CHARITY ACTIVITY OF CHURCH AND RELIGION ORGANIZATIONS DURING THE MILITARY CONFLICT IN THE EAST OF UKRAINE

Abstract
The aim of the article is to study charity activities conducted by church and religion organizations in the context of the military conflict in eastern Ukraine. For a comprehensive study of the outlined problems, the author uses a set of general scientific methods (analysis, synthesis, comparison, systematization, generalization, etc.) as well as special historical methods (historical-genetic, historical-comparative, historical-systematic). The principles of historical world perception were also involved while writing the article. The study applies an interdisciplinary approach, manifested through the usage of the categorical procedures of other sciences. This, in its turn, made it possible to form valid statements and conclusions of the scientific research. The scientific novelty of the article lies in the fact that a complete historical study of the charity activity of Ukrainian church and religion organizations during the military conflict in Donbass was conducted for the first time. The topic has not yet been the subject of a separate scientific analysis. Some scholars have only partially addressed some issues, mainly within a broader subject area. The research determines that after the beginning of the military conflict in the east of Ukraine, church and religion organizations both at the level of interdenominational associations (in particular the activity of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (AUCCRO), and at the level of individual denominations, began a broad charitable activity. They declared the need for a peaceful resolution of the conflict and directed their efforts to support internally displaced persons, anti-terrorist operation participants, their families, military and civilian prisoners’ release. Church and religion organizations, especially at the beginning of the military conflict in Donbass, also acted as an important component of the
volunteer movement. Different church and religion organizations, in the first instance Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), played an active role in the release of Ukrainian prisoners during 2014 – 2017. The interchurch dialogue aimed at the release of Ukrainian prisoners was initiated and maintained, to a large extent, by the representatives of the highest state level.

**Key words:** church and religion organizations, All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations, UOC (MP) (Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)), military conflict, eastern Ukraine, anti-terrorist operation (ATO).

**Introduction.** Churches and religious organizations have initiated charitable activity in eastern Ukraine since spring 2014. They got in on the solution of a number of problems, first and foremost of internally displaced persons, ATO participants and their families, military and civilian prisoners’ release, who were detained in Donbass, annexed Crimea territories and the Russian Federation. While doing that, they clearly voiced their active position both at the level of interdenominational associations (All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (AUCCRO), the Ukrainian Interchurch Council (UIC), the Council of Evangelical Protestant Churches of Ukraine (CEPCU)), and at the level of individual denominations.

The case study of charitable activity of church and religion organizations during the military conflict in eastern Ukraine has not been the subject of a separate scientific analysis. Some scholars have only partially addressed the outlined issues, mainly within a broader subject area, including the study of charity activities of certain church and religion organizations in general (Tsukanova, 2015), the investigation of chaplaincy’s ATO experience (Filipchuk, 2015, pp. 161–169; Filippov, 2014), and the analysis of the religion role in hybrid warfare in eastern Ukraine (Bokoch, 2017, pp. 27–31).

**The objective of the study** is to investigate charity activity carried out by Ukrainian church and religion organizations during the military conflict in eastern Ukraine. In this case, charity activity is determined as free material and spiritual support of churches and religious organizations to those affected by the military conflict in eastern Ukraine, as well as to military members of the ATO.

**The outline of the research.** Already at the beginning of the military confrontation in eastern Ukraine, the AUCCRO voiced out a
common interdenominational position of church and religion organizations in the form of a number of statements. The council called for the normalization of the social and political situation in the country and, subsequently, for the peaceful resolution of the military conflict in eastern Ukraine. Representatives of other interdenominational organizations also expressed their position, in particular UIC, who called for stabilization of the situation and, in fact, for organization of charity in the East in their June 3, 2014 resolution of the All-Ukrainian Conference of UIC «Church in the Time of Public Disturbance». In the document, churches and foundations that are a part of the UIC called:

“To carry out the service of charity, showing Christian love and mercy to all the wounded, affected, and displaced… giving them spiritual, psychological, medical, legal, and financial help, including the provision with temporary housing” (Ukrainian Interchurch Council, 2014).

