a group of persons, which are now punished by imprisonment for a term up to three years and a EUR 20,000 fine.

There are no discriminatory prohibitions on the participation of national minorities in the political life and administration of the state; representatives of non-titular ethnic groups are freely admitted therein.

Human rights activists point to difficulties in securing the right to ethnic and cultural-language self-identification for the Muslim population of the Thrace region in the north-eastern part of the country on the border with Turkey, as well as on certain islands in the Aegean Sea.

In June 2022, a house of worship for the Alevi community (2,800 members) was opened in Thrace with the support of the Ministry of Education and Religion, becoming the first such establishment in Greece and third in Europe (after Austria and Germany).

¹⁷⁸ Xenophobia, Radicalism and Hate Crimes in the OSCE Space, 2018-2020, Moscow, 2021. 188 pp.

Greece has not ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990), the European Convention on Nationality (1992) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995). The country has neither signed nor ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992).

Manifestations of xenophobia have increased due to a growing rate of immigration from the Middle East and North Africa.

Human rights defenders are concerned about conditions in reception centres – overcrowding, low sanitary standards, limited access to qualified medical care, as well as violations of rules regarding detention time limits, separation of children and adults, provision of qualified interpreters, etc.

Since 2018, Human Rights Watch continues to report on overcrowded detention centres and long periods of shared detention of men and women in camps. A report released by the organisation on 22 December 2021, points to the "intolerable conditions for migrant minors in Greek deportation centres where they are detained, despite the ratification in December 2020 by Greece's Parliament of Law 4760/2020 prohibiting the unaccompanied detention of children".

According to Human Rights Watch, the rights of other vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, are also not protected enough. The hard living conditions and unstable moral and psychological state often result in outbursts of aggression and antisocial behavior.

EU authorities and human rights defenders increasingly accuse Athens of illegally expelling potential asylum seekers when they attempt to cross the border back into Turkish territory/sea. The Report of the EU Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) on the violation of migrants' rights by Greek law enforcement officers published on 15 February 2022 shows that the practice of pushing back migrants is systemic, and the EU Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) deliberately cover up abuses. According to a journalist investigation, the Greek

authorities" operations to expel asylum seekers were partially financed at the expense the EU budget (from FRONTEX funds).

On 30 June 2022, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson, during a teleconference with Minister of State George Gerapetritis, Minister of Citizen Protection Takis Theodorikakos and Minister of Minister of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy Ioannis Plakiotakis pointed to the practice of pushing back migrants, abuse and excessive use of force by Greek border services and coast guards and obligated the government to develop a mechanism for dealing with migrants that meets basic human rights by 1 September 2022. She informed that Greece's migration-related funding might be suspended.

According to media reports, in September 2021 Brussels made it clear that in order to receive money from The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund Greece would be required to elaborate an independent mechanism for monitoring the situation on the Greek-Turkish border.

According to Human Rights Watch, in 2021-2022, pushback operations began to coerce previously detained asylum seekers into pushing fellow migrants back to Turkey, supplying them with weapons and promising to legalize their stay after three months in the country.

The 2022 Press Freedom Index published today by Reporters Without Borders places Greece 108th out of 180 countries (the country ranked 70th in 2021). It is noted that the police often resort to violence, while journalists are regularly prevented from covering migration-related issues and rallies in the capital.

According to the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) 2022 Fundamental Rights Report, on 23 October 2021, a 20-year-old man of Roma origin was shot dead by police officers during a chase. The incident spurred mass protests and was drew significant publicity in the press.¹⁷⁹ The Greek

¹⁷⁹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report - 2022.
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

Roma Federation insisted that the incident should be thoroughly investigated.¹⁸⁰ Seven police officers were arrested and found guilty.¹⁸¹ This prompted the authorities to take measures aimed at reforming the police rapid response system, including training law enforcement officers.¹⁸² The Greek National Human Rights Commission, which monitors the situation of Roma in Greece, also stressed the importance of retraining law enforcement officers.¹⁸³

According to the FRA report, in 2021 the European Commission urged Greece to incorporate into national law the provisions of the European Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia prepared by the Council of the European Union.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Greece, Ellan Passe (2021), '10 open and ruthless questions about the assassination of the 18-year old Roma in Perama' ('10 ανοιχτές και αδιάστακτες ερωτήσεις για τη δολοφονία του 18χρονου Ρομά στο Πέραμα'), 24 2021.

¹⁸¹ ROM Project, 'Intervention of the Roma Human Rights Advocacy and Defence Observatory on the death at Perama' ('Παρέμβαση: Παρατηρητήριο Συνηγορίας & Προάσπισης Ανθρωπίνων Δικαιωμάτων Ρομά για την ανθρωποκτονία στο Πέραμα').

¹⁸² Greece (2021), 'Takis Theodorikakos: Reforms in the Greek Police' ('Τάκης Θεοδωρικάκος: Μεταρρυθμίσεις στην Ελληνική Αστυνομία'), 1 November 2021.

¹⁸³ Greece, GNCHR Written Responses to the List of Issues in relation to the combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of Greece to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, December 2021, p. 45-46, GNCHR Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) on the combined 23rd and 24th periodic report of Greece. September 2021, p. 28, GNCHR Contribution to the New National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of the Roma for the period 2021-2027, March 2021, p. 10.

¹⁸⁴ European Commission (2021), February infringements package: Key decisions, Press release, INF/21/441, 18 February 2021; European Commission (2021), June infringements package: Key decisions, Press release, INF/21/2743, 9 June 2021; European Commission (2021), December infringement package: Key decisions, Press release, INF/21/6201, 2 December 2021.

Denmark

In Denmark, in 2021 – early 2022 there have been no cases of overt glorification of the Nazi movement, dissemination of neo-Nazism or praising the former members of the Nazi SS organisation and its branches. There have been no incidences of demolition of monuments honouring those who have fought against Nazism during World War II, no exhumations of remains of anti-fascist fighters and no prosecution of veterans of the Red Army or Allied forces. The Danish authorities do not oppose the holding of events related to the celebration of Victory Day and other anniversaries, providing assistance in the maintenance of local graves located in municipal cemeteries.

However, when voting at the UN General Assembly on the draft resolution "Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" submitted annually by Russia and other sponsors, the Danish delegation abstains, in solidarity with other European Union member States (last time on December 16, 2021).

There is no direct ban on organizations promoting racial discrimination in the Danish Penal Code, as well as on participation in such organizations.¹⁸⁵

There are a number of neo-Nazi right-wing nationalist organizations active in Denmark (Danish National Front, Danish Defence League, Danish National Socialist Movement, White Pride), with a relatively low level of activity, mainly due to a lack of funding and small membership. Practically, they focus on the distribution of propaganda materials through the Internet and social networks, mainly reflecting the attitude of these organizations to the government's migration policy, as well as calls for intolerance against the followers of Judaism living in the country. At the same time, the spread of the

¹⁸⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 22nd – 24th periodic reports of Denmark. December 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fDNK%2fCO%2f22-24&Lang=ru.

coronavirus infection and the quarantine restrictions imposed by the Danish authorities have almost entirely shifted the activities of such organizations to an online format.

The right-wing neo-Nazi group "Nordic Resistance Movement" (active in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland) traditionally stands out, by having, unlike other similar organizations, a clear political program (creation of a national-socialist republic, consisting of the countries of Scandinavia, Finland and possibly, the Baltic states, subsequently spreading the national-socialist ideology around the world), as well as a "combat wing" engaging in violent actions. Among the latter we should note the destruction of the Jewish cemetery in Randers in November 2019, marking the anniversary of 1938's Kristallnacht. As a result, the radicals damaged and desecrated 84 tombstones. In October 2020, two NMR members were prosecuted for these acts; they were sentenced to one year in prison.

Denmark's criminal law does not punish the use of Nazi symbols. According to Article 27 (paragraph 266 b) of the Criminal Law, a fine or imprisonment for up to two years can be imposed for statements and messages that are public or intended for subsequent distribution and that threaten or insult a group of people on the basis of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, religion, or sexual orientation. An aggravating factor is the propagandistic nature of such acts. In practice, however, Article 77 of the Denmark's Constitution, which guarantees the right of citizens to freedom of expression, takes precedence in such cases.

At the same time, there are examples where Danish courts have clearly indicated that certain claims and statements of political figures do not fall under the protection of freedom of expression. As an example, the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights (FRA) cites the July 4, 2019, decision of the Eastern High Court (Østre Landsret) in case S-1099, which named as discriminatory separate video addresses by the founder of the extreme right-

wing Hard-Line party, recorded in front of the house where the human rights activist of African descent was living.¹⁸⁶

The involvement of extremist nationalist parties, racist and xenophobic movements and groups in Danish political life remains limited. For example, the right-wing political party "Hard Line", which had gained notoriety by conducting provocative actions, including the burning of the Quran in areas where Muslim migrants and refugees live, failed to pass the two per cent threshold for passage to the Folketing (parliament) in the parliamentary elections in June 2019, receiving only 1.8% of the vote.

At the same time, there is an increase in hate crime in Denmark. According to information published by Danish law enforcement agencies, only in the first quarter of 2022 there had been 263 hate crimes, an increase of 32% from the same period of 2021. Muslims and Jews are among the most vulnerable religious groups (56% and 23% of the total number of such crimes, respectively).

According to the FRA for 2022¹⁸⁷, in the first half of 2021 the number of registered hate crimes, many of which were relate to the COVID-19 pandemic, increased by 12% compared to the previous year.¹⁸⁸

As follows from the information provided in the Denmark's Government reply to the 6th questionnaire (2021) of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) within the Council of Europe, in 2019 Danish national police reported 100 cases of hate speech (there were 68 such cases in 2018, 48 in 2017, and 56 in 2016).¹⁸⁹

National and international human rights structures criticize Danish authorities for shortcomings in countering discrimination.

¹⁸⁶ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-report-2020_en.pdf.

¹⁸⁷ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

¹⁸⁸ Denmark, National Police (Rigspolitiet) (2021), Report on hate crimes (Hadforbrydelsser i 2020 – Rigspolitiets årsrapport vedrørende hadforbrydelser).

¹⁸⁹ Denmark's Government reply to ECRI's 2021 6th questionnaire, page 11.

According to the data published by structures for equality in 2021, the number of cases due to racial or ethnic discrimination increased in 2020 in Denmark.¹⁹⁰

According to the FRA for 2022, the Danish Institute for Human Rights in its report published in 2021¹⁹¹ stated a simplified procedure for obtaining Danish citizenship for young people from Scandinavian countries, noting the need for equal opportunities for all those who wish to gain Danish citizenship without exceptions.¹⁹²

According to the information from the FRA for 2022,¹⁹³ parents with Danish names are more likely to send their children to school (25 %¹⁹⁴) than those with names that sound like Muslim ones (15 %).¹⁹⁵

In February 2020, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, in its report to the special-purpose Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) created under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, noted the lack of progress in incorporating the dispositions of the Convention in the national law.¹⁹⁶

According to the information from the FRA for 2022,¹⁹⁷ Denmark is one of the EU countries that have incorporated the dispositions of the EU Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia in their internal

¹⁹⁰ Denmark, The Board of Equal Treatment (Ligebehandlingsnævnet) (2021), Annual report 2020 (Ligebehandlingsnævnets årsberetning 2020), pp. 3, 36 and 38.

¹⁹¹ Danish Institute for Human Rights (2021), *Stranger in your own country? Access to citizenship for children and youth who were born and/or have grown up in Denmark* (Fremmed i eget land? Adgang til statsborgerskab for børn og unge, der er født og/eller opvokset i Danmark), February 2021.

¹⁹² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

¹⁹³ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

¹⁹⁴ Olsen, A. L., Kyhse-Andersen, J. H., and Moynihan D. (2020), 'The unequal distribution of opportunity: A national audit study of bureaucratic discrimination in primary school access', 29 December 2020.

¹⁹⁵ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

¹⁹⁶ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/DNK/INT_CERD_IFN_DNK_41240_E.pdf.

¹⁹⁷ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

law.¹⁹⁸ In particular, the Danish Penal Code has been amended to protect minorities that have become victims of hate crimes.¹⁹⁹

According to the National Integration Barometer, more than half of Danish ethnic minorities face discrimination in their daily lives. The Danish authorities are particularly concerned about the situation in Muslim communities. For that reason, they are closely supervised in order to make sure that Islam stays an integral and harmonious part of society, not allowing religion to become an instrument of any kind of manipulation and pressure.

Human rights activists criticize the 2016 amendments to the Danish criminal law that established liability for justifying illegal violent acts during religious education (the "Imam Bill"). At the same time, as a way to tighten control over preachers, Danish legislation was amended to allow restricting funding for certain religious organizations, as well as prohibiting entry into the country for members of the clergy who justify radicalization.

This policy of the Danish authorities is also confirmed by the March 2020 terrorist threat assessments report by the Danish Counterintelligence Service, indicating that the main threat to the Kingdom comes mainly from radical Islamism. With right-wing extremist violent acts around the world becoming more frequent, the threat level posed by such groups has been raised from "limited" to "general". The intelligence services do not rule out the possibility of a similar scenario in Denmark.

It should be noted that, in general, the adoption of such measures in the context of combating extremism and terrorism follows the common European practice, but their application in Denmark drew criticism from human rights defenders. At the same time, it is worth noting that similar anti-extremist measures taken by Russian legislators often become the reason for Denmark

¹⁹⁸ Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, OJ 2008 L 328.

¹⁹⁹ Denmark, Government, Proposal on amending the Act on prohibition against differential treatment within the labour market (Forslag til lov om ændring af lov om ligestilling af kvinder og mænd, lov om forbud mod forskelsbehandling på arbejdsmarkedet m.v., straffeloven og forskellige andre love).

accuse Russia of alleged attempts to restrict freedom of expression and suppress civil society.

As for Jews living in Denmark, according to a December 2018 study by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), 80% of them constantly (9%), often (32%) or sometimes (39%) have to avoid wearing or displaying things and objects that would identify them as Jewish. Eighty-five per cent of respondents consider anti-Semitism to be a very serious or a fairly serious problem (36% and 49%, respectively).²⁰⁰ At the same time, Denmark's largest Jewish association, the Danish Jewish Society, traditionally warns against public display of identifying accessories or clothing.

Moreover, since 2012 this organization has been preparing and publishing reports on manifestations of anti-Semitism in Denmark. According to its data, for example, in 2017 there were 30 corresponding cases, including attacks and physical assaults (2), threats (3), anti-Semitic statements (24). At the same time, the number of incidents tends to increase: in 2016, 22 such cases were registered. The alleged detractors include people born in the Middle East as well as ethnic Danes.

According to statistics from the report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Denmark (sixth monitoring cycle), in 2019 Danish police registered 51 anti-Semitic crimes. The number of such crimes increased compared to 2018 (26) and 2017 (38).²⁰¹

Discriminatory attitudes toward migrants still persist. Legislatively, this is reflected by the fact that second and third generation migrants have very limited grounds for obtaining Danish citizenship. This category of people, and

²⁰⁰ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Experiences and perceptions of anti-Semitism – Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-experiences-and-perceptions-of-antisemitism-survey_en.pdf.

²⁰¹ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Denmark (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted March 29, 2022, published June 9, 2022. <https://rm.coe.int/6th-ecri-report-on-denmark-/1680a6d5e4>.

especially women, has little involvement in the labour market.²⁰² Discriminatory attitude towards migrants and their descendants as well as representatives of ethnic minorities is also confirmed by the results of public opinion polls. The FRA particularly stressed this.²⁰³

As follows from the report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Denmark (sixth monitoring cycle) published in 2022, as of January 1, 2021, 617,770 unregistered immigrants lived in the country. 260,304 of them were from Europe, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand ("Western", mostly white immigrants), and 357,466 from other 157 countries ("non-Western" immigrants who, according to the Danish Office of Statistics, are considered as ethnic and religious minorities).²⁰⁴ In March 2021, 34,494 people were registered as "Western" and 165,174 as "non-Western" immigrants.²⁰⁵ The report also emphasizes that it becomes increasingly difficult for refugees and migrants to acquire permanent resident status, usually granted only after eight years of residence in the country and depending of a number of restricting criteria. According to the new policy, temporary residence permits of all categories of refugees are verified every one or two years.²⁰⁶

The FRA also found in its report for 2021 that both the far-right extremists and radical Islamists residing in Denmark used the spread of the

²⁰² Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on 9th periodic report of Denmark. March 2021.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT/CEDAW/COC/DNK/44503&Lang=En.

²⁰³ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2021.
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-fundamental-rights-report-2021_en.pdf.

²⁰⁴ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Denmark (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted March 29, 2022, published June 9, 2022.
<https://rm.coe.int/6th-ecri-report-on-denmark-/1680a6d5e4>.

²⁰⁵ Data from the website of Statistics Denmark, available at Immigrants and their descendants - Statistics Denmark (dst.dk).

²⁰⁶ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Denmark (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted March 29, 2022, published June 9, 2022.
<https://rm.coe.int/6th-ecri-report-on-denmark-/1680a6d5e4>.

coronavirus infection and related restrictive measures as a pretext to incite hatred.²⁰⁷

The situation is such that there is a "parallel society" in Denmark, or a social phenomenon where a large proportion of migrants from the Middle East and North Africa live secluded lives and remain outside the Danish linguistic, cultural, and legal environment. They tend to reside in disadvantaged urban areas where municipal and social housing accounts for most of the housing stock and which, owing to the influx of refugees, had been almost entirely populated by migrants.

In addition, the concept of a "ghetto" has been officially in effect at the legislative level since 2011. In addition to the discriminatory nature of this term, the criteria included in it also raise questions. In particular, one of the possible grounds for classifying an area as a ghetto is that at least 2.7% of the population should have a criminal record.

In March 2018, the Danish government, led by Lars Løkke Rasmussen, presented a package of measures aimed at putting an end to this "parallel society". The program, dubbed "One Denmark without Parallel Societies – No Ghettos in 2030", includes a number of restrictive measures to adjust the national composition of the inhabitants. The document also solidified the concept of a "ghetto".

Since the beginning of the aforementioned program to get rid of ethnic ghettos, the Danish law enforcement authorities were given the opportunity to establish "sharp penalty zones" in the ghettos. If an offence is committed in such zones, the perpetrator may face a penalty twice the maximum sentence presupposed for that category of offence in the Danish criminal law. If the maximum penalty for a crime is a fine, it could be replaced by imprisonment. As additional policing measures, the Danish government has also proposed

²⁰⁷ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2021.
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-fundamental-rights-report-2021_en.pdf.

increasing the police presence in ghettos, including through deploying mobile police units. In addition, a mechanism has been approved to identify and subsequently expel repeat offenders and the most "influential" members of the criminal environment from the ghetto.

In 2019, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights took notice of the situation and expressed deep concern about laws adopted "in contravention of its obligations under international human rights treaties and its Constitution" that "impose differential treatment on grounds such as national origin, social status and residence". In particular, the CESCR viewed as discriminatory the categorization of specific areas as "ghettos" based on the nationality of those living in them (the classification of areas as "ghettos" is determined by the proportion of residents from "non-Western" countries), also pointing to the violation of migrants' right to freely choose their place of residence and choose educational institutions for their children. The combination of such measures, according to the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, not only results in discrimination based on ethnic origin and nationality, but also further marginalizes the residents of disadvantaged areas²⁰⁸.

Furthermore, the CESCR noted that the authorities had recently taken numerous measures directly or indirectly affecting the economic, social, and cultural rights of refugees and migrants. Among these measures, the Committee pointed to the introduction in 2016 of gradations for family reunification in various situations, the launch of the temporary stay procedure for refugees in 2018, under which local authorities are no longer required to provide refugees with permanent housing, and the limitation in 2019 of free interpreter services when visiting medical facilities.

²⁰⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 6th periodic report of Denmark. October 2019.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/DNK/CO/6&Lang=En

In December 2021, Denmark adopted a law aiming at reducing the number of "non-Western" people living in social housing to less than 30% within 10 years. In this regard, three judicial proceedings were opened in 2021, raising the issue of the discriminatory nature of this law.²⁰⁹

In addition, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in its concluding observations on twenty-second – twenty fourth periodic reports of Denmark recommended to the Danish government to refrain from applying more severe laws and measures to immigrants and their descendants from "non-Western" countries, as well as from using the terms "Western" and "non-Western" in its policy and laws to avoid stigmatization, marginalization or indirect discrimination of any group of people.²¹⁰

The Danish authorities take a noticeably discriminatory approach towards the Danish nationals who participated in terrorist structures. For example, 2019 amendments by the Danish Parliament allow for the in absentia administrative stripping of Danish citizenship from persons whose actions caused "serious damage to the vital interests of Denmark" (adopted due to the reluctance of Danes to repatriate and prosecute their foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) in the territory of Denmark). In addition, under these novel laws, the children of Danish FTFs are stripped of the right to automatically obtain Danish citizenship by virtue of the citizenship of their parents. This provision runs contrary to the obligations of Copenhagen to reduce statelessness (according to the open data of the Danish counterintelligence service, 40 Danish children remain in the regions of Syria and Iraq formerly controlled by the Islamic State terrorist organisation, banned in Russia). In addition, Danish citizens who remain abroad

²⁰⁹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

²¹⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 22nd to 24th periodic reports of Denmark. December 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fDNK%2fCO%2f22-24&Lang=ru.

and have participated in terrorist organizations may be completely denied consular assistance in Danish foreign missions.

From the beginning of the special military operation (SMO) for the denazification and demilitarisation of Ukraine and the protection of the civilians in the Donbass by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation the Danish authorities, in line with the Western approaches, have taken an extremely anti-Russian position. Thus, the media reported that the territory of the Kingdom has been used for cyber-attacks on Russian institutions. But their participants have not been brought to justice.

Though the Danish authorities did not undertake legislative steps leading to discrimination of Russians and representatives of Russian-speaking community, our compatriots face infringement of their rights and psychological pressure in daily life.

In contacts with representatives of organizations of Russian compatriots living in Denmark some Russian citizens confirm that they periodically become victims of the policy aimed at "scrubbing" all that is Russian, including the presence of this word in names of non-commercial organizations.

There are cases of delayed informing of the Russian Embassy by the Danish authorities about incidents concerning arrests of our citizens, as well as about private clinics refusing medical assistance. Danish law enforcement bodies, while formally providing consular access to detained Russians, periodically delay the coordination of such visits.

The Danish authorities do not impede overt recruitment of Danish subjects and citizens of other countries by Ukrainian embassy in the Kingdom for participation in hostilities in Ukraine. Aggressive activity of the Ukrainian Embassy, violating the dispositions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, is not limited to recruitment of mercenaries. Information resources of this diplomatic mission are also used for distribution of photographic and video materials on torture, ill-treatment, and brutal murders of Russian military in

Ukraine. The Ukrainian embassy is also inciting ethnic hatred by spreading on the Internet insults towards Russians and calls to kill them.

There are cases of vandalism against the buildings of the Embassy and the Russian Cultural Centre, the Alexander Nevsky church in Copenhagen, and memorials to Soviet military in Copenhagen, Aarhus, and Allinge (island of Bornholm).

Ireland

In Ireland, there have been no attempts to glorify the Nazi movement or former members of Nazi organisations of the SS and its branches, including the Waffen-SS (for example, by constructing monuments and memorials dedicated to such personalities and organizations, holding public demonstrations in their honour to glorify the Nazi past, Nazi movements, modern Nazi movements, declaring members of such organizations and those who collaborated with the Nazi regime as participants in national liberation movements).

In 2022, due to the beginning of the special military operation (SMO) for the denazification and demilitarisation of Ukraine by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, preparation and holding of the events related to the Victory Day took place in a hostile atmosphere from a part of the Ukrainian diaspora and some representatives of the Irish society.

Irish media widely broadcasted statements of a number of Irish politicians on the inappropriateness of celebrating the Victory Day in relation with the situation in Ukraine. The administration of the Phoenix Park in Dublin where the most massive rally of the "Immortal Regiment" traditionally took place refused to grant access to the site this year.

Despite constant monitoring by the government, the Irish parliament and human rights NGOs, the authorities admit, including at a high political level, that the complete eradication of manifestations of racial discrimination is yet to be achieved.

Thus, the anti-racist demonstrations in the United States in the summer of 2020 prompted an analysis of the situation in Ireland, which was assessed by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins. He noted that sentiments against migrants and people of colour were gaining strength in Ireland, and that nationalism was beginning to threaten Ireland's democratic foundations.

Political leaders and the public have begun to recognize that refugees, migrants, and other minority groups are increasingly seen in some parts of Irish

society as a threat to "majority rights". Under this pretext, certain local extremist groups have turned to racist and anti-Semitic criminal activity.

According to the online racist incident reporting system iReport.ie, launched by the Irish Network Against Racism, there have been 700 racist incidents in 2020 (530 in 2019), including 159 criminal offenses. There was also the largest increase in reports of racism on the Internet – 334 (174 in 2019), including in social networks and in the Facebook accounts of reputable radio and print media, with Facebook featuring the highest number of such publications (119 incidents). It was noted that this all contributes to an increase in far-right-themed content.²¹¹

According to a number of non-governmental organizations, 51 cases of violence on grounds of racial hatred were registered in Ireland in 2020. According to the information published in 2021, the number of cases of inciting hatred on the Internet increased significantly,²¹² as well as the number of complaints of discrimination on racial and ethnic grounds.²¹³

Moreover, according to NGO experts, domestic racism remains a serious problem for Irish society, given the virtual absence of effective legislation and law enforcement measures to curb it (the relevant laws are outdated and practically not applied).

Official Dublin has been criticized by the local and international human rights community for being too liberal in its attitude toward certain organizations and individuals who freely distribute extremist and racist publications in the digital media. Human rights activists point out that the Irish authorities refuse to take action against the disseminators of extremist ideas (including the blocking of content), citing the right to free speech on any subject

²¹¹ <https://inar.ie/inars-2020-ireport-ie-reports-of-racism-in-ireland-published/>

²¹² Michael, L. (2021), Reports of racism in Ireland: Data from iReport.ie – 2020, Dublin, Irish Network Against Racism

²¹³ Ireland, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2021), 'Developing a national action plan against racism – IHREC submission to the Anti-Racism Committee', 6 September 2021.

except for direct calls to violence. Lawyers use this specificity of Irish law to refute accusations of spreading extremist ideas in court.

In December 2019, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination created under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination pointed out that there are manifestations of racism in Irish society. This is evidenced by the high incidence of racial profiling on the part of the Irish police ("Garda"), as well as an increase in incidences of hate speech. An increase in racist rhetoric and its frequent use by Irish politicians, particularly during election campaigns, was highlighted. The CERD noted in this regard that the 1989 Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act had proven ineffective in combating hate speech, especially hate speech on the Internet.²¹⁴

The Committee noted with concern the considerable number of racially motivated hate crimes against representatives of ethnic minorities, noting that other grounds of discrimination, such as gender and religious affiliation, were often also present in such cases. It was highlighted that existing Irish criminal law did not feature offence categories in which racial hatred was a primary motive, nor was it specified as an aggravating circumstance. According to the CERD experts, this leads to the misreporting of such crimes, as racist motives are systematically not taken into account in criminal proceedings. In the context of the increase in far-right rhetoric and hate crimes against ethnic minority groups, the Committee also highlighted the absence of legal frameworks banning racist organizations in the country.²¹⁵

However, recently the Irish people have become more willing to report hate speech incidences. The aforementioned NGO, the Irish Network against Racism, has noted an exponential increase in the number of complaints about hateful offensive publications on the Irish segment of the Internet.

²¹⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 5th to 9th periodic reports of Ireland. December 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/IRL/CO/5-9&Lang=Ru.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

By comparison, in 2014, there were 108 complaints about relevant illegal publications online, in 2019 – 174; in 2020 their number reached 334.

To remedy the existing situation, human rights activists emphasize the importance of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission recommendations regarding the need to improve the 1989 Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act and to develop a comprehensive state-level regulatory framework to combat hate speech on the Internet, with an independent state body to monitor compliance. The experts also point out the urgency for the authorities to take measures to raise public awareness of the issue of combating racial discrimination.

It is worth noting that the authorities are taking certain steps in this direction. In April 2021, under public pressure, the Department of Justice of Ireland began drafting the Hate Crime Bill. Its main purpose is to increase the penalties for public insults and aggressive attacks, including on the Internet, based on nationality, race, colour, ethnicity, and a number of other distinctions.

Human rights activists are still alarmed about the situation with the steadily growing Muslim community in Ireland (numbering in more than 70 thousand people).

According to the Report of the Commission on Human Rights and Equality for 2019 and the Immigrant Council of Ireland's 2019 report, the number of incidences of racism generally directed against Muslims remains at the same, rather elevated level – about 40% of Muslims in Ireland officially stated that they had experienced violence (verbal or physical aggression) at work, in educational institutions, in everyday life because of their faith. However, experts from these human rights bodies note that in reality the real figure is much higher – about 80%.

Inadequate living conditions for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers remain a significant problem for Ireland. Amnesty International Ireland has pointed to the shortage and poor quality of state-provided housing for this

category of citizens, which allegedly negatively affects their "mental state", and also leads to "infringement of dignity" and inability to ensure a normal "private life".

Migrants and refugees from Asia and Africa are among the most vulnerable members of society. Those arriving in the country are housed in temporary accommodation centres, where they wait for all the necessary documents to be processed in order to stay in Ireland. However, the unreasonably lengthy legalization process has resulted in the vast majority of refugees having to reside in these centres for extended periods of time, causing discontent among the local population as well. In 2019-2020, some of these facilities were set on fire, leading in some cases to casualties among refugees. There has been a wave of protests across the country, demanding that the authorities reconsider the existing refugee reception process. Ireland's new coalition government, formed in June 2020, has pledged to dismantle the centres and develop new procedures for the reception and accommodation of refugees.

The problematic situation of migrants in Ireland was highlighted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination²¹⁶ and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance functioning within the Council of Europe.²¹⁷ In this context, lengthy processing of applications for international protection, unreasonably lengthy process of obtaining a work permit, the long periods of inadequate accommodation of migrants in reception centres, and the concealment of deaths in these centres were highlighted. It also noted that the media, including the mainstream Irish media, spread anti-migrant sentiments.

²¹⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 5th to 9th periodic reports of Ireland. December 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/IRL/CO/5-9&Lang=En

²¹⁷ The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Ireland (Fifth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 2 April 2019. (Published on 4 June 2019). <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-ireland>

ECRI, citing a 2017 study, noted with concern that 40 per cent of migrants working on Irish trawlers reported encountering racially motivated insults and humiliation at workplace. They also quoted the EU MIDIS II survey, which showed that Ireland had one of the highest levels of hate-related harassment experienced by migrants and descendants of sub-Saharan African migrants.²¹⁸

There are also questions about the situation of such a category of persons as "travellers", a term that includes the Roma and homeless persons. According to estimates by Irish human rights activists, the official recognition of these people as an ethnic minority in 2017 has not fundamentally changed the overall situation. At present, more than 25,000 of these people (about half of the total number) still live in poverty. Between 30% and 50% of prisoners of both sexes in Irish prisons belong to this group. The Irish public and human rights activist recognize that an effective solution to the problem of "travellers" has yet to be found, due in no small part to their culture, which is to some extent incompatible with a sedentary lifestyle and socially useful work.

This problem has also come to the attention of international universal and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms, primarily the CERD and ECRI. In particular, it has been noted that "travellers" and the Roma, along with people of African descent, are disproportionately becoming victims of racial profiling on the part of the police and make up the majority of the penitentiary system population. The racist rhetoric in the media and on the Internet is directed against these vulnerable groups. These ethnic minorities are extremely under-represented in the Irish public sector and in political positions at all levels. They have limited access to social housing, face serious discrimination and inequality in renting in the private housing sector, and as a result are disproportionately at risk of becoming homeless. It has been noted that local authorities have used the

²¹⁸ The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Ireland (Fifth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 2 April 2019. (Published on 4 June 2019). <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-ireland>

2002 Housing Act to justify the forced eviction of "travellers". In addition, local authorities demonstrate a reluctance to fully use the budgeted allocations for providing housing to such persons. Unemployment is extremely high among the "travellers" and the Roma, and children in these communities are very rarely enrolled in school. All members of these groups are in a very poor state of health.

Racism is also evident in education (despite new legislation banning the practice of discriminatory admission of children to schools on the basis of their parents' religion) and in the adoption process. This has been highlighted, *inter alia*, by the CERD that pointed to racially motivated abuse in Irish mother and child homes, as well as physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, which have affected children of mixed racial descent the most²¹⁹.

As follows from the report of the European Union Agency for fundamental rights (FRA) for 2022, the results of studies in the EU countries also show discrimination of ethnic minorities and migrants.²²⁰ Thus, according to the poll of the Higher Education Department, more than one third (35 per cent) of employees belonging to ethnic minorities, on a total of 3,323 respondents, have experienced discrimination on racial and/or ethnic grounds during their work in educational institutions or remotely (online), compared to 16 per cent of "other white" respondents and 3 per cent of "white Irish".²²¹

In the international arena, Ireland follows the common position of the European Union on the issue of countering neo-Nazism. For example, the Irish delegation regularly abstains when considering the annual resolution

²¹⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 5th to 9th periodic reports of Ireland. December 2019.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/IRL/CO/5-9&Lang=Ru.

²²⁰ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

²²¹ Kempny, M. and Michael, L. (2021), Race equality in the higher education sector: Analysis commissioned by the Higher Education Authority, Dublin, Higher Education Authority, p.33.

"Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" introduced by Russia and other co-sponsors at the UN General Assembly. The vote on this document on December 16, 2021, was no exception.

The generally stable legal status of Russian compatriots in Ireland with no serious violations of their rights and freedoms (there were only isolated signals about some signs of everyday nationalism from local population, concerning, along with people of Russian origin, representatives of other diasporas residing in the country) has deteriorated markedly after the beginning of the special military operation in Ukraine by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on February 24, 2022.

Many Russian-speaking people, including Russian citizens, faced bullying at work, at school, in public organizations, as well as roused Russophobic campaign in Irish media. Amongst other measures, we can mention the decision of Irish broadcaster Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTE) to rename the popular weekly programme about Russian culture "Russian Hour" on Dublin City 103.2 FM to "Kaleidoscope."

In this regard, the Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots in Ireland organized its activity to take note of such cases and inform thereof the Embassy of the Russian Federation; the Council also helped the victims to draw up appeals to local security services or to deputies of the Irish representative body. The Coordinating Council also drafted a petition to the Irish parliament demanding that measures be taken to protect Russian diaspora and language from discrimination. Special attention was paid in the document to the prevention of harassment of Russian-speaking pupils and students.

Russophobic sentiments also affected the Russian diplomatic mission in Ireland. On March 7, 2022, an unknown person drove their truck through the

gates of the Russian embassy in Dublin. The police watched what was happening but did nothing to prevent this.

Despite the Russophobic campaign in the media, associations of Russian compatriots in Ireland organized a mass motor rally on May 8, 2022.

The column of 100 vehicles, mostly driven by nationals of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltic States, transited through the territories of several counties of Ireland without incident. Patrols of Irish law enforcement officers were placed along the route of the rally at the request of the organizers. At the end of the event, the traditional action of the Immortal Regiment took place.

Iceland

Iceland preserves the memory of its contribution to the formation and maintenance of polar convoys during the Second World War. The government and the local authorities do not impede holding commemorative events in honour of the Victory Day and on the anniversary of the beginning of the Great Patriotic War.

Before the special military operation of Russia aiming at denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine the President of Iceland, Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson, in part due to his professional historical education, regularly participated in commemorative events dedicated to memorable dates in the history of the.

As of June 2022, there is no evidence of public attempts to distort history, glorify Nazism and its modern forms at the state level or to desecrate monuments and memorials to anti-fascists in Iceland.

At the same time, at the international arena Iceland joins the EU's common line and annually abstains when voting on the UN General Assembly resolution "Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance". The vote on this document on December 16, 2021, was no exception.

Racism and xenophobia are practically absent in Iceland.

According to the newspaper Iceland Monitor²²², in March 2021 the Icelandic government agreed to allocate about 20,000 euros to raise a monument to Hans Jónatan, believed to be the first black settler in Iceland. The memorial is to be installed in Djúpivogur where Hans Jónatan lived.

At the same time, on March 31, 2022, Minister of infrastructure and head of the Progressive Party Sigurður Ingi Jóhannsson Made a racist remark (as assessed by local media) concerning Vigdís Hasler, head of the Farmers'

²²² https://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/news/2021/03/06/memorial_to_rise_of_first_black_settler_in_iceland/.

Association of Iceland of Indonesian origin, saying literally that "he would not take photos with this black woman". After the politician had made public apologies, the conflict was settled.

Human rights organizations have expressed concern that the measures taken by the Icelandic authorities to counter racism are insufficient. Furthermore, under Icelandic law, penalties are only imposed for serious and repeated offences, and this does not happen often. As a result, the effective prosecution and punishment of those responsible for spreading hateful ideas and speech faces difficulties.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) created under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination recommended in its concluding observations on twenty-first – twenty-third periodic reports of Iceland adopted in August 2019 to take measures to ensure full implementation of existing legal provisions prohibiting racial discrimination, to take decisive measures for countering racist hate speech, including from political and public figures, to ensure that all racial hate crime be brought to the attention of competent authorities and investigated, that the perpetrators be brought to justice and duly punished if found guilty, and that the victims be provided with legal protection. The CERD also recommended to Iceland to register racial hate crimes and to provide to the Committee statistics on registered hate crimes, results of investigations and sentences imposed.²²³

This problem was also previously highlighted by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, which emphasized that anti-Muslim rhetoric is prevalent in political discourse. Accusations of Muslims (as

²²³ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 21st to 23rd periodic reports of Iceland
<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/275/65/PDF/G1927565.pdf?OpenElement>.

well as migrants) of having links with terrorists, committing acts of aggression and violence have often been used in political debates.²²⁴

In recent years, there are isolated manifestations of neo-Nazi activity in the country, as well as spread of neo-Nazi or hate ideology. Human rights defenders note with concern a rise of hate speech in Iceland, especially towards ethnic and religious groups and foreigners (Muslims), cases of inciting racial hate and promoting ideas of racial superiority as well as using racist stereotypes.

There are no registered far-right organizations in Iceland. Typically, efforts to spread racism and neo-Nazism in the country were conducted and coordinated from other states.

In 2018-2019, Swedish neo-Nazis from the "Nordic Resistance Movement" (NRM) attempted to recruit Icelanders into their ranks by launching a campaign on social media and organizing events with leaflet hand-outs²²⁵ in the centre of Reykjavik.

There were media reports of police interference only in the case of a manifestation in Akranes, where neo-Nazis stood at the entrance to a shopping centre.²²⁶ In September 2019, the head of the aforementioned organization, a Swede by the name of Simon Lindberg, even visited Iceland.

There was information in the media about the opening of the Icelandic branch of the NRM (with its own website <https://nordurvigi.is>, featuring reports about the first manifestation of Icelandic NRM activists – distributing leaflets in the centre of the Icelandic capital).

The reaction of the Icelandic public has been sharply negative. In September 2019, residents of Reykjavik held an anti-Nazi rally with about 200 participants. The activity of the "Movement" was stopped shortly thereafter.

²²⁴ The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Iceland (fifth monitoring cycle). Adopted on December 6, 2016 (published on February 27, 2017). <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-iceland/16808b581c>.

²²⁵ <https://stundin.is/grein/9597/>.

²²⁶ <https://www.ruv.is/frett/norraenir-thjodernissinnar-ferdast-um-landid>.

In 2020, Icelandic neo-Nazis attacked members of the Jewish community living in the country: anti-Semitic posters denying the Holocaust and accusing Jews of abuse of women and paedophilia were distributed near synagogues and Jewish institutions. The action was organized by the NRM not only in Iceland, but also in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. These actions, organized by right-wing radicals during the Jewish community's celebration of Yom Kippur, sparked outrage from international Jewish organizations.

In October 2020, Simon Wiesenthal Centre for International Affairs director Shimon Samuels sent a letter to Icelandic Prime Minister Katrín Jakobsdóttir, expressing concern about these events (letters were also sent to the leaders of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden). The letter noted that given the total population of the country of about 364,000, neo-Nazis could hardly remain unknown to the authorities. Reykjavik was called on to follow the example of Finland, which banned the NRM in September 2020, and to take action against the instigators of this anti-Semitic campaign.²²⁷

In Iceland, there are also issues linked to the stay of refugees and migrants.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted in its concluding observations on twenty-first – twenty-third periodic reports of Iceland adopted in August 2019 that the number of foreign citizens residing in this member State continued to grow substantially (from 7.6 per cent of the total population in 2009 to 12.6 per cent in 2018). The CERD welcomed the measures taken by the country to facilitate their integration, including the creation of the Multicultural and Information Centre in Reykjavik, which offers full range of services in several languages and conducts awareness campaigns to promote diversity.²²⁸ At the same time, the Committee expressed concern by the

²²⁷ <https://www.wiesenthal.com/about/news/wiesenthal-centre-breaking.html>.

²²⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 21st to 23rd periodic reports of Iceland
<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/275/65/PDF/G1927565.pdf?OpenElement> .

persistently high level of unemployment among representatives of ethnic minorities or people of migrant background; it reaches 7.4 per cent, which is more than twice the level of unemployment among the total population.²²⁹

The Icelandic authorities give priority with the refugee reception quotas to particularly vulnerable groups of people, primarily women and children who come from countries engulfed in an armed conflict. For example, Iceland has accepted 200 Syrians in the last 10 years.

According to the Icelandic Directorate of Immigration, in 2020 there were 654 asylum applications from citizens of 52 countries, almost a quarter fewer than in 2019. Despite this decrease in the total number of applications due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 528 – an unprecedented number of applications – were approved. In addition, asylum was granted to 103 relatives of those refugees that received a favourable decision. Thus, in 2020 Iceland granted asylum to 631 people from 32 countries, mostly from Venezuela (130), Iraq (100) and Syria (58).

The reception of migrants and refugees affected the general public sentiment. For example, in 2015 the media reported public protests against the construction of a mosque in the suburbs of Reykjavik, accompanied by acts of vandalism. According to experts, this expression of discontent was related to Icelanders' fears that this religious facility would contribute to the spread of Islamic radicalism in the country.

According to the results of studies conducted at the University of Iceland, children of foreigners and children of mixed marriages are often vulnerable to bullying. These children have more difficulties to establish contacts with their peers, even if they have grown in Iceland and Icelandic is their native language.²³⁰

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ <https://rus.is/bulling-ili-travlya-chto-eto-takoe/>.

Human rights mechanisms have also noted cases of human trafficking in relation to migrants (this has been pointed out by another UN treaty body for human rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women²³¹). It is known that the victims of these crimes mostly originate from East Asia and South America.

Between June 2020 and April 2021, the Icelandic police opened 13 investigations into human trafficking cases. The victims were mostly women under the age of 40. Most frequently, the perpetrators were African and Asian nationals with residency permits in Iceland.

Migrant-phobia is usually spread by the far-right. At the beginning of 2020 there were a number of rallies in support of refugees on the verge of expulsion from the country against the backdrop of the growing activity of such structures.

Icelandic society is attempting to analyse the situation, the reasons for the penetration of racist and white supremacy ideas and their impact on people's minds. In part, such processes have been inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States. Among other things, there are cases of "positive racism", when enterprises and organizations invite people with migrant backgrounds to events. The goal in such cases is to stress the participation of non-Icelanders in different events.²³² For example, an online conference organized by Amnesty International at the University of Iceland in February 2021 focused on racism in Iceland. Students of non-European descent who had first-hand experiences of domestic racism also participated in the event²³³.

There are no reported cases of harassment of people from ethnic, linguistic, or religious minorities in Iceland.

²³¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the combined 7th to 8th periodic reports of Iceland. February 2016.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fSL%2fCO%2f7-8&Lang=ru.

²³² <https://www.ruv.is/frett/2021/02/04/open-online-meeting-about-racism-in-iceland>.

²³³ https://english.hi.is/events/the_reality_of_racism.

Even though there is a small Jewish community residing in the country,²³⁴ in 2021 Judaism was registered as an official State religion in Iceland for the first time.²³⁵

From the beginning of the special military operation of Russia in Ukraine two rallies (without public order infringement) were held in Iceland in front of the consular department of the Russian Embassy.²³⁶ On February 28, 2022, Russian consulate was attacked. After the rally, one person with mental disorder broke down the gates and tried to knock down the camera.²³⁷ The offender was arrested and brought to the police. Diplomats constantly receive insults and threats by e-mail and telephone.²³⁸

According to the compatriots, after the beginning of the special operation some members of the Russian diaspora experienced insults and threats on Facebook from Icelanders, as well as from Balts and Poles residing in the country. At the same time, there were no relevant appeals from Russian citizens to the hotline of the Embassy.

According to the information of February 28, 2022, on the news portal RUS.IS, there is a rise of Russophobia in Icelandic society, incited by national media, declarations of government members and restricted access to unbiased and comprehensive information.²³⁹

From the end of February 2022, Icelandic media published a huge amount of blatantly biased and highly emotional materials, professionally inciting xenophobic sentiments among ordinary citizens, showing developments in Ukraine only from a negative side for Russia, without citing alternative information sources, without any analysis of situation and neutral coverage of events.²⁴⁰

²³⁴ <https://isroe.co.il/islandiya-prinyala-iudaizm/>.

²³⁵ <https://stmegi.com/posts/88177/9-maloizvestnykh-faktov-o-evreyakh-i-islandii/>.

²³⁶ <https://russian.rt.com/world/news/969364-islandiya-napadenie-rossiya>.

²³⁷ <https://russian.rt.com/world/news/969364-islandiya-napadenie-rossiya>.

²³⁸ <https://russian.rt.com/world/news/969364-islandiya-napadenie-rossiya>.

²³⁹ <https://rus.is/ot-redakcii/>.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

In the beginning of March 2022 vandals desecrated the chapel at the construction site of the Russian orthodox church in Reykjavik, drawing two swastikas on it.²⁴¹

The leading Russian news website 1tv.ru is blocked in the territory of Iceland from February 27, 2022.

On February 27, 2022, the prime minister of Iceland announced on TV the intention to cancel all visas issued to Russian citizens. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iceland corrected her words and informed that only visas of specified categories would be revoked.²⁴²

²⁴¹ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/974510-russkie-emigranty-travlya-specoperaciya>.

²⁴² <https://rus.is/ot-redakcii/>.

Spain

The issue of combating Nazism, neo-Nazism and other contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance has been firmly placed among the priorities of the Spanish leadership's domestic and foreign policy, regardless of its party affiliation. Spanish diplomacy pays considerable attention to countering impunity and improving responsibility for offences in these spheres, building upon the recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council, of the Council of Europe, of the UNESCO, and of the international human rights NGO.

Despite this, when the resolution titled "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" traditionally introduced by Russians is being considered at the UN General Assembly, Spain continues to act in line with the EU collective policy and abstains from voting.

There is no evidence of the glorification of the Nazi movement, members of the Nazi SS organization or the erection of monuments dedicated to the Nazis in Spain in recent years. It should be noted that the Spanish right-wing nationalism appeals mainly to the period of Francoism (1939–1975). Despite the differences in the approaches of political forces to the assessment of this period in the country's history, such controversial issues as the operation of the Spanish Blue division in hostilities on the Eastern Front as part of the German Wehrmacht is discussed mainly within the framework of historical scientific discourse.

Currently the "Law on democratic memory" initiated by the ruling centre-left coalition (Socialist party – block "Unidas Podemos") is in the final stages of the parliamentary procedure. The document provides for decisive measures to counter the apologetics of Francoism, including the revision of court verdicts and assignments of aristocratic titles from this period. Even the ultrapatriotic

party "Vox," actually third political power in Spain (52 deputies in the lower house of the parliament), traditionally disowns accusations of sympathy for neo-Nazism and Francoism.

Meanwhile in practice reiterated concrete cases of racism, xenophobia, religious and ideological intolerance are detected; they are covered by the media and trigger reactions from the NGOs. Movimiento contra la Intolerancia (Spanish human rights organization) registers more than 4,000 such incidents in the country every year, noting that the vast majority of victims are disabled persons, homeless, Roma and migrants who do not report such cases to the police. This figure includes attacks against Muslims on the streets, insults on the Internet, and the desecration of mosques in a number of Spanish cities. The rate of detection of such offences is about 64 per cent.

According to the same NGO, Spanish far-right groups consisting of more than 10,000 members hold dozens of mass events every year to spread their ideology, and the Spanish segment of the Internet has about 1,000 websites promoting neo-Nazism, racism, and xenophobia.

From 2007, the members of far-right organizations hold annually in February a procession through Madrid in memory of the fallen soldiers of the "Blue division", displaying fascist symbols. The most recent event of this kind (unauthorized, unlike previous years) took place in February 2022. Local residents repeatedly expressed their protest and appealed to the authorities to prohibit such events.

According to figures released by the Spanish Interior Ministry, the number of hate crimes increased in by 5.6 per cent in 2021 compared to "pre-pandemic" 2019, thus reaching 1801 cases (in 2020, due to sanitary restrictions under the emergency rule, this number was even lower – 1401 cases), including those related to racism and xenophobia – 678 cases, and ideology (336). The cases of gender-based discrimination increased significantly (almost twice), reaching 477. It should be noted that many incidents are not registered. More

than 80 per cent of offenders are Spanish. In April 2022, the Spanish Ministry of Interior published the Second Hate Crime Action Plan for 2022-2024 aimed at coordinating the efforts of the State in this sphere and providing for 86 concrete measures.

The European Union Agency for fundamental rights notes that only one out of ten victims of hate crimes in Spain informs thereof the law enforcement bodies. Such an elevated level of distrust to the police is explained by the lack of conviction that their reports will be duly studied or by fear of revenge.²⁴³

Such NGOs as Amnesty International and SOS Racismo draw attention to the practice of nationality-based discrimination when the Spanish authorities process asylum applications by refugees from Africa and the Middle East, as well as to the prejudicial treatment they receive by local police, especially on the borders of the Spanish semi-exclaves Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco. Cases of return of minor migrants immediately upon their arrival (without adults) on the Spanish territory were investigated by the juvenile bench of the Ceuta prosecutor's office.²⁴⁴

The stringent measures taken by the Spanish government to prevent illegal migrants (including refugees) from entering the country remain a major concern for international monitoring mechanisms, human rights defenders, independent lawyers, and the public.²⁴⁵ In particular, they point to the dangerous practice of immediately deporting migrants, even if they have physically crossed the Spanish border, back to Morocco without examining their documents, formalizing protocol, and granting them the right to apply for asylum (these procedures are provided for by EU directives, as well as by international treaties signed by Spain). The experts of the Subcommittee on the

²⁴³ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ For more details see the Report of the Ministry on the Human Rights Situation in Selected Countries, 2020.

Prevention of Torture, of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances²⁴⁶, as well as the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), highlighted the need for Madrid to legally abolish such practices. However, in June 2020, the ECHR softened its position and unexpectedly recognized the lawfulness of actions by the Spanish authorities in several cases of expulsion of illegal migrants, mentioning the "aggressive behaviour of Africans".²⁴⁷ According to the FRA report, the issue of expulsion of illegal migrants still persists in 2022. Human rights agencies remain concerned about the situation in overcrowded migrant temporary stay centres. The European Union Agency for fundamental rights pointed to inadequate living conditions in migrant holding centres in the Canary Islands.²⁴⁸

There are still cases of disproportionate use of force by law enforcement officers against migrants and racial profiling, notably not just against the mentioned category, but also against members of ethnic minorities. In particular, the problem was mentioned in the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2020.²⁴⁹

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance also noted the continuing problem of the Roma community in the country, in particular, the low rate of school attendance and completion by Roma children, even though the Spanish authorities have taken steps in this regard.²⁵⁰ In its conclusions on the implementation of its recommendations of 2018 the Commission called upon Spanish authorities to take additional measures to avoid segregation of

²⁴⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances on additional information presented by Spain. September 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CED%2fC%2fESP%2fOAI%2f1&Lang=ru

²⁴⁷ Materials on this topic were published in El Pais of 14 June 2020.

²⁴⁸ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

²⁴⁹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2020

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-report-2020_en.pdf

²⁵⁰ Conclusions of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on the Implementation of the Recommendations in Respect of Spain following the Fifth Monitoring Cycle. Adopted on 1 December 2020, published on 23 February 2021. <https://rm.coe.int/interim-follow-up-conclusions-on-spain-5th-monitoring-cycle/1680a17dc5>

Roma children at school and to prevent Roma dropping out schools. It was found that no funding was provided in this sphere.²⁵¹

According to the European Union Agency for fundamental rights, hate speech and publications on issues related to coronavirus mostly targeted Roma people.²⁵²

The drastic change in the discourse of official Spanish authorities due to the beginning of Russian special military operation in Ukraine had a negative impact on the situation of Russians residing in Spain. Russophobic propaganda in the media has played here a fundamental role, as well as the massive arrival of refugees from Ukraine (around 130,000 people) and the activity of some Ukrainian nationalist organizations. As a result, there is a quickly growing negative attitude towards compatriots in daily life.

Moreover, Russophobic rhetoric has spread on social media. Russian-language chats in Spain received messages on countering "propagandists of the Russian world" with incitements to create some kind of analogue of the notorious Ukrainian site "Mirotvorets" (Peacemaker) – a site with personal data of Russians in Spain. It was suggested to publish these materials in the media and to send them to Spanish authorities (at the Aliens Office in Madrid) for appropriate action.

Block of bank accounts and cards, including those belonging to employees of Russian foreign missions, became the most frequent episode of nationality-motivated discrimination. Thanks to the efforts of the Embassy at official level, the activity of compatriots' associations and a number of local lawyers, assistance to affected citizens has been organized. In the regions of mass residence of Russians (autonomous communities Andalucía and Valencia)

²⁵¹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

²⁵² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

several social and legal assistance centres have been created, providing professional assistance free of charge.

In this context, despite current foreign policy situation, the successful march of the "Immortal Regiment" in Madrid and motor rally in the Basque Country in honour of the Victory Day in May 2022, realized by compatriots' associations and friendly Spanish organization, deserve special attention.

Italy

In Italy, manifestations and reconstructions of fascism are prohibited by law – article 48 of the Constitution of the Italian Republic of 1947 prohibits the re-establishment in any form of the fascist party, which was dissolved after the defeat of Italy in World War II.

The country also has a legal framework for prohibiting the activities of fascist and Nazi organizations. It is based on the Shelby Law (1952) and the Mancino Law (1993). The first one provides for the criminal liability for the organization of associations, movements or groups that have features typical to the fascist party and aim to recreate it. Following the adoption of the second law, criminal penalties were introduced for "promoting ideas based on racial superiority, racial and ethnic hatred, as well as praising the figures, principles, acts and methods of the fascist regime or its anti-democratic goals."

Several organizations of nationalist and nearly neo-fascist views operate on the right edge of the political spectrum in Italy. The most famous of them are Casa Pound (House of Pound, political movement created in 2003, which has its own publishing house Altaforte), the largest far-right non-parliamentary party Forza Nuova (New Force, created as a party in 1997, which has branches in all regions of the country). According to available information, some radicals are taking part in the hostilities on the Ukrainian side. Movimento Fascismo e Liberta – Partito Socialista Nazionale (Fascism and Freedom Movement – National Socialist Party) is also worth mentioning. At the regional and local levels, there are smaller associations of right-wing radicals.²⁵³

Public actions of radicals usually include events dedicated to milestone dates (23 March 1919 – the creation of the Italian Union of Struggle, the forerunner of the National Fascist Party; 29 July 1883 – the birthday of Benito

²⁵³ Examples are "Lealta Azione" ("Loyalty and Action", Lombardy region), "Skin4Skin" (Milano), "Hammerskin" (Milano), "Generazione Identitaria" ("Generation of Identity", Milano), "Manipolo d'Avanguardia" ("Advance Guard", Bergamo), "Do.Ra." (Varese), "Militia" (Rome), "Avanguardia Nazionale" (Roma), "Rivolta Nazionale" (Rome), "Fortezza Europa" (Verona), "Veneto Fronte Skinheads" (Vicenza).

Mussolini; 27–30 October 1922 – the "Blackshirts" campaign to Rome; 20 April 1889 – Adolf Hitler's birthday; and 28 April 1945 – death day of Benito Mussolini), as well as meetings in the burial places of fascist figures.

Some cities (provincial level) retain the title of "honorary citizen" for Benito Mussolini, mostly due to the unwillingness of local authorities to cancel municipal ordinances adopted in the 1920s. Some examples are the cities of Pietrasanta (Tuscany) or Carpi (Emilia-Romagna).

There are also illegal neo-Nazi organizations in the Apennines. On October 19, 2021, it became known to the media that cells of an extensive network "Hagall Order" have been uncovered in a number of major Italian cities (including Rome, Naples, Torino, Siena). On suspicion of links with it 26 people were arrested. According to Italian law enforcement bodies, its activity was concentrated around spreading hateful ideology, recruiting and further military training of followers.

According to a 2020 public report by Italian intelligence agencies,²⁵⁴ the Italian far-right has intensified its activities in the virtual space in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, using the available social media tools to promote racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, civil disobedience, and to spread conspiracy theories and disinformation. They actively used the themes of deterioration in the socio-economic situation in the country amid the spread of coronavirus. In their rhetoric, the ultra-right use the traditional slogans about the protection of national identity, traditional family, countering migration, multiculturalism, Islamization, globalization, pan-European institutions, and NATO that are understandable to the population.

In the past period, the far-right actively used the slogan about the "sanitary dictatorship of the government" and organized or actively participated

²⁵⁴ <https://www.sicurezzanazionale.gov.it/sisr.nsf/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/RELAZIONE-ANNUALE-2020.pdf>

in protests in Italian cities against restrictive government measures aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19.

It was under the pretext of fighting the aforementioned "sanitary dictatorship" that Forza Nuova decided to dissolve itself in December 2020 and to create Italia Libera (Free Italy), new political force, which also included the "orange jackets" (supporters of full national sovereignty) and people not wearing masks.

Nevertheless, neo-Nazi, and neo-Fascist associations remain a marginal force in Italy and have no representatives in national authorities.

The countermeasures taken by the Italian authorities also contribute to this. On 7 June 2021, police dismantled Ordine Ario Romano (Aryan Roman Order), right-wing organization, which was spreading neo-Nazi and neo-fascist ideas on social media, promoting anti-Semitism, and inciting its followers to commit extremist acts. Moreover, the group's members were developing plans to attack a NATO facility. According to media reports, some group members were already known to law enforcement agencies for their extremist activities and had been under scrutiny for various extremist activities.²⁵⁵

Notable efforts are also being made within civil society organizations. One of the key socio-political institutions for preventing the reincarnation of Nazi fascism in the Apennines and monitoring the activity of the far-right in the country is the National Association of Partisans of Italy (Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia), which has branches in all regions of the country.

Respectful treatment is also noted in Italy for memorials and monuments erected in honour of those who fought against Nazism and Fascism. New graves of our citizens who died in the Apennines during the war are being detected, and new memorial sites are being installed. In November 2020, another

²⁵⁵ <https://www.dw.com/en/italy-police-dismantle-antisemitic-neo-nazi-group-planning-nato-facility-attack/a-57803525>, <https://www.ispionline.it/en/pubblicazione/aryan-roman-order-case-italian-neo-nazi-group-30769>

monument to the Soviet partisan Vladimir Tulisko was unveiled in Caldiero (Province of Verona).²⁵⁶

At the same time, the theme of glorification of Nazism, manifestations of neo-Nazism and cases of racism continues to be inadequately reflected in national media and local public discourse, but not so much because of the lack of acute problems in this sphere, but for reasons of political and journalist expediency.

Despite the rather active efforts to counteract neo-Nazi and racist organizations mentioned above, Italy, in line with the EU-wide approaches, abstains from voting on the Russian draft resolution of the UN General Assembly titled "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance."

Human rights organizations report manifestations of intolerance in the country. The NGO "Italian Observatory for Human Rights" produces during several years its project "New Intolerance Map" that matches the content of discriminatory publications on social media and their geolocation data. According to the research, 19.57 per cent of negative publications targeted Muslims, 7.6 per cent – Jews and 5.61 per cent – migrants. In geographical terms, the highest concentration of anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim negative publications was observed in Northern Italy.²⁵⁷

As practice shows, anti-Semitism is not over in the Apennines. According to a report published in January 2021 by the Eurispes Institute of Social and Political Studies,²⁵⁸ there was an increase in the number of people in Italy in 2020 who deny the mass extermination of Jews by the Nazis – 15.6 per cent (by

²⁵⁶ Vladimir Tulisko was amongst the prisoners in forced labours in Trento region in summer 1944. He managed to escape. Mr Tulisko joined the Italian partisan division "Pasubio" that acted near Verona. He perished in the fight with the Nazis retreating to the north from Italy near the city of Caldiero.

²⁵⁷ https://www-voxdiritti-it.translate.google/la-nuova-mappa-dellintolleranza-6/?x_tr_sch=http&x_tr_sl=auto&x_tr_tl=en&x_tr_hl=de

²⁵⁸ See <https://eurispes.eu/news/eurispes-risultati-del-rapporto-italia-2020/>

comparison, in 2005 there were only 2.7 per cent). 16.1 per cent of respondents say that the persecution of Jews resulted in "not many casualties." 61.7 per cent of respondents believe that cases of anti-Semitism in Italy "are isolated and do not indicate the existence of a problem." 19.8 per cent of respondents believe that "Benito Mussolini was a great leader who made a few mistakes."

These data correlate with numbers provided by the EU Agency for fundamental rights. In its overview of anti-Semitic incidents recorded in the European Union in 2010-2020 the FRA cites statistics of the Italian Observatory for Security against Acts of Discrimination, which also show a rise in detected anti-Semitic incidents in Italy: 101 in 2020 and 91 in 2019. Notable differences in the number of such incidents for 2010-2018 and 2019-2020 are attributed to different methods of counting. But this difference does not affect the overall trend of anti-Semitic incidents in Italy: even for the first period there is a growth in number of anti-Semitic cases from 16 in 2010 to 56 in 2018, with a maximum value of 64 in 2014.²⁵⁹

Among the new cases of anti-Semitism, the most highly publicized incident was that happened on January 25, 2022, in Campiglia Marittima (Tuscany): a 12-year-old schoolboy was beaten by high schoolers for his Jewish origin. The story received coverage in regional media and was taken under the personal supervision of governor of Tuscany Eugenio Giani.

As for the manifestations of xenophobia in Italy, according to experts, most of them are not related to the activities of neo-fascists and are of a domestic nature. The main reasons for the growth of xenophobic attitudes in recent years include the deterioration of the socio-economic situation of the population, high unemployment among young people and the presence of migrants from Africa and Asia, as the country has actually become one of the main "transshipment points" on its way from Africa to the rest of Europe. At the

²⁵⁹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Anti-Semitism. Overview of anti-Semitic incidents recorded in the European Union. 2010-2020. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-antisemitism-overview-2010-2020_en.pdf

same time, after sharp criticism of Italian authorities by international human rights community in 2018-2019 because of strict measures to suppress illegal migration the authorities adopted a number of indulgences for migration management, as well as for simplifying legalization process.

The increase of the number of migrants caused a growth of anti-immigrant rhetoric in political discussions, which was noted with concern by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance functioning within the Council of Europe.²⁶⁰ Experts stated the inefficiency and the lack of financial, organisational, and regulatory tools in Italy to counter this phenomenon.

The UN human rights treaty bodies have a rather balanced approach to dealing with the migration situation in Italy. At the same time, the need is constantly pointed out to ensure the rights of migrants and asylum seekers, improve living conditions in migrant primarily registration centres, migrant reception centres, as well as specialized "crisis centres" and centres for unaccompanied children, and to stop the practice of holding migrants in detention for more than 48 hours. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) have highlighted this,²⁶¹ the Human Rights Committee (HRC),²⁶² the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC),²⁶³ the Committee against Torture,²⁶⁴ and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).²⁶⁵

²⁶⁰ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Italy (fifth monitoring cycle).

Adopted on 18 March 2016, published on 17 June 2016. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-italy/16808b5837>

²⁶¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 5th periodic report of Italy. September 2015.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fTA%2fCO%2f5&Lang=ru

²⁶² Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 6th periodic report of Italy. March 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fTA%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

²⁶³ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Italy. January 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fTA%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=ru

²⁶⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Italy. November 2017.

The problems of the migrants from African and Asian countries engaged in the commercial sphere in Italy drew the attention of the experts of the UN Working Group on business and human rights following their visit in late September – early October 2021. They noted, inter alia, inhuman working and living conditions of many migrant workers caught in a vicious circle of exploitation and debt bondage, serious problems in the field of occupational health and safety. Agriculture, production of clothes and logistics were cited among the problematic sectors.²⁶⁶

A complex of problems is associated with the existence of Roma settlements in Italy. This generally refers to illegal buildings on the outskirts of settlements. These areas are criminalized, and drug trafficking often flourishes there. Law enforcement agencies regularly raid places where Roma live, and illegal buildings are periodically demolished. At the same time, the left-liberal media and human rights organizations use these facts to accuse the government of racism and xenophobia. The CESCR, CERD, HRC and CRC drew attention in 2015-2019 to the importance of addressing the situation of the Roma, including in housing, access to social services and education, and the labour market.

In the first half of 2022, in the context of Russian special military operation in Ukraine, politically motivated incidents of xenophobia and discrimination of Russian citizens and compatriots became more frequent.

The situation in Italy was characterized by escalation of anti-Russian sentiments. Russian diplomatic missions regularly received messages from compatriots on threats against them. Hostility and even aggression towards

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fTA%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=ru

²⁶⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 19th and 20th periodic reports of Italy. December 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fTA%2fCO%2f19-20&Lang=ru

²⁶⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2021/10/statement-end-visit-italy-united-nations-working-group-business-and-human-rights?LangID=E&NewsID=27607>

representatives of Russia and Russian diaspora come mostly from representatives of the numerous Ukrainian diaspora in Italy, one of the largest in Europe. This was manifested, inter alia, towards Russian diplomatic missions. In particular, on March 2, 2022, the fence of the Russian Consulate General in Genova was covered with anti-Russian slogans. On April 11, 2022, a Ukrainian citizen spilled red paint on the front door of the Russian embassy in Rome. Still, Italian law enforcement bodies take necessary measures to improve the security of Russian foreign missions.

Restriction of access to Russian media in Italy actually turned out to be a deny of access for our compatriots to information in their native language and imposition of Western-centric information agenda.

We also know about denials of service to Russian citizens from some Italian banks. Thus, there are cases where Russian clients are informed on the intention to close their bank account and asked to withdraw the remaining cash in one of the bank offices. The bank employees do not motivate such decisions in writing, citing internal regulations concerning Russian and Belorussian citizens. In particulars, denials of service to Russian citizens were observed in the banks "UNICREDIT", "Posta Banca", "BNL", "Intesa Sanpaolo". In a number of cases problems with bank service were settled with the help of local lawyers.

The campaign against Russian culture and its representatives, launched in Italia in February-April 2022, led to a number of ignominious incidents. Thus, on February 28, 2022, mayor of Milan Giuseppe Sala, also head of La Scala Theatre, demanded to the world famous conductor Valery Gergiev to publicly condemn Russia's actions in Ukraine under the threat to end cooperation and, in particular, to ban him from participation in the performance of the opera "Queen of Spades" by Piotr Tchaikovsky.²⁶⁷ Receiving no reply to this ultimatum, the

²⁶⁷ La Scala Removed Valery Gergiev from "Queen of Spades." Classical music News.ru. March 1, 2022. <https://www.classicalmusicnews.ru/news/la-scala-removed-valery-gergiev-from-queen-of-spades/>

authorities of Milan announced that La Scala theatre "refuses further cooperation with the Russian conductor".

On April 9, 2022, the municipal theatre of Lonigo in Vicenza, on the demand of the Ministry of Culture, cancelled the ballet "Swan Lake" that was to be performed by a Ukrainian dance troupe. The reason thereof was also the nationality of Piotr Tchaikovsky. On the same day, "Swan Lake" was cancelled in the Bellini theatre in Naples.²⁶⁸

Students undertaking an education in Italy (as a rule, they have come here in the framework of exchange programmes), the least protected group of Russian citizens, found themselves under open discrimination attack; observers estimate that by the end of February 2022 they were about 350 in the Apennines. After blocking of Russian bank services and freezing of accounts they were virtually deprived of their means of subsistence and had either to prematurely terminate their studies and return to Russia or to look for other ways to earn money.

²⁶⁸ "Because the composer is Russian" – "Swan Lake" cancelled in Italy. Regnum. April 9, 2022. <https://regnum.ru/news/cultural/3559845.html>

Canada

Canada is at the forefront of countries that do not stop trying to falsify the history of World War II. The glorification of Nazi criminals is not enshrined in law in Ottawa. However, the monuments to all those who fought against the USSR on the side of Hitler's Germany are treated with special care and respect.

In Edmonton, Alberta, there is a memorial obelisk in the form of a cross with the inscription "Fighters for the Will of Ukraine" located at the cemetery of St. Michael, with plates bearing the abbreviations of units of the Sich Riflemen, the Galician Army of the West Ukrainian People's Republic, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN-UIA) and the 1st Division of the Ukrainian National Army (formed from the former elements of the 14th Grenadier division of Waffen-SS – "Galicia"). In the same city of Edmonton, on the territory of the Centre for Ukrainian youth unity, there is a bust in honor of Roman Shukhevych, founder of the OUN-UIA, Deputy Commander of the "Nakhtigal" battalion, commander of the 201st SS Schutzmannschaft battalion, and organizer of mass killings of Belarusians, Poles, Jews and Ukrainians during World War II. Another example is Oakville, Ontario, where the Ukrainian cemetery of St. Vladimir has two monuments, one of which is dedicated to OUN-UIA soldiers, the other to members of the Galicia SS division who were killed in the battle with the Red Army for the city of Brody on 13–22 July 1944.²⁶⁹

As justification for the existence of such memorials, some Canadian media cite pro-Bandera lobbyists who openly state that "fighting on the German

²⁶⁹ Why deny the Ukrainian Nazi connection? Ottawa Citizen. 27 October 2017. <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/why-deny-the-ukrainian-nazi-connection/>; Nazi monuments uncomfortable Canadian truth. Winnipeg Free Press. 2 November 2017. <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/nazi-monuments-uncomfortable-canadian-truth-454627783.html>

side doesn't mean to be a Nazi", especially if the Ukrainians who served under the Nazis "were fighting communism".²⁷⁰

After World War II, thousands of Nazi criminals and collaborators (up to 5,000, according to some estimates) found refuge in Canada. According to information provided in the report titled "Accomplices of Nazi crimes, 96 veterans of the Latvian SS Legion who are still alive", prepared by the Historical Memory Foundation together with the Foundation for the Support and Development of Jewish Culture, Tradition, Education and Science, 16 former Latvian SS Legionnaires, who may have been involved in committing war crimes and crimes against humanity during World War II, lived in the country as of 2020.²⁷¹ There is also a local branch of the Daugava Hawks organization, with members of which Latvian Foreign Minister Edgar Rinkevich met during his official visit to Canada in 2017.²⁷²

It should be noted that the Canadian side has expressed interest in this matter and has asked the Russian Federation to provide information on the persons mentioned in the report to verify them in accordance with the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Investigation Program. According to representatives of the Ministry of Justice of Canada, the Agency is working with border and immigration services, as well as with the police to ensure that those who were personally involved in committing war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide, are not granted asylum in Canada.²⁷³

²⁷⁰ Ukrainian-Canadian community urged to confront WWII past amid controversy over monuments. National Post. 23 December 2017.

<https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/ukrainian-canadian-community-urged-to-confront-past-amid-controversy-over-monuments-to-nazi-collaborators>

²⁷¹ Accomplices of Nazi crimes, 96 veterans of the Latvian SS Legion who are still alive, a joint report of nongovernmental organizations. Report by the Historical Memory Foundation together with the Foundation for the Support and Development of Jewish Culture, Traditions, Education and Science. Moscow, 2020.

http://historyfoundation.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Легиионеры_4_light.pdf

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Canada wants to know the names of Latvian SS legionnaires: war criminals will be denied asylum. Sputnik. 18 March 2020

<https://lv.sputniknews.ru/Russia/20200318/13397788/Kanada-khochet-znat-imena-latyshskikh-legionerov-SS-voennym-prestupnikam-otkazhut-v-ubezhische.htm>

However, the existing attitude (or rather, inaction and connivance) of the Canadian authorities towards those responsible for the mass murder of civilians on the territory of the USSR indicates the opposite. Members of the Nazi formations are carefully concealed from justice, allowing them to live their lives peacefully. In this regard, the example of Vladimir Katriuk, a former member of the 118th punitive SS Schutzmannschaft battalion, responsible for the destruction of the Belarusian Khatyn, is illustrative (he died on 22 May 2015 at his apiary in the province of Quebec).²⁷⁴

Helmut Oberlander, who served for the Sonderkommando 10a and was directly involved in the murder of 214 Soviet children in the orphanage at Yeysk, as well as civilians in the Krasnodar region and the Rostov oblast in 1942, was never brought to justice due to his death in September 2021. The unhasting Canadian judicial system, which for two decades had sought only the deportation of this Hitlerite henchman (instead of conviction for genocide and crimes against humanity), proved incapable – or unwilling – to enforce even such a modest measure.

Only one of the 19 cases initiated by Jewish organizations to deprive Nazi criminals of their citizenship has been completed: 2 criminals escaped, 11 died, and the remaining cases were won by the defense.

An active role in justifying the crimes of the Nazis during World War II is played by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) and numerous Ukrainian-Bandera structures operating under its authority, promoting the ideas of aggressive nationalism, antisemitism and the glorification of Nazi collaborators who fought for "independent Ukraine". At the same time, the obvious facts of direct participation of Bandera in the extermination of civilians, the organization of mass pogroms of the Jewish population, in particular in Lvov in June 1941, and of the Poles during the Volhynian massacres are denied.

²⁷⁴ Vladimir Katriuk, alleged Nazi war criminal, dies in Quebec. CBC News. 29 May 2015
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/vladimir-katriuk-alleged-nazi-war-criminal-dies-in-quebec-1.3091770>

Under pressure from the UCC, Canada officially equates communism with Nazism, and the Holodomor tragedy is presented as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people, without mentioning that other peoples of the Soviet Union were also victims of the famine in the 1930s. The crimes of modern followers of Nazism in Ukraine are hushed up, and the picture of what is happening is deliberately distorted in favour of the ruling regime in Kiev.

Ottawa continues to build a monument to the victims of Communism. Work on the memorial is funded in part by Tribute to Liberty's "buy-a-brick" campaign called Pathways to Liberty. The idea is to sell virtual "bricks" that appear on the organization's website and in the newsletter. Each brick is dedicated to an alleged victim and contains biographical information about that person. In July 2021, an organization calling itself the General Committee of United Croats of Canada purchased "bricks" dedicating them to the Ustashas A. Pavelic and M. Budak. The first was referred to in the biographical section as a doctor of law, and the second as a poet. Subsequently, both names were removed from the Tribute to Liberty website. At the same time, the website still mentions another Ustasha, I. Orshanich.

Five more "bricks" were purchased by an organization calling itself the Knightly Order of Vitéz, several members of which took part in the persecution and deportation of Hungarian Jews and in the plundering of their property in 1944. Lastly, the Edmonton branch of the League of Ukrainian Canadians bought five "bricks" in memory of R. Shukhevich.²⁷⁵

Canadian politicians openly demonstrate their support for Nazi ideology. On 27 February 2022, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada Chrystia Freeland posted a photo on her Twitter account, which shows her holding a black and red scarf with the UIA slogan "Glory to Ukraine" on it. A few hours after social

²⁷⁵ Victims of communism memorial received donations honoring fascists, Nazi collaborators, according to website. CBC News. 23 July 2021.
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/victims-communism-memorial-fascists-1.6112809>

media users started actively commenting on the post, Freeland replaced the photo with a new one without the slogan.

In October 2021, the Simon Wiesenthal Centre called on the Canadian Department of National Defence for an investigation after far-right extremist members of Ukrainian armed groups posted on social media that they had been trained by Canadian soldiers as part of the UNIFIER training mission. The relevant information was published in a report prepared by the Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies at George Washington University in Washington, DC. Experts documented that Ukrainian military personnel claiming ties to the Canadian armed forces were members of "Centuria", "Azov", and "Right Sector" extremist groups. They promote white nationalism, praise members of SS units, and have been seen performing Nazi salute.

The Canadian side has responded to the accusations by stating that it does not investigate the backgrounds of foreign members they train and that it is the responsibility of Ukraine to ensure its soldiers are not connected to extremist movements.²⁷⁶

The case against Montreal resident Gabriel Sohier Chaput about the use of hate speech caused a wide public response, especially among members of the Jewish community. The reason for the proceedings was his article published on the neo-Nazi website the Daily Stormer. It was full of racist images and references to Jews, and the site itself contained many pictures of Hitler and other images related to Nazi ideology. In his defence, the defendant argued that the Daily Stormer was a "parody site" and the article was meant to ridicule excessive political correctness. Nevertheless, the prosecution regarded his words about the need for "non-stop Nazism" as an actual call for the physical extermination of the Jews. In July 2022, the judge in the case, having heard the prosecutors' arguments, concluded that the public prosecutors had failed to

²⁷⁶ <https://www.friendsofsimonwiesenthalcenter.com/news/fswc-calls-for-investigation-after-ukrainian-neo-nazis-brag-about-receiving-training-from-canadas-military>

convincingly prove a real connection between Nazism and the Holocaust. In his opinion, an expert historian should have been heard in the courtroom for this purpose. The defence, in turn, tried to insist on the absence of such a connection, explaining the extermination of death camp prisoners solely by economic expediency and not by ideology. Such a blasphemous attitude on the part of Canadian justice has naturally caused indignation in the Canadian Jewish community. In this regard, the Canadian branch of B'nai B'rith (Sons of the Covenant), a world Jewish organization, posted a message on its website on 11 July 2022 condemning the court's findings, saying that Canadian justice should not deny the Holocaust or distort its history²⁷⁷.

Against this background, the country has seen an increase in the activity of neo-Nazi groups and the demand for extremist ideology: Northern Guard, Canadian Coalition of Concerned Citizens, the Quebec organization La Meute ("Pack"), as well as regional branches of Soldiers of Odin and the movement Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West (PEGIDA). In addition, the extremist organization Jewish Defense League of Canada, which emerged as a defence organization against antisemitic African and Latino neighbourhoods in Canadian cities, has been noticed to be active.

At the same time, over the past few years, the activities of structures such as the "Storm Alliance" and the Canadian branch of Canadian "Blood and Honour" have ceased.

In 2021, 16 extremist groups were listed as terrorist organizations, including the "Proud Boys", the "Atomwaffen Division", the "Base", the "Three Percenters", the "Aryan Strikeforce". The "Proud Boys" were dissolved in May 2021. At the same time, a statement by its members was published in the

²⁷⁷ Quebec judge should recognize Nazism led to Holocaust, legal expert and Jewish group say. The Globe and Mail. 13 July 2022.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-quebec-judge-should-recognize-nazism-led-to-holocaust-legal-expert-and/>

Telegram, messenger, claiming their non-involvement in terrorist activities or non-belonging to ideas of white supremacy.²⁷⁸

One of the most prominent instigators and promoters of the "brown plague" in Canada has for many years been Paul Fromm (head of the Canadian Association for Freedom of Expression and Citizens for Aid Reform), who has a reputation as one of the most notorious neo-Nazis in the country, using "free speech" to cover up and justify the extremist activities of North American right-wing radicals. The online edition of VICE reported that the federal revenue agency had approved wage subsidies for Paul Fromm's organizations as part of the program to support citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁷⁹

Just as in other countries, the Canadian far-right has embraced neo-Nazi symbols and anti-Muslim and antisemitic slogans. There are regular demonstrations in major cities across the country, including anti-government ones. New supporters are being actively recruited among young people. The propaganda work is carried out on social networks and in the blogosphere. Neo-Nazis usually manage to mobilize up to 200-300 people for their public actions.

In August 2019, it became known that senior corporal of the reserve engineers Patrik Mathews, trained on duty to work with explosives, recruited his colleagues in the right-wing group "The Base" in Beausejour (province of Manitoba), and later was forced to flee to the United States, where he and his American accomplices were detained by the FBI.²⁸⁰

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police continuously monitor the activities of far-right and neo-Nazi groups. In 2022, its officers conducted several raids

²⁷⁸ Proud Boys Canada dissolves itself, says it was never a 'white supremacy' group. Reuters. 2 May 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/proud-boys-canada-dissolves-itself-says-it-was-never-white-supremacy-group-2021-05-02/>

²⁷⁹ Group Run By Canadian Neo-Nazi Received Federal COVID Relief Funds. VICE. 22 December 2020. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/qjpzm7/group-run-by-paul-fromm-canadian-neo-nazi-received-federal-covid-relief-funds>

²⁸⁰ Military, RCMP investigating Winnipeg neo-Nazi army reserves leader. Winnipeg Free Press. 19 August 2019. <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/military-rcmp-investigating-winnipeg-neo-nazi-army-reserves-leader-554974742.html>

aimed at catching "Atomwaffen Division" supporters. In particular, in March law enforcers searched the home of key activist P.G. McDonald in Ottawa, and in May they arrested a 19-year-old member of the organization in Windsor. Another raid was carried out in June near Quebec. There were no arrests or detentions following the raid.²⁸¹

Furthermore, the activities of the Canadian far right are under the scrutiny of the U.S. intelligence services since some activists of these associations were involved in riots in several U.S. cities.

At the same time, Canada has a strong anti-fascist movement. It also consists of several dozen small disparate groups. Activists try to suppress any public actions of the far-right. For example, on 30 September 2017, the "March Against Racism" took place in the centre of the Canadian capital in the form of a peaceful demonstration, one of the main organizers being the NGO Ottawa Against Fascism.

Unfortunately, Russophobia has become commonplace in Canadian life. One striking example is the provocation around the traditional celebration of Victory Day by the Russian-speaking community of Ottawa at the T-34 tank located in the Canadian War Museum. In 2018, a representative of the UCC attempted to disrupt the event by coming on stage with a Ukrainian flag and shouting anti-Russian slogans.

An open letter published a week later on Facebook by the Ottawa branch of the UCC to James Fleck, Museum's Director, expressed indignation over the support provided by the state museum authority of Canada for "glorifying the Soviet regime." As examples of "proof of guilt" of the USSR, the authors cited a set of Russophobic accusatory stamps that do not have any justification. At the same time, the Victory Banner was mentioned as evidence of the glorification of the "criminal Soviet regime", and the image of the symbol of the defeat of

²⁸¹ RCMP conduct raids in central Quebec targeting Atomwaffen Division neo-Nazi group. CBC News. 16 June 2022.
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-raid-atomwaffen-division-neo-nazi-group-1.6491005>

Nazism was contrasted with the picture of the yellow-blue Ukrainian state standard. Later, Marcus Kolga, a notorious Russophobe, wrote in his column in the Ottawa Citizen newspaper about "beaten Ukrainian" and "unruly" Russians.

As a result, the Museum's management decided to ban the Russian community from holding events devoted to Victory Day on its premises. There was no reaction to appeals from compatriots and the Russian Embassy in Canada to reconsider the decision. This case was illustrative: in Canada, any provocation can serve as a reason to limit the rights of the Russian-speaking community. Taking anti-Russian stances immediately, without understanding the situation, is typical of the local authorities. Nevertheless, concerned citizens continue to lay flowers on their own at the T-34 tank located on the territory of the museum to the present day.

Despite the Russophobic policy adopted by Canadian political circles, Russian compatriots strive to attract attention to Victory Day and other memorable dates of the Great Patriotic War events. Thus, in 2020, against the background of restrictive measures due to the spread of the coronavirus, activists from Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver held online concerts and performances on YouTube to commemorate 9 May.

On 8 May 2021, the Ottawa activists organized a patriotic motor rally from the military history museum to the Embassy of Russia and further on, and on 9 May 2021, a mini-reception for Soviet veterans and the Russian-speaking expatriate community was held in the territory of the Embassy near the monument to the heroes and victims of the Great Patriotic War (with observation of all coronavirus restrictions).

In 2022, on the eve of 9 May, pro-Bandera structures published death threats on social media against anyone caught with the ribbon of St. George. In Calgary, one of the organizers of the event of compatriots was hit by a car with Ukrainian flags without registration plates. There is no search for the attackers. However, despite threats from radical nationalists, activists from the Russian

community in Calgary organized a rally, a concert, and an "Immortal Regiment" on 8 May 2022, posting a record of the celebrations on YouTube.

Canadian authorities have a negative and even repressive attitude toward patriotic activities of the Russian-speaking diaspora. There have been dismissals of Canadian citizens of Russian origin, administrative checks and interrogations by Canadian law enforcement officers. The members of the Coordination Council of the Russian Fellow Citizens Organizations (CCRFCO) who took part in the regular World Congress of Compatriots in October 2021 fell within the scope of attention of the Canadian intelligence services after their return from Moscow. They were also visited by officers from the respective agencies who were interested in the reasons for taking part in this event as well as in the "plans for the future". There was a reported violation of the right to work of a representative of the Russian-speaking community in Canada. A Russian citizen from Calgary informed about repeated refusals by various IT companies to employ him because of his national appurtenance and his Russian citizenship.

The migration services of Canada continue discriminatory actions against Crimea residents who are Russian citizens. Russians, who were already in the country, were suggested – under the threat of cancellation of their visas and deportation – to urgently exchange at the Embassy their traveller passports issued by divisions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Crimea. The Russian diplomatic missions, on their part, promptly accepted documents submitted by them for changing their passports.

With the beginning of the special military operation for demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, Canada is facing real Russophobic hysteria. One of the reasons is the large Ukrainian community consisting, among others, of descendants of followers of S.Bandera and R.Shukhevich.

Russian diplomatic missions in Canada regularly receive complaints from compatriots of insults and threats, of damage to property from the Ukrainian

diaspora. The most complicated situation is in areas densely populated by persons originating from Russia and Ukraine (Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver). Citizens with Russian roots often receive via e-mail and in person threats of death and reprisals for taking an active stance or for having ties with Russia. Russian children in Canadian schools and students at universities are subjected to bullying. Private Russian-speaking schools in Canada had to switch to online distance learning as of March 2022.

Earlier, the Russian-language educational environment was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Private schools actively worked in many large Canadian cities (including Winnipeg, Vancouver, Halifax, Calgary, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and Edmonton). In such schools, along with the mandatory subjects provided for by the Canadian education system, the history of Russia, Russian language, literature, and geography were taught, our fellow citizens worked there as teachers, Russian textbooks were used. However, measures taken by the Canadian authorities to combat the coronavirus, including reducing classes and maintaining social distance, forced a number of Canadian educational institutions to unilaterally terminate existing leases with Russian schools located on their premises.

There have been cases of physical violence. For example, in Toronto in March-April 2022 several cases of beatings of Russian-speaking citizens were reported. Three of them took place outside Russian grocery stores and two took place in Russian restaurants. Five attackers were detained.

The mere use of the Russian language, irrespective of the nationality of the speaker, can also be a reason for aggression. For example, three minors attacked a Moldovan woman. The teenagers threw the woman to the ground after hearing that she was talking on the phone in Russian.

Ukrainian neo-Nazis in Montreal send letters to Canadian companies with demands to fire Russians from their jobs, and resort to public intimidation. They also compile lists of prominent American Russian-speaking lawyers.

Russian-affiliated businesses are under serious administrative and public pressure. Aggression against everything that is Russian forces private company owners to remove all references to Russia and Russians. Thus, on 10 March 2022, the Russian Spoon bakery in Vancouver had to remove the word "Russian" from its name due to threats.

The culture sector is also subject to restrictions. The Canadian side cancelled concerts of the young Russian virtuoso pianist Alexander Malofeev in Vancouver and Montreal. The Canada Council for the Arts refuses to fund creative projects involving Russian or Belarusian cultural figures until "the Russian military leaves the territory of Ukraine".

On 16 March 2022, at the request of the federal government, the Canadian media regulator formally decided to ban RT and RT France from broadcasting in the country. At the same time, local cable TV providers announced the exclusion of all Russian channels from their networks. By doing so, the Canadian authorities continued their policy of cleansing Canada's information field and depriving its citizens and Russian compatriots living in the country of access to alternative information, which contradicts the norms of democracy and the principles of media freedom.

The overall number of hate crimes remains steadily high in Canada. According to the Police-reported crime statistics report released on 2 August 2022, there was a 27% increase in the number of hate-motivated offenses in 2021 compared to the previous reporting period. Jews remain the most vulnerable group (487 crimes), followed by black persons (642 crimes). There was an overall increase in the number of hate crimes against religious groups: Catholics (260%), Muslims (71%), and Jews (47%).²⁸²

Cases of antisemitism have been reported within the student communities of the universities of York (York University), McGill (McGill University),

²⁸² Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2021. 2 August 2022.
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00013-eng.pdf>

Ryerson (Ryerson University) and Toronto (University of Toronto).²⁸³ The Edmonton Journal (Alberta) was accused of intentional hate propaganda for publishing an offensive cartoon.²⁸⁴ There were calls on social networks to boycott small and medium-sized businesses owned by immigrants from Israel.²⁸⁵ The statements of the Quebec politician Hassan Guillet are recognized by the leadership of the Liberal party as a manifestation of intolerance towards an ethnic group.²⁸⁶ The election posters of Jewish community deputies were defaced with racist graffiti.²⁸⁷ There were attacks on people²⁸⁸, repeated antisemitic statements²⁸⁹, and numerous instances of vandalism, including the depiction of Nazi symbols.²⁹⁰

In November 2020, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, recognizing that antisemitism was on the rise in Canada and the world, appointed a Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism.²⁹¹ However, these types of offenses have not ceased. For

²⁸³ Antisemitism on Canadian campuses. The Jerusalem Post. 10 December 2019.

<https://www.jpost.com/opinion/antisemitism-on-canadian-campuses-610537>

²⁸⁴ Edmonton newspaper under fire for 'anti-semitic' cartoon. The Canadian Jewish News. 8 August 2019.

<https://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/edmonton-newspaper-under-fire-for-anti-semitic-cartoon>

²⁸⁵ BDS campaign targeting Toronto businesses backfires. The Canadian Jewish News. 6 September 2019.

<https://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/bds-campaign-targeting-toronto-businesses-backfires>

²⁸⁶ Montreal Liberal candidate turfed following anti-Semitism allegations. Global News. 30 August 2019.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/5838086/montreal-liberal-antisemitism-allegations/>

²⁸⁷ Campaign signs across Canada are being defaced with hateful graffiti. The Hill Times. 23 September 2019.

<https://www.hilltimes.com/2019/09/23/campaign-signs-across-canada-are-being-defaced-with-hateful-graffiti/215779>

²⁸⁸ Taxi company fires driver behind alleged anti-Semitic assault. CTV News. 1 August 2019.

<https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/taxi-company-fires-driver-behind-alleged-anti-semitic-assault-1.4533089>

²⁸⁹ Montsion defence requests additional security after men yelled anti-Semitic slurs in courthouse confrontation. Ottawa Citizen. 13 March 2019.

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/montsion-defence-requests-additional-security-after-men-yelled-anti-semitic-slurs-in-courthouse-confrontation/>

²⁹⁰ Police looking for suspects after 6 hate crimes, some anti-Semitic, reported in Burlington. Global News. 5 June 2019.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/5354368/six-hate-crimes-burlington-halton-police/>

<https://globalnews.ca/news/5354368/six-hate-crimes-burlington-halton-police/>;

Two charged in relation to anti-Semitic graffiti at Beth Jacob Synagogue. The Hamilton Spectator. 11 October 2019.

<https://www.thespec.com/news/crime/2019/10/11/two-charged-in-relation-to-anti-semitic-graffiti-at-beth-jacob-synagogue.html>;

London police investigate swastika vandalism at Muslim newcomer home. CBC News. 22 March 2019.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/london/london-ontario-swastika-vandalism-1.5066841>

²⁹¹ Prime Minister announces Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism. Office of Prime Minister of Canada. 25 November 2020.

example, in January 2021, vandalism at a synagogue in Westmount, Quebec Province, where a young man painted a Nazi swastika on the walls, caused a wide response.²⁹²

It is noteworthy that the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, was accused of racism during the campaign in September 2019 after publishing archive photos showing him in "blackface" makeup. The politician later acknowledged that his behavior was "unconscionable racism" and apologized to Canadian minorities.²⁹³

Manifestations of xenophobia are reported among other State officials. In 2019–2020, the Senate of Canada twice decided to suspend Senator from Ontario Lynn Beyak for promoting hatred and racism: in March 2019, when she refused to delete from her page on the official portal of the Senate letters received from citizens expressing support for her positive statements about the colonial system of residential schools for indigenous children and containing racist comments against the Indian population; and in February 2020, since the politician did not fully implement recommendations, including successful completion of training courses on countering racism.²⁹⁴

The rapid spread of COVID-19 has also led to numerous manifestations of xenophobia and racism in the country. According to an official statement issued on 8 April 2020 by the Canadian Commissioner for Human Rights, Marie-Claude Landry, cases of racist insults and threats, including physical violence against minorities, especially citizens of Asian origin, have increased during the pandemic.²⁹⁵

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/11/25/prime-minister-announces-special-envoy-preserving-holocaust>

²⁹² SPVM's hate crime unit investigating after Westmount, Que., synagogue defaced by swastikas. Global News. 13 January 2021.

Available at: <https://globalnews.ca/news/7574646/spvm-hate-crime-unit-westmount-synagogue-swastikas/>

²⁹³ 'Deep disappointment': Trudeau revisits blackface in Black History Month reception. Canadian Press. 25 February 2020.

²⁹⁴ Independents Push to Suspend Beyak despite Apology. National Post. 27 February 2020.

²⁹⁵ Racism in response to COVID-19 harms us all. Statement of Marie-Claude Landry, Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission
Available at: <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/statement-racism-response-covid-19-harms-us-all>

In July 2020, Statistics Canada released data on a sharp increase in insults against racial minorities since the COVID-19 pandemic began.²⁹⁶ According to a survey of 43,000 people, one in five (21%) "colored" Canadians had experienced discrimination. Among the most frequent victims were the African (26%), Korean (26%), Chinese (22%), and Filipino (22%) people.

According to the report released in March 2021 by COVID Racism²⁹⁷, 1150 people reported manifestations of anti-Asian racism between 10 March 2020 and 28 February 2021. Mainly vulnerable groups of the population (the elders, the youth, the low-income) came under attack. The incidents occurred more often in public places. 60% of the victims were women. A resolution condemning racism against people of Asian descent was approved unanimously on 23 March 2021, by the House of Commons upon the initiative of the opposition New Democratic Party.

In Montreal, Vietnamese Buddhist temples were attacked by vandals. Several statues and objects of worship were smashed. The city police suggested that the crime was hate-motivated.²⁹⁸

In Vancouver, Canadian entrepreneurs of Chinese descent were forced to reduce business activity by 50–70%.²⁹⁹ In Greater Toronto, sales of Chinese restaurants fell by 30–80%.³⁰⁰

Indigenous population remains the most discriminated group in Canada. In 2020, the mass media regularly reported cases of violence against this group.

²⁹⁶ Perceptions of personal safety among population groups designated as visible minorities in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. Statistics Canada. 8 July 2020.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00046-eng.htm>

²⁹⁷ A Year Of Racist Attacks: Anti-Asian Racism Across Canada. One Year Into The Covid-19 Pandemic. Report. 23 March 2021.

https://mcusercontent.com/9fbfd2cf7b2a8256f770fc35c/files/35c9daca-3fd4-46f4-a883-c09b8c12bbca/covidrasm_final_report.pdf

²⁹⁸ Montreal police suspect hate-crimes after vandals hit Buddhist temples, Chinatown. CBC News. 4 March 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/vandalism-temples-1.5485151>

²⁹⁹ Vancouver's Chinese-Canadian businesses report up to 70% business drop amid virus fears. Global News. 17 February 2020.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/6560530/vancouver-chinatown-business-drop-coronavirus/>

³⁰⁰ Chinese restaurants in GTA see large drop in sales in weeks after coronavirus outbreak. The Globe and Mail. 11 February 2020.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/toronto/article-chinese-restaurants-in-gta-see-large-drop-in-sales-in-weeks-after/>

As of November 2020, 41 Indian reservations continued to have long-term restrictions on the consumption of drinking water. In February 2021, the Auditor General of Canada found that in some isolated communities the level of funding for wastewater treatment remained the same for the last 30 years.³⁰¹ In 2022, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) expressed its grave concern over the plight of Anishinaabe Indian children in northwestern Ontario. The water in the area is contaminated with mercury, resulting in chronic and extremely serious health problems for local residents, both physical and mental. In particular, the Committee indicates that children suffer from speech impairments, learning disabilities, and seizures.³⁰²

Between 2017 and 2020, the Canadian police killed 25 representatives of First Nations. The percentage of indigenous people in federal prisons reached 30%, while in western provinces (Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan) it is 54%.³⁰³

However, racial profiling is common among the police staff, security and border services of Canada, it is targeted not only against indigenous people, but also against Canadians of African descent and other ethnic minority groups and Muslims.³⁰⁴ Police "street checks", where law enforcement officers stop and question persons suspected of a crime and check their documents, are carried out arbitrarily and disproportionately affect people of African descent.³⁰⁵

³⁰¹ Too many First Nations lack clean drinking water and it's Ottawa's fault, says auditor general. CBC News. 25 February 2021.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/auditor-general-reports-2021-1.5927572>

³⁰² Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Canada. June 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en

³⁰³ The Indigenous people killed by Canada's police. Al Jazeera. 24 March 2021.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/3/24/the-indigenous-people-killed-by-canadas-police>

³⁰⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 21st to 23rd periodic reports of Canada. September 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f21-23&Lang=ru

³⁰⁵ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on its mission to Canada, August 2017.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/239/60/pdf/G1723960.pdf?OpenElement>

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted overrepresentation of African-Canadians and indigenous peoples at all levels of the justice system, from arrest to incarceration. Among the reasons for the discriminatory situation, the human rights body attributed, first of all, widespread poverty among this population group and insufficient quality of social services provided to its members.³⁰⁶ The fact that indigenous peoples and people of African descent in Canada are disproportionately more vulnerable to poverty than the rest of the Canadian population was also noted by the CRC.³⁰⁷

The HRC Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples noted the adoption of legislation that remediate some of the discriminatory effects of historical provisions that revoked the Indian status of women – and all their descendants – who married non-status men, while granting status to non-aboriginal women and their descendants who married status Indians. He pointed out that some classes of people continue to be excluded from status on the basis of the historical discrimination against matrilineal descent.³⁰⁸

In 2022, the CRC called on the Canadian authorities to revise the legislation to ensure that women and men are equally legally entitled to pass their indigenous status to their grandchildren. In addition, the Committee experts suggested restoring names on birth certificates where they had been illegally altered or removed; adopt legislative and administrative measures to account for the rights, such as name, culture and language, of children

³⁰⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 21st to 23rd periodic reports of Canada, September 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f21-23&Lang=ru

³⁰⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Canada. June 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en

³⁰⁸ Report of the Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) on the rights of indigenous peoples to the 27th session of the Council. Addendum. The situation of indigenous peoples in Canada. A/HRC/27/52/Add.2. July 2014. <https://undocs.org/ru/A/HRC/27/52/Add.2>

belonging to minority and indigenous populations and ensure that children receive an education on their cultural background and identity.³⁰⁹

The CRC noted with criticism barriers to access by indigenous parents to birth registration.³¹⁰

The Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) on the rights of indigenous peoples also pointed out that the housing situation in Inuit and First Nations communities reached a crisis level. People live in overcrowded conditions and homes are in need of repairs.³¹¹

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) expressed concern about reports that indigenous women and girls in foster care and the child welfare system were particularly vulnerable to sex trafficking.³¹²

CRC experts examined the findings of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, made public in 2019. According to the report, thousands of such cases have gone unrecorded for decades.

CEDAW noted with concern the high number of girls who suffer from discrimination and sexual harassment in schools and the disproportionate number of migrant, refugee, asylumseeking and indigenous girls who continue to face difficulties in gaining access to high-quality education.³¹³

CERD expressed concern at the reported disparity in resource allocation for education and the lack of sufficient funding of mother tongue education programmes, leading to unequal access to quality education, especially for

³⁰⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Canada. June 2022.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Report of the Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) on the rights of indigenous peoples to the twenty-seventh session of the Council. Addendum. The situation of indigenous peoples in Canada. A/HRC/27/52/Add.2. July 2014.
<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/075/08/pdf/G1407508.pdf?OpenElement>

³¹² Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the combined 8th and 9th periodic reports of Canada, November 2016.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f8-9&Lang=ru

³¹³ Ibid.

African-Canadian and indigenous children, which contributes to future socioeconomic disparity among these groups.³¹⁴

The CRC criticized the structural discrimination against children belonging to indigenous groups and children of African descent. Experts noted that the areas of greatest concern remained education, health care, and adequate standards of living.³¹⁵

The National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence indicated that in most communities in Canada, social services were funded through the provincial or territorial governments. However, in First Nations reserves, these services were normally funded through the federal government, which in many areas provided significantly less money per person for programmes and services when compared to what was provided by the provincial and territorial governments.³¹⁶

The discovery in late May 2021 of a mass grave of Indian students at the Kamloops Indian Residential School (British Columbia) functioning between 1890 and 1978 (under control of the Catholic Church until 1969, later under the federal government), has become a high-profile event.

The remains of 215 children aged three and older were found near the school. According to the chief of the Indian community Rosanne Casimir all deaths were undocumented. According to one version, this might happen because of their violent nature.

³¹⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 21st to 23rd periodic reports of Canada, September 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f21-23&Lang=ru

³¹⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Canada, June 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en

³¹⁶ Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Canada) within the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review procedure. March 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en

Up to 500 students would have been registered at the school, according to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. Furthermore, from 1915 to 1963 alone, 51 children died there. Since the very existence of residential schools in Canada, more than 150 thousand students attended such schools, 4 thousand among them, according to the Centre, had become victims of the government policy carried out in respect of indigenous people. Experts believe, however, that there can be much more deaths.³¹⁷

Children were forcibly taken to such educational institutions and separated from their families on purpose. Children in residential schools were forbidden not only to see their family members, but even to communicate in their native language and to adhere to their traditions. At the same time, one of the main tasks of such schools was to develop skills of primitive manual labor. Residential schools had very poor living conditions: children suffered from malnutrition, lack of quality healthcare, hard physical labor, and abuse. All of the above was the reason for high mortality in such schools.

In memory of the children whose remains were found in Kamloops, on 30 May 2021, national flags were at half-staff across Canada as a sign of mourning. In some cities, it lasted 215 hours, an hour for each child who died.

Furthermore, there were demonstrations throughout the country during which a monument to an architect of the boarding school system, Egerton Ryerson, was toppled in Toronto. The protesters doused the statue with paint and put on the empty base graffiti referencing the terrible discovery.³¹⁸

Just a month later, Canada announced that it had discovered another, even larger (more than 750 people) mass grave on the territory of a similar

³¹⁷ Remains of 215 children found buried at former B.C. residential school, First Nation says. CBC News. 27 May 2021.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/tk-eml%C3%B4ps-te-secw%C3%A9penc-215-children-former-kamloops-indian-residential-school-1.6043778>

³¹⁸ Protesters behead toppled statue of Egerton Ryerson following rally honoring residential school victims. Toronto Star. 6 June 2021.

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2021/06/06/statue-of-egerton-ryerson-toppled-at-university-after-rally-for-residential-school-victims.html?rf>

educational institution in Marieval (Saskatchewan province). Another event to commemorate the children who died was organized by the Cowessess indigenous community soon after that. The meeting was opened with prayer and closed with a moment of silence.

Canada's Prime-Minister Justin Trudeau said it was a painful reminder of that dark and shameful chapter of his country's history.

According to the concluding observations of the CRC on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Canada, to date, indigenous children and children of African descent continue to be overrepresented in alternative care, including foster care. They are often separated from other people of their ethnicity. These children are at higher risk of violence and abuse, as well as neglect on the part of caregivers.³¹⁹

As for Canada's legal and regulatory measures to counter racism and neo-Nazism, the principle of equality for all residents of the country, regardless of race, social origin and religion, is enshrined in the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the 1988 Canadian Multiculturalism Act. Although there is no formal ban on far-right movements in the country, Article 319 of the Criminal Code of Canada establishes liability for disseminating ideas of racial superiority (in particular, calls for physical violence and deliberate infliction on the group conditions of life) in the form of deprivation of liberty for a period up to two years.

The first policy document in this area was the Action Plan against Racism³²⁰ adopted by the Liberal government of Paul Martin in 2005. The Plan was an attempt to systematize the forms of racial intolerance registered in

³¹⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Canada. June 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fCAN%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en

³²⁰ Canada's Action Plan Against Racism.

<http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/CH34-7-2005E.pdf>

Canada and distribute the powers between Federal departments and agencies in the implementation of measures to prevent them.

In 2018, the government of Justin Trudeau introduced the National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence.³²¹ The document analyzes the political, religious and ethno-cultural factors that lead to the escalation of extremism in society. The main challenges are poverty, low levels of education, and limited access to health care.

To implement the Strategy, the Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence was established under the Ministry of Public Security in 2017. This structure received a good financial boost (35 million Can. dollars in 2016, followed by an annual budget of 10 million Can. dollars). In addition, it has established a special Community Resilience Fund, whose resources are directed to research on countering extremism in Canada (in the period 2019-2020, 7 million Can. dollars were allocated for this purpose).

In June 2019, the Minister of Canadian Heritage Pablo Rodriguez announced allocating a 45 million Can. dollars investment to implement Anti-Racism Strategy 2019–2022.³²² A special unit, Secretariat Against Racism, was organized to implement the tasks set by the Strategy. According to the government, 85 projects amounting to 15 million Can. dollars received funding within the Strategy by 2021. In the fall 2020, Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland announced allocating 50 million Can. dollars as additional support to anti-racist initiatives for 2020-022.

As for regional law enforcement, only Ontario has an anti-racism law, Anti-Racism Act (adopted in 2017 by the Provincial Legislature).³²³ In the

³²¹ National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence.

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/ntnl-strtg-centrg-rdclztn-vlnc/ntnl-strtg-centrg-rdclztn-vlnc-en.pdf>

³²² Building a Foundation for Change: Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2019-2022.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/anti-racism-engagement.html>

³²³ Anti-Racism Act. 2017. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/17a15>

document Anti-Racism Policy³²⁴ submitted in 2018 in pursuance of the Act, the key preventive measures include strict observance of the principle of equality in employment for representatives of all ethnic groups, holding training seminars, and promotion of representatives from the "colored" and indigenous populations to senior positions in Federal and provincial government.

In addition, the government of Ontario adopted the Anti-Black Racism Strategy³²⁵, which provides for the allocation of 47 million Can. dollars to help children and adolescents from African-Canadian families to "socialize", improve education, and review correctional policies in respect of young offenders.

However, when Canada passed the Universal Periodic Review under the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, referring to the Human Rights Commission of Canada, noted that there had been little progress in addressing many long-standing problems, including the situation of indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups.³²⁶

Given the ambivalent attitude of the Canadian authorities to countering manifestations of racism, it is not surprising to see Canada's position with regard to the UN General Assembly resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", introduced annually by Russia together with a wide range of co-sponsors. The delegation of Canada has recently abstained from voting on this

³²⁴ Anti-Racism Policy. An Overview. The Ontario Public Service.
https://files.ontario.ca/anti-racism_policy_overview_eng.pdf

³²⁵ Anti-Black Racism Strategy.
https://files.ontario.ca/ar-2002_anti-black_racism_strategy_en.pdf

³²⁶ Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Canada) within the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review procedure. March 2018.
<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/059/69/pdf/G1805969.pdf?OpenElement>

document. In previous years, representatives of the country have repeatedly voted against the adoption of the resolution.

Cyprus

There are no facts proving glorification of Nazism in the Republic of Cyprus. The country's leadership does not undertake any attempts to justify or revive the Nazi ideology, to distort or rewrite the history of WWII and its results. There are no attempts to promote neo-Nazi and extremist ideas, as well as to spread hate speech against ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities in the country's information space.

At the same time, the delegation of Cyprus, following the General European line, annually abstains during the vote in the UN General Assembly on the resolution introduced by Russia and other co-sponsors "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance".

In Cyprus, there is a number of sporting and public organizations with nationalist views. There is a fan movement organized under a football club APOEL (Nicosia) consisting mainly of young people with extreme right and nationalist views. Its participants quite often use neo-Nazi swastika in informal communications.

Since 2016, representatives of the political movement National People's Front (ELAM) have been elected to the House of Representatives of Cyprus. This political party with nationalist ideas is becoming popular among the younger generation. The association makes no secret of its ties with the Greek far-right party Golden Dawn whose leaders were sentenced to long-term imprisonment as organizers of a gang in 2020.

Illegal migration poses a serious threat to Cyprus. The Ministry of the Interior reports that around 50 – 100 illegal migrants are coming to the southern part of the island every day. Throughout the first five months in 2022 only, the authorities received some 11 thousand applications for refugee status (more than 15 thousand in 2021).

The problem is compounded by the lack of migrant accommodation centers, lack of employment opportunities and lack of decent living conditions. The situation is worsened by the long processing times (up to several years) for applications for refugee status. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) pointed to shortage of reception centres for refugees.³²⁷ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (the monitoring body of experts established under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) noted with concern the difficulty of access to justice for migrant domestic workers due to their possible detention and subsequent deportation pending the completion of legal proceedings.³²⁸ The Committee against Torture, another UN treaty body, drew attention to the fact of criminalization and routine detention of irregular migrants, the extended periods of detention of such migrants and the work of migration detention facilities throughout the country.³²⁹ Among positive developments, one can note the beginning of work, in June 2019, of a specialized judicial body that seeks, among other things, to expedite the processing of migrants' applications.

The CERD also criticized the spread in society of racially motivated verbal abuse and physical attacks by far-right extremist and neo-Nazi groups against people of foreign origin, including people of African descent, as well as against human rights activists and Turkish Cypriots. The CERD experts also expressed concern about existing racist stereotypes and hate speech against

³²⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 23rd and 24th periodic reports of Cyprus. May 2017. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCYP%2fCO%2f23-24&Lang=en

³²⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 8th periodic report of the Republic of Cyprus. July 2018. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fCYP%2fCO%2f8&Lang=en

³²⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the 5th periodic report of Cyprus. December 2019. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fCYP%2fCO%2f5&Lang=ru

members of certain ethnic minority groups, as well as Roma who are Muslims. The CERD pointed to the lack of legal provisions to hold such acts accountable, as well as insufficient efforts of law enforcement agencies.³³⁰

Another problem in Cyprus is related to manifestations of racism among football fans who are de-facto uncontrolled groups of aggressive youth. On some occasions disciplinary sanctions have been imposed on Cyprian football teams by the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA). In the press there are periodic reports on violence and racist chants in Cypriot stadiums during national and international matches. In this regard, the government has repeatedly announced its intention to improve work with football fans communities.

The FCNM Advisory Committee functioning within the Council of Europe has acknowledged the lack of interaction between the state and religious and ethnic communities without a constitutional status. For instance, the Roma living in Cyprus are officially regarded by authorities as belonging to the Turkish community of Cyprus. This hinders their access to certain rights and their possible enjoyment, given that the Roma community remains marginalized in economic and social terms. One of the FCNM Advisory Committee's recommendations to Cyprus therefore was to develop a detailed action plan for the social inclusion of Roma and their overall participation in socio-economic life, to be implemented in close consultation with the representatives of this category of the population.

The Committee has also called on the authorities to consider the establishment of a state institution, with a clear mandate, visibility and sufficient resources, to liaise with relevant entities and address effectively the

³³⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 23rd and 24th periodic reports of Cyprus. May 2017.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCYP%2fCO%2f23-24&Lang=en

needs of national minorities, Roma communities, as well as other groups not recognized under the main law of the country.³³¹

Authorities curb any manifestations of xenophobia and discrimination on racial, language or national grounds in the society quickly and effectively. After appeals of the Russian Embassy in Cyprus, the leadership of the country took all necessary security measures in respect of the Russian population and other Russian-speaking people residing on the island. The local police are dealing with complaints of threats and aggression because of national affiliation filed by the Russian citizens and take procedural measures if there are sufficient grounds to do so. The authorities also adequately responded to the Russophobic actions by nationalists from the Ukrainian diaspora, as well as to their attempts to engage into anti-Russia campaign the Cypriots who expressed solidarity with Ukraine.

One of the examples which caught the attention of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights proves that Cyprus takes adequate measures to combat racism and xenophobia in the country. Thus, the Attorney General of Cyprus appealed against the verdict issued in 2019 by the first instance court for an assault by a group of people on a resident of Russian origin. The victim was not only insulted in the presence of her minor child because of her national affiliation, she also experienced physical aggression. The Supreme Court admitted an aggravating circumstance that this act was racially motivated and agreed to increase the imposed penalty: EUR 3000 (instead of EUR 750) and increased a suspended prison term.³³²

³³¹ The Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities Opinion on Cyprus (fifth cycle), adopted on 7 November 2019.

<https://rm.coe.int/interim-follow-up-conclusions-on-cyprus-5th-monitoring-cycle-/168094ce05>

³³² the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf;
http://www.cylaw.org/cgi-bin/open.pl?file=/apofaseis/aad/meros_2/2021/2-202107-4-21etc2.htm

Latvia

Latvia maintains the policy of deliberate falsification of history and justification of former Waffen-SS Legionnaires and Nazi collaborators, who are elevated to the rank of participants in "national liberation movements". In practice, it means efforts are made to instill nationalistic and Russophobic sentiments among the general population. One of the pillars of this policy is the declaration adopted by the Latvian Saeima on 29 October 1998 "On Latvian Legionnaires in World War II", which, contrary to the facts, stated that "aim of the warriors who were conscripted or voluntarily joined the Legion was to protect Latvia from the restoration of the Stalinist regime" and that they "never participated in Hitler's punitive actions against the civilian population". In 2000 in the village of Lestene, a memorial complex dedicated to the memory of the members of that organization³³³ was opened with the support of the State. It was put up with donations from the organization "Daugava Hawks", created by veterans of the Latvian Legion.

In line with these goals, public efforts to distort and falsify history and justify collaborators are made by representatives of not only right-wing radical forces, but also Latvian authorities, including the country's leaders. Among other things, there are known instances of coordinated efforts by the leaders of three Baltic States in this area. Among them are the joint statement made on 7 May 2020 by the presidents of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe (where the liberation of the Baltic States from the Nazis is called "occupation", allegedly "because one totalitarian regime was replaced by another") and the video message of the heads of the three Baltic States posted in June 2021 on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of deportation from these countries (14 June

³³³ Accomplices of Nazi crimes. 96 SS Latvian Legion veterans who are still alive. Joint Report of the Historical Memory Foundation and the Foundation for the support and development of Jewish culture, traditions, education and science. Moscow, 2020 http://historyfoundation.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Легиионеры_4_light.pdf

1941) which is dedicated to the idea of equal responsibility of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union for starting World War II.³³⁴

In line with this policy, on 16 December 2021, Latvia, following the directions of the European Union, once again abstained from voting on draft annual resolution of the UN General Assembly "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", sponsored by Russia.

There have also been attempts to whitewash Latvian accomplices of the Nazis from a legal standpoint. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the decision made by the Prosecutor General of Latvia in February 2019 to terminate the criminal proceedings on the possible involvement of Latvian pilot Herberts Cukurs (who was a member of the Arajs Kommando – a unit of the Latvian Auxiliary SD Police – and was nicknamed "the butcher of Riga") in the extermination of the Jewish population of Latvia during World War II. The investigation was conducted since 2006 under Article 71 - Genocide - of the Latvian Criminal law. The proceedings were terminated due to the fact that Latvian Prosecutor's office did not find the corpus delicti provided for in Article 71 in the actions of Herberts Cukurs. The decision was reviewed and the investigation resumed only under pressure from the public, Latvian and international Jewish organizations, as well as the appeal in May 2019 of the Council of Jewish communities of Latvia to the Prosecutor General on this issue.

To promote the ideas of advocates of the "occupation doctrine", all kinds of pseudo-scientific works on "occupation" are published (e.g. Crimes of the USSR occupation army in Latvia. 1940 – 1991 by Jānis Riekstiņš). Moreover,

³³⁴ Presidents of the Baltic States once again tell lies about Soviet deportations. Web-site Remembrance, Research and Justice: Heritage of WWII in the 21st Century. 15 June 2021.
<https://remembrance.ru/2021/06/15/pribaltijskie-prezidenty-vnov-vystupili-s-lozhju-o-sovetskih-deportacijah/>

books aimed at shaping a positive image of the Nazis and their accomplices are used as supplementary history books in schools.

On 2 March every year, a commemorative event is held in Stompaku bog in the Viļaka Municipality to honour the Forest Brothers, attended among other people by the country's officials. 76 years ago, there was fighting between KGB and Forest Brothers in this area". The gang of about 300 nationalist partisans was headed by Pēteris Supe, who had come to Latvia on 2 October 1944 as a member of German intelligence unit Lapland, had previously trained with Abwehr's Group 212 of frontline intelligence officers in Eastern Prussia. As part of the Lapland unit that had been deployed specifically for this purpose, Pēteris Supe consolidated the scattered anti-Soviet groups and units in the areas of Abrene, Viļaka, Balvi, Alūksne, Gulbene, Valka, Cēsis and Madona.

This topic is promoted in Latvia, in particular, through organizing tourist paths along famous military sites of the Forest Brothers. There is a guided tourist path near Stompaku bog, with various tasks and historical information. In general, the Baltic States implement a number of measures to incorporate locations related to the Forest Brothers into a network of tourist facilities. In May 2021, Latvia and Estonia created a map and a brochure listing military and historical tourist sites related to the Forest Brothers (over 150 well-kept former military sites with exhibitions, as well as natural sites such as battlefields, trenches and bunkers).

In 2021-2022, the efforts of Latvian authorities to glorify Nazism and justify the crimes of Nazi collaborators have assumed unprecedented, previously unseen forms and proportions. Cynically, Latvia has decided to focus on dismantling monuments to soldiers who liberated the country from Nazism and banning May 9 celebrations.

Many years of revisionist efforts by the Latvian establishment culminated in the legal ban on May 9 celebrations, public demonstration of the symbols

associated with the Victory over Nazism, and public events near Soviet military memorials.

On 11 November 2021, the Latvian Saeima passed several amendments to the laws On the Security of Public Recreational Events and Celebrations and On Holidays and Commemorative Days that prohibit the use of St. George's Ribbon.

On 31 March 2021, the Latvian Saeima adopted a series of amendments to the law On the Security of Public Events, the most radical of which banned events within 200 meters of any memorial that "glorifies the victory and memory of the Soviet Army or its servicemen in Latvia".

On 7 April 2022, the Saeima adopted the law On Establishing a Day of Remembrance of the Dead and Wounded in Ukraine, proclaimed May 9 a day of mourning, and banned public events and celebrations on this date. The law had one-time application and ceased to apply on 11 May 2022. However, the same may happen in the coming years and be legitimized for the long term.

In addition to legal bans, local authorities also made concrete attempts to prevent the people from laying flowers to the Monument to Soldiers Liberators in Riga's Victory Park on 9 May 2022: the night of 8 May 2022, the State police fenced off the monument with no prior notice and closed the nearby public transport stops. However, these restrictive measures did not stop the local population from honoring the memory of fallen Soviet heroes.

Without hiding their annoyance at the failed attempt to cloud May 9 celebrations, law enforcement authorities detained 35 persons and initiated 49 administrative proceedings, mostly related to the "use of symbols that glorify military aggression and war crimes", implying the use of St. George's Ribbon. On the morning of 10 May 2022, the authorities barbarically removed with an excavator the flowers that had been laid at the square by the Monument.

These blasphemous actions of the authorities against the memory of the fallen liberators caused justifiable outrage of many residents of Riga who

continued to bring flowers to the monument on 10 May 2022. The same evening, Latvian patriot nationalists with the help of the State police forced all visitors out of the Victory Park and blocked access to the monument until 31 August 2022.

The most high-profile case in this context has been the arrest of Alexander Dubyago, a Latvian citizen who came to the Monument with the Russian flag in order to honor the memory of Soviet servicemen. Even though the young man neither shouted nor promoted political slogans, law enforcement bodies without any reason charged him under article 74.1 of the Criminal Code – justification of genocide and military crimes – that provides for an imprisonment of up to five years.

In their ultra-nationalistic frenzy, on 12 May 2022, deputies of the Saeima of Latvia urgently legitimized the dismantlement of the Monument to Soldiers Liberators in Victory Park, suspending article 13 of the 1994 Russia – Latvia Intergovernmental Agreement on the Social Protection of War Pensioners, under which Latvia pledged to protect Soviet memorials in its territory. Members of the Saeima's Foreign Affairs Commission, who were the authors of the amendments, supported this cynical decision by openly stating that "Latvia's commitments under article 13 of the Agreement do not extend to such structures as monuments any more".

To implement this decision, at the extraordinary meeting on 13 May 2022, deputies of the Riga City Council voted by majority (39 votes against 13) to bring down the Monument to Soldiers Liberators.

The Monument to Soldiers Liberators in Riga has for a long time annoyed right-wing nationalists. It has been proposed to rename or transform the memorial, allegedly to reflect its "true meaning". An initiative to demolish it has been discussed within a working group formed in the Saeima of Latvia. The Internet has been used as well. Google Maps have displayed next to the Russian name of the Monument to Victory an incorrect "translation" into Latvian –

Okupācijas piemineklis ("Monument to Occupation"). Admins of the web-site did not respond to complaints.

The Monument to the Liberators of Riga was one of the first victims of vandalism against monuments to Red Army soldiers, who had liberated the country from Nazism during World War II, which has spread throughout Latvia since the beginning of the special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine. On 24 February 2022, vandals poured paint over the monument. After that, a vandal tried to hit the monument with a hammer. The offender was detained by police. In this context Jānis Bordāns, Latvia's Minister of Justice, urged for the demolition of the monument, calling it a threat to national security, and encouraged Latvian authorities to find loopholes to circumvent provisions of the treaty with Russia that protected the memorial.

On 16 June 2022, the Saeima speedily adopted the law on the Prohibition of Exhibiting in the Republic of Latvia of Items Glorifying the Soviet and Nazi Occupation Regimes that obliges municipalities to demolish Soviet memorials before 15 November 2022, including the Monument in Riga. Roughly 300 Soviet memorials to Red Army soldiers who liberated Latvia from Nazism are covered under this law.

President Egils Levits publicly supported this law, noting that behind it was a desire to prevent "any glorification of Russia's imperial ideology in the public space".

In 2022, there has been a sharp increase in the desecration of Soviet military memorials in Latvia.

While during in the whole 2021, the Embassy of Russia in Latvia detected four acts of vandalism against Soviet monuments in the territory of the Republic of Latvia, in the first half of 2022, there were over a dozen of such cases.

As of the end of June 2022, 13 cases of desecration of memorials to Red Army soldiers were detected, municipalities illegally demolished 7 monuments

and eliminated a mass grave. In several cases, these blasphemous actions were approved by local legislative authorities. In particular, it is known that such acts were approved by regional councils of Ogre and Jelgava.

It is remarkable that several Latvian municipalities have been proactive in demolishing Soviet memorials and did not wait for legislative amendments to come into force. For example, on 31 May 2022, the authorities of Sigulda announced their plans to demolish three monuments: a memorial to the Panfilov Division in the village of Mālpils, a memorial to the conference of the Young Communist League and a memorial stone to Soviet prisoners of war in Sigulda.

On 14 June 2022, in violation of Latvia's international legal obligations, the authorities of Jēkabpils began implementing in practice the illegal decision of the regional council to eliminate the mass military burial on Rīgas street, 205, in close vicinity of the memorial complex. Heavy machinery demolished the pedestal of the monument to Soviet artillerymen, the remains of three Soviet officers buried underneath were exhumed. On the same day, the adjacent memorial complex to the heroes of the Soviet Union who had been killed in the Krustpils operation was demolished.

The Latvian side has not asked for the agreement of the Russian side to these activities and the exhumation of the remains of Soviet soldiers, as provided in the relevant bilateral treaties. Protest notes of the Russian Embassy with demands for the explanation of Latvia's violations of its international legal obligations have been left without a coherent answer.

The monument in Jēkabpils has previously been attacked by vandals as well. On 24 February 2021, the 76 mm gun was stolen from the monument's pedestal. Despite the fact that Latvian law enforcement agencies initiated a criminal case on the matter, the perpetrators have not been prosecuted.

Even the monuments erected in honor of Latvian Red Army soldiers were demolished. Thus, on 9 May 2022 the monument to the famous Latvian intelligence officer Arvīds Roze and the reconnaissance group Baikāls headed

by him was demolished in the village of Tome in Ogre Municipality. During the Great Patriotic War, Roze and his group sent important information to the headquarters of the 1st Baltic Front about the movement of Nazi troops and the construction of fortifications near Riga.³³⁵

It is regrettable to note that a similar negative tendency has developed in Latvia as a whole. Numerous notes sent by the Embassy to the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs demanding that international commitments in the field of war memorials be implemented in good faith and that unilateral unlawful actions by local governments be suppressed, are invariably left unnoticed by the Latvian authorities. The consequences of acts of vandalism have until recently been eliminated solely thanks to proactive local residents, despite the fact that responsibility for the maintenance and preservation of memorial sites is vested in local governments. Now the authorities intend to prevent such initiatives by local residents.

It is notable that the representatives of the Latvian authorities of different levels not only justify the destruction of monuments in honor of Red Army soldiers who liberated Latvia from the Nazis, but also make blasphemous statements about these monuments, comparing them with garbage and promising to properly destroy them. Thus, the head of Jēkabpils local council Raivis Ragainis allowed himself to publicly call the dismantled monuments from the mass military burial and the adjacent memorial "pieces of concrete without any historical value". The head of Ogre Municipality Council Egils Helmanis who actively supported the demolition of four monuments in honor of the Soviet soldiers and officers fallen during the liberation of Latvia from the Nazis and the monument to diplomatic courier Theodor Nette, cynically stated that the monument in Madliena will be used for road construction works.³³⁶

³³⁵ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220511/v-poslke-tome-snesli-pamyatnik-legendarnomu-latyshskomu-razvedchiku-21766017.html>

³³⁶ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220511/v-poslke-tome-snesli-pamyatnik-legendarnomu-latyshskomu-razvedchiku-21766017.html>

Mayor of Riga Mārtiņš Staķis also "stood out" by stating that no parts of the Liberators' Monument will be preserved after its demolition and promising to fully recycle the monument because it allegedly has no artistic value whatsoever.³³⁷ According to the media, the representatives of Riga City Council turned their press conference on the demolition of the monument into a show to satisfy the vindictive urges of Russophobes.³³⁸

It is necessary to note that all above-mentioned acts, as well as the Latvian policy as a whole on the demolition of monuments to fighters against Nazism and anti-fascists contradict the provisions of the above-mentioned resolution of the UN General Assembly devoted to the fight against the glorification of Nazism.

Parallel to the intensified fight against Soviet memorials and historical heritage, Latvian authorities continued to defend the inviolability of Latvian Waffen-SS Legionnaires.

In September 2021, the competent authorities of the country denied Belarus legal assistance in the criminal case on genocide during the Great Patriotic War, not allowing the interrogation of 22 members of the Latvian SS legion, citing possible "damage to the sovereignty of the Republic of Latvia".

The Prosecutor General's Office of Belarus made the request in June 2021³³⁹, after the Historical Memory Foundation and the Foundation for the Support and Development of Jewish Culture, Traditions, Education, and Science published a report titled Supporters of Nazi Crimes. 96 SS Latvian Legion veterans who are still alive. It included information about almost a quarter of about 400 former Latvian SS Legionnaires living in Latvia and abroad, at least some of whom may have been involved in serious crimes during

³³⁷ <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/08/03/monument/>

³³⁸ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220804/ne-razbirat-po-chastyam-no-i-ne-vzryvat-kak-budut-snosit-pamyatnik-osvoboditelyam-22415313.html>

³³⁹ The Prosecutor General's Office of Belarus is going to interrogate living Latvian SS Legion veterans. Historical Memory Foundation. 24 June 2021. <http://historyfoundation.ru/2021/06/24/genprokuratura-belarusi-vyzovet-na-dopros-nyne-zhivyyh-veteranov-latyshskogo-legiona-ss/>

World War II. It identified 22 former members of the SS Legion in Latvia, as well as 19 in Australia, 2 in Argentina, 3 in Brazil, 4 in the United Kingdom, 16 in Canada, and 33 in the United States.³⁴⁰

As noted in the report, between 1991 and 2020, no Nazi collaborators from the Latvian SD Auxiliary Security Police, Latvian police battalions or other units of the Latvian SS Legion were convicted of war crimes or crimes against humanity. The only exception was the case of Konrāds Kalējs, the commander of the Salaspils camp guard who was involved in mass murders of Jews. After revealing the details of Konrāds Kalējs's biography during the Second World War and the withdrawal of his U.S. citizenship in 1994, Latvian authorities belatedly sent a request to Australia for his extradition only in 2000, a year before his death. As a result of bureaucratic delays by the authorities of the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Australia, as well as delays with the request from Latvia, the war criminal, which had left many obvious traces, was never brought to justice.³⁴¹

Continuing its work on identifying Nazi collaborators, in 2021 the Historical Memory Foundation published a report *Retired Butchers. Latvian Nazi Criminals Serving in the CIA*. This study identifies 23 Latvians who collaborated with U.S. intelligence in the late 1940s – 1960s. The report clearly demonstrates that most Latvian CIA agents during World War II served the Nazis, and many of them were directly involved in crimes against humanity, including the Holocaust, punitive operations against civilians of Soviet republics, the blockade of Leningrad. Among these criminals was Jānis Cīrulis, who as part of a special unit of the Security Police and the SD took part in mass

³⁴⁰ Accomplices of Nazi crimes. 96 SS Latvian Legion veterans who are still alive. Joint Report of the Historical Memory Foundation and the Foundation for the Support and Development of Jewish Culture, Traditions, Education and Science. Moscow, 2020. http://historyfoundation.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Легионеры_4_light.pdf

³⁴¹ Accomplices of Nazi crimes. 96 SS Latvian Legion veterans who are still alive. Joint Report of the Historical Memory Foundation and the Foundation for the Support and Development of Jewish Culture, Traditions, Education and Science. Moscow, 2020 http://historyfoundation.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Легионеры_4_light.pdf

murders of civilians in Latvia and the USSR, including near the village of Zhestyanaya Gorka (Novgorod Oblast).

