

Yearbook of Muslims in Europe

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Introduction

The recent history of Islam in Ukraine is closely interrelated with Ukrainian independence. Before the late 1980s no single community officially existed in this part of the USSR. However, in 2014 around 700 Islamic communities were registered,¹ including those on the Crimean peninsula. Since 1991, Muslims have become a significant and active part of the Ukrainian population, mostly in Kiev, Crimea and some urban regions of Eastern Ukraine. Due to the ongoing political crisis and military conflict in the area, the Muslim part of Ukrainian society experienced various problems. Furthermore, this resulted in the appearance of new phenomena in the history of Ukrainian Muslim communities: that is, internal refugees, ethnic and religious persecutions as well as the rise of new Muslim organisations based on political loyalty. Moreover, after the Russian annexation of Crimea, local Muslims (which constitute more than half of the total Muslim population in Ukraine) entered a completely new legal and political reality. The same is true for Muslims of Eastern Ukraine (especially, for the areas around Donetsk and Luhansk), who, as well as other segments of the local population, continue to suffer from the protracted military conflict.

In contrast to past decades, it is even more difficult to speak about Islam in Ukraine as a single entity; there are already three regions with different political situations—Crimea, the military conflict zone of Donbass in the Eastern part of Ukraine, and the rest of the country. Facing this challenge, Muslim communities reacted differently rather than adopting a common position: some of them do not cease to propagate neutrality in the conflict while others have joined the pro-Ukrainian part of society (while also participating in

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1 In Ukrainian law, a religious community (*hromada*) is a group of believers with a leader, whether or not they have a regular meeting place. A religious community can be registered or unregistered.

the Ukrainian “Anti-Terrorism Operation”)² and, finally, some groups support Russian political positions. As a result, one can observe not only a doctrinal clash between various traditions of Islam but also differences coming from divergent political loyalties and their international contexts. Beyond that, however, it is possible to observe new points of connection between Muslims and other religious communities in Ukraine, which have started campaigns to promote national reconciliation and peaceful dialogue in society.

Nevertheless, topics related to Islam and Muslims started to appear in press and media even more frequently than before; some Muslim leaders (especially those supporting the Ukrainian government) are welcomed in interreligious meetings, public events as well as TV-shows and other forms of public discussions of the current situation in Ukraine. In Crimea, where the Russian authority still continues to demonstrate its power in relation to Crimean Tatars, most Muslims organisations attempt to focus their projects around building new and restoring old mosques. Most “untraditional” Islamic groups (as they are usually described by the Russian media), however, such as Salafi communities, *Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami*, etc. have already left Crimea for other parts of Ukraine. It is said that more than 20,000 Crimean Muslims (including not only religious, but also political activists) departed Crimea since the beginning of Russian control over Crimea in March of 2014. Thousands of them now live in Kiev and Western Ukraine, mostly in the Western Lviv and Vinnytsia regions. According to official sources, there are around 500,000 “internally displaced persons” (as the Ukrainian government calls them) from Donetsk and Luhansk and at least few thousands among them are Muslims.

Public Debates

2014 was completely different to previous years in terms of issues that framed public debates around Islam and Muslims in Ukraine. Certainly the turbulent political and military events affected views and discussions of various ethnic and religious groups in Ukrainian public discourse. First of all, public discourses focused on Crimea and the situation of Crimean Tatars; most discussions in

2 According to Crimean Tatar leader Mustafa Dzhemilev, around 450 Crimean Tatars were in the Ukrainian army by December, 2014. Gorchinskaja, Aleksandra. “Dzhemilev prognozirujet novyi naplyv pereselencev na materikovuju Ukrainu” (Dzhemilev predicts new wave of Muslim refugees in the “continental” Ukraine), http://gazeta.ua/ru/articles/life/_dzhemilev-prognoziruuet-novyj-naplyv-pereselencev-iz-kryma-na-materikovuyu-ukrainu/594731, accessed 24 November 2014.

the media were concerned with their views on Russian control over Crimea. Already by the end of February 2014, when a group of militants captured the Crimean parliament, the opposition of Crimean Tatars to secessionist moves, and their boycott of the controversial and unrecognised referendum of 14 May 2014 to legitimise Crimean secession, became subjects of discussions in the media. Mustafa Dzemilev, a Ukrainian MP and former leader of the Mejlis of Crimean Tatars, was at the centre of attention. The same was true about Refat Chubarov, the current head of the Mejlis of Crimean Tatars. Both were labelled “extremists” by Russian authorities and banned from entering Crimea in July 2014. In the following months, the “Muslim issue” in public debates mostly covered the pressure of Russian authorities on the Crimean Tatars, the plight of Crimean refugees and police raids on Islamic religious institutions in Crimea (for example, search of the madrasa in Kolchugino on 24 June 2014).³ The reasons for these raids were not officially given.

