

UKRAINE

Religious Freedom, Militancy, and the Post-Soviet Space

Research Unit

USCIS Refugee, Asylum and International Operations

June 2020



Presentation Roadmap

- Soviet Union (Religious Persecution)
- Post-Soviet Regional Conflicts and Causes
- Current Conflict in Ukraine (Including Armed Actors)
- Religion and Human Rights in Ukraine Today
- Human Rights in Russia
- Military Service (Soviet, Ukraine, Russia)
- Resources

The Breakup of the Soviet Union, 1991



Religion in the Soviet Union

- Soviet Union was officially an atheistic State, but approximately 1/3 professed religious belief
- Marxism-Leninism provided for control, suppression, and eventual elimination of religious beliefs
- Soviet officials identified religion with nationalism; suppression efforts were tied to relationship with republics, a group's size, and willingness to submit to political authority
- Smaller groups or those with allegiance to a foreign authority (e.g. the Pope) attracted harsher efforts

Religion in the Soviet Union

Orthodoxy

Permitted to function openly but controlled:

- **Russian Orthodox Church** (largest at 50+million; over 4,000 of 7,000 registered active churches were in the Ukrainian Republic; Russian-language and name used but resented by many; tool for Soviet control; shifting government relationship throughout history including periods of deportations, clergy executions and replacements, church closures)
- **Georgian Orthodox Church** (2.5 million followers; tight government control; only permitted in Georgia Republic; forced to conduct service in Old Church Slavonic instead of Georgian language)

Forced underground:

- **Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church** (hostility from government, viewed as nationalistic; operated outside of State borders; believers harassed; leadership decimated)
- **Belarusian Autocephalous Orthodox Church** (hostility; 2000+ clergy shot or sent to labor camps; believers harassed)

Religion in the Soviet Union

Protestants

- 5 million collectively
- All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists formed to control them, but many resisted
- **Evangelical Christian Baptists** (largest Protestant group; some registered but many functioned illegally)
- **Lutherans** (second largest; primarily Latvian and Estonian Republics, with focus on religious and national issues)
- Smaller groups: **Pentecostals, Seventh-Day Adventists, Mennonites, Jehovah's Witnesses**, others; with or without official sanction

Religion in the Soviet Union

Catholics and Others

- **Roman Catholic Church** (5.5 million in Lithuanian, Belarusian, and Latvian Republics; also Moldovan, Ukrainian, and Russian Republics; stood for Lithuanian religious and national rights; clergy imprisoned; police infiltration; churches closed)
- **Ukrainian Catholic Church (Uniates)** (4 million but hostility from Soviet regime; 1945 hundreds of clergy arrested, deported, killed; declared illegal and forced to join Russian Orthodox Church but survived underground)
- **Armenian Apostolic Church** (4 million; population of Armenia)
- Small number adhered to **Buddhism, Lamaism, and shamanism**

Religion in the Soviet Union

Islam

- 45 to 50 million adherents (second largest)
- All working mosques, schools, publications supervised by Soviets through four regional “Spiritual Directorates” for control
- More met informally in homes and tea houses with self-taught mullahs than in sanctioned mosques

Religion in the Soviet Union

Judaism

- Jewish section of Communist Party formed for control; community councils abolished
- Propaganda against Jewish clergy and religion
- Most of the 5,000 functioning synagogues were closed; training rabbis and religious practice impossible causing many to leave

Religion in the Soviet Union

KGB Infiltration

- KGB sought to control Church hierarchy
- Secret police recruited a network of informers, mostly by force or threats
- Their known presence sowed mistrust among the clergy and the congregation
- Informers couldn't be fully trusted, so KGB officers were placed beginning in 1950s
- Program was supervised by the KGB's Fifth Directorate (responsible for ideology) with support from the Second Directorate (which handles counterintelligence)
- By the late 1980s, the church had been fully penetrated.



Significant concentration of ethnic Russians



Scattered presence of ethnic Russians

Population totals for the Baltic states taken from *The World Factbook 1994*. Population totals for all other countries taken from *CIS Statistical Bulletin #20, June 1994*.

Russia

Kazakhstan

Turkey

Turkmenistan

Iran

Afghanistan

Pakistan

India

Sweden

Finland

TALLINN

Estonia

RIGA

Latvia

VILNIUS

Lithuania

MINSK

Belarus

MOSCOW

KIEV

Ukraine

CHISINAU

Moldova

Romania

Bulg.

Black Sea

T'BILISI

Georgia

YEREVAN

Armenia

Azerbaijan

EAKU

Caspian Sea

Aral Sea

TASHKENT

Uzbekistan

BISHKEK

Kyrgyzstan

DUSHANBE

Tajikistan

China

Cyprus

Mediterranean Sea

Lebanon

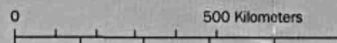
Syria

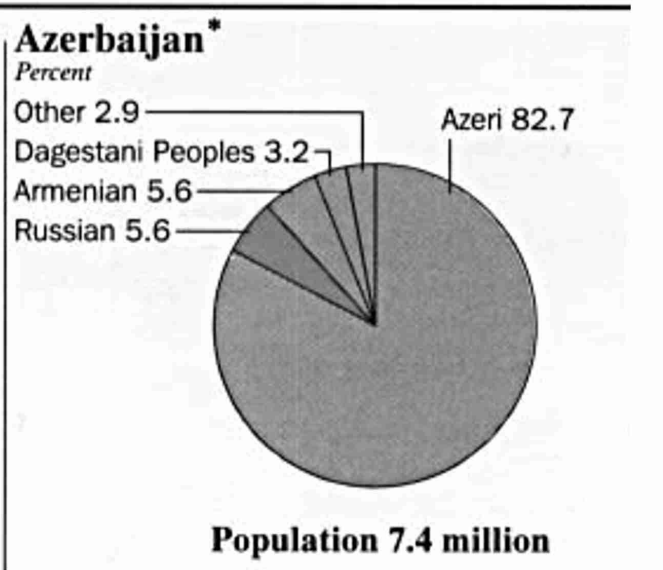
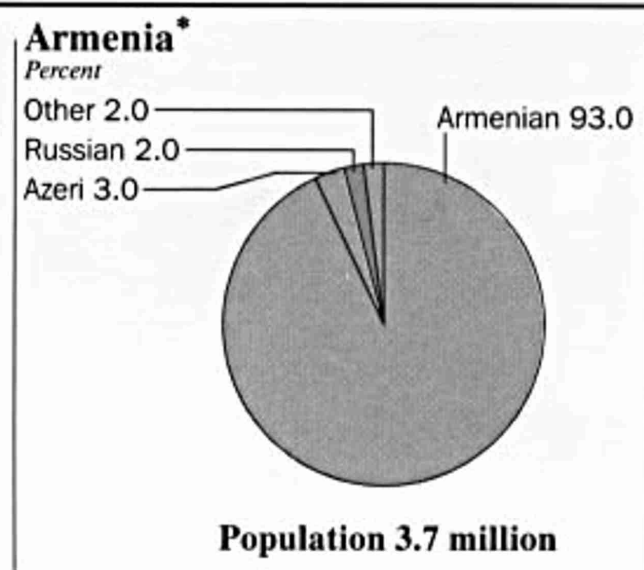
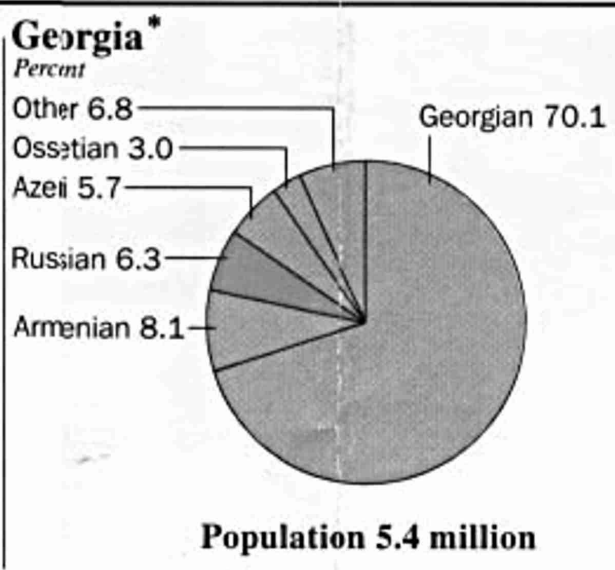
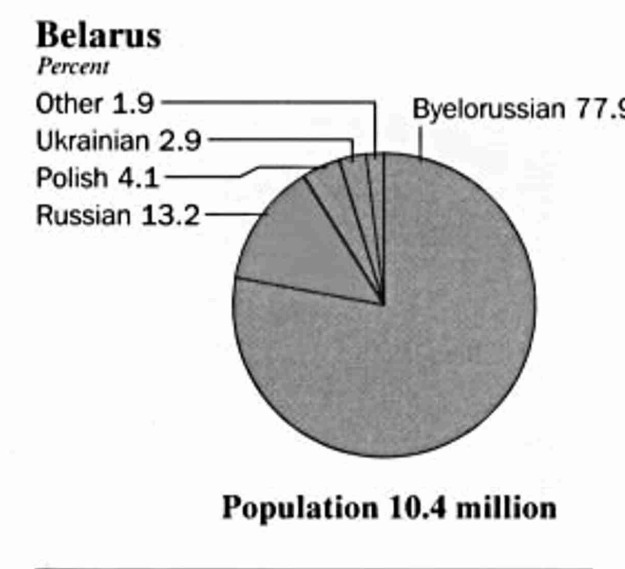
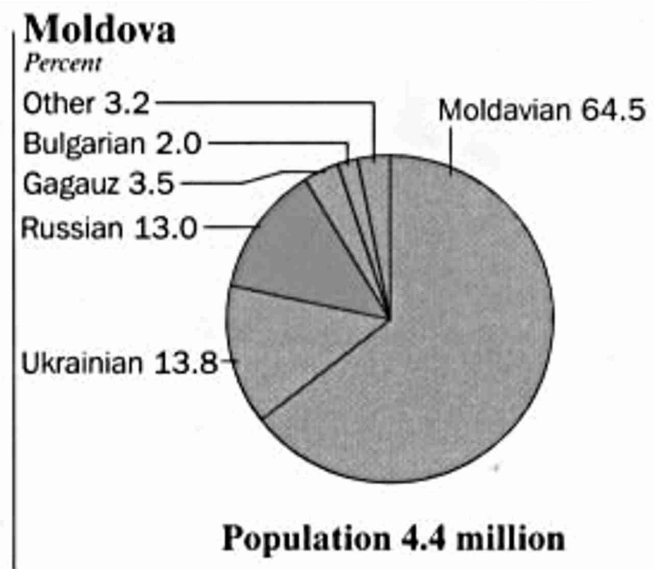
Iraq