The violent reaction of Latvian ultra-patriots to the decision of the Belgian authorities to demolish the monument to Latvian legionnaires in Zedelgem that was installed in 2018 (dismantled on 31 May 2022) is also significant.

Thus, in December 2021, Latvian Minister of Culture Nauris Puntulis (of the National Alliance party) spoke in defense of the monument, urging "to respect the memorial", and the official representative of the above-mentioned political party Laima Melkina stated that "attempts to accuse Latvian legionaries of Nazi war crimes and the Holocaust clearly contradict the decisions of the Nuremberg Tribunal". The Latvian Embassy in Belgium sent a note on this matter to the Belgian Foreign Ministry, and Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkēvičs addressed a letter to the leadership of Flanders.

The practice of honoring former Waffen-SS legionnaires continued.

On 16 November 2021 the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia officially approved the establishment of the National Partisans Armed Resistance Remembrance Day on March 2 to commemorate the fight of the Forest Brothers near the Stompaku bog in the Viljak region.

In 2022, the events dedicated to this day were for the first time held under the aegis of the official state Day of Remembrance, during which the president of Latvia Egils Levits opened a memorial to the "national partisans" – in fact, open Nazi collaborators – buried in Stompaku.

On 16 March 2022, on the day of remembrance of Latvian Waffen-SS legionaries, there was the traditional procession of sympathizers of "national heroes" attended by members of nationalist organization Daugava Hawks dressed in uniforms with Nazi chevrons. Once again, representatives of the National Alliance - advisors to the prime minister of Latvia Imants Parādnieks and Jānis Iesalnieks, leader of the party Raivis Dzintars and deputy of the

Saeima Jānis Dombrava – took part in the procession to the sound of the songs of the Waffen-SS legion. Riga City Council rejected the application of the Latvian Anti-Nazi Committee to hold at the same time an event against the justification of crimes of the Latvian punitive division. On the same day, Speaker of the Saeima Ināra Mūrniece "honored" with her presence the cemetery of legionaries in Lestene, where she laid flowers and made another revisionist speech.

The marches of Waffen-SS veterans have been heavily criticized by the international community. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), which operates within the Council of Europe, has repeatedly expressed concern in its reports about the annual commemoration of Latvian legionaries of the Waffen-SS on 16 March. ECRI has pointed to the fact that parliamentarians from the National Alliance party, which is part of the ruling coalition, had been seen attending the ceremonies. The Commission experts have repeatedly made recommendations to the Latvian authorities to condemn all attempts to commemorate persons who fought in the Waffen-SS and collaborated with the Nazis, as well as to call on MPs to abstain from attending such commemoration ceremonies.³⁴²

The efforts of the Russian-speaking community to preserve the memory of the heroic deeds of the Red Army that liberated Latvia from Nazism were met with a harsh reaction from the authorities who are already constantly persecuting community activists by putting pressure on them and conducting demonstrative punitive actions. As a rule, our fellow citizens are accused of "anti-state activities", "assistance to a foreign state in its activities against Latvia", "organization of mass riots", "espionage".

On 17 December 2020, the Latvian court found A.Gaponenko, a well-known human rights activist and public figure, Co-Chairman of the United

³⁴² Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Latvia (fifth monitoring cycle) adopted on 4 December 2018, and published on 5 March 2019.
<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-latvia/1680934a9f>

Congress of Russian Communities and the head of civic organization Non-Citizens' Congress, guilty of "stirring up enmity and hatred based on racial, ethnic and national origin", and sentenced him to one year of suspended deprivation of liberty, for saying that in the 1930s-1940s many Latvian residents voluntarily agreed to cooperate with the Nazi Germany. On 8 February 2022, A.Gaponenko was convicted to one and a half years of suspended deprivation of liberty. The case is currently under appeal.

Criminal proceedings against Alexander Filey, member of the Board of the Russian Union of Latvia and permanent author of the Russian analytical portal Rubaltic.ru (for glorification of the "Soviet occupation") and against a number of other fellow citizens have been initiated. Euro-MP Tatjana Ždanoka, well-known human rights activist, is also under serious pressure by the government (the proceedings initiated in August 2020 against her and a number of other activists of the Russian community in connection with the organization in 2018 of the All-Latvian Parents' Meeting have been terminated; later on, the proceedings have been resumed against V.Linderman, a well-known public figure of the country). The case against O.Burak is in the second stage of appeal.

On 29 October 2021, Yuri Alekseev, Latvian publicist and public figure, was sentenced to 14 months of deprivation of liberty based on falsified charges of stirring up interethnic discord. In connection to this biased verdict, the Russian community of Latvia published a statement noting that this sentence, as well as the decision of the Constitutional Court of Latvia that justifies the liquidation of education in Russian, historically traditional for Latvia, the whipped-up hysteria regarding "Russian spies", and criminal prosecution of Russian-language journalists, pointed to the intention of the Latvian government to take political reprisals against the Russian-speaking community. It was stated that the Latvian judicial system had long ago lost the trust of Russian-speaking Latvian residents. The case is currently under appeal.

The largest organization of the country's retired military servicemen, the Republican Association of Veterans in Latvia, was subjected to significant pressure by the authorities; it was closed based on a court decision under a formal pretext (the reason named was violations of the rules for keeping accounts). On 6 October 2020, the chairman of this organization, Russian retired military serviceman V.Norvind, was separated from his family and forcibly expelled from Latvia, in spite of the fact that he had suffered a heart attack. The Latvian authorities cancelled his residence permit.

The persecution of Russian-speaking activists in Latvia intensified after the Russian Armed Forces were forced to start the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect civilians in the Donbas.

The Latvian authorities adopted a set of legislative measures to criminalize any form of support of Russia and of its special military operation conducted in Ukraine. Thus, the criminal law of Latvia has an article that envisages liability "for the justification and glorification of the crimes" committed by Russia in the territory of Ukraine. On 31 March 2022, the Saeima adopted a law on amending the criminal legislation to criminalize the use of letters Z and V in public space, effected "with the aim to support the aggressor". The St. George ribbon, that had also been banned in Latvia, is deemed such symbol, too. All similar actions are punished with up to 5 years of imprisonment.

Latvian law enforcement agencies are putting brutal pressure on Russian citizens who are crossing the border. In order to enter Latvia, they are required to sign a statement of disagreement with the policies of the Russian Federation. If Russians refuse, they are denied entry under the pretext that they allegedly pose a threat to public order and the internal security of the country. An example of this destructive and discriminatory policy is the publicly reported denial of entry into Latvia on 22 July 2022 to Igor Yurgens, President of the All-Russian Union of Insurers, on such grounds.

The Russophobic hysteria has overwhelmed the Latvian authorities to such an extent that in August 2022 the Latvian parliament declared Russia a state sponsor of terrorism.

The Latvian government promises to only renew previously issued residence permits in "special cases" (studies, family reunification, humanitarian reasons, etc.). The intention to deprive Russian citizens of residence permits demonstrates Riga's open disregard for its international obligations and represents a violation of the rights of a particular ethnic group.

Since the end of February 2022, the State Security Service and the State police have basically started a "hunt" for dissenters inside the country. There has been an outbreak of summoning activists for "preventive conversations" to law enforcement bodies and special services all over Latvia. In particular, journalist Yuri Alekseev whom the Latvian intelligence services had threatened with new criminal proceedings for his active civic position, wrote on his social media page about being summoned this way. It is known that representatives of practically all Russian-language media of the country, including such large ones as Segodnya (Today) newspaper, Telegraph magazine, Latvian News weekly, Saturday, Seven Super Secrets, Baltcom radio as well as the websites mixnews.lv, pross.lv, bb.lv have been summoned to such "conversations".

Since February 2022, Latvian intelligence services have worked on 23 criminal cases initiated on these grounds. In most cases, people have been prosecuted for posting on social networks or participating in Victory Day events. Most of the charges have been brought under Article 74.1 of the Criminal Law – justification of genocide. According to publication in the media, at least two people, one of whom is V.Linderman, are under arrest.

Apart from criminal persecution, Russian residents of Latvia have faced mass-scale intimidations, insults, and threats in everyday life. Basically, bullying of "politically unreliable" citizens (those who have, in whichever form,

stated their support for Russia or who simply have a balanced position) are bullied on social media.

Since autumn 2021, <https://myrotvorets.team>, a website similar to the notorious Ukrainian Myrotvorets website, has been active in the country. The website publishes personal data of people who have supported Russia's special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine. This media has also published personal data of Latvian Russian-speaking journalists, including those who have been prosecuted by Latvian intelligence services for "cooperation" with Russian media, as well as data of activists of the Russian-speaking community, including members of the Latvian Russian Union.

Notably, the Latvian government has not found the functioning of this website unlawful. The State Data Inspection of Latvia has not found any violations and made a cynical remark that the data presented on the website had been processed in line with the right to freedom of expression.

Under the contrived pretext of fighting "Russian propaganda", any dissent is being wiped out of Latvian media; as a result, representatives of Russian-language media are under serious systemic pressure. The persecution intensified at the end of February 2022, when the rebroadcasting of all Russian channels in Latvia was banned one by one. On 24 February 2022, broadcasting of channels Russia RTR, Russia 24 and TVC International was terminated. Starting from 2 March 2022, broadcasting of RBC TV channel was banned, Belarus 24 was suspended, and rebroadcasting licenses of the First Baltic Channel Estonia and First Baltic Channel Lithuania were revoked. On 7 March 2022, the Latvian National Council on Electronic Media decided to switch off 18 more Russian channels in the country: TNT – Comedy, TNT 4, TNT 4 International, TNT, TNT Music, ПЯТНИЦА (FRIDAY) International, KHL TV, Kinopremiera, Kinosvidanie, Men's Cinema, La-Minor TV, Auto Plus – Auto-Plus TV Channel, Nostalgia, Live!, Who is Who, Baby TV, Russian Night, Zee TV.

When it became clear that the ban failed to affect the popularity of the Russian channels and the residents of Latvia still watch them using "illegal decoders" and satellite dishes, the Latvian Parliament, as part of the work to enhance the media landscape of the country adopted the amendments establishing administrative liability for unlawful watching of the banned Russian channels. This offence is punishable with a fine in the amount of up to EUR 700.

The entire Russian-speaking population of Latvia faces pressure from the Latvian authorities. Russian residents of Latvia are viewed by the Latvian leadership as an alien and destabilizing element. As a consequence, the nationally oriented policy of the official authorities is aimed at stripping this part of society of its rights. In practice, this takes the form of numerous violations of the rights of ethnic minorities.

The main remaining problem is the fact that a significant part of the Latvian population does not have [Latvian] citizenship. "Non-citizens" are deprived of numerous social, economic, and electoral rights in the country. Human rights activists are currently aware of about eighty differences between citizens and "non-citizens".

In Latvia, just as in Lithuania and Estonia, persecution of Russian-speaking residents has recently intensified, including criminal prosecution, termination of employment, and a ban on the use of the Russian language in public places.

As of today, "non-citizens" constitute about 200,000 residents of the country (11 per cent of the population), 65 per cent of them are ethnic Russians. The Latvian authorities do not recognize "non-citizens" as belonging to the ethnic minorities and, consequently, have excluded them from the scope of application of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, ratified by Latvia in 2005 with significant reservations.

The pace of naturalization is consistently slowing down: in 2016-2021, it dropped to a record low and constituted 987 persons, 915 persons, 930 persons, 808 persons, 725 persons and 368 persons per year respectively (for comparison, 19,169 persons were naturalized in 2005).

In connection to this fundamental problem international universal and regional human rights protection mechanisms have published over fifty recommendations, including on simplifying the naturalization procedure, provision to "non-citizens" of electoral rights and respect ethnic minorities' language rights in their entirety.

On 5 November 2019, Latvia adopted the law on automatic assignment of citizenship to children born in families of non-citizens. However, it concerns only a few dozens of new-born babies per year (in 2020, the non-citizen status was assigned to thirty-one babies in Latvia).

In the context of the compulsory derussification policy, it is becoming more notable that the authorities are actively narrowing the sphere of application of non-official languages. Latvian is the only language allowed for communication with authorities, use in topographic signs and other inscriptions, as well as in identity documents. The de facto elimination of Russian-language education is carried out through a comprehensive education reform (transition of schools and kindergartens into the Latvian language of instruction, development and implementation of new educational content, optimization of the school network, prohibition of teaching in Russian in private universities). These discriminatory innovations are supported by the judicial branch. For example, in 2019 and 2020, the Constitutional Court of Latvia recognized as constitutional the provisions on the derussification of education and the introduction of compulsory instruction in the Latvian language at various levels of education.

As the result of such abhorrent measures, on 1 September 2021, the transit period of the school reform was completed, and starting from the

2021/2022 academic year instruction in all middle and secondary school educational institutions is fully in the Latvian language.

It is impossible to receive university education in Russian in Latvian state universities. The only exception is some Slavic studies subjects (Russian, Belarusian, Polish languages).

The Latvianization of education has also affected private educational and pre-school institutions. On 14 May 2020, the Saeima of Latvia adopted amendments to the law On Education that obliged all municipal preschool educational institutions to provide educational programmes in Latvian.

On 16 June 2022, the Saeima approved in the first reading another set of amendments to the law On Education that envisage full transition to teaching in Latvian in pre-schools since 1 September 2023, in schools – since 1 September 2025.

The trend for ousting non-official languages (above all, the Russian language) is becoming increasingly notable in other areas of public life in Latvia. There has been a consistent strategy to oust the Russian language from the media. Over the years, provisions have been made to increase the share of broadcasts and publications in Latvian and official EU languages, and simultaneously limit radio and television broadcasting, as well as publications in Russian.

Pursuant to the new law on administrative punishments for offences in the sphere of management, public order and use of the official language, since 1 July 2020, liability has been introduced for demonstration of "serious disrespect to the official language", the conclusion of contracts with employees who do not know Latvian, and unwillingness to ensure the use of Latvian language at work. Promotional materials disseminated among Latvian citizens should be in Latvian only. An exception is possible if a person has expressed consent to receive materials in other languages, too.

In spite of the critical situation in healthcare system and significant problems with the organization of the vaccination campaign, this restriction had a great impact on the mass-scale vaccination in the country in 2021, especially among elderly people (this age group constitutes a significant part of Latvia's Russian-speaking population). The authorities did not agree to suspend the law even temporarily, thereby limiting access to vital data for our fellow citizens.

On 16 June 2022 amendments to the law On Political Parties were also approved, making it possible to suspend the activities of political associations for "denying crimes or expressing support for undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of democratic states". Although no countries are named in the text, it is obvious that this innovation is aimed primarily against those political parties that represent the interests of the Russian-speaking residents of Latvia who are in favor of maintaining ties with Russia.

At the same time, a draft law was adopted in the second reading that only allows to finance election campaigns in the State language.

In addition, Latvia has begun to universally embrace the "culture of cancelling Russia". In June 2022, a request approved by the State Language Center was submitted to Riga City Council to rename the streets in Riga named after Russian scientists and artists. There is no doubt that this initiative will be implemented, particularly due to the fact that Latvian authorities are sympathetic to the "civic activism" of nationalist forces that present such ideas. In July 2022, Public Memory Center society collected 78 names "glorifying" the USSR and Russia which should be changed. Most of them are in Riga – 16, in Daugavpils – 9 and in Jūrmala – 6. In addition to names of Russian personalities and names connected with Russia, the list also includes many names of Soviet-era Latvian writers and public figures.³⁴³

³⁴³ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220715/issledovатели-sostavili-spisok-ulits-proslavlyayuschikh-sssr-22248323.html>

Russophobia is deeply rooted among Latvian politicians, who have allowed themselves to make discriminatory statements about Russians. In July 2022, Inese Vaidere, member of the European Parliament from the National Alliance party, in her post on social networking site expressed her indignation about the fact that flight announcements at Riga airport are made in three languages – Latvian, English and Russian, and the website of the airport has a Russian version. Andrejs Faibuševičs, a deputy of the National Alliance, banned speaking Russian in his bar in the Russian-speaking city of Daugavpils. In addition, he published a racist post about Latvian boxer Mairis Briedis, who speaks Russian. The deputy wrote in the publication that if Mairis Briedis did not know Russian, "he would have remained a normal Latvian, not turned into a vatnik. The problem is the ability to consume Russian information. Figuratively speaking, walking through a pigsty, it's quite difficult not to get your feet dirty".³⁴⁴

Such manifestations of Russophobia did not emerge out of thin air. The monitoring of data from international universal and regional human rights control mechanisms has repeatedly revealed the spread of intolerance against a number of groups in Latvia. For example, ECRI, referring to a 2016 survey conducted by the Latvian Centre for Human Rights among representatives of NGOs and migrants, as well as foreign students, noted that almost 68 per cent had been victims and 33 per cent had witnessed hate incidents or discrimination, or had heard about such incidents from others. 13 per cent of the respondents had been victims of an attack or had heard that someone else had fallen victim to such attacks. According to respondents, hate incidents were motivated by race (36 per cent), ethnicity/ xenophobia (25 per cent), language (22 per cent), and religion (6 per cent). Over 40 per cent of third-country nationals reported having experienced discrimination in situations such as interaction with public

³⁴⁴ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220724/kult-otmeny-izobreli-v-latvii-latviya-davno-otmenila-svoikh-russkikh-22310354.html>

authorities and police, in health care institutions, at border crossing points as well as in the street and public transport.³⁴⁵

ECRI has also noted that the Latvian legislation contains gaps in terms of the prohibition of racial discrimination and public expression of or incitement to hatred and insults based on race, language, religion or ethnic origin. The Commission noted an increase in Islamophobic rhetoric in public and political discussions in Latvia.³⁴⁶

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) established in line with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination noted that unofficial data showed a higher number of hate crimes and hate speech than officially reported by Latvian authorities and expressed concern about information that victims of hate crimes do not want to report these crimes to the authorities. It also pointed to the use of hate speech by politicians in connection with the election, including the use of hate speech on the Internet.³⁴⁷ Latvian authorities regularly prove in practice this observation made by the CERD. An example could be the statement of Latvian Defense Minister Artis Pabriks who during the spread of the coronavirus infection in 2020 suggested not to treat those who came to pay tribute to the Red Army soldiers at the monument to the Liberators of Riga on May 9 and to oblige them to pay for treatment "to those who were around them".

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has expressed concern about the absence of a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and provisions aimed at ensuring equality and non-discrimination in the economic, social, and cultural spheres. The Committee has also pointed out the

³⁴⁵ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Latvia (fifth monitoring cycle) adopted on December 4, 2018, and published on March 5, 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-latvia/1680934a9f>

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 6th to 12th periodic reports of Latvia. August 2018. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLV%2fCO%2f6-12&Lang=ru

prevalence of prejudice and discrimination based on colour, language, religion, national or ethnic origin that hinder disadvantaged and marginalized groups' access to economic, social and cultural rights.³⁴⁸

UN Human Rights Treaty bodies have also paid attention to the problem of non-citizens in Latvia. Thus, the Committee against Torture, even though upon the whole in December 2019 it welcomed the progress Latvia achieved in addressing the issue of statelessness, at the same time expressed its concern about the fact that the law granting automatic citizenship to children of non-citizens does not cover all minor non-citizens.³⁴⁹ In 2018, The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination also expressed its concerns over the education reform and the remaining problem of non-citizens. Experts recommended that Latvian authorities take the necessary measures to ensure that its language policy and laws do not create direct or indirect discrimination of the population.³⁵⁰ The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has noted that in 2021 discrimination against non-citizens, persisted in the country; according to its data, that year, the number of non-citizens in Latvia was about 209 thousand.³⁵¹

Steps taken by the Latvian authorities on the language, with a view to shaping a monolingual society are also being subjected to criticism. According to the conclusions made back in 2018 of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM Advisory Committee) operating under the framework of the Council of Europe,

³⁴⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 2nd periodic report of Latvia. March 2021. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/059/69/pdf/G1805969.pdf?OpenElement>

³⁴⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the 6th periodic report of Latvia. December 2019. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fLVA%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

³⁵⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 6th to 12th periodic reports of Latvia. September 2018 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLVA%2fCO%2f6-12&Lang=ru

³⁵¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 2nd periodic report of Latvia. March 2021. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/059/69/pdf/G1805969.pdf?OpenElement>

the language policy pursued by Latvian leadership has the effect of diminishing the space for the use of languages of national minorities.³⁵² In fact, the country's ongoing comprehensive education reform aims to eliminate bilingual schools and end the use of the Russian language at educational institutions of all levels. The Russian language was called the second most widespread among the population. According to the 2017 study of the Central Statistical Bureau, 37.7 per cent of the population spoke Russian (while 61.3 per cent spoke Latvian).³⁵³

The FCNM Advisory Committee has also pointed to the fact that the education reform pursued by the Latvian authorities puts students belonging to national minorities at a distinct disadvantage in terms of academic performance, which, in turn, may affect their ability to successfully integrate into the society and the economy.³⁵⁴

In its opinion of June 2020 on the education reform in Latvia, the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission of the Council of Europe) also mentioned problems in education for national minorities. The Commission expressed the opinion that the introduction of Latvian as the main language in kindergartens should be reconsidered, because acquiring proficiency in minorities' own languages is crucial for preserving their identity as well as linguistic diversity within the society. It was also noted that private schools should be granted the right to implement educational programs in minority languages, and that legislative innovations of Latvian authorities prohibited it.

The CESCER has also expressed concern over the measures taken by the official Riga to Latvianize education. In particular, it noted that this language

³⁵² The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities opinion on Latvia (third cycle), adopted on February 25, 2018. <https://rm.coe.int/3rd-op-latvia-en/16808d891d>

³⁵³ <https://www.csb.gov.lv/en/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/search-in-theme/2747-latvian-mother-tongue-608-population-latvia>

³⁵⁴ The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities opinion on Latvia (third cycle), adopted on February 25, 2018. <https://rm.coe.int/3rd-op-latvia-en/16808d891d>

policy adopted by the authorities may have a discriminatory impact on persons belonging to minorities, especially in the fields of education, employment, and access to services. It was also noted that the Committee remains concerned that the amendments to the Education Law, and Cabinet Regulation No. 716 of 21 November 2018, have a discriminatory effect on minority groups and that they create undue restrictions on the teaching of minority languages and instruction in minority languages in both in public and private pre-schools and primary schools.³⁵⁵

The resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Latvia published on 3 March 2021 drew attention to discrimination against national minorities in Latvia as well.³⁵⁶ It states that cases of documented inflammatory statements by Latvian public figures in the Republic of Latvia have not led to the authorities taking sufficient action, creating an impression of impunity and ambivalence, thus affecting negatively the interethnic climate. Besides, "restrictive policies and other pressures driven by a political agenda are particularly evident in the education system, the media, and with regard to the use of national minority languages". It was also noted that the broad scope of application of linguistic requirements in Latvia adversely affects the possibility for non-native speakers of Latvian of accessing positions within the public service.

All of the above indicates that Latvian authorities deliberately indulge radical manifestations of neo-Nazism, the continuing violent revision of historical events and the glorification of Latvian legionnaires under false pretexts of their alleged participation in the "national liberation movement. In

³⁵⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 2nd periodic report of Latvia. March 2021. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/059/69/pdf/G1805969.pdf?OpenElement>

³⁵⁶ Resolution CM/ResCMN(2021)9 on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Latvia. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 March 2021 at the 1397th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies. https://search.coe.int/cm/pages/result_details.aspx?objectid=0900001680a14111

addition, it is clear that the Russian and Russian-speaking population of Latvia, primarily non-citizens, are discriminated against on the grounds of race.

Lithuania

The official Vilnius is openly undertaking the policy to falsify the history of World War II and glorify Nazi collaborators as national heroes, contradicting the conclusions of the Nuremberg Tribunal. The authorities take efforts to openly justify the crimes of Nazi collaborators – the so-called Forest Brothers. This year, this policy was expanded to include the planting of hatred against Russians and everything associated with Russia, including monuments in honor of Soviet soldiers who died liberating Lithuania from Nazism.

Given such cynical attitudes in Lithuanian political circles, it is not surprising that every year the country's representatives, following EU foreign policy guidelines, every year abstain from voting on the resolution of the UN General Assembly "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance".

At the highest level, the Lithuanian authorities regularly voice revisionist assessments and outright falsifications of historical facts. So, for example, on 7 May 2020, the presidents of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia Gitanas Nausėda, Egils Levits and Kersti Kaljulaid adopted a joint statement on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, in which they called "occupation" the liberation of the Baltic States from the Nazis by the Red Army, "as one totalitarian regime was replaced by another". Another example is the video message of the heads of the three Baltic States posted in June 2021 on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of deportation from these countries (14 June 1941). It also attempts to elaborate on the idea of an equal responsibility of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union for starting World War II.³⁵⁷

Along with parades that have been traditionally held by Lithuanian neo-Nazi organizations and right-wing forces on the occasion of national holidays

³⁵⁷ Presidents of the Baltic States once again tell lies about Soviet deportations. Web-site Remembrance, Research and Justice: Heritage of WWII in the 21st Century 15 June 2021 <https://remembrance.ru/2021/06/15/pribaltijskie-prezidenty-vnov-vystupili-s-lozhju-o-sovetskih-deportacijah/>

on February 16 ("Day of restoration of Lithuanian statehood") and March 11 ("Day of restoration of independence of Lithuania"), in 2022 the Republic of Lithuania, in a rush of historical revisionism decided to demolish monuments to Soviet soldiers located in places of burial of the Red Army soldiers across the country. This policy is motivated by the desire to get rid of the "totalitarian legacy". The legal framework has been prepared accordingly: Soviet symbols are forbidden by law in Lithuania. After the Communist period in the country's history was officially recognized as "occupation" on a par with the Nazi occupation, all facilities that remind of that time, especially monuments, became targets of destructive efforts by authorities at all levels.

After the beginning of the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine, a wave of vandalism swept over Lithuania, resulting in desecration of dozens of monuments, memorials and obelisks located mainly in the places of military burials. In particular, on March 2, in Žasliai (Kaišiadorys district) red paint was poured over a monument, in Pašaltuonys (Jurbarkas district) vandals wrote "Putler kaput" on the monument, and on March 3 red paint was poured over the monument in Eržvilkas (Jurbarkas district). In April 2022, vandals poured paint over the monuments in the village of Aukštėliai, Klaipėda district, dedicated to the 16th Lithuanian Division that liberated Klaipėda in January 1945, and the monument at the military cemetery in Kaunas, where Soviet prisoners of war were buried.³⁵⁸ Cases of desecration of memorials in Marijampolė, Šeta, Kurkliai, Bubiai, Žasliai³⁵⁹, Pašaltuonys and Eržvilkas³⁶⁰ were also reported. The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation is conducting criminal investigations into these incidents.

³⁵⁸ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/22042022-v-litve-oskvernili-dva-pamyatnika-sovetskim-voinam/>

³⁵⁹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/21042022-v-litve-snesli-ocherednoy-pamyatnik-sovetskim-soldatam/>

³⁶⁰ https://lt.baltnews.com/freedom_of_speech/20220411/1021506655/Litovskiy-sindrom-mezhdu-geroizatsiey-natsizma-i-istoricheskoy-pravdoy.html

Although Lithuanian law enforcement authorities reported that investigations had been initiated into these incidents, nothing is yet known about their results.

In addition, in April 2022, the Seimas of Lithuania approved amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences prohibiting the public display of the St. George ribbon, which was considered to be a symbol of the "totalitarian regime" that "promoted military aggression".

Obviously, the Lithuanian authorities are not interested in solving such crimes and are ready to turn a blind eye to them, since such actions are fully in line with the political course of the ruling circles. An example is the monument to the Soviet soldier in Kurkliai, Anykščiai District, that was desecrated by vandals on 10 April 2022. On 18 May 2022, the Utena district prosecutor's office made a decision to stop the pretrial investigation "due to the lack of corpus delicti". This outcome was facilitated by the fact that the sculpture had already been dismantled by the local government on May 5.³⁶¹

Vandalism against the Soviet monuments is condoned and even encouraged by the leaders of the Lithuanian state. For example, president of the country G.Nausėda unequivocally made it clear that he was not going to "put up with vestiges of Soviet propaganda".³⁶² Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė declared that she didn't understand "why monuments are considered to be some kind of heritage and what kind of heritage it is".³⁶³ In line with this approach, on 19 April 2022, Minister of Culture Simonas Kairys signed an order that allowed local governments to determine the future of Soviet monuments in cemeteries

³⁶¹ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220519/v-litve-zakryli-delo-ob-oskvernenii-pamyatnika-sovetskomu-soldatu-23254639.html>

³⁶² <https://ru.respublika.lt/ru/naujienos/ru/politika/ne-miritsja-s-perezitkami-propagandi-i-razziganija-vojni-gnayseda-o-sovetskix-pamjatnikax/>

³⁶³ [https://www.lrt.lt/ru/novosti/17/1660229/evrei-litvy-osuzhdaiut-oskvernenie-memoriala-pamiati-zhertv-kholokosta#:~:text=%D0%95%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B9%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F%20%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%9B%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B2%D1%8B%20\(%D0%95%D0%9E%D0%9B\)%20%D0%B2.%D0%BC%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%20o%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%B2%D1%8B%D1%85%20%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%B8%D0%B9%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%20%D0%B2%20%D0%9F%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%80%D1%8F%D0%B9](https://www.lrt.lt/ru/novosti/17/1660229/evrei-litvy-osuzhdaiut-oskvernenie-memoriala-pamiati-zhertv-kholokosta#:~:text=%D0%95%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B9%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F%20%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%9B%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B2%D1%8B%20(%D0%95%D0%9E%D0%9B)%20%D0%B2.%D0%BC%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%20o%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%B2%D1%8B%D1%85%20%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%B8%D0%B9%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%20%D0%B2%20%D0%9F%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%80%D1%8F%D0%B9)

that "give off aggression and symbolize war".³⁶⁴ At the same time Lithuanians make a formal reservation that the graves of the fallen and the tombstones will remain untouched, because, they say, Vilnius undertakes to fulfill the relevant provisions of the relevant Geneva Conventions. In practice, however, they are not always observed.

As a result, by July 2022, the municipal authorities of Lithuania decided to dismantle tens of monuments, memorials, obelisks and statues, including in the largest cities. It has already happened in Kaunas, where the local authorities in April demolished a monument depicting a Soviet soldier at the Aukštieji Šančiai military cemetery. The cemetery contains the graves of 5,065 soldiers and officers of several rifle corps of the 3rd Byelorussian Front's 5th Army who died in July 1944 in the battles in the area, including 12 Heroes of the Soviet Union.³⁶⁵ On July 4-6, 2022, the dismantling of the sculpture of three soldiers, the sword, and the red star and the eternal flame effectively destroyed the memorial to Red Army soldiers in Klaipėda.³⁶⁶

Supporting the Russophobic hysteria, Vilnius authorities decided to demolish the memorial to Soviet soldiers in the Antakalnis cemetery, where Lithuania's largest burial site is located. At a meeting of the city council, mayor Remigijus Šimašius called the monument "a militaristic monstrosity not fitting the graves".³⁶⁷ The centerpiece of the memorial are six steles with images of Soviet soldiers. For decades, this particular monument has been the main venue of wreath-laying ceremonies by the Russian Embassy on memorable days of World War II. On such days Russian compatriots gathered there as well.

³⁶⁴ <https://lrkm.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/parengtos-rekomendacijos-savivaldybems-del-sovietiniu-paminklu-nukelimo>

³⁶⁵ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/26042022-v-kaunase-snesli-pamyatnik-na-zakhoronenii-sovetskikh-voinov/>

³⁶⁶ https://www.1tv.ru/news/2022-07-05/432684-v_klaypede_nachalsya_snos_monumenta_sovetskim_voinam_kotorye_pogibli_osvobozhdaya_litvu_ot_fashizm_a

³⁶⁷ <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/06/08/pamyatnik/>

The above facts and the Lithuanian policy on war memorials as a whole contradict the provisions of the previously mentioned annual UN General Assembly resolution on the fight against the glorification of Nazism.

The state policy of Lithuania to falsify the history of World War II on the basis of the idea about equal responsibility of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany for its unleashing, reinforcement of the idea of "the Soviet occupation" of the Baltic countries manifest in school education programs and in heroization of the local post-war underground. In 2022, school administrations, with the approval of the authorities, took radical measures: they began firing³⁶⁸ teachers who demonstrated "dissent" on historical issues and on the current political agenda, primarily on the topic of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine.

The policy of whitewashing and glorifying the Forest Brothers (according to the Lithuanian interpretation – "partisans") as alleged "heroes of the national liberation movement" and "fighters against the Soviet regime" continues. Groups of these "activists", numbering up to 30 thousand people, acting on the territory of Lithuania from 1944 to 1956, are responsible for killing over 25 thousand civilians, including children, women and elderly people. Most of the victims were ethnic Lithuanians. Many of the band members actively collaborated with the occupation administration of the Third Reich and were part of it, were directly involved in the Holocaust in Lithuania during World War II, when about 220 thousand Jews were killed (96 per cent of the Jewish population living in the country at that time). Witnesses say that the Forest Brothers came from the very villages whose residents they murdered and robbed.³⁶⁹ After the war, the Forest Brothers continued their terrorist activities, killing not only the representatives of the Soviet government, but also people who had saved Jews from Nazis during the war. For example, on 10 June 1945,

³⁶⁸ <https://news.rambler.ru/world/48627304-nashi-v-litve-apogey-rusofobii-borba-s-pisatelyami-i-vzvinchennye-tseny/>

³⁶⁹ <https://iz.ru/1137992/andrei-razumovskii/banditskii-fors-v-litve-proslavliaiut-lesnykh-bratev>

forester Mykolas Šimelis who had saved 14 Jews was killed. The same happened to writer and linguist Matas Untulis who had saved 5 Jews.³⁷⁰

Celebrations in honor of the Forest Brothers take place in Lithuania annually. An important role in their glorification is played by the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania (LGGRTC) – a state-funded organization studying "the crimes of Soviet occupation" and community "resistance" to it. Under the auspices and with the participation of the Centre, "scientific" papers are published, and various related memorial events are held: monuments and memorials to the Forest Brothers are installed, their remains are looked for and re-buried³⁷¹, memoirs of collaborators are published and disseminated, etc.

In May 2021, the LGGRTC was headed by Arūnas Bubnys, a historian with a controversial reputation. In particular, his research on World War II was sharply criticized by Jewish Holocaust experts in Lithuania.³⁷² It is noteworthy that during one of the speeches in this capacity, the head of the LGGRTC was on a platform under a photo of Jonas Noreika (he collaborated with the Nazis during World War II and was involved in the mass murder of Jews; during the Nazi occupation of Lithuania, he headed the Šiauliai district; he issued an order to create a ghetto in Šiauliai, where all Jews from the surrounding areas were put). There was also an image of Kazys Škirpa, the founder of the Lithuanian Activist Front, whose writings advocated ethnic cleansing of Jewish Lithuanian citizens.

As for Jonas Noreika, it is noteworthy that his involvement in the mass murder of Jews and collaboration with the Nazis was admitted by his

³⁷⁰ https://lt.baltnews.com/freedom_of_speech/20220411/1021506655/Litovskiy-sindrom-mezhdu-geroizatsiey-natsizma-i-istoricheskoy-pravdy.html

³⁷¹ https://lt.baltnews.com/freedom_of_speech/20210720/1020933569/Vse-iz-za-krizisa-Kak-vlasti-Litvy-ispolzuyut-geroizatsiyu-lesnykh-bratev.html

³⁷² https://baltnews.lt/vnutri_Lithuania_politika_novosti/20210501/1020769520/Istoricheskij-sgovor-V-Tsentre-genotsida-Litvy-novyy-obelitel-Kholokosta.html

granddaughter, journalist Sylvia Foti, in her book about him, which was published in the United States in 2021.³⁷³

In May 2021, a monument to another Forest Brother Antanas Kraujelis, nicknamed "Siaubūnas" ("Monster" in Russian) was opened in one of the cemeteries of the Lithuanian capital in the presence of members of parliament and representatives of the executive branch, including Deputy Defense Minister Žilvinas Tomkus, Lieutenant General Valdemaras Rupšys, commander of the Lithuanian army, and Arūnas Bubnys, director of the LGGRTC. The tombstone was consecrated personally by Catholic Archbishop Gintaras Grušas.³⁷⁴

In December 2021, Vilnius authorities opened a new square in the capital and named it in honor of "hero" Juozas Lukša, one of the most well-known leaders of the Lithuanian anti-Soviet movement, a member of the Lithuanian Activist Front, and also the agent of Western special services, who was sent to Lithuania to fight against the Soviet regime after the Great Patriotic War (at the same time, the official Vilnius conceals the fact that Juozas Lukša was an active participant in the Holocaust in Lithuania). The event was preceded by the decision of the Lithuanian parliament to declare 2021 the year of Lukša. The demand by Faina Kukliansky, chair of the Lithuanian Jewish Community (LJC) to the parliament to cancel the relevant decision caused indignation of the right-wing forces and provoked a scandal.³⁷⁵ Earlier, on the day of Lukša death, Lithuania honored his "heroic deeds" in the fight against Soviet authorities. The event was attended by Lithuanian Defense Minister Arvydas Anušauskas, rifle squads, members of the Seimas of the Republic, mayors, and local residents. President G.Nausėda recalled that Lukša's remains have not yet been found and

³⁷³ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20210310/Vnuchka-litovskogo-posobnika-natsistov-vypustila-knigu-o-prestupleniyakh-deda-14640287.html>

³⁷⁴ https://lt.baltnews.com/vnutri_Lithuania_politika_novosti/20210520/1020805098/Litovskiy-standart-vozvyshenie-prestupnikov-stanovitsya-gosudarstvennoy-normoy.html

³⁷⁵ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/politics/20200716/12640637/V-Litve-razgorelsya-skandal-vokrug-zayavleniya-glavy-EOL-o-partizane.html>

called it the duty of Lithuanians to find them. He also called this Forest Brother an example of patriotism and courage for Lithuanian youth.³⁷⁶

Anti-Semitic manifestations continue to be recorded in the country. Vandalism at Jewish cemeteries has been a regular occurrence for many years, and as a rule, the perpetrators are not found. For example, in the spring of 2022, unknown persons desecrated the memorial to Holocaust victims and World War II victims in Paneriai near Vilnius four times. In a statement condemning these incidents, the JCL noted the "apathy of the responsible agencies and public tolerance of such attacks".³⁷⁷

It should be separately mentioned that the policy of official Vilnius to "cover up" and glorify the Forest Brothers, who took an active part in the extermination of Jews, is regularly and officially condemned in Israel, Israel believes that Lithuania spreads "false narratives" about the history of the Holocaust.³⁷⁸

In November 2021, Lithuanian authorities in Šiauliai were forced to halt the construction of a bicycle route because it was discovered that it passed through a mass grave of Holocaust victims. The city's leaders did not make the decision immediately: it was only after the Jewish community raised the alarm.³⁷⁹

In September 2021, an act of vandalism took place at the old Jewish cemetery Piramontas (Šnipiškės) in Vilnius.³⁸⁰ Nazi swastika was painted on a plaque calling for respect for the final resting place of the Jewish people.

Names associated with the Nazis are still used in Lithuania. For example, in May 2022, another international military exercise Iron Wolf with the

³⁷⁶ https://lt.baltnews.com/vnutri_Lithuania_politika_novosti/20210906/1021036996/Agent-s-Zapada-Kak-posobnik-natsistov-zasluzhil-zvanie-geroya-Litvy.html

³⁷⁷ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220401/v-litve-oskvernili-pamyatnik-zhertvam-kholokosta-v-paneryae-22451502.html>

³⁷⁸ <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/lithuania-promotes-a-false-holocaust-narrative-opinion-655487>

³⁷⁹ https://baltnews.lt/vnutri_Lithuania_politika_novosti/20211118/1021198979/Snova-skandal-Litva-zakhotela-krutit-pedali-na-kostyakh.html

³⁸⁰ https://baltnews.lt/vnutri_Lithuania_politika_novosti/20210909/1021046743/Vandalizm-po-raspisaniyu-v-Litve-khudozhniki-izobrazili-svastiku.html

participation of NATO units was held at the Gaižiūnai training ground. The name Iron Wolf (Geležinis Vilkas) was the name of the Lithuanian nationalist antisemitic and Nazi movement (also known as the Iron Wolf Association) founded in 1927 that called for the creation of a powerful state following the example of the European Nazi movements. Its members actively participated in the slaughter of Poles and Jews. Later, after the organization was dissolved, its members joined the Lithuanian collaborators and together continued to participate in the extermination of the Baltic Jews. In 2021, there was a high-profile scandal during these exercises, when German soldiers stationed in Lithuania as part of the NATO contingent celebrated Hitler's birthday, all the while singing Nazi marches and anti-Semitic songs, bullying and beating up fellow soldiers.

Nationalist circles, the Department of State Security (the main secret service of Lithuania) and law enforcement agencies of the country subject to harassment and repressions all those who publicly declare the participation of Lithuanians in the Holocaust and the mass murder of civilians. Vilnius is making active efforts in this direction, despite the fact that these unsightly facts have historical evidence. In particular, the fact that Lithuanians themselves also took part in the Holocaust was pointed out to the Lithuanian authorities by Faina Kukliansky, chair of the JCL.³⁸¹

Besides, denial of Lithuania's characterization of the period when the country was part of the Soviet Union as "occupation" entails criminal persecution under Article 170 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania for "denial of Soviet occupation" that could lead up to two years in prison.

Retroactive application of law, violation of the principle of presumption of innocence and of the right to fair judicial proceedings have become the

³⁸¹ https://lt.baltnews.com/freedom_of_speech/20210617/1020869575/Streljali-v-zhenschin-i-detey-Litva-sluchayno-umolchala-ob-unichtozhenii-evreev.html,
https://baltnews.lt/freedom_of_speech/20210617/1020869575/Streljali-v-zhenschin-i-detey-Litva-sluchayno-umolchala-ob-unichtozhenii-evreev.html

standard judicial practice in this country, in particular in the continuing longtime judicial proceedings based on the criminal case (falsified based on political grounds) with regard to the well-known events in Vilnius in January 1991.

These legal provisions are used by Lithuanian special services and law enforcement agencies, as well as nationalist circles to persecute and harass anyone who expresses alternative views on Lithuanian domestic and foreign policy and history, much less publicly admits the involvement of Forest Brothers in the Holocaust and mass murders of civilians. In the opinion of a number of human rights activists, Lithuania has built up an entire system of measures and methods of putting pressure on those who disagree. A significant place within this system is occupied by the crimes introduced by Article 170-2 of the Lithuanian Criminal Code.

Criminal and administrative persecution of all dissidents who publicly challenge official interpretations of history continues. On 27 March 2019 the Vilnius District Court sentenced 67 former Soviet party and state figures, special forces soldiers and military personnel, most of them citizens of the Russia, to long terms of imprisonment for committing "war crimes and crimes against humanity" in January 1991. On 31 March 2021, the Court of Appeal of Lithuania increased Yuri Mel's prison term from 7 to 10 years, and Gennady Ivanov's prison term from 4 to 5 years. On 30 June 2022, the Supreme Court of Lithuania passed a ruling on the appeals lodged and reduced Yuri Mel's prison term by one year.³⁸²

Vivid evidence of discrimination of Russian citizens by the Lithuanian authorities is contained in the case of the former member of Riga special operation troops (OMON) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR K.Nikulin; on 11 May 2011, Vilnius District Court found him guilty of

³⁸² <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/30062022-sud-v-litve-sokratil-srok-lisheniya-svobody-rossiyaninu-yuriyu-melyu/>

premeditated murder of seven persons and attempted murder of one person at the Medininkai control point in July 1991. He was initially charged with "murder of two and more persons" (the limitation period established in respect of such crimes had expired by the date of the trial, so the charge was changed). No clear evidence was produced concerning K.Nikulin's involvement in the crime ascribed to him, however the Russian was sentenced to life imprisonment and a 650,000 euro fine. Even though in 2021 the Russian citizen was recognized as group 3 disabled person, the prison administration refused twice to transfer him from a detachment with strict detention conditions to a detachment with less severe detention conditions. In spite of the Russian Embassy's repeated motions, our citizen was denied medical diagnostic procedures which he has requested during several years because of the intensified pains in his stomach. In March 2020, having examined for two years K.Nikulin's petition seeking his transfer to Russia to serve punishment pursuant to the Russian-Lithuanian Agreement dated 25 June 2001, on transfer of persons sentenced to imprisonment for [further] serving punishment, the Ministry of Justice of Lithuania stated "that the transfer of the convict does not appear possible".

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) is in no hurry either to proceed with examination of the application of the Russian citizen, lodged as early as in 2017, and the decision whether this case would be examined has not been taken as of today. In October 2020, the Russian side informed the ECHR about its intention to take part in the proceedings on this application as a third party.

Apart from criminal prosecution of Russian citizens in Lithuania, similarly to other Baltic States, the local authorities and security services practice various methods of pressure on civic society activists, human rights activists and journalists expressing alternative opinions about their domestic and foreign policy as well as history. In the opinion of a number of human rights

activists, Lithuania has built up an entire system of measures and methods of putting pressure on those who disagree. A significant place within this system is occupied by the crimes introduced by Article 170-2 of the Lithuanian Criminal Code.

There have been new developments in the politicized case against prominent Lithuanian opposition activist Algirdas Paleckis, accused of spying for Russia. On 6 May 2022, the Lithuanian Court of Appeals approved a guilty verdict, according to which the activist was imprisoned for six years. The social activist had already spent more than a year in custody, then was placed under house arrest, but on May 11 was sent to prison to serve the rest of his sentence.³⁸³ His lawyer told the media that the disgraced politician was in solitary confinement, severely malnourished and suffering from health problems.³⁸⁴

The reason behind the persecution of Algirdas Paletskis is that in a TV interview he challenged the official version of January 1991 events near the Vilnius TV tower and the House of the press and, referring to the witnesses, stated that the bloodshed was provoked by the radicals who were seeking power and that when the TV tower in Vilnius was taken control of, "our own people shot at our own people". This phrase served as a reason to initiate a criminal case under article 170 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Latvia, which introduces the responsibility "for the denial of Soviet aggression and occupation".

In March 2020, the leader of the youth organization "Juventus", the organizer of the "Immortal regiment" in Klaipieda, A.Greychus, faced repressions. For the 70th anniversary of the Victory, his organization published brochures on the liberation of Klaipieda and donated them to the city's school

³⁸³ https://lt.baltnews.com/vnutri_Lithuania_politika_novosti/20220511/1021570079/Nesoglasnyk--v-tyurmu-Algirdasa-Paletskisa-okonchatelno-lishili-svobody.html

³⁸⁴ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220506/sud-litvy-otlkonil-zhalobu-osuzhdennogo-za-shpionazh-v-polzu-rf-paletskisa-21726124.html>

libraries. On 12 November 2021, the Klaipieda District Court found him guilty of "espionage in favor of the Russian Federation" and sentenced him to four years in prison. According to the case materials, the human rights defender was accused of collecting and transmitting to the "special services of the Russian Federation" information about the events he had organized, photographs of people who participated in these events, video materials and articles, a video report about the trial of Klaipieda politician V. Titov and information about the employees of the State Security Department. On 5 July 2022, the Lithuanian Court of Appeals upheld the verdict against the human rights activist.³⁸⁵

In late 2019, a harassment campaign was launched against the head of the Lithuanian Association of Teachers of Russian Schools, Ella Kanaite. As a result, she was fired from the school where she worked as a teacher and was not hired anywhere else. In 2019, a criminal case was initiated against Victor Orlov, head of the Forgotten Soldiers association, which searches for the remains of Soviet soldiers. The case was dropped after a year, but he was pressured for a long time, he received threats on the phone.³⁸⁶ In 2020, Tatyana Afanasieva-Kolomiets, organizer of the Immortal Regiment in Vilnius, was also searched and interrogated by officers of the State Security Department.

The Lithuanian authorities abolished the Lithuanian Russian Union. Its leader, Sergey Dmitriyev, is also constantly being attacked and threatened in all kinds of ways.

In this regard, a revealing event was the decision of the ECHR of 12 March 2019 in the case *Drėlingas v. Lithuania*, which upheld the sentence given by the Lithuanian court to Stanislovas Drėlingas, a former KGB officer who participated in the 1956 operation to apprehend Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas and his wife (later, the gang leader was executed by shooting). The

³⁸⁵ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220705/litovskomu-pravozaschitniku-ostavili-prezhniy-srok-zaklyucheniya-zashpionazh-23750586.html>

³⁸⁶ https://news.rambler.ru/world/48627304/?utm_content=news_media&utm_medium=read_more&utm_source=copylink

official Vilnius interprets this ruling of the European Court as recognizing that the Soviet authorities' campaign against the "partisans who fought for the freedom of Lithuania" constituted "genocide of the Lithuanian people."

In October 2020, the Main Electoral Commission of the Lithuanian Republic did not allow opposition politician V.Titov to participate in the elections to the Seimas, discarding part of the signatures collected by him that were required for registration. He accused the government of "bureaucratically blocking" a non-system politician. In 2019, V.Titov was fined for EUR 10,000 for his criticism of perpetuation of the memory of one the above-mentioned commanders of the Forest Brothers, Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas.

Due to prosecution by Lithuanian authorities, the chair of the Socialist People's Front, anti-fascist G.Grabauskas, also opposing glorification of the Forest Brothers and propagation of Russophobia, was forced to leave the country.

After the beginning of the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine, the number of demonstrations of Russophobia and discrimination of Russian citizens and persons of Russian origin has drastically increased in Lithuania. The media was the first one to be subjected to restrictions. A large-scale attack on Russian mass media was launched. The Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (LRTC) first suspended the broadcasting of RBC and Mir-24 channels for five years and applied similar sanctions to six other Russian and Belarusian channels. In March, the LRTC disconnected other programs of interstate TV and radio company Mir from the Lithuanian airwaves and blocked more than 50 news sites and some official portals of the Russian authorities. In April, the LRTC suspended re-broadcasting of 32 Russian-language channels (in particular, such channels as Kinokomedia, NTV Mir, Friday, Indian Cinema, TNT, Baby TV and others) controlled by Russian company Gazprom-Media. According to a report by LRTC, Gazprom Media holding company is owned by Gazprombank, against

which the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control has imposed sanctions. In addition, according to that body, the broadcasting or distribution on the Internet of television programmes owned by entities subject to anti-Russian sanctions contradicts the interests of Lithuania's "national security".³⁸⁷

The Lithuanian government has taken legislative measures aimed to prevent the spread of support for the Russian special military operation in Ukraine among the country residents. On March 17, the Seimas of Lithuania approved the amendments to the Criminal Code of Lithuania which, under the guise of war propaganda criminalization provide for criminal liability for its public support. At the same time, in mid-March, the Lithuanian Parliament approved legislative amendments regulating state procurement allowing excluding hostile States (meaning Russia and Belarus) from tenders and cancelling contracts that have been already concluded therewith.

On 19 April 2022, the Seimas of Lithuania adopted amendments to the laws on administrative offences and on meetings providing for ban on public demonstration of St. George ribbon and other symbols of "totalitarian and authoritarian regimes" used "for the aims of propaganda of the aggression effected by them, the committed crimes against humanity and war crimes" (including the letters Z and V). Penalties for individuals are fines from 300 to 700 euros, in case of repeated violations – up to 900 euros, fines for legal entities are higher – up to 1200 euros, and for repeated violations – up to 1500 euros.³⁸⁸

The level of anti-Russian rhetoric has drastically increased in the country, and such attitudes are actively encouraged in the society by the efforts made "at the top". In March 2022, a plan for organization of mass-scale telephone calls to put psychological pressure on the Russian population was launched. For these

³⁸⁷ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220420/v-litve-zapretili-retranslyatsiyu-bolee-30-rossiyskikh-telekanalov-22816590.html>

³⁸⁸ www.lt.sputniknews.ru/20220419/seym-litvy-zapretil-publichnoe-ispolzovanie-georgievskoy-lenty-22788067.html

purposes, huge posters with the words "Call Russia" were installed in Lithuanian cities and towns, they proposed to "all those who are not indifferent" to make calls via the technological platform callrussia.org to Russian numbers and convince people to act against the special operation conducted by Russia. The organizers asserted that this resource had at its disposal a database containing forty million Russian private telephone numbers. Volunteers were assisted in organization of such calls by specialists in the field of technology, advertising and communications who instructed how to conduct the conversation. Moreover, the project organizers suggested that its participants call their friends and acquaintances in Russia for the same purposes.

Given all the efforts made by the Lithuanian government for smearing and discrimination of everything that is connected to Russia, since February 2022, there have been manifestations of hatred and discrimination against Russian citizens and Russian-speaking residents of the country. According to human rights activist Giedrius Grabauskas, in 2022 threats to Russian-speaking residents became more frequent. There have been cases when cars were smashed and people were attacked on the streets.

The local media regularly add fuel to the fire. They publish Russophobic speeches by Lithuanian politicians and public figures.

The hysteria has affected culture as well. Books by Russian classics began to be removed from Lithuanian libraries. Lithuanian publishers, including those that print Russian-language materials, are also subjected to persecution. For example, White Swans publishing house, which publishes books in both Lithuanian and Russian, is under pressure. There is information that under the influence of the Department of Strategic Communications of the Lithuanian army, the books of the publishing house were withdrawn from libraries and stores.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁹ https://news.rambler.ru/world/48627304/?utm_content=news_media&utm_medium=read_more&utm_source=copylink

The Russophobic hysteria correlates with the manifestations of xenophobia that international human rights monitoring mechanisms have detected in Lithuania.

Specialized international organizations have repeatedly documented persisting violations of the rights of Roma, as well as other national minorities, and certain social groups. Thus, the specialized Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) established in line with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, pointed to the prevalence in the country of biased attitudes towards members of vulnerable and minority groups, especially migrants, Muslims and Roma, "hate speech" and insults against them, including anti-Semitic statements in the media and on the Internet.³⁹⁰

The Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (AC-FCNM) operating within the Council of Europe has noted that the authorities' efforts to mitigate the negative effects of assimilation policies on minority language learners are insufficient, as well as the existence of problems regarding the use by linguistic minorities of their native languages.³⁹¹

Among other human rights problems, international monitoring organizations note the existence in Lithuania of deeply rooted prejudices against vulnerable and minority groups, especially migrants, Muslims, Roma, and Jews. This has resulted in the widespread use of hate speech, particularly in the media, including Internet platforms, and in the political discourse.³⁹²

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 9th and 10th periodic reports of Lithuania. June 2019

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLTU%2fCO%2f9-10&Lang=ru

³⁹¹ The Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities opinion on Lithuania (fourth cycle), adopted on 30 May 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-advisory-committee-opinion-on-lithuania-english-language-version/1680906d97>

Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 4th periodic report of Lithuania. July 2018

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fLTU%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru

The international community remains concerned about the anti-discrimination provisions in Lithuanian law. For example, the European Commission has noted that provisions in Lithuanian law do not adequately integrate EU standards on criminal liability for certain forms of hate speech inciting violence or hatred. For example, there was only liability for publicly condoning, denying or grossly downplaying international crimes and the Holocaust in Lithuania when public order was violated and only if such actions were committed on Lithuanian territory or against Lithuanian citizens.³⁹³

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), citing national data for 2021, also indicated that Lithuania had increased the number of complaints of discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnicity to the relevant authorities.

Roma remain the most vulnerable group. Persistent discrimination against Roma, particularly in the exercise of their rights to housing, health care, employment and education, has been noted with concern by UN human rights treaty bodies such as the Human Rights Committee (HRC) and CERD, as well as the AC FCNM. This included indications that the Roma community faces social exclusion and is disproportionately affected by poverty.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), which operates under the Council of Europe, has referred to the problem of the legalization of Roma buildings in the Kirtimai camp in Vilnius.³⁹⁴ The FRA has also referred to unresolved problems with Roma housing, including in the camp.

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 9th and 10th periodic reports of Lithuania. June 2019

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLTU%2fCO%2f9-10&Lang=ru;

The Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities opinion on Lithuania (fourth cycle), adopted on 30 May 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-advisory-committee-opinion-on-lithuania-english-language-version/1680906d97>

³⁹³ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

ECRI conclusions on the implementation of the recommendations in respect of Lithuania subject to interim follow-up, adopted on 3 April 2019, published on 6 June 2019.

<https://rm.coe.int/interim-follow-up-conclusions-on-lithuania-5th-monitoring-cycle-/168094ce17>

The problem of migrants in Lithuania also remains under the scrutiny of international human rights mechanisms. It is noted that many asylum seekers are denied entry to Lithuanian territory or access to asylum procedures, including the services of a lawyer. Those who have managed to remain in Lithuania still face difficulties in terms of fully integrating into the society and suffer from prejudices and discrimination in access to housing.

Racial discrimination has also been recorded in Lithuania against natives of African and Asian regions, who began coming to the country en masse in 2021. Since May 2021, thousands of refugees from Africa and the Middle East have illegally entered the country across the border with Belarus. Migrants in the border areas were directed to tent camps, as well as settled in abandoned public buildings. The condition of all such facilities was unsatisfactory. Often people could not leave them. When the number of accepted migrants exceeded 4,000, the border guard was ordered to turn people away and not allow them to enter its territory. Lithuanian authorities passed legislation allowing for the forced return of illegally entered persons detained at the country's borders. According to the FRA, as of the end of 2021, some 8,000 people have not been allowed into the country by the Lithuanian authorities.³⁹⁵ One year after the start of the migration crisis, about 2,700 people remain in Lithuania, living in special camps.

Lithuanian authorities are not going to abandon the measures applied to migrants. Minister of Interior Agnė Bilotaitė said that Lithuania considers the tactics of driving out illegal migrants as the main strategy in the fight against the migration crisis and does not intend to abandon its decisions, despite criticism by human rights organizations. Vilnius justifies its harsh actions against migrants by the need to protect against the influx of illegal migration.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁵ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

³⁹⁶ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220802/litva-prodolzhit-taktiku-vytesneniya-migrantov-zayavili-v-mvd-24065519.html>

Belarusian border guards have repeatedly noted that Lithuanian and Polish law enforcers are forcibly pushing migrants into their territory. The maximum number of displaced people for 2022 was recorded on July 18 (80 people).³⁹⁷

The position of the Supreme Administrative Court of Lithuania on a migrant's complaint against a district court's decision to detain him (he was detained in Poland together with a group of people who were on their way from Lithuania) is noteworthy in this regard. With reference to the clarification of the EU Court of Justice on the request for interpretation of the acts of the European Union concerning the granting of international protection and the admission of applicants under such protection, no administrative formalities are required to "request" international protection, as they are fulfilled at the moment of "making" the request. For the latter step, the applicant for international protection must fill in the form provided for in the relevant directive. Moreover, any third-country national or stateless person is entitled to apply for international protection in the territory of an EU Member State, including its borders or transit zones, even if he or she is in that territory illegally. The Expanded Chamber of Judges has stressed that a State retains the right to require that applications for international protection be made in person and/or in a particular place. At the same time, the state cannot exercise this right in such a way as to discourage the application or deal with the application as soon as possible. This also applies to cases where the State has a special situation due to a massive influx of aliens. The Lithuanian court has pointed out that the fact that the applicant is unlawfully present in the territory of an EU Member State is not one of the grounds on which his detention can be justified. The declaration of an emergency situation due to a mass influx of migrants was also not considered a reason for detention on the grounds of a threat to security or public policy. Thus, the unlawfulness of the applicant's presence in Lithuania was not

³⁹⁷ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220718/v-litve-za-sutki-vytesnili-v-belorussiyu-rekordnoe-chislo-nelegalov-23899430.html>

regarded by the court as a serious threat to the main public interest (without reference to his conduct in the particular case).³⁹⁸

International human rights organizations have drawn attention to the problem of migrants in Lithuania. Thus, Amnesty International NGO³⁹⁹ published a report in July 2022, accusing the authorities of racism and cruel treatment of refugees from Africa and the Middle East. It is noted that the Lithuanian authorities do not want to treat all asylum seekers equally – this difference is especially noticeable against the background of the "as friendly as possible" reception of Ukrainians in the country. The report also mentions torture, inhumane detention conditions, cases of sexual violence, denial of access to asylum procedures, and forcing refugees to "voluntarily" return to their home country. A number of other human rights organizations (Human Rights Monitoring Institute, Lithuanian Red Cross, Human Rights Center, Diversity Development Group NGO) have also criticized Lithuania, claiming repeated human rights violations in the country.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁸ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220731/vysshiy-administrativnyy-sud-litvy-otmenil-reshenie-o-zaderzhanii-migranta-24047594.html>

³⁹⁹ www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/lithuania/report-lithuania/

⁴⁰⁰ www.delfi.lt/ru/news/article.php7icH87869519

Luxembourg

The official authorities of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (hereinafter referred to as GDL) seek to prevent the emergence of neo-Nazi movements in the country. Extremist and radical nationalist parties and groups of a racist and xenophobic character are neither popular nor supported in Luxembourg. Print media and Internet publications containing calls for discrimination on racial or national grounds are prohibited, as well as the use of hate speech.

At the same time, law enforcement authorities do not rule out the existence of some elements in the country who secretly sympathize with neo-Nazi ideas and share them. In the light of the special military operation conducted by the Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine, there has been a rise in Russophobic sentiments among Luxembourgers. Cases of harassment against Russian children at schools and aggressive attacks against our compatriots were recorded. Leaflets featuring the Ukrainian flag and the appeal "Russians – get out of Luxembourg!" were thrown into their mailboxes.

There was an attack in the centre of Luxembourg on 7 March 2022, under unclear circumstances, on a Russian-speaking Ukrainian girl, who suffered serious stab wounds. As her nationality was not known, the Russian Embassy in Luxembourg sent a note to GDL's Foreign Ministry demanding an investigation into the incident. GDL's Foreign Ministry was also notified that the Embassy had information on specific manifestations of Russophobia.

As a result of the Embassy's persistent requests, the Luxembourg Foreign Ministry's leadership gave assurance that every time they had contact with the Ukrainian community they warned against a relapse into Russophobia, and urged not to escalate the situation and not to vent negative emotions on the Russian-speaking population of the Grand Duchy.

Luxembourg's Foreign Minister, J.Asselborn, said on 9 March 2022 that "under no circumstances should the Russian community be discriminated against in Luxembourg".

We have recently seen a trend towards self-radicalization of individuals through access to extremist material and 'hate speech' on social media. Late 2021 saw the end of the first trial in Luxembourg's history of a young couple accused of having links to ISIS and distributing terrorist material on social media. The man was sentenced to 3.5 years, and the young woman, to 2 years.

The so-called "Steve Duarte case" remains relevant. The 35-year-old rap artist, a Portuguese national born in Luxembourg, left in 2014 to fight for Islamic State in Syria. He is currently being held in the Kurdish prison of Ghwayran in al-Hasakah, northeastern Syria. Several years ago he expressed his desire to return to the Grand Duchy to face trial. But in Luxembourg he was accused of committing grave crimes in the ranks of ISIS (in one of the videos published by Islamists he appears during an execution). According to media reports, Luxembourg's Foreign Ministry is closely monitoring the situation, but there has been no talk of "repatriating" Steve Duarte to GDL yet. The possibility of negotiations between Luxembourg and Portugal over the "Duarte case" has also been mentioned. In July 2022, the Prosecutor's Office of Luxembourg confirmed that the Luxembourg Portuguese was "on trial".

There is also a growing popularity of nationalist ideas and extreme right-wing movements in the Grand Duchy. In November 2021, the police found weapons and right-wing extremist propaganda material in the home of a Luxembourger in Schiffflange. The authorities were alarmed by the large-scale (by local standards) and unauthorized protests, which in some cases took violent forms, held by covid dissidents in late 2021, days after the Government had announced its plans to introduce tougher anti-Covid measures. Some protesters "stormed" Christmas markets, attempted to break into the Parliament building and deliberately staged rallies outside the homes of Minister for Family Affairs, C.Cahen, and Prime Minister, X.Bettel. The police then did not rule out the involvement of members of radical groups in organizing the protests.

Opinion polls on anti-discrimination, including EU-wide surveys (e.g. the 2019 study "Being Black in the EU" by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), show that Luxembourg ranks among the bottom three countries in a number of indicators. For example, among almost 6,000 respondents from 12 States, 47 per cent of people from the African continent experienced various forms of harassment in Luxembourg, mainly in employment. However, in the other countries surveyed, the average number was 39 per cent. A number of experts still note the existence of anti-Semitic sentiments in Luxembourg society.

According to the study "Racism and ethno-racial discrimination in Luxembourg" published in March 2022, people of African descent suffer from racism and discrimination in employment, education and housing in much higher proportions than other population groups.

In addition, according to the report, two thirds of alleged victims of racism or discrimination fail to report incidents that happen to them, in particular due to significant financial costs, and problem of proof and access to full legal aid, which is usually limited, as well as out of fear to lose their jobs.⁴⁰¹

The legislation of GDL contains no provisions that declare illegal and prohibit any organization that incites racial discrimination. Moreover, the Equal Treatment Act does not contain criteria of national origin, colour and descent, and committing a racially motivated crime does not constitute an aggravating circumstance in Luxembourg⁴⁰² and is not considered by the courts when deciding on the penalties.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰¹ Racism and ethno-racial discrimination in Luxembourg. The Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and the Greater Region, the Centre for Intercultural and Social Studies and Training, the Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research. 8 March 2022.

https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/le-racisme-et-les-discriminations-ethno-raciales-au-luxembourg_en

⁴⁰² Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Luxembourg. May 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLUX%2fCO%2f18-20&Lang=ru

Report on Luxembourg of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (fifth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 6 December 2016. Published on 28 February 2017.

In its concluding observations on the combined eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Luxembourg, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), established under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, also criticized the draft constitutional amendments. The latter maintains article 10 bis (1) of the Constitution, which provides that "Luxembourgers are equal before the law", suggesting that there may be inequality between nationals and stateless persons.⁴⁰⁴

Today, international human rights monitoring mechanisms face difficulties in assessing whether different population groups fully enjoy the rights provided for in international human rights treaties. This is due to the fact that GDL does not collect statistical data, disaggregated by ethnicity.⁴⁰⁵

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)⁴⁰⁶ and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe⁴⁰⁷ believe that anti-Semitic sentiments, Islamophobia and migrant-phobia are widespread in Luxembourg, as are discriminatory stereotypes in the media and on the Internet, which contribute to prejudice against certain population groups.

In May 2022, the CERD observed an increasing trend of racist hate speech against migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and people of African descent, including on the Internet. BEE SECURE Stopline platform was

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-luxembourg/16808b589b>

⁴⁰³ The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

⁴⁰⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Luxembourg. May 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLUX%2fCO%2f18-20&Lang=ru

⁴⁰⁵ Ibis.

⁴⁰⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Luxembourg. March 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fLUX%2fCO%2f6-7&Lang=ru

⁴⁰⁷ Report on Luxembourg of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (fifth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 6 December 2016. Published on 28 February 2017.

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-luxembourg/16808b589b>

launched to counter this phenomenon. It helps to gather evidence of the use of hate speech on the Internet and forward it to the police.⁴⁰⁸

Although there is no legislative provision explicitly prohibiting ethnic or racial profiling in GDL⁴⁰⁹, the latter is generally not practiced among law enforcement officials.

At the same time, service in the Great Duchy's police force is subject to the requirement of Luxembourg citizenship. However, there is no such requirement for volunteers in the armed forces. In addition, GDL's Labour Code, as well as Act on equal treatment, Act, establishing the general status of State officials, and the Act, establishing the general status of municipal officials, do not prohibit discrimination on the basis of colour and descent.⁴¹⁰

International monitoring mechanisms also noted the poor refugee situation in the Grand Duchy. According to many human rights activists, the subsistence allowance allocated to them is clearly insufficient and employment opportunities are limited. CEDAW expressed concerns that requirements in vernacular language are perceived as barriers for foreigners and migrants in the labour market and education.⁴¹¹ The way of registering arriving refugee families also attracts criticism: one file is created for the head of the family, with spouses and children included, which leaves room for possible discriminatory attitudes. The methodology of registering arriving refugee families is also problematic: one file is created for the head of the family, with spouses and children included, which leaves room for possible discriminatory attitudes.

⁴⁰⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Luxembourg. May 2022.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLUX%2fCO%2f18-20&Lang=ru

⁴⁰⁹ Ibis.

⁴¹⁰ Ibis.

⁴¹¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Luxembourg. March 2018.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fLUX%2fCO%2f6-7&Lang=ru

On 13 July 2018, a National Action Plan on Integration was adopted in Luxembourg in response to ECRI's recommendations. Responsibility for putting the measures contained therein into practice was placed on the Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and the Greater Region. The action plan covers two areas: the reception of and social support for those seeking international protection, and the integration of all non-Luxembourg citizens residing in the country. The objectives in these areas are to be achieved by improving services for this population category, facilitating access to information and interaction, and enhancing national and international cooperation in this area.⁴¹²

At the administrative level, several institutions are involved in combating racial discrimination: the Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and the Wider Region, the Office of Reception and Integration of Luxembourg, the Ministry of Equal Opportunities, the Centre for Equal Treatment, the Committee of the Ombudsman for Children's Rights, and the Inspectorate for Labour and Mines. With regard to the fight against intolerance, in 2017 the Government established a centre to combat radicalization.⁴¹³

However, the CERD receives reports about the lack of coordination between these institutions and the fact that this multiplicity of actors makes it difficult for victims to determine which is the most appropriate institution to contact in a given situation. In addition, the Committee noted that the financial and human resources in some of them are insufficient to fulfil their mandates.⁴¹⁴

In order to promote cultural diversity and tolerance, as well as to promote ideas of inter-ethnic and inter-religious interaction, festivals are held in

⁴¹² Conclusions of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on the implementation of the recommendations in respect of Luxembourg subject to interim follow-up. Adopted on 10 December 2019. Published on 19 March 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/16809cde13>

⁴¹³ Centre to combat radicalization website: www.respect.lu

⁴¹⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Luxembourg. May 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fLUX%2fCO%2f18-20&Lang=ru

Luxembourg both at the national level and in individual communes, the largest of which, "CultiMulti", is organized on a regular basis.

Tolerant attitude towards ethnic minorities is also promoted in education, for example through "Life and Society" school programme, which includes the teaching of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"Luxembourg's Colonial Past" exhibition was opened at the National Museum of History and Art in April 2022. However, CERD's experts regret that the history of colonialism and slavery is not covered at all school levels.⁴¹⁵

There is no open activity of neo-Nazi movements or organizations in the public space of GDL. There are no facts of public propaganda of the ideas of Nazism and racial superiority. The glorification of the former members of the Nazi SS organization and all its constituent parts, including the Waffen-SS, in any form is also not observed.

Public demonstrations in order to glorify the Nazi past are not held. The construction of monuments and memorials dedicated to the Nazis and their collaborators are not erected. The ban on the image of the swastika and any other Nazi symbols is strictly observed. Recently, only one case of this kind was reported, when at the end of January 2020, a number of buildings, bus stops and road signs in the capital were painted with the image of the swastika, but, as the police found, it was not used to glorify Nazism, but for offensive purposes.

The importance of preserving the memory of the tragic events of World War II is declared by the authorities of Luxembourg at the highest level. The country's leadership is making efforts to promote the thesis of the heroic resistance of the country's population to the Nazi occupation during World War II. In 1940, despite its status as a neutral state, Luxembourg was occupied by Nazi Germany. The policy of Germanization began, and citizens were forcibly conscripted into the Wehrmacht. Many Luxembourg soldiers, unwilling to fight on the side of the Third Reich, voluntarily surrendered to the Red Army or

⁴¹⁵ Ibis.

Allied forces. On the territory of the Grand Duchy itself, resistance to the occupation turned into a General strike by 1942.⁴¹⁶

Events related to the struggle against the Nazi regime (first of all, the anniversary of the General strike) are solemnly celebrated at the state level. National Remembrance Day, celebrated on 10 October, is dedicated to the struggle of Luxembourgers against the Nazi occupation in 1940-1945.

In September 2019 GDL solemnly marked the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Luxembourg from Nazi occupation. In January 2020, the Grand Duchy was represented at the highest level during commemorative events in Poland and Israel on the occasion of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp and in memory of the Holocaust.

When Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev paid an official visit to GDL in March 2019, an agreement was reached to erect a monument to Soviet citizens who had been forcibly deported to Luxembourg for forced labour during the Great Patriotic War. The inauguration of the monument was planned for autumn 2022 in the centre of the university campus in the Belval district of Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg's second largest city, which during the war was home to ironworks employing Soviet citizens. However, in light of the start of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, the Luxembourg authorities, subject to agreement with Luxembourg Prime Minister X.Bettel, announced in March 2022 that they would suspend work on the monument project.

However, in general, the interpretation of the events of those years is ambiguous, which is also associated with the facts of collaboration. Accordingly, when discussing this topic, the scientific and journalistic

⁴¹⁶ The Luxembourg general strike began in protest against the decision of the Government of Nazi Germany, which occupied Luxembourg on May 10, 1940, to annex it to the German Reich, the order to introduce universal military service in Luxembourg and the mobilization of Luxembourgers in the German Nazi army. On August 31, workers at the ARBED steel plant in Esch and the Ideal tannery in Wilz stopped working. On September 1, the strike took on a national character. The leading force was the Communists, who were actively involved in the national Resistance Movement. On September 8 it was suppressed by the Nazis by armed force. Despite this, it thwarted the plans of the German Nazi occupiers to carry out mobilization, demonstrated the will of the people to fight for independence, and contributed to the further strengthening of the Resistance Movement in the country. The anniversary of the general strike is celebrated annually in early September.

community of GDL prefers to adhere to a certain degree of caution and self-censorship.

There were no facts of desecration of military graves or damage to monuments and memorials dedicated to World War II. Such facilities are protected by the state, and local authorities maintain them in general in an exemplary state.

From 5 March 2019 to 3 March 2020, Luxembourg served as the chair of the International Alliance in memory of the Holocaust. During his presidency, in particular, Recommendations on teaching knowledge about the Holocaust were developed and approved. Also in July 2019, the GDL authorities approved the Alliance's "working definition of anti-Semitism".

In 2019, a new monument to the victims of the Holocaust was opened in the centre of the capital.

In order to preserve historical evidence of Luxembourgers' participation in World War II, a special decree established the Committee to commemorate forced conscription into the Wehrmacht and the corresponding documentation and Research Centre in 2005. In 2016, the World War II Memorial Committee was established which comprised members of veterans' organizations and representatives of a number of ministries. The tasks of the Committee include the protection of the rights and interests of citizens of Luxembourg forcibly conscripted into the Wehrmacht, and victims of the Holocaust. In addition, the Committee participates in the organization of celebrations dedicated to World War II, the search and identification of places of historical and memorial character, and conducts awareness-raising activities among young people.

On 27 January 2021 (International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, marked on the anniversary of the liberation by the Red Army of the Nazi concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau (Auschwitz)), an agreement was signed between the Government of Luxembourg and representatives of the local Jewish community, providing for

an ambitious set of measures aimed at restoring historical justice. First of all, a landmark decision was made to compensate all Jews affected by Hitler's regime in the country for losses and confiscated property. To this end, a special restitution fund is being established, which will annually receive 120,000 euros from the State budget over a period of 30 years. Until now, compensation measures applied only to nationals (about a thousand people), while refugees and stateless persons, 3,000 or 4,000 people, were effectively outside the legal framework. An additional 2 million euros is being allocated for various research and archival work, and creation of a Holocaust memorial and educational centre is underway in the former Luxembourg Abbey of Cinqfontaines.

The first payment of 5,000 euros reached victims of Holocaust from 11 countries in November 2021. The application deadline has been extended to 31 January 2022.⁴¹⁷

At the same time, it is worth noting that, while not shying away from condemning the crimes of the Nazi regime, Luxembourg, along with other EU member states, has consistently abstained from voting in the UN General Assembly on the draft resolution submitted annually by Russia, together with other co-sponsors, on "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance".

⁴¹⁷ Luxembourg pays 5,000 euros to Holocaust survivors. Delano. Luxembourg in English. 16 November 2022. <https://delano.lu/article/luxembourg-issues-5000-to-holo>

Malta

Malta's history in the twentieth century was a major factor in keeping the spread of Nazism at bay. During World War II Malta, being a British Colony, was a member of the anti-Hitler coalition. The war directly affected the islanders – Malta's defence against the Italian and German invaders was one of the prominent developments of the Mediterranean theatre, when the island was subjected to heavy bombing.

Malta gained independence from Britain in 1964. In 1981, the country declared its neutral status and has since sought to develop relations with both the USA and the USSR. Neutrality in foreign policy has allowed the Maltese to keep an open mind on matters of history. Malta objectively assesses the significance of the Victory and the decisive contribution to it by the people of the Soviet Union, and recognizes the need to remember the war and learn from it, especially in terms of countering manifestations of extremism and neo-Nazism.

There are no bans on symbols of the Red Army or the USSR in Malta, and the local authorities do not impede the activities of veterans organizations or relevant NGOs. On the whole, there are no public manifestations of Nazism and neo-Nazism in the island Republic; there are no recorded cases of the glorification of members of the Nazi movement, construction of monuments to the Nazis and their accomplices, holding of related public demonstrations, whitewashing of former members of Nazi organizations, desecration of memorials to fighters against Nazism or prosecution of anti-Nazi fighters. The local authorities pay due attention to the preservation of monuments to victims of the events of World War II.

There is a public consensus on the subject of World War II at this stage, it tends to remain outside the realm of political speculation and is not used by the authorities or the opposition to achieve their political goals.

Despite constructive approaches to the preservation of historical memory, the Maltese fail to make a concerted effort to counter attempts to revise the outcome of World War II or deny the Nazis' crimes against humanity. The Maltese media, which predominantly tries to avoid historical falsifications, distortions or revaluations in its material, allows itself to periodically reprint politically biased publications of Western information agencies (mainly Reuters and Associated Press) on "the role of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in the outbreak of war", "totalitarian post-war enslavement by Stalin's regime of the peoples of Europe, including the Baltics" and so on. An unpleasant episode was the Maltese authorities' refusal to allow the Russian Embassy to hold the traditional ceremony of laying flowers and wreaths at the war memorial in the town of Floriana on the occasion of Victory Day (2022).

In voting on the annual draft UN General Assembly Resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" introduced by Russia and other co-sponsors (most recently on 16 December 2021), Valletta has traditionally abstained in solidarity with the West.

As an integral part of the Western community and a member of the European Union, Malta has positioned itself as a consistent advocate of democratic freedoms and human rights. Malta's Constitution and a number of other legislative acts enshrine the prohibition of racial discrimination. For example, the Criminal Code (Art. 82A) provides for six to eighteen months' imprisonment as a punishment for acts aimed at inciting racial intolerance. Article 83B classifies manifestations of racism and xenophobia as aggravating circumstances. These measures are considered by human rights activists (including the local chapter of the European Law Students' Association) to be generally adequate to prevent hate speech and incitement to violence.

However, there is no legal ban on organizations and movements that promote racial discrimination and glorify Nazi ideology in Malta. Imperium Europa, far-right (locally referred to as neo-Nazi) party, was officially registered in the country in 2019. Its leader, Norman Lowell, is an ultra-nationalist who openly denies the Holocaust.⁴¹⁸ In his statements he has repeatedly made positive comments about Hitler and has also repeatedly praised Carmelo Borga Pisani, Nazi of Maltese origin who worked for Italian intelligence during World War II. Today, Imperium Europa is the third largest party in Malta⁴¹⁹, however, this does not reflect its popularity among the population – the island Republic inherited the two-party system of the former colonial power, and the neo-Nazis fail to gain the necessary votes to be elected to the House of Representatives or the European Parliament.

Despite the respect for history and the absence of significant forces promoting Nazism in Maltese political space, domestic xenophobia and pronounced racist attitudes towards migrants from Africa and the Middle East remain a significant problem in local society.

According to an opinion poll conducted in May 2019 by The Times' journalists, more than 70 per cent of the Maltese population recognize that racism is a problem in the country. However, 46 per cent "feel threatened" by other cultures and 45 per cent believe there are too many migrants living on the island.

Maltese research also shows that over 60 per cent of Black Africans regularly experience intolerance in everyday life and tend to avoid interacting with locals as much as possible. Around 30% of them have been victims of racially motivated hate crimes in the past.

⁴¹⁸ Imperium Europa approved as political party, Norman Lowell to contest MEP elections.
https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/93455/imperium_europa_approved_as_political_party_norman_lowell_to_contest_mep_elections#.YtICaxaOHDs

⁴¹⁹ EP election: Imperium Europa now Malta's third largest party.
<https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2019-05-27/local-news/EP-election-imperium-Europa-now-Malta-s-third-largest-party-6736208703>

The existence of challenges in combating racism was confirmed by the results of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Malta that took place at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in November 2018. Malta's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). For example, the report to the UPR of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights "was concerned about reports of racism and xenophobia against migrants, including racially motivated violence and racial discrimination in access to employment, housing and services".⁴²⁰

The Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) regularly notes cases of discrimination on the basis of race or ethnic origin in access to housing, employment and access to health care in Malta. According to the ACFC, circumstantial evidence indicates cases of racially motivated crimes, bullying in schools, treating persons with a different skin colour as perpetrators of a crime, rather than victims or innocent bystanders.⁴²¹

Xenophobic rhetoric appears in Malta's online space and often in the media. According to a 2018 study by Eurobarometer, the country has the highest rate of "hate speech" in the European Union. According to the ACFC and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), which also operates within the Council of Europe, social media in Malta is rife with aggressive content and continues to serve as a vehicle for the dissemination of racist speech.

Discrimination against migrants in the provision of health services has recently been increasingly highlighted in the Maltese media. In December 2021, news broke of the death of a 22-year-old woman due to the negligence of staff

⁴²⁰ Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Malta), prepared in the framework of the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review. August 2018. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/259/84/PDF/G1825984.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁴²¹ The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities opinion on Malta (fourth cycle). Adopted on 14 October 2016. Published on 4 May 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/fourth-opinion-on-malta-adopted-on-14-october-2016/16807105e5>

at a public health centre. According to the report, such treatment of migrants is widespread: instead of providing proper medical care, doctors often recommend that they take painkillers.⁴²² Concerns about the frequent lack of necessary medical care were also raised by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT).⁴²³

There are occasional reports of cases of prejudice against black people by members of the security forces, and excessive use of force. The most high-profile of these were the armed attacks on migrants by the Maltese military in 2019. Several people were injured and one, a native of Côte d'Ivoire, was killed. One of those arrested in the case confessed to hating people of African descent.

The Times of Malta published an interview with a Thai student who complained of racism not only in her daily life, but also in her dealings with Maltese officials.

The situation has not escaped the attention of relevant international organizations. The HRC Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrants recommended that Valletta fully implement its legislation to combat direct and indirect racial discrimination with regard to the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by immigrants, in particular refugees and asylum seekers, including access to private rental housing and the labour market.⁴²⁴ The Human Rights Committee recommended that Malta step up its efforts to eradicate stereotypes and discrimination against migrants while promoting tolerance and

⁴²² Migrant woman turned away with Panadol prescription, dies in her sleep. https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/114025/migrant_woman_turned_away_with_panadol_prescription_dies_in_her_sleep#.YtIPJRaOHDt

⁴²³ Report to the Maltese Government on the visit to Malta carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), from 17 to 22 September 2020. 10 March 2021. <https://rm.coe.int/1680a1b877>.

⁴²⁴ Report by the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants at the 29th session of the Council. Addendum. Mission to Malta (6–10 December 2014). A/HRC/29/36/Add.3. May 2015. https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/29/36/Add.3

respect for diversity⁴²⁵, and to take measures aimed at investigating racially motivated violence.⁴²⁶

ECRI Report on Malta (fifth monitoring cycle) says there is still no systematic data collection on the number of reported incidents of racist hate crime.⁴²⁷ The ACFC called on Valletta to establish a publicly available data collection system on hate crime incidents in 2021.⁴²⁸

According to 2021 ECRI conclusions on Malta's implementation of the relevant recommendations, the absence of the aforementioned system is due to the fact that the number of hate crimes is small enough, which is why the Malta Police Force records the number of hate crimes reports in general.⁴²⁹ According to the same document, the Hate Crime and Speech Unit, established on 24 October 2019, which works closely with the Maltese Police Force, compiles statistics and processes cases of hate crime and hate speech. The unit also supports victims of such crimes through the provision of free therapeutic and legal services.⁴³⁰

By 19 January 2021, the Unit had received 249 reports, 193 of which were filed against individual alleged perpetrators.⁴³¹

⁴²⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the second periodic report of Malta. November 2014.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/MLT/CO/2&Lang=Ru

⁴²⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the second periodic report of Malta. November 2014.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/MLT/CO/2&Lang=Ru

⁴²⁷ The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Malta (fifth monitoring cycle), Adopted on 21 March 2018. Published on 15 May 2018.
<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-malta/16808b592b>.

⁴²⁸ The Fifth Opinion on Malta of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Adopted on 5 October 2020. Published on 18 February 2021.
<https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-malta-en/1680a173fd>

⁴²⁹ ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in respect of Malta. Adopted on 30 March 2021. Published on 18 May 2021.
<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a27d87>

⁴³⁰ ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in respect of Malta. Adopted on 30 March 2021. Published on 18 May 2021.
<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a27d87>

⁴³¹ ECRI Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in respect of Malta. Adopted on 30 March 2021. Published on 18 May 2021.
<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a27d87>

The Maltese authorities seek to limit the influx of migrants as much as possible. Charity Sea-Eye reported that the Maltese coordination centre regularly ignores distress signals in the Maltese search and rescue zone from vessels carrying migrants (most recently on 11-12 May 2022⁴³²).

In 2019, Prime Minister of Malta (then J.Muscat) and leader of the opposition (then A.Delia) made public remarks about the "dominance of migrants" in the Maltese labour market.

It is indicative that Malta positions itself as a mono-ethnic state. The fifth monitoring cycle of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities contains the position of the country's authorities that there are no national minorities in its territory⁴³³.

Despite the deliberate restriction of migration flow to Malta, the authorities of the island Republic listen to the opinion of specialized international organizations. A number of educational measures aimed at promoting a culture of tolerance and mutual respect, and combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance have been implemented in the country. When it comes to these aspects, education for children and youth is built in accordance with the national educational strategy for the period 2014-2024, as well as the framework programme "Respect for All", adopted in 2014. The implementation of the UNESCO project "Education for Global Citizenship" is underway. It includes measures to promote programmes in educational institutions aimed at countering violent extremism.

In February 2017, the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security of Malta signed an agreement with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to implement Training against Hate Crimes for Law Enforcement programme. In its report (May 2018), ECRI recommended

⁴³² "Malta accused of violating fundamental human rights because of migrants"
<https://rossaprimavera.ru/news/a1567957>.

⁴³³ Report by Malta under the Fifth monitoring cycle of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Received on 24 May 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-sr-malta-en/168094b1cc>

that the Maltese authorities step up their efforts and place additional emphasis on training of law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges.⁴³⁴

In September 2018, NGO SOS Malta and the Times of Malta newspaper launched a year-long #stopphate project aimed at countering the spread of hate speech by promoting knowledge about this phenomenon, training volunteers to moderate online content, and conducting research in this area.

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality regularly conducts events aimed at raising awareness of non-discrimination. Other State and non-State actors also carry out activities with such a thematic focus. In November 2018 and February 2019, the Office of the President of Malta organized seminars on interfaith dialogue with the participation of representatives of 12 religious communities and organizations. These efforts resulted in the signing of the Malta Declaration on Interfaith Harmony on February 8, 2019.

People for Change, a Maltese NGO, held in October 2018 a roundtable discussion on racial intolerance.

In 2021, the ACFC noted that the Maltese authorities pursued their efforts to reinforce their integration policies, in particular by adopting the National Migrant Integration Strategy and its Action Plan.⁴³⁵

There is traditionally a large (7-8 thousand people) Russian diaspora in Malta. Russian citizens, mostly women who are married to Maltese citizens, form its core.

The Russian community is deeply integrated into the local society, actively engaged in public life; it makes a noticeable contribution to the social and economic development of Malta, which is also noted by the Maltese

⁴³⁴ *Ibis*.

⁴³⁵ The Fifth Opinion on Malta of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Adopted on 5 October 2020. Published on 18 February 2021. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-malta-en/1680a173fd>.

authorities. There are no ethnic conflicts between our compatriots and local residents.

The interaction of the Maltese authorities with the Russian diaspora amid the Ukrainian crisis is built in the spirit of Prime Minister R. Abela's statement that "xenophobia is unacceptable towards Russians and Russian-speaking people living in the country" (April 2022).

At the same time, verbal aggression in Maltese online communities increased sharply against the background of the EU's Russophobic campaign, after the start of the special military operation in Ukraine. There is information about individual cases of inappropriate behavior against Russian-speaking children in local schools. The Russian embassy is working specifically with compatriots and local authorities to resolve the problem. As a result of this work, the Ministry for Education of Malta brought recommendations on interaction with Russian-speaking students to the notice of the heads of educational institutions, which greatly improved the situation.

It is also worth noting that between March and May 2022 there were a number of small anti-Russian rallies in Malta (including near the Russian Embassy), held by local NGOs and representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora. The demonstrations went off without any incidents and in the presence of police.

Moldova

The Republic of Moldova (RM) sees an ongoing attack campaign against the historical memory of the Great Patriotic War, growing revisionist and pro-Western tendencies, and intensified activity of those who support the elimination of the Moldovan statehood and annexation to Romania.

The attempts to glorify Nazism and its accomplices in the republic are becoming more and more obvious against the background of "cancel culture" against Russia promoted in the West. There is systematic reconstruction and installation of memorials in honor of "heroes of the Romanian army", that occupied the territory of modern Moldova in 1941. There is open dissemination in the public space of statements acknowledging the "liberating" role of Hitler's Romanian henchman, dictator I. Antonescu, whom the current president of Moldova M. Sandu (who has Romanian citizenship) called "an outstanding historical person" (later she tried to disavow her statement).

Some Russian compatriots in Moldova note the continuing restrictions on the broadcasting of Russian TV channels, lack of an established status for the Russian language, and gradual decrease in the number of Russian schools.

In 2022, the Moldovan authorities significantly "lowered the profile" of their participation in the events traditionally widely celebrated in the country on the occasion of Victory Day in the Great Patriotic War. Right on the eve of the holiday, amendments were made to the Administrative Offences Code, introducing responsibility for using the "St. George Ribbon" and other "symbols of military aggression" (on 8 August 2022, the Constitutional Court of Moldova announced that it had applied to the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe for an opinion on those initiatives). These legislative amendments caused discontent among a considerable part of the Moldavian society. They were criticized by the former president of Moldova I. Dodon, members of opposition parties, authorities of Gagauzia and Transnistria. However, despite the obstacles imposed by the authorities, about 37 thousand

people took part in 2022 in the events organized on the occasion of 9 May throughout the republic.⁴³⁶

In recent years Moldova, which features more than two thousand monuments to the soldiers-liberators, has been facing a number of problems with the safety of these monuments.

Disturbing cases of desecration of Soviet memorials are regularly recorded. In 2019, for example, central Moldova's memorial "Eternity" was attacked twice in Chisinau: the nameplate to Hero of the Soviet Union and Moldovan-born Georgy Chernienko⁴³⁷ was smashed, and elements of the entryway decorations were stolen.

Similar acts of vandalism also took place in the regions. In the same year, the media reported about the destruction of the memorial plate at permanent fortification No. 417 in the village of Cosnita, Dubasari district, which had been erected by civil activists, and the desecration of the monument to the T-34 tank in the village of Leuseni, Hincesti district. In 2020 in Chisinau, unknown persons destroyed a memorial plate featuring the names of Soviet citizens shot during the Nazi occupation at what is popularly known as the "cemetery of paratroopers" (part of the park at the intersection of Balkan Highway and Calea Iesilor Street).

In January 2021, a memorial to the heroes of the 161st Rifle Regiment of the 95th Moldovan Rifle Division in the village of Rusca, Hincesti district, was desecrated.

In late March 2021, vandals demolished an iron obelisk to the soldiers of the Red Army's 2nd Cavalry Corps, which had been erected in the vicinity of Ivancea village, Orhei district.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁶ <https://md.sputniknews.ru/20220509/v-meropriyatiyakh-na-9-maya-v-moldove-prinyali-uchastie-ne-menee-37-tysyach-chelovek---50500181.html>

⁴³⁷ <https://tvzvezda.ru/news/201911842-qGUZ7.html>

⁴³⁸ <https://tvzvezda.ru/news/2021322711-QGLH8.html>

In May 2021, vandals seriously damaged the memorial "Glory to Heroes" in Vulcanesti (ATU of Gagauzia). The star of the eternal flame was torn off the pedestal of the monument and thrown away nearby.⁴³⁹

On 21 August 2021, a memorial plaque was smashed near the village of Corpaci in Edinet district, erected in honour of the 3rd Guards Uman Airborne Division, which had reached the State border of the USSR near the Prut river in March 1944. The broken plate was restored by the beginning of October 2021 by activists of the movement "For Us to Remember" from Bratuseni, Cupcini and other settlements with personal participation of N.Melnic, president of Edinet district council.⁴⁴⁰

On 23 August 2021, a sign in Chisinau saying "Inspected. No mines" was desecrated on a building in the old town. Such signs had been made by Soviet sappers during the demining of the city after the Nazi occupation in August 1944.⁴⁴¹ By the decision of the Moldovan capital's authorities, the remaining inscriptions reading: "Inspected. No mines", were recognized as historical monuments and taken under State protection.

In March 2022, Ukrainian migrants and Moldovan pro-Romanian radicals from the "Party of National Unity" of M.Chelaru vandalized the "Victoria" memorial complex near Leuseni village. The front part of the pedestal was painted yellow and blue, and the plaques with commemorative dates were covered in paint.

In all such cases, the Russian side took swift action by publicly expressing a strong position that such actions are inadmissible and calling on the local authorities to take steps to find and punish the perpetrators. However, despite the provisions in Moldova's law on punishment for vandalism, the perpetrators were not prosecuted in any of the mentioned incidents.

⁴³⁹ <https://eadaaily.com/ru/news/2021/05/27/vandalizm-i-beschestie-v-moldavii-oskvernili-memorial-slava-geroyam>

⁴⁴⁰ <https://md.sputniknews.ru/20211004/vosstanovili-pamyatnik-geroyam-voyny-45247273.html>

⁴⁴¹ <https://regnum.ru/news/3350844.html>

Against this background, there are far fewer examples of planned repair work or restoration of memorials. The authorities usually refer to a lack of financial capacity to maintain monuments in proper condition.

In such cases, the local authorities, specialized NGOs and residents themselves often take the initiative. The Russian Embassy in Chisinau provides all possible support in this matter. For example, in the village of Tomai (ATU of Gagauzia), one of the top priorities in 2021 was to reconstruct the monument to the soldiers of the Great Patriotic War, who took part in the liberation of the village. In October 2021, the official opening ceremony of the restored monument to the Soviet soldiers and fellow villagers who had fallen in the battles against Nazism was held in Mascauti village, Criuleni district; dozens of their names are immortalized on granite slabs of the memorial. In June 2022, a monument at the common grave of the Soviet soldiers, who had died in the spring and summer of 1944, was restored in the village of Susleni, Orhei district. The restoration was carried out by "Veche", Slavic human rights organization, with the assistance of the search group "Avgust".⁴⁴²

It is noteworthy that Moldova, with the assistance of the official authorities and support from outside, now features memorial sites aimed at distorting the history of World War II and whitewashing Romanian collaborators. In 2020-2021, for example, Moldavian NGOs built on grant funds of the Romanian side, in the territory of A.S.Pushkin's theoretical lyceum in Falesti, "a cemetery of Romanian soldiers", who fought on the side of the Nazi. A monument in the shape of a cross was unveiled there in September 2021.

On 26 October 2021, with the support of the Romanian Embassy in Moldova, the opening and consecration ceremony for the monument "General Pavel Ion Georgescu's Spring" was held in the Valea Morilor park in Chisinau.

⁴⁴² <https://md.sputniknews.ru/20211030/moldove-otkryli-otrestavrirovannyi-memorial-pobeditelyam-fashizma-46044112.html>

A monument to the fraternity of the Russian and Romanian armies during World War I was erected on this site in 1937.⁴⁴³ The authors of the new monument present it as a tribute to the victims who allegedly "were tortured and murdered by the Soviet NKVD in 1940 in the basement of the former Italian consulate building after the annexation of Bessarabia, from June 1940 to July 1941".

On 28 April 2022, despite the state of emergency declared in Baimaclia, Causeni district, the monument to the four Romanian "heroes", who had died in 1941, was unveiled. The ceremony was attended by soldiers from the guard of honour company and Moldovan Defence Minister, A.Nosatii, was also present in person.⁴⁴⁴

On 1 August 2022, a monument to the Romanian soldiers, who occupied the area along with the Nazi troops in 1941, was unveiled and consecrated in the village of Slobozia Horodiste, Rezina district, with the participation of the municipality administration.⁴⁴⁵

In light of the above, it is indicative that the Ministry of Defence of Moldova refused to honour Valentina Ercheva, senior sergeant of the Red Army, soldier of 1147th rifle regiment of 353rd rifle division, who had died on 20 April 1944 at Rascaieti village of the Stefan Voda area. The ceremony, organized on 30 April by the Search Movement of Moldova, was attended by Russian Ambassador to Moldova O.V.Vasnetsov, MPs V.Odnostalko and V.Bolya, chairman of the Union of Officers of Moldova V.Gaichuk, veterans of the Armed forces and the war in Afghanistan, leaders and activists of public organizations, and caring residents of Chisinau.⁴⁴⁶

What is also indicative is the position taken by Moldova during voting in the United Nations General Assembly on the draft resolution introduced

⁴⁴³ <https://www.kp.ru/daily/28348/4495374/>

⁴⁴⁴ <https://www.kp.md/online/news/4730004/>

⁴⁴⁵ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3658506.html>

⁴⁴⁶ <https://www.kp.md/online/news/4730004/>

annually by Russia, together with other co-sponsors, on "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance". For example, the Moldovan delegation abstained during the 76th session of the General Assembly in 2021.

There is no widespread dissemination of misanthropic rhetoric and ideas of racial or ethnic superiority in Moldovan media or Internet. Moldova's population is historically multi-ethnic and bilingual, and representatives of the titular nation are tolerant towards members of religious, ethnic and linguistic minorities.

At the same time, since late March 2022, with the connivance of the Moldovan authorities, pickets at the Russian Embassy in Chisinau have been held on a regular basis and actively attended by IDPs from Ukraine. Often such rallies are accompanied by Russophobic slurs and insults against the Russian leadership.

There is also a noticeable activation of pro-Romanian radicals, which, despite their small number, show themselves more aggressively in the local information space than supporters of Moldovan statehood and enhancement of relations with Russia. Unionists freely promote their ideals, demanding the unification of Moldova with Romania and accusing Russia of occupying the country.

What causes concern is the actions of the authorities to revise the language legislation and reduce the use of the Russian language and restrict Russian-language broadcasting. At the same time, according to expert estimates, the Russian language is used, to one degree or another, by 80 per cent of Moldova's population.

According to Article 13 of Moldova's Constitution, "The State shall acknowledge and protect the right to the preservation, development and use of

the Russian language and other languages spoken within the territory of the State".

In December 2020, the law "On the functioning of languages on the territory of the Republic of Moldova" was adopted, which provided for restoration of the status of the Russian language as a language of inter-ethnic communication, which was developed at the initiative of the then president, I.Dodon, after the Constitutional Court of the Republic recognized the 1989 document of the same name as obsolete. However, as early as January 2021, the Constitutional Court of Moldova, at the request of MPs from the pro-presidential Action and Solidarity party, declared it unconstitutional, thus depriving the Russian language of the status of an inter-ethnic communication language.

It should be noted that the attack on the Russian language began in Moldova in the first half of the 2010s. In the updated Education Code adopted in 2014, the Russian language was no longer mentioned as the language of instruction and was actually referred to the languages of one of Moldova's national minorities. This transformation of the educational legislation further "spurs" the process of reduction in the number of students in Russian-language schools (and, as a consequence, the gradual reduction in the share of such schools, in line with the policy of "optimization" of educational institutions, which receive insufficient funding from the State, determined on the basis of a "per capita approach"). This tendency leads to a serious infringement of legitimate interests of the Russian-speaking population of the country.

In addition, the National Bureau of Statistics of Moldova has been gradually abandoning the publication of data specifically on the number of "Russian" schools in the country, providing general statistics on secondary general education institutions. This approach allows attention to be drawn away from de-Russification of education.

The Russian-speaking population of the country increasingly faces discrimination at the level of public authorities. The refusal of civil servants to communicate in Russian or to accept applications in Russian is widespread, and there are domestic conflicts on linguistic grounds. Public authorities charged with combating such phenomena, Agency for Inter-Ethnic Relations and Council on the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality, have distanced themselves from such functions, referring to a lack of authority. It should be noted that the ineffectiveness of these entities, as well as of the People's Advocate (the Ombudsman), in combating discrimination was highlighted with regret by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, operating within the Council of Europe, in its conclusions of 2021 on the implementation of the recommendations made previously to Moldova. Among the reasons for inefficiency cited were the confusing system of their funding, low salaries and, as a result, high levels of staff turnover.⁴⁴⁷ Concerns about the situation of the Russian-speaking population were expressed in 2017 by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which noted that since the 2012 amendments to the law on identity documents, the national passport system had failed to fully recognize the names of persons belonging to ethno-linguistic minority groups, particularly Russian minorities.⁴⁴⁸

The degradation of the situation with media freedom in Moldova is of serious concern. The authorities are exerting pressure on independent and opposition media resources, and are in fact purging the media space of opinions and judgments that are undesirable to the Government. It is known that the broadcasting of the television channel Russia 24 has been blocked since July

⁴⁴⁷ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance conclusions on the implementation of the recommendations in respect of the Republic of Moldova subject to interim follow-up. Adopted on 30 March 2021. Published on 18 May 2021. <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a27d9c>

⁴⁴⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the third periodic report of the Republic of Moldova. October 2017. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/MDA/CO/3&Lang=En

2014. Since March 2022, Russian news and socio-political television programmes have been banned in the country under the flimsy pretext of "combating disinformation". The authorities closely monitor the broadcasting of Russian-language channels in Moldova and impose penalties on them with particular zeal. Television stations rebroadcasting content of Russian channels are most likely to be targeted, i.e. NTV Moldova, Exclusive TV, Pervy v Moldove (Primul in Moldova) and Accent TV, and RTR Moldova. On June 22, 2022, the Law on Amendment of the Code of Audiovisual Media Services came into force, providing for a ban on the broadcasting and re-broadcasting of TV and radio programmes with informative, analytical, military and political content produced in States other than EU member states, the USA, Canada as well as countries that had ratified the European Convention on Transfrontier Television (except films and entertainment programmes that do not contain militaristic content). For this reason, access to a number of Russian TV channels, including Zvezda, Mir, Nashe Kino and some others, has been blocked, as is the broadcasting of Soviet and Russian films about the Great Patriotic War and war-related TV programmes.

At the same time, there are attacks on Russian and Russian-language press and electronic media. For example, Sputnik Moldova news agency was closed, and a number of Russian-language websites were blocked (GagauzNews, Gagauz news agency; analytical resource "Region trend analitics"; Channel One and Vesti.ru). On 1 August, the Information and Security Service of Moldova blocked access to the Russian website Free Press for allegedly "one-sided coverage" of the special military operation in Ukraine and publication of "unreliable information" that could harm the national security of the country.⁴⁴⁹

So despite the balanced position declared by Chisinau, in practice the information sphere is increasingly dominated by pro-Western agenda.

⁴⁴⁹ <https://svpressa.ru/politic/news/341940/>

At the same time, there are numerous noticeable projects initiated by the US, a number of European countries and pro-Western NGOs, supposedly aimed at supporting freedom of expression in Moldova and countering "disinformation", attract attention. The result is evident. Early December 2021 saw publication of the report by NGO Centre for Independent Journalism (which receives Western financial support), which concludes that the broadcasting of the Russian TV channels Pervy v Moldove, NTV Moldova and RTR Moldova "does not contribute to the shaping of clear views" and "threatens the information security of the country". A few days later, on 8 December, the president of the Moldovan Parliament, I.Grosu, said that propaganda from outside "comes from Russia".

Following the start of Russia's special military operation in Moldova, there have been changes for the worse for Russian nationals and Russian-speaking population.

Pressure is put on all public organizations that maintain contact with or are affiliated with Russia. There were reports of threats against Russian-speaking journalists in Moldova. Editor of the newspaper of the movement of compatriots "Russkoe slovo" was among those who received such threats and insults. There were also recorded cases of pro-Russian activists being subject to pressure or intimidation.

The Netherlands

The problem of neo-Nazism and anti-Semitism in the Netherlands has not yet been definitively resolved, also due to the lack of legal prohibition of such unlawful acts.

Aware of the importance of this subject, the Kingdom has taken a number of additional measures in recent years. On 1 April 2021, for example, a national coordinator for anti-Semitism began to work, and a position of national coordinator for discrimination and racism was created. In 2019-2021, special funding was allocated to projects in the area of combating anti-Semitism, i.e. the creation of appropriate institutions (capacity-building), awareness-raising, etc.⁴⁵⁰

At the legislative level, the issue is primarily regulated by the general provisions of the Dutch Criminal Code (CC). Article 137(c) of the CC criminalizes any public insult – spoken, written, or in the form of images – against groups of people on the grounds of race, religion, belief, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability, while Article 137(d) criminalizes "incitement to hatred or discrimination" on a wide range of grounds.

At the same time, its national law does not recognize racial discrimination as an aggravating circumstance of crimes. A relevant draft law was submitted to Parliament in January 2021, but has not been adopted yet.

At the same time, the display of Nazi symbols as such (including badges, uniform attributes, greetings, etc.) is not a separate crime, but may be subject to criminal prosecution on the basis of general anti-discrimination provisions. Nor the criminal legislation of the Netherlands provides for separate elements that criminalize the denial of historical facts, including the Holocaust (in September 2021, the European Commission drew attention to this problem, suggesting that

⁴⁵⁰ See, for example, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2022/02/23/kamerbrief-over-versterking-ketenbrede-aanpak-discriminatie-en-racisme> and <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/08/17/antwoorden-kamervragen-inzake-toenemend-antisemitisme>

The Hague immediately provide for this prohibition in the regulations of the Kingdom, in accordance with commitments made at the level of the European Union⁴⁵¹). At the same time, falsifiers of history (as well as, for example, owners or administrators of sites where such materials are posted) may be held liable under the mentioned articles of the CC. However, in practice, these provisions are not often applied.

So, in practice, each specific action is considered in court in accordance with its context. Nazi salute as a gesture does not in itself entail criminal responsibility, but it may be punishable in cases where it is purposefully performed in public or during memorial services, accompanied by the voicing of Nazi slogans, etc. At the same time, the same Nazi greeting addressed to a particular person, and not to a group of people, is most likely to be qualified under Article 266 of the CC (as a general insult).

It should also be noted that the shortcomings of Dutch legislation in the field of combating racism and xenophobic expressions were brought to the attention of the European Commission, which initiated in 2021 infringement procedures against the Netherlands (along with Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland and Sweden) for not fully and correctly transposing the Council Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia⁴⁵² into national law. In particular, it has been noted that the States have failed to correctly transpose the criminalization of specific forms of hate speech that incite violence or hatred, since public condoning, denial or gross trivialization of international crimes and the Holocaust do not fall within the definition of national laws.⁴⁵³

The results of various studies show that the number of anti-Semitic incidents in the Netherlands generally remains at about the same level.

⁴⁵¹ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/09/13/antwoorden-kamervragen-inzake-het-niet-straftbaar-stellen-van-ontkenning-holocaust>

⁴⁵² The document defines the general approach of criminal law to racist and xenophobic speech and hate crimes.

⁴⁵³ European Union Fundamental Rights Agency Report 2022. June 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

According to the annual report of the Centre on Information and Documentation on Israel, nl. Centrum Informatie en Documentatie Israel (CIDI), reported 183 anti-Semitic incidents in the Netherlands in 2021⁴⁵⁴ (by comparison, 135 in 2020 and 182 in 2019). The authors of the report usually link the rise and fall of the figures from year to year to Israeli military operations. In addition, there are numerous cases of anti-Semitism on the Internet. According to the Dutch police and prosecutor's office, in 2019 over 30 per cent of discrimination complaints, registered and handled by the competent authorities in 2021, involved accusations of anti-Semitism.⁴⁵⁵

The judicial practice of the Netherlands in the fight against anti-Semitism is quite modest. As a rule, guilty verdicts in such cases are returned in exceptional cases. Provocative statements and acts are punishable only if their aims go far beyond "open, freedom of expression-based discussions in a democratic society".⁴⁵⁶ However, there are also opposite examples. A case in point of the application of anti-discrimination articles of the CC in relation to the use of Nazi symbols is, in particular, the case that reached the Supreme court of the Netherlands in 2012 about 100 daggers with the image of the swastika, symbols of the Waffen-SS units and slogans of the Third Reich for the purpose of selling them to Dutch nationals (the defendant in the case was eventually found guilty under Article 137(e) of the CC).⁴⁵⁷ There also some other cases. In early 2017, for example, several Dutch citizens were sentenced to community service and/ or fined for chanting anti-Semitic slogans and displaying the symbols of right-wing radicals "Combat 18" and "Defend Europe".⁴⁵⁸ In early 2020, a Dutch national was sentenced to community service

⁴⁵⁴ <https://www.cidi.nl/antisemitisme/antisemitisme-monitors/>

⁴⁵⁵ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2022/06/10/tk-bijlage-cijfers-in-beeld-2021>

⁴⁵⁶ An example of this interpretation by the courts of the current legislation, in particular, is the decision of the District Court of Hertogenbosch of 21 December 2004. (LJN: AR789I) and the decision of the Utrecht District Court of 22 April 2010 (LW: VM1987).

⁴⁵⁷ <https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:GHARN:2012:BY2774>

⁴⁵⁸ <https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:RBAMS:2017:146>
<https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:RBAMS:2017:144>

for posting SS symbols on the Internet and calling to violence against members of Jewish and Muslim communities.⁴⁵⁹ In February 2021, another Dutch national was sentenced to community service for posting racist and anti-Semitic material on the social networking site V Kontakte.⁴⁶⁰

One of the most high-profile anti-Semitic cases in the Netherlands was the naming of the world's largest special-purpose vessel after Pieter Schelte Heerema, a famous Dutch Nazi who was a member of the Waffen-SS during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands. Due to the negative reaction in public circles and the media, the management of the company renamed it to "Pioneer Spirit", thus retaining the original abbreviation.

The Dutch media periodically publish articles about cases of Dutch military personnel expressing support for the ideology of Nazism. It became publicly known in 2018 that the Dutch military exchanged extremist views and statements via messenger, sent swastikas and other Nazi symbols, and expressed interest in the ideas of Hitler and his associates, as well as relevant literature.

At the same time, issues related to the facts of cooperation between the Dutch authorities and the Nazis during World War II have not been fully resolved (one such high-profile challenge is the dispute over the payment of compensation to Nazi victims, who were charged by the Dutch railway company for transporting them to concentration camps).

In addition, other racist and neo-Nazi manifestations come onto the radar from time to time. In late March 2020, for example, the media reported that the neo-Nazi movement "Feuerkrieg Division", created in October 2018 and calling on its followers to commit acts of violence against people of African descent and representatives of the LGBT and Jewish communities, was partly run by subjects of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁹ <https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:RBLIM:2020:2349>

⁴⁶⁰ <https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:RBMNE:2021:719>

⁴⁶¹ <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2020/03/25/neonazi-club-geleid-vanuit-nederland-a3994935>

A scandal broke in 2021 over the Dutch website "bol.com", which sold books with anti-Semitic content (including Holocaust denial). A number of relevant NGOs filed a complaint against the company in an attempt to hold it criminally liable. The incident provoked a public discussion about the lack of appropriate regulations (censorship, among other things). The National Coordinator for Combating Anti-Semitism called the situation unacceptable, and called for the company to be held criminally liable, as well as for the legislation in this area to be tightened in general. However, the prosecutor's office terminated the investigation in December 2021, deeming its continuation unreasonable.⁴⁶²

In the Netherlands, there is a political party that can generally be described as neo-Nazi – the "Netherlands People's Union" ("Nederlandse Volks-Unie"), founded in 1971. It is known for a number of radical appeals (it advocates a constitutional amendment stating that German-Christian culture should remain dominant in the Netherlands, introduction of the subject of nationalism in schools and stricter migration policy, and opposes the construction of new synagogues and mosques in the Netherlands, etc.). However, it has no real political power.

Furthermore, in late 2020 and early 2021 several scandals flared up in connection with "The Forum for Democracy", a popular party in the Netherlands (in the last parliamentary elections on 17 March 2021 it won 8 of the 150 seats in the House of Representatives). For example, racist remarks about "white supremacy" from party leader T.Bode's WhatsApp correspondence were made public.⁴⁶³ He also said that he considered the Nuremberg trials illegitimate, much to the annoyance of the Centre for Information and

⁴⁶² <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2021/12/02/zaak-tegen-bol-com-om-antisemitische-boekenverkoop-geseponeerd-a4067682>

⁴⁶³ <https://www.ewmagazine.nl/nederland/achtergrond/2021/02/thierry-baudet-je-zus-met-een-neger-804032/>

Documentation on Israel⁴⁶⁴, and in December 2021 he compared anti-Covid restrictions with Holocaust, prompting legal action.⁴⁶⁵

There are known cases of vandalism against monuments to Red Army soldiers. These include a recent incident at "Soviet Field of Glory" war memorial near the town of Amersfoort, where 865 Red Army soldiers, who died during World War II in German captivity in the Netherlands and Germany, are buried. Unknown perpetrators covered part of the complex in graffiti with nationalist slogans and references to Ukrainian nationalists. The management of the complex turned to law enforcement authorities.⁴⁶⁶ It should be noted, however, that earlier allocations had been made from the Dutch budget to repair the memorial complex. In addition, thanks to the efforts of the Dutch public organization "Soviet Field of Glory" Foundation, it was possible to intensify work on identifying buried Soviet prisoners of war and searching for their relatives.

The said manifestations of discrimination yet again confirm the validity of the international community's concerns over the situation in the Netherlands with members of ethnic, national and religious minorities, including legal and naturalized migrants. Apparently the activity of right-wing Dutch politicians contributes to the spread of such attitudes. For example, there was a wide response in 2018 to the essentially xenophobic statement of the Dutch Foreign Minister, S.Blok, that there are no "peaceful multicultural societies" and that people are genetically wary of strangers.⁴⁶⁷

Various international human rights mechanisms have pointed to the spread of discrimination, racism, and xenophobia in the Kingdom. In 2019, the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance

⁴⁶⁴ https://www.trouw.nl/politiek/geschokte-reacties-op-neurenberg-opmerking-baudet-b161b71b/?utm_source=link&utm_medium=app&utm_campaign=shared%20content&utm_content=fre

⁴⁶⁵ <https://www.justiceinfo.net/fr/85271-covid-un-dirigeant-politique-neerlandais-en-justice-pour-ses-comparaisons-avec-lholocauste.html>

⁴⁶⁶ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/13075611>

⁴⁶⁷ See, for example, <https://nltimes.nl/2018/07/18/peaceful-multicultural-societies-dont-exist-dutch-fm-says>

(ECRI), in its fifth report on the Netherlands, pointed to a number of unresolved problems in the Government's policy to combat intolerance in society in general and especially against migrants (in particular, there were harsh requirements for the integration of foreigners, discriminatory and xenophobic statements by some politicians and journalists against Islam, Muslims, migrants, etc.).⁴⁶⁸ ECRI, among other things, called on the Netherlands to tighten civil, administrative and criminal law and to ensure full independence of the competent authorities in this field.

According to the report by E.Tendayi Achiume, UN Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, published in July 2020, despite the existing legislation in the Netherlands, there are many problems with their practical application. There is racial and ethnic profiling and obvious challenges in combating terrorism (due to the citizenship-stripping procedure). The Government has been recommended to "remediate socioeconomic gaps between racial and ethnic minorities and ethnic Netherlands", as well as improve the education system.

In general, international mechanisms note the same level of intolerance in Dutch society towards migrants, Muslims, Roma, and other persons of non-European origin; stigmatization and use of negative stereotypes against people of African descent and migrants are common. The Dutch police still practice racial profiling. Children of migrants and ethnic minorities face significant discrimination in education: due to their physical appearance, they are given lower marks when applying to secondary school and for performance. In addition, they have limited opportunities for internships, which has a negative impact on their future prospects on the labour market. In addition, people with

⁴⁶⁸ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on the Netherlands (fifth monitoring cycle). Adopted on 2 April 2019. Published on 4 June 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-the-netherlands/168094c577>

migrant backgrounds are discriminated against in the workplace. Yet another area, where migrants face restrictions, is health care.

At the same time, children are forcibly inculcated with neoliberal values. A new Civic Education Act obliges primary and secondary education establishments to provide knowledge of and teach "respect for diversity, including religion, beliefs, ethnic origin, gender, disability and sexual orientation".⁴⁶⁹

Segregation in society is experienced by members of the Muslim community, who feel alienated and isolated due to provisions in the law banning the wearing of traditional Muslim women's face-covering clothing, and amendments to the Nationality Act (The Temporary Administrative Measures to Counter Terrorism Act), which provide for the revocation of citizenship if a person is suspected of being involved in terrorist activities – that is, based on supposition rather than on established fact of having committed a crime.

In recent years the country has seen an increase in cases of racist insults in sports, especially football.

People from the Dutch overseas territories also face discrimination. Experts note that Dutch legislators and local authorities distinguish between citizens of the Kingdom of the Netherlands born in the Netherlands and citizens born in or migrating from Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten. Moreover, in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, these territories received less economic support than the European part of the country.

All these problems of racism in the Netherlands have been highlighted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, established under

⁴⁶⁹ European Union Fundamental Rights Agency Report 2022. June 2022.
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 2021.⁴⁷⁰

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), citing data from the first Dutch national study on discrimination in the housing market, notes that real estate agents and intermediaries often discriminate against persons with Polish or Moroccan names.⁴⁷¹ It also pointed to discrimination in education against people with a migrant background.

According to FRA, in the Netherlands, 52 per cent of the 9,757 cases involved discrimination on the ground of ethnicity in 2020.⁴⁷²

It should be noted that against the background of the start of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, Russophobic and discriminatory attitudes towards Russians (anti-Russian statements and publications, threats of physical violence, including against children) began to appear in the Kingdom with the Dutch media and statements made by the authorities. There were also cases of physical aggression. Employees of the Russian Embassy in the Netherlands regularly receive threatening letters, including against their family members.

The Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriot Organizations in the Netherlands records numerous cases of anti-Russian statements and publications on its website. Information on "lists with addresses of Russians in the Netherlands" is spreading on social networks, and threats are usually added to them. Representatives of the Ukrainian community have also been noticed to be involved in such activities.

Anti-Russian hysteria is also fuelled by the Dutch authorities' policy both at the international level and in the media field inside the country. Aggressive rhetoric about the need to hold Russia accountable for the downed Malaysian

⁴⁷⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-second to twenty-fourth periodic reports of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. August 2021.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/327/15/PDF/G2132715.pdf?OpenElement>

⁴⁷¹ European Union Fundamental Rights Agency Report. June 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

⁴⁷² Ibis.

Boeing MH 17 is being supplemented by statements about responsibility for the events in Ukraine.

In addition, the law enforcement authorities, Dutch Government and local press have a rather "lenient" attitude towards manifestations of Nazi ideology in Ukraine. For example, although the local media admit that certain Ukrainian entities (such as the neo-Nazi "Azov" battalion) openly promote Nazi ideology and use Nazi symbols, they avoid discussing the ideological component of such actions.

For example, the programme "Nieuwsuur" showed a report about Nazi battalion "Azov", in which the authors were forced to admit that this entity promotes Nazi ideology and uses Nazi symbols, but at the same time they did their best to avoid any discussion of the ideological component. A journalist from Bellingcat, who participated in the programme and came under the spotlight during the flight MH17 investigation, also could not overlook the nationalistic nature of "Azov", but justified the radicals saying that Ukraine supposedly had no other choice.

In light of the above, it is not surprising that, when the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices which contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", introduced annually by Russia and other co-sponsors, is considered in the UN General Assembly, the Dutch delegation abstains, following the position of the European Union on this issue.

New Zealand

In general, neo-Nazism and the glorification of Nazism in New Zealand are sporadic and are met with strong public disapproval. They are condemned in the media and those involved are prosecuted.

The only recent instance of neo-Nazism was registered in March 2020 when somebody distributed leaflets containing neo-Nazi and supremacy slogans and calling on people to join the new extremist group, in the premises of the Oakland University. Later, the administration of the University said that all the materials were seized. The incident was strongly condemned by the students and was extensively covered by the mass media. No open source has mentioned whether the perpetrator was found and punished.

The Jewish community, in particular the New Zealand Jewish Council and the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand, make significant contribution to the fight against glorification of Nazism. As a recent example of their successful efforts one can cite a petition initiated in August 2020, which resulted in the official ban on memorialization of former member of Waffen-SS Willi Huber. Mountt Hutt had named a ski slope and a cafe after him. There had also been a corresponding commemorative plate. The reason for this is that he is considered to be the founder of the local ski resort. The leading New Zealand's media outlets the Newshub and the Stuff widely publicized the case.

There have been no cases of desecration or dismantling of monuments to anti-Nazis and victims of World War II in the country. The attitude to historical heritage, including to memorials honouring war heroes, is generally that of respect.

However, New Zealand abstains from voting in the UN General Assembly on the draft UN General Assembly resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and

related intolerance" co-sponsored annually by Russia and a number of other States.

Against this background, it comes as no surprise that since Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, there have been increasing instances of overt Russophobia as a result of the global Western media's anti-Russian campaign projected in the local media. Russian nationals and Russian-speaking people, living in the country, periodically face Russophobic attitudes from New Zealanders and members of the local Ukrainian diaspora in various aspects of their daily life. The authorities have recently been closely monitoring this area, and the issue of respecting civil rights of the Russian-speaking population has been transferred to the competence of the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, established in July 2021, which takes additional preventive measures in this regard.

According to New Zealand Security Intelligence Service's annual reports, the spread of extremist racist and white supremacist ideologies remains a pressing issue for internal security.

Intolerance is faced by both indigenous Maori and non-European people, including foreigners. It is notable that this threat is posed mainly by individuals adhering to radical ideas rather than by organized groups, which makes it much harder for the security agencies to identify and suppress them.

With New Zealanders spending more time online during the coronavirus pandemic, the number of people exposed to extremist ideologies and conspiracy theories cannot be ruled out. The reason is that today the dissemination of such ideas and incitement to hatred on national, religious and other grounds have been predominantly carried out online. According to a study commissioned by the Government of New Zealand and conducted by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, extremist content from New Zealand's IP addresses is replicated on social networks, closed web forums and websites including Twitter, Facebook,

Parler, Gab, Youtube and 4Chan. There is no centralized platform for distributing right-wing content.

In search of publicity, the far-right used the "anti-vaccination" protest outside Parliament in Wellington in February and March 2022, for example, to promote their conspiracy theories about the origin of the coronavirus infection, the "true purpose" of COVID-19 vaccines and the anti-Semitic ideas linked to them, against the background of anti-government sentiments. During the demonstrations, there were also cases when Nazi symbols were displayed and an analogy was drawn between New Zealand's vaccination campaign and genocide. It should be noted that the latter prompted an outcry from the New Zealand Jewish Council and the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand, which strongly condemned the references to the crimes of the Nazi regime in Germany.

At the same time, as the March 2019 terrorist attack in Christchurch demonstrated and the 2020 report of Royal Commission of Inquiry confirmed, the domestic regulation of extremist organizations in this country is insufficient. The 28-item list of organizations banned on its territory covers only foreign groups recognized as terrorist at the international level, primarily by UN Security Council resolutions. And experts estimate that there are between 60 and 70 groups, including local groups (Action Zealanda being the most prominent), and up to 300 individual activists promoting right-wing and far-right ideas. According to official figures, by the end of 2021, there were 216 radical supporters under surveillance by the authorities, 140 of whom for ethnic and 76 for religious reasons.

Domestic racism remains an issue. The New Zealand Human Rights Commission had found that migrants become victims of overt or covert racism on a daily basis, in all areas and at all levels of society (institutional, interpersonal, within their own ethnic group or race). Notably, the driving forces behind this are not only racial supremacy and white privilege, but also fear and

ignorance, and general colonialist mindset. It has been noted that state involvement on this issue remains inadequate.

The issue of coexistence between descendants of colonizers and the Maori population remains a sensitive one. According to surveys, some 93 per cent of Maori respondents face intolerance and social injustice based on racial discrimination. For example, while the unemployment rate among indigenous people has decreased over the years, it is still significantly higher than the national unemployment rate, i.e. 7.7 per cent compared to 3.9 per cent for New Zealanders of European descent (June 2021). This problem has been highlighted by UN human rights treaty bodies, such as the Human Rights Committee (HRC)⁴⁷³, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)⁴⁷⁴, and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).⁴⁷⁵

In contrast, life expectancy among indigenous people is significantly lower, by an average of seven years. Experts attribute this to the fact that Maori face significant barriers in accessing basic health services. In addition, there is still a disparity in the salaries of indigenous health workers.⁴⁷⁶ CESCR also criticized New Zealand's authorities for having higher rates of chronic diseases

⁴⁷³ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the sixth periodic report of New Zealand. March 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

⁴⁷⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fourth periodic report of New Zealand. March 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fNZL%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru

⁴⁷⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the eighth periodic report of New Zealand. July 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f8&Lang=ru

⁴⁷⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-first to twenty-second periodic reports of New Zealand. August 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f21-22&Lang=ru

and higher disability rates among the indigenous population, and they are also negatively overrepresented in suicide and mental health statistics.⁴⁷⁷

Problems also emerge in the enjoyment of the right to education. International monitoring bodies note in this context that Maori and Pasifika students, notably at secondary school and university levels, achieve lower outcomes than those of European background and experience higher rates of stigma and disciplinary measures at schools.⁴⁷⁸ There has been a decline in the level of native language proficiency among the indigenous population. This is mainly due to the small number of Maori-speaking teachers.⁴⁷⁹

There is a notably high percentage of indigenous people affected by incarceration. The Committee against Torture, in its concluding observations following consideration of New Zealand's periodic report under the relevant convention, noted that, while making up 15 per cent of the State party's population, Maori comprise 45 per cent of arrested individuals and over 50 per cent of prison inmates, and, moreover, that more than 60 per cent of female inmates are Maori.⁴⁸⁰ CEDAW gave more precise figures, stating that 65 per cent of female inmates are Maori.⁴⁸¹ HRC also expressed concerns over the overrepresentation of Maori and Pasifika in the criminal justice system.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fourth periodic report of New Zealand. March 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fNZL%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru

⁴⁷⁸ Ibis.

⁴⁷⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-first to twenty-second periodic reports of the Kingdom of New Zealand. August 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f21-22&Lang=ru

⁴⁸⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the sixth periodic report of New Zealand. April 2015.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

⁴⁸¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the eighth periodic report of New Zealand. July 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f8&Lang=ru

⁴⁸² Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the sixth periodic report of New Zealand. March 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fNZL%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

At the same time, the total number of incarcerated persons has reached around 10,000, which has created an overcrowding problem in penitentiary institutions, which are designed for 9,000 inmates. As a key measure to reduce recidivism in custody, the authorities therefore announced an additional "Maori Pathway" plan in 2019, costing 98 million New Zealand dollars and aimed primarily at Indigenous people.⁴⁸³

In connection with the above and due to the media criticism of cases of groundless questioning of minor Maori citizens and the entering of their photographs and contact data in the police files, in early 2021 the New Zealand Police engaged with the New Zealand Institute for Security and Crime Science: Te Puna Haumarū and the University of Waikato to launch a research project in order to ensure equal approach to citizens and suspects and identify possible unconscious biased attitude towards Maori on the part of law-enforcement officials.