In its turn, among other appeals, on July 9, 2014, the AUCCRO called for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the East and stated its own willingness to join to help. Spiritual leaders called for illegal military units to lay down their weapons and stop the bloodshed; to begin the process of release of prisoners (AUCCRO, 2014). In the July 9, 2014 communiqué of the AUCCRO meeting, they also expressed solidarity with the victims of the conflict in Donbas and called for assistance to the victims in the East.

Thus, these appeals, as well as other calls of interdenominational unions, testify to the beginning of broad charitable activity of church and religion organizations in the east of Ukraine. The central role here belonged to the AUCCRO, which on October 31, 2014 published the «Appeal of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organization in Support of Charity and Volunteering». The Council urged Christians, society as a whole, and the state to intensify volunteer and charity work, and emphasized: «Ukraine is going through one of the most important moments of its history. Therefore, mutual assistance, support, grace and charity are in a need in our society as never before» (Religious Information Service of Ukraine, 2014). Similar appeals on behalf of the AUCCRO have been echoing since then.

The standpoints of other interdenominational bodies were also important, in particular, the opinion of the UIC, as well as of the CEPCU, who initiated the organization of charitable support for victims of the
military conflict in eastern Ukraine. However, the CEPCU and the UIC have focused their efforts first on helping internally displaced persons of evangelical confession. For example, a coordination center for assistance to eastern Ukraine was founded at the All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches. Its task was to provide support to internally displaced persons, to send humanitarian aid to the East, to help ATO participants (All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches, 2014).

It should be noted that interdenominational statements on behalf of the AUCCRO on support for victims in the east of Ukraine were systematically addressed to the state authorities. The circuit session of the AUCCRO in Kramatorsk, Donetsk region, in the area of ATO on November 2, 2016 was an important meeting for the development of charitable assistance in the East. According to its results, the «AUCCRO Appeal on the Peace and Progress of Ukrainian Society» was adopted. In the document, the leaders of the largest churches and religious organizations of Ukraine called on the parties to the conflict for peace (AUCCRO, 2016).

On February 6, 2018 in Kiev the meeting of ambassadors of the G7 countries with representatives of the AUCCRO testified to the importance of efficient interdenominational dialogue to resolve the military conflict in eastern Ukraine. H. Mingarelli, the head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine, addressed the religious figures by saying that:

“The role of the AUCCRO is important in ensuring social cohesion in Ukraine, including countering Russian aggression. The role of churches and religious organizations in the reintegration of the occupied territories is also essential. We are committed to working with you in the areas that are sorely necessary for reform in Ukraine” (AUCCRO, 2018).

Alongside the joint interdenominational efforts aimed at supporting the victims of the conflict in Donbas, churches and religious organizations carried out independent actions in the respective direction. Particularly noteworthy are the efforts of the major denominations to form special humanitarian missions. In fall 2014, UOC (MP) initiated the charitable foundation of the Charity without Borders mission, which provided support to the population living in the frontier zone (UNIAN, 2016). The UOC (KP), UGCC, RCC and other religious denominations joined in the active charitable assistance. In early 2019 the first session
of the OCU Synod set up an Orthodox mission to assist Ukrainian victims of human rights violations and political prisoners who are illegally detained in the annexed Crimea and the Russian Federation (Radio Liberty, 2019).

It should be noted that not only the largest church and religion organizations were involved in the charitable assistance to the victims of the military conflict in eastern Ukraine. Possible support also came from less numerous religious movements. For instance, in fall 2014, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints provided $1.5 million (US) to support the victims (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2014).

As a rule, charitable assistance of church and religion organizations in the east of Ukraine was carried through fundraising from parishioners (Filippov, 2014). Such charity events to support both the victims and the military in the ATO territory were organized throughout Ukraine. For instance, the charity event «Gift for Soldier» organized by the UOC (KP) was held in the churches of Ternopil region. Religious leaders urged parishioners to donate food, sweets, medicines, hygiene products, money, etc. for the benefit of the military (Ternopil Eparchy of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, 2018). The charity assistance to the victims of the military fighting and to the military in the ATO territories provided by foreign religious structures and given to church and religion organizations was also significant. The Ukrainian clergy also asked International Religious Charities for charitable assistance to Ukraine (UGCC, 2018).