The rights of Crimean Muslims was one of the main topics of some press conferences, held on the issue of religious freedom in Ukraine. One was organised by the Ukrinform agency on 25 November 2014 and gathered representatives of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kiev Patriarchate), the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, members of Jewish and Protestant communities and the Mufti of the *Dukhovne Upravlinnya Musulman Ukrainy Ummah* (Spiritual Administration of Ukrainian Muslim Ummah, SAUM Ummah), Said Ismagilov.⁴ The speakers concluded that the rights of Muslims are violated in Crimea and in the Donbass area along with the rights of other religious groups. In general, attitudes towards Muslims in Ukrainian public opinion have been transformed since the beginning of the military conflict. In contrast to previous years when negative media portrayals of Muslims were dominant, such headlines were absent from the media in 2014. Moreover, many appreciative comments were made about four Muslim candidates running for seats in the Ukrainian parliament during the last elections.⁵ In addition, the media covered

3 “V Krymu obyskali medrese i dom s det’mi, doprosili pedagoga” (In Crimea a medrese was searched and its teacher questioned), www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/06/24/7030019/, accessed 3 December 2014.

4 “Pres-konferencija: Novyj ekstremizm: virospovidannja pid tyskom v Krymu ta na Donbasi” (Press-Conference: “New Extremism: Religions under pressure in Crimea and Donbass”), www.ukrinform.ua/ukr/news/1994912, accessed 3 December 2014.

5 “Musul’mane v bor’be za Ukrainu” (Muslims in their fight for Ukraine), <http://socportal.info/2014/10/27/musul-mane-v-bor-be-za-ukrainu.html>, accessed 3 December 2014.

the activities of a special Muslim police squad, called “Crimea”, which has participated in military campaigns since July 2014.⁶

Transnational Links

In 2014, Ukrainian Islamic communities intensified their contacts with foreign Islamic institutions. First of all, all Islamic religious leaders (usually called “muftis” in Ukraine) participated in some international events both in Ukraine and abroad. Ahmad Tamim, Mufti of the *Dukhovne Upravlinnyia Musulman Ukrainy* (Spiritual Administration of Ukrainian Muslims, SAUM, headquartered in Kiev), made two official visits to Egypt in January and March 2014. First, he visited the former Egyptian mufti ‘Ali Jumaa and the rector of Al-Azhar University in March and participated in the international conference on “Takfiri Ideology” in Cairo. His visit received some attention in Egyptian press, as evident in his extensive interview given to the *Al-Ahram* newspaper.⁷ His usage of the title “Mufti of Ukraine” during this visit, however, caused a significant discussion among Ukrainian Muslims, since in Ukraine, as a constitutionally secular state with no state religion, muftis represent only particular organisations and are not state-appointed.⁸ However, in his later interview with the *Al-Misr al-Arabi* newspaper, Ahmad Tamim recognised the absence of the official title “Mufti of Ukraine”, while also defending the *de facto* use of this title, because he was elected mufti by a significant portion of Ukraine’s Muslims in 1992. Finally, he accused the Muslim Brotherhood (claiming that one of the Ukrainian Islamic Associations, *Alraid* was its “representative”) of spreading these accusations against him and, specifically, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, “of waging a war against him for years.”⁹ This example shows that internal conflicts among Ukrainian Muslims are partially repercussions of wider conflicts

6 “Istoriija pro okremyj dobrovol’chij batal’jon iz Krymu” (History of Special Voluntary Unit from Crimea), <http://tsn.ua/video/video-novini/istoriya-pro-okremiy-dobrovolchij-batalyon-iz-krimu-1.html>, accessed 3 December 2014.

7 “Al-Sheikh Ahmad Tamim Mufti Ukraniya li-l-Ahram: Al-Muslimun fi Biladina yatazayyiduna wa nahtaju ila manhaj al-Azhar” (Sheikh Ahmad Tamim, Mufti of Ukraine, to al-Ahram: Muslims in our country rise in number, and we need the method of Al-Azhar), www.ahram.org.eg/NewsQ/252328.aspx, accessed 3 December 2014.

8 “Kto est’ Muftij Ukrainy?” (Who is the Mufti of Ukraine?), <http://muftiyat.com.ua/news/106-hto-est-muftiy-ukrainy.html>, accessed 3 December 2014.

9 “Ahmad Tamim li-l-Misr al-Arabiya: Ana Mufti Ukraniya ‘Al-Shu’ubi’” (Ahmad Tamim to Al-Misr al-Arabiya: I am the “people’s” mufti of Ukraine), www.masralarabia.com/182333, accessed 3 December 2014.

in the Muslim world, such as global tensions between pro-Sufi groups and contemporary Islamist movements.