So far, the authorities have been unable to find a comprehensive solution to these issues. At the same time, some experts believe that the root cause of these issues is excessive authorities' focus on this particular group, which brings about a "vicious circle", in which the expansion of the Government support already in place (including material support) produces a reverse effect, causing discontent among the people of European background over the Government's Maori favouritism. As a result, in practice ensuring the rights of indigenous peoples is perceived as infringing the rights of the rest of New Zealanders (in business, appointment to posts, including the existence of Maori quota in the Parliament, etc.).

This tendency is reciprocal. The Maori believe their rights are being infringed and require more attention from the Government, while the rest of the country's population point out it is indigenous people who regard non-

⁴⁸³ Maori-focused prison initiative to target high security inmates, <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2019/05/maori-focused-prison-initiative-to-target-high-security-inmates.html>

indigenous peoples as outsiders and who are the source of most manifestations of everyday racism.

These issues have been recognized by the country's authorities. In particular, they were stressed by Minister of Justice Andrew Little in January 2019, when New Zealand was undergoing the Universal Periodic Review under the auspices of the UN Human Rights Council.

Furthermore, the issue of racism in the country also exists on a larger scale. New Zealand is one of the OECD countries with widest ethnic diversity, with population including representatives of over 200 ethnic groups speaking more than 160 languages. The number of immigrants increases by 50 thousand a year, with the majority coming from China and India. In addition to that, the country annually receives one thousand refugees based on the current quota.⁴⁸⁴

Despite the above issues, crimes on the grounds of racism, intolerance, or adherence to Nazi ideology are not considered as separate crimes. Although the Human Rights Act criminalizes deliberate incitement of racial hatred with imprisonment for up to three months or a fine of 7,000 New Zealand dollars, there is only one known case where this provision has been applied in practice. In 1979, an ultra-right activist was convicted for spreading Judophobic pamphlets. Committing a crime on the grounds of racial hatred is not considered an aggravating circumstance either. Nevertheless, under the Sentencing Act the judges are allowed to deem such illegal actions as grounds for harsher sentences.

Furthermore, criminal legislation to combat hate speech is also insufficient. The Human Rights Act criminalizes publishing materials inciting racial disharmony, however, such cases never become subject of criminal proceedings and are examined by the Human Rights Commission instead.

⁴⁸⁴ According to the Statistics New Zealand, the total number of refugees that have remained in New Zealand after World War II amounts to 35 thousand.

Matters of combating manifestations of discrimination in the New Zealand's society fall within the competence of Ministers for Ethnic Communities, Maori Development, Maori Crown Relations, Pacific Peoples, and Whanau Ora. Human Rights Commission continues to operate, and Race Relations Commissioner has been appointed. Furthermore, the Government maintains continuous contacts with five major ethnic organizations, consulting them on matter of its social policy. Those are Multicultural New Zealand, New Zealand Chinese Association, New Zealand Indian Central Association, the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand, and the African Communities Forum Inc.

One can conclude that in general, such phenomena as glorification of Nazism and neo-Nazism are not typical of New Zealand. At the same time, due to the perception of the privileged status of the white race deeply embedded in public consciousness since colonial times, much remains to be done by the Government in order to eliminate racism and xenophobia. Notably, structural discrimination against Maori remains the thorniest and the most pressing issue. So far, New Zealand's authorities have failed to bring its solution closer.

Norway

Norway, a country oft-touted for its tolerance, hasn't legally banned neo-Nazism/Nazism as a political and social movement. For that reason, Oslo has been repeatedly blasted by special-purpose Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) which was established based on The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, most recently in its concluding observations and recommendations following the review of the country-oriented report released in December 2018.⁴⁸⁵

However, almost all possible manifestations of Nazism and neo-Nazism are reflected in the nation's Criminal Code (§§ 77, 185, 186) and are punishable by law as "hate expression" or "discrimination" based on race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc. The same applies to showcasing of Nazi insignia (it is not prohibited in itself, but their use in the context of "hate expression" towards specific groups is punishable by a fine or a prison term of up to three years).

The rights of protection from discrimination, protection of the human identity, as well as provisions on equality and freedom of faith are cemented by a separate chapter of the 1814 Norwegian Constitution. Moreover, the 2017 Law On Equality and Prohibition of Discrimination and 1999 Law On Strengthening Human Rights Positions in Norwegian legislation of 1999 regulate additional guarantees for the human rights protection.

Norway has an extensive network of human rights institutions and a number of national ombudsmen that focus, among other things, on equality and discrimination prevention. Discrimination complaints filled out by citizens are processed by the Discrimination Commission. Since 2015, Stortinget

⁴⁸⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 23rd and 24th periodic reports of Norway. August 2018
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fNOR%2fCO%2f23-24&Lang=ru

(parliament) has affiliated Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (NIM) acting as an independent human rights organization.

Unlike many European nations that carry their own Nazi legacy, Norway, due to historical reasons, is not a fertile ground for fostering National Socialist ideology. Between 1940 and 1945, the nation was occupied by Nazis, with the collaborationist regime of Vidkun Quisling put in place. Human losses exceeded 10,000. Northern Norway was hit especially hard as Nazi forces relied on the scorched earth tactic while retreating.

The post-war crackdown on collaborators is a testament to how deep the Norwegian people were hurt by the occupation. Up to 2% of the population were subjected to repressions in various form, one of the highest figures among the countries that went through the stage of post-war "purges". By various estimates, up to 7,000 of Norwegians fought on the Nazis' side. Up to 6,000 fought on the Soviet-German front as part of SS Viking and Norland divisions, including Norway regiment, SS Ski Jäger Battalion "Norway", and SS Norwegian legion, with losses amounted to about 900 people. After the war, Norwegian SS members were in large part sentenced to various terms of correctional labor and temporarily deprived of civil rights.

During the entire span of Norway's occupation, the pro-Nazi regime maintained a high employment rate. According to various sources, between 200,000 and 500,000 Norwegians worked at the jobs created by Germans. In the first post-war years, the active participation of Norwegians in meeting the Reich's economic needs was not really considered to be disgraceful, while those facts were being swept under the rug for a long time (including by destroying archives on the POWs engagement in the construction of key infrastructure objects).

The Norwegian authorities were also ambiguous about the "unofficial" Resistance movement that acted as an alternative to the "official" Milorg underground organization, which was run by Norway's government in exile that

had left the country together with the Royal family and settled down in London. One of the reason behind such sentiments was that the members of "unofficial" Resistance cooperated with the Soviet military. As a result, they were not only not adequately rewarded for their input in fighting against fascism, but were often regarded by the post-war authorities as "unreliable elements" and potential "Soviet spies" and persecuted, spied on, and restricted in upward mobility.

Only by the end of the Cold War the authorities started to gradually recognize their efforts. In 1983, King Olav V laid wreaths at the memorials in the settlements of Kiberg and Berlevog (Northern Norway) in honor of the guerillas. In 1992, the guerillas were "rehabilitated" by King Harald V, who laid a wreath at the monument in Kiberg as he said, "I'm afraid we unfairly imposed significant personal burdens on individuals in the Cold War climate", I respectfully lay a wreath at the monument to the guerillas." (He never offered an apology for the previous persecutions while many Norwegians interpret these remarks exactly in this way).

At the same time, since the 1970s, according to law enforcement agencies⁴⁸⁶, Norway have seen right-wing radical groups embracing the ideas of national and racial supremacy intermittently emerge. As a rule, those were short-lived and few in numbers. The most well-known include: "Boot Boys", "Norwegian Front", "People's Party", "German Army of Norway", "Cells of Armed Aryans", "Terror of White Aryans", "Viking", "Zorn 88", etc. By the mid-1990s, the number of right-wing activists peaked. At the time, it was estimated at about 200 people.

Later on, right-wing radicals started to distantly lean toward anti-migration sentiments, which intensified as the influx of refugees and displaced

⁴⁸⁶ The most up-to-date official data on neo-Nazism in Norway could be found the report of the Police Academy, the Center for Research on Right-Wing Extremism, Hate Crimes and Political Violence (C-REX) and the Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies called "Right-wing Extremism in Norway: Development features, Conspiracy Theories and Prevention strategies", commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Justice (October 2018) and the report of the Police Security Service called "Supporters of Right-Wing Extremism in Norway: Who are they?" (March 2019).

persons from Asia, Africa and the Middle East picked up steam. As it currently stands, right-wing extremist almost never profess "classic" anti-Communism as they have replaced it for mainly anti-Islamic and anti-Semitic narrative, as well as criticism of left-wing Norwegian political forces seeking to improve migrants' standing.

Despite official disdain of neo-Nazi ideology, in practice the Norwegian authorities have been pretty lenient on neo-Nazi movements and organizations that have an opportunity to hold public events and marches, including those featuring Nazi paraphernalia, due to considerations linked to respecting the right to freedom of opinion and expression. There have been several cases when the police seeking to "avoid violence" did not stop unsanctioned right-wing rallies while dispersing those who were protesting against them, alleging that "aggressive" behavior of anti-Fascists is a threat to public order.

Norwegian neo-Nazis are few in numbers and divided. Low-key cells are present across the entire country, but most right-wing extremist are concentrated in the south, in Oslo region (up to 70% there while Oslo itself accounts for less than 10%) and along the southern coast.

A typical right-wing extremist is a man in his 30s or 40s, low education, often comes from a small settlement, located far-off from the administrative, cultural or other capital, plagued by personal life issues (single, unemployed) and social vices (alcoholism, drug addiction, criminal record). Mental disabilities are also not uncommon.

Generally, law enforcement agencies believe that right-wing extremists and Islamists are radicalized along the same line, with right-wing extremists on average being a bit older.

According to law enforcement agencies, among the right-wing radical groups embracing the ideas of national and racial supremacy, the most organized neo-Nazi group is the Norwegian branch of the "Nordic Resistance Movement" (SDS, Den nordiske motstandsbevegelsen), which was registered in

Norway in 2011 (the head of the local "arm" is a Norwegian national T.Olsen⁴⁸⁷) and is being managed from Sweden (a country where it). The movement is also present in Finland, Denmark and Iceland.

SDS is characterized by a strict hierarchy, rigid internal structure with membership fees and an age requirement of 16 years. The linchpin of its ideology is the idea of "international Jewish conspiracy." The movement supporters view themselves as national socialists.

The organization advocates for creating of a national socialist state within the Nordic countries' borders, champions the purity of the "Nordic race," is against "globalist institutions", including NATO, the EU, the European Economic Area, calls for the fight against the "Jewish-Zionist conspiracy" and LGBT also professing the cult of self-sacrifice and healthy lifestyle.

In 2020-2021, Covid dissidence became a new element of the SDS ideology, with the members of the organizations spreading conspiracy theories about the virus, opposing lockdowns and vaccination with "untested" drugs.

At a rough estimate, the core of the SDS activists in Norway number 30-40 people aged from 20 up to 60 (to compare, in Sweden SDS supporters number up to 300 people), most of them are known to law enforcement agencies due to their participation in other groups in the past. Many of them had been convicted of various criminal offenses.

SDS members take part in neo-Nazi rallies (mostly, in Sweden and Finland; usually, activists from the local arms are involved regardless of the exact location), put up posters and distribute leaflets, arrange hikes and training sessions to "make participants healthier" and bring them closer. Heavy youth-oriented campaigning is common; according to reports from the Norwegian branch of the SDS, its members regularly distribute leaflets and put up posters near high schools calling to join the organization.

⁴⁸⁷ He has been a part of various right-wing extremist communities for 20 years. In 2002 he was sentenced to a year and two months in prison for stabbing two migrants.

At that, activists are acting publicly and don't conceal their identity and avoid using violence (although not completely). As in case with political parties, the SDS organizes "educational" and "family-friendly" events and youth summer camps. According to law enforcement agencies' estimates, in the future the SDS may become somewhat more active (largely, due to anti-migration factor) which will make the group to become more assertive.

Despite a pretty aggressive narrative (calls to "join the fight," using paramilitary terms when describing the organization's hierarchy and accusing the authorities of "lying," etc.), most SDS campaigns remain within the bounds of the law, which prevents law enforcement from intervening.

The organization often appeals to such democratic principles as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association to hold rallies, demonstrations and distribute propaganda materials. They decry any attempts to derail these events by law enforcement agencies or ideological opponents as "flagrant violations" of freedom of speech and pluralism.

SDS campaigns are often provocative, but due to lenience of Norway's legislation they rarely end up in court sentences. In this vein, on April 9, 2018, the anniversary of the start of Germany's occupation of Norway, the activists pinned up banners and leaflets depicting swastikas and reading "We are back!" in a number of cities. Three SDS members (including Olsen) that took part in this campaign in the city of Kristiansand were initially found guilty of inciting hatred by the first-instance court and were fined, but after filing an appeal they were acquitted by the second-instance court in 2020. All charges against them were dropped.

In April 2019, due to the rift revolving around working methods, the most radical faction splintered from SDS, subsequently establishing a new organization called Nordic Strengh (Nordisk styrke), with Haakon Forwald, the former head of SDS in Norway, becoming one of its bosses. The organization

preaches "returning to the roots", i.e. abandoning legal methods of promoting its ideas.

The exact number of members of the new structure is unknown. In the future, the organization intends to allow "anonymous membership" for its supporters who, for some reason, cannot act in the open under their own name. Between 2020 and 2021, Nordic Strength's activities were lackluster and significantly more inferior in scope to those of SDS.

As stated above, as migrants from non-European countries kept arriving in Norway, anti-migration sentiments and organizations preaching Islamophobia and anti-Semitism gained more prominence amongst right-wing extremists. As of recently, organization called Stop Islamisation of Norway (Stopp islamiseringen av Norge, SIAN), which stands against increased migration to Norway, especially from Muslim countries, came to the fore. The organization has been active since 2000, having changed its name several times (called SIAN since 2008). It is headed by Lars Thorsen.⁴⁸⁸

SIAN's ideological platform includes combatting the spread of Islam and its ideas in Norway, as this religion, according to the organization's members, is "a political ideology under a religious disguise which threatens the Western world and freedom." The organization seeks to disassociate itself from neo-Nazi labels, arguing that it doesn't embrace racism and is committed to democratic and humanistic values, while its "opponents" are not the Muslims, who are themselves the "Islam's first victims", but the political and religious ideology of Islam. However, Norwegian public and major political forces regard SIAN as a right-wing extremist organization, with media often branding it as neo-Nazi.

⁴⁸⁸ In November 2019, he was given a 30-day suspended jail sentence and was fined for inciting hatred by delivering a speech at one of the SIAN rallies in Oslo in July 2018. The court ruled that his remarks about "the more Muslims are religious, the more they are cruel" incite hatred, as do his calls to "deport them to some remote region where they can worship their retarded ideology of oppression".

SIAN does not disclose the number of its members. While its Facebook group has more than 10,000 subscribers, expert estimate their real number to be no more than 400 people.

Most SIAN backers (more than 40%) support the Progress party, which is the most right-wing in Norway's parliament, while a slightly smaller proportion (about 30%) support even more radical and fringe anti-migrant parties Democrats, the Independence Party and the Alliance.

As in case with SDS, SIAN seeks legitimize its views by pointing to freedom of speech and expression. The organization holds rallies on a regular basis, primarily in large cities in the south of the country, distributes leaflets, and is actively engaged in informational work in social media. Most of the SIAN demonstrations trigger counter-rallies by its opponents, who seek to stop the events from happening in any way possible (for example, they surround the scene and try to roar down SIAN speakers). Periodically, clashes erupt against this backdrop.

Since 2019, SIAN activists have regularly being public burning the Koran. Several such stunts were staged by Thorsen in March-April 2022 in front of Muslim mosques in the cities of Oslo and Sandefjord. Police wouldn't start an investigation against Thorsen, arguing that "burning of Koran isn't a display of hatred against specific people".⁴⁸⁹

In 2019, a similar provocation prompted backlash from Turkey (Turkish Foreign Ministry published a press release on its website with condemnation), Iran and Pakistan (foreign ministries summoned Norway's envoys) as well as a series of demonstration in a number of Turkish and Pakistani cities that featured burning of Norwegian flags. After this, the authorities were forced to make public steps. Justice Minister Jøran Kallmyr and Jens Frølich Holte, State Secretary of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, distanced themselves from SIAN, decrying its actions as provocative while describing them as a

⁴⁸⁹ Klassekampen, April 27, 2022.

"legal manifestation of freedom of speech". The Norwegian telecommunications company Telenor, which provides mobile communications in Pakistan, also issued a press release condemning the stunt.

In August 2020, during the SIAN rally in Oslo and Bergen, those who opposed the organization gathered counter-demonstrations, which, among other things, saw attempts to attack activists, police officers and police special-purpose vehicles who were defending them (protesters threw stones and other objects at the vehicles and police officers, with one policeman injured after his face was hit by a stick). As a result, the police repeatedly used tear gas on SIAN's opponents, with several of them being detained for "inciting riots" and resisting the law enforcement. At the same time, some politicians (mainly from the opposition) and activists lambasted law enforcement officers for "too harsh a response" and using tear gas in densely populated areas where the rallies were held.

Given the rise in violence that has become intrinsic to SIAN rallies in recent time, the ban on holding such events in densely populated areas, primarily in residential areas, is being mulled.

To add some "democratic legitimacy" to the organization, SIAN has tried several times to incorporate itself into the political process by partaking in prestigious national political events (for instance, Arendal Week, a series of socio-political and business-oriented seminars, debates and addresses by prominent cultural figures, which is held every year in August and largely sets the tone for a new political season), but each time after a public backlash was rebuffed.

Other operating right-wing extremist groups are mostly fringe and low-profile, the most well-known include: Soldiers of Odin, Pegida, Vigrid, the Norwegian Defense League, the Fatherland Party, the Norwegian People's Party, the parties Stop Immigration, White Electoral Alliance, Norwegian Patriots, Democrats, Alliance. Meanwhile, international ideological movements,

such as the 'identarists' (the new right") and 'alternative right' are on the rise in Norway, especially among the young people.

Despite national-socialism ideology being unpopular in Norway and scarcity of local neo-Nazi, their activities are a cause of concern for authorities. There is an increase in right-wing extremist sentiments, which is contingent on the number of refugees and displaced persons coming from Muslim countries (currently on the decrease), as well as signs of increased cooperation between the neo-Nazi community members in Norway, Sweden and Finland.

Norwegian law enforcement agencies are particularly concerned by fact that neo-Nazi and racist ideology is trickling down "to the grassroots level", with individual persons being radicalized on the Internet and social media that are practically untraceable as they use encrypted messages on closed-off platforms.

A classic example is a neo-Nazi Anders Breivik, who, protesting against Norwegian authorities' migration policies that were "too soft," staged terrorist attacks in Oslo and on the island of Utøya in 2011, which became the deadliest in Norway's the history (77 killed, more than 150 wounded). Prior to the terror attacks, he used e-mail to spread his 1500-page manifest outlining his views that he kept on actively promulgating during the public trial. The court recognized him as capable of being held accountable and sentenced to 21 years of prison.

After a high profile crime committed by his follower Philip Manshaus, who is a Quisling devotee and intended to join SDS (in August 2019, he shot dead his Chinese-born half-sister on racist grounds and attempted to stage an attack on a mosque in Oslo's suburbs; in June 2020, he was sentenced to 21 years of prison and found liable to pay a compensation equivalent to about \$80,000), Norwegian intelligence agencies view right-wing extremism as one of the main terrorist threats to Norwegian society along with radical Islam (until June 2019, attacks by right-wing radicals were deemed "unlikely").

In its 2022 report, the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST, which, among other things, is in charge of combating terrorism) said that the number of right-wing extremists is likely to increase, a trend linked to the growing popularity of the ideas they promote, the availability of propaganda on the Internet, socio-economic difficulties and increased isolation amidst the pandemic. The service has recorded an increase in the number of Norwegians expressing support for right-wing extremist terrorist attacks.

Due to this, the country has taken action in line with government plans to combat racism and discrimination on ethnic and religious grounds (intended for 2020-2023), as well as to combat discrimination and hate speech against Muslims (intended for 2020-2023).

In 2019, the Ministry of Culture established a Commission for Freedom of Expression with a mandate which covers assessing the current situation in Norway in this area and the feasibility of new measures in the areas linked to countering the spread of fake news and hate speech. The Commission is due to present a report on the results of its work in the second half of 2022.

One of dramatic examples showing that Norway has toughened its stance of right-wing extremists is detention and deportation of American nationalist Greg Johnson in November 2019 to "prevent radicalization of population." Johnson planned to deliver a speech at a conference on Human biodiversity held by the right-wing extremist organization Scandza Forum (based in Bergen) in Oslo (in July 2017, without any issues, he took part in a similar event of Scandza Forum in Norway; prior to this, he expressed sympathy for Breivik).

Despite the increased focus of law enforcement agencies on the right-wing extremism (since 2015, the number of cases filed on the grounds of relevant offenses has more than tripled), this issue is far from being eradicated.

As of recently, incidents involving the public display of Nazi symbols have been gaining ground in Norway. In February 2018, the depiction of the Torah rune on the Norwegian ski team's uniform sent shockwaves in the media.

Photos of the team members wearing this uniform were released. The manufacturer reportedly decided to ignore the fact that the symbol is used by the Norwegian arm of SDS and was previously incorporated by German Nazi structures. Norwegian Ski Federation said that the uniform wouldn't change and suggested that athletes should decide whether to wear it or not by themselves.

As far as it is known, Norwegian society still harbors negative attitude towards representatives of some nationalities and ethnic groups. In this vein, up to 20-30% of the nation's population wouldn't like to have Gypsies or Muslims as their neighbors.

There are no signs of racist jabs against members of the Russian-speaking community or cases of persecution of Russian national by Norway's right-wing groups, including due to recent developments in Ukraine.

In general, the attitude towards neo-Nazism in Norwegian society remains negative. Norwegians remain opposed to fascism, attempts to revisit the history of WWII are unpopular. Publication that provide a distorted account of WWII are, as a rule, criticized by historians and representatives of military memorial organizations. The nation's authorities do not allow any glorification of the Nazi movement of former members of Nazi organizations, including the Waffen-SS.

Officially, authorities declare non-participations in any actions to search for and rebury the remains of Norwegian citizens who fought in the Wehrmacht during World War II.⁴⁹⁰

Nor did the authorities and general public support the 2017 initiative put forward by the Norwegian Red Cross to open a "place of remembrance" for Norwegian Waffen-SS legionnaires in Norway at the expense of the state. The organization argued that the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, "On the

⁴⁹⁰ According to various estimates, up to 7,000 Norwegians fought on the side of the Nazis, including up to 6,000 on the Soviet-German front as part of the Waffen-SS divisions Viking and Nordland. After the war, Norwegian SS members were in large part sentenced to various terms of correctional labor and temporarily deprived of civil rights.

Protection of War Victims" obliged the authorities to help relatives of the deceased to access their burial sites.

The country does not accept, especially at the official level, the desecration or destruction of monuments dedicated to those who fought against Nazism and its victims⁴⁹¹; the authorities support the construction of new monuments⁴⁹². Numerous burial sites and monuments to Soviet POWs who died in Nazi concentration camps in Norway (12,678 people) are kept in decent condition at the expense of the Norwegian state, and are restored and modernized if necessary. Solemn events are held on a regular basis at the memorials, especially on the anniversaries to celebrate Victory over Fascism. They are attended by local authorities and the public, with representatives of the Russian foreign missions being invited. Caring attitude towards Soviet monuments is especially noticeable in Northern Norway, the eastern part of which was liberated by the Red Army in 1944.

In October 2019, the 75th anniversary of this incident was solemnly and widely commemorated. The event were attended by the king of Norway and the nation's senior political leaders. Russia was represented by Sergey Lavrov. In May 2020, for the first time in many years, the Norwegian Foreign Minister took part in a joint wreath-laying ceremony with the Russian Ambassador at the monument at the grave of Soviet soldiers in Oslo.

While declaring that any extremist ideologies, including neo-Nazism, are unacceptable, Oslo is consistently refusing to support the resolution put forward by the Russian delegation in the UN General Assembly on "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and

⁴⁹¹ One of the rare exceptions is the desecration of the monument dedicated to the exploits of the anti-fascist group Oswald in Oslo (2017). The monument was vandalized with red paint, as most of the group members were Communists. The culprits were never found.

⁴⁹² As it currently stands, a project is being implemented to install a monument at the site where a Soviet crew of the Catalina seaplane died (the aircraft crashed in June 1944 on the island of Sørøya in Northern Norway while being transferred from the US to the USSR under the Lend-Lease program in 1944-1945).

related intolerance" (the Norwegian delegation traditionally abstains from voting on the resolution at the UN General Assembly; the last time it did so in December 16, 2021).

Despite the above-mentioned facts, the Norwegian Foreign Ministry has been soft on the "war" against monuments to Soviet soldiers in Poland, glorification of the "Forest Brothers" and mocking of the Great Patriotic War veterans in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

After the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation launched their special military operation (SMO) to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect civilians in the Donbass, Norwegian media regularly publish pieces attempting to whitewash the Nazis of the "Azov" battalion and portray them as "true patriots" defending the interests of their country. Their Nazi ideology and the use of SS symbols does not bother Norwegian journalists.

In May 2022, the Norwegian authorities refused to take part in the traditional ceremonies of laying wreaths at the graves of Soviet soldiers who were killed on the nation's territory during WWII. Publicly, Russia was accused of using of monuments to Soviet soldiers for propaganda purposes, in particular, to portray Norway as its ally.

Meanwhile, the unimpeded selling on the largest Norwegian online trading platform finn.no of Nazi paraphernalia (banners, objects with swastikas and Nazi symbols), which are apparently considered as historical artifacts without ideological significance, contradict government statements on combatting the promulgation of extremist ideas.

In a bid to "restore justice", the authorities, as a matter of fact, rehabilitated "romances" of many Norwegian women with Nazi soldiers during the occupation.

In 2018, Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg issued an official apology on behalf of the government for post-war persecution Norwegian women who had relations with German soldiers during the occupation by the

authorities. Sulberg said that such actions are "illegal" and contradict to "the basic principle of the rule of law, according to which no one can be considered a criminal without trial or judged outside the law."

According to Norwegian estimates, about 40,000-50,000 Norwegian women had an affair with Germans, which is about 10% from the nation's total female population aged from 18 to 35. These contacts gave birth to about 10,000-12,000 children.

After the war, the attitude towards these women in society was sharply negative: their hair was publicly shaved, and they were paraded in the streets in disgrace. Many of them were arrested and put in internment camps for forced labor. A wave of job terminations swept through the country, with suicides taking place. Women who married Germans during the occupation, were deported, mainly to Germany (the practice was kept in place until 1947), for a long time they were not allowed to come back. Apart from this, the deported individuals were stripped of Norwegian citizenship, which is unique for the nation's history, given that such a practice had never been implemented before or thereafter.

In 2000, the authorities offered an apology to the "war's children" that Norwegian women gave birth from the occupants. In many cases, they were separated from their mothers, handed over to foster families or orphanages, and they also faced biased attitude from the society.

In May 2020, the Norwegian Parliament paid no heed to the appeal of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation to the parliaments of foreign states to support the initiative to recognize the Victory over Nazism as the Mankind's World Heritage, and to regard monuments dedicated to the fighters against Nazism in all countries as a humanity's universal memorial.

In November 2020, during the preparation of the vote on the Russian resolution "75th anniversary of the end of World War II" Norway turned out to

be one of the states that managed to remove the passage about "preventing the desecration or destruction of monuments erected in memory of those who fought in that war on the side of the United Nations."

Allegations that Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union are equally to blame for the start of the WWII are gaining more and more ground in Norway, as does the thesis that in post-war years, Eastern European countries actually lost their independence, while "the end of the war in Europe could be celebrated only after the fall of the Berlin Wall", "real freedom came after the collapse of the totalitarian Soviet project" (similar ideas are promoted, for example, by the senior management of the Resistance Museum in Oslo).

In the remarks by officials on the Liberation Day and National Veteran's Day celebrated in Norway on May 8, the focus is increasingly shifting towards praising NATO, Norway's participation in international military operations, including those bypassing the UN, calls to "strengthen the transatlantic link" (at the same time, the implication is that Russia is a "source of threat").

Norwegian schoolbooks tend to make military increasingly history primitive (the Soviet Union role is "condensed," only the Battle of Stalingrad and the D-Day are mentioned as "breakthrough" allied offensives). Liberation of Western Europe by US and UK troops ("it brought democracy") is place in opposition to the liberation of Eastern Europe by the Soviet Union (after fascism was suppressed, "the clout of another totalitarian movement threatening democracy increased").

In April 2021, Norwegian state television and radio company NRK sparked public outcry after it released a four-episode semi-documentary "Front-line Soldiers" about Norwegians who fought on the Eastern Front on the Axis side. It was produced by the Defense and Culture ministries as well as Norwegian Film institute. The film tells the tale of seven Norwegian members of the SS that fought against the Red Army and Yugoslav partisans, with their narratives about their "military exploits" accompanied by fictional clips

"reconstructing" the wartime events. The "frontline soldiers" featured in the film denied participation in the executions of civilians and POWs, claiming that they "defended Norway's interests", fought against "the expansion of Bolshevism, not for Hitler", spoke with contempt about the Red Army soldiers. Historians featured in the film also urged "not to condemn, but to try to understand the motives of the front-line soldiers." In essence, they were justifying their decision to join the Nazi troops by the political context: the "fear" of communists that was prevalent in pre-war Norway, "Lenin and Stalin's totalitarian regime", the NKVD "repressions" in Poland, the Soviet-German "partition" of Europe, as well as by anti-Semitic sentiments that were deeply rooted "in the East."

The film sparked a lot of outcry from experts and the Jewish community, while even historians who took in the project supported the criticism, arguing that their comments were "taken out of context." The filmmakers and NRK were accused of "humanizing" war criminals and Nazi propaganda, "depersonalization" of victims, ignoring evidence of Norwegian complicity in the fascist crimes, lack of critical context, insufficient attention to revealing the essence of the Holocaust and Hitler's aggressive plans. NRK dismissed the accusations as they highlighted that one of the film's goals was to foster "further debates".

Based on the Norwegian historical experience, the authorities continue to give special emphasis to tracking and preventing anti-Semitism.⁴⁹³ For a long time, the issue of Jew deportation from the country was under taboo. During the occupation, about 50% of Norwegian Jews (760 people) were deported to Nazi concentration camps in Germany and Poland with the assistance of the local police, with 25 people returning to their homeland alive after the war. This fact was brushed under the carpet up until the early 1980s.

⁴⁹³ The Jewish community in Norway suffered greatly during the Nazi occupation, with most of its members being deported to Nazi "death camps" and almost completely wiped out.

In the 21st century, historians and the public grew significantly more interested in the topic of the Holocaust and Norwegian complicity in it, which allowed to reveal new facts about persecutions during WWII. For example, in 2019, Aftenposten newspaper published a series of publications about Quisling's role in the extermination of Norwegian Jews. With references to archival sources, the pieces said that Quisling was likely aware of what Nazi had in store for Jews, but deliberately did nothing to protect them. During the post-war trial he denied any involvement in the arrests and deportations of Jews to Germany, shifting the blame solely to the Germans, and was acquitted of this count of charges (he was found guilty only of "unpremeditated complicity in murder").

Norway has a government program for combatting anti-Semitism with a focus on preventing these sentiments in schools, social and regular media (in particular, experiments are ongoing that seek to detect anti-Semitic sentiments with electronic means). In January 2021, the government adopted another plan within this program, which is intended for 2021-2023 and provides additional funding for educational activities through the Jewish community, and envisages a more active Norwegian contribution to specialized international campaigns to fight anti-Semitism. Official support has helped to establish and propel the studies of the history of occupation, anti-Semitism in Norway, its current direction (the Center for Holocaust and Religious Minority Studies in Oslo, the Falstad Center for Memory and Human Rights). According to the government estimates, the measures, while at a slow pace, are having an impact, with the level of anti-Semitism in Norway put on a gradual decline (between 2012 and 2017 it went down by 4%).

Despite the measures taken by the authorities, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia manifestations in Norway are still frequent. The same applies to an increasing number of remarks meant to incite hatred or enmity, including on the Internet.

According to the piece published on August 10, 2021 in the Norwegian daily Aftenposten, a complaint was lodged with the police against Noor Ahmed Noor, an imam with the mosque in Drammen that alleged that he had released anti-Semitic comments in Urdu on Facebook ("Jews put the world in danger", "Hitler left several Jews so that the world would understand how bad this ethnic group is and why they should be killed"). While the imam "expressed regret" about his remarks, he was put on suspension.

According to a 2021 study by the Norwegian Media Authority (Mediatilsynet), 25% of Norwegians aged 16-20 faced "online hatred" on the Internet within the year.

According to the 2019 report of the Oslo Police Department, since 2016, the amount of instances of hate speech increased by 58%, while the number of statements directed against those who profess Islam went up by half.

In January 2020, in a first, the Supreme Court of Norway brought in the verdict of guilty in the case related to the use of hate speech on social media, with the sentence being a suspended 24-day jail term.

Influence of Islamization, which was caused by migration influx and the growth of anti-immigrant sentiments, prompted the public attitude towards certain religions to generally deteriorate, with the legislation regulating the religion sphere being tightened. In this vein, in June 2018, the Parliament approved amendments to the 1998 Law "On Education" which banned wearing of face-concealing headgear by kindergarten staff and teachers of educational institutions during classes.

In the report of the Norwegian Institute for Research on Labor, Trade Union Movement and Public Policy called "Attitude to discrimination, equality and hate speech"⁴⁹⁴, the surveys show that 25% of Norwegians view representatives of certain races as "more intelligent", while 39% believe that

⁴⁹⁴ Holdninger til diskriminering, likestilling og hatprat i Norge. 2. utgave. Guri Tyldum. Fafo-rapport 2019:26 <https://www.fafo.no/zoo-publikasjoner/fafo-rapporter/item/holdninger-til-diskriminering-likestilling-og-hatprat-i-norge-2-utgave>.

migrants from Somalia will never become "full-fledged Norwegians". 22% say the same about Swedes, and 16% – about representatives of the black race. 33% of polltakers are afraid to pass by a group of people that look like Muslims, 35% believe that a woman wearing a hijab cannot count on being treated as equal. 38% wouldn't like to have Gypsies as their neighbors, with 16% unwilling to live near Muslims.

According to polls conducted by the Center for Holocaust Studies in 2017, 75% of Norwegians of Jewish origin fear discrimination and hostile actions. 8.3% are prejudiced against Jews, among Norwegian Muslims this figure amounts to 28.9%.

While in recent years the Norwegian authorities, international structures and NGOs have assessed the human rights situation in the country as relatively trouble-free, the fact that human rights violations take place in Norway is recognized by relevant national and international institutions. In this vein, against the backdrop of a number of high-profile cases, the Norwegian authorities are being criticized for not observing refugees' rights.

Since February 2022, the Norwegian authorities have resumed the deportation of Afghans who were denied asylum in Norway, a practice that was temporarily suspended after the Taliban takeover.

In January 2022, the Norwegian migration authorities ordered Yasin, an asylum seeker from Afghanistan, (has resided in Norway since 2015), to leave Norway due to the lack of grounds for granting him refugee status, and given that "Afghanistan is a safe country." Yasin has a wife and daughter in Norway (both have a residence permits). He and his family members are a part of the Hazaras ethnic group, which has been persecuted by the Taliban.⁴⁹⁵

In January 2022, the authorities ordered Amir Hussein Husseinzadeh, a refugee from Iran, to leave Norway (has been in Norway since 2010), despite the fact that while living in Norway he converted from Islam to Christianity, a

⁴⁹⁵ NRK, January 25, 2022

move that makes his travelling back to Iran unsafe. Between 2018 and 2020, only 35% out of 110 Iranians, who converted from their religion, got asylum in Norway.

In its 2021 report on human rights observation in Norway, Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (NIM) details the violation of the rights of standalone refugees aged 15-18 years and the existence of "pressure" on the rights of indigenous peoples.

Given that different rules apply for single refugees aged 15-18 and refugee children under the age of 15 who are overseen by child protection services (according to Norwegian law, the responsibility for custody of single refugees aged 15-18 years is assigned to the Directorate of Immigration, while young refugee children are processed by the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs), the Government is advised to adopt amendments giving equal rights to refugee children under the age of 15 and those who are older.

Commission on Immigration ordered Mustafa Hassan to leave Norway upon reaching the age of 18 on December 28, 2020, because his mother, when requesting asylum in 2008, incorrectly indicated his country of origin (Palestine instead of Jordan). In July 2021, a court in Oslo sided with Hassan, citing his "close ties" with Norway.

Nor is the situation easy with the observance of the indigenous peoples' rights – the Sami, who compactly live within the nation's three northern provinces, including: Finnmark, Troms, Nordland. In June 2019, Norway's Ministry of Local Government and Modernization submitted a report on the positions of the Sami language, culture and social life to the Storting.⁴⁹⁶

The document revealed numerous negative trends in the Sami communities, which the authorities have so far failed to overcome. The

⁴⁹⁶ 2 Meld. St. 31 (2019–2020). Samisk språk, kultur og samfunnsliv – Digitalisering. <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/meld.-st.-31-20192020/id2729805/?ch=1>.

population size in Sami's compact residence areas remains relatively stable⁴⁹⁷. However, the proportion of elderly people is higher in these areas than in the rest of Norway, and Sami's numbers are mainly supported by the influx of migrants of non-Sami origin (their number has doubled since 2011). The Sami population is projected to continue declining until 2030.

The Sami, especially men, has a lower percentage of people with higher education compared to the nation's average. The same is typical for secondary education (some Sami never finish their studies).

Violence runs rampant in the Sami's community. According to surveys, up to 45% of the Sami have faced violence (compared to 29% of the population in the rest of Norway).

The indicators that characterize the level of discrimination within this population category in various spheres are even worse. According to Sami sources, discrimination is ten times more common there than among the Norwegian population in general (35% vs. 3.5%). The Sami sometimes face negative attitude in social and regular media.

The report dedicates a separate chapter to the state and tendencies in the development of the Sami language⁴⁹⁸. The language is on the backfoot and is being diluted by Norwegian loan words, it says. The report also notes that native speakers of the Sami language are few. It notes that the language issue also affects the social sphere, including social and health care, etc. Even in the areas where Sami live compactly, there is a shortage of diagnostic capabilities as medical personnel lacks in training to use professional terms in the Sami language.

Speaking on the situation in general, human rights activists note that, despite the authorities' significant efforts to "redeem" themselves before the

⁴⁹⁷ About 55,600 people since 2011, while only about 17,000 Sami are included in the Sameting's (Sami Parliament) unofficial lists.

⁴⁹⁸ Includes six dialects: North Sami, South Sami, Lule Sami, Pete Sami, Ume Sami, Skolto Sami. All of them are listed as endangered by UNESCO.

Sami and national minorities (Kven/Norwegian Finns, Jews, forest Finns, Gypsies/Roma, Tatars/Romani) who have become "victims" of Oslo's assimilation policies, as of recently, there have been cases of violations of the Sami rights, especially in the context of rolling out industrial projects in the territories where they traditionally live. This has triggered ingenious people to regularly express discontent.

Construction of a complex of wind parks (commissioned in 2021) on the Fosen peninsula in the province of Trøndelag by the company "Fosen Vind" sparked a widespread public outcry. According to reindeer herders, the wind farms construction has stripped them of a third of the traditional winter pastures in the region. In June 2020, the second-instance court confirmed that construction permits have been issued on legal grounds, but ruled that Fosen Vind should pay 89 million krona to the Sami. (\$10.4 million) to compensate for losing pastures. On October 11, 2021, the Supreme Court of Norway ruled in favor of the Sami, stating that their right to practice cultural traditions was violated during the construction of two of the six wind farms. The court also recognized the decisions on issuing licenses to "Fosen Vind" as invalid.

According to NIM, the litigation surrounding "Fosen Vind" highlights that interference violating the cultural traditions of the indigenous population should be defined more clearly. In this vein, the government was advised to prepare guidance on the interpretation and application of article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in Norwegian judicial practice.

Norwegian National Human Rights Institution reports have repeatedly⁴⁹⁹ stated that representatives of national minorities, especially women and children, continue to face discrimination.

⁴⁹⁹ For details, see for instance: Menneskerettighetene i Norge 2019. NIMs årsmelding, Dokument 6 (2019-2020). https://www.nhri.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NIM_A%CC%8Arsmelding_2019_web.pdf; Menneske-rettighetene i Norge 2018. NIMs årsmelding, Dokument 6 (2018-2019). https://www.nhri.no/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/NIM_Arsmelding_2018_web-1.pdf.

The Barnevern child protection authority is still facing criticism for the excessive number of children taken away from families, a discriminatory approach towards children of non-Norwegian origin (while the nation's population is 5.4 million people, more than 15,000 children that receive assistance from Barnevern have foreign roots), inadequate staff qualifications, and a high level of violence against foster children.

In 2021, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) completed the review of seven cases regarding the practices embraced by the Norwegian Barnevern child protection authority while taking away children from "dysfunctional" families and transferring them to foster parents. Within these cases, Norway was found guilty six times and acquitted once. In all Barnevern cases, Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which guarantees respect for personal and family life, was presumed to have been violated.

Gypsies feel that they are shunned in the housing and labor market, they complain about insufficient opportunities to learn their native language. Meanwhile, the Jews' main problem is hate speech and other manifestations of anti-Semitism. Kven/Norwegian Finns face difficulties in learning in their native language and the lack of media published in it, while forest Finns struggle to preserve their culture in general.

On the other hand, the nation is implemented certain comprehensive measures to support the languages, cultures and ways of life of the Sami and other national minorities. In 2018, the Norwegian Parliament established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with a mandate to study the consequences of "Norwegianization" (or assimilation) and persecution of the Sami, Kven and Finnish national minorities, as well as to develop possible "reconciliation" measures. The Commission is due to present a report on the results of its work by June 2023.

In February 2020, public hearings on amendments to the law "On the Sami" were completed, with a separate chapter stipulating that the authorities are obligated to consult with the Sami Parliament on issues concerning the indigenous people.

On January 1, 2022, the law "On Languages" came into force, which confirms the status of national minorities' languages. It is worth noting that the position of the Sami languages in comparison with Norwegian is already outlined in more detail in the current legislation. However, it was the first time that they were given their official clarified status at the national level – "the language of indigenous peoples". The law highlights that the Norwegian and Sami languages have the same standing. The Kven, Finnish, Gypsy and Romani languages have received the official status of "national minorities' languages". The law also confirmed that Norwegian version of the sign language (as opposed to international sign language) is the "state sign language."

Experts and representatives of relevant NGOs agreed that the document in this part is "positive." The same also applied to the new requirement to use easy-to-understand, "non-bureaucratic" language in lawmaking and communications with the population, which would take into account the document's target audience. The authorities believe that this norm would increase legislation-awareness in Norway and contribute to digitalization of public services and the transition to electronic document management.

Some steps are being taken to overcome discrimination in the labor market. The government's 2019-2022 integration strategy is aimed at ensuring equal rights of migrants in labor market and public life.

On January 1, 2021, a new law "On Integration" came into force in Norway, which seeks to help migrants and refugees integrate into Norwegian society and economic life as fast as possible.

At the same time, in some areas Norwegians are reluctant to implement international recommendations.

In its comments to the 23rd and 24th periodic reports on Norway (submitted on November 2, 2017), the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concerns that "racist and neo-Nazi organizations have become more visible on social media and through demonstrations" and "Norway has not declared illegal and prohibited organizations that promote and incite racial hatred." Commenting on the findings, the Norwegian authorities pointed out that Norway, in accordance with the Criminal Code, prohibits illegal actions, not organizations.

There are no plans to introduce the concept of "race" into the 2017 Norwegian Law "On Equality and Prohibition of Discrimination", because, as the authorities believe, the issues of race discrimination are already addressed as "ethnic discrimination". There are no plans to establish a separate police structure to combat and investigate hate speech cases (Russia's recommendation on this matter within the universal periodic review within the framework of the UN Human Rights Council was rebuffed). The Norwegians point out that the only relevant special unit in Oslo "gives recommendations" to colleagues from other regions.

The above-mentioned facts show that xenophobia and intolerance belong to the problematic aspects of the Norwegian human rights dossier. This is largely due to the public discontent that is being triggered by the authorities' migration policies. Islamophobia and migrantphobia underpin the ideology of right-wing radical groups operating in the country, which, despite the authorities' statements rejecting of Nazism, are not outlawed yet.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned absence of target-driven discrimination of our compatriots in Norway, the government and law enforcement authorities of the Kingdom continue to maintain the atmosphere of alertness and biased attitude to these individuals. There have been cases of negative attitude towards people of Russian origin. The Norwegian intelligence services urge their fellow citizens to show "vigilance" in their contacts with

Russians, to inform the competent authorities of all suspicious activities that involve their colleagues at work, neighbors. There have been some cases which saw Russian nationals being pressured by local counterintelligence services (who take interest in their Russian relatives, contacts with the Embassy and even encourage to renounce Russian citizenship).

Russian origin may be used as grounds for refusing to provide clearance to Norwegian citizens called up to serve in the military, glossing over employment applications, non-justified raid, detentions and deportations⁵⁰⁰.

Recently, the Russian Embassy again began receiving complaints in connection to disrespecting attitude in public spaces, including at the capital's airport. It also reported on groundless apprehensions.

A man named Haakon (the real name has not been disclosed; he was born in 2002 and has Russian roots) was not granted clearance in 2021 after several months of training at a military school due to his "ties with Russia and the possibility of him being pressured, which may be detrimental to national interests." His mother migrated from Russia more than 26 years ago, before applying to the military school, he renounced Russian citizenship⁵⁰¹.

Compatriot K.Fulosen (born in 2001; has a Russian mother and Norwegian father) was dismissed from the military service in 2022 after being refused clearance due to "his family's ties with Russia".

Another controversial issue is Norwegian child protection authorities' bid to take away children from some Russian citizens residing in the country (as of February 2022, the Embassy and the Consulate General in Kirkenes is closely following 25 such episodes, the number of children taken away is 51). Many minors have also Norwegian citizenship that poses additional difficulty for involvement of the Russian diplomatic mission in order to resolve the problem.

⁵⁰⁰ For more details, see Report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation On Violation of the Rights of Russian Citizens and Fellow Citizens in Foreign Countries"

https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/humanitarian_cooperation/-/asset_publisher/bB3NYd16mBFC/content/id/4641517

⁵⁰¹ NRK, 22 March, 2022

At the same time, the number of children taken away has decreased in recent years. The emerging trend hinges on parents' higher awareness about specifics of local legislation in protection of children's rights, and on an increased willingness to rely on legal consultations.

The number of children taken away peaked in 2015-2016m when the Norwegian child protection authorities forcibly took away 19 and 24 children respectively. In most cases, dysfunctional families are affected, with parents, as a rule, coming from the North Caucasus region. The most frequent reason of children being taken away from the families is the use of corporal punishment. In March 2019, the ECHR received a complaint from the Russian national A.S.Gaisulganov, whose wife, who lives in Norway, had her four sons taken away by child protection authorities in 2015.

Notably, starting from 2015 the European Court of Human Rights has registered 39 claims against Norway lodged by the parents of the children taken away from their families. In 10 of the 14 cases already reviewed, Norway was found responsible for "interruption of family ties" between the parents and children in violation of Article 8 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

After beginning by Russia of the special military operation for denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine, Norway has been pursuing clearly anti-Russian policies.

With a number of exceptions, Oslo is gradually joining the EU restrictive measures. In particular, the Norwegians, referring to "especially strong protection of the freedom of speech in the Constitution", refused to block RT and Sputnik, even though "these state-controlled media are used for dissemination of disinformation and fake news, deal in propaganda".

There were recorded refusals to provide services to Russian citizens in Norway. For example, Vesterland recreation park (Songdal commune, Western Norway) that has 107 cottages and a small hotel, refused to accommodate

Russian tourists in connection with the events in Ukraine effective from February 25, 2022⁵⁰².

Starting from March 9, 2022, the Enter Tromsø hotel network (comprises five small hotels and apartments in the center of the city of Tromsø) refused to accommodate tourists from Russia for the same reasons⁵⁰³.

In practice, Russophobia-linked incidents were also noted, including attacks in public places, persecutions and insults, refusals to provide service to Russian nationals and pressure at work.

On March 14, 2022, in Hundorp settlement (Sør-Fron community), a 12-year-old Maria Falkenhaug, of Latvian origin, was attacked by an unknown person as was talking on the phone with her mother in Russian. As the result, she was badly bruised. The attacker, while running away, was shouting in Norwegian "bloody Russian"⁵⁰⁴.

Ekaterina Klueva, a Russian citizen residing in Aure commune and employed as a teacher in a kindergarten was invited for a conversation with representatives of municipal authorities due to her publications about the Ukraine conflict posted on her private page on Facebook social media (the "signal" to the authorities was sent by a colleague of hers). The meeting took place on March 15, 2022 in the community administration in the presence of her lawyer. The conversation was recorded on a voice recording device⁵⁰⁵.

After protests against Russophobia held on April 24, 2022 in front of the Storting (Parliament) building in Norway, Angelina Kivioya, who organized the rally, started to receive insults and threats, including physical violence⁵⁰⁶.

In May 2022, a social media campaign was unleashed against a Russian national E. Sazonova, 65, and a friend of hers, 70. They were accused of "inciting ethnic hatred." Some Ukrainian Facebook social media communities

⁵⁰² NRK, 25 February 2022

⁵⁰³ Dagbladet, 11 March 2022

⁵⁰⁴ NRK, March 15, 2022

⁵⁰⁵ Klueva's letter to the Embassy.

⁵⁰⁶ Kivioya's complaint lodged with the police.

posted their photos with captions calling to "bully these women and their relatives." The reason for the hate campaign were the remarks the Russian nationals delivered in front of the participants of the anti-Russian rally at the Storting building⁵⁰⁷.

There was recorded a high-profile incident of refusal in medical services to people of Russian origin. Thor Kvamsdal, a doctor with Jeloy Fysioterapi clinic in the town of Moss, refused to book an appointment for the Russian citizen Elena Kasin., who resides in Norway and needs regular injections of a medicine to relieve pains in her spinal column. Knowing that Elena Kasin had moved to Norway from Russia, the physical medicine and rehabilitation physician called her and asked what she thought about the events in Ukraine and Russian President Vladimir Putin, stating that he "would not provide services to a patient who does not condemn the war in Ukraine".⁵⁰⁸ Failing to obtain clear-cut answers, the doctor recommended Russian citizen "to watch the news on TV" and call him back later.

At the same time, the government in Oslo stresses that its response is aimed at the Russian government and not Russian citizens who should not, in any way whatsoever, be held accountable for the Russian government's actions. Commenting on the case of Kasin, Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre told media that "it is unacceptable that Russians are denied medical care in Norway because of the war in Ukraine."

Against the background of the growing Russophobia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway in Twitter urged to take care of Russians in the Norwegian society and combat stirring of hatred. The government's statement are confirmed in practice. After detecting instances of discrimination aimed at Russian students, university and scientific centers employees, Ministry of Education and Research distributed memos to the educational institutions. The

⁵⁰⁷ Sazonova's letter to the Embassy.

⁵⁰⁸ Verdens Gang, March 30, 2022

memos requested the educational institution to put an increased emphasis on this issue.

Poland

Poland is conducting an intensive campaign to rewrite history, in which it is denying the decisive role played by the Red Army in the defeat of Nazi Germany, and organizing the removal of Soviet and Russian memorials in Poland. In line with this trend, measures are being taken to erase the memory of the decisive role played by the Red Army in liberating Poland and also in saving the Polish people from a Nazi genocide. According to the version of events promoted by Poland, it was the main victim of two totalitarian systems, with the USSR and Nazi Germany bearing equal responsibility for the outbreak of the Second World War, and the Polish Sejm (the lower house of Parliament) has even passed a resolution to that effect. In its version of events, Poland is emphasizing, not the invasion of Poland by the Third Reich on September 1, 1939, but its "invasion" by the USSR on September 17, 1939, which, it claims, resulted in the end of Poland as an independent state and its partition. In 2021 in an address to participants in events organized to commemorate that date, the Polish president Andrzej Duda said: "Two totalitarian empires, the German Third Reich and the Soviet Union collaborated closely in the destruction of independent Poland".⁵⁰⁹

There are celebrations, including at the official state level, of the contribution made the Polish underground resistance – the "cursed soldiers"⁵¹⁰ (also known as the "indomitable soldiers") in winning Poland's liberation and independence, which, according to Poland, was only achieved at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s.⁵¹¹ The heroes of the "national liberation struggle" are commemorated on the National Remembrance Day of the Cursed

⁵⁰⁹ <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/listy/do-uczestnikow-obchodow-82-rocznicy-agresji-sowieckiej,35160>

⁵¹⁰ The members of the armed anti-Soviet underground resistance stained their reputation in the post-war years by killing peaceful citizens including women and children, among whom were Orthodox Byelorussians from the East of Poland, as well as Jews and Poles. One of the leaders of the "cursed soldiers" was Romuald Rajs, known as Bury.

⁵¹¹ <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/wystapienia/art,989,wystapienie-podczas-centralnych-obchodow-narodowego-dnia-pamieci-zolnierzy-wykletych.html>

Soldiers, which is on March 1. In 2021, in an event held to mark that day, the Polish president Andrzej Duda said: "The Cursed Soldiers, despite the fact that the Second World War had ended and Nazi Germany was defeated, never accepted a Poland that was not truly independent and sovereign ... They did not accept the fact that ... Poland was under Soviet occupation. They therefore chose not to lay down their arms, but fought for a free and sovereign Poland until the very end..."⁵¹²

After the beginning of the special operation of the Russian forces in Ukraine, an unprecedented, in terms of its violence and falsehood (even by that country's standards) anti-Russian propaganda, nourishing the fantastic, as to its scale, outburst of Russophobia, was unfolded in Poland. This campaign is largely initiated and encouraged by the Polish government and most local media.

The Polish officials are distinguished for their being inspired with utmost anti-Russian attitude, and they publicly advocate the need to destroy Russia and Russian culture. Thus, on 30 March 2022, the Prime Minister of Poland M.Morawiecki said that Russophobia in this state had become a mainstream. Earlier, he also informed that confiscation of Russian property may be started in the country, pointing out that he intended to meet with the opposition in order to discuss this issue for its further bringing before the Sejm. Simultaneously, the process of seizure of facilities that "are in unauthorized ownership" of Russia (the secondary school at the embassy and a vacant building) has already been initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland⁵¹³.

On April 4, 2022, the Vice Prime Minister of the Government, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of Poland P.Glinski urged to disappearance of the Russian culture from the public space. In his opinion, the

⁵¹² <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/wystapienia/prezydent-zolnierze-niezlomni-postanowili-walczyć-do-konca-o-wolna-polske.4424>

⁵¹³ Polish Prime Minister sets out plans for confiscation of Russians' property in the country RBC. March 21, 2022
<https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/6237a0e49a794719c51ff7a5>

time of conducting of the special operation is inappropriate for the Russian ballet, staging the works of A.P.Chekhov and A.S.Pushkin or performance of A.V.Aleksandrov ensemble⁵¹⁴.

The Russophobic campaign affected the Russian diplomatic missions in Poland. As early as on February 25, 2022 the bank accounts of the Embassy and Trade Mission of Russia in Poland were frozen, this constituting an outrageous violation of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. To justify their decision, the Warsaw fiscal control and prosecution authorities refer to suspicions of funding by the Russian foreign institutions of terrorist activity in Poland. On February 26, 2022, unknown persons splashed paint on the plate with official symbols on the Embassy main entrance gate and broke the windows. Approximately at the same time other persons threw packages with paint at the walls of the school at the Russian Embassy. On a number of occasions in the following months the Russian diplomatic mission in Poland was subjected to insults or provocations, and the walls of the building and fences around it were defaced with paint and offensive slogans. On March 9 2022 the last of the four Russian Language and Culture Centers in Lublin closed down.

As part of the campaign against "Soviet propaganda" and the development of a politically correct interpretation of the Second World War, Poland is promoting a cult of the anti-Communist fighters, even those who collaborated with the Nazis, war criminals and killers of civilians. For example in August 2021 a memorial event was held in Warsaw to commemorate the founding of the Brygada Świętokrzyska (Holy Cross Mountains Brigade), a division of the National Armed Forces⁵¹⁵. The ceremony was organized by the

⁵¹⁴ In Poland, they decided that the Russian culture must disappear from the public area. RBC. April 4, 2022 <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/04/04/2022/624ae60d9a7947ec8b2d2561>

⁵¹⁵ The National Armed Forces was one of the underground armed groups that collaborated with the Nazis. The Brygada Świętokrzyska fought alongside the SS against the Red Army in 1944-45 and retreated into Germany along with the Nazis.

Office for War Veterans and Victims of Oppression. It was attended by representatives of the authorities and state bodies⁵¹⁶.

In 2021-22 the Polish authorities passed a law titled "On the prohibition of propagation of communism or any other totalitarian system", originally dated April 1, 2016 and subsequently amended⁵¹⁷, which provides for the removal of monuments to the Soviet liberating forces, on the grounds that they are "symbols of Communism", or "propagate that system". However, Poland is also acting in breach of its international obligations, including under the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Poland on Friendly and Good-Neighborly Cooperation, signed on May 22, 1992, the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Poland on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Science and Education, signed on August 25, 1993, and the Agreement on the Burials of Victims of Wars and Repression, and Sites Commemorating such Victims, dated February 22, 1994.

In 2020-2021 the Russian Embassy conducted a survey of Soviet monuments in Poland, other than grave monuments, in which they discovered a further 9 instances of monuments having been demolished between 2019 and 2021. Monuments in Waszkowo (Wielkopolskie Voivodeship), Bińcze and Radowo Wielkie (Pomorskie Voivodeship), Wrocław and Ścinawa (Lower Silesian Voivodeship), Krzanowice (Silesian Voivodeship), Patrzyków (Łódź Voivodeship), Wilków and Józefów (Lublin Voivodeship) were found to have been demolished or defaced.

⁵¹⁶ <https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/148025,77-rocznica-powstania-Brygady-Swietokrzyskiej-Narodowych-Sil-Zbrojnych-Warszawa-.html>

⁵¹⁷ That law came into force in September 2016. It required the removal from public places of names related to persons, organizations, events and dates symbolizing the "repressive, authoritarian and non-sovereign regime in Poland between 1944 and 1989". While originally this law did not cover monuments, in June 2017 it was amended to require the removal from public places of any objects "symbolizing communism or any other totalitarian system or propagating such a system" within a year from the amendments coming into effect (the deadline was later brought forward to March 31, 2018). But in practice the Polish authorities were not able to complete this task by the deadline. Of 561 monuments to the Soviet liberators, other than grave monuments, less than 100 remained.

As far as the Russian authorities are aware, in 2021 there were four instances of wrongful demolition of Soviet monuments – in fact there may have been more, as such incidents are generally not reported in the Polish media. In January the monument to Soviet liberators in Wysokie Mazowieckie (Podlaskie Voivodeship) was demolished. In April it was discovered that the Monument of Gratitude to the Red Army, in Lesko (Subcarpathian Voivodeship) and the Monument to Soviet and Polish Brotherhood in Arms in Czechowice-Dziedzice (Silesian Voivodeship) had been taken down. The obelisk marking the grave of A.P.Sinitsyn, Hero of the Soviet Union in Wola Bukowska (Subcarpathian Voivodeship) was also removed. There were seven instances of vandalism of Soviet war graves in Wolsztyn and Rawicz (Wielkopolskie Voivodeship), Świdnica, Wiązów and Lubań (Lower Silesian Voivodeship), Zambrów (Podlaskie Voivodeship) and Ostrołęka (Mazovian Voivodeship).

From the end of February 2022, the Russophobia spread by the Polish government found its reflection in the already active "war" against monuments and memorials in honor of the Red Army soldiers who died liberating the country from Nazism during the Second World War. Since the beginning of Russia's special military operation to deNazify and demilitarize Ukraine, there number of instances of vandalism of Soviet memorials and graves in Poland has increased dramatically. As a rule, vandals write Nazi and Ukrainian neo-Nazi symbols, obscene words, and also splash monuments with paint. From January to July 2022, there were 41 instances of vandalism of Soviet memorials recorded, including 32 monuments marking war graves, including in the following cities and towns: Rawicz, Poznań and Gniezno, in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship, Sandomierz in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, Żary in Lubusz Voivodeship, Warsaw, Radom, Garwolin and Mińsk Mazowiecki in Mazowieckie Voivodeship, Katowice and Chorzow in Silesian Voivodeship, Wrocław, Lubań, Wałbrzych, Kąty Wrocławskie, Świdnica and Bolesławiec in Lower Silesian Voivodeship, Gdansk and Tczew in Pomorskie Voivodeship,

Kołobrzeg and Koszalin in West Pomorskie Voivodeship, Glinki (near Toruń) in Kuyavian-Pomorskie Voivodeship, Krosno in Podkarpackie Voivodeship, Flisy in Lublin Voivodeship, Elbląg, Lubawa, Olsztyn and Wronki in Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, and Glubczyce in Opole Voivodeship. Some memorials (in Warsaw, Poznań, Wrocław and Tczew) have been desecrated more than once.

In March 2022 Karol Nawrocki, the President of the Institute of National Remembrance (INR – a state body responsible for developing policies relating to Polish history and the main initiator of the demolition of Soviet monuments in Poland) announced that his Institute had drawn up a list of 60 sites where the Red Army is commemorated, and that the INR would work with local administrations in a bid to remove the memorials⁵¹⁸. In June 2022 Karol Nawrocki stated that 20 of the 60 monuments on the list prepared had been demolished.

The local authorities at various levels, with the approval of the Institute of National Remembrance, have themselves initiated the demolition of Soviet monuments – other than those marking graves – on a large scale.

In this way, since the end of the 1990s most of Poland's monuments to Soviet soldiers have been demolished, with only about 100 of 561 monuments remaining.

Given the fact that the liberation of Poland by the Red Army is no longer talked about, the Polish authorities, up until February 2022 took no part in any official events to commemorate the liberation of Europe by the Red Army, but generally did not prevent such events from being held. But the situation changed dramatically following the beginning of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine.

⁵¹⁸ <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C1136300%2Cprezes-ipn-czas-dokonczy-dekomunizacje-polskiej-przestrzeni-publicznej>

During laying of a wreath in commemoration of Victory Day on May 9, 2022 at the Memorial Cemetery of the Soviet soldiers in Warsaw, the Ambassador of Russia in Poland S.V.Andreev and persons accompanying him were attacked. At the entrance to the cemetery, they were confronted by an aggressively-minded crowd that was chanting insults, tore off the Ambassador's St. George ribbon and splashed red paint on him. A group of police officers stationed nearby did nothing to prevent the memorial from being interrupted. On the same day attempts were made to prevent the Russian General Consul in Gdansk from laying a wreath on a Soviet memorial.

After the beginning of the special military operation Poland stopped inviting Russian representatives to Poland in order to take part in memorial events to commemorate historic anniversaries including those connected to the Second World War.

At the beginning of August 2022 the administration of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum of Poland on the site of the former Nazi extermination camp at Oświęcim, closed the permanent exhibition "Tragedy. Courage. Liberation" in Block 14 of the Museum which was organized by the Russian Central Museum of the Great Patriotic War, and was dedicated to keeping alive the memory of the horrors of Nazism, and the liberating role played by the Red Army. The excuse given by the Museum administration was that the agreement between the Polish and Russian museums had expired at the end of April 2022. However, in reality for over two months the Polish authorities had refused to discuss this issue with their partners from the Russian museum or with Russian diplomats who had made efforts to resolve this unpleasant situation. After the closure the Russian museum staff prepared a multimedia exhibition Oświęcim.Pravda, based on the materials from the closed exhibition, which can be viewed on the museum's website <https://victorumuseum.ru>.

The situation is made worse by the appearance, every now and again, of products bearing Nazi symbols, or the publishing of works by Nazis.

For example, in January 2021 Adolf Hitler's book *Mein Kampf* was republished in Poland as an "academic" text (the first edition in Poland came out at the beginning of the 1990s). This news was greeted with shock, not least in Poland itself. In an interview with Zvezda television, the head of the KURSK Association, E Tyts, declared that the publication of Adolf Hitler's book, a prohibited text, was both a crime and an insult, and that his organization would speak to the relevant Polish authorities concerning this matter. He added that the book was selling well in Poland, and that Poles were boasting on social media about having bought copies.⁵¹⁹ The two-volume edition is annotated with more than 5,000 notes written by experts and historians.⁵²⁰ The cover is in the colors of the Nazi flag. All two thousand copies were bought up as soon as they came on sale. The owner of XXL, the publisher of the book, then announced that he was considering bringing out another edition. Under Polish law, it is not possible to withdraw the book from sale. The public propagation of fascism in Poland is punishable by a term of imprisonment, but the Polish public prosecutor would only have been able to intervene if the book had been sold by an organization promoting the Nazi ideology. The publisher XXL is not such an organization⁵²¹. According to media reports, the Bavarian State Government, the official copyright holder of the book, takes measures to prevent the publication of Hitler's works in other countries. In order to do this, it works with Germany's Foreign Ministry. If an organization or individual plans to publish *Mein Kampf* then the German diplomatic mission in the relevant country studies the options available for preventing the publication or limiting its distribution⁵²². According to reports, that approach was taken in the present case.

⁵¹⁹ In Poland the publication of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is condemned as an "insult". Zvezda. January 23, 2021 <https://tvzvezda.ru/news/20211231822-ZDi5V.html>

⁵²⁰ Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is published in Poland, and France will be next. Rossiyskaya Gazeta. January 20, 2021 <https://rg.ru/2021/01/20/v-polshe-vypustili-majn-kampf-gitlera-na-ocheredi-franciia.html>

⁵²¹ Bavaria is fighting the propagation of Nazism in Poland. Deutsche Welle. March 9 2005 <https://www.dw.com/ru/бавария-борется-с-пропагандой-нацизма-в-польше/a-1512305>

⁵²² Ibid.

In Poland radical and nationalist groups continue to operate, according to reports. According to media reports, the Polish special services are aware of some 200 "dangerous neo-Nazis". It is estimated that there are some 600-700 active members of neo-Nazi movements in the country. According to the Polish NGO Nigdy Więcej ("Never Again") there are several thousand fascist sympathizers and more than 10,000 people influenced by that ideology in Poland. A report published by the European Parliament in May 2022 on radical right-wing extremism in the EU claims that Polish neo-Nazi movements typically certain religious (Catholic) elements.⁵²³

Poland has several dozen nationalist organizations that maintain links with "affiliated" groups elsewhere in Europe. The largest groups officially registered in Poland include the National Radical Camp (NRC)⁵²⁴, All-Polish Youth and the National Movement (NM)⁵²⁵. Their members maintain close links with nationalist groups elsewhere in Europe and support Poland's withdrawal from the EU, the return of Polish society to traditional values, and a strict migration policy.

Activists from the NRC have links with Belarusian nationalists who promote the idea of a shared Polish and Belarusian heritage, and with Polish foundations engaged in the popularization of Polish traditions, culture, history and language in Belarus. Members of the NRC created groups in social networks, in which they call on residents in western regions of Belarus to state their Polish origin in all official documents.

⁵²³ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/700953/IPOL_STU\(2021\)700953_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/700953/IPOL_STU(2021)700953_EN.pdf)

⁵²⁴ A Polish far-right group (founded in 1993), which takes its name from the pre-WW2 political party of the same name. The pre-war party was influenced by Italian fascism.

⁵²⁵ The National Movement (NM) is a Polish nationalist political party founded in 2014, and forms part of the political grouping Confederation: Freedom and Independence (CFI), alongside KORWiN (the Confederation for the Renewal of the Republic Liberty and Hope) and the Confederation of the Polish Crown. The NM supports Poland's exit from the EU and its refusal to host NATO and US troops. The leader of the party is Robert Winnicki, a deputy in the Sejm.

Polish nationalists are on record as working with Ukrainian radical groups, including in connection with the Maidan protests in 2014⁵²⁶ and Polish mercenaries have served as members of nationalist battalions in the conflict in the Donbass region.

In October 2021 Marcin Wiącek, the Polish Ombudsman (Commissioner for Human Rights) expressed concern about refusals by the public prosecutor to initiate cases related to the propagation of state fascism. Under the Polish Criminal Code the public propagation of fascism or other totalitarian state system is punishable by a fine or a term of imprisonment of up to two years⁵²⁷.

By way of example, the Ombudsman cited a case in which the Polish law enforcement authorities refused to open a case against a participant in a nationalist march on August 1, 2020 who had made a Nazi salute. The district prosecutor considered that the gesture did not constitute propagation of fascism, but was a "greeting used by Roman soldiers". Later the prosecutor's decision was reversed by a court⁵²⁸.

There have also examples of efforts to counter the activities of radical right-wing groups, including by members of civil society. In February 2021 the Polish Supreme Court ruled in a four-year old dispute between members of the NRC and R. Koliński, an activist from the Lewica Razem (Left Together)⁵²⁹, who protested against a march of Polish neo-Nazis in Elbląg. The radical group sued R. Koliński because he had claimed in his publications that the group openly linked itself with the pre-war fascist, anti-Semitic and racist group of the same name. In the end, the Court rejected the radicals' claim against R. Koliński. Specifically, the Court ruled that the current NRC "uses the same

⁵²⁶ Specifically, members of the Szturmowcy (Stormtroopers) radical nationalist group. The group opposes capitalism and "dictatorship" by Brussels, and calls for the establishment of a "pure" Polish state based on traditional values. In June 2019 the group was closed down after its leader was arrested, and its former members continued to take "individual action".

⁵²⁷ <https://lexlege.pl/kk/art-256/>

⁵²⁸ <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/pl/content/jak-sciga-sie-propagowanie-i-pochwalanie-faszyzmu-prokuratura-krajowa-w-koncu-ujawnila-rpo>

⁵²⁹ Lewica Razem is a left-leaning Polish political party. It was founded in 2015.

symbols and bears the same name... as the pre-war group, which was openly fascist". The Court also found that in its current manifesto the group called for an "ethnically homogenous" Poland, which the Court held to be a "core element of fascist views". Based on this finding the Court ruled that, based on the behavior of the group's members, their use of slogans and symbols, and their manner of dress, P.Koliński had the right to view the group as fascist⁵³⁰. The activist, however, considers this to be just a partial victory, as the Court did not expressly rule on whether the NRC was a fascist organization or not, but only on whether he had the right to call it fascist. In the Court's opinion, future court proceedings would be required in order to recognize the NRC as a fascist organization and to ban it⁵³¹.

In September 2021 the Center for Monitoring Racist and Xenophobic Behavior, a Polish NGO, reported⁵³² that the NRC had been found guilty of a legal violation for the first time in modern Polish history (since 1990). Two defendants were sentenced to a suspended term of one and a half years in prison for making public calls of an anti-Semitic character during an NRC march in Białystok (Podlaskie Voivodeship) in April 2016. The NGO pointed out that the proceedings against the participants in the march had been terminated three times by the public prosecutor, and it was only as a result of the efforts of the Center that the case went to court.

The NGO Nigdy Więcej ("Never Again"), which works together with Allegro, a Polish on-line trading platform, has stated that between 2018 and 2021 they⁵³³ caused more than 12,000 advertisements for the sale of goods bearing Nazi symbols to be removed. The goods included replica SS medals,

⁵³⁰ <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/olsztyn/sad-najwyzszy-zdecydowal-mozna-nazywac-onr-organizacja-faszystowska/wh2tfeh>

⁵³¹ Far-right group can be called "fascist", rules Poland's Supreme Court. Notes from Poland. 28 February 2021. <https://notesfrompoland.com/2021/02/28/far-right-group-can-be-called-fascists-rules-polands-supreme-court/>

⁵³² <https://omzrik.pl/czlonkowie-onr-skazani-na-kary-wiezienia>

⁵³³ <https://www.nigdywiecej.org/komunikaty/komunikaty/193-rok-2021/4528-platfomy-aukcyjne-kasuja-rasizm>

Third Reich flags, items depicting a Celtic cross, and belt buckles decorated with SS symbols or portraits of Adolf Hitler.

It should be noted that nationalist and neo-Nazi public events do take place in Poland. For example, in Jedwabne on July 11, 2021⁵³⁴ a demonstration involving nationalist organizations was held. During the demonstration, participants carried banners bearing the words "We will not apologize for Jedwabne". The demonstration was organized to protest against the claim that Poles could bear some responsibility for crimes against Jews. The leader of the "Independence March", R. Bonkiewicz, placed a wreath on the memorial to the victims of the massacre, but also made a speech in which he called for "truth, an investigation and the exhumation of the bodies."⁵³⁵

On November 11, 2021, to mark Poland's Independence Day, the right-wing and nationalist party of the same name held its 11th Independence March. Many of the slogans used in the event were directed against the European Union and against Russia. Demonstrators burned the German flag and a portrait of D. Tusk, the leader of the liberal opposition movement, Civic Platform⁵³⁶.

On March 1, 2022, in Hajnówka⁵³⁷ (Podlaskie Voivodeship) nationalist groups organized the seventh March in Remembrance of the Cursed Soldiers, in memory of Romuald Rajs, a leader of the "cursed soldiers". On the same day, in Przemyśl (Subcarpathian Voivodeship), not far from the border with Ukraine, far-right football fans organized patrols to "cleanse the city"⁵³⁸ of refugees of Middle Eastern, Asian and African origin who had crossed over from Ukraine.

⁵³⁴ In 1941 a massacre of Jews took place in Jedwabne. Formerly it was believed the atrocity had been committed by Germans, but in 2000 the Polish-American historian J.T. Gross published his book *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (*Sąsiedzi. Historia zagłady żydowskiego miasteczka*), in which he demonstrated that the killings had been carried out by Polish residents of the town. Despite the fact that the truth of this version of events was confirmed by the Polish Institute of National Remembrance in 2004, certain groups in Poland refuse to accept this fact.

⁵³⁵ <https://oko.press/narodowcy-w-jedwabnem-w-80-rocznice-pogromu-zydow/>

⁵³⁶ Civic Platform is a Polish liberal party, headed by D. Tusk and founded on January 19, 2001. It is considered to be the main opposition party in Poland.

⁵³⁷ <https://oko.press/marsz-ku-czci-burego-i-kontrmanifestacje-w-hajnowce-coroczny-wstyd-dla-panstwa-polskiego/>

⁵³⁸ <https://oko.press/szosty-dzien-na-granicy-ogrom-pomocy-fala-rasizmu/>

Police reported that three citizens of India had been attacked⁵³⁹. According to the OKO Press website, an Israeli journalist also reported that he had been attacked.²³

In Kalisz (Wielkopolskie Voivodeship), on November 11, 2021, police detained three organizers of an "Independence March" during which participants had burned copies of the Statute of Kalisz, the 13th Century charter which granted civic rights to Jews. On December 3, 2021 all three were released on bail.

There have been a number of high-profile cases in which members of far-right groups have been appointed to public positions or political office and are thus enabled to openly participate in political life in Poland.

In January 2021 T.Rzymkowski, formerly a member of far-right political parties, was appointed as the Deputy Minister for Education. According to media reports, T.Rzymkowski, had made "concerning statements" about Jews and the Holocaust, and about other ethnic minorities in Poland.⁵⁴⁰

On February 22, 2021, the Chairman of the Institute of National Remembrance (INR)⁵⁴¹, J.Szarek, announced that T.Greniuch, the acting head of the INR for Wrocław, had resigned after holding the post for just two weeks⁵⁴². As reported by Polish media sources, T.Greniuch had previously been an activist in the National Radical Camp, a far-right group. T.Greniuch has been

⁵³⁹ <https://wydarzenia.interia.pl/raporty/raport-ukraina-rosja/aktualnosci/news-przemysl-troje-obywateli-indii-pobitych-przez-grupe-mezczyzn.nId.5863607>

⁵⁴⁰ <https://www.ipost.com/diaspora/new-poland-deputy-education-minister-was-member-of-far-right-parties-656852>

https://www.nigdywiecej.org/docstation/com_docstation/64/zachowajmy_solidarnosc_z_uchodzcami_raport.pdf

⁵⁴¹ The Institute of National Remembrance is a Committee established by a law passed in 1998 (as subsequently amended), as was formed in order to investigate crimes against the Polish people. According to its founding document, it is tasked with collecting and processing of documents issued by state security bodies between July 22, 1944 and July 31, 1990, investigating Nazi and Communist crimes, organizing educational events, locating the burial places of victims and issuing opinions on whether "the names of buildings, facilities or organizations in the public arena propagate communism or any other totalitarian system" (the last item was added to its remit following the adoption of the so-called "Decommunization law" in 2016). Since July 22, 2016 the INR has been headed by J. Szarek.

⁵⁴² <https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/dla-mediow/komunikaty/138724.Oswiadczenie.html>

photographed raising his arm in a Nazi salute⁵⁴³. According to J.Szarek, T.Greniuch regrets the incident, saying "I apologize once again for the irresponsible gesture from several years ago, and I consider it a mistake"⁵⁴⁴. Shortly before his resignation, on February 11, 2021, the Israeli consulate in Poland had, via a Twitter post, encouraged T.Greniuch to visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum⁵⁴⁵, "whose mission is to remind the entire world of the dangers of Nazi ideology"⁵⁴⁶.

The activities of far-right nationalists is also evidenced by the statistics on racist incidents and by the use of the media to spread hate speech. According to data provided by the Polish National Prosecution Service, 1658 crimes motivated by racial or religious hatred (0.15% of the total) were registered in 2020⁵⁴⁷. The majority of these cases related to public insults directed at people based on their nationality, ethnicity, race or religion (580 cases), the propagation of fascism or any other totalitarian system (354 cases), and the use of violence or threats of violence motivated by racial or religious hatred (286 cases). According to the Public Prosecutor, 622 individuals were prosecuted, of whom 421 were convicted, and 11 were acquitted.

The activities of far-right radicals in Poland have attracted the attention of international human rights organizations and bodies. In August 2019 the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed its particular concern about the activities of racist organizations in Poland.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴³ <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2021-02-25/tomasz-greniuch-stracil-prace-w-ipn/>

⁵⁴⁴ <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/kraj/ipn-dr-tomasz-greniuch-stracil-prace-w-instytucji-pamieci-narodowej/hq7d3tg>

⁵⁴⁵ The State Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum (Oświęcim, in Małopolska Voivodeship) was opened in 1947 on the site of the former extermination camp.

⁵⁴⁶ <https://twitter.com/IsraelinPoland/status/1359892449653571585>

⁵⁴⁷ <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/content/jak-sie-propagowanie-i-pochwakanie-faszyzmu-prokuratura-krajowa-w-koncu-ujawnila-rpo>

⁵⁴⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined twenty-second to twenty-fourth periodic reports of Poland. August 2019 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fPOL%2fCO%2f22-24&Lang=ru

In January 2020 the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities concluded that an atmosphere of intolerance, racism and xenophobia persists in the country. It also found that representatives of national minority groups feel that state authorities at both the local and national level do not do enough to protect them from threats and violent attacks by extremist groups. They feel that the Polish authorities' attitude to any given ethnic group is conditioned by Poland's relationship with the country in question⁵⁴⁹.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has also noted that there has been an increase in the number of instances of bullying and discrimination motivated by racial or religious hatred, and that the authorities fail to respond adequately to such incidents⁵⁵⁰.

In February 2021 the European Commission found that Poland had violated EC law when implementing into Polish law the provisions of Framework Decision of the Council of the EU No. 2008/913/JHA, dated November 28, 2008 on Combating Certain Forms and Expressions of Racism and Xenophobia by means of Criminal Law. The European Commission noted that the Polish legal system only provides for criminal liability for the denial and condoning of international crimes and the Holocaust in cases where the crimes in question were committed against Polish citizens⁵⁵¹. In connection with this failure, the Commission has, since 2018, sent three requests to the Polish Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, calling on him to develop a comprehensive strategy to combat hate crime. However, the representative of the Polish government responsible for equality issues responded with a letter

⁵⁴⁹ Fourth opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Poland, adopted on May 6, 2019 <https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-poland-en/1680993391>

⁵⁵⁰ The concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Poland. September 2021 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/361/07/PDF/G2136107.pdf?OpenElement>

⁵⁵¹ European Union Agency for fundamental rights. Fundamental rights report 2022. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

setting out the position of the Ministry of Justice, which is that Polish law contains all the necessary guarantees⁵⁵².

In 2018 the Polish public prosecutor stopped publishing statistical data on crimes motivated by racial or other intolerance, on the grounds that the data in such documents was reserved for internal use by state agencies. Many rights groups suspect that the true reason for this decision is to hide a rapid growth in the number of crimes of this type. Citing a report reviewing the character and scale of unregistered hate crimes, prepared by the OCSE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, in August 2019 the Committee against Torture expressed concern about Warsaw's very low official statistics on hate crimes, and called on the Polish government to take measures to remedy the situation and combat discrimination on racial, ethnic or other grounds⁵⁵³.

Xenophobia and intolerance towards migrants are growing in Poland. Polish and international NGOs in the field of human rights connect this trend with the coming to power of the conservative and nationalist Law and Justice party in October 2015, and the reforms carried out by that current government. The current trends have been confirmed by the findings of sociological surveys. In a survey on Poles' attitudes to other nationalities and ethnic groups, which was conducted by the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS)⁵⁵⁴ in February 2021, it was found that 42% of poles feel antipathy towards gypsies. 46% of Poles admitted to having a negative view of Arabs. The CBOS also found that the proportion of people who had positive feelings about Ukrainians, Belarusians and Jews (43%, 47% and 38% respectively) were greater than those who had negative views of these groups (26%, 17% and 29%, respectively).

⁵⁵² <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/pl/content/mowa-i-przestepstwa-z-nienawisci-polskie-prawo-nie-wymaga-zmian-Pelnomocnik-rzadu-RPO>

⁵⁵³ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the 7th periodic report of Poland. August 2019 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT/C/POL/CO/7&Lang=Ru

⁵⁵⁴ https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2021/K_030_21.PDF

However, in March 2020 researchers found that the proportion of Poles with negative views of Arabs, Belarusians, Russians, Ukrainians, and Jews had fallen by 9%, 8%, 7%, 7% and 1% respectively⁵⁵⁵.

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (AFR) has criticized the humanitarian situation on Poland's, Lithuania's and Latvia's borders with Belarus. It reported that as of the end of 2021 Poland had refused admittance to 28,000 migrants, while Lithuania and Latvia had refused admittance to 8,000 and 4,000 migrants respectively. According to data provided by the AFR, the largest numbers of incidents involving the "expulsion" of⁵⁵⁶ illegal migrants were recorded in Poland, Croatia, Greece and Hungary. Warsaw has also enacted new laws allowing the forced return (i.e. deportation) of persons who have illegally crossed Poland's borders⁵⁵⁷. European authorities, however, are downplaying the destructive role played by Warsaw in the escalation of the migration crisis and the excess use of force against illegal migrants by the Polish border guards. They have also not assessed or taken any measures in relation to Warsaw's construction of a wall along its border with Belarus, which it claims is necessary to protect itself from large numbers of illegal migrants, and which is already having and will continue to have damaging environmental consequences (much of the construction is taking place in the Białowieża Forest, one of the largest primeval forests in Europe).

In the first months of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine the number of cases of discrimination against refugees from Ukraine increased. In its report on this issue, the NGO Nigdy Więcej ("Never Again") has highlighted incidents involving racially-motivated violence against dark-skinned refugees from Ukraine, attempts at extortion or fraud under the cover of offers of

⁵⁵⁵ https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2021/K_030_21.PDF

⁵⁵⁶ This term refers to the situation in which people are detained after illegally crossing the border and immediately returned to the neighboring country without taking into account their reason for crossing the border.

⁵⁵⁷ European Union Agency for fundamental rights. Fundamental rights report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

assistance, refusals to help refugees because of their nationality or religion (i.e. Orthodox), obstacles to Ukrainian children obtaining access to education, and the organization of xenophobic meetings and demonstrations, including in places of worship.⁵⁵⁸ The AFR has also cited the example of discrimination against a refugee from Ukraine who was included on the register of undesirable aliens because of a careless mistake made by the authorities when checking his papers.⁵⁵⁹

As records show, anti-Semitism in Poland remains at a high level. According to data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Poland's administrative authorities, the numbers of anti-Semitic incidents in Poland increased significantly between 2010, when 30 incidents were recorded, and 2018, when 179 incidents were recorded, and then fell slightly, to 128 incidents⁵⁶⁰. It should also be noted that Poles themselves recognize that anti-Semitic feeling is increasing in the country. According to data from the 2018 report *Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism* by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, a survey of Jewish people's experience of discrimination and hate crimes throughout the EU, 89% of Jewish respondents in Poland said that they considered racism to be a "very big problem" in the country. About half the respondents stated that they had experienced anti-Semitism in some form or other over the last five years. 70% of non-Jewish respondents believed that "Jews have too much power in Poland". They also admitted that the level of anti-Semitism had significantly increased over the last five years. Moreover, the Polish people are more distrustful of their current government in this area than in any other: 91% of respondents considered that the efforts of the Polish

⁵⁵⁸ https://www.higdywiecej.org/docstation/com_docstation/64/zachowajmy_solidanosc_z_uchodzcami.raport.pdf

⁵⁵⁹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2022. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

⁵⁶⁰ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Overview of Antisemitic incidents recorded in the European Union. 2009 – 2019. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-antisemitism-overview-2009-2019_en.pdf

authorities to combat anti-Semitism were insufficient and ineffective⁵⁶¹. According to research by the NGO Anti-Defamation League, up to 48% of Poles have anti-Semitic views⁵⁶².

The above indicators are reflected in practice. Anti-Semitic rhetoric was evident during used during the political campaigning in the run up to the 2020 presidential elections. In an interview in a Polish Catholic newspaper in July 2020, J.Kaczyński, leader of the Law and Justice Party accused A.Duda's opponent, R.Trzaskowski, the Mayor of Warsaw, of supporting the idea of paying compensation to Polish Jews for the property they had lost during the Second World War⁵⁶³. The attack was covered by the Polish state television channels.

In July 2020, Adam Bodnar, Poland's Ombudsman (Commissioner for Human Rights) formally requested the Chairman of the Polish National Broadcasting Council to take action to address the problem of hate speech and anti-Semitism in the mass media. The Ombudsman cited comments made by the journalist R.Ziemkiewicz, speaking in the television program *W tyle wizji*, broadcast by TVP on June 23, 2020, in which he blamed the Holocaust on the Jews themselves: "...it wasn't Poles who put Jews into train cars, hunted them down, escorted them out of the Ghettos, but it was other Jews, Jewish police, based on lists issued by the Jewish Judenrat,⁵⁶⁴ who managed it all"⁵⁶⁵. Following an investigation, the Polish National Broadcasting Council concluded

⁵⁶¹ Experiences and perceptions of Antisemitism second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-experiences-and-perceptions-of-antisemitism-survey_en.pdf

⁵⁶² ADL Survey on attitudes and opinions toward Jewish people in 18 countries around the world. 2019. Poland. <https://global100.adl.org/country/poland/2019>

⁵⁶³ Poland has still not adopted a law on the restitution of the property of Polish Jews. The Polish authorities say that the Polish Jews were citizens before the war, and that they and their descendants can rely this fact as a ground for bringing restitution claims in the national courts.

⁵⁶⁴ The Judenrat was a Jewish self-regulating body operating in Poland during the Second World War, which was organized in each ghetto, by order of the German occupying authorities, for the purpose of enforcing Nazi regulations that applied to Jews.

⁵⁶⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFxDMzIlfas>

that the opinion voiced by R.Ziemkiewicz did not violate the Law on Broadcasting dated December 29, 1992.⁵⁶⁶

On June 24, 2021 the Polish Parliament approved amendments to Poland's Code of Administrative Proceedings, providing that court decisions in an administrative case (including decisions on nationalizing or confiscating property during or after the Second World War) cannot be challenged if more than 30 years have passed since the date of the original decision.⁵⁶⁷ The actions of the Polish authorities were criticized by the Israeli and US Foreign Ministries and provoked heated discussion within the country. On June 30, 2021 the nationalist organization All-Polish Youth, which does not support the Polish Jewish community's demands for restitution of property, announced via Twitter that it had held a protest demonstration outside the Israeli consulate in Poland, in which they dumped construction rubble outside the building, with a sign reading "this is your property"⁵⁶⁸.

Acts of desecration of Jewish cemeteries and religious facilities are continuing. For example, in January 2021 unidentified persons painted swastikas and SS runes on the walls of the Jewish cemetery in Oświęcim, near the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, which stands on the site of the notorious extermination camp⁵⁶⁹.

International human rights organizations have also highlighted the situation of gypsies in Poland. Among other problems, they cite the continuing discrimination against that ethnic group in the social sphere, the low numbers of gypsy children (especially girls) attending primary and secondary schools, their lack of representation in the higher education system, and discrimination in the

⁵⁶⁶ <https://www.rpo.gov.pl/sites/default/files/Odpowied%C5%BA%20KRRiT%2C10.09.2020.pdf>

⁵⁶⁷ The term "Jewish property" in Poland includes private property which belonged to individual Jews and was taken from them by the Nazis during the Second World War, as well as property that was forcibly nationalized in the post-war period.

⁵⁶⁸ <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2021-07-02/mlodziez-wszechpolska-wsypala-tone-gruzu-pod-ambasada-izraela-oto-wasze-mienie/>

⁵⁶⁹ Swastika, SS symbol painted on wall of Jewish cemetery near Auschwitz. The Times of Israel. 12 January, 2021. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/swastika-ss-symbol-painted-on-wall-of-jewish-cemetery-near-auschwitz/>

labor market. These specific problems were raised by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2019, and by the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities⁵⁷⁰ and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in September 2021.⁵⁷¹ In its 2022 report, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights highlighted the clashes between Poles and Gypsies in Melets, and also the fact that the Gypsy community in Mashkovits live in unacceptable conditions⁵⁷².

⁵⁷⁰ The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities opinion on Poland (fourth cycle), adopted on November 6, 2019 <https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-poland-en/1680993391>

⁵⁷¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Poland. September 2021 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/361/07/PDF/G2136107.pdf?OpenElement>

⁵⁷² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2022. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

Portugal

The problem of the resurgence and glorification of Nazism in Portugal is not a hot-button issue. During the Second World War official Lisbon adhered to a policy of neutrality, there were no hostilities in the country. At the same time, the local population has been directly influenced by the ideology of Nazism and racial superiority and is firsthand familiar with their manifestations through the prism of the dictatorial regime of Salazar-Caetano, which existed in the country since the mid-thirties of the twentieth century until April 25, 1974, when the democratic "carnation revolution" took place in the country.

At the government level, no attempts are being made to justify the crimes of the Nazis or glorify Nazism. The country's leadership does not question the fact that Nazi Germany unleashed World War II. January 27 is International Holocaust Remembrance Day in Portugal. On January 29, 2021, the Assembly of the Republic unanimously supported the document in memory of the Holocaust victims stating the historical truth about the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp by the Soviet Army. A Holocaust Museum has been operating in Porto since 2021. The Portuguese authorities do not prevent the Russian community from holding commemorative events and celebrating the Victory in the Great Patriotic War.

Nevertheless, year in year out following the EU general guidelines, Portugal abstains on the resolution "Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to the escalation of modern forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" annually submitted to the UN General Assembly by the Russian Federation and co-sponsors.

Due to a lack of the general public interest in the topic of neo-Nazism, the use of Nazi slogans and symbols during rallies often goes unnoticed in the country. Thus, the actions by Ukrainian nationalists nearby the Russian Embassy premises and in the central squares of cities (their number has

increased drastically with the start of a special military operation of the Russian Armed Forces to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine and protect the residents of Donbass) are easily agreed upon with local municipal administrations. There is no control over the display of Nazi symbols and paraphernalia.

In recent years a number of extreme right-wing movements and cells of far-right organizations have been quite active in Portugal. These include Group 1143, Aryan Brotherhood, Portuguese Order, National Front, Hammerskins-Portugal and National Renewal Party. The New Social Order is the largest and most active. This foreign-funded movement interacts with the Greek Golden Dawn and German Alternative for Germany.

Spectacular is the growth of support among the population for the ultra-right Chega! (Enough!) party founded in April 2019. According to the results of the early parliamentary elections on January 30, 2022, this association managed to significantly improve its representation in the Assembly of the Republic (from one to twelve seats). The results of the January 2021 presidency race also testify to its growing popularity: André Ventura won 11.9 per cent of the votes coming third.

The party leader is not shying away from statements, for which he is sharply criticized by the main political forces, who discern racist and even extremist overtones in his words. Despite Ventura's statements that xenophobic views and the policy of dictator Antonio Salazar are alien to him, the Portuguese public notes Nazi and racial superiority ideas in the Chega! program and positioning.

So, in October 2021, the politician identified "demographic replacement" as one of the most serious problems for Portugal and the EU, citing the "great replacement theory" as an explanation. In the same vein, another program item of his party is formulated: "The policy regarding migration and admission to citizenship of foreigners, especially in an international context of the existing strong migration pressure on Europe, poses risks for the survival of the

Portuguese as a people with its own identity, as well as for their prosperity and collective security, risks to be reckoned with." Earlier, in September 2020, the Chega! party organized a march in Evora against the current anti-racist discourse in the country (500 members and sympathizers took part in it), while rallies against that party were held in the same city.

In March 2022, the Portuguese leaders mentioned combating racism and discrimination as an issue that needs to be addressed urgently, but at the same time, in a fundamental way. In June 2022, 21 members of the far-right organization Hammerskins-Portugal were sentenced. They were found guilty of crimes based on discriminatory attitudes, including on racial and religious grounds. Some of these offenses, including attempted murder and grievous bodily harm, were committed 6-7 years ago. Seven of the convicts will serve their sentences in penitentiary institutions.

Portuguese law enforcement agencies point to an increase in extremist propaganda in the country over recent years, primarily through the Internet due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A number of far-right movements and cells of this kind of international organizations are quite active in cyberspace. In March 2022, members of the New Social Order announced they were heading Ukraine to take part in hostilities on the side of Ukrainian special units with ultra-right and neo-Nazi ideology.

No statistics on the number of online hate speech incidents is available, but a report by the Council of Europe European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) points out to hundreds of posts on far-right Internet forums aimed at inciting hatred towards different ethnic groups. Only a few media outlets moderate comments with a view to weed out those that contain hate speech, prior to post them on their websites⁵⁷³.

⁵⁷³ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Portugal (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted 19 June 2018, published 2 October 2018.
<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-portugal/16808de7da>.

Also feeling permissiveness due to the tough Russophobic course taken by the Portuguese authorities and society as a whole, Ukrainian nationalist organizations have launched online activities to incite hatred towards Russians. The Embassy receives reports from Russian compatriots about threats of physical violence, damage to property, bullying of children in local educational institutions. There are cases of harassment against clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate, such as attempts to disrupt services, calls for Ukrainians to leave parishes and take children from parish schools.

Ukrainian nationalists have stepped up surveillance of pro-Russian activists, creating special databases of Russian citizens who support Russian policy. The Spilka Association approached the High Commission for Migration and Portuguese intelligence services for alleged facts of the transfer of information collected under the guise of helping Ukrainian refugees by organizations of the Russian diaspora to the leaders of our country. These unsubstantiated accusations prompted local authorities to launch an investigation into illegal access to and leakage of personal data. The incident had a great public outcry, further contributing to the increased anti-Russian sentiment among the Portuguese population.

Throughout 2022, refugee reception organizations in Portugal have been pointing out to the unequal treatment by local authorities of immigrants from Ukraine compared to people who arrived from other countries. Thus, Ukrainian refugees, in their opinion, get more advantages in terms of accommodation and employment.

At the same time, Portugal declares combat against manifestations of intolerance at the official level. The Constitution of the country, as well as laws No. 134/99 of August 28, 1999 and No. 93/2017 of August 23, 2017, prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin. There is a national Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination. Due to a significantly risen number of complaints submitted to this body (by

400% over the five recent years), the Portuguese government approved the National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination in July 2021. Portugal thus became the first EU country to develop a program within the European Commission's 2020-2025 Action Plan against Racism.

Nevertheless, international expert human rights bodies, in particular the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (AC FCNM) under the Council of Europe, note that the Portuguese still perceive their society as homogeneous and monolingual. The official authorities, on the one hand, recognize the existence of cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic diversity which includes a significant number of Roma living for at least five hundred years in the country, as well as the existence of a small community of people who speak the Mirandese language, in Miranda do Douro and the surrounding area. On the other hand, the authorities simultaneously maintain that there are no national minorities in Portugal. As a result, the contents of the Framework Convention is not brought to the attention of persons who might have an interest in protecting their rights thereunder⁵⁷⁴.

According to the concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee (HRC) following its consideration of Portugal's fifth periodic report, the Roma and people of African descent, as well as Muslims, are currently the most vulnerable. The HRC expressed its concern about reports of intolerance, prejudice, hate speech and hate crimes against these groups, especially in the media and on social media⁵⁷⁵.

Committee's experts are concerned over reports of police violence against ethnic minority members and that neither these crimes are properly investigated,

⁵⁷⁴ Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Fourth Opinion on Portugal, adopted 28 June 2019, published 27 January 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-portugal-en/1680998662>.

⁵⁷⁵ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 5th periodic report of Portugal. April 2020. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fPRT%2fCO%2f15-17&Lang=ru.

nor perpetrators brought to justice. The number of convictions in such cases is also low. The HRC also noted with concern reports of inadequate training of police officers assigned to areas with a high ethnic minority percentage⁵⁷⁶.

In December 2021, the United Nations Human Rights Council Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on a visit to Portugal concluded that there was a need to improve approaches in this area, noting cases of ill-treatment of black citizens, physical and verbal violence against them by law enforcement officials on racial grounds⁵⁷⁷.

The murder of black actor Bruno Cande in July 2020 caused a wide public outcry. The racism-driven crime was committed by a 76-year-old colonial war veteran.

Racist rhetoric is heard from numerous Portuguese football fan clubs and the skinhead movement. In February 2020, Moussa Marega, Malian player of the Porto football club, was forced to leave the pitch during the match due to shouting insults at him by the fans. All such situations in Portugal are carefully monitored and made public in the media, including at the suggestion of the SOS-Racism non-profit organization which is actively operating here.

A 2022 report by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) cites a case where during a public election debate, a politician called a black man a "thug" saying he would never be the president of "drug dealers." This case was subsequently heard in court, and the Portuguese justice came to a conclusion that the human right to personal integrity (moral and physical) limits the right to freedom of opinion and expression⁵⁷⁸.

Human rights activists note that there are no programs in the country that directly address the issues of people of African descent. Among other things,

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Statement to the media by the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on the conclusion of its official visit to Portugal (29 November – 6 December, 2021).

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2021/12/statement-media-united-nations-working-group-experts-people-african-descent>.

⁵⁷⁸ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

they express concern that school textbooks may illustrate them in a discriminatory or stereotypical way⁵⁷⁹.

According to the ECRI report, unemployment rate is much higher among people of African descent (33% in 2015), they are thrice more likely to take jobs that do not match their qualifications, and earn an average of 103 euros less per month. Often these members of the Portuguese population work without employment contracts, which is fraught with exploitation risks. Very few of them hold public office⁵⁸⁰.

Some people of African descent were resettled as part of social housing programs that started in the 1990s. However, in practice this led to spatial segregation, as the main construction took place away from urban centers. All this said, migrants who arrived after the 1991 census that served the basis of these programs, were left behind still living in slums or areas with utterly substandard housing under the constant threat of forced eviction without prior notification, having no possibility to obtain either legal remedies or decent housing from the authorities⁵⁸¹.

The AC FCNM, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) note that the Roma community in Portugal faces direct and indirect discrimination in almost all areas of life. Many of its members live in unsatisfactory conditions in informal settlements in barrack-type accommodations or in tents, often in remote areas with poor access to drinking water, sewerage, electricity, and transport. In addition, many Roma are not eligible for social housing under the Special Resettlement Program, as

⁵⁷⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 15th to 17th periodic reports of Portugal. December 2016.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fPRT%2fCO%2f15-17&Lang=ru.

⁵⁸⁰ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Portugal (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted 19 June 2018, published 2 October 2018.
<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-portugal/16808de7da>.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

applicants were identified on the basis of the 1993 census of informal Roma settlements⁵⁸². As a result, many of them continue to live in slums or in crowded conditions, with several families living in the same apartment, often with no access to electricity or sanitary and hygienic facilities⁵⁸³. This leads, among other things, to a lower life expectancy among the Roma compared to the rest of the population⁵⁸⁴.

As noted in the FRA report, the implementation of the National Strategy for the Inclusion of the Roma Community (2013-2022) failed to improve the dilapidated state of housing for the majority of the Roma community⁵⁸⁵.

Such living conditions are one of the reasons why the vast majority of Roma children living in these areas leave school after the fifth grade at the age of only 10-12 years without obtaining professional qualifications⁵⁸⁶. The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)⁵⁸⁷, CESCR⁵⁸⁸ and AC FCNM⁵⁸⁹ have also expressed concern over the poor school enrollment and academic performance of Roma children. Many of them are still enrolled in segregated schools or classes and subject to discrimination. Supporting traditional Romani

⁵⁸² Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 4th periodic report of Portugal. November 2014.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fPRT%2fC.O%2f4&Lang=ru.

⁵⁸³ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Portugal (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted 19 June 2018, published 2 October 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-portugal/16808de7da>.

⁵⁸⁴ Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities Opinion on Portugal (fourth cycle), adopted 28 June 2019, published 27 January 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-portugal-en/1680998662>.

⁵⁸⁵ EU Fundamental Rights Agency 2022 Report.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

⁵⁸⁶ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Portugal (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted 19 June 2018, published 2 October 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-portugal/16808de7da>.

⁵⁸⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of Portugal. September 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fPRT%2fC.O%2f5-6&Lang=ru.

⁵⁸⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 4th periodic report of Portugal. November 2014

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fPRT%2fC.O%2f4&Lang=ru.

⁵⁸⁹ Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities Opinion on Portugal (fourth cycle), adopted 28 June 2019, published 27 January 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-portugal-en/1680998662>.

livelihoods, such as street trading, is becoming increasingly difficult due to tightened regulations⁵⁹⁰.

In its 2018 report on Portugal within the fifth monitoring cycle, ECRI recommended that the authorities ensure compulsory school attendance for Roma children until they reach the age of 18.

Reporting on the implementation of this recommendation, the Portuguese authorities provided ECRI with statistics showing that school enrollment rates have increased at all stages of education. The best dynamics was demonstrated by the age group between 13 and 15 years old – pupils studying in forms 7-9: in academic year 2018/2019, their number increased by 4.5% as compared to academic year 2016/2017. The grades of children in this age group also improved.

In 2019, the Portuguese authorities launched the ROMA Educa scholarship program to regulate scholarships for high school pupils (15-18 year olds, forms 10-12). Its aim is primarily to reduce the number of Roma school dropouts. In academic year 2019/2020, 58 out of 100 available scholarships were awarded.

However, according to ECRI, enrollment rates for secondary and high school pupils are still low at 18.6% and 2.6% respectively. Hence, the Commission concluded only partial implementation of the previously given recommendation.⁵⁹¹

Cases of intolerance against people of Asian origin have been recorded, a significant number of which occurred at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic.

⁵⁹⁰ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Portugal (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted 19 June 2018, published 2 October 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-portugal/16808de7da>.

⁵⁹¹ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. Conclusions on the implementation of the recommendations in respect of Portugal subject to interim follow-up. Adopted 30 March, 2021. Published 18 May, 2021.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680a27d88>.

The assault of a Brazilian national by a police officer during carnival celebrations in the Portuguese capital was widely reported. She was struck on the head with a truncheon in contravention of established rules on the use of force (such actions are considered "last resort" under Portuguese law).

Due to the COVID-19-related restrictive measures in place since March 2020 on the Portuguese territory, applying to public events, among others, the protest activities of anti-racist organizations have been actually frozen. On 21 March 2021, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, about a hundred people attended a rally against racism, xenophobia and discrimination in Lisbon.

In February 2020, a number of organizations protesting against racism and violence by law enforcement agencies held rallies in Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra, with over 700 participants. During the procession, there were calls for the authorities to make public the findings of the investigation by the Portuguese Ministry of Internal Administration into police actions. In this context, various examples of law enforcement officers' arbitrariness were cited, the most high-profile one led to the death of a Cape Verdian student in Braganca on 31 December 2019.

A 2019 study on racism carried out by the country's parliament highlighted the need to build relationships of trust between different groups in society, especially with the younger generation of national minorities. The document, for example, recommends to recruit police officers of African or Roma descent⁵⁹².

⁵⁹² Portugal, Parliament (Assembleia da República) (2019), Preliminary summary document – Report on racism, xenophobia and ethnic-racial discrimination in Portugal (Documento síntese preliminar – Relatório sobre o Racismo, Xenofobia e Discriminação Étnico-racial em Portugal), 5 July 2019. <http://app.parlamento.pt/webutils/docs/doc.pdf?path=6148523063446f764c324679626d56304c334e706447567a4c31684a53556c4d5a5763765130394e4c7a464451554e455445637655306c4f5243394562324e31625756756447397a51574e3061585a705a47466b5a554e7662576c7a633246764c324d32596d55354d444a6a4c546b325a544d744e4446b304d7930345a6a6b314c574d354f5449305a546b334d3255324f4335775a47593d&fich=c6be902c-96e3-4943-8f95-c9924e973e68.pdf&Inline=true>.

A major study on discriminatory practices in Portuguese judicial proceedings was launched in 2018 by the University of Minho Research Centre for Justice and Governance together with the Anthropology Research Network. The first project output, called "Inclusive Courts", was published in June 2020 on a specially created, freely accessible online portal⁵⁹³. The research focused on some 650 court decisions by local courts since 1976. The results showed that judges often use unflattering and negative descriptions of certain social groups in their procedural documents. For example, epithets such as "poor beggars", "filthy", "subsidy addicts," and "traitors" are used in relation to Roma. Some ironic comments are included in the texts of decisions regarding members of religious minorities, particularly Muslims. As part of the project, a series of interviews with judges and prosecutors is planned in order to gain a better picture of the extent of the problem. The initiative has reportedly received a positive feedback already from public authorities, including the Superior Council of Magistracy, Superior Council of Public Prosecution and Judicial Studies Centre under the Ministry of Justice.

Thus, it can be stated that there is no desire to glorify Nazism and falsify the history of World War II at the official level in Portugal. Meanwhile, there is a trend of growing influence of ultra-right movements, against a backdrop of the lack of attention on the part of law enforcement agencies to certain neo-Nazi public manifestations. This concerns in particular ignoring the discriminatory and even sometimes xenophobic attitude towards Russians and Russian-speaking residents of the country, which is only fueled by the official Russophobic position of the Portuguese leaders. At the same time, the authorities are making regular efforts to resolve persistent systemic problems related to the rights of Roma and people of African descent.

⁵⁹³ <http://inclusivecourts.pt>.

Romania

At the official level, the Romanian authorities demonstrate their readiness to pay attention to the issues of counteracting the spread of neo-Nazism, anti-Semitism and other types of xenophobia in society. In 2021, the country approved a National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Combating Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia, Radicalization and the Use of Hate Speech for 2021-2023; a special government representative was appointed to promote the policy of memory, combat anti-Semitism and xenophobia, a law was passed to include a compulsory course "History of the Jews. Holocaust" from 2023 on into school (IX-XII grades) and vocational education programs. Over 38.7 million euros are assigned to create a National Museum of the History of the Jews and Holocaust in Romania.

However, as organizations involved in the monitoring of this area state, the result of the efforts by the authorities does not fully meet expectations. Director of the Center for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism (MCA) M. Katz noted in January 2022 that he was observing with "growing concern" the "downplaying and denial of the Holocaust at the level of political, leading class of Romania"⁵⁹⁴. According to a survey conducted by the Elie Wiesel National Institute for Studying the Holocaust in Romania November 22 – December 2, 2021, only 32% of ordinary citizens are aware of the Holocaust in Romania, 38% consider the Gypsy national minority a "threat", 59% of the respondents called Romanian Marshal Ion Antonescu, Adolf Hitler's accomplice, a "patriot" and 53% – a "great strategist"⁵⁹⁵.

This institute, MCA and Federation of the Jewish Communities in Romania continue to record certain anti-Semitic incidents. For example, the

⁵⁹⁴ Centrul pentru Monitorizarea și Combaterea Antisemitismului: Urmărim cu crescând discomfort negarea Holocaustului la nivelul clasei politice din România / Sesizările noastre către autorități au rămas fără răspuns, 5 January 2022 / <https://www.g4media.ro/centrul-pentru-monitorizarea-si-combaterea-antisemitismului-atragem-attentia-ca-toate-sesizarile-pe-care-le-am-inaintat-autoritatilor-au-ramas-fara-raspunsuri-antisemiti-si-negationisti-notorii-conti.html> .

⁵⁹⁵ Opinii contradictorii și prejudecăți stabile despre evrei și Holocaustul din România. Sondaj de opinie 2021 – INSHR, 23.12.2021 / <https://www.inshr-ew.ro/sondaj-de-opinie-holocaust-2021>.

well-known Romanian actress of Jewish origin Maia Morgenstern made public the facts of hateful threats to her.

Romanian legislation sets out the components of crimes motivated by hate and racism, and defines various types of punishment for them. In July 2015, Law No. 217 entered into force to amend and supplement 2002 Government Decree No. 31 of on prohibition of fascist, racist and xenophobic organizations and symbols, as well as promotion of the cult of persons guilty of crimes against peace and humanity. It defines "Holocaust in the Romanian territory" as "the systematic extermination and destruction of Jews and Roma supported by the Romanian authorities and public institutions on the territories under their control between 1940 and 1944"). The denial, justification of or downplaying consequences of the Holocaust is punishable by imprisonment for up to 3 years or a fine.

Also prohibited are legionary movements (organizations that operated in 1927-1941 under the names of Archangel Michael Legion, Iron Guard and All for the Country party) and their modern followers. The production, distribution and public use of their ideas, symbols, as well as the promotion of the cult of recognized war criminals are punishable by imprisonment for a term of 3 months to 6 years, and the creation of organizations of a fascist, racist or xenophobic orientation and their support – by imprisonment from 3 to 10 years with disenfranchisement.

Since 2018, Law 157/2018 "On Certain Measures to Prevent and Counter Manifestations of Anti-Semitism" in Romania has introduced penalties of up to 3 years in prison for promoting anti-Semitic symbols and ideas, up to 5 years for disseminating such materials, and up to 10 years – for the establishment and support of relevant organizations.

However, the first conviction for Holocaust denial was handed down in 2021, almost 20 years after Ordinance 31/2002 was adopted. At the same time, a year later, the sentence of 13 months in prison, previously imposed on Vasile

Zarnescu, colonel (rtd.) of the Romanian Information Service, for the book *Gogorita*⁵⁹⁶ of the Holocaust, was replaced with a warning⁵⁹⁷. As stated in March 2022 by M. Katz, head of the MCA, this verdict of the Bucharest Court of Appeal "annulled and made a mockery of" the authorities' progress in the fight against anti-Semitism⁵⁹⁸.

Although the punishment introduced for promoting the legionary movement has led to the fact that part of the once officially registered organizations preaching these ideas were forced to curtail or minimize public activity, certain ultra-right structures continue to operate "from the underground", using platforms in social networks⁵⁹⁹.

Among them are the registered New Right party and the Archangel Michael Legion, which has no legal status, also operating under the names of Legionary Movement and Iron Guard. Access to its website, news blog and social media pages is not restricted, and the extreme right movement freely promotes the works of its "ideological fathers" and materials from events like the conference Legionary Movement: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow (June 24, 2022, recorded on YouTube).

The building of the movement's Bucharest office features a sign with the forbidden Iron Guard symbols. Attempts to have it dismantled by the Institute for Studying the Holocaust in Romania, have failed: the prosecutor's office at the Bucharest Court of Appeal closed the case "for the lack of clear evidence"

⁵⁹⁶ An imaginary creature used to scare children.

⁵⁹⁷ Flavia Drăgan, Unda verde pentru negaționiști, de la CAB. Vasile Zărnescu, ex-ofițerul SRI care a negat Holocaustul, scapă de închisoare, 01.04.2022 // <https://defapt.ro/negationistul-vasile-zarnescu-scapa-de-inchisoare/>.

⁵⁹⁸ Vasile Zărnescu, fost colonel SRI, scapă cu un avertisment pentru negarea Holocaustului după ce judecătorii i-au admis apelul, 31.03.2022 // <https://www.g4media.ro/vasile-zarnescu-fost-colonel-sri-scapa-cu-un-avertisment-pentru-negarea-holocaustului-dupa-ce-judecatorii-i-au-admis-apelul-in-prima-instanta-zarnescu-fusese-condamnat-la-13-luni-de-inchisoare-cu.html>

⁵⁹⁹ Maria Teodoriu, Cum e ținută-n viață extrema dreaptă din România prin preoți, tabere izolate și manipulare, 30.08.2021 // <https://www.vice.com/ro/article/k789pm/istoria-extremei-drepte-in-romania>.

on October 20, 2020, after 5 years of hearings⁶⁰⁰. In February 2021, the court of Bucharest sector II upheld the decision⁶⁰¹.

Attempts to bring the movement to account as a whole have also failed. Despite the use of legionary symbols, uniforms, Nazi salutes by its members, their holding of events to cherish the memory of Corneliu Z. Codreanu, founder of the Iron Guard, prosecutors at the Bucharest Court of Appeal recognized it only as "a small group of people with nostalgic inclinations and views"⁶⁰².

Even more influential, numerous and active is the Action 2012 civic platform, comprising several dozens of NGOs. The organization aggressively promotes the ideas of "Romanian unionism", advocating the revision of borders, suggesting the "return" of Moldova, Ukrainian Bukovina and some districts of the Odessa region into the "bosom of Mother Romania". Along with revisionist slogans, ultranationalist and openly Russophobic rhetoric is often heard at the regularly organized actions and marches across the country. The "Romanian Unionist" movements are actively involved in attempts to falsify history, including the desire to lay the blame and responsibility for World War II, the greatest tragedy of the twentieth century, on Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin equally.

Leaders of these movements aspire to whitewash the war crimes of Romanian henchmen of Nazis through justifying their atrocities with slogans of "national liberation struggle" of the Romanian people for "saving historical territories" from the "red plague".

A number of open fans of the legionary movement and war criminals, including dictator Ion Antonescu, entered the Romanian Parliament upon the

⁶⁰⁰ Flavia Drăgan, Șocant: placa pe care scrie "Mișcarea Legionară", afișată public, nu încalcă legea, spun procurorii, 03.03.2021 / <https://newsweek.ro/istorie/cum-a-scatat-seful-miscarii-legionare-de-dosarul-penal-deschis-pentru-placuta-pusa-in-sectorul-1>.

⁶⁰¹ Nr. Dosar unic (nr. format vechi): 21429/300/2020. https://portal.just.ro/300/SitePages/Dosar.aspx?id_dosar=30000000000569327&id_inst=300.

⁶⁰² Flavia Drăgan, Afișarea plăcuței cu Mișcarea Legionară: ilegală, dar clasată. Procurorul General a redeschis speța, 23.04.2021 / <https://newsweek.ro/actualitate/parchetul-general-critica-clasarea-dosarului-privind-placuta-cu-miscarea-legionara>.

2020 elections "under the banner" of the Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR) with about 8% of the votes (44 mandates out of 466). The Alliance was created on the platform of the aforementioned Action 2012.

Senator AUR Sorin Lavric regularly addresses Parliament with "political declarations" posted on the legislature official website to rehabilitate members and supporters of the legionary movement as "victims of the communist regime". So, for example, on February 24, 2021, he called theologian Valeriu Gafencu, an active Iron Guard figure, known for his anti-Semitic and Russophobic views, a "holy prisoner" and "symbol of Christian sacrifice"⁶⁰³. This AUR representative also particularly mentioned in his speeches: Mircea A.Vulcanescu (March 3, 2021)⁶⁰⁴, Constantin Oprisan (March 10, 2021)⁶⁰⁵, Virgil Maxim (March 24, 2021)⁶⁰⁶, Moldovan terrorist Filimon Bodiu (March 23, 2022)⁶⁰⁷, Georghe Jimboiu (June 22, 2022)⁶⁰⁸, Constantin Gane (April 27, 2022)⁶⁰⁹, Nicolae Calinescu (February 16, 2022)⁶¹⁰.

In January 2022, Calin Georgescu, AUR honorary chairman, who was nominated by this party for the post of prime minister, stated that Corneliu Z.Codreanu, founder and leader of the Romanian legionary movement, "fought for the human good morals", and also "did good things"⁶¹¹.

⁶⁰³ Sorin Lavric, Personalitatea lui Valeriu Gafencu, 24.02.2021/

<https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/48%20lavric%20s.pdf>.

⁶⁰⁴ Sorin Lavric, Savantul interbelic Mircea Vulcănescu, 03.03.2021/.

<https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/64%20lavric%20s.pdf>.

⁶⁰⁵ Sorin Lavric, Constantin Oprișan, 10.03.2021 / <https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/92%20lavric%20s.pdf>.

⁶⁰⁶ Sorin Lavric, Deținutul politic Virgil Maxim, 24.03.2021 /

<https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/143%20lavric%20s.pdf>.

⁶⁰⁷ Sorin Lavric, Partizanul basarabean Filimon Bodiu, 23.03.2022 /.

<https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/962%20lavric%20s.pdf>.

⁶⁰⁸ Sorin Lavric, Gheorghe Jimboiu, 22.06.2022 / <https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/1233%20lavric%20s.pdf>.

⁶⁰⁹ Sorin Lavric, Scriitorul Constantin Gane, 27.04.2022 /

<https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/1067%20lavric%20s.pdf>.

⁶¹⁰ Sorin Lavric, Deținutul politic Nicolae Călinescu, 16.02.2022 /.

<https://senat.ro/PDFIntrebari/840%20lavric%20s.pdf>.

⁶¹¹ Călin Georgescu, despre Zelea Codreanu și Ion Antonescu: "Codreanu s-a luptat pentru moralitatea ființei umane. Față de martiri nu pot să am păreri/ E nevoie de schimbarea totală a sistemului" / Despre asasinarea lui Nicolae Iorga la ordinul legionarilor: "Istoria este mistificată" 06.02.2022 / <https://www.g4media.ro/calin-georgescu-despre-zelea-codreanu-si-ion-antonescu-codreanu-s-a-luptat-pentru-moralitatea-ființei-umane-fata-de-martiri-nu-pot-sa-am-pareri-e-nevoie-de-schimbarea-totala-a-sistemului.html>.

It is worth noting that many members of the Romanian ruling and intellectual elite sympathize with the figures of Marshal Ion Antonescu and Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. In September 2019, historian Valentin Chepeneag, who was then head of the Constantin Brâncuși Museum in Târgu Jiu⁶¹², and in 2020, Florian Bichir, a lecturer at the National Military University, wrote similar posts on Facebook⁶¹³.

In March 2020, after vandals poured paint over and painted an outdoor photo exhibition at the Russian Center for Science and Culture in Bucharest dedicated to the liberation of Europe from fascism by Soviet troops⁶¹⁴, the Action 2012 platform praised the vandals on its Facebook page, accompanying its post with anti-Russian comments⁶¹⁵. In response to the Embassy's note of protest, police opened a criminal case. However, the perpetrators were not brought to justice.

Meanwhile, cases of glorification of Nazism and manifestations of neo-Nazism in Romania are not isolated. Thus, according to Romanian newspaper Adevărul, the local confectionery manufacturer "SC Ro Star" used the image of Adolf Hitler for the "Dita" biscuits advertising campaign on Facebook on March 31 and April 2, 2019, under the cover of a historical quiz⁶¹⁶.

In March 2019, 28 parliamentarians of the ultra-liberal "pro-Soros" Save Romania Union proposed a bill "banning communist organizations and symbols".

In April 2019, many central media outlets reported that more than 70 tombstones and monuments had been destroyed in the Jewish cemetery in Huși (Vaslui county).

⁶¹² <https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/directorul-muzeului-constantin-brancuzi-i-lauda-pe-zelea-codreanu-si-ion-antonescu-2747196>.

⁶¹³ <https://www.g4media.ro/florian-bichir-conferentiar-de-la-universitatea-de-aparare-a-postat-pe-facebook-un-selfie-in-care-apare-imaginea-lui-ion-antonescu-institutul-elie-wiesel-postarea-reprez.html>.

⁶¹⁴ <https://ro.sputnik.md/society/20200313/29519221/Expozitia-75-de-ani-de-la-Marea-Victorie-de-la-Bucuresti-vandalizat-Reacii.html>.

⁶¹⁵ <https://ro.sputnik.md/society/20200313/29525524/Cine-ar-fi-vandalizat-expozitia-dedicat-Armatei-Sovietice-de-la-Bucuresti.html>.

⁶¹⁶ www.adevarul.ro.

According to MCA, in December 2019 and April 2020, unknown persons painted swastika images and Nazi slogans in the car parking of Unirea central department store in Bucharest.

On June 1, 2021, a memorial service was held for Ion Antonescu (shown several times on the Vaslui TV local channel) in St. Paraskeva Church in Vaslui, at the initiative of the Cultural League for the Unity of Romanians from Everywhere⁶¹⁷. The TV channel was fined⁶¹⁸, and a criminal case was opened against the priests who performed the service⁶¹⁹.

In December 2021, two swastikas were painted on the synagogue in Sighisoara. On January 6, 2022, an act of vandalism was committed against the synagogue in Fagaras.

After the Russian Federation launched a special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine, several Romanian historical community members made attempts to whitewash Ukrainian nationalists from the OUN-UPA banned in Russia in the wake of "solidarity" with Kiev. In May 2022, M.Stanescu, an employee of the Institute for Political Studies in the Field of Defense and Military History, published an article in the History journal in the spirit of the Ukrainian-promoted political myth that the OUN-UPA is alleged to cooperate with the Nazis forcedly only in their fight for independence against Bolshevism. In particular, the author portrays in a positive light Taras Bulba-Borovets, the Nazi founder of the UPA, who massively exterminated Jews (which is not mentioned in the article). He also claims that the OUN "opposed the creation of the "Galicia" SS division" and limited itself in anti-

⁶¹⁷ Lavinia Ionița, Cum a fost elogiât maresalul Ion Antonescu într-o biserică din Vaslui. Ministrul de Interne și procurorul general au fost sesizați VIDEO, 04.06.2021 // <https://ziare.com/social/stiri-sociale/maresalul-antonescu-elogiat-biserica-vaslui-1682951>.

⁶¹⁸ Daniel Samoilă, VASLUI TV. Un post local, amendat că a dat o comemorare a mareșalului Antonescu: "A fost un martir al neamului românesc", 26.01.2021 // <https://www.paginamedia.ro/cna/televiziune-vaslui-amenda-cna-maresal-antonescu-20373767>.

⁶¹⁹ Ioana Dumitrescu, 3 preoți din Vaslui sunt cercetați penal: Au ținut o slujbă de comemorare a mareșalului Ion Antonescu, 08.06.2021 // <https://www.europafm.ro/3-preoti-din-vaslui-sunt-cercetati-penal-au-tinut-o-slujba-de-comemorare-a-maresalului-ion-antonescu>.

Romanian actions due to "very good relations between Romanians and Ukrainians in the northern Bukovina"⁶²⁰.

Despite efforts to rename geographical and administrative sites that bear the names of war criminals convicted of crimes against the Roma and Jewish population intensified by the authorities in 2021, this problem remains relevant for Romania⁶²¹. The streets in Bechet (Dolj county), 1 December (Ilfov county), Râmnicu Sărat (Buzău county) and Mărașești (Vrancea county) still bear the name of Marshal Ion Antonescu, a war criminal and Hitler's associate. Ion Antonescu is portrayed on the wall paintings of Bucharest churches, in particular St. Helena and St. Constantine Church⁶²², where this Fuhrer's accomplice is depicted in the positive image of a church warden. His image is also in the church of Mihai Voda monastery, among the especially revered kings and church hierarchs of Romania⁶²³. Time after time, attempts fail to change the name of a street named after the commander of a unit of the pro-fascist Legionary Movement, Radu Gyr-Demetrescu in Cluj-Napoca⁶²⁴. The memory of Nichifor Crainic, Minister of Propaganda of the Ion Antonescu government is cherished in the name of a street in Pitesti. Streets in Bucharest and Aiuda, as well as the College of Technology in Bucharest are named after Mircea Vulcănescu, Deputy Minister of Finance of the Ion Antonescu government. The takedown of M. Vulcanescu bust in one of the squares of

⁶²⁰ Manuel Stănescu, *Ucrainenii, între Wermachtul și Armata Roșie*, Historia, Nr.244, Mai 2022, PP. 30-36.

⁶²¹ Cum încalcă legea autoritățile, minimalizând rolul criminalilor de război din România anilor '40 / Lista străzilor, instituțiilor și monumentelor din țară care încă poartă numele Ion Antonescu, Mircea Vulcănescu, Radu Gyr ș.a. / 22.02.2021 / <https://www.g4media.ro/cum-minimalizeaza-autoritatile-rolul-antisemitilor-si-criminalilor-de-razboi-din-romania-anilor-40-lista-strazilor-institutiilor-si-monumentelor-din-tara-care-poarta-numele-acestora.html>.

⁶²² <https://www.crestinortodox.ro/biserici-manastiri/biserica-sfintii-imparati-constantin-elena-vergului-67951.html>.

⁶²³ Manuela Golea, Buserică în care apare chipul marelui Antonescu, plimbată pe sine, 08.12.2022// <https://magnanews.ro/2017/12/singura-biserica-care-apare-chipul-maresalului-antonescu-fost-plimbata-pe-sine/>.

⁶²⁴ Florin Dobrescu, Nu vă atingeți de radu Gyr! USR-PLUS reia demersurile pentru schimbarea numelui străzii Radu Gyr din Cluj-Napoca, Buciumul, 01.02.2022 // <http://www.buciumul.ro/amp/2022/02/01/nu-va-atingeti-de-radu-gyr-usr-plus-reia-demersurile-pentru-schimbarea-numelui-strazii-radu-gyr-din-cluj-napoca/>.

Bucharest sector II is dragging on. Information about the violation of Law No. 217 is published by the Szekler Monitor website⁶²⁵.

Against this background, on June 29, 2022, at the initiative of the mayor's office of the above sector, the Metropolitan Municipal Council decided to rename the park named after Marshal of the Soviet Union Fyodor I. Tolbukhin. As the Russian special military operation in Ukraine began, the mayor's office took down the appropriate sign. In December 2020, Radu Mihailescu, mayor of Bucharest's sector II, representative of the Save Romania Union, supported by anti-Russian media, launched a campaign to rename the park, arguing that the Russian commander "went beyond liberating Romania from fascism", and that "the army under his leadership made a decisive contribution to the establishment of the communist regime". Earlier in 2017, Dan Cristian Popescu, deputy mayor (National Liberal Party), proposed a similar move, labeling Fyodor Tolbukhin "an occupier and an invader".

Books trying to rehabilitate Ion Antonescu and his entourage are published annually in Romania. In 2022, G. Manole's work "Antonescu at Hitler's Place" was published (Cartea Romaneasca Educational publishing house). In 2020-2021, major Romanian newspapers Adevărul⁶²⁶ and Jurnalul National⁶²⁷ promoted the books by Holocaust denier Gheorghe Buzatu⁶²⁸ Marshal Antonescu in the Face of History and Romania with and without Antonescu through their distribution networks, as well as the memoirs of war criminals close to Ion Antonescu published by the Bucharest publishing house Paul Editions: Colonel Gheorghe Magherescu, head of his secretariat (The

⁶²⁵ <http://szekler-monitor.sic.hu/2019/01/07/the-theory-and-the-facts/>.

⁶²⁶ Începând cu luni, 15 noiembrie, Adevărul îți aduce timp de două săptămâni consecutive "Mareșalul Antonescu în fața istoriei", vol. 1-2 – Gheorghe Buzatu // https://adevarul.ro/cultura/carti/Incepand-luni-15-noiembrie-adevarul-aduce-timp-doua-saptamaniconsecutive-maresalul-antonescu-fata-istoriei-vol-1-2-gheorghe-buzatu-1_619644a85163ec4271aef303/index.html.

⁶²⁷ Jurnalul vă oferă astăzi o carte-document: "România cu și fără Antonescu", de Gheorghe Buzatu, 19.04.2021 // <https://jurnalul.ro/cultura/carte/jurnalul-va-ofera-astazi-o-carte-document-romania-cu-si-fara-antonescu-de-gheorghe-buzatu-870667.html>.

⁶²⁸ Y.Obidin, Despre negaționistii Holocaustului din România (II), 04.03.2016 // <https://razboiulpentru trecut.wordpress.com/2016/03/04/despre-negationistii-holocaustului-din-romania-ii/>.

Truth about Marshal Antonescu)⁶²⁹, General Constantin Pantazzi (With Marshal till Death)⁶³⁰ and Commissar Radu Lecca, who was responsible for the "resolution of the Jewish issue" (A Conflicting Game: Between the Fuhrer, the Marshal and the Jews in Romania)⁶³¹. In particular, the above book is an attempt to play down his own responsibility and Ion Antonescu's role in the organization of the Holocaust in Romania.

More and more often are attempts to conceal the criminal nature of the actions of Romanian collaborators of Nazi Germany, highlighting their "other achievements" in the field of culture and science. On 1 April 2021, on the initiative of the Iași mayor's office, a bust was unveiled to Octavian Goga, the former prime minister (1937-1938), poet and playwright. Octavian Goga's government, to include chief ideologist of Romanian fascism Alexandru Cuza, pursued a nationalist, pro-fascist course with a pro Hitlerite orientation of its foreign policy. It was Octavian Goga's government that issued a decree depriving Romanian Jews of their citizenship.

