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Military chaplaincy in Ukraine

Informal union

All actors • Ukraine

The movement of military chaplains that act on behalf of different religious communities.

Official position/functions regarding the conflict

The movement of military chaplains developed after the beginning of the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula; it was a response to the urgent need of individual Ukrainian military units. [Many of its ministers began their chaplaincy career by providing humanitarian aid to battalions and brigades](#); later their role got crystallized and received an official status.

Now the official position of the Ukrainian military chaplaincy is to support the nationwide vision of the conflict (in the context of the military service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine), as well as to support those religious organizations that the chaplains represent.

Interests in the region of the conflict

Regarding the military chaplaincy in general (and omitting the issue of conflicts between chaplains of individual denominations), we can say that the chaplains are mainly interested in the stable support of their service on the level of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, as well as on the national legislative level. In particular, they are interested in obtaining the official (recognized by

the state) status of the participants in hostilities, which provides them with the social and medical insurance, as well as in financial support (including the expenditures on such necessary resources as gasoline when moving along the contact line). At the moment, military chaplains are actively cooperating with the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the National Guard of Ukraine, as well as with individual initiatives of the local police.

Activity regarding the conflict

The inter-denominational movement of military chaplains supports the military and the command in a variety of ways, working with the personnel and officers. In particular, in addition to satisfying the spiritual needs of the military, ministers often help solve urgent problems of the unit and work closely with a military psychologist or partially replace him/her in his/her absence.

Chaplains continue to maintain social contacts with the families of the military personnel, as well as to inform the military about the news and the political decisions in the outside world; they search for additional resources to satisfy the needs of the army or other military formations. [Sometimes their work with the families of the military happens in the form of social projects, such as family retreats organized by representatives of the UGCC.](#)

Although this is not the duty of the military chaplains, they often help establish communication between military units and officers, especially if they are required to take care of several units at once.

Another important aspect of the chaplains' work is their cooperation with the Civil-Military Cooperation Service (CIMIC). The Ministry of Defense launched a pilot project of mobile brigades, which included a chaplain, a military psychologist and a political officer, whose task was to solve urgent problems with the civilian population in different parts of the demarcation line. Such brigades, in the opinion of the command and of the officers themselves, have proven their effectiveness and helped establish ties with local communities in the face of dynamic changes on the front line.