



Christ is risen! *He is risen indeed!*

**The Baptist Union of Ukraine sincerely congratulates
our brothers and sisters, friends and partners on the great celebration
of the resurrection of Jesus Christ!**

We are especially glad and triumphant today – Christ has risen for our justification! Because of His resurrection, our faith was made useful, and our hope does not disappoint us. Since He rose from the dead, each of us, anywhere in the world, overcoming any obstacles and external influences, has communion and unity in the body of Christ.

Although we are still at war and long for the crisis to be resolved and the situation in Ukraine to stabilize, the strength and victory of the Risen One are inside of us! The victory of resurrection helps us to press on. Therefore, we pray with hope for unity and peace in Ukraine, and for hostility and economic hardship to end.

We sincerely thank you for your prayers, compassion and concern for the needs of our people, and for your open hearts and support. Despite the distance that divides us, we pray for a close collaborative work in spreading the Gospel, and we thank the Lord for your ministry in our prayers.

***"For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord
both of the dead and of the living." (Romans 14: 9)***

ONE STEP LEFT FOR BAPTIST CHURCHES' EXISTENCE TO BECOME ILLEGAL

The life of Baptist churches in eastern Ukraine is enduring hostilities for the fifth year. However, the situation became even more complicated with a new law that came into force in February 2018 in the territory of the "People's Republic of Lugansk" (LPR), which is not under Ukrainian control. From now on, it is forbidden for churches to conduct worship, do small groups, hold meetings, etc. in residences. Also, each religious organization must procure a new registration by August of this year or it will be outside of the law. At the same time the church can be registered only if there are at least thirty adult believers permanently residing in that area.

Among other things, an important fact under the new law is that the distribution of religious literature even among churches, without personal written permission of the authorities, is prohibited. Distribution to ordinary people is not even mentioned.

Ministers are concerned and there is lack of clarity on how to act at all, because this law can be used to blame the local church for espionage, extremism or terrorist activity. Sergey Sychev, a church minister in "LPR", is extremely confused by such new requirements:

"We went to the Religion Department and asked them to explain the law. We were told to go to the local deputies, who would consider our request. However, deputies sent us back to the top leadership – and everything goes around in a circle."...

Solving this issue requires the strengthening of our prayers and for God to give ministers wisdom on how to lead the church under these new conditions.



НАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ
ЛУГАНСКОЙ НАРОДНОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ

ILLEGALLY



STORY of ONE CHURCH



Unfortunately, military actions in the Donbass region are continuing, and many clashes are happening in villages and settlements near the military conflict zone. The Novolugansk settlement, located on territory controlled by Ukraine, five kilometers from the demarcation line, was attacked by Grad multiple rocket launchers a few months ago. Forty rockets fell on the private sector causing extensive destruction. Fifty houses were destroyed or burned. In addition, windows and roofs of many other buildings were damaged by the wave of explosions. Although there were no deaths, eleven residents were hospitalized with serious injuries.



The state provided some help and some residents received help from relatives to restore their homes, but there are still many victims who have received no help. Several families approached the ECB churches with a request to assist them in restoring destroyed houses. Believers have visited this village multiple times distributing food, warm clothing, ceramic heaters, and some financial aid, but it's not enough for the restoration of their homes.



The local church in this village is small, only twenty-two members. The church's good reputation is growing, and we would like to take part in helping people affected by the bombing.

**May the Lord increase His glory through the mercy
and sacrifice of His children!**

TESTIMONY *about our* HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS

We thank God for the aid provided through our friends at the European Baptist Federation, German Baptist Aid, and Slavic Gospel Association. During the last six months several projects have been carried out: we were able to distribute 90 tons of hygiene items for families with minors. Several heating projects for needy people in the gray zone were carried out during this particularly harsh winter, with more than 100 tons of aid distributed.



The situation is still very tense, and people are barely surviving. For example, Olga is a single mother from Donetsk with many children. The only source of income she has to live on is funds from the local evangelical church. There are thousands of such families in the conflict zone. Support from the state covers only a fraction of their minimal needs.

The Demyanenko family has six children. Anya is a widow; the head of the family died four years ago. The most important problem the family has is heating the old house where they live. It does not have gas heat. Their old wood stove is not able to heat all the rooms, and because of dampness, high humidity and cold, the children are often sick. Therefore, the new wood stove that is able to heat the house is a great gift for this family. Anna and all of her children sincerely thank the European Baptist Federation for their assistance that came just in time.



This is the Bezkorovainyj family. They live in Semyonovka, the village most affected during the hostilities. Their house was completely destroyed and burned. Roman, the head of the family, was seriously wounded. Christians have restored their house. Today Roman is receiving medical treatment (this 40-year-old man developed diabetes following stress), and the younger son is also being treated for asthma.

The Bezkorovainyj family expresses huge thanks to the EBF for a water heating tank and a ceramic heater. This help is priceless, especially during winter and spring!

SMALL BAKERY IN THE DONETSK REGION



The local church of the city of Myrnograd (Donetsk region) has been involved in social-volunteer ministry among the needy people of the Donbass region, internally displaced persons and gray zone residents during the war in eastern Ukraine.



It started as an idea to create a production facility to provide jobs for internally displaced persons and the opportunity for self-provision through charitable projects.



The construction of the bakery began in April 2017 with the help of various people, missions and some churches in Myrnograd. By the end of the year, construction was completed, new equipment was delivered and installed, and the staff had undertaken training in technology. The bakery began operations at the beginning of this year.

Today it is a small enterprise with a production capacity of 300 liters of fermentation per shift (or 600 loaves of bread), with thirteen jobs working six days a week. The bakery can provide support for three evangelical projects and seeks to expand!