Therefore, in the context of Russia's military aggression in Donbass, support for the ATO participants (food, clothing, medicines, and sometimes some types of military ammunition, etc.), offered by churches and religious organizations kept up with volunteer movement.

We believe that at this time church and religion organizations became one of the important components of the volunteer movement in Ukraine. Originally, the involvement of churches and religious organizations in the volunteer movement in Ukraine took place in the early 2000s (Central State Archives of Supreme Authorities and Government of Ukraine. F. 5252. Op. 6. D. 132. L. 21; Central State Archives of Supreme Authorities and Government of Ukraine. F. 5252. Op. 6. D. 236. L. 52). In particular, within the framework of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Decree «On the Establishment of the Coordinating Council for Development and Support of the Volunteer
Movement» on April 23, 2003 the leaders of religious centers and organizations were given guidance how to take part in the volunteer movement (Central State Archives of Supreme Authorities and Government of Ukraine. F. 5252. Op. 6. D. 236. L. 52). However, the involvement of church and religion organizations in Ukraine in the volunteer movement took place in the peacetime and was aimed at providing practical support to socially vulnerable groups of the population. The volunteer movement of churches and religious organizations of this time, in fact, did not differ from charitable activity.

Charitable assistance to the destitute was partially provided from abroad through the mediation of Ukrainian churches and religious organizations. However, at the initial stage of implementation of such support, there was a problem with customs clearance of humanitarian goods. This urged the supreme authorities of Ukraine to join forces for charitable assistance, which was not to be ignored. On October 13, 2014, A. Yatseniuk in a special order instructed the Ministry of Social Policy to take measures to expedite the registration of humanitarian cargoes addressed to church and religion organizations in Ukraine, which would allow them to be distributed quickly among internally displaced persons and in the area of ATO. The Prime Minister called on the central and local executive authorities of Ukraine to cooperate more actively with churches and religious organizations in the social sphere (Institute for Religious Freedom, 2014).

The UOC (MP) was particularly active in resolving the conflict in the East, especially in the release of prisoners of war. With the support of the UOC (MP), on March 17–20, 2015, a delegation of the World Council of Churches visited Ukraine and expressed solidarity with the churches and people of Ukraine in the military conflict in the East. At the same time, the delegation of the WCC noted that the key role in search for peace, consent and reconciliation belongs to the UOC (MP) being the largest religious denomination in Ukraine. The latter, according to the conviction of the World Council of Churches, could make an official statement on the territorial integrity and unity of Ukraine. The Delegation also emphasized the importance of the AUCCRO and the joint efforts of churches and religious organizations in achieving peace in Ukraine (World Council of Churches, 2015).
Therefore, in the context of the military fighting in eastern Ukraine since spring 2014, the religious community efforts to release Ukrainian prisoners of war, military and civilians have become particularly important. Because of its organizational capabilities (being in the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, having free access in the occupied territories), the UOC (MP) played the most efficient role in the release of prisoners of war and hostages. In part, other religious denominations have become involved in the process of releasing prisoners through the AUCCRO. This was a great opportunity for the UOC MP to maintain its own authority especially in the context of critical, ambiguous assessments of its activities among the Ukrainian society in recent years. One of the first interdenominational appeals on the need to release hostages was made by the AUCCRO as early as July 9, 2014. The text of the document states, among other things: «We appeal to all goodwill people for the full promotion of the fast release of all hostages…» (AUCCRO, 2014).

On December 20, 2016, according to the official statistics of the UOC (MP), 15 servicemen were released from captivity due to the efforts of its clergy (Orthodox Life, 2016). The release, as a rule, took place on Christmas Eve, the New Year, during other great religious holidays. Thus, on December 18, 2016, thanks to the UOC (MP), the military T. Kolodii was released from the captivity where he had spent more than two years (Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 2017). One of the largest exchange of prisoners of war (74 in exchange for 306) took place on December 27, 2017 in Donetsk region. Incidentally, among the 73 released (one woman desired to stay in the occupied territory) there was also a religious scholar I. Kozlovsky. In total, 3 140 hostages had been released from the captivity of terrorists by the end of 2017 (TSN, 2017).