Other Islamic communities were active internationally in 2014 as well. Said Ismagilov, Mufti of the Islamic organisation *Ummah*, visited Georgia in April 2014. Apart from his speech at the international conference on Islamic issues, Said Ismagilov signed an agreement of cooperation with the head of the Georgian Muslim Union, Zurab Tsichkiladze.¹⁰ *Ummah* also welcomed many foreign guests not only of Muslim but also of Christian background: for example, in October 2014, this Muslim organisation was visited by bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church from France and Canada.¹¹ Another Islamic organisation, the All-Ukrainian Association of Islamic Organisations *Abraid*, which cooperates with *Ummah* very closely (in fact, *Ummah* appeared with the support of *Abraid*), continued its cooperation with global institutions; first of all, with the International Islamic Federation of Student Organisations (IIFSO). For instance, in June 2014 members of *Abraid* along with other Muslim activists from around 50 countries attended an international conference in Istanbul titled “A Future of the Islamic World and the Muslim Youth.”¹² Since *Abraid* unites a significant number of the immigrants from Arab countries, it has already developed very strong links with the Islamic institutions from Middle Eastern countries (UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt). Moreover, *Abraid* runs an Arabic-language web-site Ukrpress, delivering first-hand information about current events in Ukraine to readers in the Arab world.¹³

The political climate determined much of the international activities of Crimean Muslims. In March and April 2014, when the annexation of the peninsula just happened, the *Dukhovne Upravlinnya Musulman Krymu* (Spiritual Administration of Crimean Muslims, SACM) was visited by representatives of the Russian Islamic community. On 28 March 2014, Mufti Emirali Ablaev hosted a delegation from Moscow, consisting of the Chief of the Russian Council of Muftis, Ravil Ghainutdinov, Vice Chief Damir Muhetdinov, the imam of one of the Moscow mosques, Shamil Alautdinov, and some other notables. Russian Muslims declared their support for Crimean believers, promising to

10 “Vystuplenie muftija iz Ukrainy v Gruzii vstretili aplodismentami” (Speech of Ukrainian Mufti in Georgia was welcomed by applause), http://islam.in.ua/2/rus/full_news2/5474/visibletype/1/index.html, accessed 3 December 2014.

11 “Zarady hrystyjans’ko-musul’mans’kogo dialogu” (Seeking Islamic-Christian Dialogue), <http://umma.in.ua/?p=1983>, accessed 3 December 2014.

12 “Molodezhnaja konferencija v Stambule: ‘Uchit’sja zhit’ bok-o-bok i ostavat’sja ljud’mi nesmotrja na konflikty’” (Youth Conference in Istanbul: “To learn how to live closely but to be a humans despite the conflicts”), www.araidd.org/ru/node/3829, accessed 3 December 2014.

13 www.ukrpress.net, accessed 3 December 2014.

assist them in the solution of some critical issues “for the sake the peace and prosperity in Crimea.”¹⁴ Later, on 12 June 2014, SACM welcomed the Mufti of the Central Spiritual Administration of Russian Muslims, Talgat Tajuddin. His goal, as it may be seen from press-releases, was to establish close links between Crimean and Russian Muslims. He also made a reference to some common historical ground between both groups, mentioning the “Tavrian Mohammadan Spiritual Governorship” as the first Crimean Islamic institution in the Russian Empire as well as the “Orenburg Mohammadan Spiritual Governorship” (the oldest state-controlled Islamic organisation in Russia).¹⁵ Other Islamic institutions of Russia were interested in visiting Crimea as well. Sometimes these visits served not only religious but political purposes, in order to develop new links between Crimea and the pre-dominantly Muslim regions of Russia, like the republics of the Northern Caucasus.¹⁶ Many Islamic leaders and scholars from Russia visited Simferopol on 15 October 2014, while participating in a conference dedicated to the preservation of Islamic religious heritage in the area.

Among Islamic leaders from other countries, one of the few of them was the Mufti of the Polish Religious Union, Tomasz Mickiewicz, who met Mufti Emirali Ablaev along the members of the Mejlis of Crimean Tatars.¹⁷ In contrast to the leaders of Russian Muslims, he abstained from any political declarations, talking mainly about his deep sympathies for the problems facing Crimean Muslims.

During 2014, none of the Islamic leaders from other parts of Ukraine were able to visit Crimea; it seems that preserving the connection between these communities may be a serious challenge for Ukrainian Muslims in the future. It must be noted also that many Crimean Muslims made their pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina this year based on the quota, issued by Saudi Arabia for Russian Muslims; the cost for the pilgrimage was reduced by the Russian side, probably to gain more loyalty among Crimean Muslims.