Israel

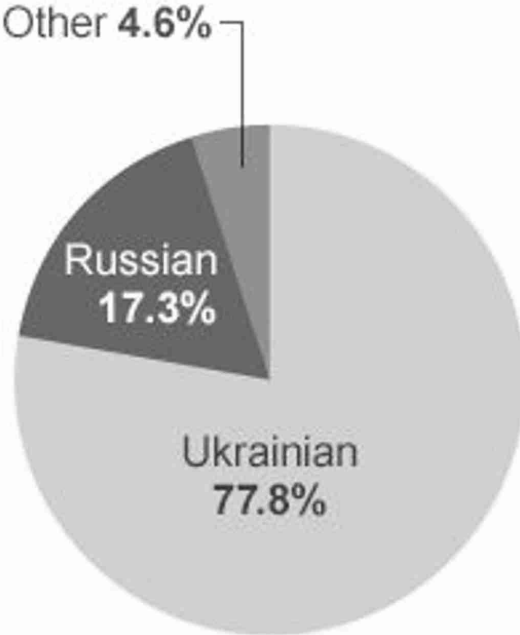
Indian claim

Chinese line of control





Ukraine by ethnic identity



Crimea by ethnic identity



Note: Some totals may not add up due to rounding
Source: 2001 Ukraine census

Russia's flashpoints with Europe

■ Nato countries ■ Russia



Russian Aggression: Moldova

Transdniestria

- Separatist region of Moldova – a narrow strip of land between the Dniester River and the Ukrainian border
- Proclaimed independence from Moldova in 1990, and following a short civil war succeeded in establishing de facto independence in 1992.
- Russia has a strong presence and the region has stated that it wants annexation to Russia.
- The international community does not recognize its self-declared statehood



Russia

Georgia

Armenia

Azerbaijan

Turkey

Iran

The Caucasus

200 Kilometers



200 Miles

Russian Aggression: Georgia

Abkhazia and South Ossetia

- Both regions have close ties with Russia, whose troops have operated there since the early 1990s
- In 2008 Moscow formally recognized both as independent states, following an armed conflict between Georgia and Russia that grew out of clashes between Georgia and Russian-backed rebels in South Ossetia
- Russia has effectively controlled the two breakaway regions since then; both heavily dependent on Russian aid
- Moves by Russia to formalize ties with both in 2014/2015 triggered fears that Moscow seeks annexation

Nagorno-Karabakh

- 1920's: Soviets established the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region
- 95% of population is ethnically Armenian—within Azerbaijan
- Bolshevik rule kept conflict in check, but tense
- 1991: Officially declared its independence and war erupted between Armenia and Azerbaijan - 30,000 casualties
- By 1993, Armenia controlled Nagorno-Karabakh and occupied 20% of the surrounding Azerbaijani territory
- 1994: Russia brokered cease-fire which remains in place, but sporadic cross-border fighting
- Russia has promised to defend Armenia and Turkey takes the side of Azerbaijan

Between East and West

The strategic importance of Ukraine

Percentage of the population that is Russian



Source: 2011 census





Russian Aggression: Ukraine

Maidan revolution

- 2013 November - Tens of thousands protest President Viktor Yanukovich's sudden decision to abandon plans to sign an association agreement with the EU, blaming Russian pressure.
- 2014 February - Security forces kill at least 125 protesters in Kiev. President Yanukovich flees to Russia, opposition takes over.

Russian Aggression: Ukraine

- 2014 March - Russian forces annex Crimea, prompting biggest East-West confrontation since Cold War. US and EU impose harsh sanctions on Russia.
- 2014 April - Pro-Russia armed groups seize parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions on Russian border. Government launches military operation in response.



Russian Aggression: Ukraine

- 2014 May – Donetsk People’s Republic and Luhansk People’s Republic declared by referendums. Leading businessman Petro Poroshenko wins presidential election on pro-Western platform.
- 2014 July - Pro-Russian forces shoot down Malaysian airliner over eastern Ukraine conflict zone, killing all 298 people on board.
- 2014 September - NATO confirms Russian troops and heavy military equipment entering eastern Ukraine.
- 2014 October - Parliamentary elections produce convincing majority for pro-Western parties.

Russian Aggression: Ukraine

- 2015 February - Germany and France broker tenuous ceasefire (Minsk Accords)
- 2016 - Economy returns to fragile growth after two years of turmoil
- 2017 July - Ukraine's association agreement with the EU is ratified by all signatories
- 2018 May – Russia opens a bridge linking southern Russia to Crimea



Volodymyr Zelensky

73%

landslide win on 21 April

Comedian but trained
as a lawyer

Instagram star with
4.2m followers

Millionaire thanks to
his production company Kvartal
95

Linked to oligarch Ihor
Kolomoisky through show on TV
channel 1+1

Russian Aggression: Ukraine

October 2019: Zelensky signs on to “Steinmeier’s Formula”

- Calls for (October 2020?) elections to be held in the separatist-held territories under Ukrainian legislation with OSCE supervision
- If OSCE judges the balloting to be free and fair, then a special self-governing status for the territories will be initiated and Ukraine will be returned control of its easternmost border
- Zelensky said local elections held only after Russian forces withdraw and Ukraine regains control of state border



Conflict in Ukraine

**MORE THAN
10,000**

*Estimated number of civilian
casualties*

Source

1.5 MILLION

*Estimated number of internally
displaced people*

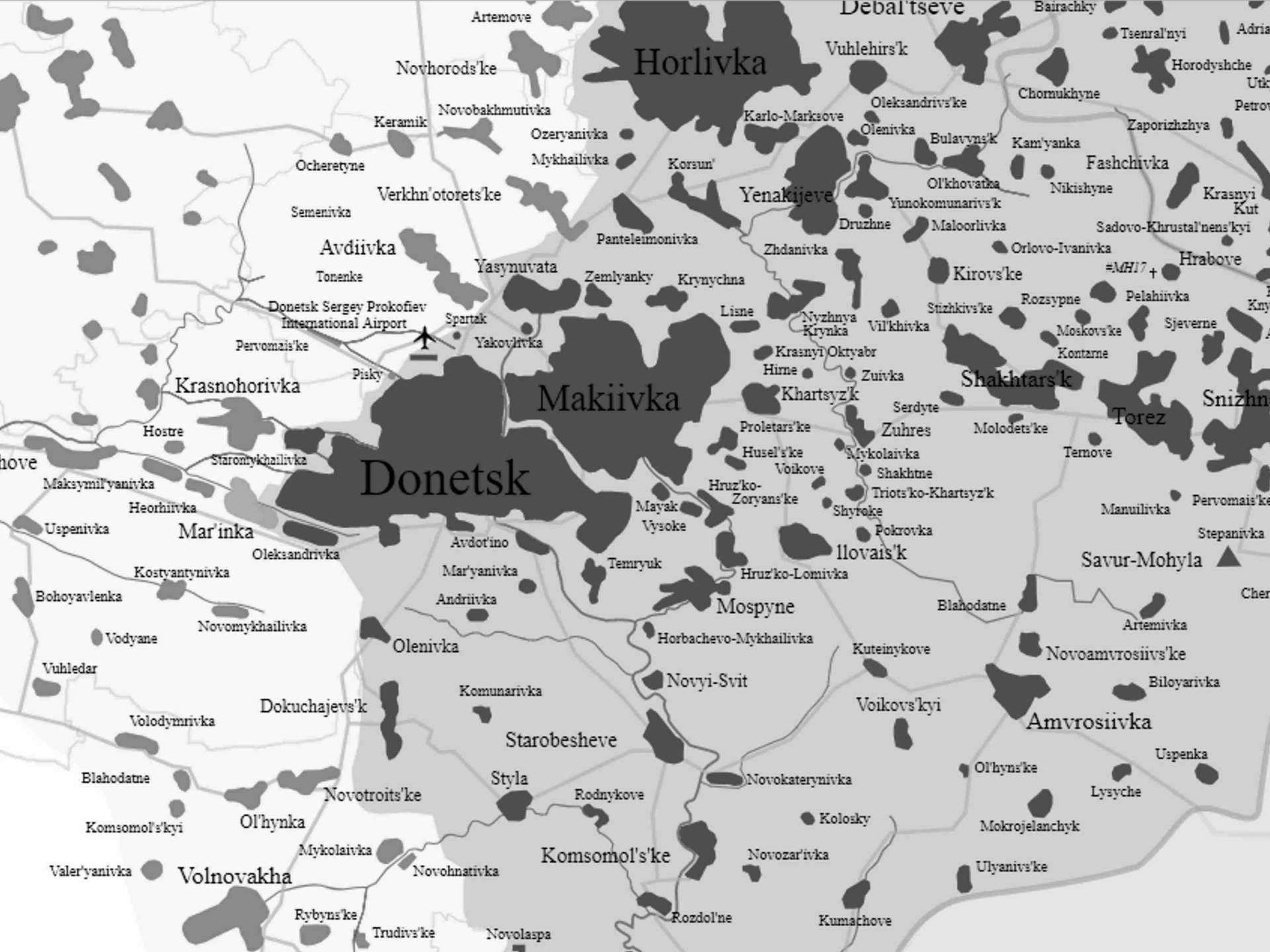
Source

280 MILES

Length of front line

Source





Artemove

Debal'tseve

Bairachky

Novhorods'ke

Horlivka

Vuhlehrs'k

Tsenral'nyi

Adria

Novobakhmutivka

Karlo-Marxove

Oleksandrivs'ke

Chornukhyne

Horodyshe

Utk

Keramik

Ozeryanivka

Korsun'