In January 2020, the Tribuna magazine, financed by the Cluj county Council, published a laudatory article about Radu Gyr Demetrescu⁶³² as a "martyr of communist prisons" without mentioning his past or the fact that he had been recognized as a war criminal⁶³³.

Attempts are being made to whitewash Mircea Vulcanescu as an "outstanding philosopher". In 2018, his daughter initiated proceedings to establish the "political nature" of the 1946 tribunal decision recognizing her

⁶²⁹ Începând din 9 noiembrie, Adevărul îți aduce săptămânal "Adevărul despre mareșalul Antonescu", vol. 1-3 – col. Gheorghe Magherescu, 09/11/2020 // https://adevarul.ro/cultura/carti/incepand-9-noiembrie-adevarul-adeuce-saptamanal-adevarul-despre-maresalul-antonescu-vol-1-3-col-gheorghe-magherescu-1_5fa90b515163ec4271abdf6a/index.amphml.

⁶³⁰ Luni, 29 iunie, Adevărul îți prezintă "Cu mareșalul până la moarte" – generalul Constantin Pantazzi, 26/06/2020 // https://adevarul.ro/cultura/carti/luni-29-iunie-adevarul-prezinta-cu-maresalul-moarte-general-constantin-pantazzi-1_5ef5c0465163ec427155bd4a/index.html.

⁶³¹ Luni, 24 august, Adevărul îți prezintă "Joc ambiguu" – Radu Lecca, 17.08.2020/. https://adevarul.ro/cultura/carti/luni-24-august-adevarul-prezinta-joc-ambiguu-radu-lecca-1_5f3a10155163ec42710c026d/index.html.

⁶³² <https://tribuna-magazine.com/poeziile-din-inchisoare-radu-gyr>.

⁶³³ Petru Clej, Memorialistica fascistă este în continuare prezentă în România, 7 February 2021.

father as a war criminal. A decision in her favour in this case would have meant, in effect, the rehabilitation of a member of the Ion Antonescu government. However, in 2019, the claim which was sustained at a court of original jurisdiction, was dismissed by the Bucharest Court of Appeal.

The Romanian public continues to express concern over the recognition, by a Sibiu court ruling of 28 May 2007, of the Democratic Forum of the Germans of Romania (DFGR is represented in the Romanian Parliament and in local governments) as legal successor to the Group of Ethnic Germans that had been established at the insistence of the Nazi Germany and banned by King Mihai Decree No. 485 of 7 October 1944. On the basis of the said court ruling, the DFGR has started restituting property lost after 1944. Over 100 properties in Sibiu county are to be returned⁶³⁴. The process is being carried out with the direct support from Klaus Iohannis, President of Romania (since 2014), former DFGR president. Despite the fact that the DFGR does not belong to radical or extremist organizations, the implemented property transfer scheme with the use of such a legal mechanism may be applied to former legionary movement activists and members of the Ion Antonescu government as well. In this context, the Romanian media, for example, note the attempts by the descendants of Group of Ethnic Germans' members to have the real estate, once forcibly seized by Nazis from the Jews, returned to them⁶³⁵. This could set a dangerous precedent for the restitution of property confiscated on the basis of war crimes allegedly committed by former owners.

In June 2021, the Cotidianul newspaper recalled that the decision "recognizing the DFNR as legal successor to a fascist organization" remained in force⁶³⁶. One issue also raised the question of "the need to clarify the

⁶³⁴ <http://www.justitiarul.ro/11189-2> , <http://www.corectnews.com/politics/noua-cas-verde>.

⁶³⁵ Carmen Gorgan, Dosarele de retrocedare din Sibiu scot la iveală adevăruri istorice dureroase. Casa cu casă... de la evrei, 20.03.2019 // <https://gazetadecluj.ro/dosarele-de-retrocedare-din-sibiu-scot-la-iveala-adevaruri-istorice-dureroase-casa-cu-casa-de-la-evrei/>.

⁶³⁶ Cornel Nistorescu, Sentința care a făcut din FDGR un succesor în drepturi de organizație fascistă, 10.06.2021 // <https://www.cotidianul.ro/sentinta-care-a-facut-din-fdgr-un-succesor-in-drepturi-de-organizatie-fascista>.

relationship between the DFNR and the Group of Ethnic Germans in the light of the declared [authorities'] combat against anti-Semitism". At the same time, it was noted that historians and media outlets who raised the alarm about the connection between the Forum and the Group were prosecuted following a DFNR lawsuit⁶³⁷.

An open letter by Romanian political scientist and economist Radu Golban⁶³⁸ concludes: expert analyses carried out by Swiss lawyers show that the decision of Romanian judicial authorities to recognize the DFGR legal succession to the German Ethnic Group is in fact recognition of a Nazi group and a violation of Bucharest's obligations under the peace agreements signed after World War II.

Against the above background, the Romanian position on the UN General Assembly vote on the resolution "Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to the escalation of modern forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" seems to be natural. In line with the general EU course, that country's delegation abstains annually.

The situation of the Romanian ethnic minorities raises certain concerns among human rights activists. The policy in the field of ensuring their rights is not comprehensive, and the ways and means to implement it vary with particular regions of the country.

Hate speech against Roma, members of the Hungarian and Jewish communities, and Muslims has been recorded in the media and cyberspace.

The CE European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in this regard even recommended that the Romanian authorities step up the work

⁶³⁷ Octavian Știreanu, Falsele procese despre Grupul Etnic German, 14.06.2021 //

<https://www.cotidianul.ro/falsele-procese-despre-grupul-etnic-german/>.

⁶³⁸ <http://radugolban.ro/>.

of the cybercrime investigation unit in order to better counter online hate speech⁶³⁹.

The issue of spreading extremism and nationalism in the predominantly Hungarian inhabited counties of Transylvania (1.3 million people or 6.5% of the country's total population), whose ethno-cultural rights are systematically derogated from by Romanian authorities, remains a particular concern for Bucharest.

Using the Hungarian language in public institutions in places densely populated by Magyars and receiving secondary and higher education in their mother tongue, formally guaranteed by the law "On Education", are the most acute issues. Thus, with reference to streamlined budget expenditures, a policy is being implemented to remove a number of disciplines in the Hungarian language from the curriculum at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Tirgu Mures.

The unflattering remarks about the Hungarian ethnic group made by MEP Traian Basescu, the former President of Romania, in a televised address were a high-profile case in the reporting period. In this regard, the National Council of the Székelys appealed to Romanian authorities with a demand to condemn politician's hate speech. The National Council for Combating Discrimination did not stand aside either, having examined this episode and imposed a fine of about 1,000 euros on the figurant.

Moreover, the Romanian authorities continue to persecute Magyars for using the flag of Székelys (Romanian Hungarians) and fine them for playing the Hungarian anthem during public events.

A controversial gesture was made by the then Romanian prime minister Mihai Tudose, who promised during a television programme in January 2018 to "hang Hungarians involved in the use of Székely flag on the same poles". The

⁶³⁹ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Romania (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted 3 April 2019, published 5 June 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-romania/168094c9e5>.

National Council for Combating Discrimination issued a warning to the politician in this regard.

The 2021 report by Miko Imre Legal Aid Service for Minorities, created by the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR), noted cases of ethnicity-driven violent behavior against Hungarians in Romania: insulting an elderly woman, attacking young people who spoke Hungarian, and discriminating against a kindergarten teacher because of her nationality⁶⁴⁰.

In February 2021, acts of vandalism were committed against the monument to the "Székely Martyrs" in Târgu Mureș and Hungarian inscriptions on bilingual tablets with the names of settlements in Transylvania⁶⁴¹.

The Hungarian minority was also outraged by the anti-Hungarian tone of the comment posted by MP R. Cristescu in March 2021 on Facebook: "The leaders of DAHR horde continue to behave like heirs to Attila's Huns, not caring that they harm innocent people..."⁶⁴²

In August 2021, during a football match between the Sepsi team from Sfintu Gheorghe, a city that is part of the predominantly Hungarian-populated Romanian county of Covasna, and the Farul team from Constanta, the fans of the latter yelled xenophobic slogan "Hungarians, get out of the country!". The same words were heard during a Steaua and Csikszereda (a team from the Romanian county of Harghita, inhabited by Szekely Hungarians) match⁶⁴³.

Meanwhile, a number of NGOs in Transylvania maintain close contacts with far-right parties and organizations in Hungary (Jobbik, Hungarian National

⁶⁴⁰ Report 2021. The violation of minority rights and the ethnic discrimination faced by the Hungarian community in Romania. Mikó Imre Minority Rights Legal Services Assistance, 2021. P.32-33.

⁶⁴¹ Report 2021. The violation of minority rights and the ethnic discrimination faced by the Hungarian community in Romania. Mikó Imre Minority Rights Legal Services Assistance, 2021. P.12-13.

⁶⁴² Derapaj verbal al unui deputat PSD, după ce UDMR a votat bugetul: "Se comportă ca niște urmași ai hunilor lui Atila, fără să le pese că lovesc în oameni", 03.03.2021 // https://adevarul.ro/news/politica/derapaj-verbal-unui-deputat-psd-udmr-votat-bugetul-se-comporta-urmasi-hunilor-atila-pese-lovesc-oameni-1_603f685b5163ec427186b3a3/index.html.

⁶⁴³ Mihai Roman, Scandări xenofobe ale galeriei Farului Constanța la meciul cu Sepsi Sfântu Gheorghe. Un oficial covăsnean amenință cu retragerea echipei din competiție, 09.08.2021 // <https://www.g4media.ro/scandari-xenofobe-ale-galeriei-farului-constanta-la-meciul-cu-sepsi-sfantu-gheorghe-un-oficial-covasnean-ameninta-cu-retragerea-echipei-din-competitie.html>.

Guard, etc.) and under their influence advocate extremist and revanchist ideas, including that about the unjust Trianon Peace Treaty and its consequences. The Hungarian nationalist Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement has its own cells in Romanian Transylvania.

The existing radical views in the region have an impact on the attitude of Székely Hungarians towards representatives of other ethnic groups. For example, a case of racial intolerance was recorded in January 2020 in the commune of Ditrău, Harghita county. Outraged at two Sri Lankan nationals employed in a local bakery, the commune residents organized a rally with the use of racist and xenophobic slogans⁶⁴⁴.

President of the Romanian Union of Carpathian Ruthenians M. Lauruk regularly draws attention to the pressure exercised by Romanian authorities on the Ruthenian community. This means a whole series of facts of frivolous persecution suffered by the organization's activists for their pro-Russian views. In fact, Bucharest shows indulgence to the forced Ukrainization of the Ruthenian national minority. There have also been cases of inaction on the part of authorities regarding the raiding of property and business assets belonging to Ruthenians.

Some complaints have been voiced before Romanian authorities regarding the possibility to receive education (from primary to complete secondary education) in their native language from the Russian-Lipovan Community of Romania and Carpathian Ruthenians. It is reported that Russian-Lipovan children are only provided with mother tongue teaching as an optional subject, while most national minorities can receive primary school education (forms 1-9) entirely in their mother tongue.

Human rights activists point out that the Romanian Roma community (more than 620 thousand people, about 3.3% of the population, and according to

⁶⁴⁴ https://adevarul.ro/news/eveniment/epurarea-etnica-ditrau-s-au-rasculat-etnicii-maghiari-doi-brutari-sri-lanka-1_5e3720735163ec4271b3a467/index.html.

unofficial data – up to 2 million people) is the one that faces the most systematic social discrimination of all ethnic minorities, including in education, employment and health services. ECRI experts note that anti-Roma sentiments in Romania are "commonplace"⁶⁴⁵.

The Center for Legal Research described the education environment for Roma children in schools in detail, noting cases of racist manifestations on the part of teachers. In April 2021, the Salvați Copiii stated that ethnic segregation of Roma children in schools persisted⁶⁴⁶. Due to employment problems, Roma are much more at risk of falling below the poverty line than other national minorities in Romania.

The Open Society Foundation draws attention to increased cases of discrimination against Roma in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. Inadequate living conditions and lack of food supplies, typical for this category of people, forced them to violate the quarantine restrictions imposed by authorities. As a result, a number of facts of exceeding official authority by police officers against Roma were recorded. The Balkan Insight notes the shortcomings of the local judicial and legal system, which systematically takes the law enforcement side in such matters. In addition, there were cases of unlawful denial of medical services to Roma.

Moreover, the spread of COVID-19 gave rise to publications in the Romanian segment of social networks blaming it on the country's Jewish⁶⁴⁷ and Roma⁶⁴⁸ communities.

According to the findings of the 2019 monitoring, Romania's 2014-2020 National Roma Integration Strategy has been "extremely superficially

⁶⁴⁵ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Romania (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted 3 April 2019, published 5 June 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-romania/168094c9e5>.

⁶⁴⁶ <https://www.agerpres.ro/educatie-stiinta/2021/04/09/salvati-copiii-fenomenul-segregarii-etnice-in-scoli-persista--693792>.

⁶⁴⁷ <http://www.inshr-ew.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/INSHR-EW-Raport-de-monitorizare-antisemitism-2019-aprilie-2020.pdf>.

⁶⁴⁸ <https://libertatea.ro/opinii/harvard-margareta-matache-rasismul-anti-romi-creste-covid-19-2957550>.
http://www.crj.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Scrisoare-de-pozitie_12mai.pdf.

implemented". Denials of public services, access to health care and social protection systems, and equal employment conditions for Roma are still frequent. In 2019, in Zalău, a Roma woman and her child were beaten with a mop by a minibus driver in an attempt to chase them away from the vehicle, and the emergency services where she sought help responded with insults⁶⁴⁹; in April 2020, a video surfaced on social media of Roma being beaten by a law enforcement officer in Bolintin-Vale, Giurgiu county⁶⁵⁰.

In January 2020, mayor of Târgu Mureș Dorin Florea was heavily criticized by human rights organizations for ethnic hate-inciting speech against the local Roma⁶⁵¹.

In turn, Petre Roman, the former Prime Minister of Romania (1989-1991), was fined 2,000 lei (about 417 US dollars) by the National Council for Combating Discrimination for his anti-gypsy statements, voiced on television⁶⁵².

In 2022, representatives of the Aresel and the Romanian Jesuit Refugee Service reported that Roma refugees arriving from Ukraine also faced discrimination: they were driven away from stands with free food and medicine, forbidden to enter waiting rooms at the Bucharest North Station, requests to take them to a refugee reception center were perceived negatively⁶⁵³.

The problems faced by Roma communities in Romania have been highlighted by the UN human rights treaty bodies (Human Rights Committee⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁴⁹ <https://libertatea.ro/stiri/rasismul-de-la-112-o-operatoare-sts-injura-o-femeie-roma-batuta-vorbiti-ca-ciorile-trazni-v-ar-dute-dreacu-2736227>, <https://youtu.be/bwCZTXOhW78>.

⁶⁵⁰ <https://republica.ro/cazul-violentelor-politiei-din-bolintin-vale-are-in-spate-o-istorie-lunga-si-complicata-de-conflictenezolvate>.

⁶⁵¹ <https://www.digi24.ro/amphhtml/stiri/actualitate/primarul-din-targu-mures-amendat-cu-10-000-de-lei-cncd-afirmatiile-sale-sunt-extrem-de-rasiste-1248976>.

⁶⁵² EU Fundamental Rights Agency 2022 Report. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

⁶⁵³ Diana Meseșan, Reportaj. Ce au pățit niște romi săraci din Ucraina când au fost confundați în Gara de Nord cu romi de la noi, 09.03.2022 // <https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/reportaj-ce-a-patit-un-grup-de-romi-saraci-din-ucraina-cand-au-fost-confundati-in-gara-de-nord-cu-romi-de-la-noi-4022475>.

⁶⁵⁴ Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the 5th periodic report of Romania. October 2017. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fROU%2fCO%2f5&Lang=ru.

and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women⁶⁵⁵, as well as the mentioned ECRI⁶⁵⁶ and CE Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (AC FCNM)⁶⁵⁷.

Cases of violation of the rights and discrimination of Russians on the basis of nationality and citizenship began to be recorded in Romania with the start of a special military operation in Ukraine. Russian citizens and compatriots living here have become the object of systematic attacks and insults on social networks. In addition to certain manifestations of Russophobia and aggressive behavior when applying for medical services, passing border control, or at schools, problems persist with servicing Russians in many banking institutions in the country.

Under the pretext of international sanctions, a number of Russian companies, including TMK Group plants and Aeroflot office, were denied the opportunity to manage their own financial resources. This, in turn, put into question the observance of the social and economic rights of employees of these companies, including the right to receive wages. In violation of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, since February 28, 2022, Romania has restricted access to Sputnik Romania and Russia Today information resources on all platforms, including websites, social networks, instant messengers, and mobile apps. On the same day, the National Broadcasting Council undertook to take measures so that "not a single TV channel from the Russian Federation is rebroadcast in Romania", as well as "to monitor the way news programs and talk shows cover topics related to the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine". Thus, in March 2022, the said authority issued fines to the

⁶⁵⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the combined 7th and 8th periodic reports of Romania. July 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fROU%2fCO%2f7-8&Lang=ru.

⁶⁵⁶ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Report on Romania (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted 3 April 2019, published 5 June 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-romania/168094c9e5>

⁶⁵⁷ Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities Fourth Opinion on Romania, adopted 22 June 2017, published 16 February 2018. <https://rm.coe.int/fourth-opinion-on-romania-adopted-on-22-june-2017/168078af76>.

Realitatea Plus TV channel (Leu 40,000 or USD 9,300) and the Gold FM radio station (Leu 50,000 or about USD 11,600), as well as warnings to TV channels Naşul TV and B1 TV. Local journalists (for example, Sputnik Romania correspondent, author of the Friends of Vladimir Putin and On the First Line news blogs (inprimalinie.org) G. Arsene and editor of the Vesti iz Rossii news site (vestidinrusia.ro) Vyacheslav Samoshkin) who are trying to cover the events taking place in Ukraine in a balanced way and from different prospects, become the object of fierce harassment and threats on social networks.

Thus, the official position of Bucharest stating that xenophobic manifestations are unacceptable in the country is strikingly different from the situation that has developed in practice. Legislative provisions banning organizations and symbols of a similar nature, as well as propaganda of persons guilty of crimes against peace and humanity, are weakly implemented. Political and intellectual elite members are also involved in the manipulation of historical facts and formation of a positive image of Hitler's supporters. In addition, relations between ethnic groups in the country remain difficult. Difficulties are traditional with secured rights of the Hungarian and Gypsy minorities and Carpathian Ruthenians. Along with this, the trend towards inflating Russophobic sentiments and pumping in an unfriendly atmosphere around Russia in the Romanian political discourse has been clearly manifested during the reporting period.

North Macedonia

After the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation started a special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect civilians in Donbass (SMO) in February 2022, the government of North Macedonia, at the suggestion of Foreign Minister Bujar Osmani, recommended that the municipal authorities of Skopje and other cities refrain from participating in the flower laying ceremony organized by the Embassy of Russia to cherish an anniversary of the Great Victory.

A provocative inscription "1945 – liberators, 2022 – murderers" and streaks of red paint were left by unknown individuals in the early 9 May 2022 morning at the foot of the stela in downtown Skopje, dedicated to the memory of anti-Hitler coalition soldiers (installed on the Russian Embassy's initiative in cooperation with the Center municipality in 2020). Demands to investigate the incident sent twice by note from the Embassy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia (copied to the Minister of Internal Affairs), remained unanswered.

In September 2021, unexplained detention of the NTV channel film crew by law enforcement officers occurred in the city of Kumanovo. The journalists were illegally withheld and interrogated for five hours with no specific charges being brought against. At the same time, Russian Embassy employees were not allowed to see the detained media workers. They were released only after the Russian Ambassador had appealed to the Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior of North Macedonia.

The cult of loyalty to the West, implanted in the country, became especially evident after the SMO started. On 4 April 2022, the Ministry of the Interior, referring to the current law, warned citizens about the possible criminal prosecution for "denial of war crimes in Ukraine." By the way, such a definition may include, among other things, denials of fake news distributed by Western and Ukrainian media aimed at discrediting Russia and its Armed Forces. At the

same time, no cases of persecution of Russian citizens under such pretexts have been recorded in North Macedonia so far.

Noteworthy is the activity of the Ukrainian diaspora organization Lesya Ukrainka Society of Ukrainians in the Republic of North Macedonia (headed by A.Urbanovich). Her Facebook page systematically posts materials and comments promoting hostility and violence against Russians. During the 12 June 2022 action in front of the Russian Embassy, members of the society broadcast through loudspeakers a Ukrainian remake of the Italian partisan song "Bella ciao" which glorifies the murder of Russians.

Despite the above warning by the Ministry of the Interior, encouragement of violence and discrimination based on nationality, religion or race is a criminal offense under article 407 of the local Criminal Code, in connection with which law enforcement authorities monitor comments on social networks related to the events in Ukraine, and intend to bring violators to justice – the North Macedonian police turn a blind eye to the nationalist devilments of Ukrainians.

The general position of the country's leadership to unconditionally support the Kiev regime adds to that. Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia Bujar Osmani was repeatedly seen using the Ukrainian nationalist greeting "Glory to Ukraine". Country's leading news agencies disregard information about the criminal acts committed by the Armed Forces of Ukraine, national battalions and Ukrainian neo-Nazi groups (for example, 2 May 2022 was completely ignored as a newsworthy anniversary of the 2014 tragedy in Odessa).

Although North Macedonia has been a full member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance since 2021, and in January 2022 supported the German-Israeli UN General Assembly resolution on the inadmissibility of denying the genocide of Jews during World War II, Skopje together with EU member states annually abstains during the UNGA vote on the resolution

"Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to the escalation of modern forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" proposed by Russia and other co-sponsors (most recently – 16 December 2021).

Despite the rejection of the ideas of Nazism, neo-Nazism and hate ideology publicly declared by the authorities, there are no articles in the Criminal Code of North Macedonia punishing the glorification of Nazism. A bill criminalizing this act was prepared by the Jewish community back in 2018, but is still under consideration by government agencies.

Differing evaluation and estimation of the events and results of World War II by the largest national communities of North Macedonia – Macedonians (58.4%) and Albanians (24.3%) – is a characteristic manifestation of the contradictions that remain between them.

The Macedonian environment is dominated by adherence to anti-fascist traditions, veneration of the memory of fallen partisans and an objective view of the Nazi crimes. It is recognized that the Anti-fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM), formed during the war years, laid the foundations of modern statehood (which is set forth in the preamble of the country's Constitution).

The Albanians, in turn, tend to justify their own massive collaborationism with the Italian and German occupiers as "situational cooperation" within the framework of the "national liberation struggle" against the Slavic encirclement for the unification of the 'ancestral Albanian lands'. Thus, they regard a Balkan protectorate, and later the Albanian Kingdom (1939-1944), a puppet state which included the most part of the modern Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija, west Macedonia and southern regions of Montenegro, created by the Axis countries, as the "Greater Albania" project made reality, which allegedly fully justifies their complicity with the aggressor.

Guided by this logic, the majority of North Macedonian Albanians positively evaluate the activities of the Balli Kombetar (National Front) anti-communist nationalist movement (it was founded in 1942 in Albania and cooperated with the fascist Italy and Nazi Germany), as well as the 21st Skanderbeg SS division and Vulnetari collaborationist military units composed mainly of Kosovo Albanians.

Xhemail Hasani (Xhem Hasa Gostivari) and Aqif Krosi Recani, who served the Italians and Germans, and led armed raids against partisans in Gostivar, Debar, Kicevo, Tetovo and other areas are the most prominent Macedonian Albanian representatives of Balli Kombetar and Vulnetari. For their contribution to the "defence of national interests", they are revered among North Macedonia Albanians to this day. Thus, a Xhemail Hasani monument was unveiled in his native village of Simnica in 2006, and Aqif Krosi Rechani monument - in Gostivar in 2015. Both events were supported by the then Mayor of Gostivar N. Beyta, a leader of the Democratic Union for Integration, the largest party of Macedonian Albanians.

At present, followers of the Balli Kombetar ideology in North Macedonia include the radical fan group Ballistet supporting the Shkendija football club (Tetovo) and promoting the "Greater Albania"-style nationalism.

Repeated appeals by representatives of the Macedonian diaspora to the authorities of Western countries to condemn the perpetuated memory of collaborators in North Macedonia and facilitate the aforementioned monuments taken down, remain without due attention.

Samuel Sadikario, President of the Holocaust Fund of Macedonian Jews, repeatedly pointed out to the trouble qualifying such tendencies as the glorification of Nazism or its supporters in the Albanian community. According to him, the episodes of collaboration with the Nazis are glossed over by Albanian historiographers, who highlight the "national liberation aspect" in their activities. One of the main Albanian researchers of this subject, director of the

Institute for Cultural and Spiritual Heritage of Albanians (Skopje) Dr. Skender Asani, holds similar views.

Public concern is caused by a gradual revision of the approach to teaching the history of World War II in schools, including the downplayed USSR role in the liberation of Europe from fascism. With the signing of the Treaty on Friendship, Good Neighborliness and Cooperation with Bulgaria (2017) and the Prespa Agreement with Greece (2018), the educational literature used in North Macedonia is at risk of being reworked to meet the wishes of neighboring countries. The bilateral historical commissions established under the pressure from Sofia and Athens are used to erase the facts of Bulgarians' and Greeks' collaborationism during World War II from textbooks, primarily the occupation of the greater part of modern North Macedonia's territory by Bulgaria. In order to please Sofia who is blocking Skopje's rapprochement with the European Union, the Zoran Zaev government (2017-2022) authorized the removal of references to the "Bulgarian fascist occupation" from dozens of local monuments to the heroes and victims of the war. In his public speeches Mr. Zaev repeatedly called for this wording to be replaced for the neutral term "administration" that suits the Bulgarians.

The club of the I.Mikhailov Cultural Center, opened at the initiative of local Bulgarians in the city of Bitola on 16 April 2022, caused a major scandal. The public outrage was caused by naming the object after a figure who enjoys an unequivocal reputation as an accomplice of the Nazis in North Macedonia and who denied the existence of the Macedonian nation – while a representative Bulgarian government delegation led by the then Prime Minister Kiril Petkov attended the event⁶⁵⁸.

In May 2022, the Left Forces opposition party filed a lawsuit against L.Gergievsky, chairman of the I.Mikhailov Cultural Center, accusing him of inciting ethnic hatred by posting numerous online publications that, according

⁶⁵⁸ <https://rossaprimavera.ru/news/9274b2ff>.

to the party, are offensive to Macedonians. On 4 June 2022, during a visit to Skopje by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria Teodora Genchovska, the entrance door of the club building was set on fire in protest by Mr. Alabakovski, the famous North Macedonian singer, which gave the Bulgarian leaders a reason to state the ongoing vexations of compatriots in the neighboring country.

A trend common to European countries is becoming characteristic of North Macedonia: an increasing interest in the ideas of the right-wing extremist "subculture" among young people. This is most noticeable among sports fans. As a rule, they are quite mobile, highly active and have a pronounced propensity for violence.

An incident involving the Albanian Shverceri group is illustrative. In November 2019, during its 30th anniversary celebration, members of this group trashed the Macedonian National Theatre, causing noticeable material damage to the building⁶⁵⁹.

At the same time, radical manifestations are also characteristic of Macedonian supporters. In June 2019, members of the Komiti group, while celebrating the victory of the Vardar handball club at a European tournament, chanted: "Death to the cursed Shqiptars"⁶⁶⁰, "A good Shqiptar is a dead Shqiptar"⁶⁶¹.

In July 2018, a Komiti activist was murdered. According to human rights organizations, the crime was directly linked to animosity between fan communities. Its coverage on social media was accompanied by a surge of nationalist rhetoric⁶⁶².

The issue of neo-Nazism manifestations among the new generation is being discussed by the Union of Fighters of the 1941-1945 Macedonian National Liberation War and its successors, the North Macedonia's main

⁶⁵⁹ https://polpred.com/?ns=1&ns_id=3793495.

⁶⁶⁰ Shqiptars is a pejorative name for Albanians.

⁶⁶¹ https://polpred.com/?ns=1&ns_id=3793495.

⁶⁶² Ibid.

veterans' organization. Its representatives emphasize the topicality of this issue, pointing out the need to address and prevent it within the current public youth policy.

Ethnic conflicts remain a wide-spread phenomenon in North Macedonia. They are mostly recorded by law enforcement agencies as domestic crimes. Human rights and international organizations, such as the local Helsinki Committee office and OSCE Mission to Skopje, have repeatedly pointed out to this fact in their reports, but the trend is still there despite amendments to the Criminal Code of North Macedonia penalizing hate crimes as a separate offence.

Human rights organizations record each month up to several dozen incidents of ethnic, racial, religious and other forms of hate speech. Thus, according to the Helsinki Committee, of 104 hate crimes registered in the country in 2020, the majority (76) were of an interethnic nature. It is noted that they involved mostly young people.

According to statistics from the govornaomraza.mk portal aggregating complaints about the use of "hate speech" in cyberspace, 1749 such cases have been recorded since 2013, of which 875 are based on nationality, 66 on the basis of skin color, 46 on the basis of religious denomination. In addition, hostility towards representatives of foreign states or international organizations was noted 38 times.

As evident from the 5th report submitted to the AC FCNM by North Macedonia in June 2020, the country's Audiovisual Media Services Agency repeatedly documented discrimination and ethnic hate speech in programs broadcast on Sitel TV in December 2016 (in relation to Albanians), as well as on Alfa TV in May 2017 (in relation to Roma), and in January 2018 (in relation to Albanians)⁶⁶³.

⁶⁶³ <https://rm.coe.int/5th-sr-north-macedonia-en/16809edd7c>.

In 2019, the Hate Speech online platform registered 214 reports of hate speech (in comparison, in 2018 there were only 84 such cases)⁶⁶⁴.

The situation worsened with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic: in March – May 2020, amid harsh restrictions imposed by the authorities which further aggravated psychological climate in the society such manifestations began to number in hundreds. Hate speech was mostly used on the grounds of rejection of other people's ethnicity (about half of all cases), political convictions and social status. There were also expressions of hostility towards North Macedonia citizens who had caught the coronavirus infection: in an attempt to stigmatize them as "a danger to society", individuals began to post their personal data in public domain.

Inter-confessional relations also remain tense. In the living environment, this is manifested, for example, in the rejection of the appearance of other religions' representatives. For example, in September 2018 there was an incident at a catering facility in Skopje when staff refused to serve a woman wearing a traditional Muslim headdress (hijab). Following an investigation into the incident, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination confirmed discrimination on the basis of religious affiliation. A similar case was recorded in March 2019 in Prilep in relation to Roma persons.

The latter also constitute the most vulnerable part of the population in North Macedonia in general. According to the 2002 census, the Gypsies (Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians) numbered 53.9 thousand people, or 2.7% of the population of North Macedonia, being the third largest national minority after Albanians and Turks.

On 30 March 2022, the results of another census were announced in the country, according to which, out of all 2,097,319, respondents 54.21% called themselves Macedonians, 29.5% – Albanians, and only 2.36% of Macedonian

⁶⁶⁴ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2022.
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

citizens were Roma⁶⁶⁵. However, speaking on Channel 77 on 2 April 2022, chairman of the Macedonian Roma Party S.Ibraimovsky, called these results falsified, saying that the census was carried out solely in the interests of Albanians, whose number was artificially inflated⁶⁶⁶.

Many of the Roma still lack identity documents (about 700 persons) and ownership certificates for the premises they occupy, lack access to educational and health services and the employment market, and live in the poorest "ghettoized" areas. In addition, their places of residence are largely excluded from urban planning and social housing is distributed to them on a leftover basis⁶⁶⁷.

The problematic situation of the Roma community in North Macedonia has been highlighted by UN human rights treaty bodies, in particular the Human Rights Committee (HRC)⁶⁶⁸, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)⁶⁶⁹, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)⁶⁷⁰, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)⁶⁷¹, as well as Committee against Torture (CAT)⁶⁷². Among the

⁶⁶⁵ Information agency "Red Spring", 3 April 2022. <https://rossaprimavera.ru/news/7f25e5da>.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁷ Working paper of the Commission. 2019 Report on North Macedonia. Annex to the 2019 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: EU Enlargement Policy. <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-north-macedonia-report.pdf>.

⁶⁶⁸ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 3th periodic report of Macedonia. July 2015.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fMKD%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

⁶⁶⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 8th to 10th periodic reports of Macedonia. August 2015

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fMKD%2fCO%2f8-10&Lang=ru.

⁶⁷⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the combined 2nd to 4th periodic reports of Macedonia. June 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fMKD%2fCO%2f2-4&Lang=ru.

⁶⁷¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 6th periodic report of Macedonia. November 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fMKD%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru.

⁶⁷² Fourth periodic report submitted by North Macedonia under article 19 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. October 2020. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3886567>.

problems they noted were low levels of participation in public life; cases of abuse and ill-treatment by law enforcement officials; poverty and unemployment; segregation in education; low life expectancy, etc.

A clear illustration of the situation of the Roma community in North Macedonia is the incident that occurred in February 2020 in Skopje: a Roma man was ill-treated on public transportation by conductors who, despite his ticket, forced him off the bus.

Nevertheless, the official authorities are taking certain measures to provide the widest possible integration of the Roma minority into the country's social and political life.

FRA's 2020 and 2022 Reports note several significant anti-discrimination provisions in the Macedonian legislation.

According to the information contained in the 2022 Report, in late 2021, North Macedonia, being a candidate for accession to the European Union, submitted to the European Commission, along with 11 EU Member States, a revised national Roma strategy⁶⁷³ as part of implementation of the EU Roma strategy for the period of up to 2023 (launched by the European Commission in October 2020⁶⁷⁴).

According to the 2022 FRA Report, the country adopted a new law on primary education, which explicitly prohibits discrimination, encourages interethnic integration and envisages educational mediators for Roma children from socially vulnerable families. A similar mediation procedure for Roma exists in the field of healthcare, facilitating access to medical institutions and services. In addition, FRA reports about a draft law dedicated to the issues of non-citizenship and a lack of official documents. This act, if adopted, would allow persons without identity documents or birth registries to register as

⁶⁷³ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf.

⁶⁷⁴ European Commission (2020), A union of equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation, COM(2020)620 final, Brussels, 7 2020.

citizens. The plan of action on active programs, employment measures and labor market services includes measures to encourage employers to hire Roma, support Roma entrepreneurship and improve their skills⁶⁷⁵.

⁶⁷⁵ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2022
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-report-2020_en.pdf.

Slovakia

The situation in the field of combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other similar practices in Slovakia has not changed significantly during 2021-2022.

Official Bratislava strongly opposes a number of radical organizations that seek to whitewash the activities of the leaders of the pro-Nazi Slovak state of World War II, and pursues a policy aimed at suppressing their activities. The official authorities are also seeking to improve the hostile attitudes of Slovak society toward ethnic minorities, especially Roma, but this work is far from over.

The attitude of Slovak society to the memory of the Deed of the Red Army, which liberated the countries of Europe from Nazism, was clearly manifested in the perception of the dismantling by the authorities of the Prague-6 district of the monument to the USSR Marshal, twice Hero of the Soviet Union Ivan Konev, who commanded the 1st Ukrainian Front from May 1944 until the end of the war. This blasphemous action has a strong resonance in the Slovak media. In an interview with Sputnik news agency, the former Prime Minister of Slovakia, Jan Carnogursky, supported the placement of the dismantled monument in Russia, meanwhile he noticed that the public organization he headed back in December 2019 proposed to purchase a monument from the Prague authorities so that it could be erected in Slovakia.

After the demolition of the monument to I.Konev, the Charter 2015 and Slavitsa public organizations in Slovakia launched a flash mob called "Slovak Challenge – I am grateful" with an appeal to the public to publish on the Internet their photographs taken until 9 May at the burial sites of the Red Army soldiers or memorials devoted to them in all liberated countries, including Slovakia and the Czech Republic, in order to recall the Deed of the Red Army. The dismantled Prague monument to Ivan Konev was chosen as the emblem of the project. In addition to personal user accounts, it was proposed to use other

social networks and the websites of organizations-authors of the project as sites for placement.

Against this background, noteworthy is the desire of a number of officials to abandon in their speeches the reference to the decisive role of the Red Army in liberating the country from the Nazi occupiers, which is already becoming a trend. There are also attempts to distort history. They are mainly carried out through the national media controlled by Western media conglomerates.

An amendment to the Act on the Immorality and Illegality of the Communist System, which came into force on 1 December 2020, banned the placement on monuments and memorials of texts, images and symbols that glorify, promote and defend a regime based on Communist ideology or its representatives (does not apply to Soviet symbols on existing monuments, graves and memorials).

On May 8, 2022, President Čaputová signed a decree awarding posthumously the Order of Ludovít Štúr of the First Class to members of the Slovak anti-communist organization White Legion of the late 1940s and early 1950s A. Puchík, A. Tunega and E. Tesar (executed by the Czechoslovak authorities in 1951). The award was given for "outstanding services in the development of democracy, human rights and freedoms. However, according to historians, these citizens were active members of youth movements of the clerical-fascist regime of Josef Tiso during World War II and collaborated with the Gestapo during the German occupation. After the victory and up to the time of their arrest, they collected secret information for transfer abroad. Public pressure forced the president to admit that awarding the three "legionnaires" one of the highest state decorations was a mistake, and to promise that this would not happen again.

The Russophobic campaign unleashed by the West after Russia launched a special military operation to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine has affected Slovakia.

There have been seven cases of desecration of Soviet war memorials in the country since 24 February 2022. A monument to the Red Army on Liberators' Square in Košice (on the night of February 26 to 27), a monument at the Central Military Memorial Slavin in Bratislava (on the night of March 2 to 3), the Red Army memorial in Svidník (March 8-9), the obelisk at the Red Army Memorial "Maly Slavin" in Bratislava (March 14-15) and the Red Army warrior tomb and Soviet soldier statue in Nová Bošáca – Grúň, Trenčín region (March 23-24) were sprayed with paint in the colours of the Ukrainian flag. On the night of April 3 to 4, the Red Army monument in Košice was desecrated again. On 14 May, a modified "wolfsangel" (a hook of wolf), which is the emblem of the Ukrainian neo-Nazi "Azov" regiment, was painted on the monument to the liberators in Piešťany.

Directly on Victory Day, there were provocative events organized with the participation of Ukrainian nationalists. The NPO Peace to Ukraine, with the consent of the Bratislava authorities, held an action entitled "Victims of Racism Day", in which the names of Ukrainian citizens who had died in the military actions were read out on Slavin, and an exhibition of photographs depicting Ukrainian cities allegedly destroyed by the Russian army took place throughout the day. The access to the traditional wreath-laying place, the gates of the monument, was deliberately blocked for the Russian embassy employees by anti-Russian activists early in the morning. In this context, flowers were laid at the memorial plates on which the names of the Red Army soldiers who died during the liberation of Slovakia are carved. There was no opportunity to commemorate the liberators either for ordinary Slovak citizens, some of whom were embroiled in a conflict with representatives of the mentioned NPO.

Slovak Defence Minister J.Nad' accused⁶⁷⁶ the Slovak Union of Anti-Fascist Fighters of not condemning after several months "Russia's military aggression in Ukraine" and of not expelling from its ranks a veteran who publicly supported Russian President Vladimir Putin and the goals of a special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine in a Slovak magazine. The politician called for the organization to be stripped of state budget subsidies.

In the Slovak Republic, the law on public tenders was amended to allow the prohibition of participation by companies from unfriendly countries. This concerns, first of all, tenders for procurement in such strategic areas as energy and defence industry. Its authors are honest about the fact that these amendments target, first of all, Russian enterprises (however, companies registered by citizens of such "unfriendly" countries in Slovakia do not fall under the restrictions).

Before Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, human rights issues in Slovakia were discussed mainly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the situation of the Roma national minority (according to the Slovak Statistical Office it is the second largest in the country – over 105 thousand people or 2% of the population, but according to the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic and the European Union Council it actually numbers around 440 thousand people or about 9% of the population), which remains the most acute topic for Slovakia.

Human rights activists blamed the Government of the Slovak Republic for taking insufficient measures against discrimination of people in socially important professions, attacked by some citizens during COVID-19 pandemic, ignoring needs of medical workers, who work in unfavorable conditions,

⁶⁷⁶ Comment by J.Nad' for the Internet portal aktuality.sk.
<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/ZKdzOEM/co-ie-a-co-nie-ie-ulohou-dncsnvch-protifasistickych-boiovnikov-nazor/?ga=2.76148949.1357382788.1655705360-811075676.1607517922>

without sufficient protection against coronavirus infection, for low, inadequate salary for their work.

The Roma minority is the hardest hit by the pandemic.

According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) estimates, under the pretext of countering the spread of COVID-19, the discrimination of the Roma population intensified and their persecution continued in Slovakia and a number of other European countries⁶⁷⁷.

This is the category that is most discriminated against in the labor market, education, health care and housing, for which Bratislava has been criticized for many years by, among others, the UN Economic and Social Council, the European Commission, FRA, the NGO Amnesty International and others. Concern about the situation of Roma in Slovakia and the persistence of structural discrimination against them has also been expressed by experts of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, established under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination⁶⁷⁸.

During the pandemic, Roma in particular faced violence, discriminatory identity checks, and fines. Dozens of informal Roma enclaves ("osady") were subjected to forced quarantine without legal grounds and under strict police control, and police raids were conducted.

A vivid example of the excessive use of force and cruel treatment by Slovak law enforcement officials against minors was the news widely reported in the national media about the alleged beating by police officers of five Roma minors, who violated the quarantine regime, in the settlement of Krompachy on 27 April 2020.

⁶⁷⁷ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2020

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-report-2020_en.pdf

⁶⁷⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 11th and 12th periodic reports of Slovakia. November 2017.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fSVK%2fCO%2f11-12&Lang=ru

This situation became the focus of the Union of Gypsies in Slovakia, as well as the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities and the Slovak National Center for Human Rights that called on the Ministry of Internal Affairs and personally the head of police to conduct a thorough investigation of the case. The president of Slovakia Zuzana Čaputová, who had regularly advocated for the rights of minorities and addressed the issue on numerous occasions during her electoral campaign, and the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, Minorities and Gender Equality called for "consistent respect of human rights and freedoms during state of emergency in the country".

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance within the Council of Europe stated that although the investigations into police brutality were not thorough enough yet, Slovakia had managed to put an end to large-scale police operations in Roma neighborhoods. It was also noted that in the country the use of body-cams was promoted as a means of preventing violent acts by the police⁶⁷⁹.

In 2020, FRA expressed its concern regarding the insufficient protection of Roma from the coronavirus pandemic. In particular, due to quarantine and self-isolation regimes imposed by the Slovak government, a large number of members of the Roma minority have lost their sources of income and their underage children (about 70 per cent) have lost access to education, as they could not study remotely due to the absence of the Internet. FRA's materials on the impact of the pandemic on human rights cited, in particular, a research by the Institute of Political Science in the sphere of education in Slovakia, according to which around 50,000 children, mostly from poorer neighborhoods,

⁶⁷⁹ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Slovakia (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted 1 October 2020, published 8 December 2020.
<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-6th-report-on-the-slovak-republic/1680a0a088>

had no access to distance learning during the first wave of the pandemic⁶⁸⁰. Many of these areas are populated by Roma.

There was discrimination in access to vaccination for Roma (by August 2021 only 7% of the 'osad' population had been vaccinated, whereas the national vaccination rate at the time was 43%).

The most acute criticism is still related to the segregation of Roma children in educational institutions. Slovakia is condemned for the excessively high percentage of Roma minors enrolled in separate classes or special remedial schools. According to statistics, Roma children make up almost 90% of their students. Despite amendments to the Law on Upbringing and Education, in force since 2015, which enshrine legal mechanisms to protect children from a socially disadvantaged environment, the situation is virtually unchanged. Most cases of segregation of Roma minors are found in regions of eastern Slovakia (Stará Lubovňa, Medzilaborce, Krompachy, etc.). According to a report by the Slovak Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education, Roma pupils are seven to eight times more likely to repeat a school year – and eight times less likely to enter university.

According to a 2022 report by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights⁶⁸¹, cases of violations of the rights of Roma children are being prosecuted in Slovakia.

In 2019, the Slovak Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport organized 60 two-day seminars for 1,211 teachers and school staff on desegregation. They led to the development of 117 desegregation plans for schools.

⁶⁸⁰ Coronavirus pandemic in the EU - impact on basic human rights: social rights. 1 September – 31 October 2020. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. 27 November 2020.
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-coronavirus-pandemic-eu-bulletin-november_en.pdf

⁶⁸¹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2022
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

Starting from September 2021, Slovakia introduces compulsory preschool education for 5-year-old children. This initiative aims to increase the preschool participation of Roma⁶⁸².

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), in addition to the above-mentioned problems faced by the Roma population in Slovakia, pointed out that the Roma, especially those living in segregated settlements, did not have permanent access to clean drinking water⁶⁸³.

In addition, it is Roma who most frequently become victims of crimes related to human trafficking (by September 30, 2021, 36 such cases had been identified in the republic). One third of them are girls from 12 to 17 years old, who are most often sold into sexual slavery (the target countries are Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, Czech Republic, Austria) or become victims of forced marriage "in accordance with Roma traditions". Illegal adoption of a child as well as attempted organ removal were noted for the first time as part of human trafficking in 2021. In order to comprehensively analyze and address the problem, the National Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings 2019-2023 is in place. According to the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, the National Program to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (2019-2023) currently includes 30 persons (45 in 2017), mostly Roma from the Eastern Slovakia Region.

The Human Rights Ombudsman and the non-governmental organization Civil and Human Rights Counselling Centre raised the issue of the illegal sterilization of thousands of Roma women and demanded that they be paid appropriate compensation. The issue had been raised at a meeting of

⁶⁸² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2020

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-report-2020_en.pdf

Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Slovakia (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted on 1 October 2020, published on 8 December 2020.

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-6th-report-on-the-slovak-republic/1680a0a088>

⁶⁸³ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 3rd periodic report. October 2019

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fSVK%2fC.O%2f3&Lang=ru

representatives of the Roma minority with deputies of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. The outcome was a formal apology by the government in November 2021⁶⁸⁴, however, no compensation mechanism was implemented.

Another serious problem is the displacement of Roma communities to the outskirts of settlements and their isolation, which results in the formation of mono-ethnic enclaves that are virtually uncontrolled by law enforcement agencies and are often breeding grounds for crime.

In 2020 the Slovak Academy of Sciences published a representative survey to find out the attitudes of the majority population towards Roma. The survey showed that a large proportion of respondents (80 percent) tended to agree that Roma were undeservedly receiving social benefits in the country. It also revealed that almost two thirds of the respondents adhered to openly negative stereotypes about Roma and only half of the respondents tended to agree with statements emphasizing the value of Romani culture⁶⁸⁵.

The survey also showed that respondents' assessments were in solidarity with hostile statements by politicians who spoke negatively about the Romani population, in particular about the lack of job skills of most Roma as well as about the high crime rate in Romani communities.

Widespread discrimination against Roma continues in employment, housing, credit, education, health care, as well as in restaurants, hairdressers, religious organizations and public transport⁶⁸⁶.

National and local authorities give priority to solving Roma issues. A new comprehensive Strategy for Equality and Integration of Roma until 2030 was adopted in April 2021 (the previous one was in force from 2012 to 2020), the Government has an Ombudsman for Roma and numerous programs aimed at engaging and integrating members of this ethnic minority in society have been

⁶⁸⁴ Slovakia, Government of the Slovak Republic (Vláda SR) (2021), 'Excuse the Government of the Slovak Republic for sterilizing women in violation of the law' ('Ospravedlnenie vlády Slovenskej republiky za sterilizácie žien v rozpore so zákonom'), adopted on 24 November 2021.

⁶⁸⁵ civic-nation.org/slovakia/society/treatment_of_minorities/

⁶⁸⁶ civic-nation.org/slovakia/society/treatment_of_minorities/

implemented. One of the most striking examples is the project for the "Horehronie" Multifunctional Centre in the village of Valaská-Piesok (Central Slovakia Region), where opportunities have been created for education, training, employment, participation in sports and cultural events for the Roma people and other socially disadvantaged groups. In settlements with large Roma communities, special "Roma civil patrols" have been introduced to monitor public order together with the local police. Special health centers have been established in Roma enclaves. Significant funds are allocated each year for projects in that area, including from euro funds.

However, no fundamental change in this area has been achieved so far. According to the monitoring of the Roma Inclusion Strategy conducted by the Slovak MIA, in 2019 the former government of Peter Pellegrini put into practice only 26 measures of the 121 contained in the document to support this population group.

Since the end of February 2022, the human rights situation in the Slovak Republic has been viewed mainly in the context of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine. Severe censorship has been announced in the country. The First Channel of Russian television has been turned off. Any criticism of the authorities or support for Russia is met with persecution.

Migration policy, for the rigidity of which Slovakia has traditionally been criticized, has been adjusted.

In May 2021, the Centre for Ethnicity and Culture Studies published a study showing a trend towards a deterioration in public attitudes towards migrants in the Slovak Republic. According to the study, the majority of respondents believe that foreigners contribute to increased crime (65%) and decreased security (62%), many of those interviewed also have negative attitudes towards "refugees from Syria" (68%) and "Muslim families" (64%).

The document states that this situation is the result of the spread of hatred towards minorities⁶⁸⁷.

In 2021 Bratislava accepted only 29 out of 370 applications for asylum, declared itself ready to receive only 10 citizens evacuated from Afghanistan, and joined the demands to protect European borders in connection with the situation on the Polish-Belarusian border.

However, between the end of February and the beginning of June 2022, some 79,000 Ukrainian citizens were granted temporary asylum on Slovak territory, according to published figures. The state has allocated around 5 million euros for their accommodation (in the form of payments to local authorities and individuals who have agreed to host refugees). Problems of their rights are not widely reported here, but reports on the difficulties Ukrainians face, e.g. in finding employment, have already started to emerge.

According to a Pew Research⁶⁸⁸ poll published in October 2019, 77% of Slovaks dislike Muslims, 30% dislike Jews, and 76% have a negative attitude towards Roma. Characteristically, the level of dislike for one group or another is higher in older age groups.

Police violence against detainees and intolerance, especially towards Roma and Muslims, are periodically raised in the media. In 2021, following proceedings before the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), the government of the Slovak Republic was forced to apologize to six Roma citizens "for ill-treatment during the police operation in Moldava nad Bodvou, but the required compensation was not paid.

In the international arena, Slovakia adheres to the consolidated position of EU countries, traditionally abstaining from voting on the draft UNGA resolution titled "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fueling contemporary forms of racism, racial

⁶⁸⁷ civic-nation.org/slovakia/society/treatment_of_minorities/

⁶⁸⁸ <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/10/14/minority-groups/>

discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" prepared by Russia and other co-sponsors (most recently on 16 December 2021).

According to estimates of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Slovakia, extremist and nationalist groups number about 2 thousand people, are highly organized and effectively use legal forms of work – through the establishment of public associations ("Slovak Public", "New Free Slovakia", "Slovak Society for the Preservation of Traditions" and "Slovak Youth Union", etc.). Their actions are sporadic, with an emphasis on social media as a propaganda tool. Local law enforcement agencies actively use modern information technology to automatically analyze Internet traffic with a view to detecting and suppressing manifestations of religious intolerance and calls to extremism.

The register of political parties and movements of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Slovakia⁶⁸⁹ officially registered only one party that professes extremist ideas with elements of racial hatred and, in particular, actively uses anti-Roma rhetoric – the People's Party Our Slovakia (LSNS)⁶⁹⁰. The orientation towards the creation of a national and socially oriented state (national socialism), which is modeled on the Pro-fascist Slovak Republic of the Second World War is among its basic principles. Its leaders, including President Jozef Tiso, who was sentenced to death for crimes committed, are revered in the LSNS as outstanding political figures who made an "invaluable contribution" to the formation of national statehood. The party keeps in touch with far-right associations of the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, Spain, Italy, Serbia and Croatia.

Law enforcement authorities repeatedly detained the leader of the LSNS, Marian Kotleba, for chanting nationalist slogans during mass events, but in no case the charges have been brought against him. In 2014, he was elected for one term as the Chairman of the Banská Bystrica region. During the 2016 elections

⁶⁸⁹ www.ives.minv.sk/rez/registre/pages/list.aspx?type=ps

⁶⁹⁰ It was also called "Kotlebians" after the leader M. Kotleba.

campaign, the LSNS passed to the National Council (Parliament) of the SR, having gained about 9 percent of the vote. In the spring of 2018, in response to the appeal of the Prosecutor General of the SR, Jaromir Ciznar, the Supreme Court of the SR recognized the activities of the LSNS as not being contrary to the law. In the presidential election on 16 March 2019, the leader of the LSNS, Marian Kotleba, took the 4th place (10.4 percent of the vote). Following the parliamentary elections in February 2020, the party received 7.97 percent of the vote, thus securing 17 parliamentary mandates (out of 150) and once again forming a full parliamentary faction in the National Council.

In public and political circles in Slovakia, the LSNS is explicitly called Nazi and regarded as disreputable. Its popularity has fallen to 5 percent in the year since the elections, it is experiencing a serious split, and Marian Kotleba was sentenced to 4 years and 4 months in prison by the Special Criminal Court in October 2020 for the propaganda of extremist ideas. This decision was appealed to a higher authority. According to some Slovak experts, the chances of the LSNS leader escaping justice are very low.

The legal basis for combating neo-Nazism, racism and racial discrimination is the Criminal Code of the SR. The list of extremist crimes is prescribed in Article 140A. It includes, in particular: acts related to the creation, support and promotion of movements the actions of which are directed against fundamental rights and freedoms; production, storage and distribution of extremist materials; denial of the Holocaust, criminal political regimes and crimes against human beings; oppression of certain nationalities and races; incitement to national and racial hatred; apartheid and discrimination against certain groups of citizens (Articles 421 – 424). In addition, the criminal's hatred towards the victim, which is explained by the actual or alleged belonging of the victim to a specific race, nation, national or ethnic group, in accordance with the definition of special motives (Article 140), is considered as an aggravating circumstance requiring the application of more severe punishment. The

criticism of the European Commission for Combating Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) under the Council of Europe has been aimed at the lack of criteria for citizenship and language in Slovak criminal law among the characteristics of potential victims of racist behavior and racial discrimination⁶⁹¹.

In addition, the state has the Anti-Discrimination Act. However, according to ECRI, this act is not properly applied, since the National Human Rights Centre of Slovakia, which is responsible for monitoring its implementation, does not have the necessary independence⁶⁹².

According to the statistics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Slovak Republic, the number of crimes committed in the country under the article "Racially Motivated Extremism" in 2020 was 115 (85 in 2019 and 159 in 2018). The average crime detection rate of such criminal cases is about 35-37 percent⁶⁹³.

The Slovak authorities are taking practical steps to counter the growth of radical sentiments in society. In particular, in 2017, the investigation into criminal cases with signs of extremism was entrusted to the office of the Special Prosecutor's office, whose staff was significantly expanded by the government's decision, as well as to the Special Criminal Court. The Ministry of Justice of the SR has established an expert Council for Social and Human Sciences dealing with extremism. Its absence was an obstacle to a thorough detection of the relevant criminal offences. The new expert Council works in two thematic areas: political extremism and religious extremism⁶⁹⁴.

The activities of far-right associations are kept in the field of view of the Slovak Information Service and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the SR. Since 2012, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Slovakia has a Crime Prevention

⁶⁹¹ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Slovakia (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted 19 June 2014, published 16 September 2014 <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-slovakia/16808b5c17>

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ https://www.minv.sk/?statistika_kriminality_v_slovenskej_republike_za_rok_2020_xml

⁶⁹⁴ Slovakia's national report under the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review procedure. November 2018 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/332/50/PDF/G1833250.pdf?OpenElement>

Department, which has formed a so-called monitoring group for Internet resources in order to detect calls for extremist or terrorist activities. The law enforcement agency has signed a contract with Altamira Company to develop a special software product that can analyze content in automatic mode. This IT tool was later improved to recognize manifestations of religious intolerance and calls to extremism in the Internet space of States bordering Slovakia.

In 2017, a national counter-terrorism unit was established. It consists of four branches (Bratislava, West, Center and East) and supplements the center for extremism monitoring. Employees of these bodies also actively monitor extremist organizations throughout the Internet space.

In order to debunk myths and refute false information regarding minorities, the "Anti-Hate" website⁶⁹⁵ was created within the framework of the project of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Slovak Republic titled "Effective Monitoring, Investigation and Suppression of Violent Extremism in Cyberspace".

To counter the spread of the influence of the LSNS on the younger generation, specialized agencies are stepping up explanatory work among children and young people, including by expanding the program for teaching the history of World War II in secondary school. The state-supported NGO "Slovak Union of anti-Nazi fighters" is doing a lot of work in this area with the support of the National Ministry of Education.

Educational activities and programs aimed at preventing manifestations of anti-Semitism, racism and extremism, as well as the radicalization of society, are carried out by the Holocaust Museum in Sered established within the framework of the Slovak National Museum.

The issue of racial intolerance, especially among radical youth, is periodically raised in the Slovak media. This usually occurs in connection with the commission of hate crimes.

⁶⁹⁵ www.protinenavisti.sk

The issue of racism in Slovak society has been noted by international monitoring bodies. Thus, experts of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)⁶⁹⁶ and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)⁶⁹⁷ expressed concern about persistent and rising hate speech in the media and on the Internet, the use of racist political discourse among politicians against ethnic minorities, particularly Roma, Muslims and non-citizens. Court proceedings in cases of racial discrimination continue to be excessively lengthy.

It is noted that a great many hate crimes go unreported to the authorities, partly because victims do not trust the police⁶⁹⁸.

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights noted that a general atmosphere of hostility towards persons considered to be alien as opposed to the majority of the population contributed to the erosion of tolerance in society and led to violations of the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups⁶⁹⁹.

In its sixth report on the situation in the field of combatting intolerance and racial discrimination in Slovakia, published in December 2020, ECRI noted an escalation in hate speech against other groups, particularly Jews, Muslims, migrants, Roma and black persons. Traditional and electronic media outlets disseminate and amplify this hate speech by overrepresenting negative themes

⁶⁹⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 11th and 12th periodic reports of Slovakia. December 2017 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fSVK%2fCO%2f11-12&Lang=ru

⁶⁹⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 3rd and 5th periodic reports of Slovakia. June 2016 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fSVK%2fCO%2f3-5&Lang=ru

⁶⁹⁸ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Slovakia (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted 1 October 2020, published 8 December 2020 <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-6th-report-on-the-slovak-republic/1680a0a088>

⁶⁹⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on 3rd periodic report of Slovakia. October 2019 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fSVK%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

and showing inappropriate images. Very little hate content is removed from the Internet⁷⁰⁰.

⁷⁰⁰ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Slovakia (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted 1 October 2020, published 8 December 2020 <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-6th-report-on-the-slovak-republic/1680a0a088>

Slovenia

Manifestations of neo-Nazism in Slovenia are not systematic. Slovenian society reacts negatively to attempts to spread aggressive nationalist ideologies. There have been no instances of neo-Nazi marches or torchlight processions in the history of independent Slovenia. Cases of ideologically motivated attacks on persons of a different nationality, faith or belief are rare.

Meanwhile, there is still a split in society caused by the attitude to the results of World War II. The territory of modern Slovenia in 1941 was occupied by Nazi Germany, fascist Italy and Horthist Hungary. Some of the young people were forcibly mobilized by the occupiers, while others joined the partisans. Many hierarchs of the Catholic Church supported the invaders, seeing for themselves the main threat in the spread of communism. There are still certain forces in Slovenia that openly sympathize with the "domobranci" and "armed anti-Communist militia" – units formed by the German and Italian occupiers in the Slovenian territory during World War II.

Official authorities made no attempt to declare Slovenian collaborators as "participants in national liberation movements". However, their political followers are making every effort to whitewash the Nazi accomplices, to declare all those who died in battles with anti-fascist partisans as victims of revolutionary violence, and some of them as true fighters for the Catholic faith.

Veteran organizations enjoy great authority in Slovenia, including the largest of them – the Union of Veteran Associations in Support of the Values of the People's Liberation Struggle in Slovenia 1941 – 1945 (SOVNOB). The organization has more than 40 thousand members, including both veterans of anti-Nazi resistance (they now number about 6 thousand people), and representatives of the following generations, whose aim is to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of the partisan movement and to prevent the justification of the crimes of fascism and Nazism, as well as the spread of related ideology in today's world. SOVNOB, together with other specialized

public associations with military and memorial orientation, is a member of the Coordination Committee of Veteran and Patriotic Organizations of Slovenia, which plays a significant role in the socio-political life of the country.

No cases of prosecution of anti-Nazi veterans have been recorded. Attempts of the right-wing forces to ban the symbols of the Slovenian anti-fascist movement (and, indirectly, the USSR and the Red Army) in the 1990s and in 2005-2008 were unsuccessful.

By contrast, the rise of right-wing political forces to power in Slovenia is invariably accompanied by a certain increase in right-wing radicalism. For example, in 2012 – 2013 the right-wing government adopted a decision (later overturned) to ban the use of the red star as a symbol of the anti-fascist resistance of Slovenes during World War II at official ceremonies (these restrictions did not apply to Russian/Soviet monuments and events) and did not allow representatives of veteran organizations with partisan banners to attend Statehood Day celebrations on 25 June 2012. The centre-right government led by prime minister Janez Jansa that ruled from March 2020 to April 2022 openly declared the use of Slovenian partisan flag with a five-pointed star at the celebration of the 30th anniversary of Slovenian independence (celebrated on 25 June 2021) unacceptable, resulting in a boycott of the event by SOVNOB, several other veteran organizations with an anti-Nazi agenda, as well as some left-wing politicians.

In 2020-2021, the government of Janez Jansam, sticking to revisionist approaches to the history of World War II, officially organized wreath-layings to the monuments to the fighters of collaborationist Slovenian national army (officially existed from January to May 1945, one part of it was under Wehrmacht's command, while the other served under SS⁷⁰¹) in Zale, a memorial in Ljubljana. Many Slovenian veteran organizations were outraged about refusal of the head of the Slovenian government prime minister Janez Jansam to

⁷⁰¹ <https://www.dnevnik.si/1042976236>

participate on 21 November, 2021, in a wreath-laying ceremony to the fallen partisans fighting against the Nazi Germany held annually on the Day of Remembrance of the Dead in Slovenia.

The developments around Ukraine and the beginning of the special military operation on demilitarisation and denazification of Ukraine (SMO) in February 2022 served as a pretext to intensify the Russophobic policy of the former government including by exerting pressure on the local veteran organizations. So, in early March 2022, the Slovenian Defence Ministry sent to the Slovenian veteran organizations a circular letter recommending to deny invitations by official representatives or the citizens of the Russian Federation to participate in official memorial ceremonies, and notifying that representatives of the Slovenian Armed Forces would immediately leave in case of participation of Russia's representatives or the Russian citizens in such ceremonies.

Another example is a renewed activity of a national branch of the all-European movement Identity Generation uniting young people with far-right views. In 2018, this group promoted nationalist ideas, in particular, it denied the Holocaust, organized anti-immigration protests, etc.

The neo-Nazi groups in Slovenia are generally marginal. They are not officially associated with any influential political forces. Scattered radical associations, among which experts include followers of the European neo-Nazi organization "Blood and honor", as well as groups "Here – Slovenia", "Bounty Hunters", "Autonomous Nationalists of Slovenia" and others, have refused to run public actions in recent years. They use social networks (primarily Facebook) to promote their ideas and maintain contacts. Shielding themselves with pseudo-patriotic slogans, these organizations oppose migrants, Muslims, Roma, immigrants from the former republics of Yugoslavia, as well as their ideological opponents.

Some electronic and print media of the country publish materials glorifying collaborators as fighters against communist evil, and the topic of identification of communism with fascism and Nazism is raised as well. Since 2009, representatives of the country's right-wing forces have made unsuccessful attempts to pass through parliament a document "in support" of the European Parliament resolution on European conscience and totalitarianism⁷⁰². Slovenian European Parliament Deputies supported the resolution of the European Parliament on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe and appealed to the State Assembly (parliament) of Slovenia to accept its position as a guide to action.

At the same time, within the framework of the UN General Assembly, the Slovenian delegation, in line with the common position of the EU member states, traditionally abstains in the vote on the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance".

The pseudo-scientific historical work of a right-wing politician, the mayor of the municipality of Radenci Roman Leljak, who made a documentary in 2018 and published a book "The Myth of Jasenovac," is noteworthy. In his works, referring to alleged archival documents, he tried to expose "propagandistic manipulation" of the number of victims in the Croatian death camp Jasenovac, created in 1941 by the fascist Ustasa regime and the German occupation administration for the genocide of Serbs, Jews and Roma. The Slovenian expert community, media and civil society representatives strongly condemned Leljak's attempt to rehabilitate Nazism. Croatia perceived Leljak's actions as revanchism and mockery of the memory of the victims of genocide and banned him from entering the country.

⁷⁰² In 2009, the State Assembly of Slovenia "took note of the text of this document".

In 2021, the Slovene Journalists Association filed a complaint with the police against Norma Bršič, wife of right-wing politician Bernard Bršič and TV host of the political talk show "Faktor" on the Slovene TV3 channel, for publicly inciting hatred and intolerance. During the show, the host made racist remarks, including on Holocaust denial.

There are some cases of desecration of monuments to anti-Nazi partisans who fought against the Italian and German invaders during World War II in Slovenia. For example, in early September 2021 in Ljubljana, a monument to the 24 hostages – victims of shootings carried out by the Nazi occupiers on 13 October 1942 as a response to the murder of the political activist and collaborator Marko Natlačen was vandalized⁷⁰³. On the night of 3 July 2019, six different monuments commemorating the heroes and victims of the Yugoslav People's Liberation War during World War II were desecrated in different parts of the capital. This act of vandalism was condemned by the President of Slovenia Borut Pahor and representatives of the country's Ministry of Culture. In general, such acts are always followed by a negative public reaction and protests on the part of center-left forces⁷⁰⁴.

At the same time, no cases of desecration or destruction of monuments to Soviet soldiers who died on the territory of Slovenia during World War II have been recorded in the last decade. Local authorities maintain the memorials in good condition.

Nevertheless, in January 2021 in Ljubljana, unidentified hooligans damaged the Eternal Flame gas burner installed at the monument in the Žale memorial complex to the Sons of Russia and the Soviet Union who died in Slovenia during World War I and World War II. This incident was not

⁷⁰³ Oskrunili spomenik v središču Ljubljane. Delo. Wednesday, September 08, 2021

<https://www.delo.si/novice/slovenija/oskrunili-spomenik-v-srediscu-ljubljane/> ;

Vandalski pohod od spomenika do spomenika. Delo. September 8, 2021

<https://www.delo.si/novice/slovenija/vandalski-pohod-od-spomenika-do-spomenika/>

⁷⁰⁴ V Ljubljani oskrunili več spomenikov. MMC RTV SLO. Wednesday, July 03, 2019

<https://www.rtvsl.si/crna-kronika/v-ljubljani-oskrunili-vec-spomenikov/493550>

politically-based. The municipal authorities immediately took actions to completely restore our memorial.

Since 2016, under the auspices of the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Guardians of the Spoon project has been implemented to increase awareness of Nazi atrocities in Slovenian territory and prevent distortion of history. The project website provides information about Slovenians imprisoned in Nazi and Fascist concentration camps during World War II and contains their recollections.

International monitoring human rights mechanisms are concerned about acts of hatred. The Human Rights Committee stressed that despite the adoption by Slovenia of legislative acts prohibiting racially motivated discriminatory hate speech, racist and xenophobic language against persons belonging to minorities, as well as migrants, refugees and Roma was noticed in public statements of some politicians.

Hate speech, particularly against migrants, Muslims and Roma, on the Internet and online fora was also indicated. The project spletno-oko.si (Web Eye hotline), a public anonymous reporting system of hate speech cases and other illegal content spread via the Internet, has recorded for the period 2007 – 2017 16,685 reports of hate speech, 541 of which were transmitted to the police for possible prosecution⁷⁰⁵.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) highlighted several cases of religious intolerance in Slovenia. Thus, for example, the construction site of the country's first Islamic cultural center and mosque in Ljubljana was vandalized several times. The government, NGOs and religious communities issued statements condemning the desecration and calling for greater tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. Some Christian shrines were also desecrated. In January 2021, unidentified persons

⁷⁰⁵ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Slovenia (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on April 3, 2019, published on June 5, 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-slovenia/168094cb00>

intentionally damaged unique wall murals in the Church of St. Nicholas in Ljubljana.

However, ECRI welcomed some reactions to manifestations of hostility and the use of hate speech, in particular towards migrants and asylum seekers, in Slovenian society. So, in 2017, the municipality of Nova Gorica, in response to the distribution of stickers containing offensive slogans addressed to refugees, issued an order to remove them immediately. In May 2018, about a hundred people took part in a peaceful demonstration in Ljubljana, acting against the use of hate speech by the participants in the pre-term parliamentary elections⁷⁰⁶.

According to international human rights monitoring mechanisms, the situation with the Roma community remains one of the most pressing human rights challenges in Slovenia. The last census (held in 2002) showed that there had been 3,246 Roma living in Slovenia. Currently, according to various state, public and non-governmental organizations, there are from 7 to 12 thousand representatives of the Roma. In particular, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) pointed to the absence of updated information following revision of combined eight to eleventh periodic reports of Slovenia on implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in December 2015⁷⁰⁷.

Experts of Slovenian and international human rights organizations welcome the existence of a legal framework in the country (status and special rights of the Roma community are defined by Article 65 of the Slovenian Constitution, the Roma Community Act of the Republic of Slovenia (2007), the Local Self-Government Act (2009)) which vest the Roma with the rights to participate in the public administration process at the municipal level, as well as

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eight to eleventh periodic reports of Slovenia. January 2016.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fCO%2fSVN%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=ru

institutions (Council of Roma Community in Slovenia) and the National Program of Measures for Roma for the period 2017–2021 adopted by the government of Slovenia in May 2017.

However, it is emphasized that Ljubljana has not yet made significant progress to improve the situation with this ethnic group. It is noted that the vast majority of Roma continue to have a low social status and are subject to various forms of discrimination.

The Human Rights Ombudsman of Slovenia, Peter Svetina, in his 2021 report once again stressed the need for a more active interaction between the State and the local authorities in dealing with the issues of the Roma situation. In addition, the Ombudsman pointed out the problems regarding the regulation of their settlements and providing them with housing and community conditions, including electricity and access to drinking water and sanitizing facilities.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination draws attention to the fact that the enrollment of the Roma children in the education system is below the national average, the Roma still have restricted access to employment and healthcare services. According to human rights organizations, the unemployment rate among this ethnic group is on average 95%⁷⁰⁸.

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in its Report 2020 notes that Roma children continue to be overrepresented in special schools designed for children with mental disabilities. This is the case although the Slovenian strategy of education of Roma formally abolished school segregation in 2004 and Roma-only classes had already been abolished in 2003.

⁷⁰⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined eight to eleventh periodic reports of Slovenia. January 2016.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fSVN%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=ru

A positive achievement in Slovenia is the implementation of large-scale horizontal programs by national employment agencies for training, career orientation, developing job seeking skills⁷⁰⁹.

The problem with the "erased", the citizens of the former Yugoslavia who had a permanent registration in Slovenia but were removed from the list of permanent residents in February 1992 under the Aliens Act, is still present on the human rights agenda. Amendments to the country's legislation, adopted in 2010 at the request of the Council of Europe and international NGOs, enabled to restore the status of 12,000 persons on the list. Human rights activists estimate that there are more than 25,600 of such persons.

While considering the application of the group of "erased" in 2012 (case *Kuric and others v. Slovenia*), the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) found that Slovenia violated Article 14 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (prohibition of discrimination in the exercise of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Convention), as well as the rights to private and family life and to effective legal assistance. The ECtHR indicated that the Slovenian government should, within one year, set up a compensation scheme to the "erased" persons.

Following the decisions of the ECtHR and the Slovenian Constitutional Court, the relevant law has entered into force since 18 June 2014. Compensations amounting to EUR 15.5 million have been paid throughout the whole period.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe monitoring the implementation of the ECtHR decisions stated that by adopting the aforementioned law Slovenia had fulfilled all its obligations imposed by the ECtHR. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights welcomed the steps taken by Slovenia in this direction, as well as a public apology by the

⁷⁰⁹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2020
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-report-2020_en.pdf

President of the National Assembly of Slovenia in respect of the "erased" persons in February 2017.

However, concerns were expressed about the social and economic rights of this segment of the population. In particular, Slovenia was recommended to expand the scope of the law, adopted in 2010, regulating the status of the "erased" persons to cover the children born outside the country, provide the "erased" persons with the possibility to recover their legal status without administrative restrictions, ensure full reparation, as well as access to education, professional training and employment.

International and national human rights organizations and institutions also point out that these groups in Slovenia are still facing great challenges, including housing problems, the amount of compensation, the legal status of the next of kin, etc.

Thus, Slovenia still faces certain difficulties in eradicating xenophobic attitudes. In general, the official authorities do not ignore the recommendations of international monitoring bodies and make specific efforts to rectify the situation in this area.

USA

In the USA cynical attempts to rewrite history, including that of the Second World war, continue unabated. The desire for global leadership is becoming so obsessive of the USA that in recent years it has become characteristic of American political rhetoric and the media to emphasize only the role of the USA and its Western allies in the victory over Nazism and not to talk about the key contribution of the USSR in the defeat of Nazi Germany.

"Historical" works aimed at falsifying history and shifting the emphasis on the "crimes" of the Soviet Union under the leadership of "Soviet dictator Stalin" are published.

For example, in 2021 J.Brunstedt, assistant professor of History at Texas A&M University, published a book called *The Soviet Myth of World War II: Patriotic Memory and the Russian Question in the USSR*. The author's main thesis is that when evaluating the results of the Great Patriotic War, Soviet leaders promoted the idea of "Russian nationalism" and "Russocentrism".

Another attempt to falsify the events and results of the Second World War can be found in *Stalin's War: A New History of World War II*, published by Sean McMeekin's in 2021. As an article in *The American Conservative* points out, the book "fits comfortably into a world where it is now fashionable to hate Russia"⁷¹⁰.

Materials along the same lines have also been published in the media. They include two articles published in the *Washington Times*: *Whitewashing Culpability*, by Herman Pirchner Jr., on August 14, 2020 and *Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact: a Bad Deal, 80 Years Ago* by Victor Davis Hanson, on August 15, 2020, both of which attempted to lay the blame for the outbreak of the Second World war equally on Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Journalists do this by using techniques that have become "traditional":

⁷¹⁰ *Rewriting History for the New Cold War*. *The American Conservative*. 28 August 2021. <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/rewriting-history-for-the-new-cold-war/>.

one-sided interpretations of the political and military realities of the pre-war period and distortions of historical events⁷¹¹.

Articles revealing unsightly facts about the history of USA cooperation with the Nazis are rather an exception. One example is a 2021 article in Medium, which claimed that the German economy during World War Two provided huge opportunities for US business. Especially for those companies that supported Nazi Germany, including Ford, IBM and Standard Oil. According to the website brewminate.com, Coca-Cola can be added to this list.

CNN reports that the USA tainted itself with cooperation with the Nazis, thus doing a "deal with the devil"⁷¹². After the Second World War, about 120 scientists from the Third Reich worked on NASA's rocket programs. Many collaborators had friendly relations with high-ranking officials and even USA presidents. In the fight against the Communists, they say, the end justified the means.

Crude attempts to distort the results of the defeat of Nazism and to blot out the decisive contribution of the USSR did not stop in Washington, even during the solemn celebration of the 75th anniversary of the victory. On the eve of May 9 2020, the administration of American President D.Trump on his official page on the Instagram social network posted a video recording Trump laying a wreath at the World War II Memorial, accompanied by the video with the caption "On May 8, 1945, the USA and Great Britain defeated Nazism." This publication is contrary to the statement adopted on April 25, 2020 by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin and USA President D.Trump on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the meeting of soldiers of the USSR and the United States on the Elbe River⁷¹³. At the same time, it

⁷¹¹ https://tass.ru/obschestvo/6789623?utm_source=google.com&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=google.com&utm_referrer=google.com

⁷¹² It's time to confront the dark postscript to America's role in defeating the Nazis. CNN, 24 February 2021. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/02/24/opinions/dark-postscript-america-nazis-golinkin/index.html>.

⁷¹³ Joint statement by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin and President of the United States of America Donald Trump on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Meeting on the Elbe. April 25, 2020 <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63277>

should be noted that there are some precedents of contemporary American officials, including at the highest level, recognizing the Soviet Union's contribution to the Victory.

Certain American diplomatic missions have also been involved in efforts to distort history. For example, the USA Embassy in Hungary has begun selecting projects and programs with the common theme of "Remembering World War II and its Aftermath – The Long Walk to Freedom". According to a document published on the website of the American Embassy, American and Hungarian organizations and individuals are required to "carefully follow the instructions" when preparing an application for participation. Among other things, the American side demands that the authors of the projects focus on stories that would describe "cruelty and collaboration in the midst of the Holocaust and World War II, as well as under the tyranny of the Soviet Union."⁷¹⁴

Such a position of the United States is clearly not conducive to improving the situation inside the country, combating racial discrimination, xenophobia and the legacy of the "brown plague".

Systemic racism and police impunity continue to flourish in the US. National minorities become victims of discrimination and social inequality.

Immigrants and prisoners, including minors, are experiencing a steady erosion of their liberties. Journalists feel unsafe, and are subjected to assaults. The government has still not fulfilled its plans to close the Guantanamo Bay detention camp.

In its 2022 Annual report on human rights and civil liberties throughout the world, rights activists from the international organization Human Rights Watch (HRW) noted that despite certain positive developments in its legislation, many problems were still in evidence, including racism, the erosion

⁷¹⁴ The Russian Embassy in Washington called on the USA to refuse to distort the facts about the Second world war. TASS. May 1, 2020 <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/8382109>.

of social and economic rights, the abuse of prisoners, the tightening of immigration rules and police violence⁷¹⁵.

Expert circles are extremely alarmed by the situation with the spread of extremist ideology in the United States. The Year in Hate & Extremism Report 2021, published by the Southern Poverty Law Center 2021, an NGO, documented a record growth in extremism in US society⁷¹⁶. The seriousness of the problem is increasingly drawn to the attention of senior American officials and legislators.

As of 2021, 733 documented "hate groups" were active in the USA, of which 98 promoted "white nationalism"⁷¹⁷. The latter include the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, skinheads and anti-migrant and Islamophobic groups. According to the authors of the report, the fall in the number of such organizations, down from 838 in 2020, does not mean that the problem has become less pressing. On the contrary, the activities of radicals are becoming more coordinated and covert – the correspondence is carried out in closed groups in social networks using end-to-end encryption technology. According to surveys, about 29% of all Americans personally know someone in their orbit who adheres to the idea of "white supremacy"⁷¹⁸.

In 2021 certain hate groups experienced a rapid rise in popularity and joined the political mainstream, thus extending their influence.

The authors of the report expressed particular concern about the activities of odious neo-Nazi organizations such as the Base, the Feuerkrieg Division and the radical right-wing group the Proud Boys.

The organization that saw the most significant growth was the Proud Boys, a self-described "Western chauvinist" group which is seen as playing an important role in recruiting members for other hate groups. According to a

⁷¹⁵ World Report 2022: United States / Human Rights Watch, 01.2022. – <https://www.hrw.org>.

⁷¹⁶ Report by the Southern Poverty Law Center The Year in Hate and Extremism Report 2021.

⁷¹⁷ NGO Southern Poverty Law Center: <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map>.

⁷¹⁸ Report by the Southern Poverty Law Center – Year of hate and extremism 2020.

study by "Die Zeit" (2021), the influence of this organization is so great that many neo-Nazis, not included in this structure, are guided by its leader J.Mason⁷¹⁹. In addition, the structure has expanded its activities to the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada and the Baltic States. It is stated that as of mid-2019, 35 Americans had left the United States for Ukraine in order to participate in hostilities⁷²⁰.

In 2021 the group was documented as having 72 active divisions throughout the country, compared with 43 in the previous year. The growth in the number of cells is particularly significant, given the fact that at least 40 of its members were charged with involvement in the storming of the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. According to a 2021 article by the investigative journalist T.Owen, for VICE, the Proud Boys had taken part in at least 114 public events.

On an almost daily basis, neo-Nazis publish materials inciting hatred and enmity. Experts note in this regard "Black and Silver Solution", "Daily Archives", "Tennessee Shield Wall Network", "Daily Stormer", "Nazi Central", "Universal Order", "14First the Foundation", "White Nationalist Defender", "Rise Above Movement", "Keystone United", "Kommandant Base 211", "Joey Faust", "National Policy Institute", "Woman for Aryan Unity", "new Jersey European heritage Association", "the Church of Jesus Christ Christian – Aryan Nations", "the White Nationalist Defender" and many others.

Many extremist ideas are currently spreading without the need to set up or join an organization. After all, online platforms allowed "individuals to

⁷¹⁹ The Brown Internationale. Kai Biermann, Christian Fuchs, Astrid Geisler, Yassin Musharbash, Hogler Stark. Die Zeit. 11 February 2021. https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2021-02/fascism-international-right-wing-extremism-neo-nazis-english/komplettansicht?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

⁷²⁰ Anti-Defamation League NGO report "White supremacist terror: modernizing our approach to today's threat". April 2020 <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/White%20Supremacist%20Terror%20final.pdf> Page 25, report by the NPO The Soufan Center entitled "White Supremacy Extremism: The Transnational Rise of the Violent White Supremacist Movement", September 2019. <https://thesoufancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Report-by-The-Soufan-Center-White-Supremacy-Extremism-The-Transnational-Rise-of-The-Violent-White-Supremacist-Movement.pdf>

interact with hate and antigovernment groups without joining them, as well as to form connections and talk with likeminded people".⁷²¹

Accordingly, the number of ideological materials distributed by extremists has increased in recent years. According to the Anti-Defamation League, in 2020 the quantity of such materials was double that in the previous year, with more than 5,000 messages containing racist, anti-Semitic and other forms of hate speech recorded. "Patriot Front", "New Jersey European Heritage Association" and "Nationalist Social Club" were the most active in spreading propaganda (92% of all activities)⁷²².

New structures are emerging to glorify Nazism and deny the Holocaust. Thus, in 2019, Iron Youth and Folksfront were established. In July 2020, members of the disbanded "Atomwaffen Division" announced the creation of a new organization called the National Socialist Order.

Many radical organizations claim to participate in the political life of the country. Among them – "American Freedom Party", "Racial Nationalist Party of America", "American Identity Movement" and "Proud Boys"⁷²³.

By virtue of the First Amendment to the US Constitution, which protects free speech, such organizations feel able to act with impunity. Law enforcers, on the other hand, intervene in the most extreme cases, when it is often too late.

In the US, neo-Nazi demonstrations and marches generally take place with a police presence – but they see their main function as preventing any unacceptable disorder resulting from clashes between extremists and their opponents.

Racism and racial discrimination have now become systemic in America, and are present in all sections of society. The disturbing rise of neo-Nazi and

⁷²¹ The Year in Hate and Extremism 2020. Southern Poverty Law Center. <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2021/02/01/year-hate-2020>

⁷²² White supremacist propaganda spikes in 2020. Anti-Defamation League. <https://www.adl.org/white-supremacist-propaganda-spikes-2020>

⁷²³ Latest violence showcases Proud Boys' toxic mix of politics and bigotry. Anti-Defamation League. 5 September 2021. <https://www.adl.org/blog/latest-violence-showcases-proud-boys-toxic-mix-of-politics-and-bigotry>

other extremist organizations is confirmed by statistics, as is the assault on the rights of non-white Americans. Human rights groups have pointed to an increase in hate speech against minorities against a backdrop of rising white nationalism and an increase in violent crime across the country.

According to crime data released by the FBI in 2019, 57.6 percent of the 8302 hate crimes reported by law enforcement were motivated by the race or ethnicity of the victims. More specifically, 48.4% were "victims of crimes motivated by offenders' anti-Black or African American bias"; 15.8% – by perpetrators' anti-White bias; 14.1% were victims of anti-Hispanic or Latino bias, and 4.3% were targeted due to anti-Asian bias. And "among the 4930 victims of racial hate crimes, as many as 2391 were of African descent"⁷²⁴.

For 2020, the FBI also recorded a high rate of hate crimes – 7,759 cases, of which 4,939 were motivated by racial or ethnic hatred and 1,174 had religious overtones. In recent years, attacks on African Americans have increased from 1,930 to 2,755, and on people of Asian descent from 158 to 274. There were 773 attacks on whites⁷²⁵.

California State University, San-Bernardino has found that in 2022 the number of violations against Asian-Americans was 224% higher than in 2021.

According to research conducted by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism, racially-motivated crimes directed against Asian-Americans have reached record numbers in the USA. In 2021 the number of such incidents was 339% higher than in 2020, while in 2020 it was 150% higher than in⁷²⁶ 2019. There was a sharp increase in New York, from 30 to 133 incidents, and in San Francisco there were 60 incidents, compared with 9 the previous year.

⁷²⁴ The Report on Human Rights Violations in the United States in 2020 by SCIO (State Council Information Office) of the PRC. March 2021, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-03/24/c_139832301.htm.

⁷²⁵ Hate crimes rise to highest level in 12 years amid increasing attacks on Black and Asian people, FBI says. The Washington Post. 30 August 2021. https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/hate-crimes-fbi-2020-asian-black/2021/08/30/28bede00-09a7-11ec-9781-07796ffb56fe_story.html; Hate Crime in the United States Incident Analysis. 2020. Federal Bureau of Investigation Crime Data Explorer <https://crime-data-explorer.fr.cloud.gov/pages/home>.

⁷²⁶ Hate crimes targeting Asian Americans spiked 150 % in major US cities. Voice of America. 2 March 2021. <https://www.voanews.com/usa/race-america/hate-crimes-targeting-asian-americans-spiked-150-major-us-cities>

One of the USA's largest racially-motivated mass shootings in 2022 is considered to be the May 14 attack on a supermarket in Buffalo (New-York state), in which an 18-year-old killed 10 people. The shooter had previously published a "manifesto" setting out his white-supremacist views. The text is full of intolerant statements, including claims that immigrants and Black people were "replacing" whites.

In March 2021, the widely publicized killing of 8 people, including 6 Asian women, in Atlanta, Georgia sparked nationwide discourse. An armed white man went on a shooting spree in three spas that resulted in the death of employees and visitors.

According to an opinion poll, 32% of African Americans and 21% of Asian Americans live in fear of racially-motivated attacks.⁷²⁷

In 2021, amid an accelerated U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, experts expressed concern that neo-Nazis, hoping to provoke an "inevitable race war" that would lead to a whites-only state in North America and Europe, expressed admiration for the ideology of the Afghan Taliban Movement for its anti-Semitism, homophobia and severe restrictions on women's freedom⁷²⁸.

It should be noted that in 2020, following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a large increase in the number of incidents in which Asian Americans were assaulted or insulted in public places, refused admittance to shops, business centers or public transport.

According to the NGO Stop AAPI Crime, between March 19, 2020 and June 30, 2021 9,081 such incidents were documented (of which 4,548 took place in 2020 and 4,533 in the first half of 2021). The majority (63.7%) were insults, 16.5% were intentional avoidance, 13.7% of cases were physical

⁷²⁷ NGO Pew Research Center: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/05/20/safety-concerns-were-top-of-mind-for-many-black-americans-before-buffalo-shooting/>.

⁷²⁸ White supremacist praise of the Taliban takeover concerns US officials. CNN, 1 September 2021. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/09/01/politics/far-right-groups-praise-taliban-takeover/index.html>; Amid Chaos, Islamist Extremists Celebrate Taliban's Success in Afghanistan. Anti-Defamation League. 26 August 2021. <https://www.adl.org/blog/amid-chaos-islamist-extremists-celebrate-talibans-success-in-afghanistan>.

attacks, and 11% were workplace discrimination, denial of service, etc., 8.3% were cases of insults on the Internet. A large percentage of incidents took place "in public streets and parks" (31.6%) and in businesses (30.1%). Women made up the majority, i.e. 63.3%, of all victims⁷²⁹. According to a 2020 report on the USA by The China Society for Human Rights Studies, one in four young Asian Americans is the target of racially motivated harassment.⁷³⁰

A study, published in December 2020 by researchers at University of Chicago and University of Notre Dame, reported that poverty in the United States had risen from 9.3 to 11.7% (i.e. by 2.4%) during the June to November 2020 period. At the same time, the poverty rate among black Americans increased by 3.1%. According to an article published by USA Today on June 29, 2020 home ownership among African American and white families was 44% and 73.7%, respectively, as of the 1st quarter of 2020. In 2020, ABC News published a story stating that 15.7% of Latinos in the United States had lived in poverty in 2019, a number more than double that among their white counterparts⁷³¹.

In January 2021, 24 million American citizens reported food shortages due to lack of livelihood, which is 5 million more than the same figure in August 2020. 45% of families with insufficient food supply belong to the low-income population. At the same time, two-thirds of them are African Americans and immigrants from Central and Latin America.⁷³²

According to official statistics, over the past 40 years, the number of people detained in prisons has increased by almost 700%, with the number of convicted Americans exceeding the mark of 2.3 million people.⁷³³ The number

⁷²⁹ Stop AAPI Crime. National Report. <https://stopaapihate.org/stop-aapi-hate-national-report-2/>

⁷³⁰ The SCIO Report on Human Rights Violations in the United States in 2020 March 2021, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-03/24/c_139832301.htm

⁷³¹ The SCIO Record of Human Rights Violations in the United States in 2019, March 2020 http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-03/13/c_138874115.htm

⁷³² United States: Pandemic Impact on People in Poverty. Human Rights Watch Report. 2 March 2021. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/02/united-states-pandemic-impact-people-poverty>

⁷³³ Prison Policy Initiative, Report: Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2020 from March 24, 2020

of prisoners by the end of 2020 was 1.814 million. According to the human rights NGO "Vera Institute of Justice", there was a slight decrease in this figure compared to 2019. (2.115 million people).⁷³⁴ Both human rights groups and scientists agree that this is a temporary phenomenon.⁷³⁵ The decline is explained by the release of convicts due to the spread of the coronavirus or the replacement of a measure of restraint or punishment. At the same time, representatives of the "colored population" are much more likely to be arrested and imprisoned than "whites".

As inmate populations increased, conditions in penitentiaries started to deteriorate. And jail officials often failed to protect prisoner rights. Black men and women were found to be "imprisoned at higher rates compared to all other age groups", with the highest rate being for Black men aged 25 to 39.⁷³⁶

According to the Death Penalty Information Center NGO, the majority of those sentenced to capital punishment are African Americans, Latinos or representatives of other ethnic minorities⁷³⁷. Specifically, as the NGO noted, African Americans account for 34.1% of all convictions. At times, innocent people are sentenced to death due to mistakes made during trial proceedings and other factors. The NGO Amnesty International has found that 156 persons sentenced to death were found to be innocent. In addition, capital punishment was applied disproportionately against people of color and the poor.

In June 2021, the media learned that the authorities of the state of Arizona purchased toxic substances for use in gas chambers. The resonance was caused

⁷³⁴ People in jail and prison in 2020. Vera Institute of Justice. 2021.

⁷³⁵ People in jail and prison in 2020. Vera Institute of Justice. 2021; Decarcerating correctional facilities during COVID-19: advancing health. Equity and safety. National academy of sciences, engineering and medicine. 2020.

⁷³⁶ People in jail and prison in 2020. Vera Institute of Justice. 2021; Decarcerating correctional facilities during COVID-19: advancing health. Equity and safety. National academy of sciences, engineering and medicine. 2020.

⁷³⁷ Website of NPO Death Penalty Information Center Facts about death penalty, as of May 20, 2020. <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/>

by the fact that such toxic substances were used by the Nazis during the Holocaust.⁷³⁸

International systems of human rights monitoring and civil rights NGOs have pointed out that racism, xenophobia as well as ethnic and religious intolerance continued to spread in the United States.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) report, entitled "The Year in Hate: Rage Against Change" published by this legal advocacy organization on February 20, 2019, the number of hate groups in the United States tracked by SPLC rose by 30% over the past four years, starting in 2014. The total number of such organizations increased in 2018, "up about 7 percent from 2014".⁷³⁹

Based on results of the poll published by the Military Times in February 2020, "more than one-third of all active-duty troops" and over "half of minority service members" said they had personally "witnessed examples of white nationalism or ideologically driven racism within the ranks in recent months." Respondents "reported witnessing incidents including racist language and discriminatory attitudes from peers." The problem is that membership in a white nationalist group among US servicemen was not prohibited, but active participation in such an organization "could lead to an administrative discharge". In February 2020, US defense officials told a hearing of the House Armed Services subcommittee that membership in a white nationalist group would not be enough to keep a man or a woman out of the military.⁷⁴⁰ They also

⁷³⁸ Outrage greets reports of Arizona plan to use Holocaust gas in executions. New York Times. 2 June 2021.

⁷³⁹ Report A/HRC/41/55 entitled "Global extractivism and racial equality" by Tendayi Achiume, the UN Special Rapporteur on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, at 41st Session of UN Human Rights Council, June 2019.

⁷⁴⁰ Members of white nationalist groups not barred from US military, official says. The Times of Israel. February 14, 2020. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/members-of-white-nationalist-groups-not-barred-from-us-military-official-says/>

said that there was "no reliable data on how many service members had been administratively discharged for espousing white supremacist ideology."⁷⁴¹

In May 2021, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) released the "Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Data on Domestic Terrorism" report that acknowledged the "threat posed by international and domestic threat actors" had evolved significantly since 9/11. In 2019, the FBI and DHS assessed that Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremists (RMVEs), "primarily those advocating for the superiority of the white race", would likely continue to be the most lethal DVE (Domestic Violent Extremist) threat to the Homeland. According to the report, the greatest terrorism threat to the United States was "posed by lone offenders". In addition, 2019 was the most lethal year for DVE attacks since 1995, "with five" such attacks resulting in 32 deaths, 24 of which occurred due to actions of RMVEs "advocating for the superiority of the white race."⁷⁴²

The authors of the report also discussed radicalization online and mentioned non-US actors by defining a lone offender "as an individual motivated by one or more violent extremist ideologies who, operating alone", supported or engaged "in acts of unlawful violence in furtherance of that ideology or ideologies" that could "involve influence from a larger terrorist organization or a foreign actor". It should also be noted that, while the US authorities emphasize the threat posed by right-wing extremism, in practice their approaches to different organizations of this type are inconsistent. A number of US experts and lawmakers have pointed out the danger posed by far-right groups active in Ukraine who have been "responsible for a rising

⁷⁴¹ Neo-Nazi Group Membership May Not Get You Booted from Military, Officials Say. February 12, 2020. <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/02/12/neo-nazi-group-membership-may-not-get-you-booted-military-officials-say.html>

⁷⁴² The inside is terrible: the USA recorded an increase in extremist sentiment. Izvestia. May 23, 2021 <https://iz.ru/1165713/kirill-senin/iznutri-uzhasnye-v-ssha-zafiksirovali-rost-ekstremistskikh-nastroenii>, America's Deadly Domestic Extremism Worst In 24 Years, Reveals New FBI Report. HuffPost. 15 May 2021. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/deadly-domestic-extremism-worst-in-25-years-fbi-white-supremacists_n_60a0591ae4b03e1dd38a5b4e.

number of violent attacks in recent years". Such organizations have reportedly established ties with US-based extremist groups, such as the "Atomwaffen Division". In the US military, incidents involving racist language and discriminatory attitudes remained a problem. In fact, "Defense Department officials tracked at least 27 reports of extremist activity by active-duty troops from 2013 to 2018".

The "Russian Imperial Movement" (RIM) has been designated as a terrorist group by the United States, some have questions the decision as not much information about this organization and its ties to foreign groups is available. Meanwhile, infamous Ukraine-based white supremacy groups, such as "Right Sector", the "Azov" battalion and "S14", whose members have reportedly perpetrated acts of violence, were not included in the Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) list.

The tendency of law enforcement bodies to use excessive force against suspects remains a serious problem in the USA. American law enforcement bodies often resort to force and use firearms and other means of restraint or abuse, regardless of the real need to prevent threats to their lives by intruders.

In 2015, The Washington Post started to log every fatal shooting by an on-duty police officer in the United States. In 2019, more than one thousand people were shot and killed by the police, while in 2020, the number decreased somewhat to 967.⁷⁴³ At the same time, the End Police Violence NGO points to more than 1.1 thousand murders committed by American police officers in 2020.

Racial profiling is closely linked with this problem since police abuse of power disproportionately impacts non-white members of US society. African Americans, who make up less than 13% of the population, are the ones who die most often: in 2019, the death rate of African Americans at the hands of police

⁷⁴³ The Washington Post, Police shootings database.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/>

officers (1,512 deaths per 42 million people) is 2.5 times higher than the death rate of white Americans (2,890 deaths per 197 million people)⁷⁴⁴.

The newspaper reported that the overwhelming majority of people shot and killed by the police were male (over 95%), and more than half the victims were between 20 and 40 years of age. Journalists of "ABC" also noted that according to statistics black USA citizens are victims of such incidents 2.5 times more often than whites⁷⁴⁵. The Washington Post reported that Hispanic Americans were also killed by law enforcement officers at a disproportionate rate (27 per million).

The notorious incident in May 2020 in which police officer D.Chauvin killed G.Floyd while arresting him was far from the only case of the police using excessive force against African Americans. Other high-profile cases of gratuitous use of lethal force by police officers include the following.

On October 12, 2019, police officer Aaron Dean shot and killed Atatiana Jefferson in her own home in Fort Worth, Texas⁷⁴⁶. He and another officer were responding to a non-emergency call by a concerned neighbor who had noticed "the home's exterior doors were open at that late hour". Prior to the shooting, the victim had been playing videogames with her eight-year-old nephew. A law enforcement officer shot to kill immediately after giving a warning, giving his victim no chance of surviving.

On January 28, 2020, William Green, who had been taken into custody on suspicion of drunk driving, was shot dead while handcuffed by a police officer in Temple Hills, Maryland⁷⁴⁷. Corporal Michael Owen Jr, a police force veteran, shot the victim seven times while the latter had been sitting in a patrol car.

⁷⁴⁴ The Washington Post, Police shootings database.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/>

⁷⁴⁵ Shot at home by police: Teaching officers how to react under stress after Botham Jean, Atatiana Jefferson killings. ABC News, 19 December 2019. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/shot-home-police-teaching-officers-react-stress-botham/story?id=67825639>

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁷ Maryland police officer charged with murder in killing of handcuffed man. BBC, 29 January 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-51291200>.

On March 13, 2020, police officers fatally shot Breonna Taylor, a Black medical worker, by mistake in Louisville, Kentucky⁷⁴⁸. The raid was carried out as part of a narcotic investigation but the victim was not found to be involved in the drug operation.

On September 1, 2020, an African American cyclist was shot dead by police in Los Angeles, allegedly violating traffic rules. After the suspect was stopped, a scuffle ensued in which he was shot and killed.

On April 11, 2021, a female police officer killed Daunte Wright during a traffic stop in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota. During a press conference, the local police chief said that the policewoman had "intended to deploy her stun gun" but accidentally shot the young African American man instead. The incident was followed by riots with pogroms and arson, including the Dollar Tree department store. The security forces responded with tear gas and stun grenades⁷⁴⁹.

On April 20, 2021, a law enforcement officer fatally shot 16-year-old Ma'Khia Bryant after a call alleging assault to the police had been made in Columbus, Ohio.

On April 21, 2021, in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, an African American man, E. Brown, Jr. was killed in a shooting incident by deputy police chiefs.⁷⁵⁰ This incident triggered widespread rioting in the city, and in response the authorities declared a curfew.

At the same time, experts note that the responsibility of law enforcement in the USA for unlawful and unreasonably harsh actions against alleged

⁷⁴⁸ F.B.I. to Investigate Shooting of Breonna Taylor by Louisville Police. New York Times, 21 May 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/21/us/fbi-louisville-shooting.html>.

⁷⁴⁹ Police fire tear gas at protesters in a second nights of demonstrations after Minnesota officer fatally shoots Black man. CNN, 12 April 2021. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/04/12/us/brooklyn-center-minnesota-police-shooting/index.html>.

⁷⁵⁰ Black residents of Elizabeth City, N.C., thought police violence happened in other places. Then it came to their town. The Washington Post. 29 April 2021. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/elizabeth-city-police-shooting/2021/04/29/80b28b40-a8ed-11eb-8c1a-56f0cb4ff3b5_story.html.

offenders and prisoners is very rare. According to ABC News, there were only 16 convictions in such cases between 2004 and 2020.

The most recent high-profile verdict was the sentencing of D.Chauvin, the killer of African American G.Floyd, to 22 and a half years in prison in 2021⁷⁵¹.

Another case of prosecution was noted in May 2021, when law enforcement officer B.Palkowitz was sentenced to 6 years in prison for excessive use of force against the African American man he arrested, F.Baker. During his arrest, F.Baker was beaten and a police officer let a service dog down on him, although he offered no resistance⁷⁵².

The decision of the jury in the case of K.Rittenhouse, who shot two people dead during a Black Lives Matter protest in Kenosha, Wisconsin, triggered widespread discussion concerning the need to address the problem of racism in the USA at a systemic level⁷⁵³.

When investigating cases involving the excess use of force by law enforcement officers, researchers from the international organization Human Rights Watch have often found that the US law enforcement bodies refuse them access to the relevant information. As a result the rights group has had to collect and analyze the necessary materials itself. 1,141 people were killed by police in 2021, more than in previous years. Statistically, African Americans are 3 times more likely to be killed by police officers than white Americans.⁷⁵⁴

The systemic abuses of USA intelligence agencies, which engage in widespread mass surveillance of citizens, also show signs of racial profiling. According to an article published by the ACLU on June 24, 2020 "at least one

⁷⁵¹ Why Derek Chauvin's sentencing for murdering George Floyd is a rarity. ABC News. 26 June 2021.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/derek-chauvins-sentencing-murdering-george-floyd-rarity/story?id=78402027>.

⁷⁵² Ex-officer was sentenced for causing severe injuries to unarmed Black man while a police dog mauled him.

Washington Post. 22 May 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/05/22/st-paul-officer-sentenced-beating-black-man/>.

⁷⁵³ CNN, These are the 5 charges the jury in Kyle Rittenhouse's trial considered:

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/14/us/kyle-rittenhouse-jury-deliberations-charges/index.html>.

⁷⁵⁴ Mapping Police Violence. <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org>.

quarter of the 18,000 law enforcement agencies across the United States" had access to such technologies⁷⁵⁵. "Over half of all American adults are" in a driver's license database that are searched using facial recognition.

The use of face recognition technology (FRT) is a good example of the systemic bias. A number of states use this technology on suspects in normal criminal cases, and also on people suspected of violating migration law. Human rights groups have repeatedly pointed to the inadequacy of such systems and their bias against members of racial and religious minorities, particularly African Americans⁷⁵⁶.

Experts from the international organization Amnesty International (AI) have requested the New York Police Department to stop using video cameras with FRT when dealing with members of ethnic minorities⁷⁵⁷.

More than 7,000 volunteers participating in a global campaign called Ban the Scan helped rights activists identify more than 25,000 FRT-enabled CCTV cameras in the city. AI researchers later compared their findings with the statistics on arrests and demographic data. As a result they found that, of New York's five boroughs,⁷⁵⁸ the cameras were largely concentrated in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens, which are the boroughs where law enforcement bodies officers stop and search primarily African American and Latino residents⁷⁵⁹.

Commenting on the results of the research, Dr. Matt Mahmoudi, expert on artificial intelligence and human rights at Amnesty International, noted that the police's indiscriminate use of such identification systems is in effect a digital

⁷⁵⁵ The Untold Number of People Implicated in Crimes They Didn't Commit Because of Face Recognition. the American Civil Liberties Union, 24 June 2020. <https://www.aclu.org/news/privacy-technology/the-untold-number-of-people-implicated-in-crimes-they-didnt-commit-because-of-face-recognition/>.

⁷⁵⁶ Data from Just Security. <https://www.justsecurity.org/73321/the-future-of-u-s-foreign-intelligence-surveillance/>.

⁷⁵⁷ USA: Facial recognition technology reinforcing racist stop-and-frisk policing in New York – new research // Amnesty International. 15.02.2022. <http://www.amnesty.org>.

⁷⁵⁸ New York has five boroughs: the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island.

⁷⁵⁹ World Report 2022: United States / Human Rights Watch, 01.2022. <https://www.hrw.org>.

version of the stop and frisk policy⁷⁶⁰, which constitutes an infringement of citizens' right to privacy, free assembly and equality, and facilitates police discrimination against non-white citizens. The use by the police of surveillance technology during protest events can also be seen as a deliberate attempt to intimidate participants, as it enables people who are exercising their civic rights to be identified, tracked and harassed⁷⁶¹.

Jumaane Williams, the Public Advocate for New York City agrees with Amnesty International's views. He has pointed out that community representatives and activists have for a long time been observing how law enforcement bodies are biased against ethnic minorities, and how the frequent malfunctioning of face-recognition software leads to wrongful arrests⁷⁶².

In April 2021, for example, Detroit resident R. Williams was detained by police for more than 30 hours for allegedly stealing from a home. The police believed that he was connected with the crime because a face recognition search "found similarities between grainy surveillance footage of the theft and Mr. Williams' driver's license photo". After comparing the photo of the intruder and R. Williams, it turned out that he was incorrectly identified by the security cameras and facial recognition system used by city law enforcement⁷⁶³.

In July 2020, a similar incident occurred again in Detroit, Michigan. Michael Oliver, a Black man, was arrested for allegedly reaching into a person's car, grabbing a mobile phone and damaging it. "Facial recognition flagged" him as a possible suspect. However, the perpetrator, captured on the footage, did not look like Michael Oliver, as the latter had tattoos on his arms unlike the person

⁷⁶⁰ The stop-and-frisk right allows police officers in many states to stop any person who is outside their home in a public place if the police officer has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the person has committed, is committing or may commit a crime. A person who has been stopped on "reasonable grounds" may be searched for concealed weapons on the spot

⁷⁶¹ World Report 2022: United States / Human Rights Watch, 01.2022. <https://www.hrw.org>.

⁷⁶² World Report 2022: United States / Human Rights Watch, 01.2022. <https://www.hrw.org>.

⁷⁶³ Wrongfully Accused by an Algorithm. The New York Times, 24 June 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/24/technology/facial-recognition-arrest.html>; American Civil Liberties Union. <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases-michigan-father-sues-detroit-police-department-wrongful-arrest-based-faulty-facial>.

in the video. After a more detailed comparison of M.Oliver's images with the real perpetrator, the police concluded that the misidentification⁷⁶⁴.

Once Detroit Police Department's use of facial recognition technology gained national attention after human rights advocates and journalists had brought to light the aforementioned cases, its chief admitted that the software used misidentified individuals "96% of the time"⁷⁶⁵.

At the beginning of 2021, Amnesty International expressed concern about the use of facial recognition technologies not only by law enforcement agencies, but also other organizations and businesses. The Nelson Management Group, the landlord of Atlantic Plaza Towers in Brooklyn, "sought state approval for the introduction of" facial recognition cameras in July 2018. From 2018 to 2019, residents of the Black majority complex "successfully resisted attempts at installing" such equipment in their apartment buildings. They had initially learned about the plan in the fall of 2018 by accident ("as a result of chaotic mail delivery"). "By collaborating with civil society, legal, technology and media organizations", the residents' pushback received significant attention. And by November 2019, "Nelson Management announced that they would not be pursuing the installation of facial recognition cameras in the apartment complex"⁷⁶⁶.

International human rights organizations have been aware of the issue of racial profiling by US law enforcement agencies for some time now. As long ago as August 2014, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), founded in accordance with the UN International Convention on the

⁷⁶⁴ Facial recognition linked to a second wrongful arrest by Detroit police. Engadget, 10 July 2020. <https://www.engadget.com/facial-recognition-false-match-wrongful-arrest-224053761.html>.

⁷⁶⁵ Detroit Police Chief: Facial Recognition Software Misidentifies 96 % of the Time, Vice, 29 June 2020. https://www.vice.com/en/article/dyzykz/detroit-police-chief-facial-recognition-software-misidentifies-96-of-the-time?utm_content=1593453617&utm_medium=social&utm_source=VICE_twitter; ACLU Statement on Second Wrongful Arrest due to Face Recognition Technology. the American Civil Liberties Union, July 10, 2020. <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/aclu-statement-second-wrongful-arrest-due-face-recognition-technology>.

⁷⁶⁶ Ban the scan: do you want your face to be used to track you? Amnesty International. <https://banthescan.amnesty.org/>.

Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, noted the large numbers of racist incidents and the prevalence of racial profiling among law enforcement agencies, as well as the fact that African Americans and representatives of other ethnic minorities were the most frequent victims of violence by law enforcement officers.⁷⁶⁷

The UN Human Rights Council's Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent has pointed out that even though African Americans account for only 13% of the US population, in 2015 26% of people killed by police were African Americans, and the proportions for 2016 and 2017 were 24% and 23% respectively. And "in the first half of 2018, black people made up 20%" of all individuals killed by law enforcement officers under all conditions.⁷⁶⁸

Following the killing of the African American G.Floyd⁷⁶⁹ by white police officers, nationwide protests broke out, putting the spotlight on the problem of systemic discrimination against African Americans and members of ethnic minority groups. Experts estimate that about 26 million people took part in the demonstrations provoked by this high-profile murder in June 2020 alone.⁷⁷⁰ Many protesters faced unjustified police brutality⁷⁷¹.

Many reporters opined that American authorities handling these demonstrations violated US and international legislation. First and foremost, criticism was directed against law enforcement officers for unjust and disproportionate use of force against mainly peaceful protesters and journalists reporting about them. Civilians were subjected to mass arrests, and the police

⁷⁶⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of United States of America. August 2014 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUSA%2fCO%2f7-9&Lang=ru

⁷⁶⁸ Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent at 74th session of the UN General Assembly A/74/274. October 2019 <https://undocs.org/ru/A/74/274>.

⁷⁶⁹ What We Know About the Death of George Floyd. New York Times, May 27, 2020, and Wall Street Journal, May 29, 2020.

⁷⁷⁰ Black Lives Matter may be the largest movement in U.S. history. The New York Times, 3 July 2020.

⁷⁷¹ Many human rights organizations have analyzed this situation. See, for example, The Amnesty international report "the World is watching. Mass violations by US Police of Black Lives Matter protesters' rights". 2021.

used rubber bullets, tear gas, stun grenades and other measures against demonstrators.

The crisis in the United States became so serious that on June 17, 2020, upon the resumption of the 43rd session of the UN Human Rights Council a group of African states called for urgent debates on the human rights abuses, systemic racism, police violence and use of violence against peaceful protestors. During these debates the policies of the current US government were strongly criticized.

In its formal statement published on June 12, 2020, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), acting under its Early Warning and Urgent Action Procedures⁷⁷², expressed its concern about "the continuing practice of racial profiling, the brutality and excessive use of force by law enforcement officials" in the United State against persons belonging to racial and ethnic minorities, including unarmed individuals. The CERD also criticized the "excessive use of force" against peaceful protesters across the country. The Committee urged the United States of America to submit "its combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports", which were overdue since November 20, 2017, and include information on the measures taken to address the issues, such as racial discrimination, highlighted in the statement⁷⁷³.

The leading UN entity on human rights also addressed the situation in the United States. In her June 3, 2020 statement, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet urged the US leadership "to condemn racism unequivocally", to hear "the voices calling for an end to the endemic and structural racism" that blighted US society and "to take actions" to truly tackle inequalities.

⁷⁷² It is worth noting that it was not the first time the CERD took such actions. In response to violent clashes between alt-right demonstrators and counter-protesters in Charlottesville (Virginia) on August 18, 2017 the CERD, also acting under the aforementioned procedures, expressed its alarm about the violence during the racist demonstrations, and called on the US government to "not only unequivocally and unconditionally reject and condemn racist hate speech and racist crimes in Charlottesville and throughout the country, but also to actively contribute to the promotion of understanding, tolerance, and diversity between ethnic groups".

⁷⁷³ <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CERD/EarlyWarning/Statements/USA.pdf>.

The serious threat posed by racism and abuses of power by the police to the fabric of US society drew attention of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council (HRC). On June 5, 2020, independent experts of the Special Procedures of the UN HRC published a statement on the protests against systemic racism in the United States. It condemned state-sponsored racial violence and urged US and other leaders to "address structural forms of racial and ethnic injustice".

Racism is closely tied to another large-scale problem in the USA: the circulation of firearms in the country.

It is no secret that the United States ranks first in the world in firearms ownership, both in absolute terms and per capita – with about 390 million firearms in 2020.⁷⁷⁴ This situation has arisen because of the liberal gun laws (the Second Amendment to the US Constitution guarantees Americans' right to bear arms), and the accessibility of these weapons.

According to the results of a study published by the Annals of Internal Medicine in 2022, 7.5 million adult American citizens, or just under 3% of the population, bought a firearm for the first time between January 2019 and April 2021.

Hence, the number of incidents involving guns in the US has remained high. In 2011, data collected by the FBI showed "that firearms were used in 60 percent of murders" and "21 percent of aggravated assaults nationwide". Based on recent statistics, over 8,500 hate crimes motivated by intolerance towards certain groups in society per year involve the use of a gun⁷⁷⁵. Curiously, US federal law does not currently "require universal comprehensive background checks with each and every transfer or purchase of a firearm in the USA".

⁷⁷⁴ America's gun culture in charts. BBC. April 8, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-41488081>; Top 10 civilian gun-owning countries. Small arms survey research project. <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org>.

⁷⁷⁵ In the Line of Fire: Human Rights and the US Gun Violence Crisis. Amnesty International. <https://www.amnestyusa.org/reports/in-the-line-of-fire-human-rights-and-the-u-s-gun-violence-crisis/>.

In 2019, there were more mass killings in the United States "than any year dating back to at least the 1970s". According to data compiled by The Associated Press and USA Today in 2019 there were 41 mass killings, defined as incidents in which attackers killed 4 or more people. Most of these (i.e. 33) involved gun violence⁷⁷⁶. Reportedly, there are approximately 100,000 "non-fatal firearm injuries in the United States each year."

This high level of gun violence has increased in 2020. Major shooting incidents occurred approximately every 73 days. The Washington Post noted, citing research by experts from the University of Cleveland, that on average more than 100 Americans are injured daily in shootings across the country, including fatally⁷⁷⁷. According to USA Today, in 2020, USA law enforcement recorded 611 instances of firearms use in crowded places, in which 513 people were killed and 2543 were injured⁷⁷⁸. According to the Firearms Incident Archive, 20,000 Americans (including nearly 300 minors) died from injuries in 2020, an increase of 3,600 cases from 2017.

According to data provided by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were a total of 45,222 firearm-related homicides and suicides in the USA in 2020. That is the highest figure since records began, and is 25% higher than the figure for 2015 and 43% higher than the figure for 2010. In 2019 there were 38,355 firearm-related deaths. The mass shootings and firearm-related homicides generally attract a great deal of media attention, but according to statistics suicides are the most common type of firearm-related death.

The coronavirus pandemic has played an important role in exacerbating the problem of violence. The researchers see the reason in total self-isolation, as a result of which social and educational programs were curtailed. An additional

⁷⁷⁶ US mass killings hit new high in 2019, most were shootings. The Associated Press. 28 December 2019. <https://apnews.com/4441ae68d14e61b64110db44f906af92>.

⁷⁷⁷ Shootings never stopped during pandemic: 2020 was the deadliest gun violence year in decades. The Washington Post. 24 March 2021.

⁷⁷⁸ Mass shootings hit a record high in 2020. Can COVID-19 vaccines bring peace in 2021? USA Today. 26 February 2021. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2021/02/26/mass-shootings-soared-covid-black-lives-matter-fears-2020/6784339002/>.

"irritant" was the high-profile death of African American George Floyd in May 2020. As a result, public distrust of law enforcement has only increased. Some urban settlements refused to obey the security forces at all. "Autonomous zones" free from police were created⁷⁷⁹.

The situation in this area has also been exacerbated by an increase in the circulation of weapons. In 2020, the Americans purchased more than 23 million units of this type of weapons – 64% more than in 2019.⁷⁸⁰

According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2021, four out of 10 adult Americans say that someone in their family owns a gun, while 30% of people own one themselves.

As the number of guns in circulation has increased, so has the number of firearms-related incidents. In 2021 there were 693 mass shootings, while in 2020 there were 611 and in 2019 there were 417.

In 2022 so far there have been 198 mass shootings, or about 10 every week. The most serious of these incidents was the shooting in a primary school in Uvalde, Texas, on May 24, in which 19 pupils and 2 teachers were killed by a gunman.

Other shootings occurred on April 3, in the center of Sacramento, in Corsicana, Texas on April 5, and on January 23, in Milwaukee. Six people were killed in each of those incidents.

On March 19 one person was killed and 27 were wounded in a shooting at a car show in Dumas, Arkansas.

A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in April 2021 revealed considerable variety in Americans' attitudes to firearm-related violence. Despite the large number of firearm-related incidents, less than half (48%) of Americans considered firearm-related violence to be a major problem in the country at the

⁷⁷⁹ See, for example, What is the Black House Autonomous Zone? The Washington Post, 24 June 2020; Welcome to the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone, where Seattle protesters gather without police. Seattle Times, June 10, 2020.

⁷⁸⁰ Shootings never stopped during pandemic: 2020 was the deadliest gun violence year in decades. The Washington Post. 24 March 2021.

moment, while 22% said that it was a minor problem, and 6% said that it was not a problem at all.

Given the current situation, rights groups continue to appeal to legislators to tighten control over the circulation firearms. Amnesty International considers that the requirement for people to undergo special training before purchasing a firearm are gun does not provide a sufficient guarantee. Additional measures to directly address violence in "risk groups" are therefore required.

Many states are lifting restrictions on the freedom to carry firearms openly. In June 2021 Greg Abbott, governor of Texas, signed a law allowing residents of the state to carry firearms without a license and without having undergone training. Georgia adopted a similar law was adopted on April 12, 2022.

In 2022 US President Joe Biden proposed the introduction of new restrictions on access to firearms in a bid to resolve the problem of firearms violence, from killings in a number of major cities to mass shootings. His proposals included increasing the minimum age for purchasing firearms from 18 to 21, and introducing stricter background checks on potential purchasers.

African Americans often suffer from the use of firearms.

At the same time, a number of experts note that members of minorities in America themselves take part in the shootings. According to the Gun Violence Foundation NGO, 37% of homicides are committed by African Americans aged 15-34⁷⁸¹.

The UN's Human Rights bodies have been drawing attention to the seriousness of this problem for a long time. For instance, members of the Human Rights Committee (HRC) and of CERD have expressed their concern about "the continuing high numbers of gun-related deaths and injuries" in the United States and "the disparate impact of gun violence on minorities, women

⁷⁸¹ Shootings never stopped during pandemic: 2020 was the deadliest gun violence year in decades. The Washington Post. 24 March 2021.

and children". The UN HRC also pointed out "the discriminatory effect of the 'Stand Your Ground' laws", which, in the opinion of the Committee, were "used to circumvent the limits of legitimate self-defense in violation of the State party's duty to protect life".⁷⁸²

At the same time, the problem of systemic racism has increasingly been used as an element of internal political struggle. Many Americans saw the "root of all evil" in the actions of the previous administration. The claims made by ex-president Trump and his supporters on social networks have been blamed for provoking an increase in violence which culminated in the storm of the US Congress. January 6, 2021.

The massive censorship of Trump and his supporters on social networks was justified by the need to prevent violence, but the politicization of the problem did not help to solve the urgent problems inside the country and did not change the depressing situation in the USA. In fact, political preferences and personal opinions of citizens were subjected to discrimination. Recently, any alternative opinion in social networks has become subject to censorship. The "liberal" public tries to portray those who express such opinions as spreading "fakes" and conspiracy theories. No one wondered why extremist websites of all kinds continued to operate unimpeded.

After the Democrats came to power, the law enforcement and intelligence agencies launched a massive campaign to harass the participants in the "hijacking," who were labeled as "domestic terrorists". More than 2,000 charges were brought against the FBI alone. Hundreds of permits have been requested through the courts to search and summon suspects, and about 500 people have been detained. The media noted that those taken into custody were subjected to

⁷⁸² Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of the United States of America by the Human Rights Committee March 2014

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fUSA%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru, Concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of United States of America by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. August 2014
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUSA%2fCO%2f7-9&Lang=ru

torture and psychological pressure⁷⁸³. With the help of such methods, as well as "processing" of relatives and friends of "domestic terrorists," the investigation achieves the "necessary" testimony.

Members of the Republican party also noted that their supporters were being harassed. Thus, Congressman P.Gosar has claimed that "outright propaganda and lies are being used to unleash the national security state against law-abiding U.S. citizens, especially Trump voters. The FBI is fishing through homes of veterans and citizens with no criminal record and restricting the liberties of individuals that have never been accused of a crime."⁷⁸⁴.

It is noteworthy that amidst the "persecution" of conservatives, the authorities prefer to turn a blind eye to the left-wing radicals who have carried out pogroms across the country during protests in support of racial justice⁷⁸⁵. Law enforcement authorities regarded the actions of Democrat supporters solely as a manifestation of freedom of speech and assembly, guaranteed by the First Amendment to the USA Constitution. This is despite the fact that the riots caused at least \$1 billion in material damage to the property of American citizens.⁷⁸⁶

In contrast, members of Congress have made no attempt to investigate the death of A.Babbitt, who was shot while unarmed as she was attempting to climb into the Congress building. January 6, 2021.

In 2022 26 Nazi monuments were documented in the USA. According to experts, such monuments can be found in Illinois, Ohio, Alabama, Florida, New Jersey, New York State, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin⁷⁸⁷. The

⁷⁸³ Capitol riot defendant claims prison guards beat and torture inmates charged in relation to insurrection. The Washington Examiner. April 8, 2021. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/capitol-riot-defendant-claims-guards-torture-inmates-related-to-insurrection>.

⁷⁸⁴ <https://www.rollcall.com/2021/05/12/at-hearing-republicans-recast-jan-6-rioters-as-victims/>;
<https://thehill.com/homenews/house/553122-gops-gosar-says-jan-6-rioter-was-executed>.

⁷⁸⁵ More George Floyd protests planned at Colorado Capitol into the weekend. The Denver Post. 29 May 2020. <https://www.denverpost.com/2020/05/29/george-floyd-protests-colorado-capitol/>.

⁷⁸⁶ \$1 Billion-plus riot damage is most expensive in insurance history. AXIOS. September 16, 2020. <https://www.axios.com/riots-cost-property-damage-276c9bcc-a455-4067-b06a-66f9db4cea9c.html>.

⁷⁸⁷ It's time to confront the dark postscript to America's role in defeating the Nazis. CNN, 24 February 2021. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/02/24/opinions/dark-postscript-america-nazis-golinkin/index.html>.

authorities still do not consider it necessary to condemn the installation in 2019 of a memorial to Nazi henchman A. Ramanauskas-Vanagas, a Lithuanian, in a Chicago suburb (on private territory). The American media bypass this shameful fact. Criticism from the Simon Wiesenthal Center is ignored⁷⁸⁸.

Both Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are widespread in the USA, which has 50 radical anti-Muslim organizations, and 61 anti-Semitic groups.⁷⁸⁹ Many cases of attacks on mosques and synagogues and their congregations have been documented. In 2021 the Anti-Defamation League recorded 2,717 illegal attacks on Jewish communities.⁷⁹⁰

Based on survey results reported by ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) on March 31, 2021 American Jews continued "to face significant fear and anxiety from the threat of anti-Semitic or other hateful attacks and harassment". 63% of Jewish respondents in the United States "either experienced or witnessed some form of antisemitism in the last five years". 56% of American Jews "heard anti-Semitic comments, slurs or threats targeting others" in the same period, while 9% of respondents said they had been "physically attacked in the last five years" on account of being Jewish⁷⁹¹.

In 2021 a record number of anti-Semitic incidents took place in the USA. The Anti-Defamation League documented 2,717 cases of assaults, harassment or vandalism, compared with 2,024 in 2020. That is the highest number of anti-Semitic incidents in any year since the ADL began to keep records in 1979 – an average of seven every day, and an increase of 31% since 2021. Attacks on Jewish organizations, including on cultural centers and synagogues, increased by 61%, while incidents in schools increased by 106% and incidents

⁷⁸⁸ The BBC Russian service. May 8, 2019 <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-48198574>
http://www.wiesenthal.com/about/news/2019_5-2-simon-wiesenthal-center-urges.html

⁷⁸⁹ Data from NGO Southern Poverty Law Center: <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map>.

⁷⁹⁰ Voice of America: <https://www.voanews.com/a/us-big-city-hate-crimes-spiked-by-39-in-2021-report-finds/6571116.html>.

⁷⁹¹ Survey on Jewish Americans' Experiences with Antisemitism by NGO Anti-Defamation League (ADL), March 31, 2021 <https://www.adl.org/blog/2021-survey-on-jewish-americans-experiences-with-antisemitism>

in college campuses increased by 21%. Assaults motivated by anti-Semitic intolerance increased by 167%, while acts of vandalism increased by 14%.

On February 26, 2020, four extremists operating in Seattle, Tampa, Houston and Phoenix were arrested on charges of conspiracy to endanger the lives of journalists and nongovernmental organization activists. The affected persons were Jewish Americans and African Americans. Images of Nazi swastikas, weapons and Molotov cocktails were sent to them by mail.

During the Israeli-HAMAS conflict in May 2021 there was a significant spike in the number of anti-Semitic attacks, with 222 such incidents in May 2021, compared with 127 in May 2020, an increase of 148%. Hundreds of anti-Israeli protests took place in dozens of cities across the country. Of the 387 assaults on Jews documented in two major cities, New York and Los Angeles, 297 occurred after May 10, when the conflict officially began. Law enforcement officers intensified patrols in Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods.

Anti-Semitic incidents included an attack by a group of people carrying Palestinian flags on Jews dining outside in Los Angeles, aggression against Orthodox Jews in New York, and the desecration of a synagogue in Alaska with Nazi symbols. Pro-Palestinian protests and acts of vandalism in synagogues were also reported in Arizona, Illinois, Florida and New York, as well as in Salt Lake City, where an unknown person painted a swastika on the door of the synagogue⁷⁹².

Other incidents included the desecration of a memorial to Holocaust victims which was desecrated in Oklahoma on February 24, 2021, and an armed attack on a Jewish family with a baby on March 31, 2021 in New York⁷⁹³.

⁷⁹² Who's behind recent rise in US anti-Semitic attacks? BBC. May 28, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-57286341>; U.S. Faces Outbreak of Anti-Semitic Threats and Violence. The New York Times, May 26, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/26/us/anti-semitism-attacks-violence.html>.

⁷⁹³ NY Man Attacks Hasidic Jewish Couple and Baby With Knife. Jewish Journal. April 1, 2021 <https://jewishjournal.com/news/334923/ny-man-attacks-hasidic-jewish-couple-and-baby-with-knife/>.

Another incident occurred in Florida at the end of March 2021. A car belonging to a Holocaust survivor was marked with two swastikas⁷⁹⁴.

In January 2021 journalists from CBS television reported that there had been more than 2,100 incidents since 2016, in which members of the diaspora were assaulted or insulted, or in which their property was vandalized.⁷⁹⁵

Members of human rights community have repeatedly expressed concern about the increasingly tough measures taken by US authorities in order to "resolve" the immigration crisis facing the country. In 2019, the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) were launched, and under the program "certain foreign individuals entering or seeking admission" to the United States from Mexico – illegally or without proper documentation – could be returned to Mexico to wait outside of the US "for the duration of their immigration proceedings".

The practice of artificially creating queues at southern border crossings has been documented, resulting in life-threatening consequences for thousands of migrants and refugees forced to violate USA law and cross the border at inappropriate locations. The impact of the program on children of asylum seekers and border crossers was particularly negative.

US authorities often separated families seeking asylum in the United States once they crossed the US-Mexico border. According to the ACLU (a nonprofit organization), minors were routinely separated from their families⁷⁹⁶. They were then transferred to various immigration facilities. Reportedly, over 2,500 immigrant children were separated from their parents or caregivers. "1,033 of them were under the age of ten when they were detained, including

⁷⁹⁴ Holocaust survivor's car marked with swastikas; auto center tagged with anti-Semitic message. WSVN, March 27 2021. <https://wsvn.com/news/local/miami-dade/holocaust-survivors-car-marked-with-swastikas-auto-center-tagged-with-anti-semitic-message/>.

⁷⁹⁵ CBS News. 26.01.2021.

⁷⁹⁶ According to the State Council Information Office of the PRC, over 5,000 migrant children were "held in government custody in recent years".