SAD STATISTICS ON SUICIDE AMONG UKRAINIAN FIGHTERS

Anatoly Matios, Chief Military Prosecutor of Ukraine, has released statistics on suicides among servicemen: on average, among servicemen who stayed in the territory of combat operations for a long time, two to three committed suicide weekly ([link](#)).

It's absolutely necessary to increase pastoral care for servicemen in Ukraine today. There are several focuses of Baptist ministry among military people, related to the war in the East



The first is a chaplaincy ministry. Brother-ministers conduct spiritual work among military personnel. They listen to them, build trusting relationships, pray together, read the Gospels, etc.

The second focus is providing material aid to military personnel and their families. Work with families is done continuously. Deliveries of parcels to servicemen are also organized.



Third, each region has military hospitals filled with wounded soldiers.

So volunteers provide spiritual and material assistance. Believers visit the wards and collect supplies to meet emergency needs of patients, then help the wounded according to this list. The spiritual part in that is to listen, pray, and encourage them with the Word. When needed, churches take care of the relatives' accommodations on nights when they come to visit wounded soldiers.





BULLET-RIDDLED EU FLAG *IN THE TESTIMONY OF UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT*

During a speech at the Munich Security Conference, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko showed a European Union flag pierced by bullets at the Donbass. He emphasized that this war concerns not only Ukraine, but European stability too.

According to the Ukrainian President, Russia's war against Ukraine is becoming a hybrid war involving the whole world. We, as Christians, understand this is primarily a spiritual struggle, since most of these conflicts are about Christian principles and a Christian worldview.



CYBERATTACKS

AND MODERN CHALLENGES

Ukrainians have discovered during recent years the shocking facts of how cruel and cynical lies can try to block the truth. Cyberattacks and "hybrid warfare" are now the main components of political and social confrontation. The virus "Petya," aimed against Ukraine, became yet another impetus for the active fight against cybercrime and the hybrid war of propaganda in the United States and Europe. After all, the Petya virus became a powerful hacker attack not only against Ukraine, but also hit computer systems in Great Britain, France, Spain, the Netherlands and India.

Hybrid wars are gaining momentum, and it is imperative to reveal and spread the truth, especially when the boundaries between war and peace tend to disappear, when war becomes both explicit and hidden, with both spying and the spreading of misinformation.



A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer, with their hands clasped in front of them, set against a warm, orange-hued sunset sky. The person is positioned in the center-left of the frame, with their back to the viewer.

OUR PRAYER

FOR RECONCILIATION AND A BETTER FUTURE

For both countries that have officially been Christian for more than a thousand years, it is too difficult today to resolve the conflict by reconciliation. To introduce peacekeepers, to enable the Ukrainian state to restore its territorial integrity, to withdraw Russian troops from Ukrainian territory and to restore the Ukrainian-Russian border is still not possible.

We hope this matter could still be resolved successfully, if our northern neighbor would agree to the introduction of a UN peacekeeping mission on the entire Donbass territory, including the section of the Ukrainian-Russian border currently not controlled by Kyiv.

This situation means that Christian countries do not have a real interest in peace, and therefore they cannot trust each other. However, we encourage Evangelical Christian-Baptists to remember that followers of Christ have the ministry of reconciliation and may build bridges between hostile parties – for the great purpose of God is to establish peace between human beings and God, as well as between people themselves. God is our reconciler, and Christ has died and overcome hostility with the cross. We stand on this basis and believe in a better future for Ukraine and other European countries.

Please

Pray for:

- *Integrity, peace and prosperity in Ukraine; hostility, violence and discord to end; crisis management and stabilization of this situation*
- *Unity and revival for our people*
- *Aid for internally displaced persons and those in the occupied territory to be available*
- *Rehabilitation camps and programs for children from the ATO area*
- *Chaplains' ministry at the front, at military units, in hospitals and among widows with children*
- *Small business enterprises to be created in the gray zone in order to provide people jobs in bakeries, greenhouses, farms, etc.; necessary means for housing improvements to ensure minimum living conditions*



Recent news:

- **BBC News:** <http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-43437389/one-woman-is-on-a-mission-to-help-ukraine-s-traumatised-children>
- **CNN:** <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/03/15/politics/dhs-fbi-russia-power-grid/index.html>
- **Atlantic Council:** <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/reports/kremlin-aggression-in-ukraine-the-price-tag>
- **UNICEF:** https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ukraine_102691.html
- **World Food Programme:** <http://www1.wfp.org/countries/ukraine>
- **USA TODAY** <https://www.usatoday.com/videos/news/world/2018/03/18/vote-crimea-tatars-largely-ignore-russian-election/33059081/>
- **The Daily Signal:** <https://www.dailysignal.com/2017/12/21/trump-approves-us-lethal-weapons-sales-ukraine-angering-moscow/>
- **SPIEGEL ONLINE:** http://www.spiegel.de/thema/ukraine_konflikt/
- **Frankfurter Allgemeine:** <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/thema/ukraine-krise>
- **FOX NEWS:** <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/03/12/eu-extends-1-2-billion-loan-to-ukraine.html>
- **Focus Ukraine:** <http://www.kennan-focusukraine.org/ukraine-quarterly-digest-4/>
- **Kennan Institute:** <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/kennan-cable-no-31-west-or-east-the-unpredictable-choice-ukrainian-migrants>
- **MISSION EURASIA:** <https://missioneurasia.org/religion-shadow-kremlin-national-prayer-breakfast-roundtable-discussion/>
- **RISU:** https://risu.org.ua/en/index/expert_thought/authors_columns/mcherenkov_column/64760/

For more information about our ministry, please contact us at: **Ukrpost.ecb@gmail.com**
If you have any questions, please feel free to email us anytime.

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