Olenivka

Bulavyns'k

Kam'yanka

Zaporizhzhya

Ocheretyne

Mykhailivka

Yenakiieve

Ol'khovatka

Fashchivka

Krasnyi Kut

Semanivka

Verkh'n'otorets'ke

Panteleimonivka

Druzhne

Maloorlivka

Sadovo-Khrustal'nens'kyi

Avdiivka

Yasynuvata

Zemlyanky

Krynychna

Kirovs'ke

Orlovo-Ivanivka

Hrabove

Tonenke

Donetsk Sergey Prokofiev International Airport

Spartak

Yakovlivka

Lisne

Nyzhnya Krynka

Vil'khivka

Rozsypne

Pelahiivka

Pervomais'ke

Pisky

Krasnohorivka

Makiivka

Krasnyi Oktyabr

Stizhivske

Moskovs'ke

Sjeverne

Hostre

Staromykhailivka

Donetsk

Makiivka

Proletars'ke

Serdyte

Shakhtars'k

Torez

Snizhn

hove

Maksymil'yanivka

Heorhiivka

Mar'inka

Avdot'ino

Mayak

Vysoke

Huz'ko-Zoryans'ke

Triots'ko-Khartsyz'k

Molodets'ke

Temove

Manuilivka

Pervomais'ke

Stepanivka

Bohoyavlenka

Kostyantynivka

Oleksandrivka

Mar'yanivka

Temryuk

Huz'ko-Lomivka

Pokrovka

Savur-Mohyla

Cher

Vodyane

Novomykhailivka

Olenivka

Andriivka

Horbachevo-Mykhailivka

Mospyne

Blahodatne

Novoamvrosiivs'ke

Biloyarivka

Vuhledar

Volodymyrivka

Dokuchajevs'k

Komunarivka

Novyi-Svit

Voikovs'kyi

Amvrosiivka

Uspenka

Blahodatne

Novotroits'ke

Styla

Rodnykove

Novokaterynivka

Ol'hyns'ke

Lysyche

Komsomol's'kyi

Ol'hynka

Mykolaivka

Novohnativka

Komsomol's'ke

Novozarivka

Mokrojelanchyk

Ulyanivs'ke

Valer'yanivka

Volnovakha

Rybys'ke

Trudivs'ke

Novolaspa

Rozdol'ne

Kumachove

THE SITUATION IN THE EASTERN REGIONS OF UKRAINE

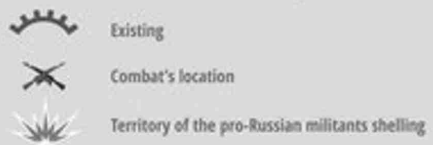
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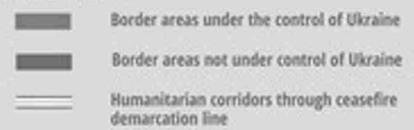
Control over settlements:



Positions of Ukrainian military



The border



Main check-points on Ukraine-Russia border



Seven task forces (ships and coast guard motorboats) are continuing to guard the Azov Sea to prevent the penetration of sabotage and intelligence groups on the coast of Donetsk and Zaporizhia oblasts, and to guard the raids of the Mariupol and Berdyansk ports

The location of military units of the Russian Federation

Boeing 777 crash site July 17, 2014



Ministry of Defense of Ukraine

<http://www.mil.gov.ua>

Resources on Conflict in Ukraine

- **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE):**

Daily and spot reports from the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

Searchable daily reports with specific information about security and armed encounters (Apr. 14, 2014 to present)

- **Wikipedia:** Timeline of the war in Donbass

Useful but caution for bias (heavily cites Ukrainian government ATO HQ reports)

Militant Groups in Ukraine

Government forces

- **Armed Forces of Ukraine:** engaged in fighting in Donbass but poorly equipped and led
- **National Guard of Ukraine:** Created March 2014; significant fighting
- **Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVS):** Primary police force with counter-insurgency operations in Donbass
- **Security Service of Ukraine (SBU):** Main intelligence Service; conducts "Anti-Terrorist Operation" in Donbass

Militant Groups in Ukraine

Government forces and Pro-Kiev militias

- **Berkut Security Force (Golden Eagle):** Riot police; answered to Ministry of Interior, not police; reports of torture of detainees; committed violence against Maidan protesters resulting in deaths; disbanded after Maidan
- **Right Sector:** A far-right, ultra-nationalist, neofacist group known to have fought against Oplot and in Donbass; founding groups included Trident (Tryzub), the Ukrainian National Assembly-Ukrainian National Self-Defense (UNA-UNSO), the Social-National Assembly and its Patriot of Ukraine paramilitary wing, White Hammer, and Carpathian Sich; has also clashed with Ukrainian forces

Militant Groups in Ukraine

Government forces and Pro-Kiev militias

- **Aidar Battalion:** 450 fighters; troubling reputation for blocking aid to civilians and seizing a bread factory; dissolved in 2015 then select members formed the Army Unit 24th Indep Assault Bn “Aidar”
- **Batkivschchyna Battalion:** created in Kirovohrad region by Resistance Movement; small
- **“Chechen Battalions”:** Anti-Russian Chechens; passionate, tough veterans of Chechnya wars, but squabbling
- **Donbas Battalion:** More than 800 fighters from Donbas loyal to Kiev; attracted instructors from Georgian military who had fought Russians in 2009; became part of National Guard

Militant Groups in Ukraine

Government forces and Pro-Kiev militias

- **Azov movement/Battalion:** effectively an autonomous special operations detachment in the National Guard of Ukraine; Political and military wings; openly accepts self-avowed neo-Nazis; intolerance toward minority groups; human rights abuses in the conflict zone; founded the National Corps in October 2016, incorporating two other nationalist groups, including Patriot Of Ukraine; well-trained and armed military power
- **The National Militia:** Component of Azov; vigilante force with ultra-nationalist, far-right political ideology; weapons and tactical training for members; vowed to patrol Ukrainian streets though not authorized; attacks on minorities

Militant Groups in Ukraine

Government forces and Pro-Kiev militias

- **Go Zirka:** satellite of Azov
- **Department for the Protection of Strategic Objects of The National Guard of Ukraine:** distinct protection police unit headed by a prominent Azov leader with links to Ukraine's Minister of Internal Affairs; far-right ideology and training
- **Tradition and Order:** aggressively expanding violent ultra-nationalist organization; carried out attacks on Roma, LGBT individuals and activists; advanced firearms and combat tactics training to members.

Militant Groups in Ukraine



Militant Groups in Ukraine

Role of Neo-Nazi, militant groups in Zelensky government?

- When Zelensky signed on to Steinmeier Formula, far right and nationalist groups marched in Kyiv's Independence Square to oppose any "capitulation"
- Some high-level members of the government openly support some neo-Nazi groups; militant groups being included in discussions on conflict in east (referred to as "veterans")
- When a troop pullback was initiated as part of the agreement, armed militants, including some from the Azov Battalion, came to the front and tried to replace the military in the positions they were leaving. Zelensky came in person to convince these groups to back down.
- October 2019, Ukrainian Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk and Minister of Veteran Affairs Oksana Koliada both attended a concert organized by Andriy Medvedko, an accused murderer and member of neo-Nazi group C-14, and headlined by neo-Nazi band Sokyra Peruna.