185 under five".⁷⁹⁷ According to the organization, as of August 2020, 678 children have been separated by the authorities under the pretext of "parental criminal records." By August 17, 2020 the organization had "filed 400 legal actions against the Trump administration", with one filing (a class-action lawsuit) aimed at blocking "the removal of children seeking asylum at the border."⁷⁹⁸

According to a report published by Physicians for Human Rights on January 12, 2021, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the federal agency that runs immigration detention facilities, had "long been accused of human rights violations, physical and psychological abuse, inadequate medical care," etc. More than 40% of the respondents formerly detained by ICE surveyed "reported experiencing acts of intimidation and retaliation after their complaints" about facilities and their treatment⁷⁹⁹. In 2018-2019, about 2,600 teens were in custody, 5 died. As of March 2021, 4,200 juveniles were incarcerated.

The Washington Post reported on an incident in which 10-year-old asylum seeker W.Obregon was deported to Mexico by authorities and then kidnapped by unknown assailants. Reporters are convinced that there are thousands of such incidents⁸⁰⁰.

Experts also criticized the living conditions of migrants – in tent cities or overcrowded "barracks" type rooms, in rooms without heating and access to basic hygiene products. Frozen foods, including expired ones, are in the diet⁸⁰¹.

Among other problems, analysts note unemployment and the criminal situation. There are known cases of refugees settling in religious buildings and

⁷⁹⁷ ACLU. Immigrant families still being separated at border, 2 2018. <https://www.aclu.org/issues/family-separation>.

⁷⁹⁸ ACLU. ACLU has Filed 400 Legal Actions Against Trump Administration. August 17, 2020 <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/aclu-has-filed-400-legal-actions-against-trump-administration>.

⁷⁹⁹ The Washington Post, 31 2020.

⁸⁰⁰ Migrant boy found wandering alone in Texas had been deported and kidnapped. The Washington Post. 9 April 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/04/09/migrant-boy-found-wandering-alone-texas-had-been-deported-kidnapped/>.

⁸⁰¹ Data from Physicians for Human Rights, Forced into Danger NGO, January 2021

places of worship. Migrants' children are not given the opportunity to attend educational institutions, nor are proper measures taken against the spread of serious infectious diseases, including HIV.

The Remain in Mexico (RMX) policy introduced by the US administration in January 2019, which required asylum applicants to stay in Mexico while they awaited court decisions on their applications, was much criticized by human rights groups. Then policy was alleged to have led to large-scale violations of fundamental freedoms. Nearly 70,000 people who sought asylum in the USA found themselves stuck in Mexican cities near the US border⁸⁰². Many migrants were victims of crimes including sexual exploitation and human trafficking⁸⁰³.

The coronavirus pandemic also violated the right of asylum seekers to a fair and timely trial. Hearings for applicants were postponed indefinitely, further endangering their health and lives.⁸⁰⁴ Following the launch of the Stay in Mexico program, only 615 people (less than 1% applicants) received positive decisions on their requests for asylum in the USA.⁸⁰⁵ In total, approximately 400 thousand people were left waiting for a response to their asylum application in 2020.⁸⁰⁶

Asylum seekers have had their applications rejected and have been unfairly deported to countries where they face danger or even death. According to Human Rights Watch, 138 deported Salvadorans have died since 2013. American deportation centers have also been criticized for holding people in overcrowded and insanitary conditions.

⁸⁰² TRAC Immigration, Details on Migrant Protection Protocols (Remain in Mexico) Deportation Proceedings. Syracuse University.

⁸⁰³ Data from Physicians for Human Rights, Forced into Danger NGO, January 2021

⁸⁰⁴ Data from Physicians for Human Rights, Forced into Danger NGO, January 2021

⁸⁰⁵ TRAC Immigration, Details on Migrant Protection Protocols (Remain in Mexico) Deportation Proceedings. Syracuse University.

⁸⁰⁶ Data from American Civil Liberties Union NGO, Hundreds of Thousands of People in Limbo as they Wait for Justice

Since March 2020 the US Department of Homeland Security has been deporting migrants based on rules introduced by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, empowered by Article 42 of the US Code of Federal Regulations. Human Rights First has investigated at least 8 705 assaults on or kidnappings of persons whose asylum applications have been refused based on Article 42 or other regulations restricting the right to asylum. Many of these people, both individuals and families, are living in poor conditions which are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and by the lack of basic healthcare and adequate nutrition.

On December 23, 2020, at the end of the Trump administration, the Department of Homeland Security, with the support of the US Ministry of Justice, introduced a rule depriving refugees from countries or having traveled through countries with a high incidence of COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, on the basis that such persons presented a "threat to the national security of the United States".

Since January 2021 the United States has deported almost 20 000 Haitians, including children, many of whom were asylum seekers, without giving them access to the asylum process, despite the growing political instability and violence in Haiti.

As of the end of February 2022, direct deportations under Article 42 to other countries including El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras were continuing.

During the Trump administration the United States entered into Asylum Cooperative Agreements (ACA) with Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, and the Biden administration subsequently withdrew from and terminated these agreements. Under the ACA, the US government deported at least 945 asylum seekers to Guatemala without providing them with any legal support. The agreements with El Salvador and Honduras were never implemented.

Leading healthcare experts in the USA have repeatedly stressed that restricting the right to asylum cannot be justified on public health grounds, and that such policies put migrants' health and security at risk. While as asylum seekers are denied the right to apply for asylum at the border, including at the port of entry, vaccinated tourists and other visitors with visas were, from November 2021 onwards, allowed to enter the country via its southern border, a clear example of discrimination against potential refugees⁸⁰⁷.

The policy of not allowing migrants and refugees from Mexico into the United States has been repeatedly challenged in local courts as contrary to the principles of humanity. Despite the fact that one of the Federal instances ruled that such measures were unlawful⁸⁰⁸, the USA Supreme court subsequently rejected that ruling⁸⁰⁹.

In April 2020, over 120 organizations (including human rights ones) urged the US Department of Homeland Security in a letter to halt expulsions at the nation's southern border. The document said that turning asylum seekers and vulnerable children away at the border "without even the veneer of sham MPP hearings" violated "US refugee, immigration and anti- trafficking laws" and "US treaty obligations to protect people at risk of return to persecution and torture", and that such actions were "completely contrary to child welfare standards". Reportedly, "at least 400 children – from Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico" – had already been expelled to Mexico. In some cases, minors ended up in the care of adults "whose relationship to the children has not been checked, placing children at risk of trafficking". Such incidents occurred in part because DHS instructed border patrol agents to "rapidly expel individuals encountered at the border, including unaccompanied children".

⁸⁰⁷ <https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/rsource/us-asylum-and-border-policies-resulting-human-rights-violations>.

⁸⁰⁸ Data from the American Civil Liberties Union NGO, Comment on Appeals Court Stay Ruling in Remain in Mexico Program, 4 March 2020.

⁸⁰⁹ Data from the American Civil Liberties Union NGO, Comment on Supreme Court Stay Ruling in Remain in Mexico Program, 11 March 2020.

Human rights activists point out that the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the situation. The victims were mainly from Latin American countries. Mortality among this population group reached 38.4% – much higher than among the white race⁸¹⁰. African Americans – 27.9%⁸¹¹ accordingly. In particular, the administration of migrant detention centers showed disregard for the people who were there, their medical care, and their living conditions. Results of the aforementioned study, conducted by "Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) staff and Harvard Medical School faculty and students", showed that the number of people per month who tested positive for COVID-19 in ICE detention "between April and August 2020 was between 5.7 to 21.8 times higher than the case rate of the US general population during that same time". Interviews with immigrants who had been detained at 22 different ICE facilities revealed that measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 had often not been complied with, and living conditions at these centers had put detainees at risk of catching the disease. Respondents were unable to maintain a social distance because the detention facilities were overcrowded, and did not have access to soap or sanitizer. Many of those who became infected had to wait up to 25 days before they could see a doctor⁸¹².

Data from analysts at Harvard University, using the Otay Mesa detention center as an example, demonstrates the disregard for COVID-19 sanitation and hygiene regulations, as well as the WHO recommendations⁸¹³. The following data is given⁸¹⁴: there are on average 2 people per 23 m², which contradicts the norms of social distancing for the prevention of transmission of the virus. At the

⁸¹⁰ Data from the USA Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2020

⁸¹¹ The Century Foundation Report. 2020

⁸¹² Praying for Hand Soap and Masks. Health and Human Rights Violations in U.S. Immigration Detention during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Physicians for Human Rights website, January 12, 2021. <https://phr.org/our-work/resources/praying-for-hand-soap-and-masks/>.

⁸¹³ Harvard College Data Analytics Group, www.detainedindanger.org.

⁸¹⁴ NGO Human Rights First, Detained in Danger: Database raises troubling questions about COVID-19 in ICE Detention Centers. <https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/press-release/detained-danger-database-raises-troubling-questions-about-covid-19-ice-detention>.

same time, the sick persons are kept in common rooms of approximately 90 persons per room.

Testing for COVID-19 was extremely limited. Out of almost 26 thousand persons detained in such institutions, only a quarter was checked for the presence of the disease. Tests for the disease conducted in individual centers, however, revealed positive results for coronavirus in over 70% of those who were there. Human rights activists also point to the fact of possible concealment of the real situation of morbidity in such institutions. Many detention centers never released statistics on the spread of the coronavirus, or stated that there were no cases.

In February 2021, a number of organizations (including human rights ones) again sent a coalition letter to the US Department of Homeland Security urging the latter "to reject the use of expedited removal and immigration detention," as such policies "effectively eliminated humanitarian protections at the border in violation of US law and treaty obligations". They expressed grave concerns "with the expedited removal process"⁸¹⁵.

In May 2021 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees called on the United States to "restore access to asylum for people whose lives depend on it". Despite his promises to mitigate the harsh policies of the Trump administration in relation to asylum seekers at the Mexican border, Joe Biden is continuing with the deportations, despite the fact that this policy is putting children at risk, splitting up families and illegally jeopardizing the safety of asylum seekers, including Black asylum seekers, who are at risk of violence in Mexico⁸¹⁶.

In December 2021, following a court ruling, which is currently being appealed against, expulsions of migrants and refugees under the RMX policy

⁸¹⁵ Coalition Letter to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas. Regarding Use of Expedited Removal Process for Asylum Seekers at the Border. Human Rights Watch, February 16, 2021.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/16/coalition-letter-department-homeland-security-secretary-mayorkas>.

⁸¹⁶ <https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/rsource/us-asylum-and-border-policies-resulting-human-rights-violations>.

began again. In December 2021 dozens of members of Congress signed a letter criticizing the government's renewal of expulsions under the RMX policy, and called on it to reverse its decision to extend the scope of the RMX to refugees of other nationalities. The Administration stated that it would use the RMX policy to expel people who could not be removed under Section 42.

Together, the RMX policy and Section 42 have enabled the DHS to block the entry, and return or deport to Mexico, more and more categories of migrants and asylum seekers. In the two years that the RMX policy was in effect during the Trump administration, Human Rights First monitored at least 1,544 officially registered cases of kidnappings, killings, torture, rape and other violent crimes against people who had been sent back to Mexico. At least two asylum seekers who were sent back to Mexico under the RMX policy were subsequently killed.

Media and rights groups regularly draw attention to discrimination against native peoples, who continue to be one of the most socially disadvantaged sections of society. There have been reports on the impact of socioeconomic and income inequality on Native Americans living in reservations. In 2015, "nearly one-quarter of Alaska Natives" lived below the poverty line. This situation gives rise to a number of adverse social consequences. For example, native American communities tend to suffer from lower levels of education and higher levels of crime, alcoholism, unemployment and suicide (50.9 cases per 100 000, which is four times the national average).

According to the American Civil Liberties Union Montana, the state's Native American population has one of the lowest literacy levels of any ethnic group in the country. Children from Native American families often face discrimination in the education system. Suicide rates among young people aged

between 15 and 24 have been found to be similar to those among war veterans⁸¹⁷.

In 2014, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed its concern about the obstacles faced by indigenous peoples "to effectively exercise their right to vote, due inter alia to restrictive voter identification laws" (e.g. many reservation residents have non-traditional addresses), district gerrymandering, and state-level felon disenfranchisement laws. For Native American living in rural areas, distances can create difficulty when it comes to "registering and voting". Hence, some members of indigenous communities do not take an active part in elections.

Human rights advocates have pointed out that there were not enough consultation with indigenous peoples on matters of interest to their communities. Lengthy legal proceedings and high costs of litigation can also negatively impact Native American communities that try to defend their rights. The problems of protecting indigenous peoples' sacred sites from desecration, as well as pollution or destruction due to the activities of extractive industries or the construction of their transportation facilities, tourism development, or the dumping of toxic waste were noted. The restriction of access of indigenous peoples to sacred areas that are essential for the preservation of their religious, cultural and spiritual practices also worried the committee members.

Another example of the inappropriate treatment of Native Americans by USA authorities is the operation of the largest pipeline from the North Dakota Oil Basin, Dakota Access, which was built in 2014-2016 against the long and vehement protests of the Sioux Indians. The pipeline runs from an oil field in western North Dakota, down the Mississippi and Missouri rivers and under Lake Oahe on the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation, through South Dakota and Iowa, and ending in Patoka, Illinois. On its way, the facility,

⁸¹⁷ NGO American Civil Liberties Union Montana: <https://www.aclumontana.org/en/news/contextualizing-federal-indian-boarding-school-initiative-report>.

designed to pump 570,000 barrels of crude oil per day (and its capacity is planned to increase to 1.1 million barrels per day; now it is already 750,000 barrels) affects not only the Indian reservations, but also the crop fields, ancient Indian burial grounds, as well as rivers and lakes that provide drinking water for thousands of Indian families. Protests by community activists against the construction of the pipeline were severely suppressed by the authorities. Attempts by tribal residents of the two Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations to prevent the transfer of oil through a pipeline already built have been rejected through the courts. The Indians fear that the main source of drinking water for the 10,000-strong Sioux Nation would be threatened if an oil spill caused by pipeline damage or even small leaks were to occur. At the same time, the media reported that there had already been cases of oil leakage at the pipeline⁸¹⁸.

In 2020, the US District Court for the District of Columbia revoked a key environmental permit for the pipeline and ordered an additional environmental study. However, as early as September 20, the pipeline operator asked the USA Supreme Court to reconsider the need for this additional environmental review. On September 22, activists in the Standing Rock Sioux community sent a letter to Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Works at the USA Department of Defense H. Pinkham, urging the federal government to abandon the ongoing environmental review of the pipeline and begin anew, because serious mistakes had been made in its implementation. Including withholding key project information from Indian activists and ignoring the technical and cultural information they provide⁸¹⁹.

⁸¹⁸ And what about minority rights? An oil pipeline has been launched over the Indian bones. RIA Novosti. May 14, 2017 <https://ria.ru/20170514/1494257910.html>; The Dakota Access Pipeline Is Already Leaking. Vice, May 11, 2017. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/d7adaj/the-dakota-access-pipeline-is-already-leaking>.

⁸¹⁹ Standing Rock calls on feds to scrap DAPL environmental review and start over. Grand Forks Herald. September 22, 2021. <https://www.grandforksherald.com/business/energy-and-mining/7206681-Standing-Rock-calls-on-feds-to-scrap-DAPL-environmental-review-and-start-over>; Dakota Access pipeline asks U.S. Supreme Court to scrap environmental study order. Reuters, September 21, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/dakota-access-pipeline-asks-us-supreme-court-scrap-environmental-study-order-2021-09-20/>; U.S. judge orders that Dakota Access oil pipeline can remain open. Reuters.

The oil company's actions target one of the most vulnerable Native American communities. The situation of the Indians living at Standing Rock is quite depressing. More than 40 percent of the reservation's population has a per capita income below the so-called federal poverty level, which is 13.8 percent of the median personal income in the USA⁸²⁰.

The media also reported that the Dakota Access pipeline was originally planned to take a different route, which was changed because it was supposed to pass through an area inhabited by the white community⁸²¹.

At the same time, there are also examples of victories of indigenous peoples and environmental activists over oil companies. In June 2021, it became known that the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline leading from Canada to the United States has officially stopped. This was done after President J. Biden revoked the key permission of the White House, necessary for the completion of the construction of the American section of the project with a length of almost 2 thousand kilometers⁸²². The construction of the pipeline through the states of North and South Dakota was also the cause of long-running controversy and also drew criticism from indigenous peoples and farmers, as did the construction of Dakota Access.

The last few years have seen increasing levels of Russophobia in the USA, and instances of the demonization of Russia in official rhetoric and in media reports are becoming ever more frequent.

In speeches by representatives of the US Department of State and in the text of laws passed by Congressional, Russia has repeatedly been accused of pursuing an "aggressive and expansionist" foreign policy, interfering in the

May 21, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/business/legal/us-judge-orders-that-dakota-access-oil-pipeline-can-remain-open-2021-05-22/>.

⁸²⁰ The Dakota Pipeline Could Devastate Some of the Poorest People in America. Time. November 2, 2016. <https://time.com/4551726/dakota-access-pipeline-standing-rock-sioux-tribe-devastate-poorest-people/>.

⁸²¹ North Dakota pipeline: How it favours white community over native neighbours – in one map. Independent. November 30, 2016. <https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/north-dakota-access-pipeline-protests-map-white-indigenous-latest-a7448161.html>.

⁸²² Construction of the disputed Keystone XL pipeline has been terminated. Voice Of America. June 10, 2021 <https://www.golosameriki.com/a/ay-keystone-xl-is-stopped/5924181.html>.

internal affairs of other states, violating human rights at home, and supporting "authoritarian regimes" around the world.

The Russophobia propagated by the American government has had a negative impact on persons of Russian origin (the USA is home to one of the largest Russian expatriate communities, with over 2.8 mln. persons, making up 0.8 of the whole population). During 2021, about three hundred fellow citizens permanently residing in the USA were subjected to prosecutions by the American intelligence services on contrived grounds, thus violating their lawful rights to preserve their national cultural identity and their freedom to maintain connections with Russia.

The work of the Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots (KSORS) was effectively closed down. Members of the FBI questioned members of the organization, searched offices, and confiscated private property – including digital devices – and documents. E.Branson, the Chairperson of the KSORS, was accused of illegally working as a foreign agent.

The Russian position of inadmissibility of putting pressure on our compatriots was more than once informed to the American government. There was emphasized inadmissibility of gross violation of the Russian citizens' rights to maintain connections with their historical Motherland.

In view of the Department of State's failure to respond to a formal communication from the Russian embassy on November 18, 2021, the KSORS decided to cease its activities. E.Branson, as well as the organization's General Director, S.Gladysh, and a number of other officers of the KSORS were forced to leave the USA. In the statement published by the CCRFCO it is noted that the American authorities have created inadmissible conditions for continuing the work on consolidation of the community, promotion of the Russian language, holding memorial actions.

There is continued pressure of the American authorities on representatives of the Russian media who in the recent years on repeated

occasions became victims of cruel and unjustified actions of law enforcement agencies. Thus, while dispersing demonstrators in Minneapolis (Minnesota) on May 30, 2020, the police pored teargas in the face of IMG Rossiya Segodnya journalist M. Turgiev. This happened notwithstanding his showing to the police officers his press card. As could be seen from the video taken at the place of the incident, the Russian had identified himself in a loud and clear manner, he did not offer any resistance and his clothes had the necessary markings.

Another incident happened on the night of July 22, 2020 in Portland, Oregon. Channel One correspondent Yu.Olkhovskaya and operator V.Arhipov suffered from the actions of law enforcement officers in the course of preparation of materials about the disorders provoked by the killing of Afro-American J.Floyd. The "guardians of law and order" inflicted damage to the health of the Russians and damaged their professional equipment – broke the video camera and mobile phone. The incident happened after our fellow citizens had informed about their appurtenance to the media. Total over 30 journalists were wounded as the result of unlawful actions of law enforcement and intelligence service officers in Portland while highlighting the protests.⁸²³

On October 29, 2020 in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), an assault related to robbery was made on Channel One crew. Correspondent G.Olisashvili suffered, operator M.Kataev had a concussion, multiple bruises and scratches. The robbers broke into the Russian citizens' car, stole a bag with personal belongings and funds and a video camera. As informed by the journalists, the local law enforcement officers demonstrated absolute indifference and total absence of any interest to investigate the incident.

On October 15, 2020, officers of the Federal Customs and Border Control Service interrogated RT channel journalist K.Rozhkov during many hours. The

⁸²³ NGO Committee to Protect Journalists <https://cpj.org/2020/08/were-scared-shitless-out-here-four-reporters-on-covering-the-federal-response-to-portland-protests/>.

Russian citizen arrived in the USA to shoot a documentary about America on the eve of the presidential elections. The discontent was caused by his intention to highlight burning issues in the country and, on the whole, his work for RT channel that had been included in the list of foreign agents. They demanded the reporter to open access to all available electronic media, further on – to provide explanations on the information placed in public domain (including about the performed vaccination with Sputnik V) as well as on the correspondence related to his journalistic activity. What happened definitely went beyond the ordinary procedures related to ensuring public safety.

On October 23, 2020, IMG Rossiya Segodnya employee D.Zlodorev was subjected to a thirty minutes' telephone interrogation by a representative of the Baltimore FBI office. Our citizen was requested to provide information about his professional contacts with the KSORS as well as with the representative office of Rossotrudnichestvo (Federal Agency for CIS Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation) in Washington.

In July 2020, YouTube video hosting blocked the accounts of Tsargrad TV channel and the Imperial Eagle historical society. The formal ground was "violation of the platform terms and conditions and of export legislation". In March 2021, the service administration also restricted access to the film of the Russian journalist A.Kondrashev "Crimea. Way to Motherland", and in September 2020 – to A.Rogatkin's film "Beslan", under the pretext that they contained materials able to frighten or shock users.

The Department of State failed to respond to any of the messages from the Russian ambassador calling for a full investigation into each of these incidents, and for the guilty parties to be prosecuted, and for measures to be taken to ensure the safety of media professionals.

After the beginning of Russia's special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect civilians in the Donbass region anti-Russian feeling increased in the USA, and was actively promoted by the media and

official rhetoric. The US authorities orchestrated a campaign to "cancel" everything Russian, which has now exceeded the fanatical anti-Communist campaign of the McCarthy years.

The anti-Russian hysteria is now having an impact on people's everyday lives. Russian restaurants and cafes, cultural centers, and Russian Orthodox churches and cemeteries have all been vandalized. Many states have prohibited the sale of Russian goods. Many Russian speakers have been harassed at work and some have been forced to resign. They are frequently threatened – including with physical attacks.

Owners of shops and restaurants who used in the names of their businesses the word "Russian", or included Russian specialties in the menu, were one of the first to face everyday aggression. It was demonstrated mostly through petty hooliganism – insulting graffiti on walls and shop-windows, negative comments on websites, anonymous threatening telephone calls. However this contributed to spreading fear among restaurant keepers. Thus, Varda M., the owner of the "Russian House" restaurant in Austin, Texas, decided to rename her restaurant as simply "House".

The owner of "Sveta" restaurant in the Manhattan quarter of New York, Svetlana Savchits, who immigrated to the USA from Ukraine in 1993, receives dozens of threats and insults addressed to her every day. She has to make regular complaints to the police because of that. As the consequence of the bullying, Svetlana has changed the gastronomical focus of the restaurant, now calling it a place with Eastern European cuisine.

The president of the association Russian Youth of America Igor Kochin confirmed increase of Russophobia in the USA in his interview to FAN media. According to him, the negative attitude is felt even more, though public catering places do not yet hang out plates "Russians not permitted" and they have not yet started writing "we do not employ Russians" in job advertisements.

I.Kochin noted in particular that Russian children are being intimidated and bullied at school, and Russian adults are losing their jobs. According to him, persons of Russian origin are increasingly losing their source of income. Discrimination is prosecuted by law in the USA, however it is quite problematic to prove the fact of harassment based on national or ethnic origin. Due to such negative background, many emigrants, even those who have achieved great success abroad, started thinking of possibility to return to Russia. The anti-Russian attitudes in the American society not only influence colleagues' attitude towards persons of Russian origin, they destroy families. There are reported incidents when American spouses stopped communicating with, speaking with their Russian spouses or even letting them into the home⁸²⁴.

Performances of Russian classical music and drama have been removed from the repertoire of orchestras and theatres in the USA. In New York literary evenings dedicated to the work of A.S.Pushkin have been canceled, as have concerts by Russian performers.

On February 24, 2022, the management of the Carnegie Hall concert hall in New York announced that the Russian conductor V.A.Gergiev would not be leading the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in three upcoming concerts. The participation of the Russian pianist D.L. Matsuev in a concert planned for February 25, 2022 was also cancelled⁸²⁵.

The US government is continually imposing new restrictions on the participation of Russian athletes, coaches and referees in international competitions.

On April 6, 2022, the Boston Athletic Association, a non-commercial association positioning the promotion of healthy lifestyle as its main goal,

⁸²⁴ "People are being dismissed": Igor Kochin, the head of Russian Youth of America describes how Russophobia is on the rise in America. https://riafan.ru/22912317-lyudei_uvol_nyayut_glava_obschestva_russkaya_molodezh_ameriki_kochin_podtverdil_usilenie_rusofobii_v_ssha.

⁸²⁵ Carnegie Hall in New York cancelled the performances of Gergiev and Matsuev. TASS. February 25, 2022. <https://tass.ru/kultura/13850801>

informed about its decision to prohibit participation in the annual Boston marathon to Russian and Belorussian athletes who were residents of these two countries. At the same time, non-residents are allowed to the competition not depending on their citizenship. Until further notice, the organization refused to acknowledge any designation by the athletes of their appurtenance to Russia and Belarus, including using their state flags⁸²⁶.

Moreover, Russian cultural figures and athletes have been required to publicly denounce Russia's actions in Ukraine.

Bilateral cooperation on scientific and educational projects is also being reduced. Russian research centers, universities and academics have been excluded from American projects, and in many cases the local scientific community are concerned about the situation (especially in joint research projects in the Arctic region). Russians have also been refused licensing certificates under the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates program. The American Cancer Society has pressurized the international OncoAlert network of oncologists to stop working with Russian oncologists. And the Space Foundation has changed the name of the annual Yuri's Night festival, dedicated to the first man in space, to A Celebration of Space.

The US Government has set out to erase all memory of the historical cooperation between the USA and Russia. In 2022 the Russian embassy was excluded from the annual ceremony in which wreaths are laid at the Arlington cemetery in Washington in order to commemorate the meeting between Soviet and American troops on the Elbe in 1945.

In line with the current tendency, public organizations are promoting anything with a connection to Ukraine, in a bid to "counteract Russian influence". For example, the University of South Carolina Symphony Orchestra has removed P.I. Tchaikovsky's Marche Slave, replacing it with The Great Gate

⁸²⁶ B.A.A. Policy on Russian and Belarusian Athletes. <https://www.baa.org/baa-policy-russian-and-belarusian-athletes>

of Kiev, by M.P.Mussorgsky, and in American universities Russian language courses have been replaced by courses in the Ukrainian language.

Washington actively involves its controlled media and IT companies who, using all possible means, obstruct bringing the Russian approaches and objective points of view on the events in Ukraine to the attention of the international community. For these purposes, censoring is openly used, up to full exclusion of the Russian position from the media environment. Both Russian media and common persons who publish content reflecting the Russian positions fall under repressions in the Internet.

Starting from April 2020, Roscomnadzor (the Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Telecom, Information Technologies and Mass Communications) found out over 60 instances of discrimination of videos placed on this platform by the Russian media as well as by civic and sports organizations and their functionaries. The restrictions in respect of the Russian media resources were drastically enhanced in the end of February 2022. Among other things, the accounts or content of the information agencies Russia Today and Sputnik, of the TV channels Russia 24, Zvezda, RBC, NTV, THT, REN TV, Izvestiya, The Fifth Channel, Russian Radio, Tsargrad and others were blocked. Channel One, Russia 1, Culture, RIA Novosti also fell within the scope of the restrictions. According to the statements of the video hosting administration, the content disseminated by the TV channels, including that dedicated to the special operation, "violates its policy".

Simultaneously with these restrictions, the administration and moderators of YouTube do not object to dissemination of information by extremist organizations, first of all by the "Right Sector" banned in Russia and by the "Azov" nationalistic formation. In fact, YouTube became one of the key platforms disseminating fake news about the course of the special military operation in the territory of Ukraine, discrediting the Armed Forces of the

Russian Federation. According to Roscomnadzor, over 12,000 of such materials are posted on the service.

In the end of February 2022, Google prohibited to Russian official media place advertisements on its platforms. In the beginning of March, its management informed that Google Play users in Russia will not be able to prolong paid subscriptions or install paid applications due to decisions taken by the payment systems.

Censorship is actively used by the company Meta that owns Facebook and Twitter social media. These resources also restrict dissemination of content of Russian media, public persons and public figures, as well as of ordinary citizens, containing the Russian position. At the same time, in the beginning of February-March 2022 the calls "to kill Russians", instructions on the ways of killings and making explosives, as well as other similar content, were actively distributed on these platforms. Moderators ignored complaints from users about such definite dissemination of ideology of hatred.

On March 11, 2022 a letter from Meta internal communications was published. As followed from this letter, the company would temporarily allow to Facebook and Instagram in some countries not to block users' calls on violence against Russians including military servicemen. It was also noted that calls to death addressed to the presidents of Russia and Belarus would not be removed on social media.

After the revealed fact of using double standards in respect of Russian citizens, Meta attempted to repair the situation. However, its subsequent statement simply served to confirm its racist publication policy. In particular, it was stated that users would be allowed to call to "death to Russian occupants" but at the same time the platform administration would block calls to violence against Russian civilians. The company also noted that publications on ways of killings would be banned.

The company also did not comply with the Russian government's lawful demand to delete such dangerous materials. On March 21, 2022, the Russian court found Meta company an extremist organization and its activities were prohibited in Russia.

Serious aggression to Russians and even just Russian-speaking persons is demonstrated by representatives of the Ukrainian community residing in the USA. Fearing attacks, Russians try to avoid speaking their native tongue in public places. In this connection, I.Kochin also noted American policemen's accepting attitude to facts of discrimination of Russian-speaking people. Our compatriots fear that it will be demonstrated to the greatest extent in organization of pro-Russian events. Previously, when pro-Russian actions were conducted, their participants were often approached by nationalistically-minded persons who tried to impede the holding of such events. They even had confrontations with the police. However now, according to our fellow citizens' assessment, one can not expect protection from the law enforcement authorities.

Even minimal connection to Russia may become the reason for physical violence. An example of this may be the attack on the American blogger, Brooklyn resident, by his Ukrainian neighbor. It was provoked by the fact that the man carelessly unfolded in the street the flag of the "Somali" division – a present mailed to him by his subscriber from the Donetsk People's Republic. For this, he was hit on the face, and his tooth was broken. The attacker pursued him for several blocks shouting racist insults, Charges have been already brought against him, including those of commission of a hate crime, and a court injunction on approaching the blogger has been delivered. At that, the latter is of both Russian and Ukrainian origins⁸²⁷.

The Rubic website popular in the USA published its readers' stories about demonstration of discrimination that they have faced. Among others, there were

⁸²⁷ Brooklyn man attacked for pro-Russian flag says he got it from YouTube fan. New York post. March 18, 2022. <https://nypost.com/2022/03/18/nyc-man-attacked-for-pro-russian-flag-says-he-got-it-from-youtube-fan/>

also reported cases of discrimination and aggression in respect of Russian children at schools, biased attitude and fault-finding in respect of persons of Russian origin at work, especially on the part of those company owners who were Ukrainian. A large increase in the number of insulting statements on the Internet and in social media has been observed⁸²⁸.

Propagation of Russophobia and its visual manifestation may be next to absurd. After the beginning of the Russian special operation, stickers with the Ukrainian flag at the entrance to shops, cafes, polyclinics, dry cleaners and other public places became widespread in the USA. At that, quite often the specialists working there explain to their Russian clients that in this way they just avoid unnecessary conversations.

It has to be acknowledged that Washington has been avoiding normal, civilized cooperation with Russia in the line of law enforcement authorities based on the Russian-American 1999 Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters. Instead, the inadmissible practice of arrest of Russian citizens in third countries based on the US law enforcement authorities' inquiries is going on. It actually concerns unlawful extraterritorial application of the American legislation against our citizens. Almost 60 such cases have been reported since 2008. In 2021, at the request of the USA, V.Dunaev was extradited from the Republic of Korea, and V.Klyushin was extradited from Switzerland.

On repeated occasions, there occurred situations when American intelligence services organized obvious provocations against and even kidnappings of our compatriots. Arrests of K.Yaroshenko, V.But and R.Seleznev are vivid examples thereof.

⁸²⁸ "Do you speak Russian? Then, you are a traitor": How they treat immigrants from the former USSR in America now. <https://www.kp.ru/daily/27374/4567724/>

Overall, there are about one hundred Russian citizens in US prisons and remand centers. As shown in practice, the majority of them serve punishment for non-violent crimes (violation of immigration laws, fraud, stealing, etc.).

The absence of exact data on the number of detained Russians can be explained by the fact that the US government not always provide information on their detention or release from custody. The application of the Embassy of the Russian Federation to the US Department of State requesting to provide data about the number of citizens of the Russian Federation who are in detention facilities remained unanswered,

As a rule, when our fellow citizens fall into the hands of the American justice they are subjected to biased approach from the investigative bodies and courts. They are subjected to psychological pressure. The well-known situation with Maria Butina is another confirmation thereof.

Using various methods, including direct threats, they try to coerce our fellow citizens to admission of their guilt and plea bargain, notwithstanding the absurdity of the charges, and if they refuse they are sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

The spread of COVID-19 aggravated the already difficult situation of Russian citizens detained in penitentiary facilities. Notwithstanding the dramatic growth in the number of infections, qualified medical assistance is rarely provided to Russian prisoners. They are only tested for coronavirus in exceptional cases.

Despite the many violations of human rights and basic freedoms referred to in this document, and the repeated highlighting of such violations by international organizations and NGOs including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, the USA is continuing to accuse other countries of committing human rights violations, and is setting itself up as the "main global champion" of human rights throughout the world, despite having long ago forfeited its right to such a status.

Not only has Washington relentlessly voted against the Russian draft Resolution of the UN General Assembly against the glorification of Nazism, but it has also consistently initiated the vote on the document, and has tried to pressure other countries to prevent broad international support for the initiative. Along with Ukraine, they remain the only States in the world that oppose the very concept of the document.

According to American representatives, the glorification of Nazism and any other hate speech is an exercise of the right to freedom of expression ("freedom of speech") and assembly, which contravenes, among other things, Washington's obligations under The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, including its Article 4 (the US reservation to this article was qualified by CERD as incompatible with the object and purpose of this international treaty in the meaning of Article 19 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties). In this regard, the serious rise of racism within the country is not surprising.

Ukraine

In Ukraine, the entire range of manifestations of the state policy of the glorification of Nazism and Nazi collaborators of World War II, recognized as criminal by the decision of the Nuremberg Tribunal, has been recorded. To this end, the Kiev authorities pursue a policy of falsifying history by whitewashing collaborators and by systematically taking measures at the country's leadership level to erase such memorable dates from the history of the Ukrainian people, as May 9 – the Day of Victory of the USSR over German Nazism. Distorted interpretations of historical events are aimed at cultivating nationalist sentiments among the general population.

The neo-Nazi ideology has already infiltrated quite deeply into certain segments of Ukrainian society and is firmly rooted in the ranks of the Ukrainian armed forces and volunteer formations. Ukrainian servicemen not only often have Nazi symbols on their tattoos, but also their chevrons with Nazi symbols and mottos, which are often full copies of those used by the Nazis and their collaborators during the war, frequently make their way to the public eye. The commitment of Ukrainian soldiers to the Nazi ideology is also borne out by their actions against the civilian population of Donbass. A great importance is attached to Nazi attitudes and documents by Ukrainian government officials, who consider it necessary to emphasize the "memorable" moments, connected with Nazi activities on the Ukrainian territory during the Great Patriotic War, for society.

Both the neo-Nazi ideology and hateful ideas are introduced into the Ukrainian society through vigorous efforts of the Kiev authorities. In 2022, hatred of the Russians became particularly pronounced; ideas of the dehumanization, which had been tested by the Nazis, are applied.

In line with the attitude of total justification of the crimes of collaborators, Ukraine, together with the United States, remain the only UN member states to vote against the annual Resolution of the UN General

Assembly "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" introduced by Russia together with a wide range of co-sponsors from all regions of the world. To substantiate their position, the representatives of Ukraine indicate that cooperation with the Nazis could be justified if its purpose was the national liberation movement.

The use of such logic has become another alarming symptom, confirming the transformation of Ukraine into a neo-Nazi entity as a result of efforts made by Ukrainian politicians to please and under the direction of "Western partners". Guided by the spirit of the "war to the last Ukrainian" logic, Western curators are using the current Kiev regime controlled by them to inflict, at the hands of Ukrainians, as much damage as possible on the Russian people and state for the sake of their own vested interests in maintaining the illusion of world leadership of Western civilisation.

The efforts to rewrite history and advocate neo-Nazism made by the current authorities are the most consistent. Aggressively introduced distorted interpretations of historical events that belittle the role and contribution of the USSR to the victory over Nazism are aimed at destroying the historical memory of the Ukrainian people about the events of the Great Patriotic War. The cultivation of nationalist sentiments among the general population is facilitated by persistent and sustained efforts of the authorities at all levels which justify and glorify Nazism, the Nazis' accomplices and the various Ukrainian groups that collaborated with the Nazi occupiers during the Second World War, under the pretext that they were part of a "National Liberation Movement". Particular attention is paid to taking a wide variety of measures for state support of movements that honor the wartime collaborators.

It should be noted that for the past few years, under the pretext of the need for decommunization in the country, a legal framework has been developed for the widespread introduction of neo-Nazi ideology into the

Ukrainian public consciousness. The "decommunization" laws adopted in 2015 affected such issues as the provision of benefits to former members of nationalist armed formations and the ban on the use of Soviet symbols as well as symbols and insignia of the Red Army. Among the other things, the Ukrainian Code on Administrative Violations was amended in May 2017 to prohibit the public use, wearing or display of the ribbon of Saint George, (or Guards ribbon) or even pictures of it.

The "decommunization" measures have triggered multiple waves of demolitions of monuments to Soviet-era figures. Although the law does provide for an exception for monuments to World War II heroes located in grave sites and honourable burials, in practice this provision is ignored by both state institutions and right-wing radicals. Moreover, as part of the "decommunization", a campaign has been launched to rename settlements and roads, as well as to dismantle memorial plaques and images related to Ukraine's Soviet past. According to official data, since 2015, 52,000 toponyms have been changed, almost a thousand settlements have been renamed and more than 2,500 Soviet-era monuments have been dismantled.

Furthermore, the renaming activities of local and regional authorities were supported by the Ukrainian judicial system. In February 2021, it was reported that the Kiev City Council prepared an appeal against a ruling of the Kiev District Administrative Court cancelling the city authorities' decision to rename Moskovsky Avenue as S.Bandera Avenue, and General Vatutin Avenue as R.Shukhevych Avenue⁸²⁹. In April 2021, the Sixth Administrative Court of Appeal ruled that the renaming was lawful⁸³⁰. In the same month, by decision of the Cherkasy City Council, one of the city streets was named after S.Bandera.

The "decommunization" process progressed at a very rapid pace. According to the list compiled at the end of May 2021 by the UINM, in Kiev,

⁸²⁹ <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/722799.html>

⁸³⁰ <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/739447.html>

26 sites, including the state emblem of the USSR on the shield of the Motherland Monument, the equestrian monument to N.A. Shchors on Shevchenko Boulevard, the sculptures of workers under the Peoples' Friendship Arch and the bust of Lenin at Teatralnaya metro station⁸³¹, had not been "decommunized".

In July 2021, by a decision of the Khmelnytskyi City Council, the street and lane named after the Hero of the USSR, A.Matrosov, were renamed in honor of the ideologist of Ukrainian nationalism D.Dontsov, the lane named after the legendary pilot A.Maresyev – in honor of the editor of the anti-Semitic Volyn newspaper and a participant of the mass murder of Jews in Rovno U.Samchuk, and S.Razin lane was named after the OUN activist O.Olzhych⁸³².

On January 4, 2022, in Desnianskyi District of Kiev, a tram stop named after General Vatutin was renamed after one of the leaders of the OUN, the "commander-in-chief" of the UIA, R.Shukhevych.

The tradition of celebrating the anniversary dates of Ukrainian nationalists continues. As early as December 2021, the resolution of the Verkhovna Rada included such "commemorative dates" into the calendar of memorable dates and anniversaries for 2022, as the 80th anniversary of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, the 110th anniversary of Y.Stetsko, S.Bandera's associate, the 130th anniversary of P.Sylenko-Kravets, a participant of the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia", and the 130th anniversary of A.Özenbaşlı, a Crimean Tatar collaborator. The document presents these figures as participants in the struggle for Ukraine's independence, without mentioning their links to the Nazis or involvement in crimes.

Earlier, in December 2019, a resolution of the Verkhovna Rada included into the calendar of memorable dates and anniversaries for 2020 the jubilees of such Nazi collaborators, as V.Kubiiiovych (who actively supported

⁸³¹ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/11504093>

⁸³² <https://easaily.com/ru/news/2021/07/16/v-hmelnickom-dekommunizirovali-ulicy-mareseva-i-matrosova>

cooperation with the Nazis and was a founder of the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia"), I.Poltavets-Ostryanitsa (the head of the UNACOM – the Ukrainian National Cossack Movement, which included auxiliary police divisions that took part in massacres of Jews in Volyn, Zhytomyr, Vinnytsia, and Belaya Tserkov), V.Levkovych (a member of the Ukrainian auxiliary police division in Dubno, and later the commander of the Military District Bug within the UIA, who was convicted by the Military Tribunal of the Kiev Region Interior Ministry troops in 1947), U.Samchuk (an activist from the OUN and the editor-in-chief of Volyn, a pro-Nazi newspaper in Rovno that published anti-Semitic articles calling for the extermination of Jews), V.Sydor (a member of the OUN and the UIA who served as commander of a section of the Nachtigall battalion, which participated in punitive operations; after the war, he continued to take an active part in clandestine activities and held the position of deputy commander-in-chief of the UIA until his elimination in 1949), A.Melnik (the head of the OUN board, who openly collaborated with the Nazis, the head of the Ukrainian National Rada in Kiev during the war, the organizer of the Ukrainian auxiliary police units, and the architect of mass killings of Jews), K.Osmak (a member of the OUN-B (S.Bandera's faction), and one of the leaders of the Ukrainian National Rada in Kiev, headed by A.Melnik), A.Vishnyvskyi (one of the organizers of the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia"), Y.Starukh (a member of the OUN board, and an organizer of anti-Jewish pogroms), V.Galas (one of the leaders of the OUN, who led the OUN clandestine network in Western Ukraine, an organizer of anti-Jewish pogroms in Ternopol Region and massacres of Poles), as well as nationalists, in particular, M.Zalizniak (the leader of the Koliivshchyna, who was involved in the massacre of Jews in Uman in the 18th century).

In December 2020, the anniversaries of S.Timoshenko (the minister of the Ukrainian People's Republic, who was responsible for constructing military facilities for the Wehrmacht in Poland), L.Perfetsky (a veteran of the

Waffen-SS Division "Galicia"), M.Kapustiansky (the deputy head of the OUN-M (A.Melnik's faction), who engaged in the formation of the Ukrainian auxiliary units to support the Nazis), V.Shchigelsky (who was for a time a member of the UIA and was executed in post-war Poland for assisting the Nazis), O.Dyakiy (a member of the OUN who was eliminated by the Soviet security forces), and R.Voloshin (a member of both the OUN and the UIA)⁸³³ were suggested as memorable dates for 2021.

On July 1, 2021, MPs from the Sluga Naroda, European Solidarity, Batkivshchyna and Golos parties submitted a draft resolution "On celebrating the 80th anniversary of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army," which, among other things, proposed to return the title of Hero of Ukraine to R.Shukhevych and S.Bandera.

Such resolutions passed by the Verkhovna Rada are being implemented by the regional authorities, which adopt regulations of their own for this purpose. Thus, on December 24, 2019, the Lvov Regional Council passed an ordinance allocating state funds in 2020 to commemorate A.Melnik, one of the leaders of the OUN, I.Lypa, an adherent of the Ukrainian nationalism's ideas, and his son Y.Lypa, an ideologist of Ukrainian nationalism.

On February 27, 2020, the Kiev City Council passed a ruling proposed by the Svoboda party MP Y.Sirotiuk on the celebration of significant dates and anniversaries in honor of the same collaborators in Kiev – V.Kubiyovich, I.Poltavets-Ostrianysia, V.Levkovych, U.Samchuk, V.Sydor, Y.Lypa, V.Galas and A.Melnik⁸³⁴ are among them.

In 2021, by decision of the Ivano-Frankovsk and Lvov Regional Councils, 2022 was declared the "Year of the UIA" in these regions.

⁸³³ <https://strana.ua/news/306764-pamjatnye-daty-2021-hoda-koho-vnesli-v-postanovlenie-verkhovnoj-rady.html>

⁸³⁴ <https://strana.ua/news/252473-kollaboranty-v-ukraine-khha-podderzhal-postanovlenie-o-pamjatykh-datakh-i-jubilejakh.html>

The anniversary of the "Act of Declaration of the Ukrainian State" adopted by the OUN collaborators in Lvov in 1941, in which the "renewed Ukrainian state" pledged to "closely cooperate with National Socialist Great Germany, which under the leadership of Adolf Hitler creates a new order in Europe and the world and helps the Ukrainian people to free themselves from the occupation of Moscow" is very popular among the Ukrainian state officials who support neo-Nazism. In June 2020, the then-mayor of Kherson, V.Mykolayenko, congratulated the citizens on the anniversary of the adoption of this act, placing an outdoor advertisement with a reproduction of the OUN newspaper "Samostiyna Ukraina," dated July 10, 1941, with the text of this document, around the city. On November 12, 2021, in Kiev, radicals set up stands near the building of the Verkhovna Rada with information posters dedicated to the publication of the "Act...." One of the posters reproduced an excerpt from this document regarding the cooperation of Ukrainians with the Third Reich.

The neo-Nazi ideology is being promoted in Ukraine through the educational system. The patriotic education programs for young people incorporate ideas of nationalism and xenophobia, particularly aggressive Russophobia, as well as an ideology which glorifies Nazi collaborators. The Strategy of National Patriotic Education for 2020-2025, signed by P.Poroshenko in May 2019, just two days before the end of his term of office, sets out all these objectives. This document provides for the formation of value orientations among younger generations, with such "heroic" organizations as the Sich Riflemen, units of the Carpathian Sich and the UIA being held up as examples. Individuals involved in the ATO and the Joint Forces Operation in Donbass were also used as role models.

The history curriculum approved by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Sciences for grades 5-9 and 10-11 of the secondary education, as well as for higher educational institutions, are aimed at shaping students' perception of the

Soviet period as a time of "occupation" of Ukrainian lands. The requirements for students include the ability to express a reasoned opinion about the role of S.Bandera, A.Melnik, R.Shukhevych and other nationalists in the "Ukrainian liberation movement".

The Ukrainian authorities actively engage ultra-nationalist and terrorist groups and nationalist battalions (it is known, in particular, about the involvement of "Svoboda", "S14"⁸³⁵ and "Azov"⁸³⁶) in the patriotic youth outreach, providing certain groups with state support through funding for such "military-patriotic youth educational" projects as the Banderstadt festival, the Gurby-Antonovtsy military field games, the Patriot Games, Jura, and the Free People and Young Banderite courses, as well as for the organization of summer camps promoting a nationalist ideology. In addition, many of the nationalist organizations also receive funding from the state budget for national patriotic education, as well as direct funding for their activities from both the state and local government budgets⁸³⁷.

So, on May 7-10, 2021, the Gurby-Antonovtsy field game (the reenactment of the "UIA-NKVD stand-off" in the area) was held once again on the territory of Rovno and Ternopol Regions with the support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, regional authorities and the Youth nationalist congress. The event was attended by about 250 people.

On May 15-16, 2021, in Kovel (Volyn Region), the "National Corps" together with the "Vakhta" radical right-wing group held paramilitary exercises for local youth. The training was provided by radicals from the "Azov" battalion and the AFU servicemen.

⁸³⁵ "S14" is known as an extremist group, with more than one violent racist action to its credit, including the organization of "patrols" in Kiev and pogroms on Roma settlements.

⁸³⁶ By the decision of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation of August 2, 2022, "Azov" is recognized as a terrorist organization.

⁸³⁷ <https://strana.ua/news/247099-natsionalisty-poluchili-ot-minkulta-pochti-polovinu-bjudzheta-na-molodezhnye-orhanizatsii.html>

Radical nationalists exert pressure and interfere with the work of children's institutions. In August 2021, in Khmelnytskyi Region, a scandal erupted around the Chayka children's health camp. L.Ivashchenko, a senior executive of the Plast nationalist youth scout organization (practically the Ukrainian analogue of the Hitler Youth), accused the employees of Chayka of being unpatriotic. The reason for this was the fact that the camp used songs by Russian artists, popular among young people, and the "Victory Day" song in preparation for the contest, where children dance together with their educators. As a result of the scandal, the employees of the institution were fired. According to the director of the children's camp, A.Belynsky, there are no guidelines as to what songs can be used, whereas the compositions are chosen by the children themselves. Commenting on the situation to the media, he also noted that he did not know how to answer children's questions about the ban on the "Victory Day" song, since millions of Ukrainians died in the war⁸³⁸.

The Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UINM) has a prominent role in the propagation of neo-Nazism. Under the former director, V.Viatrovykh, known for his Russophobic and nationalistic views, the UINM was engaged in a number of activities, including promotion of legislative initiatives to glorify Nazi collaborators and to perpetuate the memory of the participants in the Ukrainian "liberation movement", publication of "patriotic" literature and methodological recommendations for secondary and higher educational institutions, holding various corresponding events and festivals (including the Banderstadt festival honoring Nazi collaborators) involving the UIA veterans, the participants of the so-called ATO and Ukrainian "pro-Bandera" historians. Such Ukrainian nationalists, as S.Petliura, Y.Konovalets, S.Bandera, R.Shukhevych, Y.Stetsko, A.Melnik and others, were and continue to be insistently imposed on society as moral reference points.

⁸³⁸ <https://vesti.ua/strana/nastupili-na-gorlo-pesne-est-li-v-ukraine-spisok-zapretnyh-kompozitsij>

Recently, the institute also produces publications to gloss over the facts of Ukrainian nationalists' collaboration with the Nazis.

In December 2019, with the change of the UINM leadership, following the appointment of A.Drobovych as director, the historical policy of the organization remained substantively unchanged

On September 23, 2020, in response to a lawsuit filed by the UINM, the Sixth Administrative Court of Appeal of Kiev overturned the decision of the District Administrative Court, which had, in effect, classified the insignia of the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia" as Nazi symbols⁸³⁹. Three years earlier N.Miasnykova, a resident of Kiev, had brought a court action challenging statements by V.Viatrovych, the UINM's former director, that the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia" and its insignia were not "Nazi" as the division in question had not been formally part of the SS itself, but had instead formed part of the SS forces, mainly serving as a combat unit. The claimant appealed to the court demanding to recognize the actions of the UINM and its head as unlawful by providing one of the Ukrainian online editions with an interpretation of Article 1.1.5 of the Law of Ukraine "On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Regimes and Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols" regarding the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia" (the law lists what is classified as symbols of the National Socialist (Nazi) regime), and also to prohibit the promotion of insignia used by the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (1st Galician), taking into account the subsequent changes of its name. At the same time, the claimant asked the court to oblige the UINM to refute its information regarding the insignia of the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia"⁸⁴⁰.

⁸³⁹ The Kiev District Administrative Court ruled that the conclusion of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory that the insignia of the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia" is not Nazi and therefore does not fall under the ban on symbols of communist and national-socialist regimes is unlawful.

⁸⁴⁰ <https://www.unn.com.ua/ru/news/1893299-sud-skasuvay-rishennya-oask-yakim-simvoliku-diviziyi-ss-galichina-viznavali-natsistskoyu>; <https://strana.ua/news/291280-sud-priznal-nezakonnym-reshenie-o-priznanii-simvoliki-ss-halichina-natsistskoj.html>

On May 27, 2020, the Kiev District Administrative Court found that the UINM has no right to circulate statements made by its leader, and obliged it to "abstain from doing anything to disseminate" this insignia. However, the court only upheld the claimant's suit in part, rejecting other parts. Ukrainian radical nationalists from the "Right Sector", the "National Corps", "Sokol" (the youth wing of the Svoboda party), and "Tradition&Order" organized a fire show in front of the courthouse during the hearing, while the judge and N.Miasnykova's lawyer both received threatening text messages from the unknown on the day before the court's decision was issued⁸⁴¹.

In May 2021, the UINM once again "drew attention" by publishing yet another work containing distorted historical facts. The head of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee, E.Dolinsky, posted on his social media page the information about the distribution of the Institute's manual, which says how to celebrate the Victory Day. In particular, the manual states that the "100,000-strong UIA" fought alongside the Allies against Nazism, despite the fact that, according to official data, in "the best of times", the number of participants of this formation amounted to 35 thousand people⁸⁴².

The Ukrainian authorities also continue to erect monuments and memorial signs in honor of the OUN-UIA fighters and pay tribute to former Nazis who have survived to this day. The largest ultranationalist marches are tied to the date of the foundation of the UIA (October 14) and to the birthday of S.Bandera (January 1). The radicals taking part in such rallies use hateful speech, mostly directed against Russians, while also performing various provocative escapades.

On January 29, 2020, in Ivano-Frankovsk, a former vigilante and member of the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia" M.Mulyk, was buried in the Alley of Glory, in a solemn ceremony attended by regional officials and clergymen.

⁸⁴¹ <https://strana.ua/news/291414-kak-natsionalisty-zastavili-sud-otmenit-zapret-na-simvoliku-ss-halichiny.html>

⁸⁴² <https://strana.ua/news/332149-ukrainskij-institut-natspamjati-sozdal-metodichku-o-pravilnom-otmechanii-dnja-pobedu.html>

Many of those attending the ceremony were dressed in Nazi uniforms⁸⁴³. According to the Ukrainian media, M.Mulyk was the chairman of the regional brotherhood of the "Galicia" Division participants, and an honorary citizen of Ivano-Frankovsk⁸⁴⁴.

In April 2020, in Kalush (Ivano-Frankovsk Region), the Brotherhood of the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia" soldiers presented Vasily Nakonechny, a veteran of the division, with a special award in a solemn ceremony. Such "decorations" are presented to all the surviving members of the former SS. When the 95-year-old veteran of the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia" was awarded, he reflexively extended his arm in a Nazi salute. Earlier, in May 2018, by decision of the Kalush City Council, he had been awarded the title of honorary citizen of Kalush⁸⁴⁵.

The day before, on May 23, 2020, on the occasion of Heroes' Day⁸⁴⁶, all the UIA veterans and their widows living in Lvov Region were paid a one-off cash benefit from the regional budget. A total of 989 people received the payment⁸⁴⁷.

On June 21, 2020, the press office of the Lvov City Council published on the council's web page a message from the mayor, A.Sadovyi, in which he congratulated O.Ilkiv, the former liaison of the UIA leader R.Shukhevych, on her 100th birthday. The message noted, that the city and regional authorities had bought O.Ilkiv a flat in Lvov⁸⁴⁸ for her merits to the state and to mark the 78th anniversary of the UIA.

⁸⁴³ <https://galychyna.if.ua/2020/01/28/martsinkiv-poobitsyav-nazvati-vulitsyu-imenem-mihayla-mulika/>

⁸⁴⁴ <https://strana.ua/news/246875-foto-kak-v-ivano-frankovske-proshchalas-s-umershim-natsistom-iz-divizii-ss.html>

⁸⁴⁵ <https://strana.ua/news/262422-v-kalushe-nahradili-veterana-divizii-ss-poluchaja-nahradu-tot-zihanul.htm>

⁸⁴⁶ This commemorative date was chosen by the OUN in 1941. Since 2014, Ukrainian nationalist organizations have held ceremonies on this date. These events are normally attended by a number of representatives from the Ukrainian national and local governments.

⁸⁴⁷ Manifestations of Nazism, neo-Nazism and xenophobia in Ukraine. 2020 overview and analysis.

⁸⁴⁸ <https://city-adm.lviv.ua/news/society/public-sector/279791-mer-lvova-pryvitav-zviazkovu-romana-shukhevycha-zi-100-littiam>

On July 18, 2020, in the forest between Gorodnytsia (Zhytomyr Region) and Storozhyv (Rovno Region), with the support of the UINM, a memorial cross was erected in honor of the UIA "Brigadier General" I. Treyko. The ceremony was attended by representatives of the local authorities, public activists, as well as a representative of the UINM⁸⁴⁹.

In August 2020, in Kiev, a "Petliura clean-up event" was organized as part of the "honoring" the soldiers from the B.Khmelnitskyi 1st Ukrainian Regiment buried on Zamkovaya Gora hill.

On October 13, 2020, in Lutsk, the local authorities organized the third "For Ukraine! For Its Freedom!" national rebel song festival contest, which was held online only. During the event participants performed songs glorifying the members of the UIA. On the same day, in Vinnytsia, an exhibition dedicated to S.Bandera and R.Shukhevych was held.

On October 14, 2020, in Kiev, radicals from Svoboda, the "Right Sector", and the "National Corps" held their traditional march to mark the 78th anniversary of the UIA. The participants of the march carried photographs of A.Shariy, M.Medvedchuk and other public and opposition figures, which were displayed in glass jars so that they looked like severed heads. The participants chanted slogans calling for a legal campaign against Ukrainians carrying out "pro-Russian" activities, the deprivation of the licenses of TV stations including 112, NewsOne, ZIK, Nash, Inter and Kiev Live, and the abolition of the ceasefire in the Donbass for Ukrainian soldiers.

On the same day, in Lvov, M. Kozytskyi, the deputy governor of the Lvov Region Council, took part in a ceremony during which flowers were laid on the graves of the UIA fighters. Requiem services and processions involving Ukrainian nationalist insignia also were held⁸⁵⁰. In Vinnytsia, the Ukrainian

⁸⁴⁹ <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/na-polissi-vstanovyly-pamyatnyy-hrest-general-horunzhomu-upa-ivanu-treyku>

⁸⁵⁰ <https://lviv.depo.ua/rus/lviv/yak-u-lvovi-svyatkuyut-den-zakhisnika-ukraini-fotoreportazh-202010141229260>

Institute of National Memory organized an "Against the Goliath" exhibition dedicated to the leaders of the UIA, including S.Bandera and R.Shukhevych.

On November 12, 2020, the Lvov Historical Museum, with the support of the city authorities, hosted an awarding ceremony for the OUN-UIA fighters' relatives, who were presented with the "For Military Services" and "For a Special Contribution to the Development of the OUN's Armed Underground" medals.

On January 1, 2021, in Ukraine's main cities, nationalists held their traditional torchlight processions to mark the birthday of S.Bandera, during which they used aggressive Russophobic slogans. According to the Ukrainian media, the number of participants in these radical marches has been falling, which was seen as a decline in public support to nationalists. At the same time, these rallies were and continue to be held without hindrance under the new president, who is quite open about the fact that he is sticking to the ideological course established under P.Poroshenko⁸⁵¹.

On January 20, 2021, in Poltava, a national competition for designing a monument to S.Petliura was announced⁸⁵².

On January 29, 2021, in Kiev, at the behest of the City Council, Bandera readings were held once again. Individual participants of this event were presented with medals to mark the 75th anniversary of the UIA.

In February 2021, in Stryi (Lvov Region), I.Fialka, a former member of the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia", was buried with honors. The event was attended by the mayor of the city, as well as by members of nationalist structures.

On February 16, 2021, the Lvov Regional Council addressed to the president, V.Zelensky, with a request to return the title of Hero of Ukraine to S.Bandera. The deputies also decided to declare 2021 the Year of Y.Konovalets

⁸⁵¹ <https://strana.ua/news/309866-marsh-bandery-v-kieve-1-janvarja-2021-onlajn-transljatsija-video.html>

⁸⁵² <https://zn.ua/UKRAINE/v-poltave-prokhorit-vseukrainskij-konkurs-na-luchshij-pamjatnik-simonu-petljure.html>

(the leader of the OUN)⁸⁵³. In addition, the deputies of the Ivano-Frankovsk City Council put forward the initiative of awarding the title of Hero of Ukraine to the former participant of the Galicia Division M.Mulyk.

On March 5, 2021, deputies of the Ternopol City Council supported a proposal of the mayor, S.Nadal, to name the city stadium – the intended venue for the Ukrainian Football Cup final – after R. Shukhevych. J.Lion, the Israeli ambassador to Ukraine, called on the authorities to revoke this decision. Conversely, the official representative of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry spoke out in defense of the City Council, saying that "the preservation of the national memory is one of the state's key policies", and that such information occasions should be discussed by historians and not by diplomats⁸⁵⁴.

On March 16, 2021, the Lvov Regional Council picked up the trend and proposed the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers to rename Arena Lvov to the Stepan Bandera Arena Lvov. That stadium should have hosted first fixtures of the 2022 World Cup qualification. The initiative came from P.Poroshenko's European Solidarity party⁸⁵⁵.

On April 28, 2021, in Kiev, for the first time, radicals marched in honor of the anniversary of the Nazi Waffen-SS Division "Galicia". During the march participants displayed Nazi symbols. Radicals were accompanied by police officers, who blocked the traffic on many of Kiev's central streets. According to R.Bortnik, the head of the Ukrainian Institute for Analysis and Management of Policy, the march was partially funded by the Kiev City Administration, although it claimed that this had been done in error. Prior to this, such rallies to honor the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia" had been mainly concentrated in Lvov and other cities of Western Ukraine. According to experts, in view of the fact that this had occurred shortly before May 9, the march can be described as a

⁸⁵³ <https://m.day.kyiv.ua/ru/news/160221-lvovskiy-oblsovet-trebuuet-vernut-bandere-zvanie-geroya-ukrainy-i-obyavil-2021-y-godom>

⁸⁵⁴ <https://strana.ua/news/321233-ternopolskij-stadion-poluchil-imja-romana-shukhevicha.html>

⁸⁵⁵ <https://strana.ua/news/323062-arena-lvov-imeni-bandery-cto-hovorjat-o-pereimenovanii-stadiona-v-chest-vozhdja-oun.html>

provocation, and the inaction of the Kiev authorities can be explained as the result of threats from right-wing groups, which had become more influential⁸⁵⁶.

On May 2, 2021, members of the National Corps held rallies in Lvov and Ternopol to glorify the fighters of the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia". Nazi symbols were also used during these events.

In the mid-June 2021, in Kiev, O.Vaskul, the chairman of the Kiev regional brotherhood of the OUN-UIA veterans, former participant of the Waffen-SS Division "Galicia" and former head of the OUN, was buried following a solemn funeral ceremony in St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery, which belongs to the OCU. The mourning ceremony was conducted according to the official funeral rites used by the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense, and included a honor guard from the Hetman B.Khmelnytskyi Independent Presidential Regiment. It was attended by the former Minister of Education, S.Kvit, the former head of the UINM, V.Viatrovych, and by others⁸⁵⁷.

On May 22, 2021, in Strelky (Lvov Region), a solemn ceremony to bury the remains of the UIA fighters took place. The head of the European Solidarity party faction in the Lvov Regional Council O.Duda took part in the action.

On July 25, 2021, in Chervonoe (Lvov Region), the remains of the punishers from The Waffen-SS Division "Galicia" eliminated by the Soviet troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front in 1944 in the battle of Brody were reburied with honours.

In July 2021, in Novomyrhorod (Kirovograd Region), it became known that a children's team called "Hitlerites" took part in street basketball competitions during the city day. This was pointed out by a local resident,

⁸⁵⁶ https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2021/04/28_a_13576064.shtml

⁸⁵⁷ https://aif.ru/politics/world/budni_ukrainy_veterana_ss_provodil_v_posledniy_put_prezidentskiy_polk

former deputy head of the State Agricultural Inspection of Ukraine I.Nemirovsky, on his social media page⁸⁵⁸.

On August 18, 2021, in Litin (Vinnytsia Region), solemn events in honor of the 110th anniversary of O.Grabets, a member of the OUN and the UIA, who served as commandant of the Ukrainian auxiliary police in Rovno and was directly involved in the mass murder of about 30,000 Jews in the city, were held. In addition to the memorial procession along the street named after him and the laying of flowers at the memorial plaque, a round table was held at the local history museum, which resulted in a recommendation to the local authorities to name the Lityn sports complex after O.Grabets⁸⁵⁹.

In September 2021, it became known about plans to install in the central metropolitan area, as part of the "One Stone, One Life"⁸⁶⁰ project, a memorial sign in honor of a high-ranking member of the OUN V.Bagazyi, who was the organizer of the Ukrainian auxiliary police in Kiev and later he was appointed as burgomaster of Kiev by the Nazis. This was reported by the head of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee, E.Dolinsky, who particularly noted that V.Bagazyi was directly involved in the extermination of the Jews of Kiev. According to the media, the name and photo of the collaborator appeared on an interactive map of the official site of the project with the addresses where the memorial stones will be installed and the names of the people in whose honor the memorial signs will appear. The biography of V. Bagazyi published on the same web page did not contain any information about his involvement in the executions of Jews during the occupation of Kiev⁸⁶¹. In response to a query from the RT newspaper, the German Foreign Ministry said that "the controversy

⁸⁵⁸ https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2021/07/22/n_16278944.shtml

⁸⁵⁹ <https://vesti.ua/strana/v-vinnitse-otprazdnovali-110-letie-komandira-ukrainskogo-gestapo>

⁸⁶⁰ The "One Stone, One Life" project is implemented by the Ukrainian Centre for Holocaust Studies with the support of the Kiev City Administration and the Ukrainian branch of the Goethe Institute. The project was co-sponsored by the German Embassy in Ukraine. In turn, it is part of a large-scale decentralized memorial "Stumbling Blocks" by the Cologne artist Gunther Demnig, dedicated to the memory of people persecuted during the Nazi years.

⁸⁶¹ <https://ria.ru/20210928/natsizm-1752215853.html>

surrounding the figure of Volodymyr Bagazyi" was taken into account, and at the moment there were no plans to install a memorial sign in his honor. The German Foreign Ministry stressed that they took very seriously the allegations of Bagazyi's involvement in the Holocaust, and in this regard, the Ministry together with the Ukrainian Centre for Holocaust Studies and other specialists "will study the history of this man"⁸⁶². As of October 12, 2021, V.Bagazyi's biography has been removed from the project website.

On October 7, 2021, near Sokolovka (Lvov Region), a solemn reburial of the UIA fighters was held.

On October 19, 2021, in Kiev, a "memorial cross", made in 2009 to mark the 100th anniversary of the Nazi collaborator S.Bandera, was opened. At the time, a permission to erect the monument had not been granted. But in 2021, the city authorities did not object to the nationalists' initiative.

On January 1, 2022, in Kiev, yet another torchlight procession to mark the anniversary of S.Bandera was held. The procession was led by activists of the All-Ukrainian Union Svoboda nationalist party and other right-wing organizations, as well as representatives of the schismatic Orthodox Church of Ukraine. The main poster of the march depicted the burning Kremlin with Bandera's portrait in the background. The participants of the march also brought a banner calling for a "Nuremberg-2 over Judaic-Muscovite communism" and shouted nationalist and xenophobic slogans.

The nationalist march was condemned by the Israeli and Belarusian embassies in Ukraine. On January 3, 2022, the leader of the Ukrainian Volunteer Army, D.Yarosh (former leader of the radical right-wing organization "Right Sector"), published a post on his Facebook page in which he called the Israeli ambassador to Kiev, M.Brodsky, "an agent of the Kremlin influence" and urged to chase "such 'diplomats' away from Ukraine". The head of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee, E.Dolinsky, in his commentary called D.Yarosh's

⁸⁶² <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/912962-babii-yar-ukraina-germaniya-pamyatnik>

statement "an anti-Semitic message". He considered it "an anti-Semitic division of the Jews into good and bad: a good Jew has to love his murderers. A Jew who does not love Bandera and Shukhevych is an enemy and an agent of the Kremlin, he should be persecuted".

On February 4, 2022, during the European Futsal Championship semi-final match between Russia and Ukraine, Ukrainian fans chanted nationalist and Russophobic slogans, including "Ukraine is above all!", "He who does not jump is a moskal" etc. They also performed the song "Beat the moskal" calling for the elimination of Russians.

On February 5, 2022, in Kiev, the 9th Bandera readings, organized by the AUU Svoboda nationalist party, were held. The conference was led by one of Svoboda's leaders, a former MP of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Y.Sirotiuk. According to the organizers, the readings are an "intellectual forum" that takes place under the auspices of Bandera's ideas. This year's event was dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the UIA. The head of the "S14" right-wing group (recently acts under the name "Foundation for the Future" or "Society for the Future") Y.Karas spoke at the event and stated, among other things, that nationalists "have fun fighting and killing". Furthermore, he threatened that if radicals come to power, Ukraine might attack European countries, Hungary, in particular.

On the same day, in Kharkov, a "unity march", organized by the National Corps and other nationalist parties and movements, was held. Participants brought the OUN-UIA flags and chanted nationalist slogans as they marched.

On July 1, 2022, the Ukrainian ambassador to Germany A.Melnik declared that the Ukrainian nationalist leader S.Bandera was "a freedom fighter" and had not been involved in mass murders of Jews and Poles. His words provoked outrage not only in Poland but also in Germany, drawing criticism from the German Government Commissioner for Combating Anti-Semitism, F.Klein, and from the Israeli Embassy in Berlin.

Right-wing radicals in Ukraine, feeling the support of the official authorities and realizing their impunity, actively employ violence and methods of intimidation against political opponents, civil society activists, human rights defenders, journalists, and exert pressure on the authorities to make decisions that benefit them.

Radicals carry out their actions with impunity. The exponential aggressiveness of such groups, combined with the inaction (and in some cases connivance) of law enforcement officers, creates an alarming situation when the adequate majority is intimidated by marginalized groups.

On May 4, 2020, in Kharkov, radicals from the National Corps, the National Vigilantes and the Democratic Axe organized a demonstration against the appointment of deputy head of the Kharkov Region Council, E.Gritskov, as the chairman of the coordinating council on the national patriotic education. The reason was a photograph, made in 2015, of E.Gritskov with M.Dobkin, former governor of Kharkov Region, holding the red flag in his hands. On May 6, E.Gritskov resigned as the head of the council.

On May 23, 2020, radicals from the National Corps stormed the office of the Opposition Platform – For Life party, known for its stance against the glorification of Nazism and xenophobia. The nationalists tried to set fire to the office, hurled flares and smoke grenades through the windows, doused the building with paint. The radicals attacked the employees of the organization, while taking advantage of the connivance the police, which hampered the work of the office's security⁸⁶³.

In the mid-June 2020, in Kiev, Dneprpetrovsk, Lvov, Kharkov and Chernovtsi, mass protests actions were organized by nationalists, who were against the bill on amendments to the law on the use of minority languages in the education system, which was discussed in the Verkhovnaya Rada. The bill stipulated the postponement of the imposition of restrictions and the extension

⁸⁶³ <https://112.ua/mnenie/nacional-radikaly-napali-na-ofis-oppozicionnoy-platforny--za-zhizn-537009/html>

of the transition period during which the Russian would still be used for the purposes of teaching. During these protests the radicals behaved themselves aggressively, defaced state symbols of Russia, and there were multiple reports of them clashing with the police. In certain regions the nationalists were supported by local MPs. For example, the Lvov Region Council addressed to the president, V.Zelensky, noting that all those who would vote for the bill prepared by M.Buzhanskyi, the Verkhovna Rada MP from the Sluga Naroda party, would be deemed "collaborators" and "traitors to Ukraine"⁸⁶⁴.

In April 2021, nationalists from the Freikorps demanded to dismiss N.Semeykina, a lecturer at the Kharkov State Academy of Culture, for critical comments on social media on the authorities and her estimate of the conflict in Donbass, accusing her of "Russian propaganda". The radicals were echoed by representatives of the university administration. Vice Rector Y.Loshkov stated in this regard that N.Semeykina discredits the title of a teacher with her words, because "if she really has such a point of view and such beliefs, then, of course, she is not fit to be a teacher, a Ukrainian teacher." Later N.Semeykina was included in the database of the extremist Myrotvorets website⁸⁶⁵.

Radicals are also known to freely organize actions against legislative initiatives they do not like and against court rulings against their supporters. For example, when one of the two young people, who doused the monument to General N.F.Vatutin in Mariinskyi Park (Kiev) with antiseptic green dye on the night of February 10, 2020, was tried, the head of the radical group "S14" Y.Karas and representatives of D.Korchynsky's Brotherhood party were present in the Pecherskyi District courtroom. The prosecutor requested the defendant to be taken into custody until the conclusion of the investigation. But judge O.Batrin decided he could be released on bail, which was provided by

⁸⁶⁴ <https://ukraina.ru/exclusive/20200718/1028290011.html>

⁸⁶⁵ <https://strana.ua/news/328307-v-kharkove-natsionalist-trebujut-uvolit-prepodavatelja-akademmm-nauk-za-post-v-seti.html>

M.Bondar, a MP of the Verkhovna Rada⁸⁶⁶. Human rights activists believe that the presence of the nationalists in the courtroom was intended to exert pressure on the judge. There had previously been a number of incidents in which radicals carried themselves aggressively in courtrooms, demanding the release of their supporters.

Another similar incident occurred in mid-June 2020 in Kiev, outside the courthouse, where S. Sternenko, a member of a nationalist group, was being tried for a manslaughter he committed in May 2018 in Odessa. Radicals attacked journalists from Strana.UA and Sharij.net media, as well as ZIK and NewsOne TV channels, who were covering the trial. The nationalists also stormed the courtroom, provoked fights with the police, lit flares and firecrackers, trying to exert pressure on the court. In all such cases the police demanded all journalists to leave the courtroom without giving any explanation, which led to further attacks. Journalist B. Aminov, who tried to interview the accused, was threatened with a "visit from the participants of the ATO, who will show [him] how to love Ukraine." At the same time, one of the attackers were arrested. Moreover, according to Strana.UA, afterwards the police apologized for beating the "activists" and promised to punish those responsible⁸⁶⁷.

Furthermore, Ukrainian radicals do not hesitate to openly disseminate hateful speech at public events.

Essentially, this predetermined the lawlessness that neo-Nazis unleashed on the streets of Ukrainian cities in 2022.

Thus, on 1 February, 2022, in Kiev, right-wing activists organized a rally in front of the Nash TV channel office, during which they burned flares, shouted "Russian, surrender!" and called for "hanging Nashists" (employees of the Nash TV channel).

⁸⁶⁶ <https://strana.ua/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html>

⁸⁶⁷ <https://strana.ua/news.273216-sud-po-sternenko-kak-storonniki-radikala-izbivali-zhurnalistov-i-politsiju-foto-i-video.html>

Along with honoring Nazi accomplices, the Ukrainian authorities endeavor to demolish monuments to the Red Army soldiers. In addition to the local authorities, right-wing radicals are also involved in the "war" against monuments to the Red Army soldiers and victims of the tragic events of World War II, including those related to the Holocaust. Until 2022, Ukrainian law enforcement officers recorded and documented such cases in a unified register of prejudicial inquiries, yet the participants of these blasphemous actions had not been prosecuted.

In February 2020, in Odessa, nationalists removed the memorial plaque with a bas-relief of Marshal G.K. Zhukov from the wall of the Odessa I.I.Mechnikov National University dormitory, where, in the postwar years, the headquarters of the Odessa Military District, led by Zhukov in 1946-1948, was located. It was the last bas-relief of the Soviet commander in the city. The "activists" committed these actions with consent of the University administration⁸⁶⁸.

During the same month, in Odessa, vandals desecrated a memorial honoring the liberation of the city, located on April 10th Square⁸⁶⁹, while in Kiev, two young men desecrated a monument to N.F.Vatutin in Mariinskyi Park by dousing it with antiseptic green dye⁸⁷⁰. The monument to N.F.Vatutin is installed above the general's grave. The media initially reported that the police opened a criminal case under Article 297.3 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (vandalizing a grave or other burial place or a corpse)⁸⁷¹. However, later, when the police detained only one vandal, he was charged with an offense under Article 296.2 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (hooliganism committed by a group of persons)⁸⁷².

⁸⁶⁸ <https://ria.ru/20200204/1564239120.html>

⁸⁶⁹ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/721345-vandaly-oskvernili-memorial-odessa>

⁸⁷⁰ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/716870-kiev-zelyonka-pamyatnik-vatutin>

⁸⁷¹ <https://kyiv.npu.gov.ua/news/novini/u-stoliczi-specpriznachenczi-zatrimali-molodika-za-poshkodzhennya-pam-yatnika>

⁸⁷² <https://strana.ua/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html>

In May 2020, in Slavyansk, on the eve of the anniversary of the Victory, nationalists desecrated a monument in Shelkovichny Park by painting a figure of the Soviet soldier next to the Victory Banner in the colors of the OUN flag. A monument installed on the mass grave of the soldiers who died liberating Ukraine from Nazi invaders was also damaged⁸⁷³.

On May 19-20, 2020, in Kharkov, the monument to G.K.Zhukov was attacked again: for two nights in a row, unknown persons doused it with red paint⁸⁷⁴.

On May 11, 2021, in Novyi Razdol (Lvov Region), vandals damaged the monument to the Red Army soldiers.

In Lvov, the Monument of Military Glory of the Armed Forces of the USSR was demolished by July 2021. The figures of the Soviet soldier and the Motherland were the last to be dismantled. According to the media, all parts of the monument were sent to the Terror Territory Museum. The authorities planned to create a square in memory of Ukrainian heroes on the site of the former monument⁸⁷⁵.

On August 18, 2021, the authorities of Drogobych (Lvov Region) initiated the dismantling of the Eternal Flame memorial installed on the mass grave of the Red Army soldiers who died liberating Western Ukraine from the Nazis.

On October 22, 2021, in Poltava, vandals smashed a memorial plaque in honor of F.Kiva, the Hero of the Soviet Union.

On November 5, 2021, in Zubra (Lvov Region), extremists from the "Society for the Future" ("S14") group damaged a memorial at the burial site of Soviet soldiers.

⁸⁷³ <https://ruskiymir.ru/news/272570/>

⁸⁷⁴ <https://www.interfax.ru/world/709467>

⁸⁷⁵ https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2021/07/24/n_16288910.shtml

On the night of March 15, 2021, in Fontanka near Odessa, malefactors destroyed a monument to the Cheka soldiers who defended the city from Nazi invaders in 1941.

On April 11, 2022, in Mukachevo, the monument to the Soviet T-34 tank was dismantled. On the same day, in Stryi, Lvov Region, the stele to the Soviet soldier was dismantled with the help of special equipment.

On April 14, 2022, in Ternopol, the monument to the Soviet MIG-17 plane, located at the entrance to the National Renaissance Park on the "Eastern" massive, was dismantled.

On April 16, 2022, in Zdolbunov, the monument to the Hero of the Soviet Union, partisan N.T.Prikhodko, was bulldozed.

On April 17, 2022, in Kharkov, militants from the local Kraken armed group demolished the monument to the Soviet commander G.K.Zhukov.

On April 29, 2022, in Rovno, a monument erected on the grave of a division commander M.M.Bogomolov, a hero of the Civil War, was demolished. In addition, the plaques with the names of the Heroes of the Great Patriotic War were destroyed in the city.

In May 2022, in Dnepr (Dneprpetrovsk), a campaign was launched to destroy objects linked to the Soviet past. Among the first to be dismantled was the Zhukov Square stele on Victory Boulevard. A total of 13 monuments fell under demolition.

In the same month, in Zaporozhye, a monument to Soviet pilots – a pedestal-mounted La-5 fighter plane, which took part in air battles of the Great Patriotic War, was demolished on Shevchenko Boulevard.

On May 4, 2022, in Rovno, the monument to the legendary Soviet intelligence officer, the Hero of the Soviet Union N.I.Kuznetsov, who personally eliminated 11 generals and high-ranking officials of the Nazi occupation administration during the war, was demolished. On May 18, 2022, in

Pustomyty, Lvov Region, a monument to the Red Army soldiers who liberated the city from the Nazis was demolished.

On May 19, 2022, the Verkhovinsky village council in Lvov Region decided to demolish monuments to the Red Army soldiers in the villages of Verkhovina, Iltsi, Verkhniy Yasenev and Krasnyk.

On May 20, 2022, the Lvov Regional Council initiated the demolition of all the monuments to the Red Army soldiers, who liberated the region from the Nazi invaders, on its territory.

On May 30, 2022, in Brovary, Kiev Region, the dismantling of three Soviet memorial sites in Victory Park began. A monument to Soviet MiG-15 fighter jet, which was also produced in Ukraine, is among them.

In late May 2022, in Uzhgorod, vandals scribbled a monument to the Soviet and Czechoslovak construction workers with red paint.

At the same time, in Svaliava (Transcarpathian Region), a star from a monument to the Soviet soldiers was dismantled. In Zaleshchyky (Ternopol Region), a monument to the Soviet tankers was destroyed. In Zbarazh District of Ternopol Region, a monument to Sydir Kovpak partisans was demolished. In Iltsi, Verkhovinskyi District of Ivano-Frankovsk Region, a monument to the Soviet soldier was destroyed. In Boryslav (Lvov Region), local authorities decided to dismantle the monument to the Soviet soldier. In Rakhov (Transcarpathian Region), vandals doused the monument in honor of the Red Army soldiers with red paint. After a few days, the monument was demolished. In Rovno, the monument to the Budyonny cavalrymen was destroyed. In Yasinia (Transcarpathian Region), a monument dedicated to the Soviet soldier was also destroyed. In Kapustyany (Khmelnyskyi Region), the bust of N.F.Vatutin was dismantled.

On June 2, 2022, in Odessa, a monument, erected in front of School No. 56 on Tenystaya Street, representing Soviet anti-aircraft gun 52-K, which was used to defend the city from the Nazis during World War II, was

demolished. In addition, in early June, in Mazurovo, Kryvoozerskyi District of Nikolayev Region, a monument to V.I.Chapayev was demolished and the Soviet medal replica was dismantled. In Narodychi District of Zhytomyr Region, Soviet symbols were stripped from the plaque with the names of the Red Army soldiers. In Karlovka, Poltava Region, a mosaic with sickle and hammer was dismantled. In Rovno, the bust of Gulya Koroleva, a Soviet actress and a sanitary instructor during the Great Patriotic War, was dismantled. In Korsun, Cherkasy Region, memorial plaques with the names of the Heroes of the Soviet Union were dismantled.

On June 3, 2022, in Kryvoy Rog (Dneprpetrovsk Region), vandals taped up the memorial plaque to N.F.Vatutin with an information leaflet in honor of R.Shukhevych. Also, the street sign (Nikolai Vatutin Street) was taped up with a leaflet "Roman Shukhevych Street".

On the same day, in Rovno, a monument to the Red Army soldiers was dismantled.

In June 2022, in Buzhsk (Lvov Region), a monument to the Soviet soldier was demolished. In Chernovtsi, vandals doused the monument to those who liberated Bukovina from Nazi invaders with red paint, calling this action an "art installation". In Glukhov (Sumy Region), Soviet symbols were dismantled from the memorial to the Red Army soldiers. In June, the monuments to the Red Army soldiers who died liberating Ukraine from the Nazis were also demolished in Rava-Ruskay (Lvov Region), Berezhany (Ternopol Region), Torgovitsa (Transcarpathian Region), Zhdenevo urban community of Transcarpathian Region, Shumsk (Ternopol Region), Boryslav (Lvov Region), Urezh (Lvov Region), Gukalyvtsy (Ternopol Region), Rozhniatov (Ivano-Frankovsk Region). In Kiev, memorial plaques to Nikolai Gastello, Sydir Kovpak, Feodora Pushina, Pavel Rybalko and Ivan Sergienko were dismantled.

In Lvov, near the Medical University, a plaque was dismantled from the monument to military medics who worked during the Great Patriotic War.

In Kamianets-Podolskyi, Khmelnytskyi Region, a Soviet T-34 tank was dismantled from its pedestal.

In Uzhgorod, the second memorial plaque to Ivan Ankudinov, the Great Patriotic War veteran and the Hero of the Soviet Union, was dismantled.

In Kropyvnytskyi (formerly Kirovograd), the memorial plaque to Semyon Budyonny was removed.

In Pryvolna urban community of Volyn Region, a monument to Chekists was dismantled.

In Podobna, Cherkasy Region, the bust of Nikolai Shchors was demolished.

In Rovno, the pedestal of the monument to the participant of the First World War and the Russian Civil War Oleko Dundich was dismantled. Earlier, vandals had damaged the monument by ripping off the sculpture's head. Then the remains of Oleko Dundich were reburied – they were transferred from the city center to the local cemetery.

On August 19, 2022, in Lvov, the local City Council decided to dig out and transfer the remains of the Soviet soldiers, who died during the Great Patriotic War and were buried at the Field of Mars military memorial.

The radicals attacked not only memorials honoring the Red Army soldiers who fought the Nazis and Ukrainian nationalists, but also monuments dedicated to the representatives of Russian culture and great figures of the Russian Empire. On February 3, 2022, in Poltava, the monument to the Russian commander A.V.Suvorov was dismantled. The justification was that it was "not a monument of history, art, culture, architecture, urban planning, science and technology" and had "elements of Soviet propaganda".

The monument originally stood in the courtyard of the Kiev Suvorov Military School (renamed to the I.Bogun Military High School in 1992). In January 2019, the monument was dismantled following the initiative of the High Schools's directorate and with the support of the Deputy Prime Minister

V.Kyrylenko and the head of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory V.Viatrovykh. Later, the monument to A.V.Suvorov was put on display at the Poltava Museum of Heavy Bomber Aviation, which is a branch of the National Museum of Military History.

On April 7, 2022, in Mukachevo (Transcarpathian Region), the monument-bust to Alexander Pushkin was dismantled and the memorial plaque to the school that bore his name was removed. The decision was made by the local authorities.

On April 9, 2022, the Ternopol authorities decided to dismantle the monument to A.S.Pushkin. In justifying this decision, mayor S. Nadal stated that "everything Russian should be dismantled, including the monument to the Russian writer".

On April 10, 2022, by decision of the Uzhgorod authorities, a monument to the Russian poet was dismantled.

On April 30, 2022, in Cherkasy, the authorities decided to burn off the inscription on the reunification of Ukraine with Russia, which had been on the monument to B. Khmelnytskyi for many years, with a blowtorch.

On May 1, 2022, in Sumy, it was reported that the monument to the Sumy hussars had been destroyed. The only reason radicals were not pleased with them was that they had represented the Imperial Russian Army.

On the same day, in Vinnytsia, a monument to writer M.Gorky was demolished.

On May 16, 2022, in Leventsovka, Poltava Region, a bust of M.Gorky was dismantled. It was transferred to the "Soviet Period Park" in Putyvl. Also, by decision of the executive committee of the Kozelshchyna village council, Kremenchuk District, the operation of the Maxim Gorky Museum in Manuylivka was suspended.

In mid-May, in Kegychivka, Kharkov Region, it was reported that yet another monument to M.Gorky had been demolished. In addition, in Kharkov, a

monument to Russian Prince Alexander Nevsky, a revered Orthodox saint, was demolished.

On May 19, 2022, the authorities of Pereiaslavl, Kiev Region, decided to demolish the monument in honor of reunification with Russia.

On May 21, 2022, in Nikolayev, the monument to A.S.Pushkin, which had been installed in the square at the intersection of Pushkinskaya and Naberezhnaya Streets, was removed from its pedestal.

In late May 2022, in Aleksandriia, Kirovograd Region, the M.Gorky school and Dneprpetrovsk highway were renamed. At the same time, the issue of dismantling the bust of M.Gorky is being addressed. The monument to the writer was also demolished in Golozubyntsy, Khmelnytskyi Region. And in Karlovka, Poltava Region, a bust to the Soviet state official Nikolay Podgorny, a native of Poltavshchyna, was dismantled. In Dnepr (former Dneprpetrovsk), a monument and memorial plaques installed in honor of the famous Soviet doctor N.A.Semashko were demolished.

In the same period, a number of memorial sites was attacked by vandals. In Kharkov, the bust of Yevdokim Shcherbinin, the head of Sloboda Ukraine Governorate, was doused with paint. And on 29 May, in Izmail (Odessa Region), a monument to A.V.Suvorov was doused with red paint.

On May 2, 2022, in Chernigov, the monument to A.S.Pushkin was destroyed by the territorial defence soldiers.

On June 3, 2022, in Kiev, a memorial plaque to Leo Tolstoy was dismantled.

In June 2022, the Khmelnytskyi Regional Council decided to demolish the monument to writer N.A.Ostrovsky in Shepetivka.

On June 29, 2022, in Boiarka, Kiev Region, the monument to N.A.Ostrovsky was dismantled.

The surviving monuments to communist figures in Ukraine also came under attack. In late May 2022, in Khotyn, Chernovtsi Region, a bust of Karl Marx, was demolished.

In recent years, it has become a tradition for nationalists and right-wing radicals, acting with connivance of the Ukrainian authorities, to actively disrupt events commemorating Victory Day and other significant dates, as well as anti-fascist events. Generally, no follow-up measures are taken in relation to threats to anti-fascist activists. The Ukrainian police did nothing to prevent the unlawful acts of these malefactors and certainly did not hold them legally accountable, instead allowing the radicals to hide and to single out their victims. The actions of the nationalists were classified as hooliganism, irrespective of the motivations and actual nature of their conduct. At the same time, the police initiated cases against those who displayed Soviet symbols. Experts saw such actions by the Kiev authorities as an attempt to intimidate the activists, to create an atmosphere for them in which they would feel uncomfortable admitting that members of their families served in the Soviet Army.

In 2018-2019, in Kiev, on Victory Day, nationalists wearing clothes with Nazi symbols attacked E.Berezhnaya, the director of the Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection, who organized commemorative events. The law enforcement officers were oblivious to the radicals' doings, yet they arrested the victim⁸⁷⁶.

On May 9, 2020, on the 75th anniversary of the Victory over Nazi Germany, Ukrainian nationalists organized a number of blasphemous actions, despite the restrictions imposed by the authorities to prevent the spreading of Covid-19. In Odessa they interrupted a motor rally, instigated fights and hindered celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the Victory. The radicals also organized marches during which they carried portraits of Nazi accomplices

⁸⁷⁶ Infringement of rights and freedoms in Ukraine. Manifestation of discrimination, incitement of ethnic hatred, hate crimes and extremism. Report for the OSCE human dimension implementation meeting 2019. The Institute of legal policy and social protection, the Antifascist human rights legal league. 2019.

from the OUN, the UIA and similar organizations, as well as the insignia of the Nazi Waffen-SS Division "Galicia"⁸⁷⁷. In Lvov, young neo-Nazis organized a rally on the Hill of Glory, during which they displayed Nazi symbols and played a recording stylized as a Nazi occupiers' bulletins, while residents were laying flowers at the tombs of soldiers who had died in the war. The Ukrainian authorities were completely oblivious to all of such incidents⁸⁷⁸. In Kharkov, activists from the "Freikorps"⁸⁷⁹, the ATO Veterans Union, the "Right Sector", and the Veterans' League for the Defense of Ukraine hung banners from three bridges, each bearing the provocative slogan: "Дякую діду за те, що давив московську гниду" ("Thank you Grandad for squashing the Muscovite nit")⁸⁸⁰.

In 2021, memorial events to mark Victory Day once again became the scene of fights and attacks carried out by radicals. Nationalists attacked a reporter from RT Ruptly news video agency after he had interviewed passers-by in a Ukrainian city about their attitudes towards Victory Day. In Odessa's Alley of the Unknown Seaman, a fight broke out right in front of a camera operator of Strana.ua agency when nationalists tried to wrestle a portrait of G.K.Zhukov with a Saint George's ribbon attached to it from a woman who was holding it. The police did not try to arrest the attackers, but instead took the victim to the police station. Also in Odessa, police officers arrested a 63-year-old man who had come to Shevchenko Park wearing a Saint George's ribbon⁸⁸¹. On May 10, 2021, the press service of the Odessa Region police reported the initiation of criminal proceedings against a resident of the city who wore a forage cap with Soviet symbols during the celebration of Victory Day.

On May 9, 2021, in Kiev, official events to mark Victory Day were cancelled due to martial law. However, people were able to come to Park of

⁸⁷⁷ <https://ria.ru/20200509/1571213659.html>

⁸⁷⁸ <https://tass.ru/politika/8476375>

⁸⁷⁹ After World War I, the same name was used by right-wing volunteer units in Germany, many of whom later joined the Nazi party

⁸⁸⁰ https://www.sq.com.ua/rus/news/novosti/09.05.2020/den_pobedy_natsionalisty_razvesili_po_harkovu_bannery_foto/

⁸⁸¹ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/860361-ukraina-9-maya-zelenskii-napadeniya>

Glory privately to lay flowers at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. There were far fewer people in Park of Glory than in previous years. On May 9, in Odessa, a 24-hour curfew, which lasted from 22:00 of May 8 until 05:00 of May 10, was declared. The same was done in Zaporozhye, where a curfew was imposed from 19:00 of May 8 until 5:00 of May 10.

The Ukrainian president, V.Zelensky, while congratulating Ukrainians on Victory Day, published a post on his Telegram channel with a photo of a serviceman wearing a patch displaying the insignia of the Nazi SS Panzer Division "Totenkopf" on his uniform.

The canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), that the Kiev government has been trying to uproot from the country's confessional environment for many years, got under the blow of the Russophobic manifestations. A large-scale information campaign was launched against the UOC clergy, aimed to discredit its priests in the eyes of the parishioners and to turn them into an image of "enemy accomplices". Slandorous rumours are spread about archpriests of parishes, numerous fake news is posted on social network saying the church hierarchs allegedly assist the Russian Armed Forces storing food for them and forming arms caches. Every day, denunciations are sent to the Ukrainian police and the SBU about alleged storage of weapons, ammunition, and food in the UOC churches for "the aggressor". Ukrainian politicians and public persons call for prohibiting the UOC and for depriving it of its property.

Some legislative steps have already been taken in this respect. Two bills aimed against the UOC were registered in the Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine. Draft law No. 7204 dated March 22, 2022, proposed by the representative of the AUU Svoboda nationalist party O. Savchuk provides for, in particular, direct ban on the activities of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine and nationalization of all the assets of the Church. Those religious communities who wish to avoid restrictions will be provided 14 days for "changing their jurisdiction". A

document similar in trend but more lenient in terms of its contents, No. 7213, was proposed on March 26, 2022, by the inter-fraction group of MPs who are supporters of the OCU. This draft law does not contain a direct reference to the Moscow Patriarchate; however, it proposes to introduce restrictive measures against confessions "whose directing centre is located outside Ukraine."

A significant role in the "offensive" against the UOC was assigned to radical nationalists who carry out raids on churches. The UOC parishes become targets of numerous marauders who justify their plundering by struggle against "occupants" and their "spiritual lackeys". Videos of these actions are disseminated on social media in Ukraine with calls to follow these examples.

On 3 February, 2022, the "Khotyn Fortress" State Historical and Architectural Reserve refused to extend the term of use of the church with the UOC, which had rebuilt the church from ruins with its own resources, and closed it. The rejection was the result of strong pressure exerted by representatives of the "Right Sector", demanding for handover of the church to the OCU.

Multiple fakes about "saboteur priests" are spread on social media as provocations against the UOC. For example, the Kiev Metropolitanate of the UOC MP issued a refutation of disinformation about a priest who had been allegedly detained along with a 38-year-old man suspected of espionage by law enforcement officers in Kiev. There was also a misinformation that a group of saboteurs (two of whom were eliminated during the arrest) was allegedly uncovered in Belaya Tserkov in the St. Mary Magdalene monastery.

In 2022, nationalists became active again by employing violent tactics in respect of the UOC clergy. At least 4 cases of kidnapping of priests of the canonical church were reported in March alone. On March 9, the rector of the Dukonya Holy Trinity Monastery of the Ivano-Frankovsk diocese, archimandrite Tita (Drachuk) and an acolyte disappeared. A few days later they were found exhausted in the Chernovtsi Region. It turned out that they had been

interrogated and then banned not only from holding services in the city but also from living there. On March 16, in Ivanovka, Zhytomyr Region, the rector of the church, archimandrite Lavr (Berezovsky), was attacked. On the same day, in Tomashivka, Fastiv District of Kiev Region, Father Gennady was kidnapped. On March 28, in Smela, Cherkasy Region, during the divine service in the Church of the Intercession, hieromonk Vasily was kidnapped by armed persons. The fate of protoiereus Viktor Talko, the rector of the Archangel Michael church (Borodianka, Kiev Region) and his family members remains unknown. All of them ceased to be in touch in early March. Earlier, the priest had been threatened because he had dared to express his assessment of the political situation in Ukraine to the Russian media.

Violence against the UOC clergymen also continues unabated. In March 2022, in Vinnytsia Region alone, at least six cases were recorded. On March 6, in Malye Kryshlentsi, radicals broke into a church during a divine service, desecrated the altar, beat the priest and dragged him out into the street. On March 12, in Lavrovka, Vinnytsia Region, supporters of the OCU tried to throw the priest and parishioners out on the street during a divine service, threatening physical violence. The police, upon arriving at the scene, closed and sealed the church. However, a few days later it was reopened, but for supporters of the OCU. On March 13, in Sosnovka, the schismatics forced the chairman of the parish council to open the church, allegedly for weapons checks. Then the village elder forcibly took the keys to the church and gave them to supporters of the OCU. On the same day, in Penkovka, radicals sawed off padlocks and seized the premises of the local church. The malefactors tossed the church utensils and liturgical books belonging to the community out the window into the street. On March 19, in Miziakovskie Hutory, representatives of the territorial defence blocked the passage to the church and did not let the priest and parishioners in, threatening them with violence. On March 20, the same individuals seized a church in the neighbouring Pereorky. And in Bolshie

Kryshlentsi, the local supporters of the OCU attempted to take the keys to the church from the UOC priest, threatened to disrupt the divine service and forced him to join the schismatic entity.

In Ivano-Frankovsk Region, schismatics, with the help of the Territorial Defence, seized the St.Nicholas church in Kalush, the Conception Church in Verkhovina, and the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary Icon "Pantanassa" in Tseniava. In Golovy, the Church of the Intercession on Markova Hill was closed, and, in Shkindovskii Grun, the chapel was sealed. In Babianka, the monks of the Archangel Michael monastery were evicted.

On March 23, 2022, D.Govseev, the chief physician of the Kiev municipal maternity hospital No. 5, evicted protoiereus G.Storozhenko from the parish of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary Icon "Our Lady of the Sign", located on the territory of the hospital, for opposing the conversion to the OCU. The priest and his family were given 3 hours to pack in order to vacate the church housing and the church. In addition, several searches were conducted in the church and the priest's home. As the priest and his family drove out of the church's premises on their own car, armed men tried to impede them and to search the car. Only on the request of the parishioners to release the priest's family, were they able to leave the territory of the maternity hospital.

On April 3, 2022, in Dolina (Ivano-Frankovsk Region), the St. John the Baptist church of the UOC was closed following the search conducted by the law enforcement officers. This was done with the active support of the City Council.

On April 8, 2022, in Ivano-Frankovsk, priests and parishioners of the Cathedral of the Nativity of Christ, clergy and believers of the Ivano-Frankovsk diocese of the UOC issued an appeal to the Ukrainian president in connection with the pressure and threats that clergy and believers were subjected to by the authorities and supporters of the OCU. According to the believers, on April 4, 2022, the mayor of Ivano-Frankovsk, R.Martsinkiv, addressed the citizens with

the news about the alleged "voluntary" change of confessional affiliation by the religious community of the Cathedral of the Nativity of Christ and urged the citizens to help the community convert to another confession. The parishioners perceived this call for "help" as coercive pressure on the religious community to change allegiance and a threat to seize the church by force if this was not done.

On April 10, 2022, in Mikhalcha, Chernovtsi Region, representatives of the OCU, together with armed men, seized the Church of the Dormition of the UOC.

On April 14, 2022, in Kruhlyk, Kiev Region, a group of armed men led by "OCU hierarch" A.Drabinko forcibly seized the Dormition of the Mother of God Church. The malefactors kicked down the door and announced the "voluntary" conversion of the UOC religious community.

In early May 2022, in Pereniatyn, the head of the Dubno military administration, V.Pekarskyi, gave the keys to the previously sealed UOC church to supporters of the OCU. In Palche, Volyn Region, "activists" sawed off padlocks of the Church of the Intercession and handed it over to the schismatics, and in Ozero (the same region), UOC parishioners were "converted" to the OCU while they prayed in the church.

On May 21, 2022, schismatics from the OCU, supported by the police and the Territorial Defence, seized the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Ivankov (Kiev Region) and the church in Belashov (Rovno Region). The takeover was accompanied by altercations instigated by supporters of the OCU.

On May 26, 2022, it was reported, that the St. John the Evangelist church in Fursy (Kiev Region) had been forcibly seized. Supporters of the OCU physically assaulted the rector of the church, protoiereus Andriy Mukha, and UOC parishioners. The rector of the church said that after it became known of the impending provocations, the religious community of the church on behalf of the parish assembly officially appealed to the chairman of the territorial

community, the Interior Ministry and the SBU to prevent illegal actions, seizure of property and interference in the affairs of the church community. However, no actions were taken by the authorities.

On May 30, 2022, in Tsarevka, Zhytomyr Region, supporters of the OCU, led by men in priestly attire, attempted to seize the St. Prince Alexander Nevsky church. The clergy and parishioners were able to defend their church.

In addition to the use of violence and intimidation, radicals, together with adherents of the OCU, actively organize acts of vandalism and provocations against churches and priests of the canonical UOC.

On May 9, 2022, in Dorogostai, Rovno Region, unknown persons doused the yard, fences, crosses and the Saint Spyridon church with animal blood.

On May 22, 2022, in Stryi, Lvov Region, the rector of the Church of the Resurrection, protoiereus Volodymyr Mandzyuk, was doused in his face with antiseptic green dye during the divine service.

On May 23, 2022 it became known that in Cherniatyn (Vinnytsia Region), a crowd of aggressive supporters of the OCU, threatening parishioners and a UOC priest, had arbitrarily replaced the locks in the Church of St. Stephen the Archdeacon. The takeover began during a Sunday divine service that was being held by the community of the canonical church. At first, the schismatics interfered with the service, then they started to show aggression, shouting slogans and threats. Then the supporters of the OCU held a "vote" for the conversion to the new structure and arbitrarily closed the church with their padlocks. None of the actual parishioners of the church took part in the vote.

On May 29, 2022, supporters of the OCU came to Sunday divine services in the UOC parishes in Lvov, Volyn, Rovno, Zhytomyr and Kiev Regions to disrupt the prayers of Orthodox believers. In Lvov, during a divine service in the St. Vladimir Church of the UOC, several women disrupted the service, humiliated and insulted the believers. They also provoked refugees who had come to pray in the church. As a result, an elderly woman from Kharkov region

felt ill. In Ozhyshe, Volyn Region, also during the divine service, supporters of the OCU stormed the St. Michael's Church and demanded to give them the church. They were very aggressive and attacked the believers. In Glinsk, Rovno Region, during the cross procession around the Church of the Dormition, supporters of OCU staged provocations against the UOC parishioners.

In Lvov, the UOC-owned Church of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince Vladimir was attacked by vandals several times in May 2022 alone. On May 1, radicals tried to disrupt a divine service in the church; on May 8, unknown persons poured foam over the door to the church and painted it. On May 14, vandals tried to set fire to the church and once again desecrated its walls with writings. On May 25, unidentified people sprayed offensive graffiti on the church. On May 28, vandals once again desecrated the church, by spraying insulting graffiti and crossing out crucifixes.

On June 14, in Novozhyvotov, Vinnytsia Region, an unidentified group attacked the home of Father Pyotr Monastyrsky, the rector of the UOC Church of the Intercession. The vandals pelted the priest's house with stones, breaking the windows.

On the night of June 19-20, 2022, in Lvov, a fire broke out in Church of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince Vladimir in the Lvov-Sikhov neighbourhood. Law enforcement officers do not rule out arson.

In addition to the large-scale campaigns aimed at making heroes of radical nationalists and those who organized and took part in the massacres of Ukraine's Jewish population during the World War II, observers have also noted a significant increase in anti-Semitism in Ukraine.

It goes so far as to direct borrowing of methods used by the Nazis. The incident against the Jewish community in Kolomyia is illustrative in this respect. On February 11, 2020, the head of the local Jewish community, Y.Zalitsker, received a letter from the Ivano-Frankovsk regional subdivision of the National Police, requesting him to provide them with a complete list of all

Jewish residents, including students, with their addresses and contact details. This demand was justified by being a part of the fight against organized crime⁸⁸².

According to a survey conducted by the Anti-Defamation League, Ukraine is the second most anti-Semitic country in Europe. In 2016, 32% of Ukrainians admitted to being intolerant of Jews, and by 2019 the proportion was 46%⁸⁸³.

The Kantor Center's report on the state of anti-Semitism around the world confirms that in 2020, in Ukraine, there were more recorded anti-Semitic incidents than in previous years⁸⁸⁴.

The United Jewish Community of Ukraine's 2020 report on anti-Semitism⁸⁸⁵ mentions, among other things, attacks on synagogues in Vinnytsia and Mariupol, as well as an attempted arson of a synagogue in Kherson, which occurred on April 20, 2020. As the investigation into the latter incident revealed, the perpetrators espoused Nazi ideology and attempted to set fire to a synagogue building to celebrate the anniversary of Hitler's birthday.

On September 11, 2020, in Uman (Cherkasy Region), a "Hasidim are not served/Hasidim are not allowed in" sign in Ukrainian/Hebrew appeared in the Kozeroz café.

On the night of 24-25 October 2020, in Melitopol (Zaporozhye Region), unknown persons desecrated the monument "Lament for the Unborn" erected in memory of Holocaust victims.

In December 2020, the staff of the South-Eastern Interregional Unit of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory used anti-Semitic images in presentation materials.

⁸⁸² Found on the Internet- an order from the Ukrainian police on the submission of a list of Jews. Lenta.ru. May 13, 2020 https://lenta.ru/news/2020/05/13/perepis_jude/

⁸⁸³ Survey: About 1 in 4 Europeans hold anti-Semitic beliefs. Associated Press. November 21, 2019 <https://apnews.com/f18c9fa70b794974b214b6e9f1552cfd>

⁸⁸⁴ <https://lenta.ru/news/2021/04/07/antisemitism/>

⁸⁸⁵ 2020 Report on anti-Semitism in Ukraine, <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/otchyot-po-antisemitizmu-v-ukraine-za-2020-god>

In 2021, the total number of anti-Semitic incidents was slightly higher than in 2020. At the same time, there was an increase in anti-Semitic vandalism, which peaked during Hanukkah celebrations at the end of November-beginning of December 2021. At the time, in Lisichansk, six khanukiyahs and a memorial to Holocaust victims in were vandalized by anti-Semites⁸⁸⁶.

In 2022, anti-Semitic acts and attacks continued.

On January 18, 2022, in Lisichansk, another anti-Semitic act of vandalism was recorded. Unknown persons destroyed the memorial to the victims of the Jewish population killed in Lisichansk during World War II, located in the city cemetery "Green Grove". This was the second destruction of the monument. After the first one, in December 2021, the monument was rebuilt with donations from concerned citizens.

At the beginning of February 2022, the Centre for Contemporary Art of Ivano-Frankovsk hosted an exhibition of anti-Semitic paintings by the Ukrainian artist R. Bonchuk as part of the Precursor exhibition. One of them was titled "A Jew with a Pig". Another depicted a monster in a black hat, while a Torah scroll was presented in place of meat in a shawarma machine. On February 6, after complaints from the United Jewish Community of Ukraine, they were removed.

Both international human rights mechanisms, including the UN human rights treaty bodies (e.g. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) and NGOs, as well as foreign politicians have drawn attention to the spread of neo-Nazism in Ukraine and the activities of radical groups. In November 2020, the Center for Countering Digital Hate NGO (CCDH) presented a report in which Ukraine was named as one of the centers of dissemination of neo-Nazi ideology⁸⁸⁷.

⁸⁸⁶ Anti-Semitism in Ukraine – 2021. <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/antisemitism2021>

⁸⁸⁷ Hatebook. Facebook's neo-Nazi shopfronts funding far-right extremism. Report by Center for Countering Digital Hate. https://252f2edd-1c8b-49f5-9bb2-cb57bb47e4ba.filesusr.com/ugd/f4d9b9_55b47be4de914daf866cfa1810cc56c5.pdf

A group of French senators, following a visit to Kiev in May 2021, issued a statement that the activity of neo-Nazi forces in Ukraine cannot but cause concern. As the senators explained, in the middle of the Kiev Day fair in the center of the capital they unexpectedly stumbled upon the "Azov" neo-Nazi battalion teaching children how to assemble and disassemble weapons. Volunteers signed up to fight in the Donbass and a shooting range was set up there. As part of the "performance," Ukrainian radicals offered young people to shoot at a paper Kremlin. Nearby on the stalls sold IDs of Nazi soldiers from World War II, swastikas and other paraphernalia. Senator N. Goulet, who personally witnessed all this, sent a parliamentary inquiry to the French Foreign Ministry. After that, the SBU launched an investigation against the French senators⁸⁸⁸.

It has recently come to the attention of the Western media and NGOs that in the light of the special military operation carried out by the Russian Federation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine, there is an increasing tendency to whitewash the Ukrainian neo-Nazis, who are presented as fighters for the freedom and independence of a "democratic" country, fighting the "aggression of a dictatorial regime".

American IT companies are providing notable assistance to Kiev. It is known, that the administration and moderators of YouTube do not object to the dissemination of information by extremist organizations, primarily the "Right Sector" and "Azov", which are banned in Russia. In fact, YouTube has become one of the key platforms spreading fakes about the special military operation in Ukraine discrediting the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

Censorship is actively applied by Meta, which owns the social networks Facebook and Twitter. These resources also actively disseminated calls to "kill Russians", manuals on how to kill and make explosives and other similar content since late February-March 2022. The moderators ignored user

⁸⁸⁸ <https://remembrance.ru/2021/06/30/kiev-vozmushhen-tem-chto-evropejcy-na-ukraine-nashli-nacistov/>

complaints about such explicit dissemination of hate ideology. At the same time, content from Russian media, public figures, as well as ordinary citizens, comprising the Russian position or simply objective viewpoints on the events in Ukraine, was blocked.

After the practice of applying double standards to Russian citizens was revealed through the publication of the company's internal correspondence, Meta tried to correct the situation. However, its statement only once again confirmed its racist approaches to the publications. In particular, it stated that users would be allowed to call for the "death of the Russian occupiers".

At the same time, even in the Western media appear publications that directly point to the Nazi essence of the right-wing radical structures in Ukraine⁸⁸⁹, to which the image of "pro-independence fighters" is created. Particular attention is drawn to the fact that prior to the Russian special military operation, many Western media pointed out the Nazi component of radical Ukrainian formations and their glorification of Nazi collaborators S. Bandera and R.Shukhevych. However, after February 2022, this opinion has been diligently removed from the Western public space. At the same time, it is rightly noted in the above-mentioned articles that the Russian leadership's justification for the special military operation largely coincides with what was previously published in objective articles by Western journalists, who acknowledged the presence of neo-Nazism in Ukraine.

Another vivid illustration of the collective West's efforts to whitewash the crimes of the Kiev authorities is the report prepared by the NGO Amnesty International, which acknowledged the facts of war crimes committed by the AFU against civilians, in particular the use of civilians as human shields. In

⁸⁸⁹ Examples of this include: A.Ripp. Ukraine's Nazi problem is real, even if Putin's "denazification" claim isn't. NBC News. 5 March 2022. www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/ukraine-has-nazi-problem-vladimir-putin-s-claim-war-ncna1290946; B.Marcetic. Whitewashing Nazis doesn't help Ukraine. Jacobin. 4 July 2022. <https://jacobin.com/2022/04/ukraine-russia-putin-azov-neo-nazis-western-media>; J. McCann. Protecting the Ukrainian Nazis. Standpoint Zero. 16 March 2022. <https://standpointzero.com/2022/03/16/protecting-the-ukrainian-nazis/>

fact, the international organisation has shown the true nature of Kiev's use of terrorist tactics. To minimize the damage, Western countries organized a campaign to divert attention from this unseemly fact by presenting an almost united front. In response to the accusations made by the Kiev authorities, human rights activists apologized and organised a retest of the research, but they did not completely retract their words.

Most members of ethnic or national minorities in Ukraine are at risk of being subjected to discrimination or stigmatization. The radical right-wing organizations that operate in the country, such as the "Right Sector", the "Azov" Civil Corps and the "Social-National Assembly" actively incite racial hatred and propagate a racist ideology⁸⁹⁰. There have been many instances of the dissemination of intolerant views over the Internet. Racist and anti-Semitic content is posted on specific web sites promoting a nationalist agenda⁸⁹¹. Ukraine's human rights organizations have noted a growth in the number of instances of xenophobia and aggression directed at foreigners by law enforcement officers. The practice of detaining and arresting individuals or conducting document checks based on a person's race or ethnic group is still widespread.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination also noted that racist hateful speech and discriminatory comments mainly directed at minorities are now becoming increasingly common in public discussions of all kinds, including in speeches given by public and political figures, in the media – especially on the Internet, and during demonstrations⁸⁹².

⁸⁹⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Ukraine. August 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

⁸⁹¹ <https://strana.ua/opinions/161506-ukrainskie-natsionalisty-nachali-raspolzatsja-po-seti.html>

⁸⁹² Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Ukraine. August 2016

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

Rights advocates have recorded dozens of instances of intolerant or aggressive conduct towards members of minorities or persons with alternative political views. Of particular concern are illegal actions by the members of radical nationalist organizations ("S14", the "Right Sector", "Tradition&Order", the "National Corps", the "National Vigilantes", the OUN etc.). Their violent attacks are almost entirely ignored by Ukraine's law enforcement bodies. The right-wing radicals make no attempt to hide the fact that their activities are closely coordinated with the SBU and Interior Ministry.

Roma are still being stereotyped and discriminated against. There are frequent instances of members of this community being subjected to aggression, physically attacked and even murdered. International human rights organizations and bodies have noted that the Ukrainian justice system barely responds to attacks on the Roma community by nationalists⁸⁹³. Moreover, Ukrainian civil servants actually take part in the persecution of this national minority. One of the most high-profile examples of this occurred in March 2020, when V.Kryklyi, at the time Minister of Infrastructure, cooperated with members of the "S14" radical group, the "Municipal Guard" and R.Grishchak, a deputy of the Verkhovnaya Rada from the Sluga Naroda party, to conduct a raid on a railway station in Kiev allegedly as part of a campaign against "Roma gangs".

Even deputies were attacked by nationalists. On August 13, 2021, the Verkhovnaya Rada MP, Zhan Beleniuk, was insulted in Kiev by two radicals, who called him a "black monkey" and suggested that he "go to Africa".

Racist acts against Asian and African nationals in Ukraine in February-March 2022 were shocking. These included the beating of Indian students for their country's refusal to vote against Russia at the UN General Assembly; rude

⁸⁹³ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Ukraine. August 2016
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUKR%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=ru

treatment of Africans wishing to leave Ukraine; negative treatment of Chinese nationals, etc.

Many testimonies of victims, who suffered racial discrimination, while trying to leave the country with Ukrainians, were published in the media. In particular, there is a clearly visible pattern of people of African and Asian descent being prevented from boarding trains or buses, being taken out of vehicles, and being held in separate queues at border checkpoints.

This situation is the result of the fact that the current Kiev authorities, as well as their predecessors, did nothing to solve this problem, while their Western handlers, for opportunistic reasons, turned a blind eye.

The African Union expressed its concern about the situation of African citizens in Ukraine in its statement of February 28, 2022, noting that the "expulsion" of Africans and the unacceptable dissimilar treatment of them is shockingly racist.

Manifestations of intolerance and hatred against Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine continue to be recorded. On May 30, 2022, a video from Lvov appeared on the Internet showing a volunteer refusing to provide the UN humanitarian aid to refugees from the eastern part of Ukraine because they spoke Russian. When asked, the volunteer told the women that he did not understand them and demanded that they address him in Ukrainian. A nearby police officer pointed out to the refugees that it was forbidden to film the volunteer and, in response to their indignation, threatened to take the outraged women to the police station.

Some Ukrainian municipalities go further than the Kiev authorities in Russophobic hysteria. For example, in Ternopol, it is forbidden to publicly perform songs in Russian. Many street musicians, including those who came from other regions, perform in the city, and the local authorities decided to create a list of rules for them, which primarily come down to the prohibition to sing in Russian.

A separate area of effort of radical "activists" is to counteract the "propaganda of the Russian world," which includes combating the use of the Russian language.

These slogans are used as a cover for the forced Ukrainization policy carried out by the Kiev authorities with respect to national minorities and the Russian-speaking population. The result of this policy is discrimination of a significant part of the population based on language, including gross violation of the rights of the Russian-speaking community. The Russian-speaking residents of the country have no opportunity to receive education in their native language.

Starting from 2017, the course for banning the use of any other language, except Ukrainian, in the state sector, educational process and media, has been consistently pursued in the country's legislation. As the result of a number of the laws adopted, including the laws "On Education", "On General Secondary Education" and "On Ensuring Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the Official Language", the Russian language was subjected to triple discrimination in the Ukrainian state: in respect of the official language, official languages of the EU and indigenous peoples' languages. In 2021, by decisions of the Ukrainian courts, the Russian language was deprived of the status of the regional one in the Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporozhye, Nikolayev Regions and in the city of Kharkov.

In addition, there are laws aimed at the Ukrainization of public life, the press and television, and the service sector.

On January 16, 2022, a new provision of the law on language came into force in Ukraine. Since this day, the national print media in the country must be published in Ukrainian. They may be published in other languages as well, but they must be published in Ukrainian at the same time. The content, volume, and printing method must be the same in both versions. They must also have the same numbering and be published on the same day. Law prohibits publishing

advertisements in press in any language other than Ukrainian. Exceptions are made for English, the official languages of the EU, and the languages of indigenous peoples. In this connection, the Opposition Platform – For Life political party issued a statement in which it called the destruction of Russian-language print media discrimination and humiliation of millions of Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine. The party stressed that the introduced norm will make the release of Russian-language mass media unprofitable and the information reception for Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine in their native language – impossible.

Since July 16, 2022, according to the next norms of the law on language that came into force, all sites and social media pages of state authorities, local government, enterprises, institutions and organizations registered in Ukraine must have Ukrainian-language version that will be loaded by default. All goods that have installed computer programs must have the Ukrainian-language interface. Also starting from this day, fines may be imposed on individuals for using the Russian language, if it is deemed to violate the provisions of the aforementioned law.

The forces of civil society, as well as the odious punitive institution of the Verkhovna Rada, the State Language Protection Commissioner, are used to "squeeze out" the Russian language.

On January 13, 2022, the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council of Ukraine announced during an online meeting that it would conduct inspections on Ukrainian channels because of the abundance of Russian-language content on New Year's Eve.

On February 7, 2022, two schools in Kiev (Lyceum No. 303 and School No. 152) fired two teachers for using Russian language in the teaching process. The dismissals were carried out after an inspection, conducted in two educational institutions by the Office of State Language Protection

Commissioner T.Kremin. The teachers had been reprimanded before the dismissals.

On February 9, 2022, the State Language Protection Commissioner, T.Kremin, addressed the mayors of a number of Ukrainian cities with a demand to dismantle the outdoor advertising, signboards and signs installed in violation of the language law. The message about this was published on the T.Kremin's page in the Facebook social media. In particular, it was reported that letters were sent to the heads of Kiev, Kharkov, Odessa, Dnepr, Zaporozhye, Nikolayev, Kherson, Sumy, Poltava, Chernigov, Cherkasy, Chernovtsi, Kropyvnytskyi, Uzhgorod, Kremenchuk, Beregovo, Mariupol, Kramatorsk, Bakhmut and Krivoy Rog, as well as the heads of the Volnovakha, Slavyansk, Severodonetsk and Lisichansk civil-military administrations.

In April 2022, T.Kremin publicly called for abolition of teaching in Russian language in all educational institutions of the country since September 1 of the current year. He proposed to replace the discipline "Russian" with other languages, for example, history of Ukraine or English, and until that is done he proposed that before the beginning of each lesson of the Russian language teachers should explain to Russian-speaking children that their native language is by definition the language of the aggressor, which is shameful to speak. Also, T.Kremin stated that the foreign literature program should be revised, as it pays a lot of attention to the study of the works of Russian writers.

On April 11, he urged to get rid of the Russian-language toponyms in the country justifying it by the slogan "Ukraine for Ukrainians".

Ukrainian radicals regularly organize various aggressive actions against teachers who continue to use the Russian language. In March 2020, in Lvov, nationalists organized the persecution of lyceum teachers, who were accused of "propaganda of the Russian World" and "Russification of Ukrainian children". A similar incident happened to the honoured teacher of Ukraine P.Viktor. In

April 2020, nationalists launched an aggressive campaign against him because he had created video lessons of physics in Russian.

In November 2020, the professor at the National Technical University "Dnepr Polytechnic" (the city of Dnepropetrovsk) V.Gromov, under the pressure of the university administration, had to submit his resignation after an official complaint lodged against him by a student who was indignant at the fact that the professor lectured in Russian.

Nationalists are also involved in the fight against the use of the Russian language in everyday life. For example, since the beginning of 2021, in Lvov, unofficial associations (radically inclined towards the Russian language), "language activists"⁸⁹⁴, consisting mainly of young people⁸⁹⁵, have become active. In the city, they "were marked" a number of actions of the corresponding orientation. For example, "language activists" demanded that the administration of "Puzata Khata" café to stop broadcasting Russian music in the establishment and sent a complaint to the head office of this café chain. Such "personalities" provoked a conflict in the city centre with an animator who worked to Russian music. Another altercation took place in the "AzArt" hookah cafe between the "activist blogger", V.Andreev, and one of the owners of the establishment. V.Andreev demanded in an ultimatum form the owner to turn off the Russian music that was playing in the place, which was refused and Andreev was evicted. Unable to continue the confrontation in person, the blogger published a critical post on social media and appealed to the city administration to check the establishment.

The beginning of the special military operation for denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine by the Russian Federation fully highlighted how seriously this country has been reformatted into a Russophobic state with its

⁸⁹⁴ Self-designation – "мовний патруль", that is – "language patrol".

⁸⁹⁵ <https://is.gd/TmiDr3> (Facebook page of one of the associations of "language patrols").

main characteristics consisting in confrontation with Russia and denouncing everything connected to it in whichever way.

It is worth noting that this report covers data on discrimination and prosecution of Russian citizens and fellow citizens. The atrocious crimes of the Ukrainian neo-Nazi groups and foreign mercenaries against Russian military servicemen are not included in this document. The assessment of these criminal acts, which have fully confirmed the commitment of the present-day Ukrainian neo-Nazis to the ideas and tactics of the German Nazis and local collaborators from the OUN and the UIA during the Great Patriotic War, is made by the Russian competent authorities within the framework of investigation of numerous criminal cases based on these monstrous crimes. Significant efforts are also made by the Russian civil society organizations and by all persons concerned who reveal the truth about the real face of the Ukrainian government and the radical nationalists protected by it.

The situation of Russian compatriots in Ukraine remains persistently difficult. They regularly face violations of their rights and freedoms, including such things as the right to life, inviolability of the person and home. Activists are subjected to intimidation and pressure by law enforcement agencies and special services.

In 2021-2022, the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine took a set of decisions to introduce restrictions on Russian legal entities and individuals, in particular providing for suspending their economic activities, freezing their assets, restricting entrance to Ukraine. As of today, about 1,700 of Russians, over 1,000 of Russian enterprises and companies, as well as 236 educational institutions, have been included in Ukrainian sanction lists.

Russian citizens arriving to the country from Crimea are subjected to unjustified criminal prosecution. Criminal cases on charges of "treason", "attempts on territorial integrity and immunity", "creation of paramilitary armed groups", "aiding terrorists and separatists", etc., are initiated against them. In

January 2020, I.Antonov, a person with hearing disabilities of the III group, who was returning from a pilgrimage to Kiev-Pechersk Lavra monastery, was arrested. In early November 2020, the head of division of the Crimea state enterprise Chernomorneftegaz, former deputy head of the Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine in Crimea, N.Fedoryan, was arrested; the Ukrainian government charged him with "providing assistance to the occupation authorities in conducting searches and unlawful detention of individuals."

There are reported numerous violations of the procedural rights of the Russian citizens in the course of conducting criminal proceedings initiated against them. Thus, in 2020 an incident was reported when G.Odanets was subjected to tortures by the Ukrainian law enforcement officers who were trying to obtain his confession.

Additionally, Russian citizens, notwithstanding the region of their residence, face significant problems in Ukraine as the result of provocations of the Ukrainian intelligence services, contrived charges of espionage, attempts on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, involvement in the events in Crimea and Donbass. After the start of the special military operation, persecution of dissidents under "collaborationism" legislation began, with criminal proceedings "for justifying Russian aggression" being initiated against those who disagree with the policies of the Kiev authorities.

Persecutions also took place in third countries. In September 2021, the Russian citizen A. Franchetti was arrested in Prague on the Ukrainian party's inquiry in connection to his alleged participation in the 2014 events that lead to the reunification of Crimea with Russia. The Kiev authorities accuse him of "creating illegal armed groups". The issue of his extradition to the Ukrainian party is pending before the judiciary of the Czech Republic.

According to the data of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, in 2021, over 6,600 Russians were not allowed in the country's territory for distinct

reasons. Of these, about 500 persons were denied entry in connection with their "unlawful" visiting Crimea and the proclaimed republics in Donbass. Since July 1, 2022, Kiev introduced a visa regime for travel for Russians, and the border can only be crossed from Moldavia or the EU countries.

In 2021 the Ministry of culture of Ukraine additionally included 45 Russian artists, culture, and arts workers in the "blacklist" of the persons "posing a threat to national security". There is a total 210 persons on this list (as of June 25, 2022) who are banned from entering the country. Since 2014, Ukraine has banned about 800 works of the Russian cinema industry, over 300 Russian printed editions, about 300 books.

The notorious Myrotvorets website, containing personal data of politicians, journalists, civic activists not loyal to the government, as well as of Russian citizens suspected of "anti-Ukrainian activities", is still functioning with the support from SBU (the Security Service of Ukraine). Overall, there are about 75,000 Russians in its database, including our fellow citizens residing in Donbas, even children.

On August 18, 2021, a 15-year-old teenager of Donetsk, Y.Melnichenko, was included in the Myrotvorets database. He was accused of being a cadet at the Vityaz military-patriotic club, which operates in non-government-controlled territory, and of "a victim of psychological violence and Russian terrorist propaganda."

In October 2021, a 12-year-old resident of Luhansk F.Savenkova who allegedly "poses a threat to the national security of Ukraine" was included in the Myrotvorets database. Moreover, she was termed "a victim of psychological violence and Russian terrorist propaganda." Now she and her family are at risk. The reason thereof was her open appeal to the members of the UN Security Council on the Children's Day where she drew attention to the situation of children in Donbas.

Russian journalists are de facto deprived of the right to pursue their activities in Ukraine. They are not allowed to events designated for the media, conducted by the state governmental institutions. Their applications for accreditation are not accepted for consideration. In 2021, the Kiev office of TASS was closed due to the sanctions restrictions introduced against it.

Russian-speaking activists continuously face violation of their rights to the integrity of person, dwelling, property, are intimidated and subjected to pressure by healthcare authorities, law enforcement authorities, intelligence services and nationalist groups.

In December 2018, SBU officers conducted searches in Poltava in the premises of the Russian-speaking community members. A Pushkin medal was seized from the coordinator of the All-Ukrainian Coordination Council of the Russian Fellow Citizens Organizations (ACCRFCO) S.Provatorov (who also heads the Russian Commonwealth Association).

Investigative activities were conducted in respect of the historian Yu.Pogoda (a well-known researcher of the Great Northern War period), poet and publicist V.Shestakov (head of the Poltava Region Russian Community). Criminal proceedings were brought against them under Article 110 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine ("attempts on territorial integrity").

In May 2019, the SBU conducted a search of the head of the Transcarpathia Regional Association Rus V.Saltykov. They seized mobile communications devices and his personal computers.

The arrest (in August 2020) by the SBU officers of a Russian language and literature teacher, head of the non-government organization Russian National Community Rusich, a distinguished teacher with long-term experience T.Kuzmich, who is wide known for her active work to promote the Russian language in Ukraine, on suspicion of treason, caused great public outcry. The Ukrainian security services accuse her of the fact that during her stay in Crimea she allegedly "was involved by the FSB of Russia in espionage activities,

transferred materials for conducting subversion activities in the Kherson Region and all over Ukraine" and that she is also involved in "creation of a spy network". It is worth noting that T.Kuzmich paid regular visits to the peninsula since 2008 within the framework of her professional duties for taking part in the Great Russian Word Festival. The measure of restraint chosen for her was remand in custody, however in the beginning of October 2020 she was released on bail. T.Kuzmich risks a punishment in the form of imprisonment for a period of 12 to 15 years with confiscation of her property.

From the start of the special military operation, the MFA of Russia received applications from over 5,000 Russian citizens staying in Ukraine. In most of the cases, these letters contained requests to inform about safe ways of evacuation from Ukraine to Russia and other countries. Many our fellow citizens point out to the terror unleashed in Ukrainian cities by representatives of the so-called homeland defence and other persons who had received weapons in the course of their uncontrolled handing over.

