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PASTORAL ACTIVITIES OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS OF UKRAINE DURING THE ATO

Today, Ukraine is going through difficult periods in its history, being in the process of becoming an independent and European state. Since the beginning of the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine in 2014, military chaplaincy has become an expression of social unity. The article examines the activities and functioning of chaplaincy since the beginning of Russian aggression in 2014 during the Anti-Terrorist Operation/Operation of the Joint Forces (ATO/JFO). It is noted that it was the armed aggression in eastern Ukraine in 2014 that was a key factor in the development of military chaplaincy. It is emphasized that an important element in the development of military chaplaincy is the accumulated experience of military rectors during the ATO/JFO. This is noted for its importance, especially after the outbreak of a full-scale war by Russia. It is determined that the beginning of a new stage of the revival of the chaplaincy movement in the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) was in 2014, when the Russian Federation began a war against Ukraine. It was then that military chaplains were in the combat zone together with the military, witnessing and participating in the fighting in eastern Ukraine. At the same time, military rectors traveled to the combat zone on a volunteer basis to provide a pastoral component to the formation of Ukrainian soldiers. Since 2014, Ukrainian society has realized the need for a pastoral component in the process of defense and building the resilience of the Ukrainian army. The government responded, and official regulations were issued to regulate the process of pastoral care of military personnel. However, as a rule, it looked like a large number of volunteers of different denominations went to the zone of first the ATO and then the JFO. It took many years for chaplaincy in the Armed Forces of Ukraine to gain official status.

Keywords: religion, chaplain, Armed Forces of Ukraine, pastoral service, clergy.

Introduction: In times of war, it is important to form conscious and responsible patriots who are ready to fulfill their duties to protect the country's borders. Given the diversity of worldviews and denominations in a democratic Ukrainian society, as well as the existing ideological

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vacuum in the spiritual sphere and the high level of trust in the church, it is necessary to understand the important role of the chaplain in the army environment. Today, the military is facing great challenges, and the chaplain is a key factor in ensuring the psychological and spiritual well-being of soldiers. His presence and support are important for maintaining high morale and the effectiveness of a military unit.

In recent years, many scholars have paid attention to the analysis of issues related to military chaplaincy. Of particular value is the collective work of the Ivan Krypnyakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies "On Dignity. The Volunteer Movement in Ukraine 2013-2017" (*Arkusha, Lytvyn, 2018: pp. 271-296*), where the authors describe a historical analysis of the activities of volunteer chaplains in the context of war. The memoirs of Father Andriy Zelinsky, one of the first chaplains, are another valuable source where he shares his experience of pastoral service (*Zelinsky, 2015, 2016, 2017*). Romaniuk M. and Dolganova M. have made a significant contribution to the study of the legal regulation of pastoral care for the military, focusing on aspects of military-religious institutions from 1992 to the present (*Romaniuk and Dolganova, 2022*).

The aim of the paper is to analyze the peculiarities of military chaplains' activities during the ATO/JFO.

The main part of the article. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities in the East and South, the number of military chaplains who regularly visited military units and received internal training in the units was 67. In 2015, there were three public organizations of military chaplains in Ukraine (called "battalions"), and departments of military clergy at churches and religious communities. But due to the lack of a unified service, no one could establish the exact number of volunteer chaplains who continue to travel, live and serve soldiers on the front line. In 2015, 350 chaplains traveled to the front line with official permission from the Ministry of Defense, and 150 of them became active and permanent ministers (*Kalenychenko, 2015*).

Pastors who have a developed system and have been working long before the start of the ATO are called the pioneers of the chaplaincy system. Priests who serve the military have special training, undergo monthly rotations at the front line and receive related training. In the summer of 2015, the UOC-KP and UGCC churches began to implement similar systematic work. As of 2015, the seventh rotation of military priests recruited through mobilization from all regions of the country has already gone to the ATO (*Filipchuk, 2015*).