Militant Groups in Ukraine

Russian Forces

- Up to 10,000 Russian soldiers often without insignia have been active, including artillery units, reconnaissance, sabotage detachments
- Russia providing arms, training, leadership, and fighters
- Approx. 42,000 Russian forces rotated in Crimea and in Russia close to border, including Army, FSB Border Guards, Black Sea Fleet
- Russian city of Rostov-on-Don a seaport, road, and rail hub – serving as logistical base with arsenals, weapons warehouses, and a significant GRU presence; volunteers and mercenaries screened and armed
- **Wagner Group:** Moscow-controlled private military company

Militant Groups in Ukraine

Russia-backed Separatists (Umbrella names)

- **United Armed Forces of Novorossiya (“New Russia”)**: Umbrella name for forces of Donetsk People’s Republic and Luhansk People’s Republic, consisting of many different groups
- **Novorossiya Party**: Ostensibly an umbrella political organization for the separatist region; sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department
- **Donetsk People’s Militia**: Umbrella name used at the start of the war to denote a haphazard collection of armed groups operating in Donetsk; later became **DNR I Army Corps** (17,000-22,000 soldiers)
- **Luhansk People’s Militia**: (aka “**Army of the Southeast**”) An umbrella name referring disorganized armed groups operating in Luhansk; less disciplined than Donetsk; later became **Luhansk II Army Corps** (9,000-13,000 soldiers)

Militant Groups in Ukraine

Russia-backed Separatists (Donetsk)

- **Oplot Battalion (“Oplot”):** One of the first insurgent units; shot and beat Maidan protestors, abducted and tortured Maidan leader; coordinates with Russian Secret Services; have targeted Jehovah’s Witnesses in Donetsk; Sanctioned by Treasury Dept.
- **Republican Guard:** “Elite” unit with six battalions, 3,000 fighters
- **Kalmius Battalion:** “Special forces” unit with artillery and rockets; originally a group of miners who fought against Ukrainian forces
- **Miner’s Division:** Recruited from coalminers; later redesignated the 4th Motor Rifle Battalion

Militant Groups in Ukraine

Russia-backed Separatists (Donetsk)

- **Russian Orthodox Army:** Originated during insurgency as local force but contains Russian volunteers
- **Security Service Battalion:** Intended as “Praetorian Guard”
- **Sloviansk Brigade:** Reached peak of 2,000 battle-ready fighters; some defected to other militias and it became the DNR’s 1st Independent Motor Rifle Brigade
- **Somali Battalion:** Equipped with tanks; permanently stationed in Donetsk and Makiivka (Only a nickname – “brave as Somalis”)

Militant Groups in Ukraine

Russia-backed Separatists (Donetsk)

- **Voskhod Battalion:** (aka **Consolidated Orthodox Battalion Voskhod** – “**Sunrise**”) 300 fighters; claimed providing humanitarian protection for civilians but engaged in combat
- **Voztok Battalion:** Defectors from the Security Service of Ukraine's (SBU) Donetsk unit, North Caucasus fighters, and some other elements; raised by GRU to assert Moscow control; “Ukrainianized” with locals and became **Vostok (“East”) Brigade**.
- **Death Battalion:** About 300 fighters from Chechnya; Muslims
- **Sparta Battalion:** Took part in key early battles; almost 1,000 fighters

Militant Groups in Ukraine

Russia-backed Separatists (Luhansk)

- **Cossack National Guard: (aka Great Host of the Don Cossacks, & First Cossack Regiment)** Russia-created; over 4,000 fighters; participated in the annexation of Crimea - manned checkpoints on highways, guarded the headquarters of separatist government, patrolled the streets, helped build and defend fortifications on border with Ukraine
- **Zarya Battalion:** Luhansk's most capable force; artillery brigade well-equipped by Russia; sanctioned by Treasury Department
- **Prizrak Brigade ("Ghost" Brigade):** Primarily Luhansk but also cooperates with commanders in Donetsk; French-speaking Continental Unit; has a foreign communist Biryukov-Markov Unit

Militant Groups in Ukraine

Russia-backed Separatists (Luhansk)

- **Rus Battalion:** Formed from several hundred workers and security guards from a mine complex
- **Leshy ("Forest Spirit") Battalion:** 500 fighters from locals and Cossacks
- **Rapid Reaction Group "Batman":** 400 fighters; reputation of looting, organized criminality, human rights abuses; leader killed in Jan. 2015 and fighters divided among other groups
- **USSR Battalion:** Controlled town of Bryanka; eventually incorporated in LNR Territorial Defense Battalions

Militant Groups in Ukraine

Russia-backed Separatists (Luhansk and other)

- **1st Independent "August" Tank Battalion:** Only dedicated tank unit in LNR forces
- **3rd Stanichno-Luhansk Assault Battalion:** Former paratroopers and middle-aged veterans of Soviet war in Afghanistan
- **Night Wolves:** A biker gang closely connected to the Russian special services; have helped to recruit separatist fighters for Donetsk and Luhansk; intimidation and criminal activities; assisted in Crimea; sanctioned by Treasury Department
- **Ossetian and Abkhaz paramilitaries:** Small numbers joining battalions; allegiance to Russia

Militant Groups in Ukraine

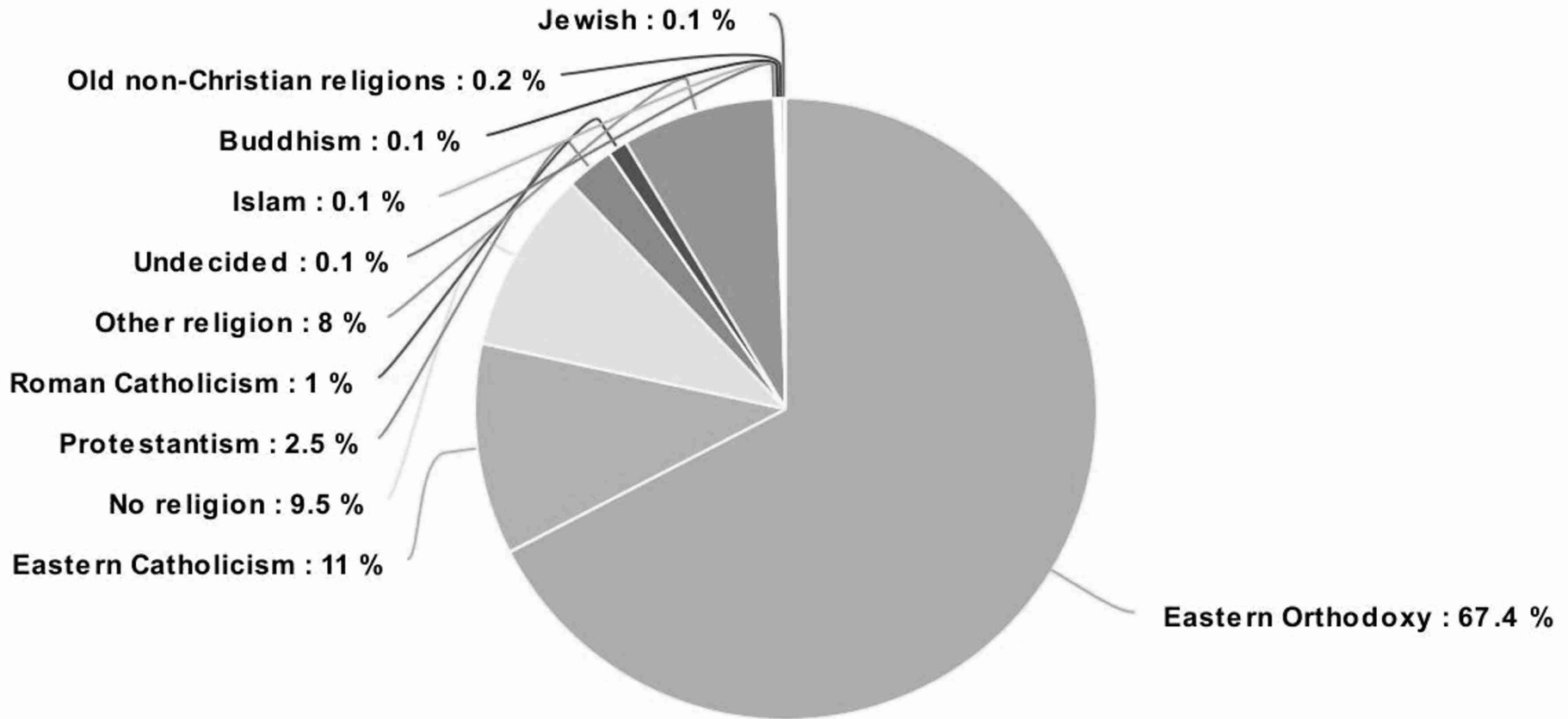
Citizens Groups Assisting Fighters:

Numerous citizen groups voluntarily assist the forces on both sides of the conflict, but mostly assisting pro-Kiev forces against separatists. Support includes medical care and training, supplies such as body armor, surveillance and drone support.

Q: How difficult is it to arrange for a truck driver to travel to Eastern Ukraine now?