The Kiev regime governmental authorities take measures for restrictions on our citizens' rights. The National Bank of Ukraine became one of the first among such bodies who prohibited to the credit institutions in the country to perform any currency operations using the Russian rouble. This step made by the regulator left thousands of persons in the country without means of subsistence.

As the special military operation continued, the situation of compatriots in Ukraine was significantly worsening due to the Russophobic hysteria unfolded by the media controlled by the Kiev regime. Serious efforts in this direction are being made by Ukrainian officials, who have actually incited hatred of Russians with their statements and have called for the slaughter of Russians everywhere.

Thus, commenting the cynical staged-up action in the town of Bucha, the Minister of Culture A.Tkachenko, in his interview to 1+1 TV channel said that

"there is no mentioning of good Russians, as there are no good Russians" and urged to fight with them all over the world. The advisor to the President of Ukraine A.Geraschenko called on in the social media "to find and punish" all civilians who cooperated with the Russian military servicemen in the Kiev Region. The well-known hater of Russians, the mayor of the city of Dnepropetrovsk (now Dnepr) B.Filatov called on in Facebook "to kill Russians all around the world, and in substantial numbers". Ukrainian Ambassador to Kazakhstan P.Vrublevsky said in an interview: "We are trying to kill as many of them as possible. The more we kill Russians now, the less our children will have to kill.

It should be mentioned that numerous Ukrainian refugees that found themselves in the countries of Europe, as well as representatives of the Ukrainian expatriate community residing there "caught on" this call and began implementing it in practice, publishing threats addressed to Russian citizens and Russian people and publishing their personal data, and in some cases attacking Russian citizens and Russian people in these countries. Data on such manifestations are included in the specific country sections of this report.

The Verkhovnaya Rada of Ukraine contributed to the discrimination of our compatriots by adopting amendments to the Law of Ukraine on the Basic Principles of Forced Seizure in Ukraine of Subjects of Ownership of the Russian Federation and its Residents. The document defines the range of the residents of the Russian Federation whose assets will be forcibly seized. This includes Ukrainian legal entities whose founder (participant, shareholder) or beneficiary is directly or indirectly the Russian Federation. In addition, the Law of Ukraine of May 12, 2022 No. 2257-IX "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Improving the Effectiveness of Sanctions Related to the Assets of Individuals" provides a mechanism for confiscation in favor of the state of the property of individuals or legal entities who deny or support "Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine".

Moreover, the Ukrainian representational authority opened up a new measurement of the rampant Russophobia by beginning examination of the draft law on banning in Ukraine geographic names related to Russia, its history, and prominent personalities. Many Ukrainian municipalities expressed their intention to rename dozens of city streets and other objects.

Thus, on April 13, 2022, the Ivano-Frankovsk City Council decided to rename twenty-five streets bearing the names of Russian and Soviet prominent persons in the sphere of culture and science. The streets named after F.M.Dostoevsky, M.Yu.Lermontov, A.P.Chekhov, L.N.Tolstoy, D.I.Mendeleev, K.E.Tsiolkovsky, I.E.Repin, V.G.Korolenko, A.S.Makarenko and the Soviet dissident academician A.D.Sakharov will disappear from the city map. Instead of them, the streets named after the Heroes of Chernigov, Mariupol, Volnovakha, Nikolayev, Kharkov, Kherson will appear. Some streets will be named after the OUN-UPA members and Ukrainian cultural workers. Apart from that, in Tismenichany settlement of the Ivano-Frankovsk community, Gagarin Street will become Roman Shukhevich Street and Rudnev Street – Stepan Bandera Street.

On April 14, 2022, the Uzhgorod city council also adopted the resolution to rename fifty-eight streets. Where possible, they will be returned their "historical names" and a number of objects will be named in honour of "the heroes of the war with Russia" after its "victorious end".

In Odessa, they decided to remove from the Memorial Sign of twin cities the names of the Russian cities Volgograd, Moscow, Rostov-on-Don, Saint Petersburg, and Taganrog.

On April 15, 2022, the deputies of the Kiev [City] Council supported the renaming of the public garden of friendship between Kiev and Moscow (on Teremki) as "the Mariupol heroes public garden". Apart from that, names of three railway stations were changed (Kiev-Oktyabrsky to Grushki, Kiev-Moskovsky to Kiev-Demeevsky, Kiev-Petrovka to Pochayna) and the name of

S.Chekalin Children's Library in the Obolonsky district of the capital. According to the Kiev City Council Secretary V.Bondarenko, the next plenary meetings will consider renaming the streets, lanes, and Kiev metro stations whose names are related to Russia.

On April 8, 2022, the head of the Kiev "Metro" V.Braginsky appealed to the mayor of the city with the initiative to rename five stations whose names contained references to the Soviet Union and Russia.

On May 11, 2022, around 20 streets in Dnepr (formerly Dnepropetrovsk) were renamed with names related to Russia and the USSR. On May 28, 2022, more than 50 streets in Chemerovtsi municipality and 19 streets in Lenkovtsi municipality in Khmelnytsky region were renamed. In the Pokrovsky community of Dnepropetrovsk region 72 streets and alleys were renamed. On May 30, 2022, 57 streets in Novoushytsia municipality and 94 streets in Dunayevtsi municipality in Khmelnytsky region were renamed. The same fate befell 19 streets in the Perechyn community of Transcarpathian region.

In June 2022 19 streets in the Ivanovtsi community in the Transcarpathian region, over 100 streets in the Volochisk community of Khmelnytsky region, 17 streets in Beregovovo of Transcarpathian region, 6 streets in the Drogobych community of Lvov region were renamed, 14 – in Berezdov community of Khmelnytsky region, 35 streets and alleys – in settlements of Brovary community of Kiev region, 63 streets in Shpola community of Cherkasy region, 19 streets in Novoyavorov community of Lvov region, etc.

In general, every week in large cities and smaller towns in Ukraine a decision is made to rename several dozen, and sometimes hundreds, of streets and alleys.

On June 19, 2022, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted Law No. 2310-IX on the prohibition of Russian music on the radio, in public transport, cafes and cinemas. According to the document, this measure applies to audiovisual works performed by "citizens and residents of the aggressor

state" on radio and television, in entertainment institutions, public transport, educational institutions, institutions of hotel and restaurant business, culture and recreation, cinemas and public space. Restrictions are proposed for the period until "the liberation of all occupied Ukrainian territories and the cessation of aggression by Russia.

As part of the campaign of "decommunization" and "derusification," everything connected in any way with Russia is being eliminated in the country. A significant number of toponyms associated with Russia and the Soviet Union have been changed, including those bearing the names of political, cultural, and scientific figures. The demolition of monuments related to common Russian-Ukrainian history, and not only to the period of the Great Patriotic War, is in full swing.

The Ministry of Culture and UINP organized a series of round tables devoted to "derusification, decommunization, and decolonization in the public space. Such events discuss aspects related to toponymy and monumental art, as well as the "borders of presence" of Russian works, artists, and figures in the Ukrainian cultural space.

A characteristic feature of modern Ukraine remains the spread, or rather the imposition of hateful attitudes towards Russians, even in everyday life, through the production of products with Russophobic names. In addition to well-known neo-Nazi products like "Separ in Sour Cream," cheese called "Anti-Russian" and sausage called "Death to Moskals" have begun to be produced.

Museums constitute a standalone area of the Kiev anti-Russian policy. As informed by observers, opening of the so-called "occupation museums" is planned in many Ukrainian cities for the purpose of the final marginalization of the Soviet period in the history of the country. It should not be excluded that the existing exhibition areas will be subjected to serious censorship to comply with the political climate, or even plundered. Thus, as reported by the media, the

"Azov" nationalists leaving Mariupol took exhibits of historical value from the local museum where they had been deployed.

After the start of the special operation, the Kiev authorities also became more aggressive in their efforts to clear the space of any alternative and reasonable activists and activists who speak from positions that differ from the official point of view. Repressions were aimed at anyone who in one form or another doubted Zelensky's course on unleashing war with Russia, was dissident, or advocated the development of equal ties with Moscow.

On February 11, 2022, the National Security and Defense Council at an off-site meeting in Kharkov imposed sanctions against the Nash TV channel. The reasons for the sanctions, as in the case of other independent and Russian-language TV channels, were not explained. In this way, the Kiev authorities removed from TV air almost all opposition media outlets working for the Russian-speaking audience and focused on the south-east of Ukraine.

The SBU arrests members of the Ukrainian opposition on a mass scale. According to the media, they are beaten and tortured to make them record anti-Russian appeals (mostly video). After that, the SBU takes hold of the access to the opposition activists' webpages on social media and on video hosting channels and starts its own information and psychological operations via these media, trying to convince the subscribers of these activists in the need to unite around the existing Kiev regime. In particular, it is known about the arrests of a TV presenter and political scientist D.Dzhangirov, political scientist Yu.Dudkin – former SBU officer, participant of programs of Ukrainian and Russian TV channels V.Mulyk, political scientists Aleksandr Kononovich and Mikhail Kononovich who support friendship between Ukraine and Russia. There are also reports about the arrest of the opposition politician V.Volga and beating of the Opposition Platform – For Life deputy N.Shufrich.

On March 16, 2022, the SBU arrested the well-known Ukrainian human rights activist E.Berezhnaya. Nothing is known about her fate as of today.

E.Berezhnaya has long ago caused irritation of the Kiev government by her uncompromising struggle for human rights, especially by asserting the rights of the Ukrainian Russian-speaking population to receive education in and speak their native language. She often spoke at international conferences organized by the OSCE and UN where, using concrete examples, she disclosed the official Kiev's discriminatory practice and infringement of the rights of the country's Russian-speaking residents. She unveiled the government's direct involvement in protection of neo-Nazi groups. Among other actions, on December 22, 2021, at the informal meeting of the UN Security Council held according to the "Arria formula", the human rights activist talked about the outrage of Nazism in Ukraine.

In the first half of March 2022, writer, poet and journalist Yan Taksyur was detained by the SBU and taken to the Lukyanovka detention center in Kiev.

On March 27, 2022, Ukrainian law enforcers searched the apartment of the political scientist and head of the Kiev Center for Political Research and Conflictology M.Pogrebynsky in Kiev.

On April 12, 2022, the Kiev authorities announced that the chairman of the political council of the Opposition Platform – For Life, Medvedchuk, had been detained. On the order of the authorities, the property of the politician and his wife was arrested. A picture of him in handcuffs was published by Ukrainian President Zelensky. Medvedchuk's haggard appearance, his obviously unsuitable military uniform, and signs of beatings suggest that it is likely that he had been captured much earlier and spent more than a day in the SBU cells, being subjected to physical and psychological pressure and cruel and inhumane treatment. On April 14, 2022 it became known that the work of the Opposition Platform – For Life faction in the Verkhovnaya Rada had been suspended by a decision of the National Security and Defense Council.

Finland

Official Helsinki has a fairly balanced attitude to issues related to the history of the Second World War.

Revanchist associations that promote the idea of returning the lands lost to Finland after World War II remain marginal and still do not have any noticeable support in Finnish society. At the same time, it is noteworthy that after the start of the special military operation of the Russian Federation on denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine in Finland, the anti-Russian media became more active in discussing the possibility of revising the norms of international treaties concluded during the war and its results. In particular, the press repeatedly published speculations concerning the hypothetical variant of refusal of the demilitarized status of the Aland Islands, as well as statements about "undesirability" of the presence of the Russian consulate there, which contradicts the provisions of the 1940 USSR–Finland Agreement on the Aland Islands and the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty.

Military memorial work remains an important part of bilateral cooperation between Russia and Finland. The Finnish side respects the memory of fallen Russian and Soviet soldiers and takes care of gravesites in accordance with existing agreements. Although anti-epidemic measures in effect in 2021 imposed significant restrictions on the organization of face-to-face meetings, representatives of local authorities and Finnish NGOs participated in memorial events held by the Embassy.

In the first half of 2022, despite provocations by individual activists, the commemorative events planned by the Embassy took place as planned. The Finnish authorities took all necessary measures to ensure the safety of the participants.

Cases of desecration of war memorials and gravesites in Finland are very rare and do not go unnoticed by law enforcement. On the night of May 6-7, 2022, pro-Ukrainian activists sprayed paint on several monuments at the

garrison cemetery in Kirkkonummi, where a memorial to Soviet submarine warriors killed in 1942 and the soldiers of the Soviet Porkkala-Udd naval base and their families who died in 1946-1955 are buried. The damage was recorded by the police, and an investigation was opened.

Despite its support for efforts to counter the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism, and all forms of intolerance, Finland, following the EU's common line, continues to abstain during its vote on the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance," adopted annually at the initiative of Russia in the framework of the UN General Assembly.

There have been no attempts to glorify Nazism or organize related events in Finland. No actions against organizations fighting neo-Nazism have been taken.

At the same time, the lack of a ban on the use of Nazi symbols in Finland is noteworthy. In August 2021, the Finnish press reported extensively on the decision of the Helsinki Court of First Instance, which dismissed charges against participants in a nationalist march on 6 December 2018, who had carried flags with swastikas and refused to hand them over to the police. The court found that the defendants' actions did not constitute incitement to hatred and did not contain "threats and insults," while the police had no reason to interfere with the event. In the ensuing public debate, most political forces in the Finnish parliament called for a ban on swastikas in national legislation, but no concrete measures in this direction have yet been reported.

The swastika is still present in the symbols of some Finnish Air Force units. In response to criticism, the military stresses that the symbol has a long history and began to be used by the Finnish Air Force in 1918, long before Hitler came to power in Germany. In 2017, the Finnish Air Force headquarters stopped using the swastika on its emblems. In addition, the symbol can still be

found on one of the country's highest state decorations, the Cross of Liberty (Vapauden risti), which, in particular, is depicted on the Standard of the President of Finland.

The number of right-wing organizations remains small here. The largest right-wing organization in Finland in recent years has been the neo-Nazi "Nordic Resistance Movement" (Pohjoismainen Vastarintaliike, also known as the NRM). In addition, there was a Finnish branch of the "Nordic Resistance Movement", the "Finnish Resistance Movement" (Suomen Vastarintaliike).

After the prohibition of these structures in 2020 and 2018, respectively, there are no major right-wing associations left in the country. Individual organizations and initiatives that gather right-wing radicals continue to exist, but their activities do not have a broad public resonance. For example, experts call one of the "successors" of banned neo-Nazi organizations the national-socialist movement "Kohti Vapautta!" ("Toward Freedom!"), which was formed around the march of the same name, which Finnish nationalists have been holding on December 6, Independence Day since 2016. Another well-known nationalist association is the Soldiers of Odin movement, which is active in about 30 municipalities across the country. According to some estimates, the number of its supporters in recent years has decreased to about 200-250.

A separate group consists of organizations that advocate stricter migration policies. Examples include the protest movement "Rajat kiinni!" ("Lock the Borders!") and the political party "Suomen Kansa Ensin" ("Finnish People First"), created by its former members and registered in 2018.

At the same time, the Finnish Security Police, in its most recent annual report, drew attention to the growing right-wing extremist sentiment in Finnish society. The agency estimates that individuals and small groups pose the greatest danger. The SUPO also notes that in recent years there has been an increase in the involvement of minors in terrorist activities.

Finland's law enforcement agencies are actively working to identify right-wing radical elements and to stop their illegal activities. In 2021, several members of a right-wing group were detained on suspicion of preparing terrorist attacks and a significant number of weapons and explosives were seized from their possession. The case is reported to be the first precedent of terrorism-related investigations against right-wing extremists in Finland.

Finnish media attention was also drawn to an investigation launched in 2020 that revealed a group of right-wing radicals in the Finnish police. As a result, three officers were fired from the agency between 2021 and 2022, two of whom were suspected of preparing to commit a crime.

Among the main factors contributing to the spread of right-wing radical ideologies, Finnish law enforcers point to the Internet and social networks, which create an environment for extremist interaction. Experts also note that long-term coronavirus restrictions, which have led to an increase in time spent online, form the prerequisites for the further spread of radical ideas.

This is also confirmed by the findings of a study published in March 2021 by the Finnish Council of State on extremist rhetoric in the Finnish-language segment of the Internet and media, which showed that Finnish virtual discussion platforms (forums, chat rooms, etc.) abound in hate speech.

The danger remains, among other things, because of the increasing number of supporters of the terrorist organization Islamic State (banned in Russia) in Finland. The Finnish Border Guard has recorded that between 2012 and 2016, about 80 Finnish citizens left the country to join ISIS. In addition, in recent years, the issue of the return to the country of wives and children of members of this terrorist structure from Syrian refugee camps has been quite acute. In December 2019, the Finnish government decided to return Finnish children in the camp (more than 30 people). Two of them returned home, but the repatriation plan was subsequently suspended due to the coronavirus

pandemic. Concerns about the situation of these children were raised by the Human Rights Committee (HRC) in March 2021⁸⁹⁶.

Despite the efforts of the Finnish authorities to eliminate all forms of intolerance, discrimination against members of national and linguistic minorities is still evident in Finnish society. This is due, among other things, to the generally negative attitudes in Finnish society toward foreign nationals, which can be clearly seen in everyday life (the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination pointed this out in 2017). In particular, Russian-speaking residents of Finland, as well as other foreigners, have faced negative attitudes toward them, including on the basis of language or origin, as evidenced by the results of relevant surveys.

Cases of violations of the rights of migrants and Roma, who face discrimination and harassment in areas such as employment, housing, and education, also continue to be documented. There are a number of restrictions on refugee status, including not being allowed to enter new information in repeated asylum applications, and obstacles to family reunification, including the requirement of an appropriate amount of income. Introduced alternatives to detention, such as "prescribed residence," also contain restrictive reporting obligations. These problems have been highlighted by the Human Rights Committee⁸⁹⁷ and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)⁸⁹⁸, among others.

⁸⁹⁶ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the seventh periodic report of Finland. March 2021

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/FIN/CO/7&Lang=Ru

⁸⁹⁷ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the seventh periodic report of Finland. March 2021

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/FIN/CO/7&Lang=Ru

⁸⁹⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the seventh periodic report of Finland. March 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/FIN/CO/7&Lang=En

International experts have also pointed to ethnic bias among Finnish law enforcement officials. The UN human rights treaty bodies (in particular the CESCR and the HRC), as well as the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, have drawn attention to cases of ethnic profiling among Finnish police officers. One recent high-profile case was the disclosure in May 2021 by the Finnish news agency YLE that the Metropolitan Police tracked the movements of the Roma community in Helsinki from 2013-2017.⁸⁹⁹

Problems persist in securing the rights of indigenous peoples. Among others, experts acknowledge that the Finnish government systematically suppressed the Sámi language and culture during the national formation process during the 20th century, although this policy is assessed as more lenient than in Norway and Sweden. It has been pointed out that the Sámi people in Finland face discrimination in education and housing, as well as in employment and in the use of their native language in everyday life, especially for health and social services. These problems have been highlighted by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance⁹⁰⁰ and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights⁹⁰¹.

Despite numerous calls from Sami organizations, Finland has yet to ratify the ILO Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, which it signed in 1989, despite repeated commitments by the government to do that.

After the start of the special military operation in Ukraine, a large-scale anti-Russian information campaign was launched in the Finnish media, against

⁸⁹⁹ <https://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/19201-two-yle-reports-set-off-discussion-about-police-racism-in-finland.html>

⁹⁰⁰ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Finland (fifth monitoring cycle). Adopted June 18, 2019, published September 10, 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-finland/1680972fa7>

⁹⁰¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the seventh periodic report of Finland. March 2021. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/FIN/CO/7&Lang=En

which an increase in negative and discriminatory attitudes toward the Russian-speaking population at the household level was recorded. The Finnish authorities, for their part, tried to prevent a possible increase in social tension by repeatedly calling for the prevention of violations of the rights of Russians.

At the same time, the Finnish government actively began to exploit the public fear of Russia. In the summer of 2022, the Finnish parliament approved legislative amendments prepared by the government of Finland, allowing the authorities to introduce special procedures for the treatment of refugees arriving across the border, if it is considered that "the migration flow is used by a foreign state for its own purposes. Provisions of the amendments – allowing law enforcement authorities to detain asylum seekers, concentrate them in special accommodations at the border, etc. – were met with criticism at the international level. Thus, the corresponding letter was sent by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights D.Mijatović to the Interior Minister of Finland K.Mikkonen.⁹⁰² Observers noted the unprecedented nature of this appeal: for the first time, the Council of Europe condemned the legislative practices of Finland, which was considered one of the most advanced countries in the field of promotion and protection of human rights.

⁹⁰² <https://rm.coe.int/letter-to-krista-mikkonen-minister-of-the-interior-of-finland-by-dunja/1680a7537d>

France

France has a well-developed legal framework that makes it possible to counter the spread of right-wing radical ideologies, suppress manifestations of neo-Nazism and attempts to glorify the Nazis and their accomplices.

The Constitution of France prohibits racism, guaranteeing equal treatment of citizens regardless of origin, race or religion.

According to Article 24 of the Law "On Freedom of the Press," public demonstration of ideology declaring superiority of a group of persons or calling for discrimination of a person/group of persons, public insult because of belonging or not belonging to an ethnic group, nation, race or religion is punished by a fine of 45 thousand euros and/or imprisonment for 1 year. Persons who deny crimes against humanity and glorify war crimes are punished by a fine of 45 thousand euros and imprisonment for 5 years.

Similar rules apply to the Internet (The Trust in Digital Economy Act of 2004). Providers are obliged to inform the competent authorities of the appearance of such materials on their resources. Failure to do so is punishable by a fine of 75,000 euros and one year in prison.

Because of the numerous incidents of racial, ethnic or religious hatred on the French segment of the Internet, in 2020 the law "On Combating Hate on the Internet" was adopted. This act contains provisions requiring the operators of Internet platforms to remove, within 24 hours, from search engines, social networks and websites illegal content containing calls for discrimination or racial or religious insults.

Under Article 132-76 of the Criminal Code, racist motives (actual or perceived membership or non-membership of the victim in a possible race, religion, nation, or ethnic group) qualify as an aggravating circumstance in a criminal offense.

Wearing or displaying Nazi symbols, uniforms and insignia in public places is also prohibited in France. According to article R645-1 of the French

Penal Code, except when necessary for the production of a motion picture, the staging of a spectacle or the organization of an exhibition of the relevant history, the wearing or display in public places of uniforms, insignia or symbols resembling those used either by members of an organization defined as criminal according to article 9 of the Nuremberg Tribunal (London, 8 August 1945), or by a person convicted of one or more crimes against humanity, is a class five misdemeanor. That is, the most serious of the non-serious violations of the law.

The punishment for this crime includes confiscation of the objects with which it was committed, a fine of 1,500 euros, community service for 20 to 120 hours, confiscation of weapons owned or possessed by the offender and a ban for at least three years on keeping or carrying weapons for which a permit is required. In the case of a repeat offender, a fine of up to 3,000 euros is stipulated.

However, the reproduction of gestures used by the Nazis of Hitler's Germany, including the famous salute gesture, is not an offence. The controversy about the need to criminalize these gestures has been going on for a long time in France, periodically exacerbated in the context of various events of a national scale. Thus, another scandal was caused by the fact that on July 12, 2022 R.Rebeiro, a deputy of the National Assembly of France from the presidential party "Renaissance" addressed a deputy of the right-wing conservative party "National Union" using the Nazi salute.⁹⁰³

A planned auction of items bearing Nazi symbols from the Third Reich in Suasson in early 2021 was canceled by the administration of the northern French region of Hauts-de-France. The National Bureau of Vigilance against Anti-Semitism accused the organizers of the sale of "irresponsibly attaching positive value to the Third Reich period," indicating that "the current passion of some for swastikas, Hitler busts and other Nazi-related artifacts is disgusting."

⁹⁰³ <https://www.nouvelobs.com/politique/20220729.OBS61477/le-depute-qui-a-fait-un-salut-nazi-a-l-assemblee-fait-un-don-a-une-association-de-deportes.html>

In order to combat Islamist separatism and to protect the principles of a secular society, the law "On protection of republican principles" was approved on August 24, 2021.⁹⁰⁴ It provides, among other things, for the strengthening of state control over the activities of religious organizations, the introduction of the principle of neutrality in the civil service, the emergence of the obligation to train civil servants in the principles of secularism. It also fixes provisions for transparency in the financing of associations, combating hostile actions, including on the Internet, strengthens control over private educational institutions, introduces a ban on religious propaganda in the educational system, and essentially allows local authorities to close Islamic schools that violate republican principles.

France is a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and reports on its implementation to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). However, despite the strong recommendations of this Committee, France refuses to withdraw the reservation to Article 4 of the Convention, which puts respect for "freedom of speech and the press" above the obligation to prohibit ideologies of racial superiority.⁹⁰⁵

It should also be noted that, as a matter of principle, France does not recognize the existence of national, religious, linguistic or other minorities. Paris maintains reservations to Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. France has not ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and is not party to Protocol 12 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the

⁹⁰⁴ Loi n° 2021-1109 du 24 août 2021 confortant le respect des principes de la République.
https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/dossierlegislatif/JORFDOLE000042635616/?detailType=EXPOSE_MOTIFS&detailId=

⁹⁰⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of France. July 2016.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fCO%2fFRA%2fCO%2f7-8&Lang=ru

Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level.

The French authorities prevent and condemn attempts to glorify Nazism or promote neo-Nazi ideas at the national level, but Paris refrains from publicly criticizing such phenomena in the Baltics, Ukraine or other Eastern European countries both in official statements and in speeches at relevant international events.

Thus, in June 2021, Senator N.Goulet sent an official request to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which she noted the rapid spread of neo-Nazi ideology in Ukraine and demanded a public assessment of the activities of Ukrainian nationalist organizations. In response, Quai d'Orsay stated that neo-Nazis in Ukraine "have no political influence" and that their presence "does not reflect political trends" in the country.⁹⁰⁶

In the international arena France maintains a consolidated position of the EU countries, traditionally abstaining from voting on the draft resolution of the UN General Assembly "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" prepared by Russia and other co-authors (most recently on December 16, 2021).

According to the French Foreign Ministry, the text of the resolution in no way promotes the fight against racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia. Such an important subject is allegedly substituted with a "simplistic approach" aimed at dividing Europeans "by attributing to the Nazi regime all the opponents of the Soviet armed forces. At the same time, it stresses that "France continues to pay tribute to all the victims of Nazi ideology before, during and after World War II. As proof of this, for example, the participation of top French leaders in commemorative events in France, Israel and Poland on the occasion of the

⁹⁰⁶ <http://www.senat.fr/questions/base/2021/qSEQ210623223.html>.

75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp (January 2020) is cited.

At the same time in France the monuments to Soviet soldiers who died during World War II, as well as their burial places, are cherished on its territory. Chief among these are the Soviet military necropolis in Noyer-Saint-Martin, monuments to Soviet resistance fighters in the Parisian cemetery Père-Lachaise and to the Normandie-Niemen air regiment in Le Bourget. French central and local authorities generally promote the organization of commemorative events on the occasion of Victory Day in the Great Patriotic War.

In May 2022, city halls in Paris and other French cities issued permits for the international memorial action "Immortal Regiment," sent police to the place of their conduct to ensure the safety of participants and protect them from provocation by representatives of the Eastern European diasporas.

Cases of desecration of graves and monuments occur in the country, including by drawing Nazi symbols. These offenses are predominantly anti-Semitic in nature. Representatives of the Council of Jewish Organizations of France regularly express concern about the increase in their number.

For example, in August 2020, vandals desecrated a memorial center to the victims of World War II in Oradour-sur-Glanc⁹⁰⁷ (Haute-Vienne). This act of vandalism was condemned by the President of the French Republic E.Macron, Prime Minister J.Castex, Minister of the Interior J.Darmanen and Minister of Justice E.Dupont-Moretti.

In December 2020, a swastika was inscribed on 67 graves in Fontainebleau.⁹⁰⁸

⁹⁰⁷ Oradour-sur-Glanc : «Tout sera fait» pour poursuivre les auteurs des tags, assure Macron. Le Parisien. August 21, 2020

<https://www.leparisien.fr/societe/oradour-sur-glanc-des-tags-inscrits-sur-le-centre-de-la-memoire-du-village-martyr-21-08-2020-8371416.php>

⁹⁰⁸ Fontainebleau : 67 tombes profanées par des croix gammées. L'express. December 28, 2020

https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/fontainebleau-67-tombes-profanees-avec-des-croix-gammees-dans-un-cimetiere_2141641.html

In August 2021, swastikas and anti-semitic slogans were found on the walls of the cemetery in Ruffach (Haut-Rhineland), and in Perros-Gerek (Côte d'Armor) swastikas appeared on a memorial stone erected in honor of prominent French Jewish lawyer and politician S.Veil, who was a concentration camp prisoner at Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen during World War II and was president of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation from 2001-2007.

In March 2022, a swastika was painted on a memorial plaque to Jewish resistance fighters in Grenoble.⁹⁰⁹

Muslims also occasionally fall into the crosshairs of French extremists.

The reason for all this, according to experts, is the decline of Christian culture and the lack of proper control over burial sites by the state. Only 20 percent of cemetery desecrators were convicted in 2020, and the fact that most of them were minors prevents the provision of public data on their identity and motives.⁹¹⁰

According to the French historian P.Vermeiren⁹¹¹, the graves in the west and southwest of the country are most at risk because of the spread of left-wing political radicalism there, while the desecration of Jewish cemeteries in the northeast of the country is explained by political radicalism, which is close in its ideological basis to neo-Nazism.

Despite the developed legislative and law enforcement tools, the situation with racism in the country, including manifestations of its modern forms, is far from ideal.

⁹⁰⁹ <https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/auvergne-rhone-alpes/isere/grenoble/grenoble-une-croix-gammee-taguee-sur-une-plaque-commemorative-un-acte-intolérable-reagit-le-crif-2509789.html>

⁹¹⁰ La lutte contre le racisme, l'antisémitisme et la xénophobie - Année 2019. Rapport public. Commission nationale consultative des Droits de l'Homme
<https://www.vie-publique.fr/rapport/274694-la-lutte-contre-le-racisme-lantisemitisme-et-la-xenophobie-2019>

⁹¹¹ Pierre Vermeren: «L'ensauvagement de la société française rattrape nos morts». FigaroVox 30 October 2020 <https://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/societe/pierre-vermeren-l-ensauvagement-de-la-societe-francaise-rattrape-nos-morts-20201030>.

In 2021, 12,500 ethnic, racial, or religious offenses were reported, including more than 6,000 criminal offenses, an increase of 13% over 2019.⁹¹²

A sociological study published in June 2021 by the French Public Opinion Institute noted that 42% of job rejections were due to ethnic reasons.⁹¹³

Racism and extremism in stadiums remain a problem. In April 2019, a French first league soccer match between Dijon and Amiens was suspended because of racist insults from the stands directed at Amiens' black captain P.Guano.

According to the Jewish Community Protection Service, there were 589 anti-Semitic incidents in 2021, a 75% increase over 2020. At the same time, the number of physical attacks increased by 36%.⁹¹⁴

In order to strengthen the fight against manifestations of anti-Semitism, a National Hate Crime Unit was created in 2019 under the General Directorate of the National Gendarmerie of the French Interior Ministry. Its main task is to coordinate investigations into anti-Semitic acts throughout the country.

It is noteworthy that the threat of anti-Semitism in the country comes not only from neo-Nazis or radical Muslims, but also at the grassroots level from ordinary citizens, who tend to blame Jews for all the flaws of capitalism and globalization. Anti-Semitic slogans and manifestations often took place during the "yellow vests" demonstrations throughout 2019.

The coronavirus outbreak also had the effect of increasing stigmatization of Jews. In the spread of the new disease, many saw confirmation of already popular conspiracy theories. The number of anti-Semitic caricatures that draw parallels between the two pandemics – the coronavirus today and the plague in the Middle Ages – increased on social media. For example, one of them depicts Anne Busein, who held the post of French Minister of Solidarity and Health

⁹¹² <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/actualites/communiqués/atteintes-a-caractere-raciste-xenophobe-ou-antireligieux-en-2021-analyse-dun>

⁹¹³ <https://www.ifop.com/publication/lobservatoire-meteojob-des-discriminations-a-lembauche/>

⁹¹⁴ <https://www.fondationshoah.org/antisemitisme/une-augmentation-tres-inquietante-des-actes-antisemites-en-2021>

until February 16, 2020, poisoning water in a well. Her husband Y. Levy, former director general of the National Institute for Health and Medical Research, and J. Salomon, head of the country's General Directorate of Health, were also attacked. The National Anti-Semitism Bureau filed a number of complaints with the prosecutor's office in this connection.

The country has witnessed aggression against members of the Christian community. According to the French Interior Ministry, in 2021 there were 686 crimes committed against Christian believers and/or cases of desecration of church buildings and property.⁹¹⁵ Attacks against believers are increasingly being recorded. For example, three people were killed (one of the victims had her throat slit)⁹¹⁶ in an attack by a 21-year-old immigrant from Tunisia on October 29, 2020, in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Nice. Another attack on a priest and a nun in that city occurred on April 22, 2022 in the Church of the Holy Apostle Peter.⁹¹⁷ A series of attacks on churches took place in January 2022 in the Paris suburbs of Saint-Denis, Bondi, Romainville and Créteil.⁹¹⁸

The number of hostile acts against Muslims is gradually increasing. According to statistics from the French Interior Ministry, there were 171 incidents of Islamophobia in 2021, 32% more than in 2019.⁹¹⁹

In October 2019, an 84-year-old former member of the National Front (before its name was changed to Rassemblement Nationale), a resident of Bayonne (Atlantic Pyrenees), on grounds of Islamophobia and right-wing views, attempted to set fire to a city mosque and seriously injured two of its visitors.

⁹¹⁵ <https://www.20minutes.fr/societe/3197319-20211214-gerald-darmanin-assure-pres-1400-actes-antireligieux-recenses-france-2021>

⁹¹⁶ <https://information.tv5monde.com/info/france-attaque-au-couteau-nice-l-agresseur-interpelle-381393>

⁹¹⁷ https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2022/04/24/nice-un-petre-blesse-au-couteau-dans-une-attaque-sans-caractere-terroriste-a-priori-l-assaillant-a-ete-arrete_6123459_3224.html

⁹¹⁸ <https://www.vaticannews.va/fr/eglise/news/2022-01/vandalisme-eglises-france-saint-denis.html>

⁹¹⁹ <https://www.20minutes.fr/societe/3197319-20211214-gerald-darmanin-assure-pres-1400-actes-antireligieux-recenses-france-2021>

At the same time, Islamist radicalism has gained ground in recent years in the suburbs of many French cities where immigrant families live. According to a study by the French Institute of Public Opinion,⁹²⁰ at least 74 percent of young French Muslims consider the principles of Islam more important than the laws of the French Republic. According to various data published in 2017-2019, the total number of Islamic descendants in the country ranges from 4.1 million to 8.4 million.⁹²¹

There are approximately 16,000 Roma in France, who, because of prejudices and stereotypes widespread against them, are systematically attacked by local residents and experience various forms of discrimination at the hands of the authorities. Often their access to public services, including education, medical care, and social security, is restricted.

A serious concern is caused by cases of discriminatory and biased approach of French judges in imposing unreasonably harsh measures of restraint and punishment on Russian citizens. In 2016-2022, A.Vinnik, I.Zhirnov, M.Ivkin and P.Kosov, as well as V.Balakhnichev and A. Melnikov, faced shortcomings in the administration of justice and execution of sentences, including unsatisfactory conditions in penitentiary institutions and the late submission of case files to lawyers and their principals.⁹²²

An urgent problem for France is the deaths resulting from the use of weapons by police officers and gendarmes.

Until 2018, there were no official statistics on murders committed by law enforcement officers in France. Now it is published by the General Inspectorate of the National Police of the French Interior Ministry: thus, 32 people were

⁹²⁰ Sondage: les jeunes musulmans plus radicaux que leurs aînés. Le Figaro. September 8, 2020
<https://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/sondage-les-jeunes-musulmans-plus-radicaux-que-leurs-aines-20200908>

⁹²¹ <https://observatoire-immigration.fr/nombre-musulmans-france/>

⁹²² See more on this Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on Violations of the Rights of Russian Citizens and Compatriots in Foreign Countries.
https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/humanitarian_cooperation//asset_publisher/bB3NYd16mBFC/content/id/4641517

killed in 2020, and 37 in 2021.⁹²³ The comparison and analysis of data collected by human rights activists and experts (only documented facts of the actions of law enforcement officers) show that the typical profile of the victim is a man of African or Arab origin, 25-30 years old, living in a disadvantaged area of one of the major cities. The typical circumstances of the murder are during apprehension/attempted escape or during pre-trial detention (due to restraint measures applied).

There are frequent cases of abuse by law enforcement officers against migrants, as well as French citizens of non-European phenotype. They are often subjected to identity checks under far-fetched pretexts, while their real reason is the racial or ethnic origin of the person being checked.⁹²⁴

According to the French ombudsman, the instructions and notices sent to police officers between 2012 and 2018 contained provisions clearly encouraging the practice of ethnic profiling. In particular, police officers were required to identify "black and North African groups" as well as to "systematically chase homeless people and gypsies away from their places of residence."⁹²⁵

Repeated incidents of violence and excessive use of force by police during forced camp closures, as well as against Roma, have been cited by UN human rights treaty bodies such as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee against Torture, among others.⁹²⁶

⁹²³ <https://www.ouest-france.fr/societe/police/37-morts-et-79-blesses-lors-d-operations-de-police-l-igpn-a-eu-fort-a-faire-en-2021-f91ff036-099a-11ed-0d51db3723ba>

⁹²⁴ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 5th periodic report of France. July 2015. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fFRA%2fCO%2f5&Lang=ru

⁹²⁵ http://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/sites/default/files/atoms/files/decision_2019-090_defenseur_des_droits.pdf

⁹²⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 20th and 21st periodic reports of France. May 2015. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fFRA%2fCO%2f20-21&Lang=ru;

Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the 7th periodic report of France. May 2016. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fFRA%2fCO%2f7&Lang=ru

It should be noted that the trend of increasing xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism recorded by human rights organizations is increasing. According to the National Advisory Commission on Human Rights, the level of tolerance in French society as a whole has been decreasing since 2010.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Human Rights Committee, and the Committee against Torture have all pointed out that racist, xenophobic, anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic manifestations, including violent ones, have increased in France, fearing that such manifestations may contribute to a feeling of exclusion in some communities.⁹²⁷

On May 25, 2021, the Law on General Security and Preservation of Liberties was issued.⁹²⁸ It provides, among other things, for the expansion of municipal police powers, the list of law enforcement officers who can get access to CCTV footage, allows public services to use drones to ensure public order, search for intruders and rescue people.

The consideration of the corresponding bill in the National Assembly in early December 2020 coincided with several major scandals related to the police. These included the use of force in the dispersal of protests and the destruction of migrant tent camps in Paris, as well as the beating by law enforcement officers of the black producer M.Zeckler, which, according to the victim, was accompanied by racist insults. Meanwhile, French police officers have repeatedly raised the issue of their own vulnerability to crime, which has resulted in repeated demonstrations by law enforcement forces in the thousands

⁹²⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the combined 7th and 8th periodic reports of France. July 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fFRA%2fCO%2f7-8&Lang=ru;

Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 5th periodic report of France. July 2015.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fFRA%2fCO%2f5&Lang=ru;

Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the 7th periodic report of France. May 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fFRA%2fCO%2f7&Lang=ru

⁹²⁸ <https://www.senat.fr/petite-loi-ameli/2020-2021/495.html>

in 2020-2021. The adoption of the aforementioned law was in many ways a response to their aspirations.

Since the beginning of a special military operation by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect civilians in Donbass, the situation of Russian citizens and Russian-speakers in France has worsened. They face manifestations of aggression in everyday life and are discriminated against on the basis of their nationality. The hysteria and anti-Russian rhetoric disseminated by the French authorities have contributed to this to a great extent.

The French authorities are actively working to identify and "freeze" in the territory of the country the assets of Russian individuals on the EU sanctions lists. For this purpose, a special unit has been created in the French Ministry of Economy and Finance consisting of the Tax Service, the Financial Intelligence Service (Tracfin) and Customs. It is engaged in identifying the movable and immovable property, as well as the accounts not only of those on the sanctions lists, but also of their relatives and associates. As a result, about 1.2 billion euros worth of Russian assets were blocked, including 700 million euros of immovable property.

The Ministry of Economy and Finance, together with the Ministry of Justice, is developing a mechanism for the confiscation of discovered property, which will require changes to current legislation.

As a result of these efforts, a number of Russian vessels were arrested in French ports: the freighter "Baltic Lider" (February 26, 2022, located in the port of Boulogne-Sur-Mer), freighter "Vladimir Latyshev" (February 28, 2022, located in the port of Saint-Malo), freighter "Viktor Andryukhin" (also March 1, 2022, located in the port of Fos-Sur-Mer). On March 3, 2022, the French Customs website published a report on the arrest of the yacht "Amore Vero" in the port of La Ciotat.

In addition, Tracfin uses its authority to block dubious financial transfers to stop Russian individuals from withdrawing funds from their French accounts to other jurisdictions.

Many ordinary Russian citizens and natives of Russia also encountered discriminatory attitudes from French banks. Due to blocked accounts and bank cards, compatriots were deprived of the opportunity to pay for basic services such as accommodation, food, and medical care.

For example, in March and April 2022, the Russian diaspora faced mass account closures and blocked transfers by French banks Société Générale, CIC, BNP Paribas and others. Employees of financial institutions referred to anti-Russian sanctions, as well as to certain "instructions of the management," which "restricted services" to holders of Russian and Belarusian passports.

Given the actions of the authorities against Russians holding accounts in French banks, local financial institutions often preventively suspend any transactions by citizens of the Russian Federation to conduct additional checks for compliance with the new requirements in the context of sanctions.

It is known about the practice of arbitrary refusals by banks to grant loans to Russians.

Thus, on March 9, 2022 an employee of a CIC bank branch in Paris informed the Russian citizens Yulia and Dmitry T. by telephone that they were denied a loan for an apartment "due to the events in Ukraine. In response to the clients' requests for any legal justification, the answer was that the bank could not be certain about the renewal of the Russians' residency permits. An official refusal was later sent to our citizens. The Russian family intended to take out a loan to buy real estate, for which they had already made the initial deposit. At the same time, Dmitry T. has an indefinite contract in France at Maillance, and both spouses have a residence permit marked "talent passport", which implies residence in France for more than 4 years and entitles them to stay in the country for many years.

Another Russian citizen permanently residing in Rennes reported that she had received a request from the Société Générale bank for a copy of her French residence permit, which she does not have because she has been a French citizen for a long time.

From February 24, 2022 to the present time, the most aggressive actions were aimed at Russian diplomatic and consular institutions and cultural missions. Intruders threw bags of paint at the building of the Russian Embassy in France, the sidewalks in front of the Embassy, and the stands at the Consulate General in Strasbourg were painted with swastikas. Unknown persons smeared paint on the gates and signs at the entrance to the office of the military attaché, the Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, the Consulate General in Marseille and the Office of the Consulate General in Villefranche-sur-Mer in Marseille. Structures of the Russian Spiritual and Cultural Orthodox Centre (RCPC) were vandalized. The Russian House of Science and Culture in Paris (RDNC) is regularly attacked. On the night of March 6-7, 2022, unknown perpetrators threw a Molotov cocktail at the Center. Several times provocative slogans were written on the stands of the Russian House of Science and Culture. Russian embassy in Paris receives regular messages with threats to diplomats. An envelope with white powder and a moulage of an explosive device arrived by mail. Some staff members' cars were painted in the colors of the Ukrainian flag.

Cases of threats and insults against Russian citizens by the local population have become more frequent.

Cases of psychological pressure on priests of the Russian Orthodox Church in France were recorded. Father Andrey (Eliseev), rector of the St. Nicholas Cathedral in Nice, and clergy of the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Paris, located on the territory of the Russian Orthodox Church, received anonymous letters threatening to kill them if they refused to leave French territory in the near future. Social networks also publish death threats against the priests "as henchmen of the Russian authorities. It should be noted,

however, that French law enforcement authorities responded promptly to the incidents, took the letters for fingerprinting, and opened criminal cases.

In addition to churches in the Russian Orthodox Church, this trend (threats, insults, psychological pressure) has affected local educational institutions.

Nevertheless, such incidents are limited and are not supported at the official level. The French Ministry of Higher Education sent out a circular letter emphasizing that Russian students and researchers in the country can continue their activities without any interference.⁹²⁹

Refusals to serve customers solely on the grounds that they are Russians occur in the service sector. For example, on 18 March 2022, Atelier Bettenfeld-Rosenblum, a furniture repair shop located in Pantin, informed its clients in a letter signed by the director that it refused to work on orders from clients connected to the Russian Federation because the firm was governed by a "ban by the French state treasury".

Two days earlier, on March 16, 2022, the private French security agency Phaz Sécurité, which was contracted to monitor the perimeter of the Russian Embassy in France, announced its desire to terminate its contract with the Russian diplomatic mission prematurely, which it did. The reason given was that the French trade union of security agencies recommended "the termination of contracts with Russian clients in connection with the events in Ukraine. Otherwise, restrictions may be imposed on the bureau up to and including the revocation of the license.

Nevertheless, at present the protection of the Embassy is provided on a temporary basis by French law enforcement agencies due to the general unfavorable situation around Russian foreign institutions associated with the growth of Russophobic sentiments.

⁹²⁹ <https://studia.universita.corsica/plugins/actu/actu-front.php?id=7997>

Efforts to do as much harm as possible to the Russians are also being made at the level of individuals and companies. On March 1, 2022, J.Thévenot, President of the Chamber of Advocates of Valenciennes and part-time President of the Autonomous Fund for Settlement of Advocates (CARPA) of the Chamber of Advocates of the Hauts-de-France, sent a letter to the five Bar Associations of the mentioned region with the instruction "to block all money transfers to clients whose names sound Slavic". He justified his actions by the fact that the term "Slavic origin" refers to many nations, and therefore, in his opinion, is not discriminatory or even more racist. As a result, all Russian-speaking individuals were stranded. However, funds of non-Russian beneficiaries are issued to clients upon presentation of a document certifying that their country of origin is not Russia.

There have been reports of damage to the personal vehicles of Russian compatriots (such as bumping dents, deep scratches, broken rear-view mirrors and wipers, damage to cars with blue and yellow paint, and, less frequently, broken windows), as well as attacks on real estate and businesses owned by Russians.

Everything that reminds of Russia was under the threat of prohibition. Thus, on March 1-3, 2022, a number of bookstores in Toulon were instructed to remove from sale all Russian-language publications, including educational literature for teaching the Russian language, and return them to the publishers.

On March 11-16, 2022, announcements about the withdrawal of "Russian products" from sale appeared in grocery stores in France. This refers to food products made according to "Russian standards" in Germany for Russian compatriots. In addition, in other grocery stores there were cases where ads with Russian symbols and colors of the Russian tricolor were removed from the shelves. Stores that sell products from Eastern European countries and restaurants that offer "Slavic-like" dishes on their menus have also gone to the trouble of restricting sales.

As it turned out, there were reasons for this. On February 24, 2022, Russian restaurants in various regions of France received threatening letters with the same content, requiring them to leave the country. The scope of the threatening letters has not been fully assessed, because not all the owners reported the letters. Examples include the following. Georges Ghazaryan, owner of La Cantine Russe, a Russian cuisine restaurant in Paris, received several similar threatening and insulting letters and a series of anonymous calls threatening his life on his personal cell phone. Because of this he was forced to turn to the police. The owner of the Roi Alexandre restaurant in Lyon also received a threatening and insulting letter and a series of anonymous calls threatening her life on her personal cell phone. The owners of the restaurants La Volga in Lyon and Baba Yaga in Lille also received threatening and insulting letters and phone calls.

Many Russian citizens encountered threats against them. Svetlana Terekhova-Mayorga, coordinator of the "Immortal Regiment" campaign in Lyon, reported that representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora had correspondence about her from social networks containing insulting remarks and threats to her life. Ksenia P., who has lived in France for many years with her son and parents, received death threats online from a Polish-born French citizen who promised to pass on her information to local neo-Nazis in order to "eradicate Russians in the West. She filed a complaint with the police, but there was no response from law enforcement.

There have also been cases of verbal threats and insults from passersby to our compatriots in the streets of French cities simply because they were speaking Russian in a public place.

Russophobia is also evident in secondary education. In schools in France there are cases when Russian-speaking children are insulted by other students, provoked into fights or simply beaten. For example, such incidents took place in the Pablo Picasso Lyceum. There is information about aggression against the

children of Anna P.-F. At the school one of her children was smashed in the head with a stone by a student. The director and teachers of the school did not take measures to combat this aggression. In addition, the Russian woman and her children were openly monitored by the local police, who displayed an abusive attitude (swearing at her). On March 10, 2022, the police and unidentified people took the children away from the mother without explaining the reasons or providing any documentation, and threatened the Russian woman verbally with a trial.

In France there are cases of removal of minor children from parents with Russian citizenship, but in contrast to a number of European countries they are isolated.

On June 9, 2022, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to suspend until December 31, 2022 the adoption procedures for children from Russia and Ukraine.

The French authorities are making efforts to permanently squeeze Russian media out of the country. On March 2, 2022, following the decision of the EU Council, the French media regulator banned the TV channel "RT-France" and the news agency "Sputnik" from the territory of France.

Despite the efforts of the authorities to suppress the manifestations and spread of neo-Nazism within the country, the problem of far-right extremism in France has been exacerbated in recent years.

According to L.Nunez, head of the French president's National Coordinating Center for Intelligence and Counterterrorism, surveillance of far-right organizations has become one of the priorities of the country's Directorate General of Internal Security (DGSI). According to the agency, there are more than 1,500 dangerous, violent far-right extremists in France.

Approximately 100 of them are under special surveillance as potential terrorists.⁹³⁰

The fight against organized neo-Nazi groups is based on the provisions of the 1936 law "On Combat Groups and Private Armed Structures" and anti-terrorist legislation, which allow for arrests on suspicion of forming an extremist group without waiting for the commission of unlawful acts. As of 2017, the French National Counterterrorism Prosecutor's Office is usually in charge of investigating such criminal cases.

Thus, in May 2022 11 members of the group "Patriotic Revenge" were detained on suspicion of preparation of acts of violence.⁹³¹ In November 2021, as a result of an extensive operation, the nationalist organization "Recolonization of France" consisting of about 100 people was neutralized, its leader and 12 heads of regional cells were detained and 51 weapons were seized. Members of the group recruited like-minded people through chat rooms in the Telegram messenger and hatched plans to kill Jews, Africans and Muslims.⁹³²

French nationalist associations are traditionally active in such regions as Brittany and Alsace, as well as in the cities of Lyon and Marseille. During the searches in May 2022 by law-enforcement agencies of the country in Alsace, 23 unregistered weapons, more than 120 thousand pieces of ammunition, including magazines for the Kalashnikov automatic rifle, over 35 kg of gunpowder and extremist literature were found. Earlier, in the autumn of 2021, 14 leaders of an organized network of ultra-right associations "DW Renversion" were arrested in Alsace, who had intended to organize a coup d'état by storming the Elysée Palace.⁹³³ A group of nationalists affiliated with this network, "Honor

⁹³⁰ <https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceinter/ultra-droite-en-france-la-nouvelle-menace-terroriste-1612243>

⁹³¹ <https://www.tflinfo.fr/justice-faits-divers/ultradroite-11-arrestations-autour-du-groupe-vengeance-patriote-soupconne-de-projets-d-actions-violentes-2220196.html>

⁹³² https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2021/11/24/derriere-l-organisation-d-extreme-droite-demantelee-par-la-justice-des-militaires-et-d-anciens-militaires_6103339_3224.html

⁹³³ <https://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/operation-azur-le-projet-secret-du-gourou-complotiste-remy-daillet-pour-renverser-lelysee-27-10-2021-MJQOSTJVIBFH7KPYP02XUXXJF4.php>

and Nation," who were going to blow up the Masonic lodge, were also neutralized.⁹³⁴

In October 2021 five members of the ultra-nationalist group Secret Armed Organization were sentenced to real terms for preparation, according to the investigation, of terrorist acts and murders of political figures in France.

In order to prevent the spread of extremist ideology, the French authorities use a mechanism developed in 2016 and optimized in 2020-2021 that allows for the administrative (extrajudicial) dissolution and prohibition of any organization whose activities threaten public safety by decree of the Council of Ministers. However, it is not uncommon for far-right groups to recreate themselves after some time in the same composition, changing their name, or as undeclared associations after such a procedure.

For example, in January 2022 in Paris, demonstrations against the regime of anti-Covid restrictions of the so-called sanitary pass were attended by activists of the neo-Nazi organizations Identity Generation and Paris Zouaves, banned in March 2021 and early January 2022, respectively. In May 2022, members of the groups Social Bastion and Blood and Honor, disbanded in July 2019, held a torchlight procession in the Haut-Rhin department in memory of French Waffen-SS legionnaires.⁹³⁵ In Lyon, attempts to recreate the "French Nationalist Party" were recorded.⁹³⁶

In addition, in March 2022, members of the far-right neo-Nazi organization Pit Bulls of Paris beat up the owner of a bar in the 11th arrondissement of Paris.⁹³⁷ On June 2, 2022, in Besançon, racist graffiti and swastikas were painted on the election posters of Stéphane Ravaclette,⁹³⁸

⁹³⁴ https://www.liberation.fr/societe/police-justice/cinq-neonazis-soupconnes-davoir-voulu-preparer-un-attentat-mis-en-examen-20210925_ZNLWE33UHJB7JNZG6VUUCZH23Q/

⁹³⁵ <https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/190522/en-alsace-une-soixantaine-de-neonazis-rendent-hommage-des-ss-francais>

⁹³⁶ <https://www.rue89lyon.fr/2021/10/23/extreme-droite-lyon-panorama-groupuscules/>

⁹³⁷ https://actu.fr/ile-de-france/paris_75056/video-un-groupe-neonazi-revendique-une-agression-dans-un-bar-de-paris-trois-mois-apres-les-faits_51014789.html

⁹³⁸ <https://linoumission.fr/2022/06/03/stephane-ravacley-tags-nazis/>

candidate of the leftist political forces for the National Assembly, and in late June 2022, a neo-Nazi meeting was held in Orleans.⁹³⁹

Neo-Nazi ideas resonate among French bikers. The motto of the "Bandidos" bike club based in Besançon (Dou Department) reproduces the SS motto ("our honor is our loyalty"), and among its members are former leaders of the banned far-right organizations "Fight 18" and "Blood and Honor".⁹⁴⁰ The Vagos bike club based in Metz (Moselle department) openly displays Nazi and neo-Nazi symbols at its events. According to media reports, both formations have connections with organized far-right criminal groups in the U.S., involved in drug and arms trafficking.⁹⁴¹

Military personnel, including those in "sensitive" positions, have often joined far-right organizations. Thus, according to leaks in the media, among the members of the "French Recolonization" was a colonel who served at Vilacoublay Air Base, where a large proportion of government and presidential flights are stationed and serviced, and among the "DW Renversment" conspirators were several active French military personnel.

In July 2020 and March 2021, the electronic newspaper Mediapar published investigative journalism about 50 neo-Nazis discovered in the French armed forces thanks to their social media accounts. After the second publication, the then head of the Ministry of Defense F.Parly assured at parliamentary hearings that the persons involved in the first investigation were severely punished, and promised to check and take measures if the new facts uncovered by the journalists were confirmed.

However, on December 8, 2021, Mediapar again raised this topic, questioning the quality of the inspection conducted by the Ministry of Defense.

⁹³⁹ <http://www.revolutionpermanente.fr/je-ne-suis-pas-un-n-gr-a-Orleans-des-neo-nazis-filmes-chantant-leur-haine-raciste>

⁹⁴⁰ <https://www.streetpress.com/sujet/1640009244-bikers-neonazis-gand-motards-crime-organise-besancon-freres-bettoni-extreme-droite>

⁹⁴¹ <https://www.streetpress.com/sujet/1646058430-vagos-groupe-bikers-neonazis-installent-metz-extreme-droite-ayoub>

The reason was the incidental detention of two people by the French customs on November 20, 2021, during the search of their residence 200 kg of cartridges, 130 weapons, including AK-47 and AR-15 assault rifles and submachine guns as well as neo-Nazi propaganda were found. One of the detainees turned out to be the subject of a March investigation by Mediapar.⁹⁴²

Illegal arms trafficking, often involving far-right groups, is becoming an increasingly acute problem. For example, during the above-mentioned raid in Alsace in May 2022, members of the "Strasbourg Offender" gang were detained and charged with large-scale arms trafficking.⁹⁴³

There are many asocial "loners" among French neo-Nazis. The law enforcement agencies do not tend to underestimate the threat posed by them and fear the emergence of a "French A.Breivik. At the level of law enforcement practice, judges try to impose long prison terms as punishment for them. Thus, in January 2022, the Paris correctional court sentenced neo-Nazi A.Chapot to 9 years in prison for "self-preparation for committing an act of terrorism. This is the second conviction with this wording in the history of the country."⁹⁴⁴

A number of right-conservative parties and associations are active in the French domestic political arena, which are often deliberately portrayed by their political opponents as extreme right-wing. However, the ideas of Nazism, neo-Nazism and racial superiority are not part of their ideology, which is aimed at protecting the traditional secular and religious values of French society, combating illegal immigration and countering destructive neoliberal tendencies. As a rule, such parties advocate Euroscepticism, anti-globalism, and seek to strengthen national sovereignty and weaken dependence on the United States. The growing popularity of such parties is largely due to the increasing number

⁹⁴² <https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/081221/neonazis-dans-l-armee-l-insupportable-laisser-faire-du-ministere>

⁹⁴³ <https://www.rue89strasbourg.com/deux-hooligans-strasbourg-offender-perquisitions-armes-mouvance-neonazie-238434>

⁹⁴⁴ https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2022/01/29/ultradroite-aurelien-chapeau-condamne-a-neuf-ans-de-prison-ferme-en-raison-de-la-multiplicite-des-actes-preparatoires-a-un-attentat_6111461_3224.html

of migrants from Arab and African countries and the problem of their sociocultural integration into French society.

The right-wing conservative parties include, in particular, the "Rassemblement National", whose leader is M. Le Pen, the "Debout la France" led by N. Dupont-Henan, the "Parti de la France" chaired by T.Jolie and others.

It is noteworthy that the French authorities' intolerance of neo-Nazi manifestations at home contrasts with the ambiguous position of Paris on this problem in other European countries. For years, the French have turned a blind eye to condoning neo-Nazi manifestations and historical revisionism in a number of Eastern European states. French foreign ministry officials and leaders avoid direct questions from journalists about the attitude of official Paris toward the marches of former Waffen-SS legionnaires in the Baltics. Nor do they pay attention to the atrocities of "Right Sector" and other national-radical associations in Ukraine, preferring not to recall the crimes of Ukrainian collaborators during World War II.

Despite the above, the issue of the glorification of Nazism and the spread of neo-Nazism is not among the most acute in French public and political life. At the same time, despite the developed legislative and law enforcement tools, the situation with racism in the country, including its contemporary forms, is far from ideal, which is confirmed by the conclusions and recommendations of international monitoring bodies.

Federal Republic of Germany

In the Federal Republic of Germany, the country's historical responsibility for the crimes of the Nazi regime is recognized at the state level. Public denial, justification or underestimation of the seriousness of the crimes of National Socialism, public approval or glorification of Nazi tyranny, distribution of propaganda materials and use of symbols of anti-constitutional organizations, which include Nazi and neo-Nazi (§§ 86, 86a and 130 of the Criminal Code (CC) of Germany) are punishable under criminal law.

There have been no attempts in Germany to obstruct the holding of commemorative events to celebrate the Victory in the Great Patriotic War or to impede the activities of veterans' associations and NGOs fighting against neo-Nazism and the glorification of Nazism. At the same time, after the start of the Russian Armed Forces' special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine, Germany has seen attempts to restrict the use of Victory symbols at the regional level. For example, on April 8, 2022 the Interior Ministry of the federal state of Lower Saxony issued an order, according to which it was prohibited to demonstrate the flags of the USSR and the St. George's ribbon as "symbols of the territorial expansion of the Russian state" at public events.⁹⁴⁵ On May 4, 2022 an order was issued by police of Berlin according to which on May 8-9 in the German capital wearing of military uniform, demonstration of St. George ribbon (exceptions were provided for veterans of the Great Patriotic War), Russian and USSR flags, Russian and Soviet war flags, reproduction and singing of war songs were prohibited.⁹⁴⁶

Since the start of the special military operation, there has been a sharp increase in the desecration of Russian (Soviet) military cemeteries and memorials in Germany. In 2021, three such incidents were recorded by the

⁹⁴⁵ <https://www.mi.niedersachsen.de/startseite/aktuelles/presseinformationen/erlass-an-die-niedersaechsischen-polizeibehorden-innenministerium-weist-auf-moeglichen-missbrauch-des-versammlungsrechtes-fur-pro-russische-kriegspropaganda-hin-210579.html>

⁹⁴⁶ https://www.berlin.de/polizei/_assets/dienststellen/anlagen-dir-e/220504-direvst111-av-ehrenmale.pdf

Russian Defense Ministry's Office for the Commemoration of Victims of Defending the Fatherland at the Russian Embassy in Germany, but in the first half of 2022 there were already 11. For example, on 8 August a video appeared on the Internet in which a German supporter of neo-Nazi beliefs desecrated a Soviet war memorial in Verneuichen (Brandenburg), accompanying his prank with racist remarks. It is not only an attempt to incite ethnic hatred, but also a cynical desecration of the memory of soldiers who gave their lives to liberate the world and Europe from Nazism.⁹⁴⁷

Despite the understanding in German ruling circles of the inadmissibility of attempts to revive Nazi ideology and the theory of racial superiority in modern conditions and the still expressed understanding of Germany's role in World War II, there is a relatively small, but numerically stable and active population stratum in the country that speaks out against it. The German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, BfV) counts about 34,000 right-wing extremists in the country, of whom an estimated 13,500 are violent people⁹⁴⁸.

The largest ultra-right political organization in the country is the National Democratic Party of Germany (NDPG) which exists since 1964 and has about 3,000 members. It has regional branches in all of the federal lands, is represented in several municipal assemblies (it has no mandates in Landtags, Land Parliaments and Bundestag). Other right-wing extremist parties – Right Wing, Third Way, etc. – are not numerous (500-600 members each), but they actively participate in organization of mass events with corresponding slogans, and conduct aggressive nationalist propaganda in Internet⁹⁴⁹.

In addition to political parties, right-wing circles organize their activities through other organizations and movements registered as legal entities or

⁹⁴⁷ <https://russische-botschaft.ru/ru/2022/08/09/kommentariy-posolstva-rossii-v-frg-15/>

⁹⁴⁸ https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/verfassungsschutzberichte/2022-06-07-verfassungsschutzbericht-2021.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2

⁹⁴⁹ Ibid.

existing on an informal basis. These include, among others, the Identity Movement, Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West (PEGIDA), the Citizens' Movement for Chemnitz, neo-Nazi "free associations," self-appointed "civil defense squads," etc. As a general trend, the BfV points to a decrease in the influence of officially registered ultra-right parties and organizations in favor of informal, non-permanent structures without a common leader, emerging inter alia on the World Wide Web, which makes monitoring by law enforcement agencies more difficult.⁹⁵⁰ In February 2020, this principle was used, in particular, by the "Group C" (its members planned terrorist acts against Muslims and political figures), the right-wing extremist organization Combat 18, which was banned by the German Interior Ministry in January 2020, and cells of the international neo-Nazi groups "Blood and Honor"⁹⁵¹ and "Atomwaffen Division"⁹⁵², which operate in the country.

Statements with xenophobic, Islamophobic and anti-Semitic overtones, as well as sentences containing signs of historical revisionism, were repeatedly voiced by several representatives of the Alternative for Germany (AfG) party, including members of the Landtags and the Bundestag. In March 2021, it became known about the BfV's decision to register AfG as an organization "suspicious" for right-wing extremism. The party appealed this measure in court. On March 8, 2022, the administrative court in Cologne ruled that the intelligence service's actions were lawful due to the presence of "sufficient factual evidence of anti-constitutional aspirations" in the AfG's ranks⁹⁵³.

The ultra-right forces are closely joined by "citizens of the Reich" – revisionists who do not recognize the legitimacy of Germany and its authorities and consider themselves citizens of the German Empire in its pre-war borders. The number of people living in this "parallel reality" is steadily increasing and

⁹⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁵¹ <https://www.tagesschau.de/investigativ/ndr-wdr/prozess-blood-honour-101.html>

⁹⁵² <https://www.zeit.de/politik/2022-04/atomwaffen-division-und-combat-18>

⁹⁵³ https://www.vg-koeln.nrw.de/behoerde/presse/Pressemitteilungen/06_08032022/index.php

is now estimated at about 21,000, over 2,000 of whom are considered to be violent⁹⁵⁴. We can observe the growing radicalization of this environment and its readiness to open conflicts with the authorities. On March 19, 2020, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Germany banned one of the largest organizations of "citizens of the Reich" United German Nations, whose members (about 120 people) were distributing propaganda of racist and anti-Semitic nature among other things⁹⁵⁵.

Mass right-wing extremist and xenophobic events are regularly held in the country, attracting from several dozen to several hundred people. Among the largest of such events were the right-wing demonstrations in Dresden on the anniversary of the bombing of the city by British and American aircraft on February 13-15, 1945. Up to 800 people took part in another such rally with revisionist slogans on February 13, 2022⁹⁵⁶. Right-wing radicals were noticeably active during the protests against government measures against the COVID-19 pandemic. The most scandalous episode was the demonstration in Berlin on August 29, 2020, when such a group (about 300-400 people) managed to break the cordon around the Reichstag building and climb its steps with "imperial" black-white-red flags, which are often used by German neo-Nazis⁹⁵⁷.

The scale of the integration of right-wing extremist elements into law enforcement agencies is significant. According to the second special report of the German Ministry of the Interior on this topic, published in May 2022, between July 2018 and June 2021, 860 checks were carried out against members of the security services (police, special services, Bundeswehr, customs) on suspicion of having right-wing extremist views or views close to those of "Reich citizens. In 327 cases the suspicions were confirmed. Over

⁹⁵⁴ https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/verfassungsschutzberichte/2022-06-07-verfassungsschutzbericht-2021.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2

⁹⁵⁵ <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/DE/2020/03/verbot-reichbuergervereinigung.html>

⁹⁵⁶ <https://www.saechsische.de/dresden/verkehrsbehinderungen-am-13-februar-in-dresden-5625094.html>

⁹⁵⁷ https://www.rbb24.de/politik/thema/2020/coronavirus/beitraege_neu/2020/08/berlin-reaktionen-reichsflaggen-absperungen-durchbrochen-reichs.html

450 criminal cases on incitement of ethnic hatred, use of symbols and propaganda of anti-constitutional organizations and others were opened⁹⁵⁸.

In the German armed forces, the most problematic unit in terms of right-wing extremist sentiments is the KSK Special Forces, one of whose companies was disbanded in July 2020 for this reason.

In June 2021 information was made public about the organization of Nazi parties by German soldiers in the NATO contingent in Lithuania in April of the same year, where Hitler was glorified and facts of sexual violence took place⁹⁵⁹.

The German police was repeatedly shaken by scandals involving dozens of its officers in electronic chat rooms, where pictures of Hitler, swastikas, photo montages of shootings of black people, etc. were forwarded.⁹⁶⁰ In a profile report published in December 2020 by the Parliamentary Control Committee of the Bundestag (which supervises the activities of law enforcement agencies) it was stated that right-wing radicals in the police, special services, and Bundeswehr maintain close ties with right-wing extremist parties, movements, and groups (the SPD, the Identity Movement, neo-Nazi "partnerships," etc.)⁹⁶¹. The participation in extremist chats by police officers from Hesse, Baden-Württemberg, and Bavaria in 2018-2019⁹⁶² and Berlin and North Rhine-Westphalia in 2020⁹⁶³ came to public attention.

There have been cases of police databases being used for off-duty purposes, and in a number of such cases, citizens, public figures and politicians have received threats against them. In particular, information was published about incidents in Hessen⁹⁶⁴ and Frankfurt am Main⁹⁶⁵.

⁹⁵⁸ <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/rechtsextremismus/2022-05-lagebericht-rechtsextremisten-reichsbuerger-und-selbstverwalter-in-sicherheitsbehoerden.pdf>

⁹⁵⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/german-soldiers-dismissed-over-hitler-birthday-song-2021-06-16/>, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-57487869>,

⁹⁶⁰ <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/berlin-und-nrw-neue-rassistische-chatgruppen-bei-polizei-entdeckt-16981029.html>

⁹⁶¹ <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/251/1925180.pdf>

⁹⁶² <https://www.dw.com/ru/pravye-jekstremisty-v-rjadah-policii-frg-vse-nachalos-v-chate/a-54963251>

⁹⁶³ <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/berlin-und-nrw-neue-rassistische-chatgruppen-bei-polizei-entdeckt-16981029.html>

⁹⁶⁴ <https://www.dw.com/ru/v-germanii-razgoraetsya-skandal-ob-ugrozax-pravykh-ekstremistov/a-54182888>

Civil society activists pointed out that the German authorities tolerate various neo-Nazi provocations, although they pretend not to notice them. In particular, the chairman of the German Union of Free Thinkers K. Hartmann spoke about this with regard to the participation of the German military in the above-mentioned NATO regular military exercises in Lithuania, which had a scandalous name "Iron Wolf" from the historical point of view. K. Hartmann reminded that the name of these exercises refers to the Lithuanian nationalist movement of the 1930s "Iron Wolf" (Geležinis Vilkas), also known as the "Association of Iron Wolves. The movement was anti-Semitic and Nazi in nature, and its ideology called for ridding Lithuania of Poles and Jews and generally creating a powerful state in the image of European fascist movements. During World War II, its members collaborated with the Nazi authorities⁹⁶⁶.

The public is aware of ties between German right-wing radicals and foreign extremist structures. Thus, as early as February 2021, Die Zeit published the results of its research on this topic. The investigation revealed a trend toward internationalization of extreme right-wing movements. In practical terms, this trend is also reflected in the strengthening of ties between German far-right organizations and Ukrainian neo-Nazis and their participation, including in the armed conflict in Donbas. Thus, information was provided about the activities of the Ukrainian neo-Nazi association "Azov" in Germany and its cooperation with the German neo-Nazi associations "National Democratic Party of Germany", "Third Way", "Identitarian Movement" and "Rightists"⁹⁶⁷.

Concerts and "song nights" by far-right rock bands promoting neo-Nazi and revanchist ideas, as well as martial arts festivals organized by this

⁹⁶⁵ <https://www.hr-inforadio.de/programm/themen/nsu-20---die-bedrohung-geht-weiter,nsu-162.html>

⁹⁶⁶ <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20191115/V-Germanii-vozmutilis-nazvaniem-ucheniy-Zheleznyy-volk-v-Litve-10675615.html>

⁹⁶⁷ The Brown Internationale. Kai Biermann, Christian Fuchs, Astrid Geisler, Yassin Musharbash, Hogler Stark. Die Zeit. 11 February 2021. https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2021-02/fascism-international-right-wing-extremism-neo-nazis-english/komplettansicht?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

contingent, help to strengthen radical cohesion and unobtrusively recruit young people. A significant number of right-wing extremists from other European countries participate in events of this kind in Germany⁹⁶⁸.

The Internet plays a significant role in the spread of right-wing extremist ideology in Germany. The far-right actively uses the possibilities of popular social networks to propagandize and mobilize participants in public events. Such views are also disseminated on so-called image boards ("4chan," "8chan," etc.) and on platforms for gamers ("Steam," "Discord," etc.)⁹⁶⁹. Sociological studies have recorded a consistently high level of hate speech against persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities in the German segment of the Internet⁹⁷⁰. In 2021, more than 2,400 criminal offenses related to the dissemination of "hate speech" on the World Wide Web (incitement to national and religious hatred, insults, etc.) were officially registered in Germany⁹⁷¹.

In the context of the growing popularity of extreme right-wing radical ideologies and organizations, a study of the political attitudes of the German middle class conducted by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the results of which were published in June 2021, also attracts attention. On the one hand, a decrease in the prevalence of openly right-wing extremist views in society was noted. On the other hand, the number of those who do not distance themselves sufficiently from statements with populist and xenophobic overtones was growing. Thus, it appears that the German middle class is partly open to populist ideas and manifestations of domestic discrimination. This creates the potential for the spread of hateful attitudes in large segments of society.

Given trends of increasing right-wing radical activity, it is not surprising that violent crimes of an extremist nature are being recorded in Germany. The

⁹⁶⁸ https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/verfassungsschutzberichte/2022-06-07-verfassungsschutzbericht-2021.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2

⁹⁶⁹ <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btd/19/161/1916170.pdf>

⁹⁷⁰ https://www.idz-jena.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Hass_im_Netz_-_Der_schleichende_Angriff.pdf

⁹⁷¹ <https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/UnsereAufgaben/Deliktsbereiche/PMK/2021PMKFallzahlen.pdf>

most recent high-profile crime of this kind with human casualties in Germany was the racist attack in Hanau on February 19, 2020, in which nine people were killed.

Right-wing extremism is currently regarded by the official authorities as one of the most serious threats to the country's internal security.

According to the Federal Criminal Police Office of Germany (BKA), in 2021 about 22,000 politically motivated right-wing extremist crimes were registered in the country, of which over 1,000 were violent. There were 9.2 thousand criminal acts motivated by xenophobia, 2.8 thousand racist crimes and over 700 Islamophobic ones⁹⁷². During the same period, the police recorded over 1.2 thousand crimes against asylum seekers and places of accommodation, with 156 people injured⁹⁷³.

In 2021 the German Ministry of the Interior recorded 10,501 hate crimes (2.55% more than in 2020), most of which were motivated by xenophobia (9,236 cases), most of which were right-wing radicals, 858 of which were violent, including 795 bodily injuries. There were also 3,027 anti-Semitic crimes, 84% of which were committed by right-wing elements, including 64 violent crimes (an increase of 28.75% over 2020), and 732 Islamophobic crimes, 588 (or 80.3%) of which were committed by right-wing elements, including 43 violent crimes (a total decrease of 28.65% over 2020). 2,782 offenses were classified as racist. There were 109 hate-motivated crimes against Christians and Roma each, respectively⁹⁷⁴. Regarding the conclusions of the MIA report on politically motivated crime we can state that right-wing extremists are regarded by the law enforcement agencies as the biggest extremist threat, since the total number of violent acts with such a motive makes

⁹⁷² Ibid.

⁹⁷³ <https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2022-02/fluechtlinge-angriffe-gewalt-rechtsextremismus>

⁹⁷⁴ https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/veroeffentlichungen/nachrichten/2022/pmk2021-factsheets.pdf;jsessionid=00E89F7AE76D76FACCFD209193C7A345.2_cid322?__blob=publicationFile&v=2

up 1,042 (against 1,092 in 2020)⁹⁷⁵. It appears that the decrease in the number of certain types of offenses noted in the report, including those with racist and xenophobic motives, can be explained by a change in the methodology of recording offenses, since the overall trend points to an increase in hate crimes.

Human rights activists are particularly concerned about the growing problem of anti-Semitism in the country. Police statistics show a steady increase in the number of anti-Semitic crimes. As noted above, in 2021 there were over 3,000 such crimes (+30% compared to 2020), of which 64 involved violence⁹⁷⁶. However, it is acknowledged that this is "the tip of the iceberg," without taking into account the various "domestic" incidents (harassment in schools and universities, etc.) that are not prosecuted. The growth of anti-Semitic sentiments in connection with various "conspiracy theories" in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic is noted⁹⁷⁷.

According to data from the 2010-2020 survey of anti-Semitism prepared by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, there were 2,351 anti-Semitic crimes in Germany in 2020, most of which (2,224) were attributed to right-wing extremists⁹⁷⁸.

A more complete picture is provided by specialized NGOs that receive complaints from victims on an anonymous basis. The joint statistics of the NGO Amadeu Antonio Foundation and Pro Asyl for the year 2021 show more than 12,000 safety incidents involving asylum seekers and their accommodation facilities in Germany, including over 2,000 cases of bodily injury and 287 cases of arson, as well as the use of fireworks, insulting slogans, threats, and more⁹⁷⁹. "In 2021, the Center for Research and Information on Anti-Semitism reported

⁹⁷⁵ <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/DE/2022/05/pmk2021.html>

⁹⁷⁶ <https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/UnsereAufgaben/Deliktsbereiche/PMK/2021PMKFallzahlen.pdf>

⁹⁷⁷ https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/2022-01-28_rias-bund_Monitoring_CoronaProteste.pdf

⁹⁷⁸ Anti-Semitism. Overview of Anti-Semitic Incidents in the EU 2010-2020. EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-antisemitism-overview-2010-2020_en.pdf

⁹⁷⁹ <https://www.mut-gegen-rechte-gewalt.de/service/chronik-vorfaelle>

more than 1,000 anti-Semitic incidents in Berlin⁹⁸⁰. Overall, according to the Center, the number of anti-Semitic incidents in the year 2021 increased by 40% over the previous year, to 2,738 (1,977 in 2020). Human rights organizations point to the fear of many victims to seek help, and as a result, a large number of incidents are not reported to the police.

The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* also noted that anti-Semitism is on the rise in German society, according to a study published by the World Jewish Congress. According to the study, more than a quarter of Germans surveyed said they agreed with anti-Semitic statements, including that Jews have "too much power over the economy." More than 40 percent said they thought Jews "talk too much about the Holocaust".⁹⁸¹ The results of this study were cited by the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) in its 2022 report.

The rights of the Roma community remain a problem. The RCNM AC indicated that cases of racial profiling by police continue, as well as instances of abusive behavior and even violence by police officers, with victims finding it very difficult to prove that they have been discriminated against. Discrimination against Roma in education continues. Negative attitudes, prejudices, and stereotypes about Roma are prevalent in German society. Citing a 2014 study by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, it is noted that every third respondent considers Roma to be unpleasant neighbors. Anti-Romani sentiment is widespread on social media, as well as in the comment sections of online news sites such as *Der Spiegel*.⁹⁸²

According to a number of human rights NGOs (Pro Asyl, Amnesty international, etc.), Germany does not sufficiently promote the right of refugees

⁹⁸⁰ https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/Antisemitische-Vorfaelle-2021_Jahresbericht_RIAS-Berlin.pdf

⁹⁸¹ <https://www.dw.com/en/one-in-four-germans-hold-anti-semitic-beliefs-study-finds/a-50958589>

⁹⁸² Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Germany (fifth cycle), adopted February 3, 2022, published June 12, 2022 <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-germany-en/1680a6e008>

to international protection⁹⁸³. An increasing number of citizens of Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan are denied full refugee status by the authorities. Of the 145 thousand asylum claims decided on by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in 2020, only 37.8 thousand (26.1%) were fully approved, 18.9 thousand (13.1%) of the applicants received the so-called subsidiary protection status, 5.7 thousand (3.9%) – postponement of deportation. 46.5 thousand (32.1%) applications were rejected, consideration of the remaining 36 thousand (24.8%) terminated on formal grounds. Thus, the total "protective quota" amounted to 43.1%.

In 2020, 10.8 thousand migrants were deported from Germany, 11,982 persons in 2021⁹⁸⁴. Persons identified as posing a terrorist threat, those convicted of criminal offenses and those evading identification are subject to deportation (361 in 2019⁹⁸⁵, 137 in 2020)⁹⁸⁶. Human rights NGOs are also concerned about the "Law on more effective implementation of the Duty of departure", which entered into force in Germany on August 21, 2019, aimed at facilitating the deportation of migrants who are denied the right to international protection. In particular, it expands the list of conditions under which such persons may be placed in places of detention prior to deportation, increases the time limits for such detention, and legalizes the placement of deportees in regular prisons in the event of a shortage of places in specialized institutions⁹⁸⁷. At the same time, the detention centres for asylum seekers in Germany are characterized by poor living conditions, which primarily affects women and children⁹⁸⁸.

⁹⁸³ <https://www.proasyl.de/thema/asyl-in-deutschland/>

⁹⁸⁴ <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/451861/umfrage/abschiebungen-aus-deutschland/>

⁹⁸⁵ <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/182/1918201.pdf>

⁹⁸⁶ <https://dserv.bundestag.de/btd/19/270/1927007.pdf>

⁹⁸⁷ <https://www.amnesty.de/informieren/amnesty-report/deutschland-deutschland-2019#section-11763742>

⁹⁸⁸ <https://www.proasyl.de/thema/asyl-in-deutschland/>

The practice of deportation to Afghanistan, considered a "safe country of origin", has long been criticized by human rights activists, but after the Taliban came to power in August 2021, Berlin suspended its implementation⁹⁸⁹.

The number of citizens' appeals to the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency in 2020 amounted to almost 6.4 thousand (+ 78% compared to 2019). In 41% of cases, the applicants complained about the infringement of their rights for health-related reasons (most often in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic), in 33% – on ethnic / racial grounds, in 17% – on gender. This was followed by such characteristics as age (9%), religion (5%), sexual identity (4%) and worldview (2%)⁹⁹⁰.

At the end of 2019, the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community recorded 7.9 thousand crimes against migrants motivated by xenophobia, 828 of which were violent. 126 torts were targeted against accommodation facilities for asylum seekers. 1.5 thousand cases of hate content distribution on the Internet have been recorded⁹⁹¹.

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) pointed out the discrimination of migrants in the labour market in Germany. With reference to a sociological survey of the German Centre for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM), it was noted that people with a migrant background are on average 50% more likely to lose their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic than non-migrants working in the same sector and in the same profession⁹⁹².

The Human Rights Committee (HRC), created in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, noted that in Germany the quota of places for asylum seekers creates restrictions on family reunification for persons benefiting from subsidiary protection. Rather narrow interpretation

⁹⁸⁹ <http://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/de/2021/08/aussetzung-abschiebung.html>

⁹⁹⁰ <https://www.antidiscriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/publikationen/Jahresberichte/2020/pdf?blob=PublicationFile&v=2>

⁹⁹¹ <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/veroeffentlichungen/2020/pmk-2019.pdf>

⁹⁹² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en/pdf

of the term family also restricts opportunities for family reunification, due to which brothers and sisters of unaccompanied migrant children do not fall under this definition. In addition, the Residents Act does not prohibit the imprisoning of persons subject to deportation. The deportations of illegal migrants themselves are carried out by the authorities without a preliminary assessment of the individual situation of the migrant. In addition, poor living conditions in German migration centres and their location in geographically remote areas were noted⁹⁹³.

By the end of 2020, according to the newspaper "Die Zeit" 1.6 thousand crimes against refugees and asylum seekers (201 of them were injured) and 84 attacks on their accommodation facilities were detected⁹⁹⁴.

Currently, according to media reports, about 200 thousand migrants live in Germany in a state of legal uncertainty, unable to get a job. Their asylum applications were denied but they were not deported due to the crisis situation in their countries of origin. The German authorities announced their intention to solve this problem by granting legal residence status to some of these persons⁹⁹⁵.

According to a study published in April 2022 by the German statistical agency Destatis, "persons with a migration background", that is, who were either born outside Germany or have at least one migrant parent, make up 27.2% of the German population. In total, about 82 million people live in the country, about 22.3 million of which were born abroad or have foreign roots – this is the highest figure since the first survey was conducted in 2005⁹⁹⁶. According to the FRA, Germany is home to the largest number of migrants⁹⁹⁷.

⁹⁹³ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 7th periodic report of the Federal Republic of Germany. November 2021 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/357/48/PDF/G2135748.pdf?OpenElement>

⁹⁹⁴ <https://www.zeit.de/aesellschaft/zeitaeschehen/2021-03/rechtsextremismus-fluechtlinae-anariffe-straftaten-bundesinnenministerium-2020>

⁹⁹⁵ <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20220702-germany-proposes-new-path-to-residency-work-for-migrants-in-limbo>

⁹⁹⁶ <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-over-1-in-4-people-have-migrant-background/a-61452241>

International monitoring mechanisms also draw attention to the problems of racism in Germany. For instance, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, operating in the framework of the Council of Europe in its March 2020 report on Germany, cited with alarm the increase in xenophobia and Islamophobia in German public discourse and the rise of violent right-wing extremists. The persistence of "racial profiling" by the police and the lack of effective support mechanisms for victims of this phenomenon are also noted in the negative. The ECRI calls on Berlin to intensify efforts to prevent and combat right-wing extremism and neo-Nazism, as well as to create safeguards to effectively prosecute "hate speech" on the Internet. The report recommends the establishment of a comprehensive system of independent anti-discrimination authorities at both the federal and Land level⁹⁹⁸.

The FCPNM's Advisory Committee also noted an increase in hate crimes, including against members of the Jewish, Islamic and Roma communities⁹⁹⁹.

Incitement to hatred in Germany, including on the Internet and in the context of political discussions, facts of hate crimes, including cases of desecration of religious objects, as well as discrimination against people of African descent, Roma, Muslims, people of Jewish faith, refugees and migrants were pointed out with concern by the Human Rights Committee.

With regard to the legal framework to combat manifestations of racism, the HRC noted that the General Equal Treatment Act 2006 does not directly protect individuals from discrimination based on language and nationality; does

It is noteworthy that this analysis did not take into account the migration movements of Ukrainians from February-March 2022. The German police stated that due to the special operation, about 900 thousand Ukrainian citizens have arrived in the country at the moment, which increased the number of the Ukrainian diaspora several times. The real number is probably higher, since there is a visa-free regime for Ukrainians in Germany.

⁹⁹⁷ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

⁹⁹⁸ Report of the European Commission against racism and intolerance on Germany (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted on December, 10 2019 and published on March, 17 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-report-on-germany-sixth-monitoring-cycle-/16809ce4be>

⁹⁹⁹ Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on the Federal Republic of Germany (fifth cycle), adopted February 3, 2022, published June 12, 2022 <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-germany-en/1680a6e008>

not solve the problem of discrimination on multiple grounds, nor does it provide for the possibility of filing class actions on the grounds of discrimination in court¹⁰⁰⁰. It is noteworthy that the non-compliance of German laws with EU norms in the field of combating discrimination was also pointed out by the European Commission, which initiated a violation procedure against Germany¹⁰⁰¹.

In 2022, a large-scale manifestation of xenophobia was noted in Germany. After the start of the SMO, there was a sharp surge in cases of discrimination, insults, threats and direct violence against Russian-speaking citizens living in Germany. According to the BKA, at the peak, up to 200 criminal offenses on this basis were registered per week.

Human rights activists and representatives of migrant associations point to the widespread "domestic" racism in Germany, which is expressed in discrimination against persons of foreign origin in the labour market, in healthcare, when looking for housing, etc., as well as "institutional" racism in government and administration, including the practice of "racial profiling"¹⁰⁰². In the course of sociological research, it is confirmed that people of non-German appearance are disproportionately subjected to control measures by the police. Many respondents complained about racist and Islamophobic remarks from police officers¹⁰⁰³.

Presented in March 2020, the 6th Country Report on Germany, prepared by the ECRI Committee, called on the Federal Republic of Germany to intensify efforts to prevent and combat right-wing extremism and neo-Nazism, as well as to create guarantees for the effective prosecution of "hate speech" on the Internet. The committee pointed out the rise of xenophobia and

¹⁰⁰⁰ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 7th periodic report of Germany. November 2021 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/357/48/PDF/G2135748.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁰⁰¹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

¹⁰⁰² <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/wissen/alltagsrassismus-in-deutschland-wenn-der-hass-krank-macht/25295914.html>

¹⁰⁰³ <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/studie-polizei-101.html>

Islamophobia in German public discourse and the growing number of violent right-wing extremists. The persistence of the practice of "racial profiling" by the police and the absence of effective mechanisms to support victims of this phenomenon were also noted. The report contained a recommendation to establish a comprehensive system of independent anti-discrimination bodies at the federal and state levels¹⁰⁰⁴.

In connection with the beginning of the Russian special operation, a drastic outbreak of manifestations of discrimination, not only of Russian persons and persons of Russian origin but all representatives of the Russian-speaking expatriate community, including Jews and "Russian" Germans from among the recent repatriates was registered. It is worth noting that most representatives of the Russian-speaking expatriate community who fell victims to ostracism and harassment also have German citizenship. Since late February, there have been a lot of quite different incidents, even those coming beyond the legal framework and cases of violence: use of physical force, threats, insults, facts of property damage, refusals to provide services, including the healthcare ones, dismissals from work, coercion to public repentance and condemnation of Russian government's actions, etc. Harassment of Russian-speaking children at schools, both by their classmates and by teachers, became widespread. At many schools, there are lessons and homework discrediting Russia and its government and distorting information about the events in Ukraine. Those who refuse to attend such lessons and do such homework are threatened with dismissal.

In such conditions, the Embassy of Russia in Berlin on March 2, 2022, organized a special feedback channel for the Russian fellow citizens in order to ensure prompt reaction to their concerns in connection to discriminatory incidents. The information received by this hotline with regard to particular instances of violation of Russian-speaking citizens' rights in Germany is

¹⁰⁰⁴ <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-report-on-germany-sixth-monitoring-cycle-/16809ce4be>

systematized by the Embassy and posted on its official website in the section #StopHatingRussians. From the beginning of March 2022, when the hotline was opened, the number of such applications exceeded eight hundred.

According to the data of the Federal Authority of the Criminal Police of the Federal Republic of Germany, as of the end of March – beginning of April 2022, about two hundred illegal acts targeting Russian-speaking individuals having relation to the situation in Ukraine or committed for "anti-Russian motives" were recorded weekly.

One of the new forms of discrimination was the German banks' refusal to service Russians' accounts and freezing of the funds in such accounts. Thus, the German bank ING-DiBa AG sent communications to its clients that their accounts would be blocked in connection with the conflict in Ukraine. Deutsche Bank, Frankfurter Sparkasse and Postbank Hamburg acted in a comparable manner; referring to possible restrictions in provision of banking services, they sent to their clients who had Russian citizenship letters that require providing German or EU residence permit.

Apart from persecution of Russian citizens in their everyday life in Germany, the discrimination of Russians was reflected on the sphere of culture as well. A campaign for coercing to public condemnation of the Russian government's actions was unfolded throughout the country. It started with putting pressure on the world-known orchestra director V.Gergiev from the part of the leading concert halls of Germany, including the Munich philharmonic orchestra which he had directed since 2015. V.A.Gergiev was dismissed from the position of the leading director of the Philharmonic Hall because of his refusal to make a public statement condemning Russia's actions in Ukraine. The Bavarian State Opera also terminated its relations with him. Apart from that, in March 2022 information appeared on the refusal of the German Russian Music Academy to support the performance at the Krasnoyarsk Opera Theatre (scheduled for September). Russophobic acts also affected places of religious

worship. In March, there were reported incidents with attacks on and desecration of the Orthodox temples of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (in Düsseldorf, Essen, Krefeld) and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (in Hannover, Berlin, and Bielefeld).

On March 11, 2022, there was an attempt to set on fire M.V.Lomonosov Russian-German School in the Marzahn district of Berlin. CCTV cameras recorded an unidentified person throwing a bottle with incendiary mixture at the entrance door of the school gymnasium building. The incident is investigated by the division of the Land criminal police department whose competencies include investigating politically motivated crimes. Its representatives proceed from the fact that the incident is directly related to Russia's special operation in Ukraine. The attack on the educational institution was condemned by the Berlin authorities and by a number of German federal politicians.

After beginning of the special military operation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation for demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine, the Russian media RT DE and SNA News (former Sputnik Deutschland) fell under the general EU sanctions implying the ban on their activities in all European Union countries. SNA News took the decision to fully terminate broadcasting in Germany and closed its official web portal and social networks accounts. Broadcasting of the TV channel RT DE is officially blocked in Germany, but its programs are still available on some external network platforms. The channel home page on the Internet is subjected to massive DDoS-attacks. On March 17, 2022, the Administrative Court of Berlin dismissed the appeal of RT DE of March 8, 2022, where our media tried to challenge the fine in the amount of 25,000 euro imposed on it by the media regulator of the federal lands Berlin and Brandenburg for non-compliance with the ban on linear broadcasting in Germany. The RT DE was ordered to pay an additional fine of 40,000 euro.

It should be noted that targeted attacks on the part of socio-political and journalistic circles at the Russian media active in Germany, first of all at the TV

channel Russia Today (RT DE) and its affiliated video agency Ruptly have taken place earlier as well, since 2020.

A toxic background had been carefully created around this Russian media: the German press disseminated baseless insinuations about its political prejudice and bias, attempts to sow the seeds of discord in the German society, etc.

In May 2021, Commerzbank, without explaining the reasons thereof, announced the closing of the accounts of RT DE and Ruptly and stopped rendering financial services to them. Under the pressure from Berlin, the Luxembourg authorities denied appropriate license to the Russian TV channel for broadcasting in German in the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany (although the TV channel's application had been drawn up in compliance with the Luxembourg and general EU legislation and submitted on the same grounds on which a number of other media, including from the states located beyond the territory of the European Union and had been certified by the Luxembourg authorities without any impediment). The apotheosis was the statement of the representatives of German security services that they were officially "following" the activities of RT DE.

Just a few days after the launching of the TV channel (December 16, 2021) based on a license issued by the Serbian authorities in compliance with the European Convention on Transfrontier Television of May 5, 1989, the media regulator of the federal lands of Berlin and Brandenburg achieved the termination of its broadcasting from the European telecommunications satellite EUTELSAT 9 and also started the process for further limiting of RT DE's broadcasting in the territory of Germany. On February 2, 2022, the Berlin-based company that was responsible for the management of the TV channel received from the media regulator an official notification about the need to stop its linear broadcasting via the Internet, satellite and external media platforms and applications.

Croatia

In the Republic of Croatia (RC), any manifestation of nationalist ideologies is generally condemned at the official level. However, sympathies for figures of the collaborationist Independent State of Croatia (ISC) during World War II are occasionally reflected in the statements of some Croatian Catholic Church representatives, politicians, and journalists.

The speeches of Bishop V.Kosic in Sisak are noteworthy in this regard. The clergyman holds the view that the collaborators are "fighters for freedom and independence," and exaggerates the crimes of the partisans in every possible way¹⁰⁰⁵. The attempts to canonize Archbishop A. Stepinac of Zagreb, convicted for cooperation with the Ustashi regime during the ISC do not stop. Thus, on February 6, 2020, this issue was once again raised by the Prime Minister of Croatia A.Plenkovic during a meeting with Pope Francis.

On January 17, 2019, the premises of the Catholic Church in Zagreb hosted a presentation of the book by J. Pecarić "Detection of a fraud about the Jasenovac Camp", dedicated to the denial of the involvement of the Ustashes in the deaths of prisoners of the largest concentration camp of the ISC. On March 13, 2019, the presentation of the book was held in the central Catholic church of Sisak.

In April 2019, on the central channel of local television HRT in the daily cultural and information program "Calendar" A.Pavelich, a former military dictator of the ISC, was called a "fighter against Belgrade violence". The Croatian liberation movement¹⁰⁰⁶, created by him in Argentina in 1956, was registered in the Republic of Croatia in February, 1992 and is active to this day.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Some of his statements can be found on the pages of leading Croatian publications and Internet portals, such as www.index.hr/mobile/clanak.aspx?category=viesti&id=819812, <https://www.24sata.hr/tagovi/vlado-kosic-47839>, <https://m.vecerni.hr/viesti/dobio-sam-tri-pretnje-lievicari-bi-ubiiali-i-nakon-7Q-godina-1194822>

¹⁰⁰⁶ <https://registri.uprava.hr/tf!stranka-detalii/veMBAAEAAAaa8SeAAAAAAAZgBAAAAQEBcmVnJvalNOcmFua-UCAA>

The growing number of revisionist materials on social networks was pointed out by the European Commission for Combating Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), which was functioning within the framework of the Council of Europe. It was noted that in 2015, dozens of cases were recorded when photographs of people dressed in the Ustasha uniform were posted on the social network Facebook¹⁰⁰⁷.

Internet portals such as www.poglavnik.wordpress.com (dedicated to the life and heritage of A. Pavelich), www.otporas.com (dedicated to the movement of the Ustasha), www.domobranzd.com (dedicated to the memory of the ISC armed forces) are operating unimpeded. With the financial support of relevant government agencies (the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Veterans), Hrvatski Tjednik and Hrvatski Domobran magazines are published, that periodically publish articles heroizing the Ustasha. Controversial historical essays and pseudo-research, aimed at creating a negative image of the Yugoslav partisans¹⁰⁰⁸, attributing without cause crimes to them¹⁰⁰⁹ are published in open access.

The problem of spreading hatred rhetoric in the online space remains a fairly significant problem for Croatia. Hatred-based comments and posts on the Internet regarding representatives of national minorities receive a large number of views and spread quickly in society, which poses a threat to the security of members of a number of diasporas. In order to combat the dissemination of publications of this kind, the introduction of regulation at the legislative level

¹⁰⁰⁷ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Croatia (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted 21 March 2018, published 15 May 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-croatia/16808b57be>

¹⁰⁰⁸ B.Matković, R.Topić Zločini Jugoslavenske armije i komunistička represija u Lici i gradu Gospiću 1945. godine: Dokumenti, svjedočanstva i grobišta, Hrvatska družba povjesničara Dr. Rudolf Horvat (2019), B.Matković Croatia and Slovenia at the end and after the Second World War (1944-1945), Mass crimes and human rights violations committed by the communist regime, BrownWalker Press, USA (2017), V.Geiger, S.Pilić, Partizanska i komunistička represija i zločini u Hrvatskoj, Dokumenti, Dalmacija, Hrvatski institut za povjest, Zagreb (2011), S.Pilić, Jasenovačka Posavina između dva svjetska rata, Tkalčić (2014), S.Pilić, B.Matković Poslijeratni zarobljenički logor Jasenovac prema svjedočanstvima i novim arhivskim izvorima, Radove Zavoda za povjesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru, No. 56, str. 323- 408.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Lovac na naciste prozvao vladu zbog knjige o Jasenovcu: Zabranite to! INDEXHR. 10 January 2019. www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/lovac-na-naciste-prozvao-vladu-zboE-kniiRe-o-iasenovcu-zabranine-to/2055399.aspx

for official information portals was discussed, the hatred-based comments on which attracted great attention of the public. In the summer of 2021, the Government of the RC presented to the parliament the final draft law on electronic media, which, among other things, introduced a mechanism for preventing inciting hatred. This step was actively advanced by the Minister of Culture and Media of Croatia N. Obulen-Korzhinek. Presenting this document to the public, the minister announced "achieving mutual understanding" between the Association of Publishers of Newspapers and the Croatian Association of Journalists regarding the fight against hatred rhetoric.

The Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities operating within the framework of the Council of Europe in his last conclusion about the state of affairs in Croatia pointed out the rise of radical nationalism in Croatia, which negatively affects the capabilities of a number of groups of the population to fully use their rights. The document also separately notes that Serbian, Gypsy and Jewish minorities are experiencing the influence of historical revisionism¹⁰¹⁰.

In case of offenses of an openly neo-fascist nature, the initiators and perpetrators of such acts are prosecuted selectively¹⁰¹¹.

In 2003, the initiative of a number of parliamentarians to introduce a new article on the glorification of fascist, nationalist and other totalitarian ideologies or the promotion of racism and xenophobia into the RC Criminal Code ended in failure. Although the amendment was passed by the Croatian Parliament and entered into force, on November 27, 2003, the Constitutional Court of the RC overturned it citing a procedural error¹⁰¹².

¹⁰¹⁰ Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Croatia (fifth cycle), adopted 1 February 2021.

<https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-croatia-en/1680a2cb49>

¹⁰¹¹ Statement of the Commissioner for human rights of the Republic of Croatia L. Vidovic of 20 October 2018 <http://ombudsman.hr/hr/dis/cld/1484>

¹⁰¹² Zakon o izmjenama i dopunama Kaznenog zakona.

https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2003_07_111_1496.html

In 2018, the Council for the Study of the Consequences of the Rule of Undemocratic Regimes under the government of the RC in its conclusion¹⁰¹³, in fact, equated the Ustasha regime in the ISC to the socialist system of the former Yugoslavia. A draft law banning symbols of totalitarian regimes, including the red star, is under development.

The situation with preservation and restoration of anti-fascist and partisan monuments is very difficult. The state Register of protected cultural facilities lists 75 monuments dedicated to the Second World War (including 3 monuments to Soviet soldiers). The number of monuments destroyed to the ground or desecrated from 1991 to 2000 is 2,964¹⁰¹⁴. There is no official statistics on desecration of monuments since 2001.

The Croatian authorities are also making some efforts to maintain anti-fascist monuments. For example, in 2019, the administration of the Primorsko-Goranska županija allocated 250,000 kuna (about 2.5 million rubles) for the restoration of the monument "Partizan" in Kastva.

In 2018, the remains of a Soviet soldier were discovered on the territory of the Baranja-Syrmia County. The Croatian side has taken on all the expenses related to the exhumation and burial of the remains in the mass grave of the Victory memorial in Batina.

In 2019, Croatian local authorities reported that a mass grave, presumably of Soviet soldiers, (with the remains of about 200 people) was discovered in the area of Čakovec.

In the same period a number of episodes of desecration of anti-fascist monuments in Dalmatia were registered (in Split, Cetinska Krajina district, Vodice settlement, Bukovica, Zrmanja). The head of the administration of the Grachac settlement prepared a decision to demolish the monument "In memory

¹⁰¹³ Dokument dijaloga: Temeljna polazišta i preporuke o posebnom normativnom uređenju simbola, znakovlja i drugih obilježja. Vlada Republike Hrvatske. March 7, 2018

<https://vlada.gov.hr/dokument-dijaloga-temeljna-polazista-i-preporuke-o-posebnom-normativnom-uredjenju-simbola-znakovlja-i-drugih-obiljezja/23424>

¹⁰¹⁴ Rušenje antifašističkih spomenika u Hrvatskoj 1990-2000, Zagreb 2002, XII

of 1,826 victims of fascist terror and 816 dead partisans". Due to the protests of local residents, dismantling works were suspended. On March 27, 2019, the Dudik memorial complex was desecrated in the suburb of Vukovar¹⁰¹⁵. In May 2019, vandals painted a monument to the people's hero of Yugoslavia, the leader of the Kordun people's uprising, and former mayor of Zagreb V.Holevec in the Croatian capital, with swastikas and nationalist abbreviations.

In 2020 and the first half of 2021, a monument to Holocaust victims (Varaždin) was desecrated with a Nazi cross and Ustasha symbols; a monument to Croatian anti-fascist liberators (Zadar) was dismantled under the pretext of fighting against undemocratic regimes¹⁰¹⁶.

The central event in the reporting period was the consecration of the monument to the Russian-Serb suffering and fraternity during the Second World War (the Yasenovats monastery, September 13, 2021) with the participation of the Metropolitan of Smolensk and Dorogobuzhsky Isidore, the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church Porfiry, the Metropolitan of the Chernogorsk-Primorsky Ioannicium, A member of the Presidium of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Serbian people M.Dodik, the ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina A.Vranesh.

The Russian Embassy and the Coordinating Council of organizations of Russian compatriots living in Croatia also held a number of events aimed at perpetuating the memory of the war period. The embassy devotes paramount importance to the repair and improvement of Soviet military cemeteries in order to preserve them in proper form, especially since some of them are attributed to the objects of historical and architectural heritage (for example, in Batin, Ilok, Wukovar, Beli Manastir, Guna, Borovo Naselje, Almash). The administrations

¹⁰¹⁵ Devastiran Spomen-park Dudik. Novosti. March 30, 2020
www.portalnovosti.com/devastiran-spomen-park-dudik

¹⁰¹⁶ Gradonačelnik Dukič uklonio posljedni spomen osloboditeljima I graditeljima grada Zadra. Antifašistički vjesnik. November 3, 2020
http://www.antifasisticki-vjesnik.org/hr/komentari/4/Gradonacelnik_Dukic_uklonio_posljedni_spomen_osloboditeljima_i_graditeljima_g_rada_Zadra/418/

of the above mentioned cities demonstrate a respectful attitude to the burial places of the soldiers of the Soviet Army, hold them in proper form and hold a set of commemorative events dedicated to Victory Day.

At the same time, the Croatian Ministry of Veterans Affairs is the main sponsor of memorials to "war and postwar victims" (meaning primarily Croatian nationalist victims from April to September 1945). Since 1998, 81 such monuments have been installed with the funds of the state budget.

In 2019, with the financial support of the municipal authorities of Valpovo town, a memorial was erected in honor of "all Croatian soldiers who gave their lives for the Independent State of Croatia". A commemorative plaque in the shape of the borders of the ISC was placed on the local administration building in Zadar, on which the coat of arms of the collaborationist state was depicted.

In the framework of the policy of "censure of all totalitarian regimes", the Croatian leadership officially supports the events held in memory of the "victims of the Yugoslav regime and the Tito's partisans"¹⁰¹⁷.

On 25 August 2019 (2020-2021 were missed due to the pandemic), on the European Memorial Day of Victims of Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes, Prime Minister A.Plenković together with Minister of the Interior D.Božinović and Minister of Veterans' Affairs T.Medved laid wreaths at the monument in honour of the defeated Ustasha army, which was erected in 1994 at the Zagreb Central Cemetery. The monument shows soldiers dressed in Ustasha uniforms, the ISC coat of arms and the inscription: "To the Croatian victims at the Bleiburg Field and on the Way of the Cross in 1945".

Under the patronage of the Croatian Sabor (parliament), commemorations are also taking place at Bleiburg Field (Austria) itself¹⁰¹⁸. The

¹⁰¹⁷ Statement of the Commissioner for Human Rights L.Vidovic of October 20, 2018.
<http://ombudsman.hr/hr/dis/cld/1484>

controversial nature of the events, which were attended by the highest officials of the RC and representatives of the Croatian Catholic Church had previously attracted the attention of the Austrian authorities and the public.

In 2019, official Zagreb strongly condemned the decision of the Catholic Church of Carinthia (Austria) to revoke the permission to hold another Church service on the Bleiburg field. On March 14, 2019, The Croatian Foreign Ministry accused the Austrian media of "misinterpreting the commemorative events in Bleiburg, and called the march of the Black Legion, the use of symbols and greetings of the Ustashas during the official part of the event, the glorification of A.Pavelich and his henchmen, as "isolated episodes". However, on July 9, 2020 The Internal Policy Committee of the Austrian National Council (the lower house of parliament) unanimously passed a resolution against the commemoration in Bleiburg on the grounds that nationalist and fascist groups from Croatia had participated in the demonstrations and had used Ustasha symbols¹⁰¹⁹.

Earlier, an expert group formed by the Austrian Ministry of the Interior assessed the "memorial ceremonies" near Bleiburg as the largest gathering of neo-Nazis in Europe. It was noted that the Croatian representatives had violated Austrian law by using Ustasha symbols and glorifying the ideas of Nazism. As a result, the Austrian parliament decided to remove all Croatian symbols from Bleiburg Field in 2022.

At the same time, the official Zagreb reacts harshly to criticism of such events in other countries as well. Thus, on May 15, 2020. Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights D.Mijatović expressed the opinion that a mass in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, to commemorate the victims in Bleiburg might eventually turn into a celebration of the Ustasha regime and former Nazi

¹⁰¹⁸ In May 1945, troops of Yugoslav partisans broke through to Carinthia in Austria, and near Bleiburg, close to the present-day Austrian-Slovenian border, carried out a mass extermination of Croatian Ustasha and Slovenian collaborators who had fled to Austria.

¹⁰¹⁹ Odbor austrijskog parlamenta usvojio rezoluciju protiv Bleiburga. Večernji list. August 9, 2020 <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/odbor-austrijskog-parlamenta-usvojio-rezoluciju-protiv-bleiburga-1415553>

collaborators. In this regard, on May 16, 2020, RC Minister of Foreign and European Affairs G. Grlić-Radman said that the Foreign Ministry would send a note of protest to the CoE Commissioner¹⁰²⁰.

The problem of using the greeting "Za dom spremni" ("Za dom spremni" – "For the Fatherland I am ready!", the cry of the Ustashas during the Second world war, an analogue of the German "Sieg Heil") remains relevant. Despite numerous protests by human rights organizations and court rulings that the cry is illegal due to its direct connection to ISC¹⁰²¹, local authorities have taken no practical steps to ban it altogether. Under the pretext that this slogan is not prohibited by law, legal entities using it in their statutes or emblems are officially registered¹⁰²².

The proclamation is chanted at public events, especially at concerts by the popular contemporary Croatian performer M. Perkovic (Thompson)¹⁰²³.

Media note that in the center of the capital, Souvenirs with the abbreviation "ZDS" are on open sale¹⁰²⁴. On August 5, 2020, at the 20th anniversary celebration of Operation Storm (in 1995, against the Republic of Serbian Krajina) dozens of participants wore clothing bearing the "ZDS" symbol and shouted the Ustasha salute¹⁰²⁵.

¹⁰²⁰ Minister Grlić Radman: CoE Commissioner's statement about Sarajevo Mass unacceptable. Republic of Croatia Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. May 16, 2020

<http://www.mvep.hr/en/info-servis/press-releases/32857.html>

¹⁰²¹ Decision of the administrative court of Zagreb dated December 8, 2015 PpJ-4877/13, decision Of the High administrative court of the RRC dated 27 January 2016 JŽ-188/2016, decision of the Constitutional Court of the RC dated November 08, 2016 U-III-2588/2016, decision of the Constitutional Court of the RC dated 25 May 2016 U-III-1296/2016.

¹⁰²² Statement of the Commissioner for human rights L. Vidovich of 20 October 2018

<http://ombudsman.hr/hr/dis/cld/1484>

¹⁰²³ Concerts of the nationalist M. Perkovic Thompson are the highest-grossing concerts in Croatia. The lyrics of his songs, which contains racist, xenophobic and pro-fascist calls, as well as ZDS, are widely quoted by nationalist youth. Former President K. Grabar-Kitarovic favors the work of M. Perkovic and supports his speeches in every possible way.

¹⁰²⁴ U centru Zagreba prodaju se maske 'Za dom spremni'; Vlasnik: 'Nema tu ništa protuzakonito'.

Jutarnjilist. July 9, 2020

<https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/zagreb/u-centru-zagreba-prodaju-se-maske-za-dom-spremni-vlasnik-nema-tu-nista-protuzakonito-15007319>

¹⁰²⁵ Skejo došao u Knin, njegovi HOS-ovci urlali ustaški pozdrav. INDEXHR. August 5, 2020

<https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/skejo-dosao-u-knin-njegovi-hosovci-urlali-ustaski-pozdrav/2203092.aspx>

Manifestations of neo-Nazism on the part of football fans are recorded. On June 11, 2020, more than 10 fans of Dinamo Zagreb football club held up a banner calling for the rape of Serbian women and children and chanting "kill the Serb," while wearing Nazi and Ustasha symbols on their clothing and flags¹⁰²⁶.

On April 29, 2019, during a football match at the capital's "Maksimir" Stadium, fans of the Zagreb club Dinamo chanted nationalist slogans and sang songs in support of the ISC. It is noteworthy that the game was not stopped, and no sanctions were imposed by the law enforcement agencies. In February 2019, during a football match in the town of Polud, the fans stretched out a banner with the pro-Ustasha inscription "Max's Butchers" (Vekoslav "Max" Luburic headed the network of concentration camps of the ISC, including the Jasenovac concentration camp).

On April 12, 2020, a journalist was beaten in a Split suburb after witnessing a mass in violation of the country's strict epidemiological measures. Four perpetrators were holding a ISC flag during the attack, shouting "Za dom spremni," and calling media representatives "red"¹⁰²⁷. On January 29, 2020, a member of the Dubrovnik Legislative Assembly sent an open letter to the mayor calling on him to remove Nazi and Ustasha graffiti that was widespread in the city. In June 2020, print media drew attention to the appearance of images with Nazi symbols and hanged Serbs in Zagreb.

The constitutional court of the Republic of Croatia, in its decision U-II-6111/2013 of 10 October 2017, recognized that the ISC and everything related to it was illegal and contradicted the Constitution of the

¹⁰²⁶ Objavljujemo nove snimke sramotnog divljanja navijača na zagrebačkoj kustosiji Susjedi zgroženi: 'Urlali su 'Ubij Srbina'. Užas! Je li to normalno?'. Jutarnjilist. June 12, 2020
<https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/crna-kronika/objavljujemo-nove-snimke-sramotnog-divljanja-navijaca-na-zagrebackoj-kustosiji-susjedi-zgrozeni-urlali-su-ubij-srbina-uzas-je-li-to-normalno-10398235>

¹⁰²⁷ Napadačima prijete pet godina zatvora, župnika štiti kanonski zakonik Sociolog: 'Biskupi peru ruke od don Josipa jer se boje etikete jugokomunista'. Jutarnjilist. April 4, 2020
<https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/napadacima-prijete-pet-godina-zatvora-zupnika-stiti-kanonski-zakonik-sociolog-biskupi-peru-ruke-od-don-josipa-jer-se-boje-etikete-jugokomunista-10204585>

Republic of Croatia. Earlier, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia, by decision U-III-2588/2016 of November 8, 2016, defined the Ustasha slogan "Za dom spremni" as a symbol of racist rhetoric and also ruled it unconstitutional. On August 14, 2019, the High Arbitration Court of the Republic of Croatia confirmed the illegality of the exclamation, due to the fact that it provoked hatred based on religion, race and nationality. However, on June 3, 2020, the High Administrative Court of the Republic of Croatia completely disregarded the established judicial practice in Croatia, and, as some publications and politicians point out, thus actually legitimized the Ustasha salute¹⁰²⁸.

In 2021, in the Croatian Sabor, a discussion was held of the bill on the extension of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Croatia by a new article, according to which it would be forbidden to use symbols, slogans, greetings, as well as other means of identifying fascists, Ustashas and Chetniks. Nevertheless, the discussion did not lead to any significant results, and the initiator of the project, the chairman of the coordination of Jewish communities in Croatia, O.Kraus, announced the need to conduct a repeated procedure for considering the proposal in 2022.

Against this background, it is not surprising that the Croatian delegation, in line with the common position of EU member states, abstains from voting in the UN General Assembly on the resolution initiated by Russia and other co-sponsors "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to escalating contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (the last time on December 16, 2021).

¹⁰²⁸ Odluka o ustaškom pozdravu sramota je za Visoki prekršajni sud i novi udarac pravnoj državi. Večernji list. June 7, 2020.
<https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/odluka-o-ustaskom-pozdravu-sramota-je-za-visoki-prekršajni-sud-i-novi-udarac-pravnoj-drzavi-1407918>

At the same time, Croatia has been a member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance since 2005. The central memorial to this tragedy on Croatian territory is the monument "Flower" within the Jasenovac Museum-Memorial Complex. A visit to the monument is included by the Ministry of Education and Science in the list of mandatory study tours to schools. Holocaust study is a part of the Compulsory History course for middle school students.

Regarding the situation with the spread of various forms of intolerance in the country, in recent years the international human rights community has also pointed to the unsatisfactory state of the rights of national minorities.

The EU agency for Fundamental Human Rights in its report for 2022, with reference to the data of the Croatian Ombudsman, notes an increase in the number of complaints about cases of discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity (based on the results of comparison of 2021 and 2020)¹⁰²⁹.

The ECRI pointed to the increasing role of the media in spreading hate speech and incitement of ethnic hatred. National minorities, mainly Serbs and Roma, are portrayed in a negative and stereotypical way in regional print media. Serbs and gypsies are exhibited in a negative and stereotypical manner.¹⁰³⁰

In February 2021 the AC FCPNM also noted an increase in the use of hate speech in social media and political discourse and the formation of prejudicial attitudes particularly towards Serbs and Roma. Print, audio-visual and other types of media, according to the monitoring body, reproduce negative stereotypes about persons belonging to national minorities. Although such practices have been condemned and even prosecuted, the existing response has had limited effect in reality. Members of national minorities hardly ever appear

¹⁰²⁹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf;

Ured pučke pravobraniteljice (2021)

¹⁰³⁰ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Croatia (fifth monitoring cycle) adopted on March 21, 2018, and published on May 15, 2018.
<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-croatia/16808b57be>

on Croatian radio and television programmes. At the same time, insufficient human and financial resources of media companies make it impossible to produce a sufficient number of quality products that are oriented towards the needs of national minorities.¹⁰³¹

The Committee for Human Rights (CHR) in March 2015 expressed concern about racist attacks against members of ethnic minority groups, in particular Roma and Serbs, and noted that proper investigations were not being conducted and the perpetrators were not being brought to justice.¹⁰³²

As in the past, during the reporting period, ethnic Serbs living on Croatian territory were the most frequent targets of ethnic attacks. According to the annual report of the Serbian People's Council (SPC), 506 incidents of hate speech against the Serbian population were recorded in 2021, the highest number in several years. It is recorded separately that the number of offensive graffiti on walls calling for violence against Serbs increased drastically, from only 10-40 graffiti per year in the previous reporting periods, to 297 in 2021. According to the Head of the Council M.Pupovac, vandals mostly leave them in crowded places – schools, universities, bus stops and kindergartens – which, in turn, affects the younger generation and inculcates intolerance towards Serbs from childhood, as well as glorifies individual members of the Ustasha movement. In this context, a public action was held in Rijeka in spring to remove such inscriptions from the city's facades. At the same time, the policy of the city authorities in Zagreb, Vukovar and Knin, which do not pay due attention to solving this problem, was sharply criticised.

In order to create the appearance of combating Nazism and ethnic discrimination, a Croatian Serb, B.Milosevic (a member of the SPC), was

¹⁰³¹ Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Croatia (fifth cycle), adopted 1 February 2021.

<https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-croatia-en/1680a2cb49>

¹⁰³² Concluding observations of the Committee for Human Rights on the 3rd periodic report of the Croatia. March 2015

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fHRV%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

appointed deputy prime minister for public affairs and human rights on 23 July 2020 by the Croatian Sabor. His role was to organise and participate on behalf of the government in memorial events, including those organised by the Serb minority. For example, in July 2021 B.Milosevic participated with the SPC members in commemorations in Varivode and Gošić, where Serbs were massacred in 1995, and a month later he represented the government at the Day of Victory and Homeland Appreciation in Knin together with the Minister for Croatian Veterans' Affairs T. Medved.

The problems faced by the Serbian national minority are among the results of the 1991-1995 armed conflict. According to authorities and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 134,000 Serbs had returned to Croatia by January 2017 (more than half of those who left the country before 1995). While the overall conditions conducive to return are positive, the ECRI notes that returnees continue to face problems in exercising their rights, particularly in the areas of housing and healthcare, as well as in clarifying legal status and access to legal aid. In Slavonia, returnees' access to public services such as electricity, gas, and water is precarious, and investments to rebuild severely damaged infrastructure have not been made in a long time. Repatriates were forced to assume the financial burden of obtaining citizenship or regularizing their residency status¹⁰³³.

The ECRI in its report drew attention to reports of sixteen cases of violence, including attacks on journalists and human rights defenders, as well as several cases of damage to property, mainly bilingual Cyrillic signs, religious buildings and cemeteries¹⁰³⁴. A tattoo in Serbian caused the beating of a young

¹⁰³³ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Croatia (fifth monitoring cycle) adopted on March 21, 2018, and published on May 15, 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-croatia/16808b57be>

¹⁰³⁴ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Croatia (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted 21 March 2018, published 15 May 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-croatia/16808b57be>

Croatian man in Split in July 2018. In September 2018, Croatian Serb leader M.Pupovac was attacked in downtown Zagreb.

On January 7, 2019, the son of a member of the parliament of the RC, I.Djakic, on his Facebook page "congratulated" Serbs on Orthodox Christmas with a picture of an Ustasha holding the severed head of a Serb.

On August 21, 2019 masked hooligans destroyed the cafe owned by a Croatian citizen of Serbian nationality in the settlement of Uzdolje. Visitors who were inside the cafe at the time of the attack (including 1 child) were also injured.

On February 9, 2019, players of the Serbian water polo team were attacked by aggressive Croats in Split.

Discrimination against the Roma minority remains in employment, services and access to education. At the same time, this group finds the greatest support from the authorities, as its problems are actively addressed by the Roma parliamentarian V.Kaitazi. Thus, in 2021 the National Strategy for Supporting Roma for 2021-2027 was adopted; it includes not only financing of cultural projects, but also support for combating discrimination and fully integrating members of the diaspora into society.

Special mention should be made of the implementation of the Law on Languages of National Minorities, according to which a national minority language is introduced as a second language for use in those administrative-territorial units where members of such a minority constitute at least 1/3 of the population. Despite the fact that in July 2019 the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia ruled that the Vukovar authorities' decision to ban the use of the Serbian language in the city was illegal, the Cyrillic script is still not used in official documents and on signs, signs and addresses. Problems in the exercise of the right to use mother tongues, in particular Cyrillic-based

languages, faced by members of national minorities were also pointed out by the HRC in 2015¹⁰³⁵.

The attitude of the Croatian population towards members of the Jewish minority, according to Eurobarometer 2021, is satisfactory and not cause for concern. However, this description of the situation is not comparable to the fact that Jewish community leaders in Croatia have refused to participate together at the Jasenovac memorial site for several years in a row due to disagreements with parliamentary representatives on a number of issues related to national identity.

Article 14 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia guarantees equal rights of citizens under the law, regardless of race, color, gender, language, faith, political or other views, national or ethnic origin or other characteristics.

The Basic Law also defines two institutions that guarantee the right to protection from discrimination: The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia and the Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Criminal Code of the RC stipulates punishment of up to 3 years in prison for discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, sex, language, faith, or nationality (Article 125). Punishment of up to 1 year of imprisonment is imposed on persons who interfere with the freedom of expression of nationality (including cultural autonomy) or the right to use their national oral and written language (Article 126); punishment in the form of imprisonment for up to 3 years is imposed on persons who publicly call for violence against other persons or groups of other persons based on their race, faith, nationality or ethnicity, skin color and other characteristics, as well as persons who publicly endorse or belittle the crimes of genocide committed for the same reasons (article 325).

¹⁰³⁵ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 3rd periodic report of Croatia. March 2015 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fHRV%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

The Electronic Media Law (Article 15) prohibits the broadcasting of materials that contain calls or encouragement of intolerance, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, fascist, Nazi or totalitarian regimes, and the distribution of information that violates human rights and calls for violence. Referring to this law, on November 26, 2018, the Council on Electronic Media of the Republic of Croatia temporarily suspended the right to broadcast a number of television channels due to the hate speech contained in their programs.

The Anti-Discrimination Plan for 2017-2022, aimed at development and application of measures to protect against discrimination and to ensure the promotion and education in the field of the importance of human rights protection is functioning at the national level. In 2020, a Protocol was adopted on the actions of civil officials in the event of hate crimes detection. A new Law on the Election of Representatives of National Minorities was adopted in 2019. There is also the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities, as well as the National Strategy on Roma issues for 2021-2027. A new Operational Program for National Minorities 2021-2024 was adopted.

It has been noted that there is a trend in Croatia to classify hate-motivated offenses as administrative offenses (rather than crimes)¹⁰³⁶. Moreover, due to the lack of public trust in law enforcement agencies, the percentage of appeals to the police or Commissioner for human rights in this category of cases is very low.

According to Croatian Commissioner for human rights L. Vidovich¹⁰³⁷, the quality of education and retraining of government officials and law enforcement officers in the fight against Nazism, racism, and the protection of human rights needs to be improved.

The Croatian Ministry of Internal Affairs organizes human rights programs for its employees. Since 2017, the CEPOL European Police College

¹⁰³⁶ Centar za mirovne studije. Antidiskriminacijska politika u Hrvatskoj 2011-2016, page 17.

¹⁰³⁷ As of March 19, 2021, the post has been held by T. Šimonović Einvolter.

has been conducting trainings at the Police Academy in the discipline of "Hate Crimes" (January 27-28, 2020).

The project "Network of cities and civil society for combating racism and discrimination" has been operating in the framework of the European Coalition against Racism in Croatia since 2017. The network includes 6 cities (Kaštela, Knin, Rijeka, Samobor, Sisak and Varaždin). The goal of the project is to implement measures to combat discrimination at the municipal level.

The above facts clearly demonstrate that the Republic of Croatia has serious problems with the spread of neo-Nazi ideology, which has not been effectively countered by the official authorities. At the same time, an increase in manifestations of intolerance on ethnic grounds indicates that xenophobic attitudes in society, in particular toward Serbs and Roma, remain among the most pressing issues on the country's human rights record.

Montenegro

Montenegro maintains a fairly strong anti-fascist tradition. The memory of those who died for the liberation of Montenegro is treated with due respect. The population remembers that it was in Montenegro on July 13, 1941, that an uprising broke out against the Nazi invaders, which then developed into a national liberation war in Yugoslavia.

Two veteran organizations are operating in the country (the Union of Veterans and Antifascists of Montenegro – SUBNOR, the Union of Veterans of the Former Yugoslavia – SOBNOR), they are working to preserve the historical truth about the Second World War. In early October 2020 in Podgorica, ceremonies were held to award commemorative medals "75 Years of Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945" to veterans of the People's Liberation War in Yugoslavia, members of SOBNOR and SUBNOR.

About 40 state-protected memorial sites (including partisan common graves) are dedicated to the People's Liberation War of 1941-1945, as well as to national heroes and outstanding personalities of Montenegro who made a significant contribution to the fight against the Nazi invaders.

Due to the fact that there were no military operations involving Soviet Army units on the territory of this country during World War II, there are no registered Soviet military graves and memorials in Montenegro.

At the same time, on December 9, 2020, on the initiative of the local authorities in Berane, a bust to the commander, Marshal and four-time Hero of the Soviet Union, recipient of many Soviet and foreign condecorations G.K.Zhukov was opened.

An integral part of the mentality of the Montenegrin people since the mid of the 20th century is an open hostility to fascist and Nazi ideology. Cases of desecration of monuments to fighters against Nazism are extremely rare. Certain incidents related to the damage to such facilities (the most common is the infliction of graffiti by young people, including fascist symbols) are

unequivocally criticized by socio-political circles, civil society organizations and anti-fascist veterans.

There is no evidence of construction of monuments to the Nazis and their accomplices on the territory of Montenegro, holding of public demonstrations of neo-Nazis, as well as announcement of members of Nazi organizations and collaborators as participants of national liberation movements. Extremist and radical organisations activities are not noted.

In this regard, it is regrettable that Montenegro, as part of its "Eurocandidate solidarity", refrains every year from supporting the UN General Assembly resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to escalating contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" introduced by Russia and other co-authors.

International human rights bodies have drawn attention to the persistent problems of the Roma community in Montenegro related to discrimination in the socio-economic, educational and healthcare sectors, poor living conditions and lack of adequate housing for displaced Roma. This issue was raised in particular by the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities¹⁰³⁸, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance¹⁰³⁹, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination¹⁰⁴⁰ and the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, M. Giammarinaro, following his visit to Montenegro in 2019.

¹⁰³⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰³⁹ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Montenegro (5th monitoring cycle), adopted 20 June 2017, published 19 September 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/second-report-on-montenegro/16808b5942>

¹⁰⁴⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the 2nd periodic report of Montenegro. July 2017. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fCO%2fMNE%2fCO%2f2&Lang=ru

Given that Montenegro is a transit and destination country for migrants along the Balkan route, M.Giammarinaro has expressed concerns that migrants and Roma may be trafficked both internally and externally. Trafficking is most prevalent in the coastal part of the country and mostly during the summer season. Children, especially from Roma communities, may be used for forced and organised begging, and girls, both from Montenegro and abroad, are sold in marriage in Roma communities in Montenegro and other countries¹⁰⁴¹.

Disagreements between religious communities are becoming more acute. The adoption in late December 2019 of the Law on Freedom of Religion and Belief and the Legal Status of Religious Communities provoked mass protests by parishioners from January to October 2020 in Montenegro, Serbia and the Republika Srpska within Bosnia and Herzegovina, and caused a change of power in the country.

The controversial provisions of the act concerned the obligation for religious organizations to prove ownership of buildings and churches prior to 1918, so its implementation was fraught with the seizure of a significant portion of the Serbian Orthodox Church's (SOC) property in favour of the state. In December 2020, the Montenegrin Parliament adopted amendments to the law to exclude articles related to the property of religious communities. According to opponents of the law, its true goal is to strengthen the position of the "Montenegrin Orthodox Church" (an unrecognized schismatic structure) by weakening the SOC, which remains the largest religious association in Montenegro.

Another reason for the protests to begin was the enthronement of Metropolitan Joannikij of the Serbian Orthodox Church of Montenegro and Primorje. Violent protests turned into clashes with law enforcement officials,

¹⁰⁴¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2019/11/end-visit-statement-montenegro-1-8-november-2019-maria-grazia-giammarinaro-un>

and police were forced to use tear gas. About 20 law enforcement officers were injured as a result of the unrest. Several instigators were also wounded.

Following the massive anti-Russia hysteria in many European countries after the launch by the armed forces of the Russian Federation of a special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilian population of the Donbas republics, the Russian Embassy established a special "feedback channel" with Russian citizens residing in the country.