To regulate chaplaincy, the Ministry of Defense developed certain requirements for future chaplains and their denominations. Firstly, membership in the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (AUCCRO covers 95% of religious organizations in Ukraine). At the time, it had to be a well-known church, "socialized," and not acting as a sect in the sociological sense.

Secondly, religious teaching was not supposed to reject the armed defense of the Fatherland. The priest had no right to hesitate whether he was doing the right thing.

Third, the Church had to have believers in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. If the number of believers of a particular denomination is small, then a separate chaplain is not needed. Instead, there had to be either a visiting pastor or believers (or another chaplain) who would look for a suitable local community (*Filipchuk, 2015*).

In 2014-2015, there were seven types of military priests: volunteer priests (up to a week in the ATO), their assistants, chaplains (3 weeks and more) and assistants, local clergy, "touring" priests (Russian Orthodox Church and Russian Orthodox Church of the Russian Federation), and clergy who are fighting. If we take into account the results of the surveys in 2015, then completely different clergymen could have been next to the military at that time. In unofficial conversations, the military said that before the war began, they were far from churches. According to surveys conducted by the Razumkov Center in 2010 and 2011, 85% of military personnel identified themselves as Orthodox, 5% as Greek Catholics, 8% as not belonging to any religion, and only 1.77% identified themselves as Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims (*Detochka, 2013*). More than 50% of respondents from the National University of Defense of Ukraine and the Humanitarian Institute (only contract soldiers were included) in a 2012 survey stated that they did not personally need a chaplain (*Sliusarenko, 2013*). Only 19% of respondents needed a chaplain, and 31% of respondents were undecided. The data has changed during the ATO. Colonel Oleksiy Tereshchuk, Head of the Military Chaplaincy Service of the Armed Forces of Ukraine at the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, states that in 2014 there were even cases when our brigades were stopped on the street by civilians with signs of religious affiliation. This is the very important work of a military chaplain ("*Who can be a military chaplain*").

In the ATO sectors, there were elders among the chaplains of a particular denomination who controlled the ministers from their own denomination, solved local problems, and reported to the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine (MoD). At that time, a completely new position was envisioned – an assistant chaplain – with much lower requirements. But the General Staff did not approve this activity at the time, citing a lack of appropriate jobs. If we set aside the problem of quotas, the proportions of believers of a particular denomination among the military, battalion chaplains are often left out of the new system. The Chief of the General Staff, then Army General Viktor Muzhenko, had to put one signature to certify the regulations on salaries, and after that it would be possible to recruit people for military chaplaincy. At this time, in 2015, there were already 344 positions of military chaplains in 67 garrisons (*Kalenychenko, 2015*).

In 2014-2015, three volunteer organizations operated on the front line: Battalion of Pentecostal military chaplains (about 60 ministers), First Ukrainian Battalion of Military Chaplains (Protestants and Orthodox, 48 ministers), Interfaith Battalion of Military Chaplains (unites Protestants, Orthodox, Catholics – about 150 ministers).

Having started their service as volunteers, they formed public organizations and continued their chaplaincy ministry. However, under the new requirements, most of them were deprived of the right to do so because not all of them were ministers of religious organizations that were part of the AUCCRO and had formal education. Moreover, not all were ready to give up their civilian careers or pastoral ministry for the sake of public service and the permanent mission of a military priest.

The commander of the First Ukrainian Battalion, Ruslan Ros (Busko), noted the open position of the ministers, but also insisted that their interests be taken into account: "Many different battalions have appeared and those who now want to control them have quickly emerged. So far, all such decisions have been made without our participation, although we will agree to any good mechanism proposed by the state. The requirement that chaplains be pastors with at least a year of service is strange to us. This means that no one has studied this issue. You need to devote a lot of time to both the flock in the parish and the military in the ATO, so it is very difficult to combine this" (*Kizilov, 2015*).