Religion in Ukraine (2014-2015)



- Eastern Orthodoxy
- Eastern Catholicism
- No religion
- Protestantism
- Roman Catholicism
- Other religion
- Undecided
- Islam
- Buddhism
- Old non-Christian religions
- Jewish

Religious Freedom in Ukraine

Christian Orthodox (before Dec. 15, 2018):

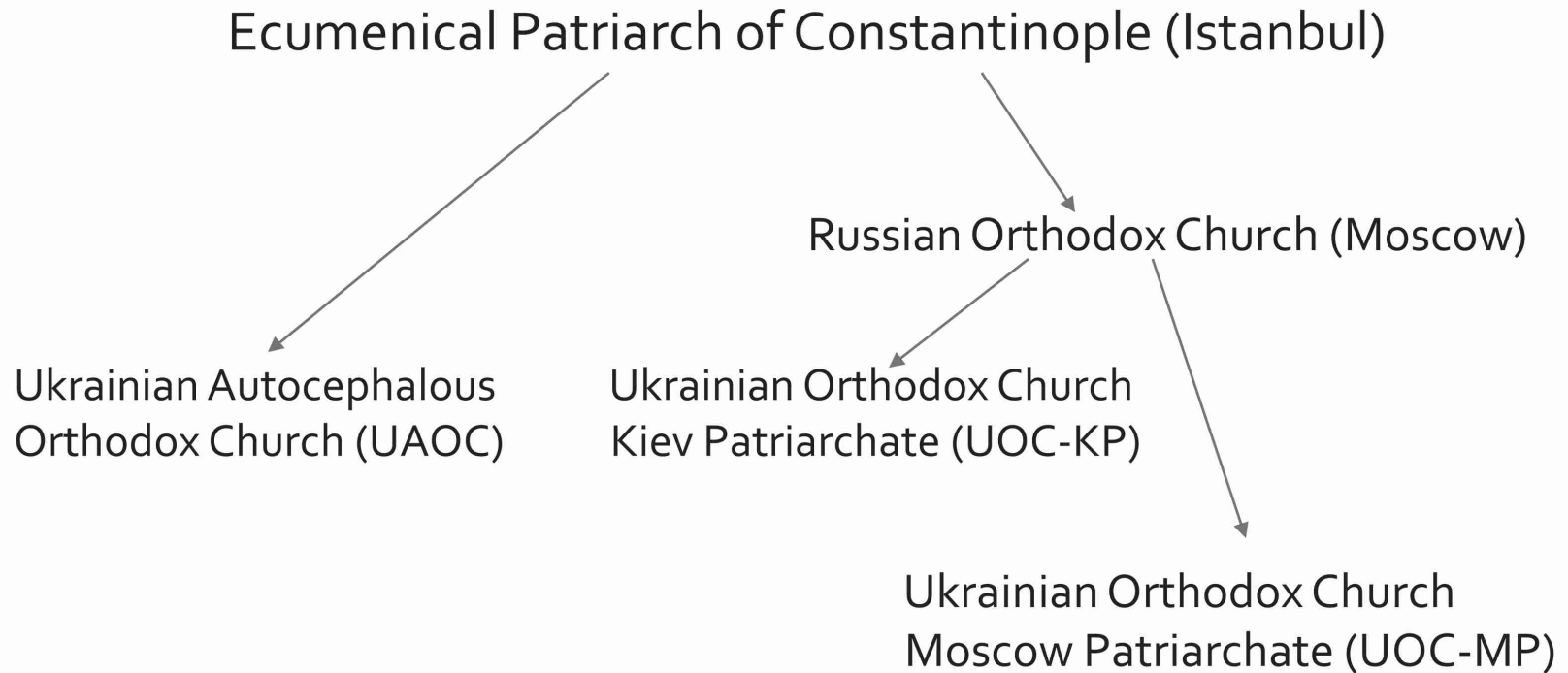
- 26.5% Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kiev Patriarchate (UOC-KP)
- 12% Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP)
- 24.3% “just an Orthodox believer”
- 3.5% the Russian Orthodox Church (as distinct from the UOC-MP)
- 1.1% the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC)
- 0.8% undecided

The Evangelical Baptist Union of Ukraine is the largest Protestant community. Other Christian groups include Pentecostals, Seventh-day Adventists, Lutherans, Anglicans, Calvinists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons).

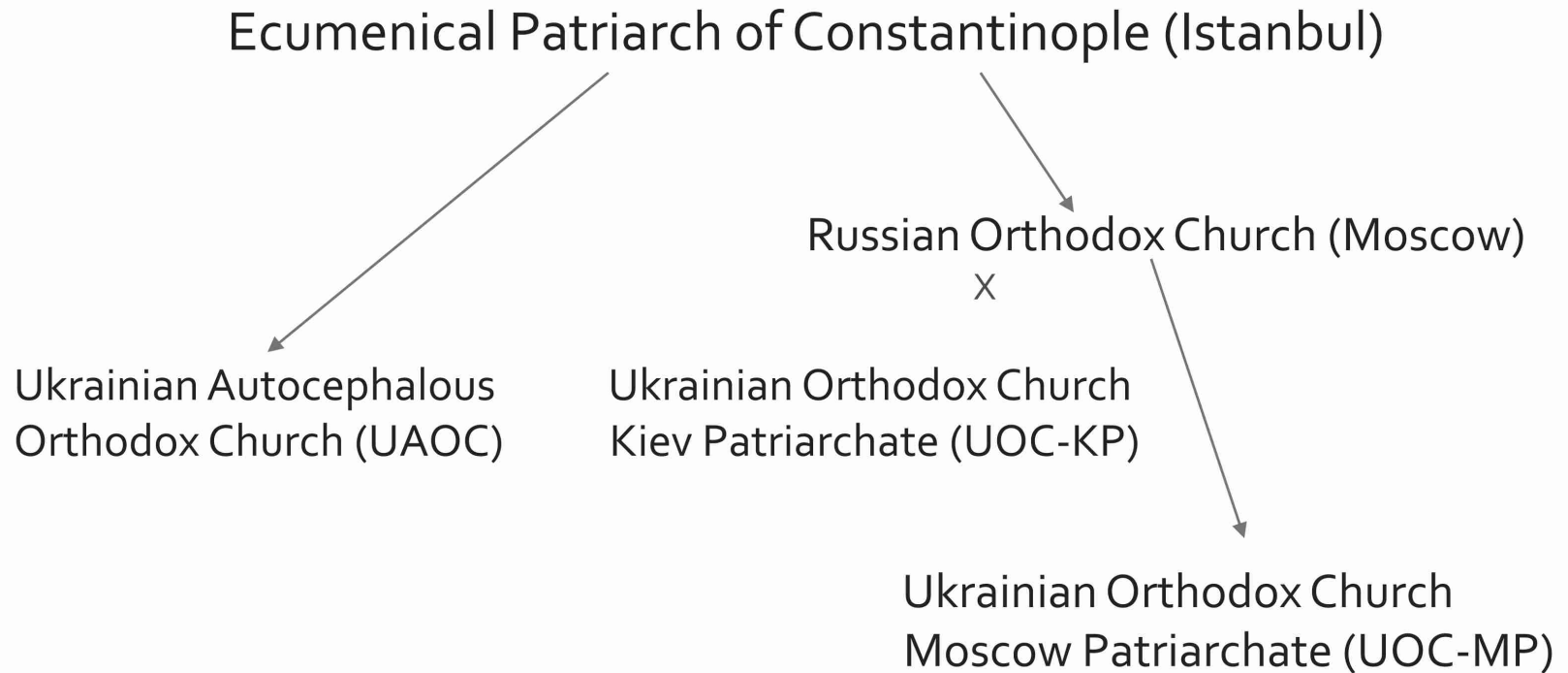
Religious Freedom in Ukraine



Religious Freedom in Ukraine



Religious Freedom in Ukraine



Religious Freedom in Ukraine

Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople (Istanbul)

Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow)
X

Ukrainian Autocephalous
Orthodox Church (UAOC)

Ukrainian Orthodox Church
Kiev Patriarchate (UOC-KP)

Ukrainian Orthodox Church
Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP)

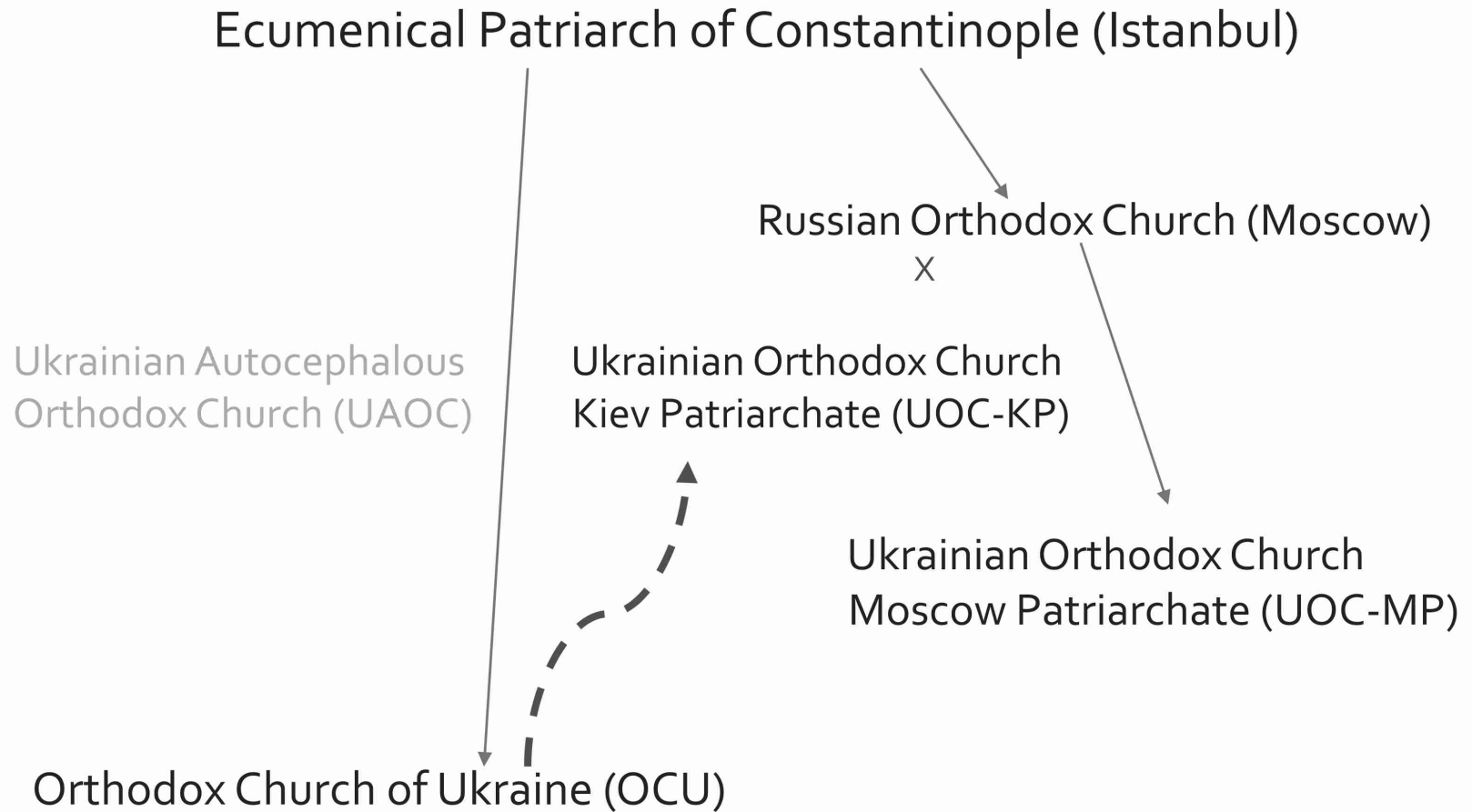
Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU)