In the context of the inflated Russophobic campaign in Europe, are noteworthy the activities of the Ukrainian embassy in Montenegro, whose leadership, after Russia launched a special military operation, conducted several "protest" actions in the country's administrative centre, Podgorica, during which the extremist and neo-Nazi symbols of the "Right Sector" were used. Aggressive and racist pronouncements against Russian military personnel, employees of the Russian Embassy and representatives of the Russian diaspora were also "featured" by individual representatives of the Ukrainian diplomatic mission (including on social media platforms). In addition, Ukrainian Consul Shmatov created a chat room in the messenger Telegram with lists of undesirable Russians. In this regard, the Russian embassy sent relevant materials along with a note to the Montenegrin Foreign Ministry in April 2022.

The increasing bias towards the West, caused by Podgorica's unconditional adherence to the policies of Washington and Brussels, was also evident in relation to the Russians and Russia. For example, in June 2022, Montenegrin operator "Mtel" switched off all Russian TV channels operating on the territory of the country, including "Russia Today", "RT Documentary", "RTR-Planeta" and "Russia 24".

Anti-Russian gestures are also evident in the public sphere. For example, in April 2022, the Montenegrin Ministry of Foreign Affairs posted a message on Twitter with a statement by Minister J.Radulovic on the need to cut diplomatic relations with Russia. The message was deleted hours later. Later, the ministry

apologized for the post, explaining that it had misinterpreted the statement of Montenegrin foreign minister, and the statement only referred to the implementation of the EU sanctions against Moscow, and not about cutting relations.

In an unprecedented move, the Montenegrin authorities, together with Bulgaria and Northern Macedonia, refused to open their airspace to the plane of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who was due to visit Serbia.

Czech Republic

The situation regarding the glorification of Nazism and racial discrimination in the Czech Republic (CR) remains quite alarming.

There are chronic problems in the country, which the Czech authorities do not intend to solve, instead being active in destructive foreign policy actions, including engagement with Russia.

With the start of Russia's special military operation to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine, Prague has been an active advocate of the neo-Nazi Kiev regime (and its nationalist battalions), supplying it with various kinds of weapons. This line was continued with the Czech presidency of the EU Council (1 July – 31 December 2022).

The support for neo-Nazi forces outside the Czech Republic demonstrates the Czech authorities' practice of double standards. The Czech Ministry of the Interior, in its 2020 report on extremism, explicitly stated that the risk of the neo-Nazi movement should not be underestimated, as its supporters continue to pose a security threat, especially to vulnerable groups¹⁰⁴².

In the context of the trends noted above, it is not surprising that the Czech Republic has consistently abstained in its vote on the annual UN General Assembly resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to escalating contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" with reference to the EU-wide position.

A specific feature of recent years has been Prague's systematic "slide" toward Russophobia, which often takes the aggressive form of a "war" on monuments to Soviet soldiers, as well as whitewashing Nazi collaborators. In socio-political and academic circles there is an active policy of equating responsibility for World War II between Hitler's Germany and the USSR, of

¹⁰⁴² Report on extremism and prejudicial hatred in the Czech Republic in 2020 (Report on extremism and prejudicial hatred in the territory of the Czech Republic in 2020)
<https://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/documents-on-the-fight-against-extremism.aspx>

concealing the liberating role of the Red Army (including by promoting the myth of the self-liberation of Prague with the help of the "Vlasovites") and of denigrating Soviet soldiers and commanders.

In 2020, local neo-Nazis became active in cyberspace due to restrictive measures in the Czech Republic in connection with the pandemic coronavirus infection. Czech law enforcement officials consider that this trend will only gain momentum in the post-pandemic period.

In May-June 2020, the Czech public's attention was drawn to cases of exploitation of neo-Nazi sentiments for profit. The Czech publishing house Naše vojsko offered a calendar with photos of representatives of the leadership of the Third Reich, the occupation administration on Czech territory, and other Nazi criminals (it previously offered similar "souvenir" products). Guidemedia published a book of Holocaust denial (previously it had also published A. Hitler's speeches and anti-Semitic publications).

Representatives of Czech NGOs, the Federation of Jewish Communities (FJC) and the Holocaust Victims Foundation (HVF), filed a complaint with the police for "propaganda for a movement oriented toward the suppression of human rights and freedoms." Subsequently, the premises of these publishers were searched, and the Czech Ministry of Internal Affairs terminated the lease agreement with one of them. A public discussion condemning the Nase vojsko publications was initiated by the German and Israeli ambassadors in Prague.

So far the publishers have managed to evade responsibility by citing the fact that this is not propaganda for Nazism, but a commercial activity aimed at making a profit. In this regard, the chairman of the HVF M. Klima appealed to Czech parliamentarians to amend the country's legislation to expressly prohibit the sale of such products as a form of propaganda. In January 2021, amendments to the Czech Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure were adopted, providing for penalties of up to six years in prison for, among

other things, "offering, making available, introducing or selling" relevant "works".

It should be noted that the aforementioned publishing house has also been involved in other illegal activities. In April 2021, the Naše vojsko publishing house was fined in connection with the distribution of a book that promoted substance abuse, and its director, E.Drtina, was sentenced to a suspended prison term. The case of dissemination of Nazi symbols was returned by the court for further investigation.

On 22 November 2021, a publication appeared on the website of the Czech Reflex magazine with a selection of historical photographs of Nazis in the occupied Soviet territories, intended, according to the authors, to demonstrate the benevolent attitude of the Nazis towards the local inhabitants¹⁰⁴³.

There is evidence of monuments and memorials to the Nazis being erected (or restored).

The "Iron Cross" granite memorial in Korzenov (Liberec region), rebuilt in 2011 to commemorate local natives who fought in the Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS, is still a place of pilgrimage for neo-Nazis.

The local authorities were considering setting up a war grave there to ensure that the "memorial" would not be destroyed¹⁰⁴⁴.

The FJC also expressed concern over the release of another "Sudety Soldierzz" album by Czech rap singers Dvojlitrbjz, which contains references to the ideology of the Third Reich. In the past, visitors to concerts of this band (as well as some other concerts of a similar nature) used to raise their hands in a Nazi salute. The Federation estimates that such practices contribute to the

¹⁰⁴³ <https://www.reflex.cz/clanek/fotogalerie/74785/neucili-jsme-se-to-jinak-zvlastni-fotky-nemcu-za-druhe-svetove-valky-v-sovetskem-svazu.html>

¹⁰⁴⁴ https://www.idnes.cz/liberec/zpravy/korenov-stepanka-sprej-ruzova-barva-svastika-kriz.A220418_151639_liberec-zpravy_jape

"creeping legitimization" of extremist views, and fears are expressed that these marginal phenomena may become acceptable.

At the same time, it should be noted that certain steps have been taken to combat manifestations of neo-Nazism: in 2020, Czech prosecutors decided to retry the case of the previously acquitted neo-Nazi organization National Resistance, accused of organizing events commemorating the SS and concerts of "white power" music.

Prague's efforts to rewrite history are vividly illustrated by the monuments to Red Army soldiers who died in the liberation of Bohemia from the Nazis.

Despite the generally good condition of the memorials to Soviet soldiers-liberators on Czech territory, in recent years more and more cases of "fighting" against Soviet memorial sites have been recorded. The most odious are the dismantling in 2017 by the Prague City Hall from the town hall building on the main square of a memorial plaque dedicated to the liberation of the city by the troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front¹⁰⁴⁵, the dismantling of a monument to Soviet tankmen (in the form of an IS-2 tank, which was removed from the pedestal and repainted pink), the placement in 2018 of "explanatory plaques" on the monument to Marshal I.S.Konev on the Interbrigada Square (in the city district of Prague-6), as well as repeated acts of vandalism against this monument and the monument to the Red Army soldiers near Prague Castle.

However, the most cynical step was the dismantling in April 2020 of the monument to Marshal I.Konev, under whose command the Red Army units fought for the liberation of the city, (erected in 1980 on the Interbrigada Square in Prague), which had been repeatedly vandalized in violation of international legal obligations of the Czech side (in accordance with the Russian-Czech Treaty on Friendly Relations and Cooperation of 1993) by the administration of

¹⁰⁴⁵ Despite initial assurances from City Hall to return the plaque to its place after repairs, the new city leadership refused to return the plaque in 2019.

Prague-6 city district. The monument has also been removed from the central database of military graves of the Ministry of Defense of the Czech Republic. Currently, the statue of I.S.Konev is in the depository, its pedestal on Interbrigada Square is destroyed. The implementation of this sacrilegious action left unheeded both public appeals to preserve the historically significant landmark and condemnation by President M.Zeman. Moreover, the state of emergency, introduced in connection with the spread of a new coronavirus infection, and restrictions on free movement around the city, according to the head of Prague-6, O.Kolar, were deliberately used by the authorities for monument dismantling without public protests.

However, the Czech Russophobes did not stop there. On May 26, 2022 Marshal Konev was deprived of his title of honorary citizen of Prague by the Prague city authorities. On June 21, 2022 the Prague-3 City District Legislative Assembly voted to rename Konev Street, located in the district.

Other acts of vandalism regarding soviet monuments were registered as well. In December 2020, unknown vandals desecrated a memorial to Red Army soldiers located in the Ostrava-Zabřeg area in the east of the Czech Republic.

Recently, public attempts have been increasingly made in the Czech Republic to whitewash the image of the Russian Liberation Army (RLA) of A.A.Vlasov, who collaborated with the Nazis, and to attribute to them a decisive role in the liberation of Prague from Nazism in May 1945.

In recent years, such public attempts have increased in the country. These gestures seem to follow in parallel with measures to "fight" against Soviet monuments. In May 2020, a monument to the "Vlasovites" was erected in the Prague district of Rzepor on the initiative of its odious head of the district P.Novotny.

In this area, most of the activity is carried out by the descendants of the first wave of Russian emigrants, the "Russian Tradition" association (RT), as

well as by their associates from communities of compatriots critical of Russia, not without being fed by Czech Russophobes.

"Russian Tradition" acts as one of the main organizers of the International Conference dedicated to the promulgation of the Manifesto of the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia (CLPR) by A.A.Vlasov in 1944. There is a memorial to the RLA at the Olshanskoye Cemetery in Prague, at which the above categories of Russian compatriots hold regular memorial acts. RT participant E. Chigalova, who since 2019 has represented the Russian community in the Council for National Minorities under the Government of the Czech Republic (the main body responsible for this issue in the Czech Republic) and actively advocated the demolition of the monument to Marshal Konev, annually participates in military memorial events in Austria dedicated to the memory of G. von Pannlitz, founder of the collaborationist Cossack organization "Cossack camp" in the USSR during World War II.

The Russian-language magazine *Russkoe slovo*, published in the Czech Republic by the Russian Tradition Society with the financial support of the Czech Ministry of Culture, publishes regularly material aimed at the rehabilitation of the Vlasovite collaborators of the Nazis.

Also noteworthy was the publication in 2020 of a book devoted to the "state president of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia" between 1939 and 1945, E.Gahe (arrested by the Czechoslovak authorities in May 1945 on charges of collaborationism during the war, he died before trial). Local historians point out that historical analysis is replaced in this publication by an emphasis on the "human" features of his personality and a demonstration of him as almost a fighter of the anti-fascist resistance. Czech nationalists are called "patriots" in the book, the regime established by the Nazi occupiers – "an unconventional concept of democracy".

In the Czech Republic, have also been documented racist manifestations not directly related to the glorification of the Nazis and their collaborators. The

Czech Ministry of the Interior recorded 134 criminal hate offenses in 2020, charges were filed against 92 people for crimes motivated by racial, national or other discord, and 74 people were sentenced¹⁰⁴⁶.

The Czech law enforcement authorities estimate that, despite their efforts, far-right groups are unable to attract significant numbers of people to their ranks. Among such fringe structures are the Workers' Party of Social Justice (Dělnická strana sociální spravedlnosti), the Working Youth (Dělnická mládež) and the National Democracy (Národní demokracie).

According to Czech Ministry of the Interior, the main event associated with neo-Nazi and hooligan associations was the October rally in Prague's Old Town Square (an estimated 500 people took part in it). Clashes were prevented by law enforcement officers. 130 people were arrested and 14 were detained for illegal activities.

One of the most pressing human rights issues in the Czech Republic remains the situation of the Roma (this minority is considered the largest in the country: according to the government of the Czech Republic in 2020, approximately 150-300 thousand Roma currently live in the Czech Republic, that is, from 1.4 to 2.8 per cent of the population). According to the office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Czech Republic, the number of socially disadvantaged areas (ghettos) in the country has almost tripled over the last period. The Czech government's policy in this area is almost invariably criticized by international and national specialized organizations, pointing to the lack of inclusiveness in Czech society.

According to the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance's December 2020 report on the situation in the Czech Republic, there is a relatively low rate of racially motivated hate incidents in the country. At the same time, "hate speech" against Roma, Muslims, migrants and members of

¹⁰⁴⁶ Report of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Czech Republic on extremism and hatred in the Czech Republic in 2019 <https://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/documents-on-the-fight-against-extremism.aspx>

sexual minorities is very common, including in the speeches of even high-level politicians. The trends of xenophobia and anti-Semitism are noted, however, not having significant support¹⁰⁴⁷.

The ECRI mentioned the long-standing problem of the "vicious circle" in which a large part of the local Roma population lives: lack of education leads to a lack of employment, living in disadvantaged areas, which negatively affects access to social security and health care. Roma children face discrimination in education: segregated schools are widespread. About 20% of Roma children attend primary schools, where more than half of the pupils are Roma. In 13 such schools, Roma pupils make up more than 90%. The ECRI highlighted a high-profile court case involving an elementary school in Ostrava in which one building was set aside for Roma children and another for all others. The question of compensation for members of the Roma minority who have been forcibly sterilized in the Czech Republic (the last incident, according to local human rights activists, occurred in the mid-1990s) has not yet been resolved either.

In addition, on November 23, 2020, the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) issued a decision on a complaint filed in 2017 by the European Roma Rights Centre and the Mental Disability Advocacy Centre. The petitioners pointed to the local practice of "institutionalizing children" under the age of three (predominantly Roma and disabled) by placing them in social welfare institutions instead of providing family forms of care. According to the United Nations Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, D. Puras, the ECSR found Prague in violation of Article 17 of the European Social Charter of 1961, which provides for the right of mothers and children to social and economic protection. The Czech Human Rights Forum NGO notes the need for "systemic change" in this area.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on the Czech Republic (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted October 1, 2020, published December 8, 2020 <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-6th-report-on-the-czech-republic/1680a0a086>

Roma discrimination in the Czech Republic and the segregation of Roma children in schools were pointed out with concern by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in May 2014, the Committee against Torture in May 2018¹⁰⁴⁸, The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in August 2019¹⁰⁴⁹, The Committee for Human Rights in October 2019¹⁰⁵⁰, The Committee on the Rights of the Child in September 2021¹⁰⁵¹ and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in March 2022¹⁰⁵². In particular, the CESCR, noting the lack of reliable data on the situation of Roma in the Czech Republic, has expressed concern that members of this community face stigmatization, poverty and endemic discrimination in the areas of healthcare, education, employment and housing. The Committee has pointed out that a very high number of Roma children are placed in special school establishments alongside children with disabilities. The Committee on the Rights of the Child also highlighted this problem. It highlighted the widespread discrimination and hate crimes against Roma in the Czech Republic, which in its view has serious consequences for Romani children.

The CESCR also addressed the issue of compensation for Romani women who were forced to undergo sterilisation between 1966 and 2012.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the 6th periodic report of the Czech Republic. May 2018

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fCZE%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

¹⁰⁴⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 12th and 13th periodic reports of the Czech Republic. August 2019

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCZE%2fCO%2f12-13&Lang=ru

¹⁰⁵⁰ Concluding Observations of the Human Rights on the 4th periodic report of the Czech Republic. October 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/CZE/CO/4&Lang=Ru

¹⁰⁵¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of the Czech Republic. September 2021

<https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=CRC%2fC%2fCZE%2fCO%2f5-6&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>

¹⁰⁵² Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 3rd periodic report of the Czech Republic. March 2022.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fCZE%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

While welcoming the adoption in 2021 of a law regulating the provision of payments, the Committee pointed out that the statutory period of three years to apply for compensation may be too short for victims to receive proper information about it and to formalise payments.

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights also drew attention to Roma issues in the Czech Republic in its 2022 report. In particular, it cited the high-profile case of the death of a 46-year-old man due to police brutality¹⁰⁵³. An investigation conducted by the Deputy Public Defender of Rights (Ombudsman) into the case found abuses by law enforcement officials both during the incident and in the subsequent investigation¹⁰⁵⁴.

The attention of UN human rights treaty bodies has also been drawn to problems related to the detention of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in the Czech Republic in special camps. Criticism has been expressed about the conditions in these detention centres, as well as the length of time migrants remain in them. This has been inter alia highlighted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee against Torture, the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. HR Committee noted with concern that senior Czech officials encourage the public perception that migration is a threat to public security, and that the media is used to instil fear of migrants and asylum-seekers. The Committee also referred to the low number of positive asylum applications, noting a possible correlation between these statistics and statements by Czech senior public officials¹⁰⁵⁵. The same problem of juvenile migrants being held

¹⁰⁵³ In response to the incident, the spokesman for the Council of Europe's Secretary General issued a separate statement on 23 June 2021 calling on the Czech authorities to investigate as a matter of urgency.

¹⁰⁵⁴ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

¹⁰⁵⁵ Ibid.

with adults was also pointed out by the Committee on the Rights of the Child¹⁰⁵⁶.

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights pointed out that Czech landlords are reluctant to rent to migrants who also face above-market rents for low-quality accommodation. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that the practice of incarceration of illegal migrants is widespread. Children, among others, were sent to special reception centres¹⁰⁵⁷.

International human rights monitoring bodies have recorded the prevalence of racist ideas and prejudices in the Czech Republic, racially motivated crimes, in particular attacks on property, threats against Roma, Jews, migrants and activists representing national minorities, as well as attacks on them. Among other things, the fear of the majority of victims to report crimes committed against them was noted, which leads to an underestimation of the relevant indicators in the reporting of law enforcement agencies.

Thus, the Committee Against Torture (in May 2018)¹⁰⁵⁸, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (in August 2019)¹⁰⁵⁹, and the Human Rights Committee (in October 2019)¹⁰⁶⁰ have expressed concern about the extent to which racist and hateful ideas, prejudices and stereotypes, and hate speech have spread among the general public, mainly through the Internet and social media. CERD noted, among other things, that such rhetoric is used by

¹⁰⁵⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of the Czech Republic. September 2021

<https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=CRC%2FC%2FCZE%2FCO%2F5-6&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>

¹⁰⁵⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights following consideration of the 3rd periodic report of the Czech Republic. March 2022.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the 6th periodic report of the Czech Republic. May 2018

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fCZE%2fCO%2f6&Lang=ru

¹⁰⁵⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 12th and 13th periodic reports of the Czech Republic. August 2019

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCZE%2fCO%2f12-13&Lang=ru

¹⁰⁶⁰ Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 4th periodic report of the Czech Republic. October 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/CZE/CO/4&Lang=Ru

Czech politicians and public figures, including members of parliament, city mayors and members of the government. Not the least role in the dissemination of racist stereotypes and prejudices against minority groups is played by the media. It often comes to the point that journalists trying to independently and impartially cover migration issues are faced with threats and pressure from radicals. The CHR noted that the media is used to reinforce stereotypical prejudices based on ethnicity or religion.

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights noted that "odious incidents" of racial hatred and xenophobia, primarily against migrants and ethnic minorities, were reported in the country in 2017. Examples cited included large-scale actions "against the dominance of Roma and migrants" in Brno, Ostrava and other major Czech cities, which, it was noted, often ended in riots, clashes with the police, followed by numerous detentions of protesters.

Similar concerns were expressed by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in October 2020. In particular, the ECRI noted that hate speech against Muslims, migrants and Jews is widespread in the country, and that Islamophobia and migrant-phobia have become hallmarks of political discourse in the past five years. Despite the fact that the Czech Republic has seen neither terrorist attacks by Islamist terrorist organizations nor the aftermath of the 2015 migration crisis, there is a low level of tolerance towards these two groups of people in the country.¹⁰⁶¹

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCPNM) in 2021 also expressed concern about the increase in hate speech against minorities and migrants in the Czech Republic. It noted that some Czech politicians, including at the highest level, are reinforcing stereotypes in certain parts of society against national minorities, Roma and migrants, including Muslims. In the view of the AC FCPNM, this

¹⁰⁶¹ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on the Czech Republic (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted October 1, 2020, published December 8, 2020 <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-6th-report-on-the-czech-republic/1680a0a086>

may be detrimental to the general climate of tolerance and respect and may also provoke spillover effects on those national minorities who are currently generally tolerated¹⁰⁶².

The March 2022 Concluding Observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights also pointed to persistent discrimination, hate speech, prejudice and stereotypes against certain individuals and marginalised groups in the Czech Republic, which included persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers¹⁰⁶³.

The European Commission noted little progress in European states in combating discrimination since its previous review in 2014. Among others, the Commission has initiated a case before the EU Court of Justice against the Czech Republic on the violation of the rights of Roma children in the field of education¹⁰⁶⁴.

Anti-Semitism has also been documented in the Czech Republic. The FRA cites data from the Federation of Jewish Communities of the Czech Republic, which shows an increase in such incidents. Thus, in 2020 there were 874 anti-Semitic incidents (694 in 2019, 347 in 2018). Most of the incidents (866) had the form of anti-Semitic texts and illustrations, as well as Internet and media appearances with such content¹⁰⁶⁵. It is noteworthy that these figures differ from the official figures of the Czech Ministry of the Interior cited in the same survey. Official statistics recorded 27 prosecutions in 2020. This discrepancy confirms the thesis of human rights monitoring structures that the

¹⁰⁶² Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (5th cycle) on the Czech Republic. Adopted 31 May 2021, published 6 October 2021. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-czech-republic-en-restricted/1680a2b3d6>

¹⁰⁶³ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 3rd periodic report of the Czech Republic. March 2022 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fCZE%2fC.O%2f3&Lang=ru

¹⁰⁶⁴ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

¹⁰⁶⁵ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. Anti-Semitism. Overview of antisemitic incidents recorded in the European Union. 2010-2020. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-antisemitism-overview-2010-2020_en.pdf

population has low trust in the authorities and therefore is reluctant to report manifestations of xenophobia.

A recent example of racially motivated hate speech was the insult made to Glasgow Rangers player G.Kamara in March 2021 by Slavia Prague footballer O.Kudela. By decision of the disciplinary commission of the Union of European Football Associations the Czech sportsman was disqualified by UEFA for 10 matches for racist statements. The incident drew a wide response in the Czech media, with most members of the political establishment (even local right-wing liberals, who traditionally specialize in human rights issues, stated that the fuss surrounding the case would only reinforce racist tendencies in the Czech Republic) taking sides with Mr.Kudela, considering the decision politicized. Thus, in his open letter to the members of the UEFA disciplinary commission, the head of the office of the president of the Czech Republic V.Minarge called his disqualification "a struggle of losers against successful ones" and "hypocrisy and discrimination without evidence".

In terms of manifestations of discrimination, the controversial case of the refusal in 2014 by the owner (with Ukrainian roots) of the Brioni Hotel in Ostrava to accommodate citizens of the Russian Federation in connection with the reunification of Crimea with Russia remains notable. Later, the hotel management as a condition for accommodation began to require Russian customers to sign a statement condemning the "annexation" of the peninsula. The case was referred to the Czech courts and reached the Constitutional Court, which sided with the hotel owner and overturned the decisions of lower courts and the Supreme Administrative Court, stressing that entrepreneurs should not be politically neutral. The verdict does not comply with the Czech Republic's international legal obligations, including those under the 1966 International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights, and Czech experts have criticized the decision, saying it is not legally correct. It is noteworthy that the Chairman of the Constitutional Court of the

Czech Republic, P.Rykhetski, expressed categorical disagreement with the final decision and recommended that the case be referred to the EU Court in Luxembourg¹⁰⁶⁶, which, in his opinion, could "deal with this phenomenon".

The Human Rights Council of the Czech Government also drew attention to this case by including it in its review under discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity. The Council tried to explain the final decision of the Constitutional Court, which justified the businessman's desire to express his political views and on that basis to draw the line between clients, by the fact that, according to the Czech legal framework, citizenship is not considered grounds for discrimination. At the same time, the Council stipulated that the list of these reasons is specified, but not limited, and "it remains unclear how this case would have ended" if nationality had been named as the reason instead of "citizenship," as these concepts are related.

The case was a marker of the emergence of Russophobia in Czech society, facilitated by the Czech authorities who actively used anti-Russian rhetoric.

After the beginning of the special military operation for demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine and protection of the DPR and LPR by Russia, manifestations of discrimination of Russian citizens and compatriots, especially noticeable in everyday life, have drastically increased in the Czech Republic.

The first emotional reaction to the events in Ukraine entailed an outbreak of "individual sanctions" against people of Russian origin in various spheres of the social life. In some cafes in Prague announcements were noted that services will not be provided to Russians or will be provided only if they declare their denouncement of the foreign policy of Russia and its government (including in writing) and apologize for what is happening in Ukraine. Reports about refusals to provide medical assistance appeared in the public space. Incidents in the educational sphere were also recorded. Thus, a deputy from TOP 09 Party,

¹⁰⁶⁶ The highest instance of the Court of Justice of the EU, whose decisions cannot be appealed.

professor at the Higher School of Economics in Prague M. Dlougi wrote on his Facebook account that he refused to teach students of Russian origin, administer their tests and examinations, as well as cooperate with Russian scientists. After criticism from the University and the heads of that Party, M. Dlougi deleted his post and published apologies referring to his emotionality¹⁰⁶⁷. The administration of the Ostrava Technical University took the decision not to admit applicants from the Russian Federation¹⁰⁶⁸.

Russian citizens face complications with renting dwellings and booking hotels in the Czech Republic. Thus, Pytloun Hotels network (comprised of fourteen city and mountain hotels) announced its refusal to accommodate guests with Russian and Belarussian passports until the end of the special operation in Ukraine. Central Group, the largest construction company in the country, stated in its official press release that it would not sell immovable property to Russian citizens. Exceptions are possible if the buyers renounce in writing the Russian government's policy in Ukraine.

Incidents when Russian citizens were denied opening accounts were recorded in various banks. Banking sector representatives do not have a uniform approach; in some banks they only extend the package of the necessary documents for persons of Russian origin and procrastinate the process itself, in other banks they fully refuse without explaining the reasons.

At the same time, some particular reasonable and weighted positions regarding absurdity of anti-Russian attitudes can still be heard in the Czech Republic. The former president of the country V. Klaus, in particular, condemned the "cheap Russophobia" and "superficial denial of the Russian culture". When urged to return the Russian state the award conferred on him in

¹⁰⁶⁷ <https://domaci.hn.cz/c1-67041950-zkratky-ucitelu-v-souvislosti-s-vaikou-jsou-vyjimecne-inspektori-resili-jednu-anonymni-stiznost>

¹⁰⁶⁸ Violations of the Rights of Russians and Compatriots Abroad During the March-April 2022 Events in Ukraine. Monitoring Review by the Moscow Bureau for Human Rights.

2007, the Pushkin medal, he replied that such behaviour would be infantile and that he did not allow such possibility¹⁰⁶⁹.

The Czech Prime Minister P.Fiala, the Minister of Foreign Affairs J.Lipavský, the Minister of Internal Affairs V.Rakušan, the Minister of Education, Youth and Sports P.Gazdik, the Ombudsman S.Křeček and a number of other Czech officials also made statements about inadmissibility of Russophobia. Notwithstanding that, the Czech Republic introduced criminal liability for public support of the Russian government and Russian actions in Ukraine, providing for actual imprisonment for a period from one to three years. This was announced by Prosecutor General I.Stríž. Thus, the Czech government equalled the right to freedom to hold opinions and their free expression to Article 365 "approval of criminal offence" and Article 405 "denying, approval and justification of genocide" of the Criminal Code of the Czech Republic¹⁰⁷⁰.

Within the framework of the well-known decisions of the European Union, by resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic No. 130 dated February 25, 2022, the Czech party suspended issuing visas and permits for long-term and permanent residence for citizens of the Russian Federation, including under the applications lodged before coming into force of the aforementioned document.

On 2 March 2022, citizens of Belarus were also affected by a Czech government decree. In June 2022, these restrictions were extended until March 2023¹⁰⁷¹. It was stated however that visas would be issued for humanitarian reasons, including need for medical assistance and death of a close relative. The Czech Minister of Internal Affairs V.Rakušan, commenting the Czech position on this issue, explained that the Czech understood humanitarian reasons as

¹⁰⁶⁹ Czech ex-president denounced Russophobia and refused to return award to Russia. TASS. 19 March 2022. <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/14121355>

¹⁰⁷⁰ <https://www.e15.cz/valka-na-ukrajine/za-podporu-ruske-invaze-hrozi-az-tri-roky-vezeni-varuje-nejvyssi-statni-zastupce-striz-1388022>

¹⁰⁷¹ <https://www.ceskenoviny.cz/zpravy/narizeni-o-nevydavani-viz-rusum-a-belorusum-bude-platit-do-konce-brezna-2023/2216109>

reunification of families and risk of prosecution in Russia, The Czech foreign policy authority extended this possible list by specifying: "Humanitarian visa shall be issued to a person whose life is at peril due to repressions, resistance to regime or criticizing thereof as well as where the risk of prosecution for political and other motives exists".

This logic also encompasses the Czech authorities' approach to Russian citizens who came to the country before or immediately after the beginning of the special operation, for whom the residence permit was approved for the purposes of getting education, reunification with the family or pursuing labour activities. In particular, they are not impeded by the Czech authorities in formal completion of the procedure for receipt of a residence permit. Numerous cancellations of booking for taking photo for biometric documents and refusals to issue the ready IDs are noted. In some cases, as a way to resolve the problem, representatives of the Czech bodies of the Interior suggest to Russians to seek political asylum; for example, this is what was informed to the Russian Embassy in Prague by a student from Pardubice M.Zlobina.

The Czech Republic restricts access of Russian and Belarusian students to a number of educational programmes in local universities, citing the EU ban on "technical assistance" to Moscow and Minsk. P. Gazdik called the Belarusians and Russians studying in Czech universities "a threat to the country's national security"¹⁰⁷². The students are required to justify the continuation of their studies with the alleged threat of persecution in their home country; they are asked to sign off on not to attend classes in disciplines that go beyond the curriculum¹⁰⁷³.

Not only ordinary people originating from Russia but diplomatic representatives, too, were subjected to aggression. On February 24, 2022, unknown persons attacked the building of the Embassy of Russia in Prague.

¹⁰⁷² https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/skoly-uprchlici-ukrajina-valka-podpora-it-rusove-belorusove.A220415_185346_domaci_albe

¹⁰⁷³ <https://www.muvs.cvut.cz/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Prohlaseni-studenta-RUS-a-BLR.pdf>

The attackers tried to break into the territory of the institution, broke CCTV cameras and threw various objects at the Embassy building.

Along with the progress of the special operation, repressions begin in the Czech Republic against sober-minded citizens who had the courage to publicly express their opinion. In particular, it is known that at one of the schools in Prague a teacher of Czech was removed from teaching after an objective assessment of the events going on in Ukraine and their real causes, and now she risks dismissal for implementation of her right to freedom of expression. Pupils informed on her, having secretly recorded the teacher's words with a mobile telephone¹⁰⁷⁴.

¹⁰⁷⁴ https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/ucitelka-vyrok-propaganda-ukrajina-vypoved-soud.A220801_105413_domaci_lisv

Switzerland

The existence and activities of right-wing extremist groups, often adhering to the ideas of neo-Nazism, are not prohibited in Switzerland (it would require a special Governmental order based on a UN or OSCE decision). As early as in 2009, there was a cross-party consensus in the Swiss Federal Parliament on the need to tighten the legal framework to deal more effectively with various radical manifestations, however, this initiative has not yet been implemented and no amendments have been made to the legislation.

Also, the Confederation does not ban public demonstration of the Nazi insignia if it is not aimed to disseminate the racist propaganda and involve third parties to this ideology. Its "simple" use by individuals is regarded as freedom of expression. Antique shops often openly sell Nazi elements of uniforms, signs, etc. MP Max Binder's initiative to impose a ban on demonstration of relevant insignia was rejected by the Government in February 2022, which was criticized by Belgium's Jewish organization.

The right-wing extremist newspaper *Expresszeitung* continues to be published. The owners of the publication are two Swiss citizens: Ruben Buchwalder and André Barmettler. Its authors and editors are German citizens, among whom there is a fairly well-known proponent of "alternative facts" and conspiracy theories, Gerhard Wisnewski. The newspaper is printed in Zurich in a printing house owned by Tamedia, one of the largest Swiss media groups.

Despite the self-dissolution in February 2022 of the only official since 2000 political Party of Nationally Oriented Swiss, the local right-wing extremist platform, according to the Swiss Federal Intelligence Service, is far from losing, but even improves its position, which is proved by the increased number of incidents with the use of violence involving right-wing extremists (38 in 2021).

Quite nationalistic ideas bordering on radicalism are promoted by the right wing of the largest party in the Swiss Confederation – the Swiss People's

Party. As a rule, its initiatives target migrants and relate to restriction of their entry to the country and tightening the migration policy of the State in general.

Six activists from the neo-Nazi group Iron Youth, aged between 18 and 20, who had organized a flash mob during an online lecture at the Zurich School of Art on Hitler's birthday on 20 April 2020 and spread racist and anti-Semitic ideas through their Telegram messenger channel, were detained in Switzerland in January 2021 after a month-long law enforcement operation. In addition to Nazi literature and insignia, an impressive arsenal of small arms and ammunition were seized from those young Swiss. Those neo-Nazis were eventually convicted under the "racial discrimination," "damage," and "unlawful possession of a weapon" articles only to suspended monetary fines, which are only to be paid if they violate the terms of their two-year probation, with additional court costs. Following those events, the Iron Youth was dissolved.

The Swiss right-wing extremist movement National Action Front continues to exist, under whose aegis another youth group, Young Action, was founded in autumn 2020. Videos professionally prepared by its participants on the Internet, including in the Telegram channel of the association, with 6,000 subscribers, gain up to 30,000 views. The grouping also has a website containing far-right slogans without direct references to the national socialist ideology.

The neo-Nazi group Combat 18, which is banned in Germany and is a paramilitary division of the international neo-Nazi network Blood & Honour, originating in Britain, also has a small but sufficiently active Swiss "branch" in the Internet space.

Among active neo-Nazi movements there are also Brigade 8 and Morgenstern Comradeship in central Switzerland and the Comradeship of the Faithful to the Fatherland in the cantons of Schwyz and St. Gallen.

In June 2022, the Swiss law enforcement agencies prevented the first post-pandemic relatively major meeting of neo-Nazis from Germany and

Switzerland (over 50 people) in Rüti (canton of Zurich), organized under the guise of a meeting of lovers of mountain trekking. Earlier, during the pandemic, right-wing extremists openly used the Nazi insignia and gestures during protests of opponents of anti-COVID restrictions.

Earlier, a certain resonance in the media was caused by the largest meeting of neo-Nazis in the settlement of Galgenen (canton of Schwyz) on 30 November 2019 – an event called the People's Forum, organized by the National Action Front. The "forum" was attended by over a hundred supporters of radical ideas, including the famous German neo-Nazi Frank Kraemer and representative of another Swiss extremist group Avalon Community Adrian Segessenmann. According to journalists, the authorities were aware of the upcoming meeting and even stopped the car of Frank Kraemer on the Swiss-German border, but did not prevent him from entering the territory of the Confederation, as well as holding the "forum" itself.

Another high-profile case was revealed in summer 2019 – the connection between the head of the Swiss company Roviva Roth & Cie Peter Patrick Roth with a Russian-born neo-Nazi Denis Nikitin (Kapustin) and this Swiss citizen's cooperation with White Rex, a brand that makes clothes with extremist and Nazi symbols. As it turned out, back in 2017 Peter Roth founded the firm Fighttex AG, which is still engaged in the supply of such products in Western Europe. Besides, its Director is the Head of the above-mentioned Party of Nationally Oriented Swiss Florian Gerber. After the scandal, Peter Roth was forced to leave the Board of Directors in his company Roviva Roth & Cie in September 2019.

The Swiss authorities also state that currently about 90% of all extremist manifestations occur on social networks and the Internet. Neo-Nazis actively participate in the discussions of the so-called Swiss Corona-sceptics, who spread conspiracy theories, including anti-Semitic and racist theories, on the Internet and urge citizens not to consent to vaccinations. A group of right-wing

extremists openly participated in a mass protest against government restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic on 20 March 2021 in Listal and beat up a journalist who was filming a photo report.

Nevertheless, Swiss law enforcers do not rule out the possibility that some local neo-Nazis may try in the future to carry out attacks similar to those that have taken place in Germany, New Zealand and other Western countries. The Swiss Federal Intelligence Service estimates that there are between 300 and 400 right-wing extremists ready to commit violent acts.

The newspaper *Tages-Anzeiger*, in an article dated 4 March 2020, pointed to the intensified right-wing extremist propaganda in major Swiss cities (Zurich, Bern, Geneva, Lausanne), where stickers began appearing in public places with text affirming the superiority of the white race (for example, "Look around, White people built all this") and a QR code, which when scanned opens an Internet page of the extremist media group Red Ice.

It is noteworthy that amid similar alarming trends, Switzerland abstains from voting in the UN General Assembly for the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to escalation of new forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" introduced annually by Russia and other co-sponsors. As an explanation of its position, the Swiss side refers to the inadmissibility to restrict the use of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association.

The Swiss authorities prefer to avoid mentioning that more than 2,000 citizens of the Confederation fought on the side of Nazi Germany during the Second World War (1,200 of them were called up from the German territory, about 800 people – as volunteers). At the same time, a negative response was caused by the publication in the media in early 2019 that 49 people in the Confederation continue to receive pensions from Germany for military service in the ranks of the Third Reich.

There is no specific legislation in Switzerland to combat racism. At the federal level, there is no either legal definition of direct or indirect racial discrimination or provisions directly prohibiting racial profiling, and the Criminal Code does not specifically classify racist motives as an aggravating circumstance. All these drew criticism from experts of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).¹⁰⁷⁵

The legal basis for countering racism is provided by article 8, paragraph 2, of the Constitution (prohibition of discrimination on grounds of origin, race, sex, age, language, social status, religious and political beliefs or disability) and by article 261bis of the Swiss Criminal Code. Calls for racial, ethnic or religious discrimination, public dissemination of such ideology, organization, assistance and participation in relevant propaganda actions, public insults and manifestations of discrimination, denial of genocide and other crimes against humanity, refusal to provide public services on the basis of race are punishable by up to 3 years' imprisonment or a monetary fine.

In December 2021, the experts noted the increase in the number of incidents of racial discrimination and the rarity of legal action taken in that regard. Besides, the fact that the registration of crimes motivated by racism is not carried out on a uniform basis and is not mandatory acts as a constraint on the effective monitoring of racist offences.¹⁰⁷⁶

According to the Federal Commission against Racism, in 2021, 630 incidents of racism (218 – on the ground of foreign origin, 207 – against Black people, 53 – against Muslims, 51 – against people of Arabic origin, and 31 cases of anti-Semitism). In its Concluding observations on the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Switzerland, the Committee expressed its concern about reports of a growing number of incidents involving racial hate

¹⁰⁷⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Switzerland. December 2021.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/CHE/CO/10-12&Lang=en

¹⁰⁷⁶ Ibid.

speech directed, in particular, against Roma, Jews, persons of African descent and persons of Asian origin, Muslims, refugees and asylum seekers on, inter alia, the Internet and social media and on the part of public figures and persons in political posts. The experts noted that use of hate speech had intensified during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.¹⁰⁷⁷

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office reported that in 2020 a third of the country's population are concerned by the presence of persons considered "different". The data also reflect negative and stereotypic relation to foreigners, Travellers, Muslims, Jews and persons of African descent.

Despite regular recommendations by UN experts and human right defenders, Switzerland still has no sufficient, accessible remedies for victims under, inter alia, the civil and administrative legal regimes.

Even after the adoption of the law on the establishment of a national human rights institution by the Federal Assembly on 1 October 2021, the Committee expressed its doubts in its effectiveness as this institution does not have a mandate to receive and deal with individual complaints, and, according to reports, it will not have sufficient financial resources. The operating Federal Commission against racism does not have adequate financial resources to effectively fulfill its mandate. Limited funding and human resources of cantons' advisory centres for victims of racism that keep a record of racist incidents and provide victims with assistance and basic legal advice.¹⁰⁷⁸

The start of the special military operation aimed to de-militarize and de-nazify Ukraine on 24 February 2022 triggered the exacerbation of anti-Russian sentiments in Switzerland, including among representatives of the country's political elite. For example, on 5 March 2022, co-presidents of the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland Cédric Wermuth and Mattea Meyer transmitted to the Federal Council (Government) an open letter outlining the

¹⁰⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ibid.

idea of creating a special inter-agency commission to check the property of the Russian citizens under sanctions, as well as of other wealthy Russians to disclose networks of figureheads to avoid "further financing of the war in Ukraine" from the territory of the Confederation. They also proposed to re-examine Swiss residence permits granted to this category of population.¹⁰⁷⁹

According to information reported to the Consular Department of the Russian Embassy in Switzerland, Swiss banks have massively started to check the reasons for opening accounts of their Russian clients residing in the Confederation and being under no sanction, who have no additional citizenship of Switzerland or other European country.

It was accompanied by violations of right to freedom of opinion and expression. In March 2022, major cable operators in Switzerland (Swisscom, Sunrise UPC, Teleboy, Salt) decided to stop retranslating RT and Sputnik channels.¹⁰⁸⁰

Ordinary people have been reported to show Russophobic sentiments. In February-March 2022, a Swiss citizen and his wife, a Ukrainian native, have publicly and repeatedly spread hate speech in the Russian language in social media against Russians and Belarussians, including those in Switzerland, calling for their elimination. The Embassy requested the local Prosecutor's Office to review the actions of this married couple for violation of provisions of the Criminal Code of Switzerland (public calls for hatred or discrimination against persons or a group of persons on the ground of their race or ethnicity). In August 2022, the Prosecutor's Office confirmed to the Embassy the fact of initiation of criminal proceedings against the spouses on the basis of four articles providing for imprisonment of up to 3 years or a fine. The investigation continues.

¹⁰⁷⁹ <https://www.sp-ps.ch/publikationen/rote-linien/den-oligarchen-im-umfeld-von-wladimir-putin-gezielt-das-handwerk-legen>

¹⁰⁸⁰ Ukraine Krieg: Swisscom & Co. sperren russische TV-sender. Nau.ch. 28 February 2022. <https://www.nau.ch/news/wirtschaft/ukraine-konflikt-swisscom-co-sperren-russische-tv-sender-66119183>

Before the special military operation aimed to de-militarize and de-nazify Ukraine, there were isolated violations of rights of Russian citizens and compatriots in Switzerland. The most high-profile was the extradition of Russian businessman Vladislav Klyushin on 18 December 2021 under the request of the US competent authorities. The reason for the extradition request was accusations in organized collusion, wire fraud, penetration in computer systems and securities fraud. It is noteworthy that a "competing" request from the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation was declined by the Swiss side in August 2021 with a reference to the absence in the Confederation national legislation of a criminal punishment for the act for which extradition was requested (large-scale fraud). The arguments of Klyushin's lawyers about a politically motivated persecution and on the use by the US side of illegal methods of evidence collection were ignored by the courts of appeal and cassation.

Anti-Semitism in Switzerland has been on the rise since restrictions were imposed to counter the spread of the coronavirus infection. In addition to insults and hostile innuendo against the Jewish community online and offline, including by representatives of the Party of Nationally Oriented Swiss, in January 2021 there were recorded cases of pieces of pork meat being thrown under the doors of synagogues in Lausanne and Geneva. In February 2021, swastika images were painted on the walls of the synagogue in Biel. Half of the 487 members of the Jewish community surveyed in 2020 by the Zurich Graduate School of Applied Sciences have encountered anti-Semitism in the past five years, especially in social media and messenger groups.

The UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism drew attention to the fairly high level of anti-Semitism and acts of violence against Jews (particularly among the French-speaking population of

Switzerland). She also pointed to the activation of right-wing extremist groups, which, in her opinion, pose a serious threat to Jewish communities.¹⁰⁸¹

The Advisory Committee on Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in the Council of Europe (FCNM AC) also noted repeated instances of violence against the Jewish community. For example, in 2017, there were 189 incidents targeting Jews, including six of them – physical attacks, hanging banners on bridges calling for the death of Jews.¹⁰⁸²

In addition, negative sentiments against Muslims are constantly growing, they are accompanied by acts of vandalism in cemeteries and offensive graffiti in mosques.

As Zurich Imam Muris Begovich said in December 2020, many members of the Balkan diaspora in Switzerland (about 500,000 people in total) also increasingly face xenophobia, which has grown in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, they are accused of "importing" the coronavirus infection from the former Yugoslav republics.

In March 2021, a legislative initiative to ban the concealment of face in public places was put to a General vote. The main purpose of the new measure was to enable law enforcement agencies to deal more decisively with masked offenders, including during protests and sporting events. In addition, according to the Public Committee, which initiated the referendum, "hiding one's face in public places contradicts the liberal spirit of living together."

The proposed legislative changes were adopted by 51.21% of votes to 48.79%. Thus, the traditional clothing of Muslim women – burqas and niqabs, which are now allowed to be worn only in places of religious worship – was automatically banned. The innovation has naturally caused discontent on the

¹⁰⁸¹ A/HRC/38 /53. Report of the HRC Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism on trends in the glorification of Nazism submitted to the 38th session of the Council. June 2018.

<https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/38/53>

¹⁰⁸² Fourth opinion of the Advisory Committee on FRAmework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Switzerland adopted on May 31, 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-advisory-committee-opinion-on-switzerland-english-language-version/16809002ca>

part of those professing Islam. Thus, the Central Islamic Council of Switzerland said that the results of the referendum caused "deep disappointment among Muslims who were born and raised" in this country. A number of NGOs, in turn, alleged violations of the fundamental rights of the religious minority in the State.

In this context, the position of the Confederation government, which proposed a more lenient alternative to this project, is of interest. A less discriminatory version of the bill would establish a requirement to show one's face only if the authorities insist on it for identification.¹⁰⁸³

The main problem for Roma and Travellers – the Yeniche and Sinti/Manush – is the lack of territories in which to establish camps, which contributes greatly to the prejudice and hostility they encounter. Roma of non-Swiss origin are often prohibited from stopping at certain places at all. This increases xenophobic attitudes and leads to conflicts between different groups of the population.¹⁰⁸⁴

There have been protests of local residents against the organization of Roma camps. The participants of the actions reinforce their protest with posters with expressions and images insulting and degrading the representatives of this population group.

Discrimination against Roma was noted in October 2019 by the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. The experts expressed concern that the measures taken by the authorities were not sufficient to

¹⁰⁸³ In Switzerland, it was forbidden to wear the full-face veil and niqab in public places. TASS. March 7, 2021 <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/10854143>

¹⁰⁸⁴ Fourth opinion of the Advisory Committee on Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Switzerland adopted on May 31, 2018. <https://rm.coe.int/4th-advisory-committee-opinion-on-switzerland-english-language-version/16809002ca> Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Switzerland. December 2021. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/CHE/CO/10-12&Lang=en

promote the traditions, culture and languages of the people. Nor is education provided to children belonging to the said minority.¹⁰⁸⁵

For its part, the FCNM AC noted the lack of influence of Yeniche and Sinti/Manush organizations on political and legislative processes, particularly at the cantonal level, and regretted the lack of a permanent mechanism for consultation with national minorities at all levels of government to take into account their views on issues that affect them.

According to FCNM AC experts, repeated instances of public expressions of hostility toward Jenish and Sinti/Manush and members of the Jewish or Muslim community clearly amount to hate speech. This phenomenon has reached a particularly large scale in social media. At the same time public and immediate condemnation of such actions is not systematic.¹⁰⁸⁶

Besides, the FCNM AC praised some of the preventive measures taken by the authorities, in particular the Federal Commission against Racism, including the campaign for tolerance and intercultural dialogue.

In March 2021, the court acquitted the police officer who shot and killed E.Maddundu, a native of the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Bex, Canton of Vaud, during an inspection in 2016. Another high-profile case is the 2018 death of M.B.Peter, a 40-year-old Nigerian, from a heart attack while attempting to resist during a police check in Lausanne.

According to CERD, apart from the Black, Roma (the Yeniche and Sinti/Manush) also become victims of violence from the law enforcers, as well as non-citizens of Switzerland. Besides, the number of cases where prosecution

¹⁰⁸⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 4th periodic report of Switzerland. October 2019.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fCHE%2fC.O%2f4&Lang=en

¹⁰⁸⁶ Fourth opinion of the Advisory Committee on FRamework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Switzerland adopted on 31 May 2018.

<https://rm.coe.int/4th-advisory-committee-opinion-on-switzerland-english-language-version/16809002ca>

against police officers used such treatment ended in favour of the complainant is low.¹⁰⁸⁷

Moreover, experts believe that the further aggravation of the situation with racial profiling and stigmatization of persons on the basis of their race, skin colour, or ethnic origin may be provoked by amendments to the Federal Act on the Use of DNA Profiles in Criminal Proceedings and for the Identification of Unknown and Missing Persons. The amendments provide for powers of the police to analyse DNA samples taken at crime scenes (DNA phenotyping techniques) for external features.¹⁰⁸⁸

An official visit of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent of the UN Human Rights Council to Switzerland took place in January 2022. The human rights experts visited Bern, Zurich, Geneva and Lausanne. At the end of it, the experts noted that the Black persons have to face racial discrimination, which is systemic, in various aspects. They once again highlighted the problem of racial profiling and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Such conduct on the part of the police, as the experts point out in their statement, only fuels existing negative stereotypes in the society.

At the same time, the experts of the Working Group welcomed a number of positive moments, such as: emerging public discourse on racism against the Black, dialogue between the State and civil society on the use of racist and colonial symbols in public places and the involvement of civil society in the fight against racial profiling and police brutality.¹⁰⁸⁹

The lack of centralized arrangement for providing training to justice system personnel on these issues does not help resolve the situation and the

¹⁰⁸⁷ Concluding observations on the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Switzerland. December 2021. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/CHE/CO/10-12&Lang=en

¹⁰⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Statement to the media by the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, on the conclusion of its official visit to Switzerland (17–26 January 2022) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/01/statement-media-united-nations-working-group-experts-people-african-descent>

training that is made available is optional. Police training including certain aspects of countering discrimination is insufficient to effectively prevent the practice of racial profiling.¹⁰⁹⁰

In solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, very large anti-racist rallies were organized in June-July 2020 in Zurich, Geneva, Bern and other cities of the Confederation, despite the "COVID" restrictions.

At the same time, public anti-racist initiatives in Switzerland are often of a purely symbolic nature and are presented by their opponents as absurd (the most famous is the widespread ban on the use of the historical name of cakes, cafes, etc. "Moor's Head", in German "Mohrenkopf").

As CERD notes, beside bias and often intolerance against representatives of certain ethnic groups irrespective of their citizenship, there is discrimination against foreigners in Switzerland, which is manifested in many aspects. In particular, the Committee has information on acts of violence against asylum seekers, including children, on the part of personnel of security service of federal centers aimed to accommodate this vulnerable category of persons.

Victims of domestic violence of non-Swiss origin are often in a dire situation. Formally, their rights are guaranteed by the Federal Act on Foreigners and Integration. In particular, it provides for the opportunity for survivors to stay in the territory of the country. However, in practice it applies only when domestic violence is systemic or reaches a "serious level". It leads to foreign victims to refrain from applying for help fearing to lose their residence permit. Non-EU citizens are motivated by the same reasons when they decide not to apply for social aid.

Another problem – the restrictions on the freedom of movement of persons holding a temporary visa (an "F" permit) limit their ability to move their residence from one canton to another and to travel abroad.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Concluding observations on the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Switzerland. December 2021. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/CHE/CO/10-12&Lang=en

Unaccompanied migrant children regularly face refusal to be enrolled in school despite the State-guaranteed right to a free basic education.¹⁰⁹¹

The CERD and Committee on the Rights of the Child experts criticized the fact that the possibility of acquiring Swiss nationality for new born children at birth depends on the status of their parents and that the acquisition of Swiss nationality at a later date is not guaranteed. Thus, children of non-Swiss parents are stateless.¹⁰⁹²

In conclusion, it can be noted that today there is a number of alarming tendencies related to the spread of racial discrimination and xenophobic attitudes in Switzerland. Mostly, they are motivated by imperfect legislation of the Confederation allowing open discrimination on the ground of nationality or religion. In the reporting period, "traditional" problems with full ensuring of rights of Jews, Roma, Muslims, persons of African descent, migrants and foreigners were added with Russophobia encouraged at the level of official authorities despite international legal obligations of the country.

¹⁰⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹² Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Switzerland. October 2021. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fCHE%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en
 Concluding observations on the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Switzerland. December 2021. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/CHE/CO/10-12&Lang=en

Sweden

Sweden continues to experience quite a high activity of right-wing radical and neo-Nazi movements. It should be noted that there are historical prerequisites for this as the country formally adhered to the neutral status during the Second World War and agreed to significant concessions to Germany (in the form of providing resource support and territory for transit of Hitler's troops to the Eastern front).

This circumstance subsequently contributed to the dissemination of a biased interpretation of the events of those years in society, including by biased authors of scientific papers, journalistic publications, school books, and the Living History Forum, which operates on State funds.

In Sweden, the concept of "occupation" is quite established in relation to the fact of the entry of Soviet troops into the Baltic States and countries of Eastern Europe, the expansionist character of the Soviet-Finnish war of 1939-1940 is emphasized, Nazism and communism are identified as "totalitarian regimes". At the same time, the decisive contribution of the Soviet Union to the Victory over Nazism is deliberately diminished, while the role of the allies led by the United States is magnified.

Double standards are also applied to Nazi collaborators. The Swedish authorities have not initiated any investigation against 270 Swedes who fought in the Waffen-SS, many of whom, according to recent studies, were involved in the Holocaust. Swedish law does not allow prosecuting WWII criminals who found refuge in the country, including those of Swedish origin.

Swedish anti-fascist circles periodically come out with revealing publications on this issue, recalling that no investigative actions have been initiated in Sweden against A.Hitler's henchmen. In March 2019, a wide resonance was caused by the publication of information that 15 Swedish citizens were still receiving "Hitler's pensions" from Germany as invalids of World War II.

Double standards are visible in Sweden's attitude to today's manifestations of neo-Nazism and racism. A very ambiguous position is taken by the Swedish leadership regarding the condemnation of the glorification of Nazism in the Baltic countries. Official Stockholm publicly repented for the 1945 extradition to the USSR a group of Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians who had fought on the side of Nazi Germany. It also turns a blind eye on radical statements about the falsification of World War II by the current authorities of these States. Acts of the glorification of Nazism, acts of vandalism and the dismantling of the monuments to Soviet soldiers-liberators in a number of European countries (primarily in Poland, the Baltic States, Ukraine§ and the Czech Republic) also remain without attention from the Swedish political establishment.

Similar laissez-faire approaches are applied regarding the neo-Nazi manifestations in Ukraine, in 2014-2016. More than 30 Swedish ultra-right fighters freely travelled to participate in the nationalist battalions "Azov" and "Aydar" as a part of the so-called Anti-Terrorist Operation in the Donbass. During the current crisis in Ukraine the Swedish authorities also conceal the Nazi nature of the Ukrainian regime and crimes committed by Ukrainian nationalist radicals. Swedish mercenaries in Ukrainian nationalist battalions are called personnel of humanitarian organizations.

At the same time, the Swedish municipal authorities faithfully monitor the state of Soviet military graves located in Sweden. For example, thanks to the efforts of local activists, the surveys were conducted to ascertain the fate of the Soviet military internees in the Bühring camp (Södermanland County).

Evidence of the politicized nature of Stockholm's approaches to the fight against neo-Nazism is also the fact that Sweden annually abstains from voting when adopting the UN General Assembly resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling

contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", in fact positioning itself as a consistent opponent of this initiative.

The main source and the main guide of right-wing extremist ideology in Swedish society is the far-right organization "Northern Resistance Movement" (in Swedish Nordiska motståndsrörelsen, NRM), which has about 200-300 active members (NGOs cite a larger number). The NRM operates in Sweden on legal grounds and has "independent" supporters. In particular, open sympathies for neo-Nazis and even membership in this organization in the past are attributed to representatives of the country's main anti-migrant parliamentary party, the Swedish Democrats (SD).

The NRM traces its history back to the "Swedish Resistance Movement", created in 1997 as a result of the merger of a number of right-wing extremist structures operating in the second half of the 20th century. In 2015, it changed its name to the NRM, combining four northern European branches – Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Finnish. Sweden remains the NRM center with its headquarters (the city of Grangesberg, Dalarna County) and the majority of its members. Since the same year, the organization has been headed by Simon Lindberg.

The NRM chose the Teiwaz rune (or Tyr rune) as its symbol, which was used by Nazi structures, including the "Hitler Youth" organization. This is not an only borrowing from Nazi Germany. There is also information that at regular trainings and educational seminars for NRM members, they watch films that praise Adolph Hitler and promote works of the "classics" of Fascism.

Experts note that in 2014-2019 the NRM pursued a strategy of maximum expansion. Since 2019, it has allegedly refocused on creating a solid group of active members, who would effectively manage the organization.

It was reported that NRM has its own publishing house Nationellt Motstånd (National Resistance), which publishes propaganda literature, and the newspaper Nationellt Motstånd (National Resistance).

In 2020 the NRM launched its new official website motstandssroelsen.se, where it posts reports and other information that directly relates to the activity and strategy of the organization. It has Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, Icelandic and English versions. The former site of the NRM Nordfront still functions but contains no information on the movement activity as it claims the role of an independent and impartial news website, which covers developments from the nationalist-socialist point of view.

As part of its political program, the NRM describes itself as a "right-wing extremist paramilitary Nazi organization," promoting anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim, and anti-Roma initiatives and calling for "purges" among politicians and journalists. Public actions of the NRM, however, do not enjoy open support among the General population.

In its report published in March 2022, the Anti-Defamation League highlights three distinguishing features of the "Nordic Resistance Movement": 1) an avowed and fanatical Nazi ideology, coupled with a declared goal of revolution by any means necessary; 2) a strong emphasis on violence and violent methods of reaching goals, complemented by the paramilitary structure of the organization; and 3) rigid hierarchy and a bureaucratic organizational structure, which has evolved to maintain the group's coherence even as it has expanded to encompass all of Scandinavia.¹⁰⁹³

The central element of the NRM ideology is anti-Semitism, which helps it recruit new supporters of the theory of White supremacy. According to experts, the movement will continue to maintain this sentiments using the anti-Semitic rhetoric as a "key theory" capable of explaining any other line of extreme right-wing thought. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) NGO states that the "objective of the NRM is to carry out a revolution to overthrow democracy and

¹⁰⁹³ The Nordic Resistance Movement. Report. The Anti-Defamation League. 5 March 2022. <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/nordic-resistance-movement>

replace it with a Nazi dictatorship to encompass all of Scandinavia and the Nordic region."

"What is so alarming about the "Nordic Resistance Movement" is its obsession with violence and its anti-Semitic core beliefs," said Sharon Nazarian, ADL Senior Vice President of International Affairs. "Their name refers to its belief that it is fighting a war of resistance against Jews and they have held hundreds of combat training sessions in preparation for what they claim will be the overthrow of European democracies,"¹⁰⁹⁴ and teach their supporters to use paramilitary tactics in street fighting and clashes with the police.

According to the Swedish Security Service, the NRM has the potential for terrorist activity and can intend to commit crimes against the country's constitutional regime.¹⁰⁹⁵ There is also evidence that more than half of the members of the NRM have been previously convicted (some more than once) for criminal offenses (including murder and attempted murder, violence, theft, inciting hatred against certain groups, vandalism of places of worship, and violations of anti-drug laws). Law enforcement agencies even pointed to the fusion of the country's neo-Nazi community with organized crime.

In November 2021, Swedish police arrested a 25-year-old NRM supporter at a farmhouse outside of Gothenburg. The stock of homemade bombs, Semi-automatic weapons and weapons parts made via 3D-printer, as well as an arsenal of ammunition were found in his house. Besides, it was reported that the detained had participated in chats on neo-Nazi forums and was interested in mass shootings in schools.¹⁰⁹⁶

In addition, since the second half of the 2010s, other neo-Nazi movements have intensified their activity in the country. Notable are the online platforms Mutgift (this former information resource of the nationalist Party of

¹⁰⁹⁴ <https://stmegi.com/posts/97379/shvedskie-neonatsisty-iz-nrm-eksportiruyut-fanatichnyy-antisemitizm-v-drugie-strany/>

¹⁰⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹⁶ <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2022/5/31/2101511/-Swedish-neo-Nazi-s-farmhouse-contained-arsenal-of-weapons-preparations-just-like-Breivik-s>

the Swedes is thought to consolidate the country's nationalists), Det fria Svärie, Ingrid ok Karlqvist, the Swedish National Youth movement, and the Soldiers of Odin.

Experts note that extreme right-wing structures of different States expand their activities to the international level and the intensification of contacts between them. Thus, thanks to this trend, a branch of the American far-right organization "Alt-right", the "Northern European Alternative Right Sector", appeared in Sweden. Regular "exchanges of experience" between Swedish neo-Nazis and their counterparts in the Netherlands, Hungary, Poland and other countries are well known.

Neo-Nazis actively initiate campaigns aimed at incitement of ethnic and religious hatred (on average they annually hold about 3,000 actions in the country, which are often held back-to-back with ceremonies in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, May Day demonstrations, pacifist and anti-fascist rallies).

In most cases, it is usually about isolated statements or actions of individuals who preach an ultra-right ideology. Many of them were brought to justice. On 5 November 2019, a lawsuit was filed against two students from the Skara commune (Västra Götaland County, South-West Sweden) after their statements insulting Jews and welcoming Hitler.¹⁰⁹⁷ On 27 November 2019, NRM member Tobias Malvo was tried in Malmö on charges of anti-Semitism, racial hatred, and glorification of Hitler (was sentenced to probation and a fine).¹⁰⁹⁸ On 9 March 2020, another member of the NRM, Anders Jonsson, was sentenced to 6 months in prison for numerous anti-Semitic appeals and honouring Hitler.¹⁰⁹⁹

¹⁰⁹⁷ <https://www.skaraborgslanstidning.se/artikel/elever-atalas-for-hets-mot-folkgrupp-hyllade-hitler>

¹⁰⁹⁸ <https://www.expressen.se/kvallsposten/krim/kand-nazist-domd-hyllade-adolf-hitler/>

¹⁰⁹⁹ <https://expo.se/2020/03/nazist-sprida-judehat>

On 9 April 2020, a criminal case was opened against a 60-year-old woman who had repeatedly expressed hatred against migrants and welcomed Hitler.¹¹⁰⁰

In recent years, in most cases, the police issue permits to neo-Nazis to hold demonstrations, bringing violators of law and order to justice only after the fact.

The statistics of hate crimes (6,000 – 7,000 cases per year) is alarming. About 70% of them have xenophobic and racist implications. Most of the risks come from right-wing extremists driven by neo-Nazi and anti-migrant sentiments, as well as radical Islamists. Consequently, the most frequent victims of crimes motivated by racial hatred are ethnic minorities professing Islam, especially those of African descent. Moreover, as the practice of investigation shows, the offender faces real punishment for this type of offences only in 3-5% of cases.

The situation is aggravated by the fact that in Sweden there is no legal ban on the activities of racist organizations under the pretext of the need for absolute respect for fundamental freedoms. Despite calls from most Swedish political parties, efforts to introduce such a ban have been delayed. So, in 2017, the government announced the start of a ban on the use of Nazi symbols (including the NRM emblem – Tyr rune), but actual results have not yet been achieved.

The work of the Swedish law enforcement system, which shows signs of racial profiling, is reprehensible. Repeated cases of registers of citizens on national, ethnic, and gender grounds are noted (despite the fact that such registration is prohibited by country's law). Concern over the frequent bias against visible minorities by the police, in particular with regard to people of

¹¹⁰⁰ <https://www.karlskogatidning.se/2020/04/09/kvinna-i-60-arsaldern-hyllade-hitler/>

African descent, Muslims and Roma, was expressed by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in May 2018.¹¹⁰¹

In January 2019, Kalla Fakta, a Swedish TV4 program engaged in journalistic investigations, announced that over the previous few months, about 100 cases of groundless police detentions of non-Swedish looking citizens. In 2021, the Committee against Torture expressed its concern by the remaining practice of ill-treatment and excessive use of force by police officers in Sweden.¹¹⁰²

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), in its 2019 report, noted that surveys of police officers and persons suffered from bias against certain ethnicities revealed that 24% of all respondents of African descent were stopped by the police. Among them, 4 out of 10 (41%) described such incidents as racial profiling. Men of African descent are stopped by the police (22%) three times more often than women (7%).¹¹⁰³

International monitoring bodies and human rights mechanisms regularly highlight manifestations of hatred remaining in Sweden. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) expressed concern about the existence of racist and extremist organizations in the country and their holding of public demonstrations, as well as the spread of hate speech in the country, including during election campaigns and in the media, especially stressing that the establishment of organizations that promote and incite racial hatred is permitted by the State.¹¹⁰⁴

¹¹⁰¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 22nd and 23rd periodic reports of Sweden. May 2018. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=en

¹¹⁰² Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the eighth periodic report of Sweden. November 2021. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/381/20/PDF/G2138120.pdf>

¹¹⁰³ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2019. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-fundamental-rights-report-2019_en.pdf

¹¹⁰⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 22nd and 23rd periodic reports of Sweden. May 2018. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=en

Similar concerns about Sweden's record of hate speech against Swedes, Jews, Muslims and Roma, particularly during election campaigns, as well as in the media and on the Internet, and the persistence of racially motivated violence in the country were raised by the Committee Against Torture (CAT) in November 2014,¹¹⁰⁵ the Human Rights Committee (HRC) in March 2016 (with the Committee reiterating its previous concerns in this regard),¹¹⁰⁶ (with the Committee reiterating its previous concerns in this regard) and the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in June 2016.¹¹⁰⁷ It is noteworthy that, despite the explanations provided by Sweden to the HRC on the situation against racism, the experts still have concerns about this issue.¹¹⁰⁸ The Committee against Torture also expressed its concern by remaining threats to minorities and marginalized individuals in the Swedish society despite measures taken to combat hate crime and racism, and police measures to protect religious buildings and communities.¹¹⁰⁹

In its report on Sweden, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) within the Council of Europe also highlighted an increase in racist and xenophobic hate speech targeted at migrants, Muslims, people of African descent and Roma. The commission found the law enforcement response to such cases insufficient and the number of prosecutions for hate crimes low. According to ECRI, the number of registered cases of defamation and the expression of racially motivated prejudices remains at the same level

¹¹⁰⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the combined 6th and 7th periodic reports of Sweden. November 2014.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f6-7&Lang=en

¹¹⁰⁶ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 7th periodic report of the Sweden. March 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f7&Lang=en

¹¹⁰⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 6th periodic report of Sweden. June 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fSWE%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en

¹¹⁰⁸ See Follow-up decision adopted by the Human Rights Committee on 1 April 2019 CCPR/C / SR. 3239

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/SWE/INT_CCPR_FUD_SWE_34519_E.pdf

¹¹⁰⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the eighth periodic report of Sweden. November 2021. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/381/20/PDF/G2138120.pdf>

(643 in 2011 and 635 in 2015). However, the number of cases related to threats increased by 20% (1,650 in 2011 and 1,972 in 2015), campaigning against certain groups grew by 39% (396 in 2011 and 552 in 2015), and infliction of damage/graffiti increased by 138% (296 in 2011 and 703 in 2015).¹¹¹⁰

In its regular report, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights noted the existence of racism in all State institutions. As an evidence was used a research based on the survey of over 500 scientific articles, books, chapters of studies and academic reports published in Sweden from January 2016 to May 2021. In addition, in 2021 the European Commission pointed out that Swedish national laws do not fully or accurately incorporate EU rules on combating racism and xenophobia and initiated relevant infringement proceedings against Stockholm.¹¹¹¹

In addition to the aforementioned problems, CERD noted in 2018 a significant difference between the number of reported cases of hate speech and hate crimes and the number of their investigations and criminal prosecutions of offenders. According to the Committee, the most frequent victims of racially motivated hate crimes are ethnic minorities, especially those from Africa. The Committee called on the Swedish authorities to effectively identify, register and investigate cases of racist hate speech, incitement to racial hatred and racially motivated violence and to bring those responsible to justice. Stockholm was also recommended to publicly condemn and distance itself from racist hate speech and xenophobic statements of government officials and politicians, including publications in the electronic media. CERD called on the Swedish authorities to expend the example of national contact points and special hate

¹¹¹⁰ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Sweden (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 5 December 2017, published on 27 February 2018 <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-sweden/16808b5c58>

¹¹¹¹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Report 2022. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

crime groups throughout the country¹¹¹² (as of 2018, such points were operating only in the three metropolitan areas).

Human rights activists point out that there are "dark spots" in keeping statistics on hate crimes, as many victims do not turn to law enforcement for lack of funds to finance trials, or simply fearing "revenge" from their persecutors.

One of the most vulnerable national groups in Sweden is the Jewish community. Its representatives complain that they often face manifestations of aggression, and also criticize the Swedish authorities for not paying enough attention to the problem of anti-Semitism. Experts connect the increased manifestations of anti-Semitism with the developments in Middle East.

Anti-Semitic actions are regularly conducted by the NRM. For example, at the end of September 2017, some 600 supporters of the movement organized a march in the country's second-largest city, Gothenburg, as the largest book festival was taking place there. The Swedish neo-Nazis timed their action to coincide with the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur and marched past a synagogue, despite the fact that the authorities, upon complaint from the Jewish community, demanded that the route be changed. This March was accompanied by insults to the Jewish community and acts of vandalism.¹¹¹³

It should be noted that NRM regularly organizes actions during the celebration of this holiday not only in Sweden, but also in other Nordic countries. Actions organized by the movement on this occasion in October 2020 in nearly 20 different cities in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Iceland included demonstrations in front of synagogues, placing anti-Semitic posters in public places, and distributing relevant leaflets. Neo-Nazis publish information about

¹¹¹² Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 22nd and 23rd periodic reports of Sweden. May 2018
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=en

¹¹¹³ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jews-relieved-after-swedish-neo-nazis-bypass-synagogues-on-yom-kippur-march/>

this on their websites. The actions of the neo-Nazis caused indignation of international Jewish organizations. Ronald Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress, condemned the coordinated brutal campaign of hatred against Jews in Northern Europe unleashed by the modern-day successors to the Nazis of the NRM. The Simon Wiesenthal Center Director for International Relations Shimon Samuels also sent a letter of concern to the Swedish leadership, urging Stockholm to follow Finland's example of banning the NRM in September 2020, and to take action against the organizers of the anti-Semitic campaign.¹¹¹⁴

In 2018, a wave of anti-Semitic protests and demonstrations swept across Sweden as a result of U.S. President Donald Trump's unilateral decision on the status of Jerusalem. Due to the incessant threats, the Jewish community of Umeå (northeastern Sweden) was dissolved in the same year.

In July 2018, during the Almedalen Week (Almedalen, Gotland),¹¹¹⁵ NRM supporters beat up representatives of the Swedish-Israeli Friendship Association who were at the association's information booth at the event.¹¹¹⁶

In early 2019, the media published reports of anti-Semitism at Stockholm's Karolinska University Hospital.

In the summer of 2019, due to numerous demonstrations of left-wing anti-Semitic forces, a tennis match in Framework of the Davis Cup between the national teams of Sweden and Israel in Skane was rescheduled.

In July 2019, in Visby, in the south of the country, NRM activists blocked the entrance to an exhibition on Holocaust survivors organized by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute together with photographer Sanna Sjösvärd, and then entered the grounds, where they chanted anti-Semitic slogans. Arrived at

¹¹¹⁴ <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/neo-nazi-nordic-resistance-movement-targets-jews-on-yom-kippur-643809>

¹¹¹⁵ The Almedalen Week is an annual forum attended by representatives of the Swedish political and business elite, as well as leading media.

¹¹¹⁶ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/neo-nazis-assault-2-pro-israel-activists-in-sweden/>

the scene of the incident, the police did not detain the radicals, who left the building unhindered.¹¹¹⁷

At the end of March 2021, baby dolls sprayed with red paint were hung outside the synagogue in Norrköping along with a banner describing the Pesach as the Jewish celebration of the death of Egyptian children. The NRM published on its website a photo of this installation. The Swedish police have opened an investigation into the alleged commission of a hate crime.¹¹¹⁸

According to Haaretz, in 2021 Sweden recorded an increase in online hate speech, especially in social media. The spread of anti-Semitic rhetoric in social media is most noted among schoolchildren and young people. This resulted in acts of aggression with anti-Semitic overtones against children of Jewish origin. To a large extent such manifestations occur in Malmö.¹¹¹⁹

The seriousness of the situation is confirmed by the fact that in its second monitoring study on anti-Semitism (2018) FRA included Sweden in the top three European countries (along with the United Kingdom and Germany) with the most tense situation for Jews, indicating that 82% of representatives of this nationality in the country characterize anti-Semitism as a "serious problem"¹¹²⁰ (for comparison in 2013 – 60% of respondents chose this answer).

ECRI pointed to an increase in the number of anti-Semitic statements. In particular, the Commission noted a doubled number of cases prosecuted for anti-Semitic propaganda, from 54 in 2011 to 102 in 2015, and threats against Jews, from 77 to 127 over the same period. However, according to ECRI estimates, these figures can be significantly higher, as representatives of the

¹¹¹⁷ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/swedish-neo-nazis-disrupt-exhibition-of-holocaust-survivors-portraits/>

¹¹¹⁸ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/baby-dolls-splashed-with-red-paint-strung-outside-swedish-synagogue/>

¹¹¹⁹ As Israel and Hamas Fight in Gaza, Antisemitism Explodes Online in Sweden. Haaretz, 20 May 2021. <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/europe/.premium-as-israel-and-hamas-fight-in-gaza-antisemitism-explodes-online-in-sweden-1.9828015>

¹¹²⁰ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2019. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-fundamental-rights-report-2019_en.pdf

Jewish community do not always contact the police, doubting the effectiveness of law enforcement.¹¹²¹

In February 2021, the European Commission (EC) called on official Stockholm to fulfill its obligations under the 2008 EU Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia. During a telephone conversation between European Commissioner for Justice Didier Reynders and Swedish Justice Minister Morgan Johansson in April 2021 made it clear that the EC reserves the right to sue the Swedes before the EU Court of Justice if they do not bring their legal framework in line with the EU recommendations.

The ever-growing Muslim community in the country also faces discrimination. Hidden Islamophobia is a very common phenomenon in the media and in various spheres of public life (especially access to work and social services), which shows the shortcomings of the State that carefully hides this problem.

Violence against Muslims, especially Muslim women in traditional dress, is not uncommon. According to ECRI, the number of cases of Islamophobic threats/attacks doubled between 2011 and 2015 (123 and 247 cases, respectively), Islamophobic defamation increased from 38 to 68 cases, damage from 16 to 76 cases (375%), and anti-Muslim propaganda from 45 to 102 cases (127%).¹¹²²

Of particular concern is the situation in the country's third largest city – Malmö (southern Sweden), where a significant proportion of Muslim refugees live, and which is also the third largest city in the country with Jewish population. Due to these circumstances, right-wing extremist movements are traditionally strong in the city.

¹¹²¹ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Sweden (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 5 December 2017, published on 27 February 2018. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-sweden/16808b5c58>

¹¹²² Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Sweden (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 5 December 2017, published on 27 February 2018 <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-sweden/16808b5c58>

Problems of discrimination on the basis of religion were highlighted by the Human Rights Committee in March 2016 and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in May 2018. The HRC, in particular, expressed concern about the large number of cases of religious intolerance in Sweden, including physical violence against persons belonging to religious minorities, particularly Muslims and Jews, and attacks on their places of worship, and that law enforcement agencies fail to register all such cases.¹¹²³ CERD pointed out the difficulties faced by Swedish Muslims, in particular people of African descent, in gaining access to work and housing outside their areas of compact settlement, which can be equated with de facto segregation. Their economic segregation and difficulties in gaining access to health care and education were also noted. CERD experts noted with concern the ongoing attacks on mosques in Sweden, as well as the lack of sufficient funding to protect them. It also drew attention to the widespread practice of stereotyping Muslims in the media and by politicians in Sweden.¹¹²⁴

It is also important that in this context CERD raised the issue of the selectivity of the Swedish law enforcement agencies' response to racist offenses.¹¹²⁵ According to experts, the Law on Combating Terrorism (which is also seriously criticized by human rights defenders for violations of citizens' rights) is aimed mainly at the persecution of Muslims, while crimes committed by other groups, including neo-Nazi structures, are not considered by Swedish law enforcement agencies as terrorist acts. The HRC also expressed concern

¹¹²³ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 7th periodic report of the Sweden. March 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f7&Lang=en

¹¹²⁴ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 22nd and 23rd periodic reports of Sweden. May 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=en

¹¹²⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 22nd and 23rd periodic reports of Sweden. May 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=en

about this practice of "stigmatization of persons" of foreign origin or from among ethnic and religious minorities.¹¹²⁶

In its 2020 report, FRA pointed to discriminatory practices in the labour sphere, noting the continuing ethnic hierarchy in recruitment.¹¹²⁷

The situation of migrants or their descendants in the second generation, mainly of African or Asian origin, is also very unfavourable. This category of the population has a lower level of education than the national average, and unemployment, especially among young people, is higher. There is de facto segregation in the study of the Swedish language, and then in educational institutions and, as a result, in the labour market. This leads to the development of "parallel societies", which, in turn, further hinders the integration of immigrants and their children.¹¹²⁸ Afro-Swedes tend to have low-status and low-paid jobs compared to the rest of the population, despite their level of education. It is more difficult for this category of population than other citizens of Sweden to move up the career ladder.¹¹²⁹

Another migrant-related problem is the forced return (refoulement) of migrants and asylum seekers and their pre-return detention by Swedish law enforcement authorities. This aspect was brought to the attention by the Committee against Torture in November 2014,¹¹³⁰ the Human Rights

¹¹²⁶ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 7th periodic report of the Sweden. March 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f7&Lang=en

¹¹²⁷ Report of the EU Agency for fundamental human rights. 2020

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-fundamental-rights-report-2020_en.pdf

¹¹²⁸ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Sweden (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 5 December 2017, published on 27 February 2018. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-sweden/16808b5c58>

¹¹²⁹ EU Agency for fundamental human rights report 2019.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-fundamental-rights-report-2019_en.pdf

¹¹³⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the combined 6th and 7th periodic reports of Sweden. November 2014.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f6-7&Lang=en

Committee (HRC) in March 2016¹¹³¹ (despite the additional information provided by the Swedish authorities to the HRC on this issue, experts remain concerned about the current situation),¹¹³² the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in June 2016¹¹³³ and the Committee against Torture in 2021.¹¹³⁴ In March 2018, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights at that time, Nils Muiznieks, pointed out the excessively strict legal norms of Sweden that make family reunification difficult, the "inhumane" practice of undifferentiated refoulement of refugees (that is, even in case of threats to their safety at home); prolonged detention of unaccompanied children and adolescents in custody, which worsens the mental state of those who arrived; human trafficking. According to FRA, Sweden is the second country in EU (after Germany) in number of withdrawals of refugee status (1,349 persons). The main reasons included lasting change of circumstances in the country of origin, the beneficiary's renunciation of their protection status, misrepresentation or fraud during the asylum procedure, and serious threat posed to public order or national security.¹¹³⁵

However, migrants themselves often become troublemakers, uniting in criminal groups and attacking the local population, and representatives of other national and religious groups. Thus, in 2018-2019, due to the increased cases of sexual harassment and violence against Swedish women by immigrants from the Middle East, a number of youth festivals held annually before were cancelled. In August 2020, an action organized by nationalists to burn the

¹¹³¹ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 7th periodic report of the Sweden. March 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f7&Lang=en

¹¹³² Follow-up decision adopted by the Human Rights Committee on 1 April 2019 CCPR/C / SR. 3239.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/SWE/INT_CCPR_FUD_SWE_34519_E.pdf

¹¹³³ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 6th periodic report of Sweden. June 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fSWE%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en

¹¹³⁴ Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Sweden. November 2021. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/381/20/PDF/G2138120.pdf>

¹¹³⁵ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Fundamental Rights Report 2022.

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022_en.pdf

Koran provoked protests in Malmö, which soon turned into aggressive clashes with the police. After protests lasting about 7 hours, accompanied by arsons of cars and shops, the police managed to bring the situation under control. Several people were arrested.¹¹³⁶ Local Christians, including representatives of the Russian Orthodox community, who are sometimes forced to avoid advertising their religious symbols, have been feeling uneasy against this background lately.

The situation of Swedish Roma suffering from ingrained prejudices leaves much to be desired. There are numerous cases of discrimination against members of this minority in public places (in cafes, shops, hotels, hospitals, transport, etc.), in the labour and housing markets. Biased decisions to deprive Roma of parental rights in relation to their children, groundless denial of access to education are not uncommon.

According to FRA, as of 2019, 20% of Roma children experienced hunger.¹¹³⁷

The Human Rights Council in March 2016,¹¹³⁸ the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in June 2016¹¹³⁹ and Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in May 2018¹¹⁴⁰ pointed out the chronic discrimination of Roma in Swedish society, the difficulties of representatives of this people, including citizens of other European Union countries from among the Roma, in obtaining education, employment and health, housing and basic

¹¹³⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53959492>

¹¹³⁷ Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Human Rights 2021

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-fundamental-rights-report-2021_en.pdf

¹¹³⁸ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Council on the 7th periodic report of the Sweden. March 2016

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f7&Lang=en

¹¹³⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 6th periodic report of Sweden. June 2016

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fSWE%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en

¹¹⁴⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 22nd and 23rd periodic reports of Sweden. May 2018.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f22-23&Lang=en

social services, and access to justice. CERD and CESCR also expressed concern about the increasing number of cases of forced evictions of certain groups of Roma living in informal settlements, as well as the fact that hate crimes continue to be committed against them.

FRA also a high level of discrimination against Roma and Travellers in Sweden. According to the data of the research on the situation of Roma conducted by FRA in 2019 in five Western European countries (Belgium, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden) and the UK, every second representative of this national minority faced discrimination in the year preceding the survey, 44% of respondents faced manifestations of aggression motivated by racial hatred, and one in ten respondents was profiled by the police.¹¹⁴¹

A specific human rights problem for Sweden remains the situation and status of the indigenous people living in the north of the country – the Sami – taking into account the historical conflict with the Swedish State (in the past – forced conversion of its representatives to Christianity, racial experiments, purposeful suppression of the Sami culture and language). The ongoing industrial and urban expansion on the lands of the Sami, as well as the conduct of military exercises in the northern territories, create obstacles for the Sami in the full use of the lands of their traditional residence and prevents them from preserving traditional ways of life. This situation is exacerbated by the intensification of mining and development works carried out within or near the Sami lands. Another cause for concern is the limitations of indigenous children in the ability to learn their native languages.

¹¹⁴¹ Report of the EU Agency for fundamental human rights. 2021.
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-fundamental-rights-report-2021_en.pdf

The range of problems faced by the Swedish Sami was pointed out, in particular, by the Human Rights Committee in March 2016,¹¹⁴² the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in June 2016,¹¹⁴³ the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in April 2018 and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in December 2017. In the conclusion of ECRI, referring to the opinion of representatives of the Sami community, it is noted that discriminatory manifestations against them continue to take place in everyday life, especially in cities. In some cases, the Sami are forced to hide or deny their ethnic origin to avoid hostile and reprehensible attitude.¹¹⁴⁴

At the beginning of Russia's special military operation to de-militarize and denazify Ukraine and protect the civilians of the DPR and LPR, the Swedes enthusiastically joined the German- and English-speaking vanguard to harass and persecute Russians. The anti-Russian campaign sometimes takes on absurd proportions: for example, sale of Swedish kefir was cancelled, as it is associated with Russia (this product was manufactured completely in Sweden under a Turkish word "kefir", but with an image of a dome of St. Basil's Cathedral on the packaging, which is directly associated with Moscow). Moreover, it got not only to outsize discrimination against our citizens on the part of Swedish authorities or an excessively Russophobic atmosphere in local mass media but to beatings for Russian speech, dismissals without reason, and harassment of children. The traditionally predatory treatment by the social service remains, as migrant families a priori belong to socially deprived and as a result are put

¹¹⁴² Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the 7th periodic report of the Sweden. March 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fSWE%2fCO%2f7&Lang=en

¹¹⁴³ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the 6th periodic report of Sweden. June 2016.

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fSWE%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en

¹¹⁴⁴ Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Sweden (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 5 December 2017, published on 27 February 2018. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-sweden/16808b5c58>

"under supervision" of local competent bodies. Also, there is virtually an isolation of heads and staff of small and medium enterprises and social organizations related to our country.

There is unprecedented pressure on organizations of Russian compatriots in Sweden. For example, letters with threats have been addressed to Lioudmila Siegel, head of the Coordination Council of the organizations of Russian compatriots. On 11 March 2022, Parliament member from the Swedish Social Democratic Party Anders Österberg sent to Minister of Culture Jeanette Gustafsdotter a request to pull subsidies from the Coordination Council of the Organizations of Russian compatriots in Sweden and Swedish parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate from the State budget if they do not distance themselves from the policy of the Russian Government. In her turn, the Minister said that this issue would be considered at the level of the relevant agency – the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society. Similar requests to the Organization of Compatriots were made by the ABF, Swedish trade union association.

In early March 2022, the administration of Luleå (Northern Sweden) decided to stop financing from the city budget the Russian-Swedish organization Sputnik. Its head Katerina Ekström was invited for a "preventive conversation" to a local police station, where she was recommended to quit the post of the head of this association, which she refused to do. Local newspaper Norrbottens-Kuriren launched an information propaganda campaign against Katerina Ekström.

The Russian Embassy hotline received a call from Russian citizen L.Kouzmin about harassment against his wife A.Kouzmina, who is an officer of the Swedish Border Police, by her division heads and colleagues for her support of Russia's position with respect to Ukraine. An internal investigation was initiated against her.

Recently, there has been a widespread practice of targeted mailing of anti-Russian materials, which say that the actions taken by Sweden and other Western countries are aimed against the Russian authorities but not the Russian people. Such documents often contain strong recommendations to join the condemnation of Russia's actions in social media and during public rallies.

Estonia

In the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR), since the 1990s of the twentieth century, the nationalist circles in power have systematically and persistently imposed a distorted interpretation of the joint history of Russia and Estonia, implicated in nationalist ideology and Russophobia. The Soviet period, which is presented by modern Estonian historiography as the "occupation of 1940-1991", and the events of the Great Patriotic War on the territory of the country, are subjected to the greatest extent of falsifications. On this basis, a myth is built about the "freedom fighters" who fought against the "Soviet aggressors" in the ranks of the 20th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Estonian Legion), security and punitive units and anti-Soviet gangs, which within the framework of this ideology are represented by "freedom fighters who opposed the Soviet occupiers". Estimates are being made that the presence of the Nazis on Estonian territory was a "lesser evil" than the "Soviet occupation", which allegedly prompted the titular population to voluntarily join the Nazis to resist the "return of the Soviets". In 2022, the revisionist line received a new impetus.

Currently, on the example of the "exploits of the Forest Brothers" and the Estonian SS, patriotic education of the Estonian Defense Forces and the Kaitseliit militia is being built, a network of their "bunkers" is being opened throughout the country. At the same time, the facts of the crimes committed by Estonian collaborators and Forest Brothers, their active participation in the massacres of civilians in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, mass extermination and torture of concentration camp prisoners and Soviet prisoners of war, mass murder of Jews are completely suppressed. So, since 2007, after the amendment to the law on holidays adopted by the Estonian Parliament, the day of the liberation of Tallinn from Nazi troops (celebrated on September 22) has been declared a Day of Resistance. The attitude of the Estonian authorities to Victory Day is similar. Accordingly, the Estonians who fought in the ranks of the Red

Army and liberated the territory of the ESSR are secretly deleted from the local "pantheon of heroes" and are given out as accomplices of the "Soviet occupiers".

During World War II the Nazi militarized organization "Omakaitse", 26 battalions of local auxiliary police and the 20th Estonian division Waffen-SS operated in Estonia. According to historians, the Estonian police units killed 61 thousand civilians and about 64 thousand Soviet prisoners of war under the command of the Nazis (Estonia itself acknowledges a way smaller number of deaths during the occupation, but even according to Estonian data, the figure is about 30 thousand people). The Estonian police also took active participation in the extermination of about one thousand local Jews and about seven thousand Jews from abroad. In addition, they guarded 25 concentration camps established on the territory of the republic.¹¹⁴⁵

Recently, documents have been declassified in Russia, testifying to the crimes committed by Estonian punishers on the territory of the Pskov region, where they destroyed entire villages along with its inhabitants. In August 2021, The Pskov Regional Court recognized the established and newly revealed acts committed in 1941-1945 by the Nazis on the territory of the former Estonian concentration camp in Moglino – as well as in various areas of the Pskov region – such as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide of national and ethnic groups living in the USSR.

In line with the policy, designed to whitewash Estonian collaborators and justify their crimes, Estonia annually abstains from voting on the UN General Assembly resolution submitted by Russia and other co-authors on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and

¹¹⁴⁵ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20220812-v-pribaltike-svoi-geroi-estoniya-reshila-snesti-pamyatniki-bortsam-s-natsizmom/>

related intolerance (the last time it was adopted on Thursday, December 16, 2021).

The Estonian authorities are attempting to falsify history at the highest level, in order to smear the Soviet Union and the deeds of the Red Army which liberated Europe, and to obscure their own unsightly pages of the history linked to cooperation with the Nazis. A good example to the stated is the joint statement adopted on May 7, 2020, by the presidents of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, in which the liberation of the Baltic states from the Nazis by the Red Army is considered "occupation and annexation", "because one totalitarian regime (Nazi) was replaced by another (communist)". Another example is the video address of the heads of the three Baltic states published in June 2021 on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of deportations from these countries (June 14, 1941). In this address, an attempt is made to develop the thesis that Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union were equally responsible.¹¹⁴⁶

The whitewashing and immortalizing of Estonian Nazi collaborators is actively and openly encouraged by the leading figures of the right-wing nationalist Isamaa and the Conservative People's Party of Estonia (CPPE), who formed a part of the government coalition from April 2019 to January 2021, and today hold a total of one-third of the votes in the unicameral parliament.

Supporters of these parties were the main instigators and organizers of the annual gatherings of former SS members and their modern admirers on the heights of Sinimäe (Ida-Viru County), where in the year of 1944 the Red Army fought bloody battles against the Estonian, Belgian and Dutch Waffen-SS units. Usually, representatives of the legislative and executive branches of government participate in this event. On July 27, 2019, among the participants, there were members of the Estonian Parliament (Riigikogu) from the CPPE and Isamaa

¹¹⁴⁶ <https://remembrance.ru/2021/06/15/pribaltijskie-prezidenty-vnov-vystupili-s-lozhju-o-sovetskih-deportacijah/>

party, representatives of the Ministry of Defense and the Kaitseliit militia, as well as members of ultranationalist and neo-Nazi groups.¹¹⁴⁷ The members of the Estonian Parliament also participated in such gathering in 2021, whereas in 2020 the gathering was cancelled due to coronavirus. At such gatherings, the symbolism of the criminal Nazi organizations is traditionally openly demonstrated. Human rights activists also note that this event is financed from the state budget. The regular gathering of veterans of Estonian Waffen-SS division and their followers in Sinimäe on July 30, 2022, was relatively modest compared to previous ones, as no politicians or other prominent figures of the country were involved, with about a hundred participants.¹¹⁴⁸

In the summer of 2019, a fair was held on the territory of the military propaganda museum in Valga (used, among other things, for NATO events), at which souvenirs with Nazi symbols and propaganda were sold, such as posters of the Third Reich, armbands with swastikas, elements of uniforms and insignia of the Wehrmacht and the Waffen-SS formation, books about this SS unit and its participants, A.Hitler's book "Mein Kampf" in Estonian, memoirs of former SS members, as well as shells and ammunition obtained by the "seekers" at the battlefields.¹¹⁴⁹ According to the information spread in the media, such fairs-sales of Nazi-themed goods are held on the basis of the museum almost every month.¹¹⁵⁰ On August 19-20, 2022, with the participation of local organizations of "freedom fighters", another such exhibition was held as part of the XIV "International Festival of Military History". During the event, the Forest Brothers were also honored.

Events devoted to the memory of Estonian SS members are also held openly, with participation of representatives of Estonian state authorities. In

¹¹⁴⁷ https://ee.sputniknews.ru/estonian_news/20190727/17357965/pamjatj-Estonia-esesovtsy-Sinimae-pochtili-deputaty-i-voennyje.html

¹¹⁴⁸ <https://rossaprimavera.ru/news/8db1bfa4>

¹¹⁴⁹ https://ee.sputniknews.ru/estonian_news/20190729/17393648/Na-baze-NATO-v-Estonii-raskryli-rynok-natsistskoy-produktsii.html

¹¹⁵⁰ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/Baltics/20190728/12144422/Magnitik-s-ulybkoy-natsista-i-pivo-s-zapakhom-svastiki-opasnyy-put-stran-Baltii.html>

August 2019, for the 20th time, a hike took place along the route of the Erna reconnaissance and sabotage group formed by Estonians and Finns, that was acting behind Red Army lines in the summer of 1941. The endpoint of the route was the town of Kautla, where on July 31, 1941, a decisive battle took place between the Erna saboteurs and NKVD fighters.¹¹⁵¹ In this "military patriotic event", organized by the "Estonian Scout Association", NPO, with direct support of Estonian Ministry of Defense and Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, 26 teams took part, including those made up of military contingent stationed in the republic, consisting of soldiers from NATO States members.

The admirers of the Estonian SS are united in the "Club for the Friends of the Estonian Legion", NGO, which has a page on Facebook and its own website www.eestileegion.com. These sources have a detailed description, written in positive terms, of the "heroic path" of the Estonian formations within the Waffen-SS, as well as the history of this unit, denying the crimes of the Holocaust committed by it.

Another torch procession, which took place on February 24, 2022, in the center of Tallinn to mark the anniversary of the proclamation of independence of Estonia and was organized by the CPPE and party's affiliated nationalist youth movement "Blue Awakening", only confirms the state's nationalistic spirit. During the action, which brought together a significant number of participants from Estonian neo-Nazi groups, the symbols of the Waffen-SS and Nazi Germany were openly demonstrated, and nationalist and xenophobic slogans were chanted. In 2021, the event was not so widely celebrated due to coronavirus-related restrictions imposed. This time, the procession was also attended by persons with placards calling on Russia to return "territories lost under the Treaty of Tartu". There were also some people holding a "Free Ingria"

¹¹⁵¹ https://ee.sputniknews.ru/estonian_news/20190731/17413874/pohod-Erna--estonskaja-molodjozh-projdet-sledy-diversanty-Hitler.html

flag (an organization promoting the idea of secession from Russia of the Kingisepp District of the Leningrad Region). In 2022, the organizers urged the marchers to leave their political posters at home. According to the video report of the event, several thousand people took part in it.¹¹⁵²

There is information that some of the photos of Nazi criminals were posted on the websites of the Russian online campaign "Immortal Regiment" from the territory of Estonia in May 2020. Having established the IP addresses from which the pictures of Nazis were uploaded, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation opened a criminal case on these facts under the article "Rehabilitation of Nazism".

Honoring the Estonian SS members remains a common practice in Estonia, which includes describing the Nazis as "fighters for independence" and giving them state awards. On August 31, 2020, Minister of Justice R.Aeg held a regular ceremony of presenting the Oak Wreath of Freedom badge, timed to coincide with the 26th anniversary of the withdrawal of Russian troops from the country. Along with the members of the Estonian Legion, the awards were given to former Forest Brothers, members of various underground groups that opposed the Soviet authorities, and court historians who presented the mythology of the Estonian "liberation movement" in an ideologically verified manner.

Monuments to direct participants of Nazi formations are being created on the territory of Estonia. Another such action took place in August 2020 in Luulupe on Saaremaa Island, during which a monument to one of Estonia's most famous Forest Brothers commanders, Eldar Ilp and his "comrades-in-arms" R.Thomson and F.Tuuling, was erected. The ceremony was attended by the then-speaker of the Estonian Parliament H.Pylluaas (CCPE), who called the Nazi collaborators "freedom fighters".

¹¹⁵² <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3517553.html>

While presenting Ilp as a hero, the Estonian ultra-rightists hold back the fact that he committed criminal offenses, terrorized and killed civilians for the sake of robbery, and tortured women and the elderly. From the end of 1944 to 1946, Ilp's gang killed 456 local citizens and only five Red Army officers. These figures clearly show who the bandits were really "fighting" against.¹¹⁵³

In addition, in October 2020, a "theme day on the controversial and tragic history of the Forest Brothers took place in Lääne-Viru County, and already in November their restored bunker and a memorial plaque were opened with fanfare in the same county. The work was carried out by the Society of Friends of Väike-Maarja Museums at the suggestion of the Union of Former Forest Brothers of Estonia. Similar sites are to be opened all over the country.

On August 22, 2021, members of the Union of Former Forest Brothers inaugurated a monument to the Forest Brothers in the village of Hyuti (Myniste Parish, Võru County) on the territory of the Estonian House memorial complex. The ceremony was attended by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia and a current member of the Riigikogu U.Reinsalu, Elder of Valga Parish M.Rogenbaum, Elder of Rõuge Parish R.Loik, Member of the Board of the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory M.Andreller and Head of the Valga Military Theme Park M.Kivi.¹¹⁵⁴

In the same month, the bunker of the Forest Brothers of Ennuksemäe was rebuilt in Viljandi County.

In May 2021, a map and brochure of military-historical tourist sites was created in Estonia and Latvia, which is also aimed at glorifying the Forest Brothers. The mentioned map includes more than 150 places associated with such bandit formations, which are well-kept "former military facilities" with an extensive exposition, as well as "natural sites" – battlefields, trenches and

¹¹⁵³ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3666989.html>

¹¹⁵⁴ <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2021/08/23/v-estonii-v-prisutstvii-eks-glavy-mida-reynsalu-otkryli-pamyatnik-lesnym-bratyam>

bunkers of the Forest Brothers. The organizers suggest combining visiting these sites with hiking in the woods and walking along nature trails.

On August 7, 2022, on Saaremaa Island (Western Estonia), the Estonian Society of Freedom Fighters organized a reconstruction of the "ultimate battle" of the Forest Brothers with NKVD officers of the USSR. The gang of Forest Brothers was led by E.Ilp. At the event, it was announced that a three-meter oak cross would be erected in memory of this criminal¹¹⁵⁵.

On August 10, 2022, a military-sports game of reconnaissance patrols named after Admiral J.Pitka took place, in which 27 teams from 12 countries participated. Among these teams, there was one joint team, which included people from the United States, Estonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina – all representatives of the Allied battle group deployed in Estonia.

There are plans to re-erect in the city of Lihula a memorial to a soldier dressed in SS uniform, holding a German machine gun in his hands, in memory of "Estonians who fought against Bolshevism and for the restoration of Estonian independence in the period 1940-1945". The monument to the soldiers of the 20th Estonian SS division appeared back in 2002, when a memorial sign with a bas-relief of a soldier in the form of a Wehrmacht with an iron cross on his chest and a "Schmeiser" pointing east in his hands was installed in one of the parks of the resort town of Pärnu. Then in 2004 it was moved to Lihula Parish in western Estonia, but was taken down after a few days.¹¹⁵⁶ It is currently located in a museum near Tallinn.¹¹⁵⁷

In Estonia, there is a steady trend to proliferate books and publications that portray Nazi henchmen in a positive way. Thus, the "Culture and Life" magazine is still being published, despite the fact that its each issue contains materials which represent positively the period of Nazi occupation, glorify Estonian Nazi collaborators and Waffen-SS members, and denigrate the Soviet

¹¹⁵⁵ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3666989.html>

¹¹⁵⁶ <https://topwar.ru/146030-v-es-fashizma-net-no-v-jestonii-vosstanavlivajut-pamjatniki-nacistam.html>

¹¹⁵⁷ <https://jewishnews.com.ua/society/v-estonii-vosstanavlivayut-pamtnik-esesovczam>

period. This magazine has its own website – kultuur.elu.ee. In 2019, in addition to the aforementioned fair in Valga, the re-issue of Hitler's "Mein Kampf" in Estonian by Matrix Publishing was very successful in Estonian bookstores.

It is not uncommon for Estonian media to publish materials aimed at falsifying the history of the Great Patriotic War and equating the feat of the Soviet people with the misanthropic intentions of Nazi Germany. Such publications are often timed with memorable dates of that War, especially before Victory Day or on the anniversary of Nazi Germany's attack on the USSR. Thus, on the eve of May 9, 2021, several Estonian media outlets committed such actions. On May 7, the news website DELFI published an extremely Russophobic article on the 76th anniversary of the Allied Victory over Nazi Germany and its satellites. By placing the article on the main page of the website, the website owners thus showed their solidarity with the author.¹¹⁵⁸

Also, in early May, the Rus.Postimees.ee news website published an article citing the opinions of young people about Victory Day, accompanied by a photo of the monument "Bronze Soldier" in an inverted form. Immediately after the reaction of the Russian embassy to the article was posted on Facebook, the editors of the news website changed the controversial photo in the article, but in Estonian part of the website and in the paper version they still have the upside down "Bronze Soldier".¹¹⁵⁹

On June 22, 2021, on the 80th anniversary of Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, which marked the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the Estonian newspaper "Eesti Päevaleht" published an article entitled "the 80th anniversary of the "Summer War": why Hitler attacked Stalin". This article also contains unsubstantiated revisionist claims that Nazi aggression was a "preventive measure of Germany" because "it was not Hitler who wanted a big

¹¹⁵⁸ https://sputnik-meedia.ee/Estonian_news/20210508/421738/diplomaty-rf-vozmutilis-rusofobsnij-paskvil-estonskoje-izdaniye-kanun-9-may.html

¹¹⁵⁹ https://sputnik-meedia.ee/Estonian_news/20210512/445352/Pochva-ushla-iz-pod-nog-Posolstvo-RF-prokommentirovalo-publikatsiyu-Postimees.html

war, but Stalin", and "in July 1941, the leadership of the USSR was preparing for an attack on Germany".

On July 19, 2022, "Postimees" published a praiseworthy review of an article by Henrik Prunsveld, which positively assessed the activities of Karl Litzmann, head of the Estonian Generalbezirk Estland of the Reichskommissariat Ostland and the SS Obergruppenführer. It is notable that the key moments of his biography were concealed. In particular, the article keeps back the fact that during the Great Patriotic War, K.Litzmann, among other Nazis, organized mass executions of the Estonian civilian population, resulting in 61 thousand civilians and 64 thousand Soviet prisoners of war dead.¹¹⁶⁰

Located in Tallinn, a private "Museum of Occupations&Freedom" has made maintaining a negative perception of the Soviet period of history its key task. In the exposition of this museum, episodes related to Stalinist repressions and deportations are emphasized, and Estonia's time as part of the USSR is presented in a biased manner, without mentioning the socio-economic, scientific or cultural achievements of the Soviet period.

Along with the formation of the Forest Brothers cult, the idea of "suffering from the Communist regime" is actively promoted in Estonia. For this purpose, suitable "cultural objects" are created. As part of the fast tracking of the hidden agenda based on "suffering from the communist regime" in August 2018, a Memorial to the Victims of Communism was opened in Tallinn. The concept of this site is commemoration of the victims of the "crimes committed by Soviet communists" in 1940-1991. In 2019, an exhibition "Communism is Prison" was opened in Tallin in the building of the former Patarei Prison (the Battery), on the basis of which it is planned to create an international museum in memory of the victims of communism by 2026.

¹¹⁶⁰ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3666989.html>

Attempts to glorify Nazi accomplices, which have become an integral part of state policy, are directly related to the increased manifestations of anti-Semitism and the desecration of monuments to Soviet soldiers who fell on the territory of Estonia in battles with the Nazi invaders. In June 2019, vandals destroyed several tombstones at the Tallinn Jewish cemetery (for the first time in 110 years, including the period of Nazi occupation), including the grave of the former head of the Tallinn veteran association V. Metelitsa. In the same year, new cases of desecration of the graves of Red Army soldiers during the Great Patriotic War were recorded – in the city of Kuressaare (an inscription with aerosol paint was applied to the monument), in the village of Tehumardi (gravestones were doused with engine oil). The local police conducted administrative proceedings, but the perpetrators were not found.

On March 2, 2021, unknown persons desecrated a Tank T-34 monument near Narva. In two places, the armor was graffitied with "to the fallen heroes of the amphetamine war... 2018". The authorities of the city, where many Russians live, promptly took measures to bring the appearance of the monument in order. The Narva police launched an investigation.¹¹⁶¹

In early April 2021, a monument to the victims of Nazism was desecrated at the Rahumae cemetery in Tallinn. According to local police, on April 3, unknown persons laid chicken eggs on the monument. The birds that broke the eggs stained the tombstone. The police found no traces of vandalism. A criminal case was initiated into the desecration of the monument.¹¹⁶²

It is not only monuments to Red Army soldiers who died during Estonia's liberation from Nazism that are under attack by vandals, all monuments erected in honor of soldiers who fought and died in Soviet uniform are under attack. On the eve of municipal elections on October 17, 2021, a monument in Tondiloo

¹¹⁶¹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/02032021-posolstvo-rf-v-estonii-potrebovalo-nayti-vandalov-oskvernivshikh-tankpamyatnik-pod-narvoy/>

¹¹⁶² <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/10042021-pamyatnik-zhertvam-fashistov-v-talline-izmazali-kurinymi-yaytsami/>

park on Kivila street in Lasnamäe district of Tallin, erected in honor of the Soviet soldiers who died in Afghanistan in 1980s, was also desecrated. Unknown persons sprayed paint on the memorial. The monument was erected in 2006 to commemorate not only Russian, but also Estonian heroes of the War in Afganistan.¹¹⁶³

The Estonian authorities joined the vandals' "fight" against the monuments to Soviet soldiers by attempting to demolish them. One of the first and most significant steps made in this direction was the removal of the monument unofficially named as the Bronze Soldier, built in Tallinn on Tõnismägi hill on 22 September 1947 to commemorate the fallen in the Great Patriotic War. In April 2007, the Estonian Cabinet of Ministers made a decision to move the memorial and to relocate the remains of soldiers to a military cemetery on the outskirts of Tallinn. This decision provoked unrest involving thousands of people. The most tragic episode of those events was the murder of Russian citizen Dmitry Ganin.

Despite the relocation, the memorial retained its central role in the celebration of Victory Day. Every year on May 9 (day the Great Patriotic War ended), tens of thousands of Tallinners gathered at the Bronze Soldier to commemorate the fallen heroes. Moreover, representatives of the Estonian Defense Forces, with the permission of their command, also laid a memorial wreath at the monument. However, the memorial also continued to be attacked by vandals.

On June 22, 2019, some unknown persons attached a leaflet with a skull image to the Bronze Soldier of Tallin. Such desecration of the monument caused widespread outrage among compatriots. However, the police put the brakes on the investigation of the incident, alluding to the "low CCTV recordings quality". A few months later, in the same cemetery, unidentified

¹¹⁶³ <https://www.ritmeurasia.org/news--2021-10-22--sovetskie-pamjatniki-v-estonii-nenavistny-vandalam-gosudarstvennym-i-chastnym-56993>

persons split one slab over the grave of a Soviet soldier and knocked another to the ground.¹¹⁶⁴

The situation around the dismantling of the memorial in the village of Taebla in the Lääne-Nigula Parish in July 2019 aroused deep concern. The relocation of the burial was initiated by the leadership of the school being reconstructed nearby, which was allegedly hindered by the Soviet obelisk. According to the information of the Estonian War Museum, authorized to carry out such work, the remains of 11 people were exhumed (however, according to archival data, there were 26 people buried in this place). According to the representative of the Parish council, the monument is kept on the territory of the local gymnasium. Nevertheless, the supporting photos were never provided.

On October 25, 2019, the Russian Ambassador to Estonia, A.Petrov, sent a note to the Undersecretary for Political Affairs, P.Teesalu, requiring official explanations of the incident. However, no meaningful response was ever received. Further attempts to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Estonian side also failed. The Estonian authorities refer to the provisions of the Law on the protection of military graves of January 10, 2007, according to Article 8 of which "remains are subject to reburial if the military burial is in an inappropriate place". This wording has a rather broad interpretation. It is obvious that such vague provisions allow, if necessary, to recognize any memorial of this kind as "inappropriate".

On March 2, 2021, the Tank T-34 monument was desecrated in Narva. The memorial was initially erected in memory of the crossing of the Narva River by Soviet troops on July 25-26, 1944, during the offensive operation of the Leningrad Front. An insulting inscription was put on the pedestal of the monument, which was soon eliminated by the authorities of Narva and local

¹¹⁶⁴ <https://www.ritmeurasia.org/news--2021-10-22--sovetskie-pamjatniki-v-estonii-nenavistny-vandalam-gosudarstvennym-i-chastnym-56993>

activists from among compatriots.¹¹⁶⁵ In connection with the incident, the Russian embassy issued a tough official statement.

On April 7, 2021, vandals overturned a memorial stone, installed near the Raeküla village at the site of the execution of Red Army soldiers in July 1941. After the appeal of the Russian Embassy to the chairman of the City Council of Pärnu, the monument was restored to its former place.

The active efforts of the Embassy to protect the memory of the Great Patriotic War, to preserve memorials and graves of Soviet soldiers and officers, and the harsh reaction of the Russian side to attempts to glorify the Nazis and their accomplices were strongly supported by enthusiastic Russian diaspora members and individual organizations of compatriots, primarily those uniting veterans, former residents of the besieged Leningrad and minor prisoners of Nazi concentration camps.

In 2022, the Estonian authorities decided to intensify their undignified fight against Soviet memorials, using as a pretext for such mean actions the forced commencement by Russia of a special military operation for the denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine.

On April 21, 2022, the Estonian Parliament adopted the law banning open demonstration of symbols "used at commission of an act of aggression, genocide, crime against humanity or war crime, and in support or justification of such crimes". The law also establishes a punishment up to 5 years of imprisonment for "joining the armed forces of a foreign state committing an act of aggression, or to another armed group of a foreign state taking part in the act of aggression; taking part in commission or preparation of an act of aggression or conscious support of an act of aggression on the part of a foreign state including its financing".

¹¹⁶⁵ In Estonia, vandals desecrated a monument to the Tank T-34. RuBaltic. Tuesday, March 02, 2021 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/02032021-v-estonii-vandaly-oskvernili-pamyatnik-tanku-t34/>

The Estonian authorities created obstacles to the celebration of Victory Day by the Russian-speaking population in Estonia. The Head of National Criminal Police of the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board A.Alavere said on March 24, 2022, that the attitude of law enforcement officers to the appearance of Ribbon of Saint George in the public space will be subject to reconsideration as this symbol is worn by Russian soldiers who "kill residents of Ukraine".

The same position was stated at the TV program of the Estonian state TV and radio channel ERR by the Director General of the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board E.Vaher who said that the Estonian police will be taking measures to counter the demonstration of the Russian military symbols on the May 9, meaning Soviet Army uniform and Ribbon of Saint George. In particular, he stated: "we are ready to stop such activities on May 9. We will use more resources as the situation cannot be compared to the previous years". He also expressed the hope that the Estonian Parliament will make some amendments to the law by the 9th of May in order to give a free hand to the police in respect to those who openly demonstrate such symbols.

On March 24, 2022, the Mayor of Tallinn M.Kõlvart (Estonian Centre Party) urged the residents of the capital to "refrain from using symbols that may cause negative reaction", noting that a legal ban on particular symbols may have an opposite effect.

In April 2022, an act of vandalism was committed in the cemetery in the Lügánuse small borough. The star at the obelisk on the common grave of soldiers fallen during the Great Patriotic War was dismantled.

Vandalism was also committed on Saaremaa Island. In Anseküla, the tombstone at Valery Nosik's solitary war grave was overturned. In Tehumardi, the memorial plates, which are part of the memorial ensemble set on the common grave of 234 soldiers, were doused with paint.

On the evening of April 12, 2022, the order on the chest of the Bronze Soldier in the Tallinn military cemetery was cut down.

From April 26 to May 10, the Estonian police officially banned public gatherings associated with Bronze Night and Victory Day, which express support for the "aggressor country" and where military symbols, including flags of the USSR and Russia, Ribbon of Saint George, and Soviet military uniforms were used. At first, the ban was established in Tallinn, Harju County, and also in Ida-Viru Country. Later it was extended to the whole country. On the eve of May 9, police control was strengthened, and involved social networks. On that day "provocative" symbols were detected in various regions of Estonia, about 30 citizens were detained, and 12 "offenders" were fined.

In the middle of May 2022, an act of vandalism was committed to the memorial stone established on the place of crossing of Emajõgi river in September 1944.

On May 16-17, 2022, a monument to Soviet soldiers and the stone slab in front of it disappeared from Mihkli cemetery in Koonga Parish, Pärnu County. Now only the foundation of the monument is left.

On June 17, 2022, it became known about the dismantling and transportation in an unknown direction of the monument to the soldiers of the Soviet Army who fell in the Great Patriotic War, installed on a mass grave in Otepää (the burial place of 34 soldiers).

At the end of June 2022, the Russian Embassy in Tallinn learned about the dismantling of the monument located on Kindralimägi Hill (on the way to Etsaste, Tartu County) built in honor of the Soviet commander, Major General P.Potapov, who fell in the battles for the liberation of Estonia in September 1944.

In July 2022, following the example of neighboring Baltic countries, the Estonian government ordered the removal of all monuments to Soviet soldiers fallen in World War II and the reburial of the remains of soldiers buried under

the military monuments by the end of the year. According to Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, specific decisions have been made regarding military monuments, which stipulate that the remains of soldiers buried underneath the monuments must be gradually reburied and the monuments themselves relocated.¹¹⁶⁶ In total, this campaign of demolition will involve about 400 Soviet monuments.

To this end, a special commission on the dismantling of Soviet monuments has been formed, whose task is to prepare a list of memorials subject to demolition and destruction. However, the entire composition of the commission was classified. It is only known that it will be headed by Asko Kivinuk, who used to work in the Estonian Centre for Defence Investment.

On July 13, 2022 in Rakvere, excavations began at the site of a common grave of Red Army soldiers who died during World War II in order to rebury the remains of the fallen in the local city cemetery. The Rakvere City Council had earlier approached the Estonian Ministry of Defence Commission on War Graves with a proposal to rebury the remains and move the monument. The Commission deemed the reburial appropriate, and the Minister of Defence instructed the War Museum to make the appropriate arrangements.

On July 19, 2022, it became known about the intention of Lääneranna Parish of Pärnu County to demolish six monuments at the burial sites of the Red Army. As stated by local authorities in a statement, these objects are excluded from the register of cultural objects, but they are still military graves, so they will be moved once the study of the surroundings with GPR is carried out. The monuments are supposed to be handed over to a local museum, and the fate of the graves, five of which are located in active cemeteries, was never disclosed.

The deadline for the demolition of Soviet memorials set by the end of the year did not suit the Estonian authorities and probably their Western handlers. Therefore, on August 4, 2022, the Estonian government announced its decision to get rid of Soviet monuments all over the country at an accelerated pace.

¹¹⁶⁶ <https://ren.tv/news/v-mire/1003115-v-estonii-do-kontsa-goda-snesut-vse-pamiatniki-sovetskim-voinam>

K.Kallas announced that Soviet monuments must be seized from the public space as soon as possible.¹¹⁶⁷ Once announced, this decision only provoked new acts of vandalism against Soviet monuments. Thus, on 9 August 2022, it was reported that some unknown persons desecrated a common grave of the Red Army soldiers in the Pauluse cemetery in Tartu.¹¹⁶⁸ Estonian authorities make no real effort to punish those guilty of desecrating the memorials to Soviet soldiers, said Russian Ambassador to Estonia Vladimir Lipayev commenting on media this act of vandalism.¹¹⁶⁹

The confrontation that broke out between the Estonian authorities and the residents of Narva over the Tank T-34 monument has symbolized the beginning of a new stage in the Estonian authorities' fight against Soviet monuments. The Estonian government's decision to demolish all memorials and monuments devoted to Red Army soldiers outraged the citizens of Narva, who advocated for keeping the monument in the city. The Estonian government expectedly spoke out against it, stressing that monuments like the Tank T-34 in Narva would divide Estonian society in the face of the Russian special military operation. In the meantime, on August 8, 2022, at a meeting of the coalition ruling in the city self-government, it was decided to convene a meeting of the City Council, at which a decision would be made to instruct the city government to dismantle the Narva tank in order to transfer it to a closed and safe place on the territory of the city.¹¹⁷⁰

The authorities of Narva conducted a survey to find out the opinions of the townspeople regarding the fate of the tank, standing on the monument to Soviet soldiers. According to the Mayor Katri Raik, two-thirds of the 3,000 respondents want the tank to stay in the city and be stored somewhere in a

¹¹⁶⁷ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/04082022-premer-estonii-prizvala-kak-mozhno-skoree-izbavitsya-ot-sovetskikh-pamyatnikov/>

¹¹⁶⁸ <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/08/09/oskvernili/>

¹¹⁶⁹ <https://ria.ru/20220810/oskvernenie-1808530835.html>

¹¹⁷⁰ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/080822-pravyashchaya-koalitsiya-v-narve-prinyala-reshenie-o-perenose-sovetskogo-pamyatnikatanka/>

closed area. "The tank should remain in Narva, this is the opinion expressed by the majority in the City Council," K.Raik explained, noting that such a point of view was formed during consultations between the factions.¹¹⁷¹

On August 16, 2022, during an extraordinary press conference of the government in Tallinn, it was announced that seven Soviet monuments in Narva and Narva-Jõesuu would be moved. On the same day, the dismantling of the T-34 monument in Narva and its subsequent transfer to the Estonian War Museum in Viimsi began. Also in Narva, the Commemorative plaques at Peetri plats, Red Army soldiers monument in Narva Castle Park, and the memorial to Igor Grafov were moved. The "Kolm tääki" monument in Narva-Jõesu and the monument to the Meriküla memorial were also moved away. Additionally, the Soviet symbols on the World War II mass grave site between the Narva River and the Victoria Bastion were removed.

The above-mentioned facts, as well as the policy pursued by the Estonian authorities with regard to the war memorial heritage, are incompatible with the provisions of the aforementioned annual UN General Assembly resolution on combating the glorification of Nazism.

Attention to Nazi recidivism in Estonia and the desecration of Soviet monuments is mainly attracted by the information resources of compatriots. For this, they are persecuted by the Estonian authorities.

As part of an overall policy of countering "Kremlin influence", Tallinn is pursuing a policy of restricting the work of accredited Russian news agencies in Estonia by any means, forming a blockade around them due to considering them to be "hostile propaganda channels". Since March 20, 2020, under pressure from state and law-enforcement agencies, the daily news TV program "News of Estonia" on the First Baltic Channel (operated by the Russian First Channel franchise) was discontinued.

¹¹⁷¹ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/11082022-izvestny-rezultaty-oprosa-zhiteley-narvy-o-dalneyshey-sudbe-sovetskogo-pamyatnikatanka/>

The Estonian authorities are demonstratively ignoring requests and appeals from representatives of the Russian media accredited in the country: Interfax, RIA Novosti, TASS, and VGTRK. Journalists do not receive newsletters and press releases from Estonian government agencies, are not allowed into government institutions, and are not accredited to official events. Under pressure from the special services, banking structures refuse to provide services to them, block bank accounts, and unilaterally terminate contractual obligations without any explanation.

The Estonian authorities used the start of the Russian special military operation in Ukraine to completely block Russia in the media space. An aggressive propaganda was unleashed against everything connected with our country. The Estonian media environment is completely closed for alternative points of view, any "dissent" is being interpreted as war propaganda and deceptive information, Russian media are either censored or closed, criminal cases are forged against unwanted journalists, scrupulous monitoring of social media (including those of the Russian diplomatic missions) is carried out. Thus, in early March 2022, the news agency "Sputnik Meedia"¹¹⁷² announced termination of its work due to pressure and restrictions on the part of Estonian banks and authorities, as well as because of threats to its employees. During the year, the banks in Estonia were freezing salaries to the employees and closing the accounts of "Sputnik Meedia" on the suspicions of "money laundering, financing terrorism, illegal sale of alcohol". Besides, recently many newsmakers refused to cooperate with the portal, and "open threats" from unknown persons started coming to its editor-in-chief and employees.

On April 6, 2022, the Estonian intelligence services apprehended the editor-in-chief of "Sputnik Meedia", Russian citizen E.Cherysheva, on suspicion of the allegedly committed crime against peace and violation of the

¹¹⁷² Notably, "Sputnik Meedia" was created by former employees of the news agency "Sputnik Estonia", which was closed two years ago due to strong pressure from the Estonian police.

international sanctions, including by supporting the work of the previously closed news agency. After a 16-hours search in her dwelling, she was taken to a remand prison. All gadgets, cell phones, and cash were seized from E.Cherysheva. After several days, the editor was released, but unable to leave the country or even her home for a period longer than three days.

By May 2022, Estonia banned as a whole over 40 Russian and Russian-language TV channels (including The First Baltic Channel, which rebroadcasts the programs of the Channel One Russia in the Baltic countries), CTC, REN TV, Russia 24, NTV+, etc.), and over 50 websites (including TASS, RT, RBC, Sputnik); the newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda in North Europe was ousted from the media market.

The intensified struggle against Soviet memorials can also be explained by the fact that Estonia, like other Baltic states, remains a comfortable environment for right-wing radical groups. For today's neo-Nazis, monuments honoring those who fought their idols remain a serious irritant. The local group of the Finnish nationalist and clearly racist organization called "Soldiers of Odin" was formed in 2016 and is currently very active in Estonia. Its activists keep in touch through closed Facebook groups and attend mass events dedicated to the glorification of Nazi accomplices. New supporters of the group are actively and openly recruited through the website www.soldiersofodin.ee.

For Estonia, radicalization on the Internet has become a new phenomenon, which increasingly and actively involves young people. In January 2020, the Estonian Internal Security Service (KaPo) identified a 13-year-old teenager who was one of the leaders of a large international network of neo-Nazi groups "Feuerkrieg Division". He actively recruited new people via social media and spread anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi materials on the Internet. However, due to the minor age of the neo-Nazi, law enforcement agencies were unable to bring him to justice, and only mentioned that "certain measures" were taken.

Notably, this story got into the KaPo yearbook published in April 2021. Thus recognizing the presence of right-wing radical groups in the country as one of the threats to national security (though the main threat is still considered to be the "Kremlin's hand"), the Estonian Internal Security Service in explaining the reasons for what happened referred to the existence of "echo chambers" in Estonia, where radical thoughts do not meet opposition and counterarguments. Though the Estonian authorities failed to mention that Estonia itself is now becoming an echo chamber with the connivance of the political establishment and with their tacit consent.

The CPPE's newspaper called "Uued Uudised" (Fresh News) issues daily publications which incite hostility towards people of African and Asian origin and other "foreigners", and exaggerates the threat of "crowding out" the indigenous population by them. As a result, there is an increase in cases of public insults and physical attacks on people from Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Increasingly, interethnic and interracial strife appears on the pages of social networks, but the authorities are not taking any steps to reduce the degree of interethnic tension.

In addition, human rights activists point out that the activities of the Estonian human rights protection bodies, in particular the Chancellor of Justice and the Gender Equality & Equal Treatment Commissioner, in combating racial discrimination is ineffective. The decisions of the Equality Commissioner were not binding. In addition, the consent of a person suspected of discrimination is required in order to initiate a conciliation procedure for racial discrimination against individuals. According to activists, no cases of consent to this procedure have been recorded so far. There are also no positive examples of protection from racial discrimination in judicial practice.

The unwillingness of the Estonian authorities, seeking to please aggressive nationalist forces, to take measures to limit the spread of neo-Nazism and combat racism has repeatedly attracted international attention. In March

2019, the Human Rights Committee (OHCHR) expressed concern about the spread of manifestations of hatred in Estonia. The OHCHR was especially concerned that the current legislation does not guarantee sufficient protection against hate speech and hate crimes, in particular because of the relatively lenient penalties and strict requirements for their imposition for offenses of incitement to hatred, violence or discrimination under Article 151 of the Estonian Criminal Code, which requires that there is a "threat to the life, health or property" of the victim. However, other acts, such as publicly denying, endorsement or justification of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, or racist hate propaganda or otherwise inciting discrimination, are not prohibited by law. Taking the aforementioned into account, it is not surprising that the Committee noted the high incidence of hate speech, including by politicians and opinion leaders, as well as high hate crime rate.¹¹⁷³

On October 30, 2020, the European Commission notified Estonia of the decision to initiate proceedings in connection with Tallinn's failure to fulfill its obligations to implement EU legislation. One of the issues is that Estonian criminal law does not consider racist and xenophobic motives as aggravating circumstances.¹¹⁷⁴ The Estonian authorities avoid criminalizing explicit manifestations of racism and xenophobia, such as public justification, denial or belittling of international crimes and the Holocaust crime, public incitement to violence and incitement to hatred against particular groups. Estonia remains one of only two EU countries without a legal ban on such activities.

With reference to the European Commission, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights drew attention to these aspects in its report on human rights in the European Union for 2021.¹¹⁷⁵

¹¹⁷³ Concluding observations of the Committee for Human Rights on the 4th periodic report of Estonia. March 2019

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru

¹¹⁷⁴ <https://news.err.ee/1153405/european-commission-launches-infringement-proceedings-against-estonia>

¹¹⁷⁵ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report 2021 https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-fundamental-rights-report-2021_en.pdf

Concerns about Estonian legislation were expressed by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in April 2022. In particular, the Committee noted that the Penal Code does not fully prohibit racist organizations, the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or racial hatred, neither does it punish racially motivated hate speech and incitement to hatred. The CERD reiterated its concern at the lenient penalties for the cases provided for in the law.¹¹⁷⁶

Estonia is among the European states where the legalization of Nazis relies on poorly concealed governmental support and sympathy of the local population, which has been repeatedly pointed out by human rights activists defending the rights of the Russian-speaking population of the country. This is directly related to a serious increase in the political weight of right-wing nationalist forces, increased manifestations of xenophobia, anti-Semitism, neo-Nazism, cases of desecration of monuments to soldiers of the Red Army and high activity of right-wing radical groups.

The growth of xenophobic sentiment is noted primarily among ethnic Estonians. CPPE activists who do not hide their racist views make a significant contribution to inciting hatred towards migrants. In February 2021, the head of the conservative faction in the Tallinn City Council, M.Kallas, on his Facebook page, called the opponents of the transfer of the memorial to the Bronze Soldier from the center of Tallinn in 2007 and compatriots sympathizing with them "human garbage with a Soviet mentality".

It is very noteworthy that Ukrainian labor migrants also fall victims of nationalists. In March 2021, the adviser to the parliamentary faction of the CPPE Yu.Cook, in a note for the party's news website "Uued Uudised", complained that Ukrainian construction workers "make the public space of our

¹¹⁷⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 10th and 11th periodic reports of Estonia. April 2022
<https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhsq90DTob4ikPW5%2fsvlCWY%2bsTv4D7bkEbOggPC2IgX%2bZhrsC0LVGMdazwZw%2bHIR%2fVTCJQSvj7Oir%2bNS5aln%2fwOjl1b8cVSIHONH4Mj4oNamJOXsczsRWStBIDLusa5FiBnA%3d%3d>

national state too Russian". The threat of Russification of Estonia, according to him, "comes not only from Putin, but also from the Ukrainian labor force". At the same time, Conservative leader M.Helme stated in the autumn of 2020, that the Language Inspectorate (Keeleinspektsioon), a special supervisory and punitive body that monitors the purity of the Estonian linguistic space and is not subject to parliamentary and public control, should be involved in the identification of illegal migrants, primarily from neighboring Russian-speaking countries. Its functions are limited solely to identifying insufficient level of knowledge or usage of the Estonian language, followed by the imposition of sanctions and large fines on individuals and legal entities.

The infringement of the rights of national minorities in Estonia, primarily Russian-speaking, which, according to human rights activists, makes up more than 30% of the country's population, remains an acute problem. The situation is especially bad in the field of education in the native language. In Estonia, the supremacy of ethnic Estonians, their language and culture¹¹⁷⁷ over other peoples living in the country is enshrined at the constitutional level. Estonian laws explicitly restricted the political, social, economic and cultural rights of non-ethnic Estonians. The Estonian Ministry of Education and Research had developed an Estonian language development program for the years 2021-2035, which provided for the complete elimination of education in Russian, starting from pre-school institutions.

Representatives of Estonian authorities at the highest level, including the president of the country, make statements about the need to eliminate Russian-language education. Thus, on February 24, 2021 in her address to the nation on the occasion of Independence Day of Estonia, the then president K.Kaljulaid

¹¹⁷⁷ The preamble to the Estonian Constitution of 1992 states that "the state is called upon to ensure the preservation of the Estonian nation, language and culture for centuries to come".

stated that it is not only the right of Russian parents to send Russian children to Estonian schools, but also their responsibility.¹¹⁷⁸

The state has embarked on a course of estonization of all spheres of public life, primarily education. Russian-speaking children are being assimilated and deprived of their right to receive education in their native language, which automatically leads to restriction of their access to quality education.