14 “Muftijat Kryma posetila delegacija iz Rossii vo glave s Ravilem Gajnutdinovym” (A delegation from Russia headed by Ravil Gainutdin visited Crimean Muftiate), <http://golosislama.ru/news.php?id=22805>, accessed 3 December 2014.

15 “Muftijat posetil Talgat Tajuddin” (Muftiate was visited by Talgat Tajuddin), <http://qha.com.ua/muftiyat-posetil-predsedatel-tsdum-rossii-talgat-tajuddin-137011.html>, accessed 3 December 2014.

16 “Musul’mane Kawkaza vstretilis’s muftiem i glavoj Kyma” (Muslims of Caucasus meet Mufti and Head of Crimea), www.ansar.ru/analytics/2014/11/06/54923, accessed 3 December 2014.

17 “Muftij Pol’shi pribyl v anneksirovannyj Krym i obsudil problemy musul’man” (Mufti of Poland came to annexed Crimea and discussed problems of Muslims), <http://ru.krymr.com/content/article/25434139.html>, accessed 3 December 2014.

In some parts of the Donbass region, where pro-Russian militants proclaimed their unrecognised state of Novorossiia (consisting of “Donetsk People’s Republic” and “Luhansk People’s Republic”), some Muslim leaders joined the new state authorities. Rinat Aysin, a head of the Islamic organisation *Ednannia* (Unity) became “Counsellor in Religious Affairs of the Head of the Highest Council of the Donetsk People’s Republic.” In October 2014, he visited the Moscow Muftiate to establish some new links of cooperation between the Muslims of Moscow and Donetsk.¹⁸ In one of his interviews, Rinat Aysin talked mostly about humanitarian issues and not political ones. He represents, however, just a minority among Muslims of the Donbass region. Other international activities of Donbass Muslims were almost impossible to undertake due to the military conflict in the region.

International Islamic organisations have responded to the events in Crimea and Donbass quite reservedly. What seems to be significant in this context is Mustafa Dzemilev’s meeting with Iyad Madani, the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.¹⁹ Madani informed Mustafa Dzemilev that there is the possibility for Ukraine to become an associate member of the OIC. Also on 3 May 2014, the European Muslim Union (EMU) organised special hearings on Islam in Ukraine (“Solidarity with an embattled minority”) in Berlin; Crimean Muslims were represented by Abduraman Egiz from the Mejlis of Crimean Tatars.²⁰

Law and Domestic Politics

Most of the recent developments in the domestic politics of Ukraine which affect the Muslim population are related to the political crisis. Already in the beginning of 2014, the parliamentary coalition (mostly represented by the Party of Regions), following former president Viktor Yanukovich, voted for the new legislation, popularly known as “The Laws of 16 January” (*Zakony*

18 “Interv’ju s muftiem DNR” (An interview with a mufti of DNR), www.islam.ru/content/analitics/12438, accessed 3 December 2014.

19 Yakubovych, Mykhaylo, “Chy stavaty Ukraïni chlenom Organizacii’ islams’kogo spivrobot nyctva?” (Is it necessary for Ukraine to become a member of OIC?), www.day.kiev.ua/uk/article/cuspilstvo/chi-stavati-ukrayini-chlenom-organizaciyi-islamskogo-spivrobotnictva, accessed 3 December 2014.

20 “Solidarity with an embattled minority”, www.emunion.eu/jupgrade/index.php/emu-activities/40-activities/272-solidarity-with-an-embattled-minority, accessed 3 December 2014.

16-go sichnia).²¹ Interpreting old and setting some new prescriptions for public activities, these laws also regulated financial procedures of NGOs: those organisations, which receive any support from abroad, had to register as “foreign agents.”²² Since many Islamic organisations use foreign funding and are being registered as “non-governmental organisation” and not “religious community”, this was the first step to more government control of their activities. However, on 28 January 2014, the Parliament voted to repeal nine of the laws, including the controversial one about NGOs.

Other initiatives, mostly introduced by the new coalition in the Parliament, were limited to the Crimean issue. In detail, this includes the *Declaration of the Guarantee for the Rights of Crimean Tatar People in the State of Ukraine*, officially proclaimed on 20 March 2014.²³ This document expresses support for Crimean Tatars and their “ethnic, cultural, language and religious identity as indigenous people of Ukraine.” The Mejlis of Crimean Tatars was also mentioned (Article 3 of the *Declaration*) as the representative body of the Crimean Tatar national council (*Kurultay*). Unsurprisingly, this *Declaration* was mostly a sign of moral but not real support since Crimea was already out of Ukrainian government control. Other initiatives, mentioned in this document (“Projects of Cooperation with Mejlis”, Article 7) are still due for consideration. The only recent laws to solve some problems of internally displaced persons from Crimea and Donbass cover mainly social issues and not the protection of religious rights.²⁴ Muslims (mainly Crimean Tatars) who already moved to Western Ukraine or Kiev, receive support, mainly from numerous voluntary organisations.