Religious Freedom in Ukraine



Religious Freedom in Ukraine



Religious Freedom in Ukraine

Kiev-controlled Ukraine

- Conflict between Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) and Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kiev Patriarchate (UOC-KP)
- SBU carried out dozens of raids at priests' residences and churches aligned with the Russian Orthodox Church
- Other religious groups and radical political groups, including the Right Sector, disrupted UOC-MP prayer services, and in some cases, radical nationalists physically assaulted parishioners.
- National Guard banned UOC-MP chaplaincy
- Anti-Semitic acts by government: honoring Nazi collaborators and erecting statue of 1918-1921 leader who allowed anti-Jewish pogroms
- Baptist Union representatives accused members of a UOC-MP congregation of disrupting a religious ceremony
- Vandalism of Christian monuments, Holocaust memorials, synagogues, and Jewish cemeteries, and at Jehovah's Witnesses' Kingdom Halls.

Religious Freedom in Ukraine

Donbass

- Separatist forces detain and imprison religious leaders
- Armed men – often from the State Security Ministry or police of the self-declared Luhansk People's Republic – raid religious communities, halt worship meetings and seize religious literature. Courts hand down fines of several weeks' average wages to punish "illegal" worship meetings.
- Raids of **Pentecostal**, Baptist, Jehovah's Witness, and UOC-KP communities; fines; buildings and property seized
- All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christian/Baptist Churches and non-Moscow Patriarchate Orthodox congregations banned
- Forces occupy religious buildings of minority religious groups and use them as military facilities.

Religious Freedom in Ukraine

Crimea

- Occupation authorities subject Muslim Crimean Tatars to abductions, forced psychiatric hospitalizations, imprisonment, and detentions, especially if the authorities suspect the individuals of involvement in the Muslim political organization Hizb ut-Tahrir
- Jehovah's Witnesses banned in Russia – all 22 Crimean congregations de-registered
- Protestants and Muslims face charges for illegal missionary activities
- Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church report authorities make it difficult to operate
- OCU parish refused registration, made to vacate cathedral in Simferopol

Ukraine: Dissent and Social Media

Q: Zelensky administration monitoring social media of people expressing their political opinions?

- Zelensky administration is social media savvy
- Not significant policy change and SBU work continues
- Most investigations of individuals for content on social media have been for posting “extremist” or “separatist” content; legislation used for targeting these individuals remains
- Popular Russian social media sites banned since 2017 (VKontakte, Odnoklassniki, Yandex (a Russian search engine), and Mail.ru); some users use VPNs to circumvent; Facebook and Twitter have become more popular
- Attacks on journalists

Ukraine: LGBTI

- Conditions improving but environment is still very difficult; decriminalized 1991 but widespread negative societal attitude towards LGBTI persons
- Frequent disruption of events from violent far right groups (C14), without sufficient police protection (esp. before/after)
- Hate crimes infrequently investigated, unless intense pressure from civil society
- Discriminatory raids on LGBTI night clubs (“prevention of human trafficking”)
- high social stigma against those with HIV/AIDS (treatment, housing, or employment)
- workplace discrimination protected, but discrimination widespread in hiring, housing, education, etc.
- Russia-controlled/separatist areas severe (eg. “gay propaganda” laws)

Ukraine: Corruption and Whistleblowers

- Zelensky platform to fight corruption, but little real change and some questionable moves (dismissed Ruslan Ryaboshapka - prosecutor general who instigated the anti-corruption drive)
- High Anti-Corruption Court created April 2019; most outside views are positive (selection of judges with help of foreign expert panel); success will depend on whether anticorruption investigators and prosecutors are reliable (unknown)
- November 2019 law on whistleblowers (protection; financial incentive); Likely greater will to protect a whistleblower speaking out against corruption from those formerly in power; less favorable for those exposing Zelensky's Servant of the People party
- Oligarchs still wield great influence, protect their interests (Kolomoisky)

Ukraine: Race/Nationality

Q: Problems in Ukraine because Georgian? Ethnic Russians?

- Attacks against ethnic minorities in Ukraine are relatively common, but the targets are frequently Roma, not Georgian
- Ukrainian citizens/natives better positioned than migrants (2010 Georgian asylum seekers mistreated in detention)
- Georgian Legion formed 2014 to fight in Donbass; they left 2017 due to mistreatment
- Policies restricting Russian language and promoting Ukrainian impact non-Ukrainian speakers
- Attitudes toward Russians soured; but many families are mixed ethnic Russian/Ukrainian
- Association/sympathy with separatists creates risk

Ukraine: Crimea

- Repressive environment of Russia exported to Crimea
- Not finding reports that ethnic-Ukrainians targeted merely on that basis
- Prominent members of the Crimean Tatar community, pro-Ukrainian activists, outspoken critics of authorities subjected to harassment, intimidation or politically-motivated prosecution (terrorism-related charges)
- Independent media and journalists unable to operate; online media resources was blocked
- December 2018 Russia's Justice Ministry requested that the Crimean Bar Association expel human rights lawyer Emil Kurbedinov for "extremist activities" (Hizb ut-Tahrir)

Russia Concerns



Russia Concerns

- Political dissent: Targeting protestors, activists, NGOs (foreign connections); monitoring social media and journalists; arrests, fines, torture in detention, physical attacks and murders
- Religion: Monitoring, registration; Jehovah's Witnesses banned; charges of extremism, fines, property confiscation, prison sentences
- LGBT: "Gay propaganda" laws; targeting protestors; serious government and societal discrimination and abuses

Past Membership or Military Service

- Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)
- Soviet Military
- Russian Military
- Ukrainian Military

OUN and UPA

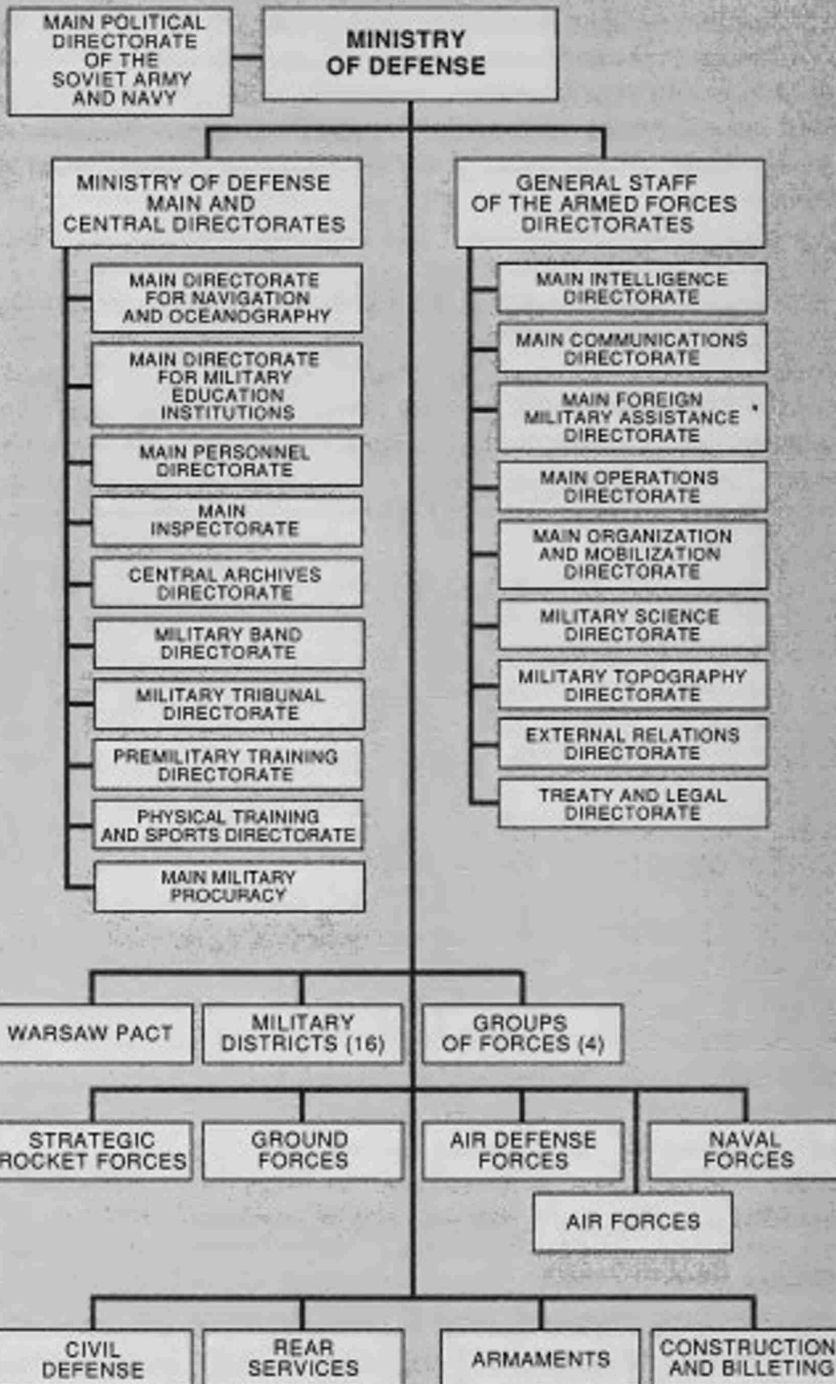
- **Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN)**: 1929 to 1950s; split into OUN-M and OUN-B in 1940
- **Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)**: Subset of OUN-B Oct. 1942 to 1958; guerillas fighting against Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, the Polish Underground State, and Communist Poland
- Far Right, Ultra-nationalist; use of violence to achieve ethnically-pure Ukrainian state; some alleged cooperation with Nazi Germany
- Extermination of Poles committed over 17 months (from November 1942 to April 1944)
- As of March 2019, recognized as veterans with all benefits: “fighters for independence of Ukraine in the 20th century”