Despite the fact that Russian language in Estonia is native for about 30% of the population and de-facto continues to play the role of international communication language, it has no status of either state, official or minority language, including in places of compact residence of our compatriots. Even in Narva city, where ethnic Estonians constitute less than 4%, Russian cannot be introduced as a language of paperwork, because Russian-speaking citizens of Estonia constitute only 47% of city population.

At the first stage of Estonianization of the sphere of education, Russian was forced out of higher educational institutions, including private ones, and then out of the system of professional technical education.

In 2011 there was a transition of teaching 60% of subjects in gymnasiums (grades 10-12) to the state language, i.e., the Estonian language. This event was very painful for young Russian compatriots.

Now, the Estonian Government takes measures to oust the Russian language from the school and pre-school education system. The Estonian language development program for the years 2021-2035 and Estonia-2035 Strategy provide for full transfer of education in state and municipal educational institutions to Estonian not later than in 2035. The step-by-step action plan for unification of the budgetary Estonian-language secondary and pre-school education under the pretext of integration, presented in December 2021, implies intrusive interference of the state in the affairs of the local self-governments and educational institutions.

¹¹⁷⁸ <https://www.president.ee/ru/official-duties/speeches/16451-2021-02-24-16-28-05/index.html>

The Russian language has already been almost completely ousted from the system of higher education. Thus, in Tallinn University and University of Tartu one can partially study in Russian only in the specialties "Russian Philology" (Bachelor's degree) and "Slavic languages and cultures" (Master's degree). Russian-language curricula are still available at the private Estonian Business School and the Estonian Academy of Art. As a consequence, no more than 30% of Russian-language high school graduates enter Estonian universities, while more than 50% of those from Estonian-language schools do.

The systematic estonianization of gymnasium and vocational secondary education (grades 10-12) continues. Currently, according to Estonian law, no more than 40% of subjects can be taught in Russian at the gymnasium level. Refraining, for domestic political and financial reasons, from taking drastic legislative steps toward de-Russification, the Estonian government is implementing a program of merging Russian-language and Estonian-language high schools under the pretext of "optimization". As a result, completely Estonian-language educational institutions (Keila Korvpallikool, University of Tartu, Rakvere College, Haapsalu College, Viljandi Culture Academy, Virumaa College, Põlva Kooli, Võru Kooli, Kallaste School, etc.) appear without regard to the interests of Russian students and their parents. Similar steps are planned in the cities of Narva (where Russians constitute a significant part of population), Jõhvi and Tallinn.

In addition, according to the defenders of the Russian language, the following practice is common in respect of Russian-speaking schools. At first, a Russian-speaking school is deprived of the high school status (the ability to have grades 10-12) and becomes a middle school (having 9 grades). The school is transferred to another settlement, often with a smaller number of inhabitants, or administrative transformations merge a town with a Russian-speaking population with nearby Estonian-speaking settlements and thus the interests of the Russian-speaking community are not taken into account.

A clear example of this approach is the merger in 2019 of the Russian and Estonian grammar schools in Kohtla-Järve (75% of the city's population is Russian) into a fully Estonian-language public grammar school without any discussion of this step with the Russian-speaking community. From the first days of their studies, Russian-speaking pupils at this school have faced blatant discrimination on linguistic and ethnic grounds on the part of the administration and Estonian teachers. Meanwhile, a similar reformatting is planned for Russian educational institutions in Narva (where more than 90% of the population is Russian-speaking) and Mustvee Parish by 2022.

Similar events took place with the school in Kallaste (Peipsiääre Parish, the town is inhabited by descendants of Russian Old Believers), which was moved to Kolkja, and with the school in Kiviõli (Lüganuse Parish, Ida-Viru County). First, both schools were transformed from high schools to middle schools. As for the school in Kallaste, it was decided to move it to the village of Kolkja, where there is also a Russian school. On July 1, 2021, the Russian school in Kallaste was closed. Earlier, as a result of the administrative reform carried out in 2017, the parish of the descendants of the Old Believers of Lake Peipus region was erased by merging it with Estonian parishes. As a result, the newly formed parish became predominantly Estonian, and the descendants of the Russian Old Believers lost their self-government. Thus, the authorities were able to make decisions without taking into account the opinion of the Russian population.¹¹⁷⁹

The alarming situation with Kiviõli school arose in 2021 and developed similarly. As a result of the administrative reform to unite Kiviõli with the surrounding villages with an Estonian population, the percentage of Estonian population in the new entity increased. As a consequence, local authorities planned to merge it with the Estonian-speaking school as part of the reform of the township's school network, but they did not discuss the process with the

¹¹⁷⁹ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3338792.html>

school leadership. The indignation of the school staff was caused by the fact of negligent attitude of the township authorities towards them: all questions considering the reform were left unanswered. In this regard, the leadership and teachers of the school fear that the school may be closed.¹¹⁸⁰

Thus, under the very same "optimization" pretext, in November 2019 the municipal authorities of Keila eliminated the only Russian school in the city, despite the objections of parents and protests organized by them in favor of preserving the Russian-language school. At the City Council meeting, where it was decided to close the Russian school, the mayor said that it was closed with the aim of creating a single Estonian community in the city (according to public activists, this was recorded in the minutes of the meeting).¹¹⁸¹

In February 2021, the Tallinn District Court ruled to dismiss the appeals of students' parents and upheld the decision of 19 August 2020 of the administrative court refusing to overturn Kale's decision to reorganize schooling in the city. On June 21, 2021, the Estonian State Court also dismissed an appeal challenging this decision to close the school. The plaintiffs are preparing to appeal this decision to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

The results of such measures are obvious: out of 520 secondary educational institutions in the country there are 74 institutions with partial teaching in Russian language (for comparison, in 1995 there were 141, and as late as 2009 there were 96 such institutions).

Civil activists in Estonia who defend the right to get education in Russian have noted that the transfer of Russian children to Estonian-language education leads to a decrease in their competitiveness in the educational sphere. This thesis is supported by a well-founded scientific opinion. Professor A.Pulver and Professor A.Toomela acknowledge in the study "The Foreign-Speaking Child in

¹¹⁸⁰ <https://sputnik-meedia.ee/society/20210303/120400/Vozmuschaet-otnoshenie-russkij-direktor-shkola-reforma-estonski-Ida-Virumaa.html>

¹¹⁸¹ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3338792.html>; <https://dokole.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/29.10volikoguprotokoll.pdf>

Estonian School" (The School of Natural Sciences and Health, Tallinn University, Tallinn, 2012) that Russian-speaking children in Estonian school are not able to realize their abilities and perform at a lower level. Children with high abilities show average results. Children of average ability show low results. This does not happen when teaching in their native language: in this case, children develop and maintain their level of achievement. As a result of the difficulties faced by Russian-speaking children in Estonian schools, their self-esteem declines. Children studying in their native language do not experience such struggles. Thus, equal and inclusive opportunities for education have never been created in Estonia. Showing results below their abilities, Russian children are limited in getting an education and have lower chances to continue their education at university.¹¹⁸²

Public activists also point out that the main problem in the integration of Russian-speaking students is not the poor command of Estonian, but rather the inability of the Estonian authorities during to provide quality teaching of the State language. There is lack of teaching materials and teachers among Russians living in Estonia, and as for Estonian teachers, those are unwilling to work in Russian schools.

Recently, the media has been actively working on public opinion, promoting the topic of "necessity of transition to a unified school" and "unified education system" under the pretext of caring for the Russian population, whose worst socio-economic situation is allegedly associated with poor knowledge of the State language. It is supposed to abolish the division into Estonian and Russian schools and kindergartens in favor of Estonian-language institutions with some optional opportunities to support native speech for students from non-majority communities.

¹¹⁸² <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3338792.html>; <https://dokole.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/29.10volikoguprotokoll.pdf>

The problem of discrimination on the basis of proficiency of the State language in Estonia has been addressed by international human rights monitoring procedures, such as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in 2014 and 2022¹¹⁸³; the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)¹¹⁸⁴ in 2015; the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities¹¹⁸⁵ in 2015; the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 2017¹¹⁸⁶; the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and the Human Rights Committee (HRC) in 2019.

The CESCR, in particular, expressed concern about the lack of flexibility in the application of per centage quotas for teaching in Estonian in Russian-language gymnasiums. This, in the opinion of the Committee's experts, becomes an obstacle to the acquisition of basic subjects by Russian-speaking students in Russian-speaking schools, which are taught only in Estonian, and, in the case of vocational schools, leads to a shortage of qualified teachers capable of teaching specialized subjects. The situation is further aggravated by Estonian authorities' punitive approach to enforcing the Language Act, including through the mandate and functions of the Language Inspectorate.¹¹⁸⁷

The HRC has expressed concern about the impact of language policies and practices, which continue to impede the full enjoyment of the rights of the

¹¹⁸³ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 10th and 11th periodic reports of Estonia. August 2014
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2f10-11&Lang=ru

¹¹⁸⁴ The European Commission against racism and intolerance report on Estonia (fifth monitoring cycle).

Accepted June 16, 2015, published October 13, 2015. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-estonia/16808b56f1>

¹¹⁸⁵ Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Estonia (fourth cycle). Accepted March 19, 2015, published October 21, 2015

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168047d0e5>

¹¹⁸⁶ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 2nd to 4th periodic reports of Estonia. January 2017

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2f2-4&Lang=ru

¹¹⁸⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the third periodic report of Estonia. February 2019

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fEST%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

Russian-speaking population on an equal basis with the rest of the country's population. Such opinion is also supported by the CESCR's finding about the lack of flexibility in the implementation of the quota of teaching in Estonian.¹¹⁸⁸

In 2022, CERD noted with concern that despite the Equal Treatment Act which prohibits discrimination against an employee or potential employee on the basis of nationality and ethnic origin, such treatment on the basis of Estonian language proficiency (or rather lack of proficiency) is not classified as discrimination. The Committee has also pointed out the differences in employment and income rates between the Estonian and non-Estonian population, including on the basis of language proficiency.¹¹⁸⁹

Difficulties in the use of the Russian language are noted not only in the educational sphere; the use of Russian in various spheres of public life is generally difficult. Estonia, which ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) in the late 1990s (with significant reservations), evades the provisions of Article 11, which explicitly obliges to recognize every person belonging to a national minority and their right to use their patronyms in issued national identity documents. The Estonian authorities ignore the recommendations of the CERD and the CESCR to officially recognize patronymics of Russian-speaking residents. The CESCR, in particular, noted in February 2019 that the Estonian authorities' obstacles to national minorities' use of middle names in official personal documents limit their ability to exercise their right to protect their cultural identity.¹¹⁹⁰

¹¹⁸⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee for Human Rights on the 4th periodic report of Estonia. March 2019

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru

¹¹⁸⁹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 10th and 11th periodic reports of Estonia. April 2022

<https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhsq90DTob4ikPW5%2fsylCWY%2bsTv4D7bkEbOqgPC2IgX%2bZhrsC0LVGMdazwZw%2bHIR%2fVTCJQSvj7Oir%2bNS5aln%2fwOj11b8cVSIHQNH4Mj4oNamJOXsczsRWStBIDLusa5FiBnA%3d%3d>

¹¹⁹⁰ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the third periodic report of Estonia. February 2019

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fEST%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

The CESCR criticized the Estonian authorities for the continuous discrimination against the non-Estonian-speaking population, which, due to insufficient State language proficiency, faces systemic discrimination in all areas of public life. This, according to CESCR experts, is evidenced by the high level of unemployment and poverty among the non-Estonian-speaking population. The Committee also noted with concern the excessively high threshold for speakers of minority languages to use such a language when communicating with local authorities in areas where persons belonging to these linguistic minorities traditionally or in significant numbers live. The CESCR also expressed concern about the excessive requirements imposed on the use of traditional toponyms, such as local street names, in the minority language in the areas of traditional residence of people belonging to that linguistic minority.¹¹⁹¹

The ECRI noted in March 2022 that the situation of the Russian-speaking population is characterized by a high level of social exclusion. Among other things, ECRI stressed that Russians are the most disadvantaged in the labor market and also face a number of problems in education because of the language of instruction. The Commission noted that the spread of the coronavirus had a negative impact on employment rates among Russian-speaking residents, as their jobs often did not provide for remote work. In addition, many hid the first symptoms of the disease for fear of losing their jobs.¹¹⁹²

The CERD explicitly pointed to the punitive approach to the introduction of the official language in Estonia and recommended that it should be reconsidered by ensuring the effectiveness of the control mechanism of the language supervisory bodies. The experts also emphasized that the Estonian

¹¹⁹¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the third periodic report of Estonia. February 2019
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fEST%2fCO%2f3&Lang=ru

¹¹⁹² Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Estonia (sixth monitoring cycle). Adopted March 29, 2022, published June 9, 2022. <https://rm.coe.int/6th-ecri-report-on-estonia/1680a6d5e6>

authorities did not strike a balance between their stated recognition of diversity in society and the degree of imperative they attach to proficiency in Estonian, including making it a prerequisite for employment. The CERD also noted that the Language Act limits the use of minority languages in public administration to local authorities only, and in areas where most permanent residents do not speak Estonian.¹¹⁹³

Human rights activists also note in this regard that the Russian residents of Estonia are almost displaced from many important sectors of the economy. This is facilitated by the authorities' policy of "integration" of the non-Estonian population, while social and economic integration is not given due attention. For example, it is much more difficult for a Russian entrepreneur to obtain a loan than for an Estonian. Moreover, even Russians who know Estonian cannot compete with Estonians. As a result, inequality between ethnic communities in the country continues to increase. The unemployment rate among Estonians is 5.8%, and among Russians it is 9.4%. The largest number of unemployed is found in the regions inhabited by Russians (mainly in the Ida-Viru County).

The Russophobic approach was supported by the Labor Inspection of Estonia. On 18 March 2022, the Inspection issued a recommendation to employers, which explains that if they note an employee wearing a St. George Ribbon, a Z-symbol or using Russian flag on social media, consider it "instigation to war and stirring up hatred pursuant to the Penal Code of the Republic of Estonia", which "constitute crimes and give the right to terminate labor relations in connection to loss of trust, based on Part 1, para. 5 of Article 88 of the Law on Labor Contract".

This recommendation justifies the local managers who have proactively operated in this way. Thus, the head of "Elron" (government-owned passenger

¹¹⁹³ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination upon consideration of the combined 12th and 13th periodic reports of Estonia. April 2022
<https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhsq90DTob4ikPW5%2fsylCWY%2bsTv4D7bkEbOggPC2IgX%2bZhrsC0LVGMdazwZw%2bHIR%2fVTCJQSvj7Oir%2bNS5aln%2fwOjl1b8cVSIHONH4Mj4oNamJOXsczsRWStBIDLusa5FiBnA%3d%3d>

train operator) L.Betlem, as early as on March 1, 2022, informed his employees about inadmissibility of expressing "support to the Russian criminal regime" in social media. He noted that labor contracts would be terminated with those who do so, for "loss of trust and damaging the employer's reputation".

The situation in the economic sphere is similar to the situation in other spheres. Only 3% of Estonian authorities in the country are non-Estonians. The interests of the Russian-speaking population are not taken into account. Vivid example of the above mentioned is the merger of Russian schools with Estonian ones made due to corresponding changes in the administrative structure. In such cases, the opinion of Russian-speaking communities is not taken into account. Human rights activists note that there is a high degree of Russophobia among Estonians. 50% of Russians maintain contacts with Estonians, while only 30% of Estonians keep in touch with Russians.

Regardless of the economic situation, the regional units of the country, predominantly inhabited by Russians, receive less government funding. As a result, the poorest municipalities in Estonia are the regions with Russian population. Among the poorest there are such cities of Ida-Viru County as Narva, Kohtla-Järve, Sillamäe, as well as the town of Maardu located near Tallinn.

A drastic deterioration in the situation of the Russian-speaking population is evidenced by the report on the results of integration monitoring published by the Estonian Ministry of Culture on May 10, 2021. These results confirm the actual failure of the state integration reform in Estonia. Forced estonianization does not contribute to the harmonious involvement of national minorities in Estonian society. Thus, 29% of representatives of the non-titular nation of the country believe that "they are not welcome here" (in 2016, this opinion was shared by 16% of respondents); 38% of non-Estonians in Estonia feel like second-class people (21% in 2016); 26% of the respondents said that intolerance is manifested against them (10% in 2016). Up to 70% of people

from the target group believe that they are not capable of influencing the development of society and the state in any way, another 73% – that their career prospects are obviously worse than those of ethnic Estonians. There remains a strong dependence of socio-economic and career advancement on national and linguistic affiliation, ethnic discrimination in terms of wages. On average, non-Estonians in identical positions earn 15% less, and 50% of students studying in a non-native Estonian language have difficulties with studying, while experiencing serious stress.

Russian-speaking activists and members of compatriots' NPOs are subjected to persecution and pressure in Estonia, among other things, for advocating for free usage of the Russian language in the country. To support this narrative, the authorities are forcing spy mania and anti-Russian hysteria. For this purpose, the Estonian special services practice various methods of pressure on politicians, public figures, human rights defenders and journalists disloyal to the authorities, and civil society activists who speak from different points of view on the country's domestic and foreign policy, as well as its history, from the official point of view.

In this regard, interview given to news portal "Delfi" on June 1, 2020 by A.Sinisalu, director of Estonian Internal Security Service, is indicative. He directly pointed at "disloyalty" of "Human Rights Information Center", NGO (the oldest organization of the country specializing in legal protection of the Russian and Russian-speaking communities) and openly pointed out who disagree with violation of national minorities' rights in Estonia are not welcome in the country.

One of the methods used by the special services to put pressure on those who disagree is to open criminal cases under far-fetched pretexts. So, until 2018, a criminal case was conducted on "providing incorrect data" and "forging documents" against the editor-in-chief of the news portals "Baltija" and "Baltnews" A.Kornilov, who was named in the KaPo yearbook for 2014 as a

"propagandist and Kremlin influence agent". After Kornilov had paid a large fine, the case was closed. In February 2019, a court verdict came into force against a prominent Estonian Russianist, director of the Pushkin Institute of Tallinn, A.B.Krasnoglazov, who was accused of "embezzlement of funds" and "forgery". In July 2019, M.Rusakov, the head of the human rights NPO "Kitezh" and NGO "Russian School of Estonia", was detained and interrogated for many hours by the police. A purely civil lawsuit brought against him, connected with internal disagreements in the Estonian United Left Party, was used by the security forces to seize all technical data carriers and communication means from him. In March 2020, the case against him was closed, but in April 2021, the tax authorities began checking against M.Rusakov again.

At the end of March 2021, it became known about the detention of human rights defender and lawyer S.Seredenko in connection with the criminal charge brought against him of committing a crime against the Republic of Estonia (in August 2021 the case was transferred to the court). At the same time, the Estonian authorities were hiding information about his arrest for almost a month.¹¹⁹⁴ In August 2021, the case was transferred to court and the trial was declared closed. If the indictment is accepted, the court may sentence S.Seredenko to life imprisonment.

Estonian human rights activists, as well as their colleagues from other Baltic countries, note that the reason for these actions of the Estonian authorities was the active work of S.Seredenko and other Russian activists in Estonia to preserve Russian-speaking education and protect monuments to Soviet soldiers of the Red Army who died in the battles for liberation of Estonia from Nazism (including the "Night Watch" movement). S.Seredenko for a long time on a voluntary basis performed the functions of the "Russian ombudsman" in Estonia

¹¹⁹⁴ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/world/20210330/15422485/estonia-arestovan-russkoyazychnyy-pravozaschitnik.html>.

for a long time on a voluntary basis. In addition, Estonian media materials process public opinion in order to create a negative impression of the human rights defender. Many facts of exerting pressure on him are intentionally ignored: for example, it is not mentioned that S. Seredenko, who had two higher educations, recently had to work as a janitor in Maardu gymnasium, as he could not get a job due to Security Police mark (KaPo). S.Seredenko also provided free legal advice to human rights activists and activists of Russian communities in Latvia and Lithuania.¹¹⁹⁵

The arrest of S.Seredenko caused a wide resonance among the public of the Baltic States. NGOs representing the Russian-speaking community of Estonia, members of the Estonian United Left Party and sympathizing citizens organized several public actions in Tallinn.¹¹⁹⁶ The events in support of the Russian-speaking human rights defender were also held in Latvia near the building of the Estonian Embassy in Riga by representatives of the Latvian Russian Union (LKS) and other activists. MEP from Latvia T.Zhdanok, who took part in the event, noted that two years ago the EP organized hearings on the persecution of dissidents in the Baltic countries. It was about the fates of A.Paleckis, A.V.Gaponenko, V.Linderman and other human rights activists who allowed themselves to freely express their own opinions. S.Seredenko also participated in these hearings. According to the MEP, the arrest of the human rights defender two years after those hearings in the European Parliament is an indication that the situation has only got worse.¹¹⁹⁷

The arrest of S.Seredenko drew attention to the deputy from Estonia in the European Parliament J.Toom. According to her, the arrest of S.Seredenko was "a very bad signal for those who believe that Estonia is an open state of law. Many representatives of the Russian-speaking community face with

¹¹⁹⁵ <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3236502.html>

¹¹⁹⁶ https://sputnik-meedia.ee/Estonian_news/20210421/334498/V-Talline-proshel-uzhe-vtoroy-piket-Svobodu-pravozaschitniku-Sergeyu-Seredenko.html

¹¹⁹⁷ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/Latvia/20210408/15467802/Latviya-ugrozhaet-a-Estoniya-uzhe-sazhaet-v-Rige-trebuyut-osvobodit-pravozaschitnika-Seredenko.html>

arrogance and disrespect here. Indeed, it's hard to imagine that such deafening silence would surround the arrest of an Estonian-speaking political activist".¹¹⁹⁸

The Russian school of Estonia, in the context of the Seredenko's case, called on PACE to pay attention to the persecution of citizens in the country for dissent and noted the practice of initiating unfounded criminal cases against people who somehow disagree with the general "correct opinion".¹¹⁹⁹

The party "Latvian Russian Union" reported on the appeal sent by representatives of the Russian community of the Baltic region, the European Parliament, Riigikogu and Riga City Council to the then President K.Kaljulaid with a call to stop politically motivated prosecution of human rights activist Sergey Seredenko. Among those who signed the open letter are MEP T.Zhdanok, Riga City Council Deputies M.Mitrofanov, J.Pliner, V.Buzaev, and recently tragically killed A.Kuzmin, as well as M.Stalnukhin, an Estonian MP.¹²⁰⁰

After the start of a special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, the Russophobic campaign in Estonia continued with renewed vigor. On 4 May 2022, the Estonian Internal Security Service deported A.Esakov, a Russian citizen permanently residing in Estonia and one of the organizers of the Immortal Regiment, as a person posing a "threat to the Estonian statehood". In April 2022, the Estonian intelligence services made efforts to identify "unreliable" citizens. It is known, in particular, that KaPo summoned S.Solodova, an active member of Russian compatriot organizations in Kohtla-Järve, for a "preventive conversation".

There are continued attempts to oust the Russian language from the media. On March 25, 2022, the Minister of Finance of Estonia, K.Pentus-Rosimannus, proposed that the government allocate 1.3 million euros as a

¹¹⁹⁸ https://sputnik-meedia.ee/Estonian_news/20210409/278143/Evrodeputat-Yana-Toom-prizvala-vnesti-yasnost-po-delu-Sergeya-Seredenko.html

¹¹⁹⁹ https://m.sputnik-meedia.ee/Estonian_news/20210426/360171/Russkaya-shkola-Estonii-prizvala-PASE-dat-otsenku-arestu-Sergeyu-Seredenko.html?mobile_return=no

¹²⁰⁰ <http://russkiymir.ru/news/287171/>

targeted state subsidy to the Ministry of Culture to support the Russian-language editions of the Estonian media. The project provides that the recipient of the grant must be a private legal entity registered in Estonia, which produces information products in Estonian and Russian, and be a member of the Estonian Association of Media Enterprises. News agencies publishing materials solely in Russian will not be able to obtain such a grant.

Last April, M.Reve, one of the defenders of the Bronze Soldier monument, blasphemously transferred during the Bronze Night of 2007, had his residence permit cancelled and was banned from entering the Schengen zone for a ten-year period on security grounds (as "posing a threat to the Constitutional order, committing terrorist crime or other grave crime").

On April 27, 2022, the Russian citizen, one of the organizers of the Immortal Regiment events S.Chaulin, came to Tõnismägi (where the Bronze Soldier used to stand) with flowers and candles, and was detained on suspicion of organizing illegal public rallies. On 9 May 2022, so was the activist of the Russian-speaking community Yu.Kalinina.

Law enforcement authorities and security forces of Estonia take measures to identify pro-Russian persons. The Estonian Police and Border Guard Board urged social media users on March 8, 2022, to promptly inform the "online-police" about any "doubtful publications" (i.e., pro-Russian publications) for their checking for "instigation of war and stirring up hatred". On the next day KaPo specified that the security service had to be immediately informed about "flagrant cases" of activity in social media.

On 11 March 2022, KaPo announced on its website that information billboards about criminal liability under Articles 234² and 235¹ of the Penal Code of the Republic of Estonia for assistance to or contacts with Russian security forces were installed on the Estonian border control points at the Russian border. When commenting the aforementioned publication, Deputy Director General of the service A.Toots explained that the notification was

made in connection to the "active approach of the Russian security services to persons crossing the border" and urged to inform of any attempts of such contacts, otherwise "when convicted, people will find themselves on one list with traitors and anti-state offenders".

Moreover, Estonian border guards cancel visas because of "hostile symbols" (St. George Ribbons, elements of the Russian Army uniform and other symbols, Latin letters Z and V).

One of the main human rights problems is the mass "non-citizenship" in order to ensure the "ethnic purity" of the Estonian passport. In Estonia, the Russian-speaking population, which constitutes the majority of "non-citizens", is in a discriminatory position, despite the fact that the Russian-speaking community has about 360 thousand people (25% of the population). In fact, we are not talking about a minority in the "conventional sense of the word", but about a state-forming people in terms of their numbers and historical role in state building (like the Flemings in Belgium, the Scots in the UK or the Bosnian Croats and Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina). In Estonia, the privileged position of the Estonian ethnos, its language and culture is guaranteed by its Constitution, meanwhile the policy of political, socio-economic and cultural-linguistic discrimination of the "non-indigenous" population goes on.

The number of people who received Estonian citizenship constantly decreases: 1,589 people in 2014, 558 in 2017, 497 in 2020. As of October 1, 2020, there were about 69,000 stateless persons in the country (about 6% of the population), the vast majority of whom are Russian compatriots and their descendants. Estonia is among the top ten countries in the world with the highest number of stateless persons. The reduction of Alien's Passport holders' number happens mainly due to mortality. To obtain the Estonian citizenship, "non-citizens" need to undergo the humiliating procedure: they need to take a mandatory language exam and reach least B2 level, and then prove their

knowledge of the Constitution). For this reason, Estonia (according to Eurostat) remains the absolute outsider in the EU in terms of naturalization.

The Alien's Passport holders are significantly limited in their civil rights. A prerequisite for the realization of social and economic rights for this social group is a residence registration. According to the Estonian Law "On Ratification of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities", "non-citizens" are excluded from the number of persons covered by this document. The Alien's Passport holders also experience serious difficulties during international travel.

The Estonian authorities justify this by the fact that "non-citizens" themselves or their parents were "brought against their will" to Estonia during the "Soviet occupation". Meanwhile Estonia had grossly violated the norms and principles of the Treaty on Fundamentals of Interstate Relations of January 1991 between the Russian SFSR and the Estonian SSR, in particular, the provisions of Art. 3, which states that "the Parties will provide the opportunity to obtain citizenship of their countries to all the permanent residents of the respective territories in accordance with his / her freely expressed desire". There are also no clear explanations from the Estonian authorities regarding the reasons why citizenship is deprived of persons born in Estonia after 1991.

Despite regular criticism from international organizations, including the UN, OSCE and the EU (represented by the European Parliament), as well as human rights NGOs, the Estonian authorities, following the course laid down in 1991 to build a mono-ethnic and mono-linguistic state, refuse to grant full civil status to this category of residents of the country, requiring them to pass exams for knowledge of the Estonian language at a high level.

The legislative innovations of the recent years, allegedly aimed to resolve the non-citizenship problem, though slightly improving the situation, did not actually solve it.

Thus, starting from 2016, the natural increase of "non-citizen" population stopped, as it was permitted to provide Estonian citizenship to their children born in the country. As "indulgency", from 2018, Alien's Passport holders were provided an opportunity to study at Estonian language courses at the expense of state budget funds with further mandatory passing the language examination.

The amendments that came into force in February 2020 were really Jesuitic, they provided the right of simplified obtaining of Estonian citizenship without examinations (after presenting a certificate on the absence of citizenship of another state) for a minor person if one of their ancestors had an Aliens' Passport and permanently resided in Estonia when the country obtained independence on August 20, 1991 and another ancestor was a citizen of a foreign state. According to the conclusion of the Chancellor of Law of Estonia J.Madise, this document initially suggests discrimination, as more than 90% of children will not be able to exercise their right to the title citizenship until they are 18 years old.

International human rights monitoring mechanisms pay considerable attention to the problem of statelessness in Estonia. In January 2017, the Committee on the Rights of the Child noted the limited nature of the amendments to the Law on Citizenship and urged the Estonian authorities to ensure the accelerated naturalization of children of non-citizens.¹²⁰¹ Following her visit to Estonia (June 11-15, 2018), the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights, D.Mijatovic, raised the issue of easing the conditions of naturalization for persons over 65, pointing out that many Russian-speaking elderly people cannot obtain Estonian citizenship due to their inability to learn Estonian.¹²⁰² In February 2019, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern in this regard (according to the Committee, as of January 1,

¹²⁰¹ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined 2nd to 4th periodic reports of Estonia. January 2017
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2f2-4&Lang=ru

¹²⁰² <https://rm.coe.int/report-of-the-council-of-europe-commissioner-for-human-rights-dunja-mi/16808d77f4>

2019, non-citizens accounted for 5.5% of the total population). At the same time, CESCR criticized the 2015 amendments to the Law on Citizenship, which, in its opinion, are of a limited nature and do not apply to a number of categories of children.¹²⁰³ In April 2019 the Committee for Human Rights expressed concern about the limited scope of amendments to the Citizenship Law that excluded certain categories of children of "non-citizens", the strict requirements for state language skills required for naturalization, and the adverse effects of "undetermined citizenship" status on the ability of stateless persons to participate in political life, and recommended that measures should be taken to eliminate these gaps.¹²⁰⁴ The CERD also expressed concern about the high number of non-citizens in Estonia, calling them persons with undetermined citizenship.¹²⁰⁵

In July 2019, The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), in a report on the results of the Estonian parliamentary elections in March, noted the need to "raise the level of naturalization among persons with undetermined citizenship in order to grant them full voting rights".

After the start of Russia's special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine, the Estonian authorities, in addition to combating Soviet memorial heritage and searching for Estonian residents allegedly collaborating with the Russian intelligence, began to gradually move toward completely severing ties between the Russian and Estonian peoples. The first steps were taken in the field of culture. On April 21, 2022, the Estonian government

¹²⁰³ Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the third periodic report of Estonia. February 2019.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fEST%2fC.O%2f3&Lang=ru

¹²⁰⁴ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on 4th periodic report of Estonia. March 2019.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2f4&Lang=ru

¹²⁰⁵ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined 12th and 13th periodic reports of Estonia. April 2022
<https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhsq90DTob4ikPW5%2fsvlCWY%2bsTv4D7bkEbOggPC2IgX%2bZhrsC0LVGMdazwZw%2bHIR%2fVTCJQSvj7Oir%2bNS5aln%2fwOjl1b8cVSIHONH4Mj4oNamJOXsczsRWStBIDLusa5FiBnA%3d%3d>

supported the "principled" position that Estonia should be "closed" to those performers and cultural figures from Russia and Belarus who justify "Russia's aggression against Ukraine and support Putin's actions". As K.Kallas stated, "The majority of entrepreneurs, event organizers, and local governments are okay with the moral compass. But there are a few who still plan to organize concerts in Estonia by artists who justify war and killing people. Such artists cannot come to Estonia. Our position is clear: politicians and artists who glorify Putin will not be allowed into Estonia. Their concerts and performances will not take place here". The Ministry of Internal Affairs promised to impose individual entry bans, if necessary.

Restrictions on maintaining contacts also affected the ties between Russian and Estonian "sister cities". In particular, the partner relationships of the city of Tartu with Pskov and the Vasileostrovsky District of Saint Petersburg were terminated. In March of this year, Tallinn announced "termination of cooperation and termination of the respective agreements with the municipalities of Russia (including Moscow, Saint Petersburg) and suspending Russian cities' participation in all formats of inter-municipal cooperation".

On March 7, 2022, the member of the Ruling Reform Party in Riigikogu and the head of the party fraction in the Tallinn City Council K.Mihal called to "de-Putinize of the Estonian capital and clear of its media environment from Russian propaganda".

Discrimination of people of Russian origin concerned the educational sphere as well. On March 7, 2022, University of Tartu announced its decision not to admit applicants from our country for studying in the 2022/2023 academic year, thereby expressing its position "against the aggression in Ukraine". It was followed by the Tallinn University of Technology, which on 22 March 2022 informed that "out of solidarity with Ukraine and following security experts' recommendations", it was decided not to accept Russian applicants for studying for the same academic year. Then, on March 24, 2022,

The Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre also announced its decision not to admit individuals from Russia in the following academic year. In the beginning of April, the Tallinn University informed about its decision in the 2022/2023 academic year not to admit for studies who are citizens of Russia and Belarus and have no residence permit or long-term visa in Estonia, do not study in Estonia and have no international protection (meaning, that is not applied in respect of the Russians and Belarussians who already live, study or work in Estonia).

In early March, the University of Tartu unilaterally suspended the agreement with Pskov State University for an indefinite period (referring to some resolution of the Association of Estonian Universities), terminated bilateral academic mobility programs, cancelled scholarship payments to two Pskov State University students already studying under the multilateral international program ERASMUS+ (Belarus, Sweden, Netherlands, Estonia), while offering to stay in the University of Tartu "at their own expense" or consider distance learning. At the same time, the students were reportedly denied access to online courses from Russia.

On August 9, 2022 the Prime Minister of Estonia K.Kallas, supporting the racist demands of Ukrainian President V.Zelensky to expel all Russians from Europe, stated that visiting Europe is a "privilege" and demanded to stop issuing tourist visas to Russian citizens to European Union countries.

Since 18 August 2022, the Estonian government decreed to cancel a number of visas for citizens of the Russian Federation, which is seen as yet another manifestation of xenophobia and hatred towards our country.

Thus, the steps taken by the Estonian authorities only prove that Estonia is less and less inclined not only to fulfill its obligations, but even to demonstrate its commitment to the norms of international law. Instead, taking advantage of the aggravation of the situation made by the collective West, Tallinn is actively making efforts to implement its Nazi political approaches,

seeing the Russian-speaking population and Soviet memorial sites as its main irritants.

Japan

In the context of manifestations of neo-Nazism and the glorification of Nazism, Tokyo's policy of rewriting history is particularly noteworthy. As official approaches to interpreting the beginning, progress and results of World War II evolve, a revanchist-revisionist bias toward whitewashing the aggressive, expansionist policy of militarist Japan in Southeast Asia and the Pacific becomes increasingly clear. The events of those years are often presented as a separate story that has no direct connection with the confrontation between the Allies and Nazi Germany in the European theater of war. At the same time, the facts of Japan's alliance with Hitler and the Italian fascists, and Japan's provision of varied military, technical and logistical assistance, aimed primarily against the USSR, to Berlin are consistently silenced.

Behind such trends in Japan lies a process of systematic restoration of the positions lost as a result of the defeat in World War II by political forces that promote the ideas of the ancient Japanese Shinto religion – a set of local pagan beliefs based on the concept of the divine origin of the Emperor and the Japanese people as a whole.

The extent of the influence of Shinto circles on Tokyo politics is evidenced by their close ties with the country's ruling elite. For example, the largest association in the Legislative Assembly of Japan, the Shinto Parliamentary Association, which counts 300 deputies in its ranks, lobbies for the interests of the Shinto Political Union, a key political organ of the Shintoists. The second largest group of parliamentarians (about 280 deputies) supports the largest right-wing nationalist organization, the Japan Council (Nippon Kaigi), also based on Shinto ideology. Moreover, 16 of the 20 members of F.Kishida's current Cabinet of Ministers, including the Prime Minister himself, are members of at least one of the aforementioned parliamentary bodies.

As noted by Japanese experts themselves, it was these forces that successfully pushed for the revision of the restrictions imposed on the country after the war: Shinto conservatives gradually achieved the return of the system of chronology based on the epoch of the reign of the emperors, the restoration of some traditional national holidays of the pre-war period, in particular the birthday of Emperor Hirohito, under whose leadership Japan entered into an alliance with Nazi Germany and unleashed the war in the Pacific Ocean.

In April 2013 there was the largest-ever pilgrimage of members of the Japanese Parliament (168 deputies) to Yasukuni shrine where the souls of all those who died for Japan in wars are honored, including, since 1978, those who have been declared Class A war criminals by the Tokyo Tribunal.

This practice was continued by Prime Minister Y.Suga, who sent an appropriate offering to Yasukuni on August 15, 2020–2021 on the occasion of the anniversaries of the end of World War II, and by the current Japanese leader F.Kishida, who has made donations already twice after coming to power in October 2021 – in conjunction with the beginning of the traditional autumn (October) and spring (April) festivals. The shrine is also regularly visited by members of the Cabinet (on August 15, 2021 – five members including Defense Minister N.Kishi; on the same date in 2020 – four members of the Cabinet: Minister of the Environment S.Koizumi, Minister of Education K.Hagiuda, Interior Minister S.Takaichi, and Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs S.Eto).

These circumstances, coupled with Japan's strong dependence, including in terms of ensuring national security, on its key ally – the United States – create fertile ground for the government, experts and journalists to interpret certain pages of the history of World War II in a one-sided and at times blatantly Russophobic way. In particular, the press, with the tacit approval of the authorities, regularly publishes odious materials containing distorted speculations about the allegedly equal responsibility of the USSR and Hitler's

Germany for unleashing the war, articles about "the invasion of Soviet troops in Poland" and "the forcible capture of the three Baltic states after the conclusion of a secret agreement with Berlin."

In January 2021, the Jerusalem Post published a joint article by Foreign Ministers of Japan and Lithuania, T.Motegi and G.Landsbergis, on the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, which clearly demonstrated that most Japanese political elites held predominantly incorrect perceptions about the beginning of World War II. This material refers to the "occupation" of Poland and Lithuania by the USSR and draws unacceptable parallels between the actions of the Soviet Union and the actions of Hitler's Germany which invaded many Eastern European countries. At the same time, the publication predictably blurred the criminal role of Japan itself in World War II and its alliance with the Nazi regime.

The clearly discernible duplicity in the statements concerning the events of August-September 1945 is highly indicative. Thus, there is virtually no mention of the responsibility of the United States for the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki either in the annual speeches by the Prime Minister and heads of regional administrations on the occasion of the anniversary of this tragedy or in the relevant analytical materials. At the same time, the media's deliberate highlighting of the topic of the USSR's entry into the war against Japan, on the contrary, clearly demonstrates the country's deep-rooted unwillingness to recognize the objective results of the Second World War that are enshrined in the UN Charter.

The campaign to distort history intensified in 2020 in the context of the 75th anniversary of the beginning of the Manchurian Strategic Offensive Operation celebrated on August 9, and August 15 which is considered here as the date when Tokyo ended its hostilities. Publications in the national media, including such major news agencies and newspapers as Jiji, Iomiuri, Asahi, Sankei, or Hokkaido, aggressively replicated Japanese interpretations and

abounded in biased, ideologically charged descriptions of the events of that time.

The coverage of the history of the war years in textbooks is done in a similar revisionist way. In a number of them, the mentioned events are combined into a subsection vaguely entitled "Atomic Bombings and the Entry of the USSR into the War", which can create a distorted associative pattern.

The results of the work on the approval of the content of school textbooks to be republished and used in high schools since 2023 that were made public by the country's Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Culture in March 2022 are also eloquent in this regard. It was reported that all publishers had fully complied with the government's requirement for the "exhaustive coverage" of the "ancestral ownership" by Japan of the "Northern Territories" (the Southern Kurils) and the disputed islands of Takeshima/Dokdo and Senkaku/Diaoyu in the textbooks for the advanced optional courses of Geography and Political Economy.

At the same time, the report negatively assesses the "superficial" handling of official approaches to these problems in the textbooks for the subjects "History of Japan," "World History," "History and Geography" and "Social Science," for which ideological prescriptions of the Ministry are still advisory. In particular, it criticizes the "lack" of references to the "continuing illegal occupation" of the Southern Kurils which is described as one of the factors detrimental to Japan's interests and the integrity of its foreign policy, and which leads to the "worrisome risks" of a flawed perception of the importance of defending national sovereignty in the minds of students.

In addition, based on the results of the examination, it is noted with satisfaction that new editions of textbooks on "History and Geography", "World History" and "Social Science" include passages clearly emphasizing Russia's "annexation" of Crimea in 2014. Among other things, they now contain references to Moscow's "violation" of international law, arguments about the

Kremlin's attempts to "legitimize the seizure" of the peninsula through "propaganda of a tendentious historical narrative", primarily relying on the fact that Prince Vladimir and his cohorts were baptized in these lands (Chersonesos/Korsun).

The Government's support for the annual "Northern Territories Day" on February 7 also speaks volumes. Traditionally, its central event is a "national rally" with the participation of the country's leadership, parliamentarians and public figures, and the proclaimed goal is the "return" to Tokyo of the Southern Kurils allegedly illegally seized by the USSR in 1945.

Far-right nationalist organizations regularly hold pickets near Russian missions abroad demanding the "return of the Northern Territories." They conduct particularly large, noisy and sometimes aggressive actions, for example, involving cars and buses painted with provocative propaganda slogans and equipped with loudspeakers, on such "important" dates as February 7, August 9 and August 15. The mailboxes of the Embassy and Consulates General are flooded with petitions with the usual set of accusations regarding historical and "island" matters. In 2020, there was a slight increase in such activity by extremist groups, which, in particular, may be due to the "jubilee" character of the year.

The hysterical Russophobic propaganda campaign that was launched in government, journalistic and expert circles in the context of Russia's special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine is yet another, and very pronounced, manifestation of the Japanese government's line to interpret the results of World War II in a revanchist way in order to whitewash Tokyo's expansionist militarist policies of those years.

Under the guise of slogans of "ideological solidarity" and adherence to the rule of international law, the Kishida administration and all major Japanese media regularly voice and publish theories questioning the neo-Nazi and anti-Russian character of the Kiev regime and its longstanding crimes against

the Russian-speaking population of Donbas. The public is offered a deliberately distorted picture of events, in which numerous fascist statements and open calls for the genocide of Russians by Ukrainian officials are completely ignored. Instead, an emotionally charged false narrative is planted about the alleged crimes committed by the Russian military after the start of the special military operation (especially the provocation in Bucha, the "shelling" of a maternity hospital and theater building in Mariupol, etc.) and about "brave resistance to the invader" by the Ukrainian armed forces, fighters of the "Azov" nationalist battalion and other similar formations prohibited in Russia.

An equally eloquent example is the supply to the Armed Forces of Ukraine of military equipment (bullet-proof vests, helmets, etc.) held by the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, which, according to many local experts, may violate the legislation prohibiting the provision of military and technical assistance in conflict regions (the leaders of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party justified this measure as "an unprecedented step to protect the lives and health of the Ukrainian people").

There have been repeated attempts to exploit the Ukrainian issue in order to satisfy Tokyo's illegitimate territorial claims to the Southern Kurils: the local information space actively implants the idea that Russia aims to "solve problems by force," that the "invasion of Ukraine" (beginning with the "annexation of Crimea" in 2014) and the "illegal occupation of the Northern Territories by Soviet troops" in 1945 are closely related, and that there is no other alternative but to stand in solidarity with the Zelensky regime in order to achieve progress in the "return" of the Russian islands to Japan.

Against this background, it is not surprising to see Tokyo's position during the vote at the UN General Assembly on the annual resolution Combating Glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other Practices that Contribute to Fueling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination,

Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Japan has traditionally refrained from supporting this document submitted by Russia and its co-sponsors.

As for racism, xenophobia and other manifestations of intolerance in Japanese society, they are mainly directed against representatives of other nationalities living in the country.

Japan has no legal act prohibiting racial, ethnic, or religious discrimination. The lack of comprehensive legislation in this area was highlighted in September 2018 by the relevant Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in its concluding observations on the combined tenth and eleventh periodic reports of Japan.¹²⁰⁶

International monitoring structures and a significant number of human rights NGOs have consistently criticized the Japanese government for the continuing gap in living standards between the Ainu and Ryukyuan on the one hand and the Japanese population on the other hand. There are cases of harassment of the representatives of these indigenous peoples both in the labour market and in terms of access to education and a number of social programs. At the same time, discrimination against the Burakumin persists in the areas of employment, housing and marriage.¹²⁰⁷

In the context of the implementation of the May 2019 Act on Promoting the Policy of Public Respect for the Ainu Heritage, it is now more openly recognized that this ethnic group still faces biased and discriminatory attitudes in everyday life. According to surveys conducted in 2020, about a quarter of people who identify themselves as Ainu say they have experienced these problems firsthand, and another 13 percent are aware of such cases among acquaintances. It is indicative that discrimination against the Ainu has been

¹²⁰⁶ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/287/65/PDF/G1828765.pdf?OpenElement>

¹²⁰⁷ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined tenth and eleventh periodic reports of Japan. 26 September 2018. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fJPN%2fCO%2f10-11&Lang=ru

indirectly mentioned in the mainstream media, in particular by Japan's largest public broadcaster NHK.

Various Ainu and human rights organizations continue to criticize the opportunistic nature of the said Act, which, in their opinion, was adopted without sufficient consideration of the viewpoint of the Ainu people themselves and "actually involves the exploitation of their cultural and historical heritage". It is noteworthy that doubts about the usefulness of the central authorities' efforts periodically appear in the expert-journalist community as well. The Cabinet of Ministers is accused of embellishing the positive effect of the proposed socio-economic measures, since the real beneficiaries of the financial injections to be allocated for this purpose are allegedly the Hokkaido Prefecture and its administrative-territorial entities, and not the Ainu community itself. The need to supplement the basic course with provisions detailing the steps to ensure the rights of small people to traditional methods of fishing and forestry for religious ceremonies is emphasized. For example, since November 2020 the Sapporo District Court (Hokkaido Prefecture) has been hearing a lawsuit filed by the Ainu Raporo Nation ethnic group demanding recognition of river fishing as their "inalienable right" based on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the lifting of the ban on salmon fishing imposed by Japanese regulations. This is the first litigation of that kind in Japanese judicial practice.

The situation of the indigenous inhabitants of the Ryukyu archipelago, to whom official Tokyo denies any benefits or measures to support their cultural identity, is much more difficult. International nongovernmental organizations often point out the distortion of school educational courses which contain little or no information about the identity and ethnic and linguistic uniqueness of the Ryukyuan.

Cases of incitement to ethnic hatred and hate crimes against ethnic minorities have been recorded. This trend is particularly noticeable with regard

to people of Korean origin. At the same time, neither public nor private individuals have yet been brought to justice for racially motivated hate speech and hate crimes.

The adoption in June 2016 of the Act on the Promotion of Efforts to Eliminate Unfair Discriminatory Speech and Behaviour against Persons with Countries of Origin other than Japan was a positive step toward eliminating hate speech. However, it should also be borne in mind that the scope of the Act is limited to speech against persons legally residing in the country. Consequently, the Act can only provide limited remedies to members of ethnic minorities residing in the State party.¹²⁰⁸

In general, the situation in Japan with regard to combating manifestations of various forms of intolerance can be characterized as unfavourable and gradually deteriorating. This is evidenced, in particular, by the authorities' adoption of a rigid course toward historical revisionism and the flourishing of ideas of nationalism and revanchism in the country. In addition, ineffective domestic policies to eliminate discriminatory attitudes toward non-titular ethnicities living in Japan have contributed to growing interethnic tension within the country.

Mass violations of the rights of Russians and discrimination against them have not been registered in Japan before. However, after the Russian Armed Forces launched a special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect civilians in Donbass, a campaign against Russia and its citizens that is unprecedented in its Russophobic intensity began (including at the instigation of some officials in F. Kishida's administration).

In the Japanese information space, including the media, social networks and the blogosphere, there is a tendency for anti-Russian rhetoric to intensify.

¹²⁰⁸ Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the combined tenth and eleventh periodic reports of Japan. 26 September 2018.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fJPN%2fCO%2f10-11&Lang=ru

The official authorities are taking consistent steps to instill in the public consciousness the imperative thesis of "total solidarity with the collective West and commitment to condemnation and cancel culture with respect to Russia".

Such Russophobic sentiments are projected onto the daily lives of Russian citizens in Japan and lead to violations of their social and economic rights. The Russian visa center located in the Akasaka district of Tokyo regularly receives anonymous threats and demands that our compatriots "get out of Japan".

Similar "appeals" are sent to the Moscow Patriarchal metochion in Tokyo, as well as to the clergy of the Autonomous Orthodox Church of Japan.

There have been cases of denial of employment on the grounds of Russian citizenship. A number of Japanese companies have created a work environment in which their Russian employees, for fear of being fired, do not openly express their opinions about events in our country.

On March 3, 2022, there was a case of vandalism when the Red Square Russian goods store in Tokyo was damaged.

Other disturbing examples include attempts by a number of hotels to deny accommodation to Russians (February-March 2022; the incidents were promptly resolved after direct intervention by city administrations), public "doubts" by the head of the political council of the opposition Democratic Party for the People, K.Otsuka about the advisability of placing Russian-language inscriptions on road signs in northern Hokkaido prefecture "in light of the situation in Russia" (when faced with accusations of xenophobia from his followers, he hastily deleted the tweet).

Consular offices of the Russian Federation receive complaints from Russian women testifying about domestic violence by their Japanese spouses, as well as insults and humiliation on the grounds of nationality.

It should be noted that Tokyo is making some efforts to curb the trend toward discrimination against Russians in the Japanese society in the context of

the situation in Ukraine. These phenomena have repeatedly been qualified as categorically unacceptable and inappropriate for the Japanese developed civil society by representatives of the F.Kishida government, especially by Chief Cabinet Secretary H.Matsuno.

In the course of this Russophobic campaign and clearly at the instigation of the official authorities, Japan's political, business and party circles have fully suspended contacts with the Russian ambassador to Tokyo who effectively found himself in "informational isolation" which makes it difficult for him to perform his direct duties. An outrageous act of protocol discrimination was the refusal (for the first time in almost 50 years) to invite him to memorial ceremonies on the occasion of the anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Against the background of Tokyo's emphasis on promoting the concept of "security of the individual," its principles and norms are demonstratively not applied to aspects related to the events in Ukraine. In particular, in April 2022, Japan removed the reference to the Ukrainian nationalist battalion "Azov" from the list of terrorist organizations in the national 2021 Review of International Terrorism Situation. Thus, for political reasons, Japan is actually encouraging the activities of the aforementioned terrorist organization, which is fraught with new threats to the lives and security of Russian citizens.

Kosovo¹²⁰⁹

The Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo are openly pursuing a policy of glorification of Nazism. The most odious example of how it is implemented in practice is the project to reconstruct the house of one of the main Nazi collaborators of the Second World War, X.Deva. As mayor of Kosovska Mitrovica, he was involved in the persecution of Serbs, Jews, Roma and other non-Albanians, and later served as interior minister in the puppet Nazi government in Albania, and was behind the creation of the SS Skanderbeg division. It is noteworthy that financial support for this project was initially pledged by the European Union and the Pristina office of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as part of the EU program Cultural Heritage as a Driver for Intercommunity Dialogue and Social Cohesion.

Work on the restoration of this site, which began in February 2022, was suspended only after the reasoned written appeal by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture and Information of Serbia M.Gojkovic to the leadership of the EU and UNDP, as well as public condemnation of what is happening by the Simon Wiesenthal Center (Israel).

The subsequent calls by some Kosovo politicians to protect X.Deva's "legacy" and attempts to assign the collaborator the role of one of the "most important figures in the Albanian national movement" seem unacceptable.

One of the key problems in the human rights record of the autonomous province which is not under Belgrade's control is the pronounced discriminatory attitude of the Albanian majority toward the Serbian population. Instead of searching for ways to solve the existing problems, the Kosovo authorities are consciously and consistently pursuing a policy of forced "albanization" of the province by ousting national minorities.

¹²⁰⁹ The autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija after NATO's aggression against Serbia in 1999 is de facto not under Belgrade's control. However, UN Security Council Resolution 1244 affirms Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity in relation to Kosovo.

The continued fragmentation of Kosovo Albanian parties contributes to the growth of radical sentiments. In an attempt to score political points while distracting the attention of the impoverishing population from acute socio-economic problems, they are increasingly using "Great Albania" and other nationalist slogans in their discourse.

Since the rise to power in Pristina in March 2021 of A.Kurti, the nationalist radical leader of the nationalist Self-Determination Movement, the number of ethnically motivated hate crimes has increased significantly. Thus, in 2021, 128 attacks on Serbs and their property were recorded, twice as many as in 2020. In 2022, the negative trend continues, with 207 such incidents already recorded as of the end of July.

The situation is aggravated by delays in the investigation of crimes against ethnic minorities by Albanian judges, as well as the lack of prompt response by Kosovo law enforcement agencies.

This issue has come to the attention of international intergovernmental human rights organizations. The resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Kosovo adopted on July 3, 2019 and based on the comments of the UN Mission in Kosovo, recommended that Kosovo leaders urgently take concrete steps to foster intercommunity dialogue and promote tolerance at central and local levels, condemn attacks on national minorities and ensure their prompt investigation, achieve more effective implementation of legislation to protect vulnerable ethnic groups, address disparities in access to justice between the Albanians and representatives of other peoples, ensure the use of the Serbian language in judicial and administrative documents, etc.¹²¹⁰

¹²¹⁰ Resolution CM/ResCMN(2019)11 on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Kosovo, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 July 2019.
https://search.coe.int/cm/pages/result_details.aspx?objectid=090000168095da70

Meanwhile, the Serbs remain the largest national minority in Kosovo (more than 100,000 people, or about 6 percent of the population) and retain a quota of 10 out of the 20 seats reserved for national minorities in the 120-seat unicameral "Assembly" ("Parliament") of Kosovo. The remaining 10 seats are divided among the six other ethnic groups recognized by Pristina as national minorities (Bosniaks, Turks, Gorani, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians).

The main political party of Kosovo Serbs is the Serb List which proved it during the snap elections of February 2021 by winning all 10 seats in the "Assembly" and getting the only "ministerial" post in the Kosovo "Government" guaranteed to Serbs by the "Constitution" of the province.

Other ethnic minorities are better represented in Kosovo's executive structures: they hold as many as three "ministerial" portfolios, including the position of "Deputy Prime Minister" (their holders are nominees from the Bosniak, Turkish, and Roma communities).

At the legislative level, there is a requirement for national minorities to approve any initiatives in the "Assembly" that affect their interests (the so-called "double majority" principle). However, the Kosovars often circumvent this rule. In particular, this holds true for the "dragging" through the "Parliament" of the decision to create the Kosovo "Army" on the basis of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF), which is contrary to UN Security Council resolution 1244. Failing to obtain the consent of the Serb List and the desired "double majority" in the "Assembly", the Kosovars began to build up the military component within the structure of the KSF itself without formally changing its name. Then, on December 14, 2018, three laws were adopted by a simple majority – On the KSF, On Service in the KSF, and On the Ministry of Defense of Kosovo. In this way, the body, originally designed to deal with the consequences of natural and man-made disasters, was given the function of protecting the "sovereignty and territorial integrity" of Kosovo.

The implementation of the arrangement to create the Community of Serb Municipalities of Kosovo (CSMK) vested with executive powers, enshrined in the Agreements between Belgrade and Pristina of 2013 and 2015, remains an unresolved problem. The Kosovars refuse to discuss the issue in an EU-mediated dialogue with Belgrade. After the resumption of the negotiation process in July 2021, Kosovo leaders stated that the CSMK could be established only following a decision of the provincial Constitutional Court and in the format of a non-governmental organization fully controlled by Pristina.

The Serbian community in Kosovo is regularly subjected to economic pressure. On 29 May 2020, as part of a "policy of reciprocity" against Belgrade, the Kosovo "Government" decided to prohibit the importation of industrial and agricultural products from Serbia if the goods and accompanying documentation do not bear the "Republic of Kosovo" label. In addition, Pristina obliged Serbian producers to request a permit to enter Kosovo for each vehicle. Such actions have disrupted the supply of goods and, consequently, worsened the economic situation of the Serbian community oriented towards their consumption.

There is a persistently high number of unreturned refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) who were forced to leave Kosovo after the end of the 1998-1999 armed conflict in the province. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimates the number of registered IDPs in 2020 at 213,393 persons, the vast majority of whom are Kosovo Serbs. The number of returnees to Kosovo follows a declining trend – in 2017 their number reached 498, in 2018 – 370, in 2019 – only 191. Between September 2020 and March 2021, 273 people returned to Kosovo (of which 223 were Kosovo Serbs, 36 – Ashkali, 10 – Roma, and 4 – Kosovo Albanians). The total number of IDPs in Kosovo as of June 2021 was estimated at 16,151 people, 412 of whom stay at 22 collective reception centers.

The outflow of the Serbian population continues to intensify, far outnumbering the number of returnees, which threatens the continued existence of the Serbian community in Kosovo. In addition, the problem of the return of immovable property belonging to refugees and IDPs has not been yet resolved. According to the Serbian news agency Tanjug, there are currently 70,000 unanswered claims for the return of the property seized in Kosovo to Serbs and other non-Albanians. 18,000 claims for compensation for material damage remain pending in Kosovo's courts.

Another problem in the province is discrimination in the religious sphere. Amendments to the Law On Freedom of Religion that would allow religious organizations to obtain the status of legal entities, conduct entrepreneurial activity, own property, open bank accounts, and enjoy tax privileges have not yet been introduced. The amendments were also supposed to regulate the status of certain religious groups requiring recognition as separate religious communities.

There has been no progress in the reconstruction of St. Nicholas Church at the Holy Archangels Monastery complex in Prizren which was destroyed by the Ottoman Turks back in the late 16th century, or in the completion of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Pristina despite the Kosovo court ruling in favor of the Serbian Orthodox Church. In January 2020, the University of Pristina appealed to the municipal court of first instance to overturn the 1991 Serbian government decision to give the Serbian Orthodox Church the land to build the church. If it is successful, the authorities will have their hands free to demolish the cathedral because it allegedly hinders the expansion of the campus of the abovementioned University.

It is noteworthy that immediately afterwards, on 26 February 2020, the Kosovo Court of Appeal ruled in favor of the Catholic Church, recognizing its right to a 7,500-square-meter plot adjacent to the Mother Teresa Cathedral building in the city center, not far from Christ the Savior Cathedral. The same

holds true for the long-running confrontation between Pristina municipality and the Kosovo Jewish community over the location of a future synagogue, construction of which has been approved in principle back in 2016. The local authorities deny the right to build the facility in the center of the city, demanding that it be moved to the periphery, which causes reasonable indignation among Jews.

The Law on Special Protective Zones which stipulates a special regime for cultural and historical sites, is constantly violated. In August 2020, another attempt was made to resume the construction of the highway to Montenegro (Dečani – Plav), which began in 2018 through the territory adjacent to the Dečani Monastery, the 14th century site inscribed on UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage List. Despite the efforts of international mediators who managed to temporarily suspend the works, the head of the local municipality said that he did not intend to retreat, counting on support of the Kosovo "Constitutional Court". The authorities do not intend to implement the decision of this Court of 20 May 2016 which secured for the Dečani Monastery the right of possession of two plots of 24 hectares, refusing to register them as the property of the Monastery in the municipal land registry.

According to the Kosovo Serbian NGO Aktiv, between January and June 2021, there were 17 cases of property damage to the Serbian Orthodox Church. In particular, in the municipality of Vitina, unknown attackers stoned the Church of St. Petka on 23 April (St. George's Day) 2021, and on 12 May 2021 there was an attempt to tear the church flag from the dome of the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in the municipality of Klokot. Such incidents occur regularly and in all places, which clearly demonstrates the intolerance toward Serbs that is actively fostered in Kosovo Albanian society.

The problem of the use of minority languages in Kosovo is underestimated for various reasons. Recognizing its existence, a number of experts cite among the main reasons the acute shortage of qualified specialists

capable of high-quality translation of various documents of the Kosovo institutions from Albanian into Serbian (both being official languages according to the "Constitution" of the province). In reality, under this pretext, the Kosovo authorities continue to oust Serbian, as well as other languages of national minorities, from all spheres of public life.

Mistakes in translation are often made intentionally. In particular, the name of the self-proclaimed "Republic of Kosovo" in the Serbian version of the designation of various "state" institutions is written in the Albanian manner ("Kosova"). Serbian journalists covering the work of the Kosovo "Parliament" regularly encounter the lack of simultaneous interpretation of meetings into the Serbian language. Language discrimination was particularly acute during the COVID-19 pandemic: Kosovo Serb reporters complained that key and socially significant decisions and announcements by the authorities in the public health sphere were communicated to the public only in Albanian.

The Pristina authorities continue to take discriminatory measures that impede the freedom of movement of national minorities through Kosovo. Among the provocative steps is the adoption of the decision in September 2020 by the "Ministry of the Interior" to oblige car owners to change their vehicle registration plates from the status-neutral "KS" to "RKS" ("Republic of Kosovo"), in violation of the Brussels agreements with Belgrade. Such a step is unacceptable to most Serbs, because if they do so, they will inevitably face the non-recognition of license plates in Central Serbia.

The lack of adequate protection of personal data creates the ground for further deterioration of the already vulnerable members of national minorities. A flagrant incident occurred in April 2020, when local media published the data of 210 Kosovo Serbs, Roma and Gorani who had been ordered to self-isolate, including the names of citizens who were treated for coronavirus. In another case, the names and ID numbers of 82 Serbian doctors and nurses who came to

the province to monitor the sanitary and epidemiological situation in the northern municipalities were disclosed.

Summarizing the above, a disappointing conclusion has to be drawn: there is a steady growth of right-wing radicalism stimulated by the local leadership in the region uncontrolled by Belgrade. Pristina is encouraging projects and activities aimed at whitewashing the accomplices of the Hitler coalition. At the same time, the province is pursuing a policy of forced albanization that leads to the aggravation of relations between various ethnic groups and suppression of the rights of national minorities in general and the Serbian population in particular.

Annexes

List of Annexes:

1. Text of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/149 "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" (Russian)
2. Text of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/149 "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" (English)
3. List of cosponsors of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/149 "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance"
4. Results of voting when adopting draft United Nations General Assembly "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" on 16 December 2021

**Резолюция, принятая Генеральной Ассамблеей
16 декабря 2021 года**

76/149. Борьба с героизацией нацизма, неонацизмом и другими видами практики, которые способствуют эскалации современных форм расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости

Генеральная Ассамблея,
руководствуясь Уставом Организации Объединенных Наций, Всеобщей декларацией прав человека¹²¹¹, Международным пактом о гражданских и политических правах¹²¹², Международной конвенцией о ликвидации всех форм расовой дискриминации¹²¹³ и другими соответствующими документами по правам человека,

ссылаясь на положения резолюций Комиссии по правам человека 2004/16 от 16 апреля 2004 года¹²¹⁴ и 2005/5 от 14 апреля 2005 года¹²¹⁵ и соответствующих резолюций Совета по правам человека, в частности резолюций 7/34 от 28 марта 2008 года¹²¹⁶, [18/15](#) от 29 сентября 2011 года¹²¹⁷ и [21/33](#) от 28 сентября 2012 года¹²¹⁸, а также резолюций Генеральной Ассамблеи [60/143](#) от 16 декабря 2005 года, [61/147](#) от 19 декабря 2006 года, [62/142](#) от 18 декабря 2007 года, [63/162](#) от 18 декабря 2008 года, [64/147](#) от 18 декабря 2009 года, [65/199](#) от 21 декабря 2010 года, [66/143](#) от 19 декабря 2011 года, [67/154](#) от 20 декабря 2012 года, [68/150](#) от

¹²¹¹ Резолюция [217 А \(III\)](#).

¹²¹² См. резолюцию [2200 А \(XXI\)](#), приложение.

¹²¹³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 660, No. 9464.

¹²¹⁴ См. Официальные отчеты Экономического и Социального Совета, 2004 год, Дополнение № 3 ([E/2004/23](#)), гл. II, разд. А.

¹²¹⁵ Там же, 2005 год, Дополнение № 3 ([E/2005/23](#)), гл. II, разд. А.

¹²¹⁶ См. Официальные отчеты Генеральной Ассамблеи, шестьдесят третья сессия, Дополнение № 53 ([A/63/53](#)), гл. II.

¹²¹⁷ Там же, шестьдесят шестая сессия, Дополнение № 53А и исправление ([A/66/53/Add.1](#) и [A/66/53/Add.1/Corr.1](#)), гл. II.

¹²¹⁸ Там же, шестьдесят седьмая сессия, Дополнение № 53А ([A/67/53/Add.1](#)), гл. II.

18 декабря 2013 года, [69/160](#) от 18 декабря 2014 года, [70/139](#) от 17 декабря 2015 года, [71/179](#) от 19 декабря 2016 года, [72/156](#) от 19 декабря 2017 года, [73/157](#) от 17 декабря 2018 года, [74/136](#) от 18 декабря 2019 года и [75/169](#) от 16 декабря 2020 года по этому вопросу и своих резолюций [61/149](#) от 19 декабря 2006 года, [62/220](#) от 22 декабря 2007 года, [63/242](#) от 24 декабря 2008 года, [64/148](#) от 18 декабря 2009 года, [65/240](#) от 24 декабря 2010 года, [66/144](#) от декабря 2011 года, [67/155](#) от 20 декабря 2012 года, [68/151](#) от 18 декабря 2013 года, [69/162](#) от 18 декабря 2014 года, [70/140](#) от 17 декабря 2015 года, [71/181](#) от 19 декабря 2016 года, [72/157](#) от 19 декабря 2017 года, [73/262](#) от 22 декабря 2018 года, [74/137](#) от 18 декабря 2019 года и [75/237](#) от 31 декабря 2020 года, озаглавленных "Глобальный призыв к конкретным мерам, направленным на ликвидацию расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости и всеобъемлющее осуществление и принятие последующих мер по выполнению Дурбанской декларации и Программы действий",

учитывая другие важные инициативы Генеральной Ассамблеи, направленные на повышение степени осведомленности о страданиях жертв расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости и дискриминации в различных формах, в том числе в исторической перспективе, в частности в память о жертвах рабства и трансатлантической работорговли,

ссылаясь на Устав Нюрнбергского трибунала и приговор Трибунала, который признал преступными, в частности, организацию СС и ее составные части, включая "Ваффен СС", в лице официальных членов СС, причастных к совершению или знавших о совершении военных преступлений и преступлений против человечности, связанных со Второй мировой войной, а также на другие соответствующие положения Устава и приговора,

памятуя об ужасах Второй мировой войны и подчеркивая в этой связи, что победа над нацизмом во Второй мировой войне способствовала формированию условий для создания Организации Объединенных Наций, призванной предотвратить будущие войны и избавить грядущие поколения от бедствий войны,

напоминая, что в период проведения семьдесят шестой сессии Генеральной Ассамблеи отмечается семьдесят пятая годовщина вынесения приговора Нюрнбергского трибунала,

отмечая, что неонацизм не сводится лишь к героизации движения, существовавшего в прошлом, а представляет собой современное явление, которое поощряют субъекты, кровно заинтересованные в расовом неравенстве и готовые пойти на многое ради того, чтобы заручиться широкой поддержкой своих необоснованных притязаний на расовое превосходство,

ссылаясь на соответствующие положения Дурбанской декларации и Программы действий, принятых 8 сентября 2001 года Всемирной конференцией по борьбе против расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости¹²¹⁹, в частности пункт 2 Декларации и пункты 84-86 Программы действий, а также на соответствующие положения итогового документа Конференции по обзору Дурбанского процесса от 24 апреля 2009 года¹²²⁰, в частности пункты 11, 13 и 54,

будучи встревожена распространением во многих частях мира различных экстремистских политических партий, движений, идеологий и групп расистского и ксенофобского толка, включая группы неонацистов и "бритоголовых", и тем, что эта тенденция привела к принятию дискриминационных мер и политики на местном и национальном уровнях,

¹²¹⁹ См. [A/CONF.189/12](#) и [A/CONF.189/12/Corr.1](#), гл. I.

¹²²⁰ См. [A/CONF.211/8](#), гл. I.

с обеспокоенностью отмечая, что даже в тех случаях, когда неонацисты или экстремисты формально не входят в состав правительства, присутствие в нем ультраправых идеологов может вызывать такой же эффект, что и включение в процесс управления и политический дискурс тех же самых идеологических концепций, которые делают неонацизм и экстремизм столь опасными,

будучи встревожена распространением песен и видеоигр, пропагандирующих расовую ненависть и подстрекающих к дискриминации, вражде или насилию,

будучи обеспокоена тем, что группы, пропагандирующие ненависть, используют онлайн-платформы для планирования публичных мероприятий, включая митинги и демонстрации, а также акты насилия, в целях пропаганды расизма, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости и для распространения информации о них и мобилизации средств на их проведение,

памятуя о той роли, которую может играть Интернет в содействии равенству, инклюзивности и недискриминации как составляющей укрепления демократии и уважения прав человека,

испытывая серьезную обеспокоенность в связи с тем, что неонацистские группы, а также другие группы и отдельные лица, исповедующие идеологию ненависти, все активнее работают с восприимчивыми лицами, главным образом детьми и молодежью, используя специально созданные веб-сайты для их идеологической обработки и вербовки,

будучи глубоко обеспокоена всеми недавними проявлениями насилия и терроризма, спровоцированным воинствующим национализмом, расизмом, антисемитизмом, дискриминацией на основе религии, убеждений или происхождения, в том числе исламофобией,

христианофобией и афрофобией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью, в том числе во время спортивных мероприятий,

с глубокой обеспокоенностью констатируя вызывающее тревогу продолжение увеличения числа случаев дискриминации, нетерпимости и насильственного экстремизма, мотивируемых антисемитизмом, религией или убеждениями, в том числе исламофобией и христианофобией, и предубеждениями против лиц, имеющих иное этническое происхождение, исповедующих иные религии или придерживающихся иных убеждений,

обращая особое внимание на отсутствие единообразия среди существующих норм, касающихся защиты свободы слова и выражения мнений и запрета расовой дискриминации, а также пропаганды национальной, расовой или религиозной ненависти, представляющей собой подстрекательство к дискриминации, вражде или насилию,

с обеспокоенностью отмечая в этой связи, что в силу различия национальных стандартов, запрещающих язык ненависти, некоторые страны могут служить убежищем для распространителей неонацистских, экстремистских, агрессивных националистических, ксенофобских или расистских идей, поскольку многие неонацистские и близкие к ним экстремистские группы расистского и ксенофобского толка действуют на транснациональном уровне, опираясь на поставщиков Интернет-услуг или платформы социальных сетей,

подчеркивая, что цель борьбы с языком ненависти заключается не в том, чтобы ограничить или запретить свободу слова, а в том, чтобы предотвратить подстрекательство к дискриминации и насилию, которое должно быть запрещено законом,

выражая обеспокоенность тем, что экстремистские и разжигающие ненависть группы, включая неонацистские группы, используют цифровые технологии, чтобы распространять свою идеологию, и признавая при этом, что цифровые технологии имеют большое значение для осуществления

прав человека и борьбы с расизмом, расовой дискриминацией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью,

1. *подтверждает* соответствующие положения Дурбанской декларации и итогового документа Конференции по обзору Дурбанского процесса, в которых государства осудили попытки сохранить и возродить неонацизм, неофашизм и агрессивные националистические идеологии, основанные на расовых и национальных предубеждениях, и заявили, что эти явления никогда не могут заслуживать оправдания – ни в каких случаях и ни при каких обстоятельствах;

2. *ссылается* на положения Дурбанской декларации и итогового документа Конференции по обзору Дурбанского процесса, в которых государства признали, что осуществление права на свободу выражения мнений, в частности средствами массовой информации и с помощью новых технологий, включая Интернет, и полное уважение права свободно искать, получать и распространять информацию могут внести позитивный вклад в дело борьбы с расизмом, расовой дискриминацией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью;

3. *принимает к сведению* доклад Специального докладчика Совета по правам человека по вопросу о современных формах расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости, подготовленный в соответствии с просьбой, содержащейся в ее резолюции [75/169](#)¹²²¹;

4. *выражает признательность* Верховному комиссару Организации Объединенных Наций по правам человека и ее Управлению за их усилия по борьбе с расизмом, расовой дискриминацией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью, в том числе за ведение Управлением Верховного комиссара Организации Объединенных Наций по правам человека базы данных о практических способах борьбы с

¹²²¹ [A/76/369](#).

расизмом, расовой дискриминацией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью;

5. *выражает глубокую обеспокоенность* по поводу героизации в любой форме нацистского движения, неонацизма и бывших членов организации "Ваффен СС", в том числе в форме сооружения памятников и мемориалов и проведения публичных демонстраций в целях прославления нацистского прошлого, нацистского движения и неонацизма, а также посредством объявления или попыток объявить членов указанной организации и тех, кто боролся против антигитлеровской коалиции, сотрудничал с нацистским движением и совершал военные преступления и преступления против человечности, участниками национально-освободительных движений, а также переименования улиц в целях их героизации;

6. *призывает* ко всеобщей ратификации и эффективному осуществлению Международной конвенции о ликвидации всех форм расовой дискриминации и настоятельно призывает те государства-участники, которые еще не сделали этого, рассмотреть вопрос о том, чтобы сделать заявление в соответствии с ее статьей 14, и тем самым признать компетенцию Комитета по ликвидации расовой дискриминации принимать и рассматривать сообщения от отдельных лиц или групп лиц, находящихся под их юрисдикцией, которые утверждают, что они являются жертвами нарушения государством-участником каких-либо прав, закрепленных в Конвенции;

7. *настоятельно призывает* государства ликвидировать все формы расовой дискриминации всеми соответствующими средствами, в том числе, сообразно обстоятельствам, законодательно, обеспечив при этом, чтобы закрепленное в законодательстве определение расовой дискриминации соответствовало определению, содержащемуся в статье 1 Конвенции;

8. *рекомендует* тем государствам, которые сделали оговорки к статье 4 Конвенции, серьезно рассмотреть вопрос об отзыве таких оговорок в первоочередном порядке, как было подчеркнуто Специальным докладчиком;

9. *признает*, что дискриминация по признаку расовой, этнической или

религиозной принадлежности или убеждений во всех ее формах и проявлениях, включая неонацизм, исламофобию, христианофобию и антисемитизм, представляет угрозу для социальной сплоченности в целом, а не только для тех расовых и этнических групп, против которых она направлена непосредственно;

10. *напоминает* о том, что любые законодательные или конституционные меры, принимаемые в целях противодействия экстремистским политическим партиям, движениям, идеологиям и группам расистского и ксенофобского толка, включая группы неонацистов и "бритоголовых", и подобным им экстремистским идеологическим движениям, должны быть сообразны соответствующим международным обязательствам в области прав человека, в частности сформулированным в статьях 4 и 5 Конвенции и статьях 19-22 Международного пакта о гражданских и политических правах;

11. *призывает* государства разработать и осуществлять национальные планы действий по ликвидации расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости, с целью обеспечить, в частности, тщательное отслеживание проявлений нацизма, неонацизма и отрицания Холокоста, как, например, торжественные чествования нацистского режима, его союзников и связанных с ними организаций;

12. *рекомендует* государствам – участникам Конвенции принять надлежащие меры для приведения их законодательства в соответствие с их обязательствами по Конвенции, в том числе по статье 4;

13. *подчеркивает*, что обеспечение права на свободу выражения мнений, проведение мирных собраний и свободу ассоциации имеет важное значение для поддержки борьбы с расизмом, расовой дискриминацией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью во всем мире;

14. *вновь особо отмечает* рекомендацию Специального докладчика в адрес государств запретить "любые торжественные чествования – как официального, так и неофициального характера – нацистского режима, его союзников и связанных с ними организаций"¹²²², особо отмечает также, что подобные виды практики оскорбляют память бесчисленных жертв Второй мировой войны и оказывают негативное влияние на детей и молодежь, и подчеркивает в этой связи, что государствам необходимо принять в соответствии с международным правом прав человека меры по противодействию любому чествованию нацистской организации СС и всех ее составных частей, включая "Ваффен СС", и что отсутствие эффективного противодействия со стороны государств подобным видам практики несовместимо с обязательствами государств – членов Организации Объединенных Наций по ее Уставу;

15. *выражает глубокую обеспокоенность* участвовавшими попытками и случаями осквернения или разрушения памятников, воздвигнутых в честь тех, кто боролся против нацизма в годы Второй мировой войны, а также незаконной эксгумации или переноса их останков и в этой связи настоятельно призывает государства в полной мере

¹²²² [A/72/291](#), п. 79.

выполнять их соответствующие обязательства, в частности по статье 34 Дополнительного протокола I к Женевским конвенциям 1949 года¹²²³;

16. *решительно осуждает* инциденты, связанные с героизацией и пропагандой нацизма, как-то: акты нанесения граффити и рисунков пронацистского содержания, в том числе на памятники жертвам Второй мировой войны;

17. *приветствует* усилия государств-членов по сохранению исторической правды, в том числе путем строительства и сохранения памятников и мемориалов, посвященных тем, кто сражался в рядах антигитлеровской коалиции;

18. *выражает тревогу* по поводу использования экстремистскими группами, включая неонацистские группы, и отдельными лицами, исповедующими идеологию ненависти, информационных технологий, Интернета и социальных сетей для вербовки новых членов, в особенности для обращения к детям и молодежи, в том числе для усиления воздействия распространяемых ими идей ненависти, признавая при этом, что Интернет можно также использовать для борьбы с такими группами и для оказания противодействия этим группам;

19. *призывает* государства принять соответствующие меры для противодействия новым и возникающим угрозам, связанным с ростом числа террористических атак, инспирируемых расизмом, ксенофобией и проявлениями нетерпимости в иных формах или совершаемых во имя религии или убеждений;

20. *с обеспокоенностью отмечает* значительное число инцидентов расистского характера по всему миру, включая активизацию групп "бритоголовых", причастных ко многим из этих инцидентов, а также всплеск насилия на почве расизма и ксенофобии, направленного, в частности, против лиц, принадлежащих к национальным или этническим,

¹²²³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1125, No. 17512.

религиозным и языковым меньшинствам, или на какой-либо иной почве, включая поджоги домов и акты вандализма и насилия в школах и местах отправления культа и на кладбищах;

21. *подтверждает*, что такие акты могут при определенных обстоятельствах быть квалифицированы как подпадающие под действие Конвенции, что они не могут быть оправданы как акты осуществления свободы мирных собраний, свободы ассоциации или свободы выражения мнений и что они будут зачастую подпадать под действие статьи 20 Международного пакта о гражданских и политических правах и в отношении них могут вводиться определенные ограничения, предусмотренные статьями 19, 21 и 22 Пакта;

22. *рекомендует* государствам принять надлежащие конкретные меры, в том числе в законодательной области и в сфере образования, в соответствии с их международными обязательствами в области прав человека, с тем чтобы предотвратить пересмотр итогов Второй мировой войны и отрицание преступлений против человечности и военных преступлений, совершенных во время Второй мировой войны;

23. *призывает* государства принимать активные меры для обеспечения того, чтобы в системах образования были подготовлены необходимые материалы, точно отражающие историю, а также поощряющие толерантность и другие международные принципы в области прав человека;

24. *ссылается* на вынесенную Специальным докладчиком рекомендацию о том, что просвещение, направленное на то, чтобы не дать прорасти семенам расизма, посеянным националистическим популизмом, должно включать в себя точное и репрезентативное изложение национальной истории, отдающее должное расовому и этническому многообразию и разоблачающее лживые попытки вычеркнуть этнические группы из национальной истории и самосознания нации в целях

сохранения этнонационалистических мифов о "чистоте" нации в расовом или этническом отношении¹²²⁴;

25. *безоговорочно осуждает* любое отрицание или попытку отрицания Холокоста, а также все проявления религиозной нетерпимости, подстрекательства, преследования или насилия в отношении отдельных лиц или общин по признаку этнического происхождения или религиозных убеждений;

26. *подтверждает свою глубокую приверженность* исполнению долга памяти и приветствует призыв Специального докладчика активно сохранять те связанные с Холокостом объекты, которые использовались нацистами в качестве лагерей смерти, концентрационных лагерей и лагерей принудительного труда и тюрем, а также его обращенный к государствам призыв принять меры, в том числе законодательные, правоохранные и образовательные, с тем чтобы положить конец любому отрицанию Холокоста¹²²⁵;

27. *ссылается* на сделанный Специальным докладчиком вывод о том, что ревизионизм и попытки фальсифицировать историю могут при определенных обстоятельствах подпадать под предусмотренный в статье 4 а) Конвенции запрет использования языка ненависти, которое государства обязаны объявить караемым по закону преступлением¹²²⁶, и что предпринимаемые неонацистами при вербовке попытки пропагандировать экстремистскую идеологию или расовую, этническую или религиозную ненависть и нетерпимость могут подпадать под действие статьи 4 b) Конвенции;

28. *призывает* государства продолжать принимать все надлежащие меры, направленные на предупреждение и пресечение использования языка ненависти, в том числе в Интернете, и

¹²²⁴ [A/73/305](#) и [A/73/305/Corr.1](#), п. 56.

¹²²⁵ [A/72/291](#), п. 91.

¹²²⁶ [A/HRC/38/53](#), п. 15.

подстрекательства к насилию против лиц, находящихся в уязвимом положении, в том числе в рамках организации собраний и сопряженных с насилием акций протеста, сбора средств и совершения других действий;

29. *выражает серьезную озабоченность* в связи с попытками запретить на законодательном уровне символику, ассоциируемую в государствах с победой над нацизмом;

30. *выражает глубокую обеспокоенность* по поводу попыток распространения коммерческой рекламы, спекулирующей на страданиях жертв военных преступлений и преступлений против человечности, совершенных нацистским режимом во время Второй мировой войны;

31. *подчеркивает*, что память необходимо уважать и что описанные выше виды практики оскорбляют память бесчисленных жертв преступлений против человечности, совершенных во время Второй мировой войны, в частности преступлений, совершенных организацией СС и теми, кто боролся против антигитлеровской коалиции и сотрудничал с нацистским движением, и могут оказывать негативное влияние на детей и молодежь и что отсутствие эффективного противодействия со стороны государств подобным видам практики несовместимо с обязательствами государств – членов Организации Объединенных Наций по ее Уставу, включая обязательства, относящиеся к целям и принципам Организации;

32. *подчеркивает также*, что все виды такой практики могут вести к эскалации современных форм расизма, расовой дискриминации, антисемитизма, дискриминации на основе религии или убеждений, исламофобии и христианофобии, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости и способствуют распространению и умножению числа различных экстремистских политических партий, движений и групп расистского и ксенофобского толка, включая группы неонацистов и "бритоголовых", и призывает в этой связи к повышению бдительности;

33. *выражает обеспокоенность* в связи с тем, что угроза правам человека и демократии со стороны экстремистских политических партий, движений и групп носит всеобщий характер и что от нее не застрахована ни одна страна;

34. *особо отмечает* необходимость принятия соответствующих мер для борьбы с описанными выше видами практики и призывает государства и все другие заинтересованные стороны принимать при полном уважении международного права прав человека более эффективные меры по предупреждению подобных явлений и формирования экстремистских движений расистского и ксенофобского толка, создающих реальную угрозу демократическим ценностям, и борьбе с ними, а также повышать бдительность и инициативно добиваться признания этих проблем и эффективно их решать;

35. *обращает особое внимание* на то, что надежные дезагрегированные данные и статистическая информация о преступлениях на почве расизма и ксенофобии имеют большое значение для квалификации совершенных правонарушений, выявления характерных признаков жертв и преступников и установления возможных связей последних с экстремистскими движениями или группами, улучшения понимания этого явления, определения эффективных мер борьбы с преступлениями на почве расовой неприязни и ксенофобии и оценки воздействия этих мер, и напоминает в этой связи о принятых в Повестке дня в области устойчивого развития на период до 2030 года¹²²⁷ обязательствах в отношении данных, мониторинга и подотчетности, включая сбор данных в разбивке по параметрам, значимым для стран;

36. *рекомендует* государствам принимать дальнейшие меры в поддержку подготовки сотрудников полиции и других правоохранительных органов по вопросам, касающимся идеологий

¹²²⁷ Резолюция [70/1](#).

экстремистских политических партий, движений и групп, апологетика которых представляет собой подстрекательство к насилию на почве расизма и ксенофобии, укреплять свой потенциал в деле борьбы с преступлениями на почве расизма и ксенофобии и предупреждать практику расового профилирования, выполнять свою обязанность привлекать к ответственности виновных в таких преступлениях и бороться с безнаказанностью;

37. *выражает глубокую обеспокоенность* по поводу увеличения числа мест, занимаемых представителями экстремистских партий расистского или ксенофобского толка в ряде национальных и местных парламентов, и особо отмечает в этой связи, что все демократические политические партии должны разрабатывать свои программы и строить свою деятельность на основе принципа уважения прав человека и свобод, демократии, верховенства права и благого управления и осуждать любые заявления, пропагандирующие идеи расового превосходства или ненависти и преследующие цель эскалации современных форм расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости;

38. *напоминает* об обеспокоенности Специального докладчика по поводу возрождения неонацизма в современную эпоху и расширения поддержки и принятия неонацизма и связанной с ним идеологии во все большем числе стран¹²²⁸;

39. *с удовлетворением отмечает* в этой связи обращенный к политическим лидерам и партиям призыв Специального докладчика решительно осуждать подстрекательство к расовой дискриминации или ксенофобии, утверждать идеалы терпимости и уважения и воздерживаться от формирования коалиций с экстремистскими партиями расистского или ксенофобского толка¹²²⁹;

¹²²⁸ [A/HRC/38/53](#), п. 16.

¹²²⁹ [A/72/291](#), п. 83.

40. *приветствует* рекомендацию Специального докладчика продолжать принимать меры в рамках национального законодательства в соответствии с международным правом прав человека, направленные на предупреждение использования языка ненависти и подстрекательства к насилию, и прекратить оказывать поддержку – будь то финансовую или какую-либо иную – политическим партиям и другим организациям, которые прибегают к неонацистскому или иному языку ненависти, и принимать меры по роспуску организаций, которые несут ответственность в тех случаях, когда целью использования такого языка ненависти является подстрекательство к насилию или когда есть основания предполагать, что оно приведет к нему¹²³⁰;

41. *призывает* государства увеличивать многообразие кадрового состава правоохранительных органов и настоятельно призывает их принимать все надлежащие меры для облегчения подачи жалоб и для введения надлежащих санкций в отношении находящихся на государственной службе лиц, признанных виновными в совершении актов насилия на почве расовой неприязни или уличенных в использовании языка ненависти;

42. *выражает глубокую обеспокоенность* по поводу увеличения числа сообщений о случаях проявления расизма, антисемитизма, дискриминации на основе религии, убеждений или происхождения, включая проявления исламофобии, арабофобии, афрофобии и ксенофобии во время спортивных мероприятий, в том числе со стороны экстремистских групп расистского и ксенофобского толка, включая группы неонацистов и "бритоголовых", и призывает государства, международные организации, спортивные федерации и другие соответствующие заинтересованные стороны усилить меры по борьбе с такими инцидентами, приветствуя также при этом шаги, предпринятые

¹²³⁰ [A/HRC/38/53](#), п. 35 с).

многими государствами и спортивными федерациями, клубами и группами болельщиков для искоренения проявлений расизма на спортивных мероприятиях, в том числе предоставление возможностей для занятий спортом без какой бы то ни было дискриминации и в духе олимпийских идеалов взаимопонимания, терпимости, инклюзивности, справедливости и солидарности;

43. *напоминает* о рекомендации Специального докладчика, касающейся включения в национальное уголовное законодательство положения, согласно которому совершение преступления с мотивами или целями, связанными с расизмом или ксенофобией, является отягчающим обстоятельством, влекущим за собой более суровые меры наказания¹²³¹, и призывает те государства, в законодательстве которых нет подобных положений, рассмотреть возможность выполнения этой рекомендации;

44. *отмечает* меры, принятые государствами в целях предотвращения дискриминации в отношении, в частности, лиц, принадлежащих к национальным или этническим, религиозным и языковым меньшинствам, лиц африканского происхождения, цыган, мигрантов, беженцев и просителей убежища и обеспечения их интеграции в общество, настоятельно призывает государства обеспечить полное и эффективное осуществление правовых, политических и институциональных мер по защите этих лиц и групп, включая женщин и девочек, и рекомендует государствам твердо гарантировать всем, без какой бы то ни было дискриминации, их права человека, в том числе связанные с защитой и безопасностью, доступ к правосудию, адекватную компенсацию и надлежащее информирование об их правах, а также обеспечить, сообразно обстоятельствам, судебное преследование и надлежащее наказание тех, кто совершил в их отношении преступления расистского и ксенофобского характера, включая возможность требовать

¹²³¹ [A/69/334](#), п. 81.

возмещения материального и морального ущерба, причиненного в результате таких преступлений;

45. *призывает* государства повысить степень информированности общественности о доступных национальных и других средствах правовой защиты в случае нарушения прав человека на почве расовой дискриминации и расизма;

46. *обращает особое внимание* на то, что экстремизм обусловлен множеством причин, устранение которых требует адекватных мер, таких как просвещение, повышение уровня осведомленности и развитие диалога, и в этой связи рекомендует активизировать работу с молодежью по разъяснению опасности идеологий и деятельности экстремистских политических партий, движений и групп;

47. *подтверждает* в этой связи особую важность дополнения законодательных мер просвещением во всех формах, в том числе по вопросам прав человека, и призывает государства продолжать вкладывать средства в образование в рамках как традиционных, так и нетрадиционных учебных программ, в частности с целью изменения взглядов людей и развенчания представлений о расовой иерархии и идей расового превосходства и противодействия их негативному влиянию, а также способствовать утверждению идеалов недискриминации, равенства и уважения для всех, как это отмечено Специальным докладчиком;

48. *признает* важнейшую роль просвещения в деле поощрения прав человека и основных свобод в борьбе против расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости, в частности в утверждении принципов терпимости, недискриминации, инклюзивности и уважения этнического, религиозного и культурного многообразия и предупреждении распространения экстремистских расистских и ксенофобских движений и пропаганды;

49. *решиительно осуждает* использование в образовательном процессе образовательных материалов и риторики, пропагандирующих расизм, дискриминацию, ненависть и насилие на основе этнического происхождения, национальности, религии или убеждений;

50. *особо отмечает* представленную Специальным докладчиком Генеральной Ассамблее на ее шестьдесят четвертой сессии рекомендацию, в которой он отметил важность уроков истории, посвященных драматическим событиям и человеческим страданиям, ставшим результатом становления идеологий нацизма и фашизма¹²³²;

51. *подчеркивает* важность других позитивных мер и инициатив, направленных на сближение общин и предоставление им условий для подлинного диалога, например в форме круглых столов, рабочих групп и семинаров, в том числе учебных семинаров для государственных должностных лиц и работников средств массовой информации, а также различных мероприятий по повышению информированности общественности, особенно мероприятий, организуемых по инициативе представителей гражданского общества и требующих постоянной поддержки со стороны государства;

52. *обращает особое внимание* на позитивную роль, которую могут играть в вышеупомянутых областях соответствующие органы и программы Организации Объединенных Наций, и в частности Организация Объединенных Наций по вопросам образования, науки и культуры;

53. *подтверждает* статью 4 Конвенции, согласно которой государства-участники осуждают всякую пропаганду и все организации, основанные на идеях или теориях превосходства одной расы или группы лиц определенного цвета кожи или этнического происхождения или пытающиеся оправдать или поощряющие расовую ненависть и

¹²³² [A/64/295](#), п. 104.

дискриминацию в какой бы то ни было форме, и обязуются немедленно принять позитивные меры, направленные на искоренение всякого подстрекательства к такой дискриминации или актов дискриминации, и с этой целью в соответствии с принципами, провозглашенными во Всеобщей декларации прав человека, и правами, ясно изложенными в статье 5 Конвенции, в частности:

- а) объявляют караемым по закону преступлением всякое распространение идей, основанных на расовом превосходстве или ненависти, всякое подстрекательство к расовой дискриминации, а также все акты насилия или подстрекательство к таким актам, направленным против любой расы или группы лиц другого цвета кожи или этнического происхождения, а также предоставление любой помощи для проведения расистской деятельности, включая ее финансирование;
- б) объявляют противозаконными и запрещают организации, а также организованную и всякую другую пропагандистскую деятельность, которые поощряют расовую дискриминацию и подстрекают к ней, и признают участие в таких организациях или в такой деятельности преступлением, караемым законом;
- с) не разрешают национальным или местным органам государственной власти или государственным учреждениям поощрять расовую дискриминацию или подстрекать к ней;

54. *подтверждает также*, что, как подчеркивается в пункте 13 итогового документа Конференции по обзору Дурбанского процесса, всякое выступление в пользу национальной, расовой или религиозной ненависти, представляющее собой подстрекательство к дискриминации, вражде или насилию, должно быть запрещено законом, что всякое распространение идей, основанных на расовом превосходстве или ненависти, или подстрекательство к расовой дискриминации, а также все

акты насилия или подстрекательство к совершению таких актов должны быть объявлены преступлениями, караемыми по закону, в соответствии с международными обязательствами государств и что такого рода запреты согласуются с правом на свободу мнений и их свободное выражение;

55. *ссылается* на Стратегию и План действий Организации Объединенных Наций по борьбе с языком ненависти, в которых изложено стратегическое руководство для системы Организации Объединенных Наций по борьбе с ненавистнической риторикой на национальном и глобальном уровнях;

56. *отмечает* ту позитивную роль, которую осуществление права на свободу мнений и их свободное выражение и полное уважение свободы искать, получать и распространять информацию, в том числе через Интернет, могут играть в борьбе с расизмом, расовой дискриминацией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью;

57. *призывает* государства улучшать ситуацию с осуществлением права на свободу выражения мнений, реализация которого может иметь решающее значение для продвижения демократии и противодействия расистской и ксенофобской идеологии, основанной на идеях расового превосходства;

58. *призывает также* государства, которые несут главную ответственность за противодействие дискриминации и использованию языка ненависти, и всех соответствующих субъектов, включая политических и религиозных лидеров, поощрять инклюзию и единство в реагировании на пандемию коронавирусного заболевания (COVID-19) и предотвращать расизм, ксенофобию, использование языка ненависти, насилие, дискриминацию и стигматизацию, высказывать свое мнение и принимать решительные меры по борьбе с этими явлениями;

59. *выражает обеспокоенность* в связи с все более широким использованием цифровых технологий для пропаганды и распространения

идей расизма, расовой ненависти, ксенофобии, расовой дискриминации и связанной с ними нетерпимости и в этой связи призывает государства – участники Международного пакта о гражданских и политических правах противодействовать распространению вышеупомянутых идей, памятуя при этом о своих обязательствах согласно статьям 19 и 20 Пакта, в которых гарантируется право на свободное выражение мнений и изложены основания, позволяющие ограничивать по закону осуществление этого права;

60. *считает* необходимым поощрять использование новых информационно-коммуникационных технологий, включая Интернет, для содействия борьбе с расизмом, расовой дискриминацией, ксенофобией и связанной с ними нетерпимостью;

61. *признает* позитивную роль, которую средства массовой информации могут играть в борьбе против расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости, в утверждении культуры терпимости и инклюзивности и в отражении многообразия многокультурного общества;

62. *рекомендует* государствам, гражданскому обществу и другим соответствующим заинтересованным сторонам использовать все возможности, в том числе возможности, предоставляемые Интернетом и социальными сетями, для противодействия в соответствии с международным правом прав человека распространению идей расового превосходства или ненависти и для утверждения идеалов равенства, недискриминации, многообразия и демократии;

63. *рекомендует* национальным правозащитным институтам там, где они существуют, разработать соответствующие программы, направленные на утверждение идеалов терпимости, инклюзивности и уважения ко всем, и осуществлять сбор соответствующей информации по этой теме;

64. *отмечает* важность укрепления сотрудничества на региональном и международном уровнях в целях противодействия всем проявлениям расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости, в частности применительно к вопросам, затронутым в настоящей резолюции;

65. *подчеркивает* важность тесного сотрудничества с гражданским обществом и международными и региональными правозащитными механизмами для эффективного противодействия всем проявлениям расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости, а также экстремистским политическим партиям, движениям и группам, включая группы неонацистов и "бритоголовых", и другим подобным им экстремистским идеологическим движениям, которые подстрекают к расизму, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости;

66. *напоминает* о том, что Комиссия по правам человека в своей резолюции 2005/5 просила Специального докладчика продолжить проработку этого вопроса, сформулировать соответствующие рекомендации в будущих докладах и запросить и принять к сведению в связи с этим мнения правительств и неправительственных организаций;

67. *предлагает* государствам рассмотреть вопрос о включении в свои доклады для универсального периодического обзора и в доклады соответствующим договорным органам информацию о шагах, предпринимаемых для борьбы против расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости, в том числе в порядке выполнения положений настоящей резолюции;

68. *просит* Специального докладчика подготовить для представления Генеральной Ассамблее на ее семьдесят седьмой сессии и Совету по правам человека на его пятидесятой сессии доклады об осуществлении настоящей резолюции и рекомендует Специальному

докладчику уделить особое внимание пунктам 5, 12, 14, 15, 16, 20, 28, 29, 30, 48 и 50 выше с учетом мнений, собранных в соответствии с просьбой Комиссии, упомянутой в пункте 66 выше;

69. *выражает признательность* тем правительствам и неправительственным организациям, которые предоставили информацию Специальному докладчику при подготовке ею своего доклада Генеральной Ассамблее;

70. *рекомендует* государствам и неправительственным организациям сотрудничать со Специальным докладчиком, в том числе предоставляя информацию о событиях, которые имеют отношение к затрагиваемым в настоящей резолюции вопросам, в целях содействия подготовке будущих докладов Генеральной Ассамблее;

71. *подчеркивает*, что такая информация важна для обмена опытом и передовыми методами противодействия экстремистским политическим партиям, движениям и группам, включая группы неонацистов и "бритоголовых", а также другим экстремистским идеологическим движениям, которые подстрекают к расизму, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости;

72. *рекомендует* правительствам увеличить объем ресурсов, выделяемых на подготовку и распространение информации об успешных конструктивных мерах по предупреждению расизма, расовой дискриминации, ксенофобии и связанной с ними нетерпимости и противодействию этим явлениям в дополнение к применению санкций за любые нарушения, в том числе путем предоставления в соответствующих случаях средств правовой защиты пострадавшим;

73. *рекомендует* правительствам, неправительственным организациям и соответствующим субъектам как можно шире распространять информацию о содержании настоящей резолюции и

изложенных в ней принципах, в том числе через средства массовой информации и по другим каналам;

74. *постановляет* продолжать заниматься этим вопросом.

*53-е пленарное заседание,
16 декабря 2021 года*

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 2021

76/149. Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

The General Assembly,

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,¹²³³ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,¹²³⁴ the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination¹²³⁵ and other relevant human rights instruments,

Recalling the provisions of Commission on Human Rights resolutions 2004/16 of 16 April 2004¹²³⁶ and 2005/5 of 14 April 2005¹²³⁷ and relevant Human Rights Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 7/34 of 28 March 2008,¹²³⁸ [18/15](#) of 29 September 2011¹²³⁹ and [21/33](#) of 28 September 2012,¹²⁴⁰ as well as General Assembly resolutions [60/143](#) of 16 December 2005, [61/147](#) of 19 December 2006, [62/142](#) of 18 December 2007, [63/162](#) of 18 December 2008, [64/147](#) of 18 December 2009, [65/199](#) of 21 December 2010, [66/143](#) of 19 December 2011, [67/154](#) of 20 December 2012, [68/150](#) of 18 December 2013, [69/160](#) of 18 December 2014, [70/139](#) of 17 December 2015, [71/179](#) of 19 December 2016, [72/156](#) of 19 December 2017, [73/157](#) of 17 December 2018, [74/136](#) of 18 December 2019 and [75/169](#) of 16 December 2020 on this

¹²³³ Resolution [217 A \(III\)](#).

¹²³⁴ See resolution [2200 A \(XXI\)](#), annex.

¹²³⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 660, No. 9464.

¹²³⁶ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 3 ([E/2004/23](#)), chap. II, sect. A.

¹²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2005, Supplement No. 3 and corrigenda ([E/2005/23](#), [E/2005/23/Corr.1](#) and [E/2005/23/Corr.2](#)), chap. II, sect. A.

¹²³⁸ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 53 ([A/63/53](#)), chap. II.

¹²³⁹ *Ibid.*, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 53A and corrigendum ([A/66/53/Add.1](#) and [A/66/53/Add.1/Corr.1](#)), chap. II.

¹²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 53A ([A/67/53/Add.1](#)), chap. II.

issue, and its resolutions [61/149](#) of 19 December 2006, [62/220](#) of 22 December 2007, [63/242](#) of 24 December 2008, [64/148](#) of 18 December 2009, [65/240](#) of 24 December 2010, [66/144](#) of 19 December 2011, [67/155](#) of 20 December 2012, [68/151](#) of 18 December 2013, [69/162](#) of 18 December 2014, [70/140](#) of 17 December 2015, [71/181](#) of 19 December 2016, [72/157](#) of 19 December 2017, [73/262](#) of 22 December 2018, [74/137](#) of 18 December 2019 and [75/237](#) of 31 December 2020, entitled "A global call for concrete action for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action",

Acknowledging other important initiatives of the General Assembly aimed at raising awareness about the suffering of victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and forms of discrimination, including in the historical perspective, in particular regarding commemoration of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade,

Recalling the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal, and the Judgment of the Tribunal which recognized as criminal, inter alia, the SS organization and its integral parts, including the Waffen-SS, through its officially accepted members implicated in or with knowledge of the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity connected with the Second World War, as well as other relevant provisions of the Charter and the Judgment,

Mindful of the horrors of the Second World War, and stressing in this regard that the victory over Nazism in the Second World War contributed to the establishment of the conditions for the creation of the United Nations, designed to prevent future wars and save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,

Recalling that the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly coincides with the seventy-fifth anniversary of the judgment of the Nuremberg Tribunal,

Noting that neo-Nazism is more than just the glorification of a past movement, it is a contemporary phenomenon with strong vested interests in racial inequality and an investment in gaining broad support for its false claims of racial superiority,

Recalling the relevant provisions of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance on 8 September 2001,¹²⁴¹ in particular paragraph 2 of the Declaration and paragraphs 84 to 86 of the Programme of Action, as well as the relevant provisions of the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference of 24 April 2009,¹²⁴² in particular paragraphs 11, 13 and 54,

Alarmed at the spread in many parts of the world of various extremist political parties, movements, ideologies and groups of a racist or xenophobic character, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and at the fact that this trend has resulted in the implementation of discriminatory measures and policies at the local or national level,

Noting with concern that, even where neo-Nazis or extremists do not formally participate in government, the presence therein of extreme right-wing ideologues can have the effect of injecting into governance and political discourse the same ideologies that make neo-Nazism and extremism so dangerous,

Alarmed at music lyrics and video games that advocate racial hatred and incite discrimination, hostility or violence,

Concerned by the use of Internet platforms by groups that advocate hatred to plan, fundraise and circulate information about public events aimed at promoting racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, such as rallies, demonstrations and acts of violence,

¹²⁴¹ See [A/CONF.189/12](#) and [A/CONF.189/12/Corr.1](#), chap. I.

¹²⁴² See [A/CONF.211/8](#), chap. I.

Mindful of the role that the Internet can play in promoting equality, inclusion and non-discrimination as part of strengthening democracy and respect for human rights,

Seriously concerned that neo-Nazi groups, as well as other groups and individuals espousing ideologies of hatred, have increasingly targeted susceptible individuals, mainly children and youth, by means of specifically tailored websites with the aim of their indoctrination and recruitment,

Deeply concerned by all recent manifestations of violence and terrorism incited by violent nationalism, racism, antisemitism, discrimination based on religion, belief or origin, including Islamophobia, Christianophobia and Afrophobia, xenophobia and related intolerance, including during sports events,

Recognizing with deep concern the continued alarming increase in instances of discrimination, intolerance and extremist violence motivated by antisemitism, religion or belief, including Islamophobia and Christianophobia, and prejudices against persons of other ethnic origins, religions and beliefs,

Underlining the existing lack of uniformity of norms regarding protected speech and expression and prohibited racial discrimination and advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence,

Noting with concern, in this regard, that the variation in national standards prohibiting hate speech may provide safe havens for neo-Nazi, extremist, violent nationalist, xenophobic or racist speech owing to the fact that many neo-Nazi and relevant extremist groups of a racist or xenophobic character operate transnationally by relying on Internet service providers or social media platforms,

Stressing that the purpose of addressing hate speech is not to limit or prohibit freedom of speech, but to prevent incitement to discrimination and violence, which shall be prohibited by law,

Expressing its concern about the use of digital technologies by extremist and hate groups, including neo-Nazi groups, to disseminate their ideology, while recognizing that digital technologies are of great importance for the enjoyment of human rights and for combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance,

1. *Reaffirms* the relevant provisions of the Durban Declaration and of the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, in which States condemned the persistence and resurgence of neo-Nazism, neo-Fascism and violent nationalist ideologies based on racial and national prejudice and stated that those phenomena could never be justified in any instance or in any circumstances;

2. *Recalls* the provisions of the Durban Declaration and of the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, in which States recognized the positive contribution that the exercise of the right to freedom of expression, in particular by the media and new technologies, including the Internet, and full respect for the freedom to seek, receive and impart information can make to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

3. *Takes note* of the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, prepared in accordance with the request contained in its resolution [75/169](#),¹²⁴³

4. *Expresses its appreciation* to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and her Office for their efforts to fight racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including the maintenance by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of the database on practical means to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

¹²⁴³ [A/76/369](#).

5. *Expresses deep concern* about the glorification, in any form, of the Nazi movement, neo-Nazism and former members of the Waffen-SS organization, including by erecting monuments and memorials, holding public demonstrations in the name of the glorification of the Nazi past, the Nazi movement and neo -Nazism, declaring or attempting to declare such members and those who fought against the anti-Hitler coalition, collaborated with the Nazi movement and committed war crimes and crimes against humanity participants in national liberation movements, as well as by the renaming of streets glorifying them;

6. *Calls for* the universal ratification and effective implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and urges those States parties that have not yet done so to consider making the declaration under its article 14, thus providing the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination with the competence to receive and consider communications from individuals or groups of individuals within their jurisdiction claiming to be victims of a violation by a State party of any of the rights set forth in the Convention;

7. *Urges* States to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination by all appropriate means, including legislation as required by circumstances, while ensuring that the definition of racial discrimination set out therein complies with article 1 of the Convention;

8. *Encourages* those States that have made reservations to article 4 of the Convention to give serious consideration to withdrawing such reservations as a matter of priority, as stressed by the Special Rapporteur;

9. *Acknowledges* that discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion or belief in all its forms and manifestations, including neo-Nazism, Islamophobia, Christianophobia and antisemitism, is a threat to social cohesion, not just to those racial and ethnic groups that are their direct target;

10. *Recalls* that any legislative or constitutional measures adopted with a view to countering extremist political parties, movements, ideologies and groups of a racist or xenophobic character, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups and similar extremist ideological movements, should be in conformity with the relevant international human rights obligations, in particular articles 4 and 5 of the Convention and articles 19 to 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

11. *Encourages* States to develop and implement national action plans for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, with a view to, inter alia, monitoring closely the phenomenon of Nazism, neo-Nazism and Holocaust denial, such as commemorative celebration of the Nazi regime, its allies and related organizations;

12. *Encourages* States parties to the Convention to take appropriate measures to ensure that their legislation is in accordance with their obligations under the Convention, including those under article 4;

13. *Stresses* that the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association are important in supporting the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance worldwide;

14. *Emphasizes once more* the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur that "any commemorative celebration of the Nazi regime, its allies and related organizations, whether official or unofficial, should be prohibited" by States,¹²⁴⁴ also emphasizes that such manifestations do injustice to the memory of the countless victims of the Second World War and negatively influence children and young people, and stresses in this regard that it is important that States take measures, in accordance with international human rights law, to counteract any celebration of the Nazi SS organization and all its integral parts, including the Waffen-SS, and that failure by States to effectively

¹²⁴⁴ [A/72/291](#), para. 79.

address such practices is incompatible with the obligations of States Members of the United Nations under its Charter;

15. *Expresses deep concern* about increased frequency of attempts and activities intended to desecrate or demolish monuments erected in remembrance of those who fought against Nazism during the Second World War, as well as to unlawfully exhume or remove the remains of such persons, and in this regard urges States to fully comply with their relevant obligations, inter alia, under article 34 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1949;¹²⁴⁵

16. *Firmly condemns* incidents that glorify and promote Nazism, such as acts involving pro-Nazi graffiti and paintings, including on monuments dedicated to victims of the Second World War;

17. *Welcomes* efforts by Member States to preserve historical truth, including through constructing and preserving monuments and memorials dedicated to those who fought in the ranks of the anti-Hitler coalition;

18. *Expresses alarm* over the use by extremist groups, including neo-Nazi groups, and individuals espousing ideologies of hatred, of information technologies, the Internet and social media to recruit new members, especially targeting children and young people, and to disseminate and to amplify their hate-filled messages, while recognizing that the Internet can also be used to counteract these groups and their activities;

19. *Calls upon* States to take appropriate measures to address the new and emerging threats posed by the rise in terrorist attacks incited by racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief;

20. *Notes with concern* the significant number of racist incidents worldwide, including the rise of skinhead groups, which have been responsible for many of these incidents, as well as the resurgence of racist and xenophobic violence targeting, inter alia, persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, or on any other grounds, including arson attacks on

¹²⁴⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1125, No. 17512.

houses and vandalization of and violence in schools and places of worship and cemeteries;

21. *Reaffirms* that such acts may, in certain circumstances, be qualified as falling within the scope of the Convention, that they may not be justifiable as exercises of freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association and freedom of expression and that they will often fall within the scope of article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and may be subject to certain restrictions, as set out in articles 19, 21 and 22 of the Covenant;

22. *Encourages* States to take appropriate concrete measures, including legislative and educational ones, in accordance with their international human rights obligations, in order to prevent revisionism in respect of the Second World War and the denial of the crimes against humanity and war crimes committed during the Second World War;

23. *Calls upon* States to take active measures to ensure that education systems develop the necessary content to provide accurate accounts of history, as well as promote tolerance and other international human rights principles;

24. *Recalls* the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur that education that seeks to undercut the racist effects of nationalist populism should include accurate and representative accounts of national history that give voice to racial and ethnic diversity and that expose the untruths of those who attempt to write ethnic groups out of national histories and identities in order to sustain ethnonationalist myths of racially or ethnically "pure" nations;¹²⁴⁶

25. *Condemns without reservation* any denial of or attempt to deny the Holocaust, as well as any manifestation of religious intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities, on the basis of ethnic origin or religious belief;

26. *Affirms its deep commitment* to the duty of remembrance, and welcomes the call of the Special Rapporteur for the active preservation of those

¹²⁴⁶ [A/73/305](#) and [A/73/305/Corr.1](#), para. 56.

Holocaust sites that served as Nazi death camps, concentration and forced labour camps and prisons, as well as his encouragement to States to take measures, including legislative, law enforcement and educational measures, to put an end to all forms of Holocaust denial;¹²⁴⁷

27. *Recalls* the conclusions of the Special Rapporteur that revisionism and attempts to falsify history may, in certain circumstances, fall under the prohibition of hate speech under article 4 (a) of the Convention, which States are required to declare as offences punishable by law,¹²⁴⁸ and that neo-Nazi recruitment attempting to mainstream extreme ideologies or racial, ethnic or religious hatred and intolerance may fall under article 4 (b) of the Convention;

28. *Calls upon* States to continue to take all appropriate measures aimed at preventing and countering hate speech, including on the Internet, and incitement to violence against persons in vulnerable situations, including the organization of meetings and violent protests, fundraising and engagement in other activities;

29. *Expresses serious concern* regarding attempts to prohibit, at the legislative level, symbols associated in States with the victory over Nazism;

30. *Expresses deep concern* about attempts at commercial advertising aimed at exploiting the sufferings of the victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the Second World War by the Nazi regime;

31. *Stresses* the need to respect the memory and that the practices described above do injustice to the memory of the countless victims of crimes against humanity committed in the Second World War, in particular those committed by the SS organization and by those who fought against the anti-Hitler coalition and collaborated with the Nazi movement, and may negatively influence children and young people, and that failure by States to effectively address such practices is incompatible with the obligations of States

¹²⁴⁷ [A/72/291](#), para. 91.

¹²⁴⁸ [A/HRC/38/55](#), para. 15.

Members of the United Nations under its Charter, including those related to the purposes and principles of the Organization;

32. *Also stresses* that all such practices may fuel contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, antisemitism, discrimination based on religion or belief, including Islamophobia and Christianophobia, xenophobia and related intolerance and contribute to the spread and multiplication of various extremist political parties, movements and groups of a racist or xenophobic character, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and in this regard calls for increased vigilance;

33. *Expresses concern* that the human rights and democratic challenges posed by extremist political parties, movements and groups are universal and no country is immune to them;

34. *Emphasizes* the need to take appropriate measures necessary to counter the practices described above, and calls upon States and all other stakeholders to take more effective measures, while fully respecting international human rights law, to prevent, counter and combat those phenomena and extremist movements of a racist or xenophobic character, which pose a real threat to democratic values, and to increase their vigilance and be proactive in strengthening their efforts to recognize and effectively address those challenges;

35. *Underlines* the importance of reliable disaggregated data and statistics on racist and xenophobic crimes for identifying the types of offences committed, the profiles of victims and of perpetrators and whether the latter are affiliated with extremist movements or groups, thus enhancing better understanding of the phenomenon, identifying effective measures to address such racist and xenophobic crimes and assessing the impact of these measures, and recalls in this regard the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development¹²⁴⁹ on data, monitoring and accountability, including collecting data disaggregated by characteristics relevant in national contexts;

36. *Encourages* States to adopt further measures to support training for the police and other law enforcement bodies on the ideologies of extremist political parties, movements and groups the advocacy of which constitutes incitement to racist and xenophobic violence, to strengthen their capacity to address racist and xenophobic crimes and prevent racial profiling practices, to fulfil their responsibility for bringing to justice the perpetrators of such crimes and to combat impunity;

37. *Expresses deep concern* about the increased number of seats occupied by representatives of extremist parties of a racist or xenophobic character in a number of national and local parliaments, and emphasizes in this regard the need for all democratic political parties to base their programmes and activities on respect for human rights and freedoms, democracy, the rule of law and good governance and to condemn all messages disseminating ideas that are based on racial superiority or hatred and that have the objective of fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

38. *Recalls* the concern of the Special Rapporteur regarding the resurgence of neo-Nazism in contemporary times and growing support for and acceptance of neo-Nazism and related ideology in an increasing number of countries;¹²⁵⁰

39. *Notes with appreciation*, in this regard, the call of the Special Rapporteur upon political leaders and parties to strongly condemn incitement to racial discrimination or xenophobia, to promote tolerance and respect and to

¹²⁴⁹ Resolution [70/1](#).

¹²⁵⁰ [A/HRC/38/53](#), para. 16.

refrain from forming coalitions with extremist parties of a racist or xenophobic character;¹²⁵¹

40. *Welcomes* the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur to continue to take steps through national legislation, in accordance with international human rights law, aimed at preventing hate speech and incitement to violence, to withdraw support – financial and otherwise – from political parties and other organizations that engage in neo-Nazi or other hate speech and to take steps to dismantle responsible organizations where such hate speech aims, or can reasonably be expected, to incite violence;¹²⁵²

41. *Encourages* States to improve diversity within law enforcement agencies, and urges them to take all appropriate measures to facilitate the filing of complaints about and to impose appropriate sanctions against those within the public service found to have committed racially motivated violence or to have used hate speech;

42. *Expresses deep concern* about the increase in reported cases of racism, antisemitism, discrimination based on religion, belief or origin, including Islamophobic, Arabophobic, Afrophobic and xenophobic manifestations during sports events, including those committed by extremist groups of a racist or xenophobic character, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and calls upon States, international organizations, sports federations and other relevant stakeholders to strengthen measures to address such incidents, while also welcoming the steps that many States and sports federations, clubs and fan groups have taken to eliminate racism at sporting events, including through sport practised without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which require human understanding, tolerance, inclusion, fair play and solidarity;

¹²⁵¹ [A/72/291](#), para. 83.

¹²⁵² [A/HRC/38/53](#), para. 35 (c).

43. *Recalls* the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur to introduce into national criminal law a provision according to which committing an offence with racist or xenophobic motivations or aims constitutes an aggravating circumstance, allowing for enhanced penalties,¹²⁵³ and encourages those States whose legislation does not contain such provisions to consider that recommendation;

44. *Notes* measures taken by States to prevent discrimination against, in particular but not limited to, persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, people of African descent, Roma, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and to ensure their integration into society, urges States to ensure the full and effective implementation of legal, policy and institutional measures protecting these individuals and groups, including women and girls, and recommends that States effectively guarantee to everyone, without discrimination of any kind, their human rights, including those related to safety and security, access to justice, adequate reparation and appropriate information about their rights, and pursue prosecution and adequate punishment, as appropriate, of those responsible for racist and xenophobic crimes against them, including the possibility of seeking reparation or satisfaction for damages suffered as a result of such crimes;

45. *Calls upon* States to increase awareness about available national and other remedies for human rights violations based on racial discrimination and racism;

46. *Underlines* that the roots of extremism are multifaceted and must be addressed through adequate measures such as education, awareness-raising and the promotion of dialogue, and in this regard recommends the increase of measures to raise awareness among young people of the dangers of the ideologies and activities of extremist political parties, movements and groups;

¹²⁵³ [A/69/334](#), para. 81.

47. *Reaffirms*, in this regard, the particular importance of all forms of education, including human rights education, as a complement to legislative measures, and calls upon States to continue to invest in education, in both conventional and non-conventional curricula, inter alia, in order to transform attitudes and counteract ideas of racial hierarchies and superiority, and counter their negative influence, and to promote the values of non-discrimination, equality and respect for all, as outlined by the Special Rapporteur;

48. *Recognizes* the paramount role of education in promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms and combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, especially in promoting the principles of tolerance, non-discrimination, inclusion and respect for ethnic, religious and cultural diversity and preventing the spread of extremist racist and xenophobic movements and ideas;

49. *Strongly condemns* the use in educational settings of educational material and rhetoric that promulgate racism, discrimination, hatred and violence on the basis of ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief;

50. *Emphasizes* the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur presented at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, in which he emphasized the importance of history classes in teaching the dramatic events and human suffering which arose out of the adoption of ideologies such as Nazism and Fascism;¹²⁵⁴

51. *Stresses* the importance of other positive measures and initiatives aimed at bringing communities together and providing them with space for genuine dialogue, such as round tables, working groups and seminars, including training seminars for State agents and media professionals, as well as awareness-raising activities, especially those initiated by civil society representatives, which require continued State support;

¹²⁵⁴ [A/64/295](#), para. 104.

52. *Underlines* the positive role that relevant United Nations entities and programmes, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, can play in the aforementioned areas;

53. *Reaffirms* article 4 of the Convention, according to which States parties condemn all propaganda and all organizations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form, and undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination and, to this end, with due regard to the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rights expressly set forth in article 5 of the Convention, inter alia:

(a) Shall declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, and incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof;

(b) Shall declare illegal and prohibit organizations, and also organized and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognize participation in such organizations or activities as an offence punishable by law;

(c) Shall not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination;

54. *Also reaffirms* that, as underlined in paragraph 13 of the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence should be prohibited by law, that all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, or incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts, shall be declared offences punishable

by law, in accordance with the international obligations of States, and that these prohibitions are consistent with freedom of opinion and expression;

55. *Recalls* the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, which sets out strategic guidance for the United Nations system to address hate speech at the national and global levels;

56. *Recognizes* the positive role that the exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, as well as full respect for the freedom to seek, receive and impart information, including through the Internet, can play in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

57. *Calls upon* States to strengthen freedom of expression, which can play a crucial role in promoting democracy and combating racist and xenophobic ideologies based on racial superiority;

58. *Also calls upon* States, who have the primary responsibility to counter discrimination and hate speech, and all relevant actors, including political and religious leaders, to promote inclusion and unity in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and to prevent, speak out and take strong action against racism, xenophobia, hate speech, violence, discrimination and stigmatization;

59. *Expresses concern* about the increased use of digital technologies to promote and disseminate racism, racial hatred, xenophobia, racial discrimination and related intolerance, and in this regard calls upon States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to counter the dissemination of the above – mentioned ideas while respecting their obligations under articles 19 and 20 of the Covenant, which guarantee the right to freedom of expression and outline the grounds on which the exercise of this right can be legitimately restricted;

60. *Recognizes* the need to promote the use of new information and communications technologies, including the Internet, to contribute to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

61. *Also recognizes* the positive role that the media can play in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, promoting a culture of tolerance and inclusion and representing the diversity of a multicultural society;

62. *Encourages* States, civil society and other relevant stakeholders to use all opportunities, including those provided by the Internet and social media, to counter, in accordance with international human rights law, the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred and to promote the values of equality, non-discrimination, diversity and democracy;

63. *Encourages* national human rights institutions, where they exist, to develop appropriate programmes to promote tolerance, inclusion and respect for all and to collect relevant information in this regard;

64. *Notes* the importance of strengthening cooperation at the regional and international levels with the aim of countering all manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in particular regarding issues raised in the present resolution;

65. *Stresses* the importance of cooperating closely with civil society and international and regional human rights mechanisms in order to counter effectively all manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, as well as extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and other similar extremist ideological movements that incite racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

66. *Recalls* the request of the Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 2005/5, that the Special Rapporteur continue to reflect on this issue, make relevant recommendations in future reports and seek and take into account in this regard the views of Governments and non-governmental organizations;

67. *Invites* States to consider including in their reports for the universal periodic review and their reports to relevant treaty bodies information on the

steps taken to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including with the aim of implementing the provisions of the present resolution;

68. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur to prepare, for submission to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session and to the Human Rights Council at its fiftieth session, reports on the implementation of the present resolution, and encourages the Special Rapporteur to pay specific attention to paragraphs 5, 12, 14, 15, 16, 20, 28, 29, 30, 48 and 50 above, based on the views collected in accordance with the request of the Commission, as recalled in paragraph 66 above;

69. *Expresses its appreciation* to those Governments and non-governmental organizations that have submitted information to the Special Rapporteur in the course of the preparation of her report to the General Assembly;

70. *Encourages* States and non-governmental organizations to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur, including by providing information on developments with regard to the issues raised in the present resolution in order to contribute to the preparation of future reports to the General Assembly;

71. *Stresses* that such information is important for the sharing of experiences and best practices in the fight against extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and other extremist ideological movements that incite racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

72. *Encourages* Governments to invest more resources in building and sharing knowledge on successful positive measures to prevent and counter racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in addition to sanctioning any violations, including by providing remedies to victims of violations, as appropriate;

73. *Encourages* Governments, non-governmental organizations and relevant actors to disseminate, as widely as possible, information regarding the contents of and the principles outlined in the present resolution, including through the media, but not limited to it;

74. *Decides* to remain seized of the issue.

53rd plenary meeting
16 December 2021

Annex 3

**List of cosponsors of the resolution of the 76th session
of the UN General Assembly "Combating glorification of Nazism,
neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary
forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia
and related intolerance"
(without Russia)**

Algeria	Madagascar
Angola	Mali
Armenia	Morocco
Bangladesh	Mozambique
Belarus	Namibia
Bolivia	Nicaragua
Botswana	Nigeria
Burkina Faso	Pakistan
Cambodia	Philippines
Cameroon	Republic of South Africa
CAR	Rwanda
Cat-d'Ivoire	Saudi Arabia
China	Senegal
Congo	Serbia
Cuba	Sri-Lanka
DPRK	Sudan
Egypt	Syria
Eritrea	Tajikistan
Ethiopia	Togo
Ghana	Tunisia
Guinea	Turkmenistan
Guyana	Uganda
Haiti	Uzbekistan
India	Venezuela
Jamaica	Vietnam
Kazakhstan	Zimbabwe
Kyrgyzstan	
Laos	
Lebanon	

Voting results
on draft resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism
and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms
of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance"
at the plenary meeting of the 76th session
of the United Nations General Assembly
on 16 December 2021

Affirmative
votes (Y)

130

Dissenting
votes (N)

2

Abstained (A)

49

-	Afghanistan	-	Dominica	A	Liechtenstein	A	Samoa
A	Albania	Y	Dominican Republic	A	Lithuania	A	San Marino
Y	Algeria	Y	Ecuador	A	Luxembourg	-	Sao Tome and Principe
A	Andorra	Y	Egypt	Y	Madagascar	Y	Saudi Arabia
Y	Angola	Y	El Salvador	Y	Malawi	Y	Senegal
Y	Antigua and Barbuda	Y	Equatorial Guinea	Y	Malaysia	Y	Serbia
Y	Argentina	Y	Eritrea	Y	Maldives	Y	Seychelles
Y	Armenia	A	Estonia	Y	Mali	Y	Sierra Leone
A	Australia	Y	Eswatini	A	Malta	Y	Singapore
A	Austria	Y	Ethiopia	-	Marshall Islands	A	Slovakia

Y	Azerbaijan	Y	Fiji	Y	Mauritania	A	Slovenia
Y	Bahamas	A	Finland	Y	Mauritius	A	Solon Islands
Y	Bahrain	A	France	Y	Mexico	Y	Somalia
Y	Bangladesh	Y	Gabon	-	Micronesia (Federated States of)r	Y	South Africa
Y	Barbados	Y	Gambia	A	Monaco	Y	South Sudan
Y	Belarus	A	Georgia	Y	Mongolia	A	Spain
A	Belgium	A	Germany	A	Montenegro	Y	Sri Lanka
Y	Belize	Y	Ghana	Y	Morocco	Y	Sudan
Y	Benin	A	Greece	-	Mozambique	Y	Suriname
Y	Bhutan	Y	Grenada	Y	Myanmar	A	Sweden
Y	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Y	Guatemala	Y	Namibia	A	Switzerland
Y	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Y	Guinea	Y	Nauru	Y	Syrian Arab Republic
Y	Botswana	Y	Guinea- Bissau	Y	Nepal	Y	Tajikistan
Y	Brazil	Y	Guyana	A	Netherlands	Y	Thailand
Y	Brunei- Darussalam	Y	Haiti	A	New Zealand	Y	Timor-Leste
A	Bulgaria	Y	Honduras	Y	Nicaragua	Y	Togo
Y	Burkina Faso	A	Hungary	Y	Niger	A	Tonga
Y	Burundi	A	Iceland	Y	Nigeria	Y	Trinidad and Tobago
Y	Cabo Verde	Y	India	A	North Macedonia	Y	Tunisia
Y	Cambodia	Y	Indonesia	A	Norway	A	Turkey

Y	Cameroon	-	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Y	Oman	Y	Turkmenistan
A	Canada	Y	Iraq	Y	Pakistan	-	Tuvalu
Y	Central African Republic	A	Ireland	-	Palau	Y	Uganda
Y	Chad	Y	Israel	Y	Panama	N	Ukraine
Y	Chile	A	Italy	Y	Papua New Guinea	Y	United Arab Emirates
Y	China	Y	Jamaica	Y	Paraguay	A	United Kingdom
Y	Colombia	A	Japan	Y	Peru	Y	United Republic of Tanzania
Y	Comoros	Y	Jordan	Y	Philippines	N	United States
-	Congo	Y	Kazakhstan	A	Poland	Y	Uruguay
Y	Costa Rica	Y	Kenya	A	Portugal	Y	Uzbekistan
Y	Cote d'Ivoire	Y	Kiribati	Y	Qatar	Y	Vanuatu
A	Croatia	Y	Kuwait	A	Republic of Korea	Y	Venezuela
Y	Cuba	Y	Kyrgyzstan	A	Republic of Moldova	Y	Viet Nam
A	Cyprus	Y	Lao People's Democratic Republic	A	Romania	Y	Yemen
A	Czech Republic	A	Latvia	Y	Russian Federation	Y	Zambia
Y	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Y	Lebanon	Y	Rwanda	Y	Zimbabwe

-	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Y	Lesotho	Y	Saint Kitts and Nevis		
A	Denmark	-	Liberia	Y	Saint Lucia		
Y	Djibouti	Y	Libya	Y	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		

Symbol "-" means that delegation of the country has not participated in the voting.