On the local level, however, there are still some tensions between the representatives of municipal authorities and some Islamic organisations. In May 2014, the city council of Khmelnytsky refused to allocate a plot of land for the construction of a mosque to the local Muslim community. This was the fourth time of such refusal, since the Muslim community (associated with

21 Cohen, Ariel, “Ukraine’s Anti-Protest Laws: A Step Backwards in Time”, www.heritage.org/research/reports/2014/01/ukraine-s-anti-protest-laws-a-step-backwards-in-time, accessed 3 December 2014.

22 “Rada pryjnjala zakon pro ‘inozemnyh agentiv’” (The Council adopted law on “foreign agents”), <http://tyzhden.ua/News/99021>, accessed 3 December 2014.

23 <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1140-18>, accessed 3 December 2014.

24 *Proekt Zakonu pro zabezpechennja prav i svobod vnutrishn'o peremishhenih osib* (Project of the Law on the Guarantee of the Rights and Freedoms of the Internally Displaced Persons), http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=52046, accessed 3 December 2014.

SAUM) had made requests in the past.²⁵ Among meetings of Islamic leaders with Ukrainian politicians, a visit of the Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament Oleksandr Turchinov to the Al-Rahma mosque in Kiev must be mentioned. During this event and a meeting with the Mufti of the Spiritual Administration of Ukrainian Muslims, Ahmad Tamim, Oleksandr Turchinov noted that he appreciated the efforts of the national and religious communities to support Ukrainian territorial integrity.²⁶ Since Ahmad Tamim is the member of All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organisations, SAUM is the only Islamic institution in Ukraine which receives attention of senior government officials and politicians.

Probably for the first time in Ukrainian parliamentary elections, one of Ukraine's Muslims leaders participated as a candidate. Said Ismagilov, the Mufti of the Islamic organisation *Ummah*, ran as a first-listed candidate for the party *Ukraina Jedyna Kraina* (Ukraine: One Country). The party received only 28,145 votes (0.17% out of total).²⁷

A completely different picture may be observed in Crimea. Since the time of the Russian takeover of the peninsula, many crimes against Crimean Tatars have been reported: kidnappings, murders,²⁸ arson attacks on mosques,²⁹ restrictions on public meetings etc.³⁰ In contrast to Ukraine, where there are no restrictions on book publications, Russia has its own index of prohibited

25 "Vchetverte u Hmel'nyč'komu ne nadaly diljanku pid mechet'" (For the fourth time land was not given for the mosque in Khmelnytski), <http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/exclusive/reportage/56315/>, accessed 3 December 2014.

26 "Turchinov posetil DUMU s oficial'nym vizito" (Turchinov officially visited SAUM), http://umma.ua/ru/news/ukraine/Turchinov_posetil_DUMU_s_ofitsialnim_vizitom/28133, accessed 3 December 2014.

27 *Parlaments'ki vybory—2014* (Parliamentary elections—2014), www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vnd2014/wp300?PT001F01=910, accessed 3 December 2014.

28 "Hamzin: Pohishhenija i ubijstva krymskih tatar—realizacija 'chechenskogo scenarija'" (Hamzin: Kidnappings and murders of Crimean Tatars: Realization of "Chechen Scenario"), <http://ru.krymr.com/content/article/26622879.html>, accessed 3 December 2014.

29 "Muftijat Kryma: Krymskie tatary ne budut mstit' za podzhogi mechetej" (Crimean Muftiate: Crimean Tatars will seek not revenge for the burnings of mosques), <http://gordonua.com/news/crimea/Muftiyat-Kryma-Krymskie-tatary-ne-budut-mstit-za-podzhogi-mechetey-Video-52098.html>, accessed 3 December 2014.