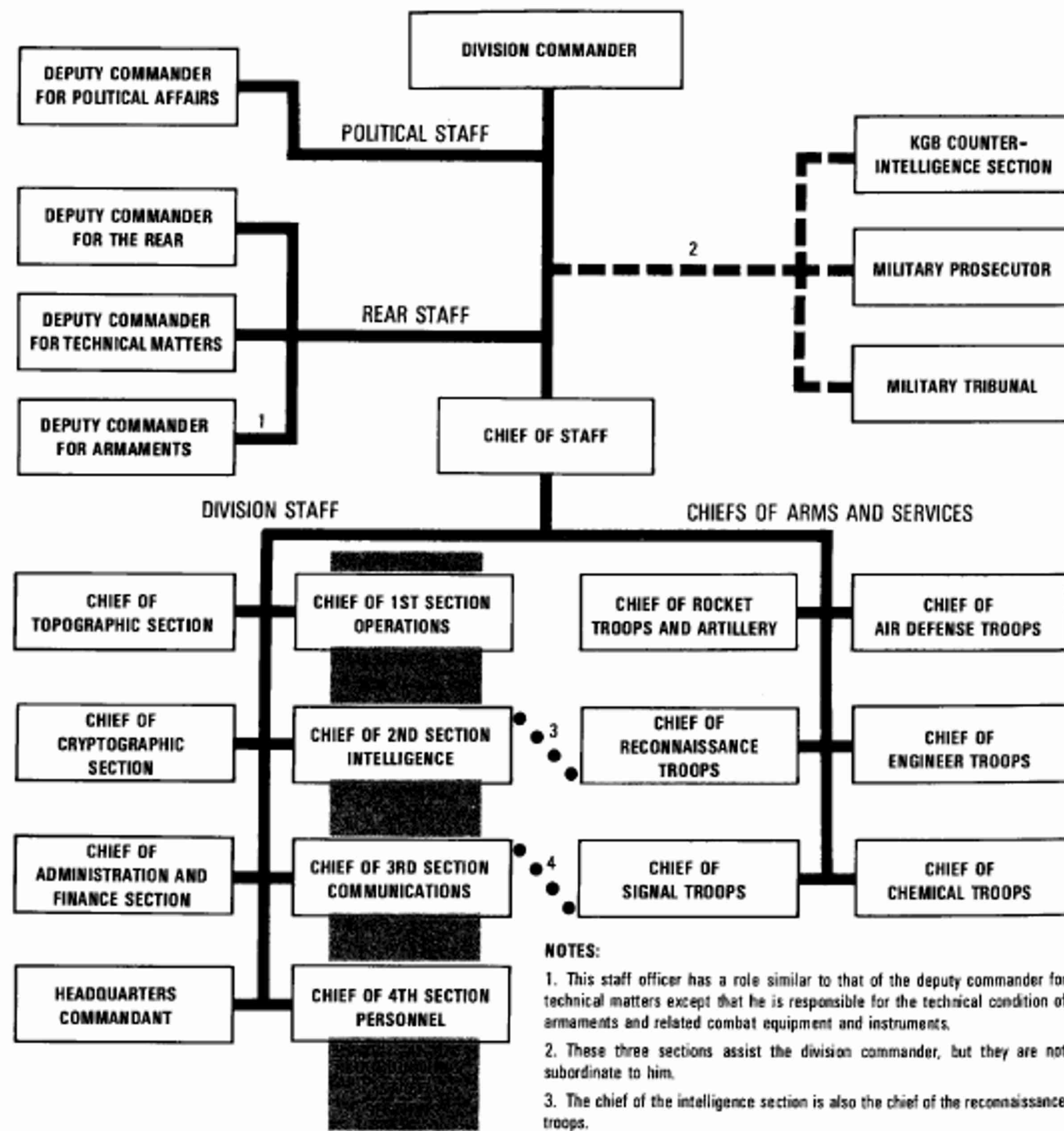
Soviet Union Military

- By 1989: Nearly 6 million troops in uniform
- Five armed services: Strategic Rocket Forces, Ground Forces, Air Forces, Air Defense Forces, and Naval Forces.
- Two paramilitary forces: Internal Troops and Border Troops.
- “One-fourth of the entire Soviet population in 1989 was engaged in military activities, whether active duty, military production, or civilian military training.”
- Many servicemen were assigned nonmilitary duties that in many other countries were performed by civilians.
- Conscription

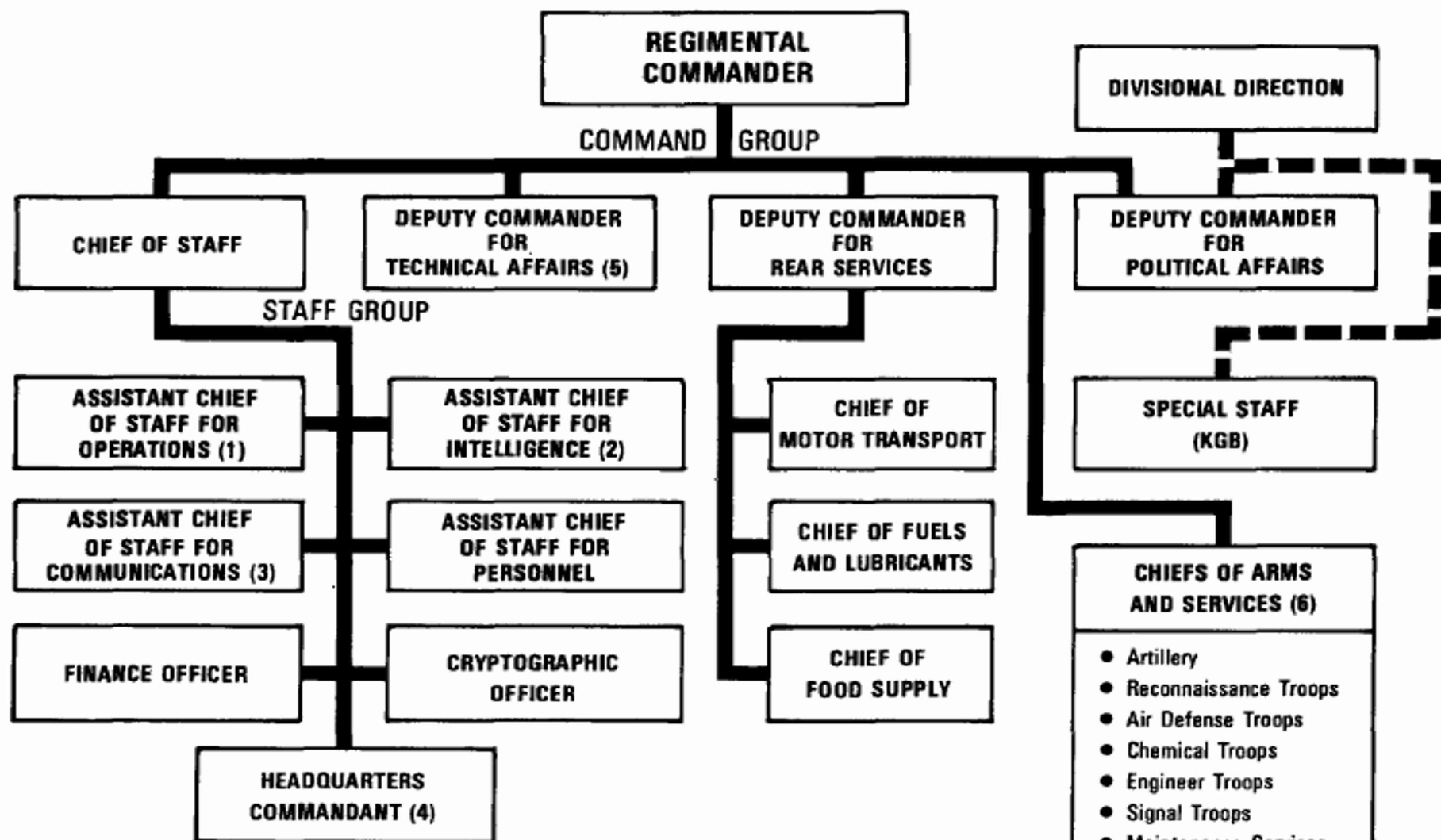
Soviet Union Military Structure

MARSHALS. GENERALS. AND ADMIRALS	
Marshal of the Soviet Union/Chief Marshal (of specific arm)	Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union
Amy General/Marshal(of specific arm)	Fleet Admiral
Colonel General (3-star)	Admiral
Lieutenant General (2-star)	Vice Admiral
Major General (1-star)	Rear Admiral
SENIOR OFFICERS	
Colonel	Captain 1st Rank
Lieutenant Colonel	Captain 2nd Rank
Major	Captain 3rd Rank
JUNIOR OFFICERS	
Captain	Captain-Lieutenant
Senior Lieutenant	Senior Lieutenant
Lieutenant	Lieutenant
Junior Lieutenant	Junior Lieutenant
WARRANT OFFICERS	
Praporshchik	Michman
SERGEANTS AND PETTY OFFICERS	
Master Sergeant	Ships Chief Petty Officer
Senior Sergeant	Chief Petty Officer
Sergeant	Petty Officer 1st Class
Junior Sergeant	Petty Officer 2nd Class
SOLDIERS AND SAILORS	
Private 1st Class	Seaman 1st Class
Private	Seaman