Senior officials of the state as well as relatives of prisoners requested the religious community to assist in the release of prisoners. In particular, President P. Poroshenko and Blessed Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine, Onufrii, agreed on joint coordination of state and church actions in the release of Ukrainian prisoners (Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 2016). On October 12, 2017, Security Service of Ukraine Chairman V. Hrytsak met with representatives of the AUCCRO, as a result the Council was requested to assist the interchurch associations and humanitarian organizations to help in the
release of hostages (UNIAN, 2017). Interrupted after a long blockade the negotiation process on the prisoners’ exchange was held due to the efforts of many parties, including religious figures.

In early September 2016, the AUCCRO appealed to the Interreligious Council of Russia (ICR), the Council for Cooperation with Religious Associations under the President of the Russian Federation, the World Council of Churches, calling for the release of prisoners «as a manifestation of charity» (Church, Society, State Facing Challenges and Threats of the Present-day (Information Materials), 2017, p. 5). This appeal was voiced at the ICR meeting on October 6, 2016 and was unanimously endorsed by the Council after discussions. On October 6, 2016, the ICR published a «Statement on the Appeal from the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations». In the document, the heads and representatives of the traditional religious communities of Russia expressed «deep concern» in the military conflict in eastern Ukraine and called on the confrontation parties to the support of the ceasefire regime, to resolve all difficult issues through dialogue, to seek a peaceful solution to the existing contradictions. Supporting the initiative of the AUCCRO, the ICR stressed that the release of all prisoners and hostages could have been an important step towards reconciliation (Interreligious Council of Russia, 2016).

As it was mentioned above, on October 12, 2017, the SSU Chairman V. Hrytsak addressed AUCCRO with a request for assistance in the release of Ukrainian prisoners. At the beginning of November 2017, the AUCCRO addressed the religious leaders of Russia and European countries, the leaders of interdenominational and international institutions (Institute for Religious Freedom, 2017). Despite the fact that the Metropolitan Onufrii is a member of the Council, the UOC (MP) conducted the work independently. In this respect, it is important to emphasize its significant achievements.

It is logical that Ukrainian religious figures stated the need for further work on the release of Ukrainian prisoners. Relevant statements were constantly made both at the level of the AUCCRO, other interdenominational associations, and at the initiative of certain religious denominations, including the UOC (MP). On January 4, 2018 Blessed Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine Onufrii, during the meeting with mothers and wives of prisoners of war released at the end of December 2017, claimed that negotiations on the prisoners release
would be continued: «We have submitted new lists with our proposals. Now these lists will be considered, there will be negotiations. I think this process will continue» (Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 2018). The Head of State President of Ukraine P. Poroshenko hoped for further cooperation in the release of Ukrainian prisoners at a meeting with Metropolitan Onufrii. He also thanked the Ukrainian churches for their help in releasing the prisoners and supporting their families (President of Ukraine, 2017).

At the same time, there was no practical manifestation of churches and religious organizations activities aimed at releasing Ukrainian political prisoners held in Crimea and the Russian Federation. After all, this issue concerned the political and diplomatic sphere. However, in June 2018, on behalf of the parishioners, a letter requesting the release of Ukrainian political prisoners was addressed to the Metropolitan of the UOC (MP) Onufrii (Religious Information Service of Ukraine, 2018). The emergence of a partial opportunity for direct personal support of Ukrainian political prisoners by religious figures appeared in fall 2018.

Similar situation occurred with the seizure of Ukrainian sailors by Russia on November 25, 2018 in the Sea of Azov, the solution of which was possible only at the highest, international political and diplomatic level. At the same time, the Ukrainian side tried to involve religious structures, first of all the UOC (MP) and its head, in the organization of the release process of Ukrainian Navy captive sailors. On December 17, 2018, the AUCCRO adopted an appeal to the religious leaders and representatives of the highest authorities of Russia demanding the release of Ukrainian captive sailors (Institute for Religious Freedom, 2018). The second AUCCRO appeal to the religious and governmental bodies of the Russian Federation, as well as to the World Council of Churches and Other Institutions appeared on January 22, 2019. It stated:

“The All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations calls on you to do your utmost to make the process of release of those imprisoned for political reasons citizens of Ukraine possible, and make sure that all prisoners and hostages are released in the near future” (AUCCRO, 2019).