30 "V Simferopole pod prismotrom OMONa prohodit miting krymskih tatar" (A meeting of Crimean Tatars in Simferopol is under control of special police), <http://mignews.com.ua/regiony/krym/2816108.html>, accessed 3 December 2014.

books (officially called “The Federal List of Extremist Materials”).³¹ Many basic sources, like some collections of hadith and books on Islamic doctrine, are listed as “extremist” materials (according to statements of some Russian courts). In August 2014, Russian security services conducted raids in Crimean madrasas, looking mostly for “extremist literature.” Responding to this issue, the Spiritual Administration of Crimean Muslims called on Crimean Muslims to avoid using such books.³²

As Elmira Muratova notes, it is almost impossible for the main centre of Crimean Muslims to retain independence and to avoid complete integration into the Russian religious environment.³³ Still, it is not clear, however, whether Russian authorities have a single vision of the future of Crimean Tatars; more likely, there are a number of views on their rights and their implications. What is more definite is that Russian authorities may seek the loyalty of some Muslim groups, supporting “traditional” institutions against various contemporary Islamic movements. Sergey Aksonov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Crimea (appointed by Russian authorities), already promised to solve “all the problems of Crimean Tatars,” but warned against those who will not recognise Crimea as part of Russia, threatening them with “deportation” or “legal prosecution.”³⁴ On 18 September 2014, the Mejlis of Crimean Tatars was removed from its office in Simferopol; however, its meeting in July 2014 was already held outside of Crimea, in the government-controlled part of Ukraine. One can observe a change of balance of power in Crimean Islam. Unsurprisingly, along with pro-Russian political groups among the Crimean Tatars, some loyal religious organisations have appeared (like the Tavrian Muftiate, *Tavricheskiy Muftiyat*). Generally speaking, 2014 was a transitional year for many Crimean Muslims, since the complete introduction of Russian laws was planned from 1 January 2015 onwards.

31 *Federal'nyj spisok ekstremistskih materialov* (Federal List of Extremist Materials), <http://minjust.ru/ru/extremist-materials>, accessed 3 December 2014.

32 “Muftijat Kryma prizval musul'man izbavit'sja ot zapreshennyh tekstov” (Crimean Muftiate calls on Muslims to avoid forbidden texts), <http://lenta.ru/news/2014/08/14/islam/>, accessed 3 December 2014.

33 Muratova, Elmira, “Novye realii musul'man Kryma” (New reality of Crimean Muslims), <http://kngu.org/content/elmira-muratova-novye-realii-musulman-kryma>, accessed 3 December 2014.

34 “Aksenov poobeshhal reshit' problemy krymskih tatar i nakazyvat' teh, kto protiv prisoidinenija Kryma k RF” (Aksionov promised to solve the problems of Crimean Tatars and to punish those who stand against the incorporation of Crimea by Russia), www.newsru.com/russia/22sep2014/tatary.html, accessed 3 December 2014.

The situation in the Donbass regions, outside of government control, appears to be less clear. Since May 2014, when military clashes started, thousands of Muslims left their homes. Many Islamic organisations, however, continue their activities, and some of them already started cooperating with the new political authorities. It is hard to say, however, whether these organisations have any real legitimacy among local communities or not. Political instability, military clashes and migration do not allow any conclusions to be drawn about the direction of religious policies of the pro-Russian groups. One can definitely observe their efforts to gain loyalty among local Muslims, mostly in close cooperation with some Russian Islamic organisations.

Activities and Initiatives of Main Muslim Organisations

Notwithstanding the fact of the political and military crisis in Ukraine, many Muslim communities made their best efforts to continue their activities. First of all, in 2014, around 200 Ukrainian pilgrims visited Mecca and Medina for the hajj. SAUM continued its tradition to organise “diplomatic *iftars*” during the month of Ramadan, inviting state officials and ambassadors of foreign countries, mainly from the Middle East. SAUM also organised celebrations of the main Muslim festivals (including celebration of *mawlid*, the Prophet Muhammad’s birthday) in regional Muslim communities. Members of the Islamic University (founded by SAUM) participated in some Ukrainian book fairs with their publications. The head of SAUM, Mufti Ahmad Tamim, visited many public events in Ukraine and abroad.

Another Islamic institution with its centre in Kiev (SAUM *Ummah*) organised events to initiate cooperation between Ukrainian Muslims and scholars of Islamic Studies. Along with the Association *Alraid*, SAUM *Ummah* ran a summer school of Islamic Studies in August 2014. Mufti Said Ismagilov was among the co-organisers of the Fourth International Conference “Islam and Islamic Studies in Ukraine”, which was held by the Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine on 19 November 2014. Besides traditional celebrations of Muslims holidays and other religious activities, SAUM *Ummah* and the Association *Alraid* published statements on current events in Ukraine, such as the presidential elections, the celebration of Ukrainian Independence Day etc. In some parts of Donbass, however, public activities after May 2014 have become extremely difficult because of the military conflict. As a result, Muslim communities there were more concerned with the issue of survival than with the usual schedule of religious activities.