The Soviet Regimental Staff



NOTES:

(1) Also Deputy Chief of Staff

(2) Commands the reconnaissance company

(3) Commands the signal company

(4) Controls work of traffic regulators

(5) Also commands the maintenance company

(6) An ad hoc group which provides advice if required; represents organic or attached arms and services listed above. Officers in this group head, or are members of, other staff groups. Their primary task is to command the combat support and combat service support subunits.

Soviet Union Military Intelligence

- **Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU)**: secretive directorate with approximately 2,500 personnel collecting information on adversaries
- **KGB**: Under the direction of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU); vast monetary and technical resources, over 500,000 personnel, huge archival files containing political information of the highest sensitivity; maintained a network of officers and informers in the armed forces.

“KGB sections within military divisions investigated and interrogated espionage suspects, enforced the political reliability of division personnel, and participated in determining key assignments”

Soviet Union Military Operations

- **Hungarian Revolution**: Oct./Nov. 1956, U.S.S.R. forces crushed an anti-Soviet revolt; Over 2,500 Hungarians and 700 Soviet troops were killed in the conflict, and 200,000 Hungarians fled as refugees
- **Prague Spring**: Jan. to Aug. 1968 Soviet forces intervened to quash pro-Capitalist reforms in Czechoslovakia; 72 Czechs and Slovaks killed
- **Sino-Soviet border conflict**: 1969, several occasions of inconclusive armed conflicts; Soviets repelled a Chinese incursion into the Zhenbao/Damansky island
- **Afghanistan Invasion and Occupation**: Dec. 1979 to Feb. 1989; serious human rights abuses against civilians and detainees; see By All Parties to the Conflict: Violations of the Laws of War in Afghanistan, Human Rights Watch, March 1988.

Soviet and Russian Military Hazing

- Hazing (*Dedovshchina*) widely reported
- Brutalization of junior conscripts by more senior conscripts serving their last year of compulsory military service, as well as NCOs and officers
- A variety of subordinating or humiliating activities from doing the chores of the senior ranks to violent and sometimes lethal physical, sexual, and psychological abuse
- Cited as a major source of poor morale in the armed forces.

Soviet Union Military Resources

- Organization of USSR Forces (-1989): Library of Congress Country Study, pp.695-; Ranks/Insignia pp.737-; Internal Security pp.753-
- The Soviet Army: Operations and Tactics, U.S. Dept. of the Army, Sec. 3-9, Jul. 16, 1984.
- The Soviet Army: Troops, Organization, and Equipment, U.S. Department of the Army, Jun. 1991.

Russian Military (1991-)

- Transition from USSR
- 1991 Belavezha Accords agreed by Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus formed the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), had its own supreme military commander until end of 1993
- March 1992 Yelstin established Armed Forces of Russian Federation – had over 2 million soldiers, most of old Soviet military under Moscow
- As of 1996, 670,000 officers and enlisted; shortfall and officer-heavy, trying to survive
- Attempt to transition to more modern force

Conscript and Contract Serviceman Ranks

	Field Uniform	Duty Uniform			
		Ground Forces	Aerospace Defense Forces	Navy	
Senior Warrant Officer					Senior Warrant Officer
Warrant Officer					Warrant Officer
Starshina					Petty Officer of the Ship
Senior Sergeant					Senior Petty Officer
Sergeant					Petty Officer 1st Class
Junior Sergeant					Petty Officer 2nd Class
Private First Class					Senior Sailor
Private					Sailor

	Field Uniform	Officer Ranks		
		Ground Forces	Aerospace Defense Forces	Navy
Marshal of the Russian Federation				
General of the Army				
Colonel General				
Lieutenant General				
Major General				
Colonel				
Lieutenant Colonel				
Major				
Captain				
Senior Lieutenant				
Lieutenant				
Junior Lieutenant				
				Admiral of the Navy
				Fleet Admiral
				Vice Admiral
				Rear Admiral
				Captain 1st Class
				Captain 2nd Class
				Captain 3rd Class
				Captain-Lieutenant
				Senior Lieutenant
				Lieutenant
				Junior Lieutenant

Russian Military Intelligence

- The “Main Intelligence Directorate” (GRU) persists (aka *Glavnoye razvedochnoye upravleniye*)
- KGB officially dissolved in December 1991, replaced by five successors including the Federal Security Service (FSB) and Federal Border Service and Border Security (detailed information in slide notes)

Russian Military Operations (1991-)

- **Moldova**: 1992, 14th Army supported rebels with artillery barrages and weapons transfers
- **Tajikistan**: 1992-97, 201st Motor Rifle Division sided with Soviet-era regime against minority ethnic groups and Islamic extremists, led military operations
- **First Chechen War**: 1994-96, attempt by Chechnya to secede, 23,700 Russia troops later reinforced by 30,000, massive air and artillery bombardment killed ~35,000 civilians; largely considered defeat of Russian troops
- **Yugoslavia/Kosovo**: 1992-1999, Russian involvement in peacekeeping, tension but no glaring red flags

Russian Military Operations (1991-)

- **Second Chechen War**: 1999-2002, Putin making statement after defeat in first Chechen War; 50,000 regular troops and 40,000 security troops from Ministry of Internal Affairs, up to 50,000 civilians killed; clashes have continued in North Caucasus (Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria) and service there should be explored
- **Abkhazia and South Ossetia**: 2008, support of separatists
- **Ukraine**: 2014 - present
- **Syria**: Sept. 2015 – present: military support for Al Assad regime; air strikes, civilian deaths

Russian Military: Resources

- Organization of Russian Forces (1991-1996): Library of Congress Country Study, pp.524-41
- The Russian Way of War, Foreign Military Studies Office, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command G2, 2016.

Ukraine Military (1991-)

- **Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU)**: formed in 1992-93 on the basis of units, equipment, and staff structures of the Soviet Kiev Military District, designed for combined arms offensive operations against NATO in Europe, not defense of independent Ukraine; little change since.
- Has participated in peacekeeping missions outside of Ukraine since 1992, but no immediate red flags for these

NOTE: National Guard of Ukraine created March 2014; significant fighting in Donbass

Ukraine Military 2017 White Book

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Ukraine Military Resources

- White Book 2017 of the Armed Forces, Ukrainian Ministry of Defense, 2018.
- Fact Finding Mission Report: Ukraine, Austria and France, May 2017 - discusses military service, noting that there was a brief period in 2013 where mandatory conscription was suspended, yet conscription was reinstated in 2014.

Resources

RAIO Research Unit ECN Country Pages:

[Ukraine](#)

[Georgia](#)

[Moldova](#)

[Armenia](#)

[Kazakhstan](#)

[Russia](#)

[Azerbaijan](#)

[Kyrgyzstan](#)

[Uzbekistan](#)

[Forum18.org](#): Excellent resource for religious freedom in the region

[Ukraine: Conflict Tracker](#): Council on Foreign Relations follows the conflict in the Eastern region (Donbass) – Use Microsoft Edge browser

[U.S. Department of State International Religious Freedom Reports](#)

[Detailed map of Donbass and areas of rebel and government control \(July 2016\)](#)

Citizenship Laws

Regional Citizenship Laws:

- [LLOC Russia Kazakh citz 12-2016.pdf](#) - Law Library of Congress response regarding Russian/USSR/Kazakh citizenship
- [LLOC query Armenia Ukraine citz 10-2014.pdf](#) - Law Library of Congress response contains information on Ukrainian and Armenian citizenship law
- [LLOC Query Kyrgyz Russia z 10-2014.pdf](#) - Law Library of Congress response provides information on USSR/Russian citizenship; specifically addresses Kyrgyz citizenship but has general post-USSR CIS country information

Resources on Conflict in Ukraine

- **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE):**

Daily and spot reports from the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

Searchable daily reports with specific information about security and armed encounters (Apr. 14, 2014 to present)

- **Wikipedia:** Timeline of the war in Donbass

Useful but caution for bias (heavily cites Ukrainian government ATO HQ reports)

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- Organization of USSR Forces (-1989): Library of Congress Country Study, pp.695-; Ranks/Insignia pp.737-; Internal Security pp.753-
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UKRAINE

Religious Freedom, Militancy, and the Post-Soviet Space

Research Unit

USCIS Refugee, Asylum and International Operations

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