On July 25, 2019, religious figures supported the Resolution on illegally detained Ukrainian citizens in the Russian Federation, annexed Crimea and Donbass at a roundtable meeting on religious freedom in
Ukraine held in Kyiv. The document contained a number of practical recommendations for both domestic political leadership and the international community that would optimize the process of releasing Ukrainian prisoners and hostages (Institute for Religious Freedom, 2019).

Churches and religious organizations realized spiritual guardianship, in particular of members of the anti-terrorist operation, through the institute of military chaplaincy in eastern Ukraine. With the onset of military fighting in the East, the question of the formation of the institute of military chaplaincy in Ukraine was episodically raised throughout the years of independence. In July 2014, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted one of the first orders for a chaplaincy service in the Armed Forces, the National Guard, the State Special Transport Service and the State Border Service. Although since 2014 chaplains of various religious denominations were present in the ATO area, officially the first institute of military chaplaincy was introduced in 2017 in the National Guard of Ukraine. At the beginning of July 2017, the chaplains of the UOC (KP), UGCC, AUOC signed an employment agreement with the National Guard of Ukraine. However, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine forbade to involve priests of the UOC (MP) in the chaplain service in NGU, since their spiritual centers «are in the territory of the country-aggressor» (Gromadske, 2017). Obviously, this decision was made in accordance with the amendments to the Law of Ukraine «On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations», which provided for a change of subordination of religious communities.

It should also be noted that since the beginning of the military conflict in the East, clerics have systematically visited Ukrainian soldiers on the frontline, passing on donations and spiritual care (TSN, 2015). As noted above, on November 2, 2016, a circuit meeting of the AUCCRO was held in Kramatorsk, Donetsk region, following which the «AUCCRO Appeal on Promoting Peace and Progress in Ukrainian Society» was adopted (AUCCRO, 2016).

Conclusions. With the onset of the military fighting in eastern Ukraine, church and religion organizations, including those affiliated with the AUCCRO, as well as at the level of individual denominations, have declared a need for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. They directed their efforts to support internally displaced persons, members of the ATO, their families, fostered the release of military and civilian
prisoners held in eastern Ukraine, in annexed Crimea and Russia. At the initial stage of the armed confrontation, churches and religious organizations acted as one of the components of the volunteer movement in Ukraine. Church and religious structures were particularly important, especially the UOC (MP) due to its organizational capacity. The latter played a significant role in the liberation of Ukrainian prisoners during 2014 – 2017, and its activity has become a means of retaining its own authority. To a large extent, the interchurch dialogue aimed at the release of Ukrainian prisoners was initiated and maintained at the highest state level. It should be noted that the topic under analysis has considerable prospects for the further research. This is especially true about specific manifestations of charitable activity of church and religion organizations and the spread of chaplaincy in the ATO area.

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Мякінченко Ірина. БЛАГОДІЙНА ДІЯЛЬНІСТЬ ЦЕРКОВНО-РЕЛІГІЙНИХ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙ ПІД ЧАС ВІЙСЬКОВОГО КОНФЛІКТУ НА СХОДІ УКРАЇНИ