In Crimea, the most prominent Islamic event was an international conference in October 2014, dedicated to the 700th anniversary of the construction of the Khan Uzbek Mosque in Solhat. The meeting was run by the SACM, the “Council of Ministers of Crimea” and some Islamic institutions from Russia. The conference gathered many Islamic leaders, officials, and scholars from Russia, Belarus, and Turkey, but no speakers from other parts of Ukraine were able to attend the conference.³⁵

A few recently constructed mosques were opened in 2014 in the cities of Simferopol, Novozhylovka and some other places. A new Islamic organisation, the Central Spiritual Administration of Crimean Muslims (“Tavrian Muftiate”), headed by Ruslan Saitvaliev, was established in 2014. This institution gained control of one of the main mosques of Yevpatoria (Juma-Jami). The Central Spiritual Administration of Crimean Muslims has a close links with the Central Muslim Religious Administration of Russia.

The activities of Ukrainian Muslims, however, were not limited to their usual communal activities. For the first time, Muslims from various parts of Ukraine formed a special military unit to participate in fights against pro-Russian militants in the Donbass region. Around half the soldiers of the Patrol Special Police “Crimea” were Muslims of various ethnic origins (Crimean Tatars, Chechens, Ukrainians, and Russians).³⁶ The “Crimea” was involved in heavy clashes with pro-Russian groups in Ilovaysk and Pisky (Donetsk Region).

Demographics and Statistics

It must be noted that none of the Ukrainian censuses (the most recent one was conducted in 2001) included questions on religion. Moreover, state religious statistics merely count religious communities and not the number of people in any of these communities. As a result, it is quite difficult to determine the exact number of Ukrainian Muslims. The numbers listed in this appendix are based on some reports on the numbers of “Muslim” nationalities in Ukraine (like Crimean Tatars, Arabs etc.),³⁷ statistics by the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture,

35 “Otkrylas’ konferencija k 700-letiju mecheti Khana Uzbeka” (Opening of the conference on the event of the Khan Uzbek Mosque 700th Anniversary), <http://qha.tv/video.php?id=7956&dil=3>, accessed 3 December 2014.

36 *Okrema Sotnia Krym* (Special Unit Crimea), <https://www.facebook.com/sotnja.krym?fref=ts>, accessed 3 December 2014.

37 www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/, accessed 3 December 2014.

sociological studies,³⁸ official data,³⁹ and the author's own experience of field studies and interviews with Muslim leaders in Ukraine.

Muslim Population	600,000 (1.4% out of total population) (2014).
Ethnic/National Backgrounds	More than half of Muslims are citizens of Ukraine. Largest ethnic groups are Crimean Tatars (around 300,000), Volga Tatars (70,000), Azerbaijanis (50,000), Chechens, Daghestanis, Turks, Iranians, Arabs, Uzbeks as well as Ukrainian, Belarusian and Russian converts (approx. 10,000).
Inner-Islamic Groups	Sunnis (mostly Hanafi) constitute the absolute majority. Twelver Shi'is are relatively small in number, not exceeding 20,000.
Geographical Spread	Around 50% of Ukrainian Muslims live in Crimea; more than 30% live in Kiev and Eastern Ukraine (Kharkiv, Donetsk, Luhansk), around 20% in other regions.
Number of Mosques	Around 400 (including more than 300 on Crimea).
Muslim Burial Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Muslim cemetery on Lukyanivs'ka str., Kiev – Abdal Muslim cemetery, Symferopil, Crimea – Ghazi-Mansur cemetery, Bakhcisaray, Crimea
Places of Islamic Learning and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Al-Irshad Islamic School and University (Lukyanivs'ka str, 46, Kiev, 04071, tel.: ++380 444651877/78, fax: ++38000 444651876). – Al-Nur Islamic School (Dehtiarivska Str., 25-a, Kiev, 04119, tel.: ++38000 444909900, fax: ++38000 444909922). – Azov Medrese of Islamic Sciences (Majskoje, Dzankoj region, Crimea, Gasprinskogo str., 1, tel.: ++38000 656450691, fax: ++38000 656454535).

38 Muratova, Elmira, *Krymskie musul'mane: vzgljad iznutri (rezul'taty sociologicheskogo issledovanija)* (Crimean Muslims: View from Inside (Results of a Sociological Survey)) (Simferopol: ChP Jelin'o, 2009).

39 <http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/resourses/statistics/ukr2014/55893/>, accessed 3 December 2014.

Muslim Media and Publications

- *Minaret* Islamic Newspaper (in Russian, published monthly by SAUM), <http://www.islamyat.org/gazeta-minaret>.
- *Alraid* Islamic Newspaper (in Russian, published monthly by Association *Alraid*), <http://www.araidd.org/ru/taxonomy/term/103>.
- *Ummah* Islamic Newspaper (in Ukrainian, published monthly by SAUM *Ummah*), <http://umma.in.ua/?cat=54>.
- *Istochnik Mudrosti* (Source of Wisdom) (in Russian and Crimean Tatar, published monthly by SACM).
- *Ukraina i Islamskij mir* (Ukraine and Islamic World) (in Russian, published irregularly by the Muftiate of Kiev).

Main Muslim Organisations

- *Dukhovne Upravlinnya Musulman Ukrainy* (Spiritual Administration of Ukrainian Muslims, Lukyanivs'ka str, 46, Kiev, 04071, tel.: ++38 444651877/78, fax: ++380 444651876, <http://www.islam.ua>, info@islam.ua). This organisation is among the oldest (founded in 1992) and headed by Sheikh Ahmad Tamim. With its headquarters in Kiev, it covers more than 100 communities in most of the regions of Ukraine. From a theological viewpoint, it follows Sunni Sufi Islam, primarily the order of 'Abd Allah al-Harrari (1910—2008) from Lebanon.
- *Dukhovne Upravlinnya Musulman Ukrainy Ummah* (Spiritual Administration of Ukrainian Muslims *Ummah*, Dehtyarivs'ka str., 25, Kiev, 04119, tel.: ++380 444909900, fax: ++380 444909922. <http://umma.in.ua>, dumu.umma@gmail.com). Founded in 2008, the Spiritual Administration represents more than 25 communities from all around Ukraine. Its leader, Sheikh Said Ismagilov, often appears in Ukrainian media. SAUM *Ummah* follows a mainstream Sunni creed with a strong admiration of the concept of “moderation” (*wasatiya*) in Islam. It has very close relations with the association *Alraid* (their headquarters are located in the same building).
- *Asociaciya Alraid* (Association *Alraid*, main office, Dehtiarivska Str., 25-a, Kiev, 04119, tel.: ++38000 444909900, fax: ++38000 444909922, <http://www.araidd.org>, office@araidd.org). This organisation, founded in 1997 by the Arab diaspora in Ukraine, is officially registered as an NGO. It has around 15 divisions in the regions of Ukraine, including Crimea. *Alraid* is very active in publishing and media, propagating cultural encounters between Ukraine and Middle Eastern states.

- *Kyivs'kyj Muftiyat* (Muftiate of Kiev, News'ka str., 10-A, Kiev, 03062, tel.: ++380 444496546, tugantel@gmail.com). This Muftiate (founded in 2007) represents Volga Tatar communities of Ukraine and propagates their cultural heritage. It has established good relations with Muslims of Tatarstan and is mostly concerned with the preservation of their cultural heritage in Ukraine.
- *Dukhovne Upravlinnya Musulman Krymu* (Spiritual Administration of Crimean Muslims, Kurchatova str., 4, Symferopil', 95000, tel.: ++380 652274353. <http://www.qmdi.org>, muftiyat@qirimmuftiyat.org.ua). SACM, with its leader Mufti Emirali Ablaev, is the largest Islamic organisation in Ukraine. It unifies most of the Crimean communities and a few in the Kherson region. It was founded in 1992 to preserve the religious identity of Crimean Tatars (representing the Hanafi-Maturidi school of law and theology). The SACM continues to operate in Russian-controlled Crimea.
- *Dukhovnyj Centr Musulman Krymu* (Spiritual Centre of Crimean Muslims, 60 let. Oktyabria str., 20–39, Symferopil', Crimea, 95044, tel./fax: ++380 652523514, <http://www.dcmk.org>, muftiyat@dcmk.org). This organisation was established in 2010 with support from the Spiritual Administration of Ukrainian Muslims. Headed by Ridwan Veliev, it supports the revival of Sufi traditions in Crimea, sometimes associated with popular “folk” Islam. It consists of a few dozen communities in Crimea.
- *Central'noje Dukhovnoe Upravlenie Krymskih Musulman* (“*Tavticheskij Muftiyat*”) (Central Spiritual Administration of Crimean Muslims (“Tavrian Muftiyate”), <http://www.cdumk.ru/>, info@cdumk.ru). Established in 2014 with the help of Central Spiritual Administration of Russian Muslims, this organisation just started its activities. It seems to support a Sufi notion of Sunni Islam.
- *Dukhovnyj Centr Musul'man Ukrainy* (Spiritual Centre of Ukrainian Muslims, Donetsk, Marshal Zhukov str., 1, 83071). This centre was established in 1995 to unify Muslim communities of Donbass. By the end of the 1990s, it included more than 20 of local communities in the Doneck and Luhansk areas. It has reduced its activities, mostly because of the military conflict in Eastern Ukraine.