Анотація

Метою статті є вивчення благодійної діяльності, яку проводили церковно-релігійні організації в умовах військового конфлікту на сході України. Для усестороннього вивчення окресленої проблематики використовувався комплекс загальнонаукових (аналіз, синтез, порівняння, систематизації, узагальнення тощо) та спеціальних історичних (історико-генетичний, історико-порівняльний, історико-системний) методів. При підготовці статті також використано принципи історичного пізнання. У дослідженні застосовано міждисциплінарний підхід, який проявився через використання категоріального апарату інших наук. Це, у свою чергу, дало можливість сформувати обґрунтовані положення та висновки наукового дослідження. Наукова новизна статті полягає в тому, що тут вперше проведено комплексне історичне дослідження благодійної діяльності українських церковних і релігійних організацій під час військового конфлікту на Донбасі. Адже ця тема ще не виступала предметом окремого наукового аналізу. Деякі вчені лише частково торкалися окресленої проблематики переважно у рамках ширшого предметного кола. Визначено, що після початку військового конфлікту на сході України церковно-релігійні організації і на рівні міжконфесійних об'єднань (зокрема діяльність Всеукраїнської Ради Церков і релігійних організацій), і на рівні окремих конфесій розпочали широку благодійну діяльність. Вони заявили про необхідність мирного розв’язання конфлікту та спрямовували свої зусилля на підтримку внутрішньо переміщених осіб, учасників антитерористичної операції, їх родин, звільнення військових і цивільних полонених. Церковні й релігійні організації, особливо на початку військового конфлікту на Донбасі, також виступали як важлива складова волонтерського руху. Важливу роль церковно-релігійні структури, передусім Українська православна церква Московського патріархату, відіграли у звільненні українських полонених
Iryna Miakinczenko. DOBROCZYNNA DZIAŁALNOŚĆ RELIGIJNO-KOŚCIELNYCH ORGANIZACJI PODCZAS KONFLIKTU WOJSKOWEGO NA UKRAINIE Wschodniej

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest zbadanie działalności charytatywnej prowadzonej przez organizacje religijno-kościelne w kontekście konfliktu zbrojnego we wschodniej Ukrainie. Do kompleksowego badania przedstawionych problemów zastosowano zestaw ogólnych metod naukowych (analiza, syntez, porównanie, systematyzacja, uogólnienie itp.) oraz specjalnych metod historycznych (historyczno-genetycznych, historyczno-porównawczych, historyczno-systemowych). Przy opracowywaniu artykułu wykorzystano także zasady poznania historycznego. W badaniu zastosowano podejście interdyscyplinarne, przejawiające się za pomocą aparatu kategorialnego innych nauk. To z kolei umożliwiło sformułowanie uzasadnionego oświadczenia i wyników z badań naukowych. Oryginalnością naukową tego artykułu jest to, że po raz pierwszy przeprowadzono tu kompleksowe badanie historyczne działalności charytatywnej ukraińskich kościelnych i religijnych organizacji podczas konfliktu zbrojnego w Donbasie. W końcu ten temat nie był jeszcze przedmiotem odrębnej analizy naukowej. Niektórzy uczeni tylko częściowo zajęli się tymi zagadnieniami, głównie w szerszym obszarze tematycznym. Ustalono, że po rozpoczęciu konfliktu zbrojnego na wschodzie Ukrainy organizacje religijno-kościelne i na poziomie stowarzyszeń międzywyznaniowych (w szczególności działalność Ogólnoukraińskiej Rady Kościołów i Organizacji Religijnych), a także na poziomie poszczególnych wyznań rozpoczęły szeroką działalność charytatywną. Zadeklarowali potrzebę pokojowego rozwiązania konfliktu i skierowali swoje wysiłki na wsparcie osób przesiedlonych wewnętrznie, uczestników operacji antyterrorystycznej, ich rodzin, wyzwolenia jeńców wojskowych i cywilnych. Organizacje kościelne i religijne, zwłaszcza na początku konfliktu zbrojnego w Donbasie, także były istotnym elementem ruchu wolontariackiego. Ważną rolę odegrały struktury religijno-kościelne, przede wszystkim Ukraińska Cerkiew Prawosławną Patriarchatu Moskiewskiego, w wyzwoleniu ukraińskich jeńców w latach 2014-2017. Głównie dialog międzykościelny
mający na celu wyzwolenie ukraińskich jeńców został zainicjowany i popierany na najwyższym poziomie państwowym.

Słowa kluczowe: organizacje religijno-kościelne, Ogólnoukraińska Rada Kościołów i Organizacji Religijnych, UCP PM, konflikt zbrojny, wschodnia Ukraina, operacja antyterrorystyczna.

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