One of the main obstacles was that the battalions served as civilian associations that had no right to meet religious needs. Since the Council for Pastoral Care (CPC) worked with freelance chaplains, for some reason they thought that there should be no requirements. On the contrary, such requirements should have been for everyone. The so-called "battalions of military chaplains" did not comply with this. Once upon a time, Evangelical Baptist Christians tried to act through a public association. There were many questions as to how this association could meet the religious needs of the military. However, in 2014, their representatives became members of the Council for Pastoral Care under the MoD and acted as a church within the parameters of the Law of Ukraine "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" rather than the Law of Ukraine "On Public Associations" (*Kalenychenko, 2015*).

Protestants had another good reason to stay on the front lines. According to the commander of the Interfaith Battalion of Military Chaplains, Ihor Shtorm (Shulyk), pastors had unique knowledge of working with the most difficult categories of the population: "The issue is that Protestant pastors and deacons have experience in rehab centers, prisons, and have worked with the most difficult people. Other priests do not know how to deal with addicts. And this is a very significant disadvantage of traditional denominations. And how will they be able to serve the military? We have programs for different categories of victims. We have already appointed senior chaplains for the sectors. They do almost nothing, and those who have gone before are working. Traditional churches remain in charge, but others will work - I do not agree with this" (*Kalenychenko, 2015*).

The distribution of chaplains according to the confessional affiliation of the military as of 2014-2015 was also a problem. According to the established custom, chaplains were introduced only after specific questions from the soldiers, without declaring their denomination at the beginning of the service. A chaplain is a priest, and it doesn't really matter what denomination he belongs to, the main thing is that a person lives by the Word of God, performs his duties well and the result is visible. When soldiers come out of the shelling, they do not ask the chaplain what church he is from. They need prayer and faith, something to support and inspire them (*Vladychenko, 2014*).

Providing assistance to their wards in the field, chaplains themselves need some training, which should not be limited to theological knowledge. In 2015, the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University launched a pilot training program "Psychotherapy and Chaplaincy." The master's program was created together with the Realis Christian Training and Research Center and the Center for the Study of Religion at Drahomanov, with a master's degree in religious studies. Despite the interest in the training, only Protestants who wanted to have a legitimate basis for their chaplaincy ministry were actually enrolled. This program was focused on helping chaplains overcome post-traumatic conditions and providing them with competence in working with people in a post-traumatic state. They were taught how to overcome post-traumatic conditions related to the war (*Vladichenko, 2014*).

The church's patriotic activities during the ATO/JFO period were carried out in the following areas:

1. Explanatory work among believers who serve in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, other security forces and volunteer battalions;
2. Personal examples of courageous behavior of priests in confrontation with militants;
3. Acts of mercy by the clergy and believers in caring for the sick and wounded in hospitals, helping orphans and families of the deceased;
4. Numerous donations for defense and for gifts to soldiers on the front line;
5. Intensification of the anti-terrorist struggle of the peoples under the occupation of pro-Russian militants (*Prokopiuk, 2014*).

War is not just death, but also the deprivation of life of others. And in the twenty-first century, as it turned out, it is too. There is a lot of blood and grief in combat operations. It is necessary to kill the enemy, and it is difficult for a person to survive this moment. And it is the chaplain who can explain that killing the enemy is not the same as killing a person. That protecting the weak is probably the purpose of man in this world.

In 2014-2015, Ukrainian chaplains did not take up arms and did not go to the battlefield unless there was an urgent need for confession. Today, however, chaplains must be able to survive on the battlefield, but they are forbidden by the church and the law to take up arms.

In the United States, where the chaplaincy model has been tested and is very effective, chaplains, together with soldiers and officers, participate in combat operations, are always near the personnel, and therefore deserve high trust (*Stebalak, 2019*).

Every soldier should have the opportunity to communicate with a chaplain of the denomination to which he or she belongs. For example, in Poland, which seems to be a monolithic Roman Catholic country, there are Orthodox chaplains. Although the number of Orthodox there is actually negligible. Protestant churches in Ukraine have quite large communities that cannot be ignored and are not fair. Representatives of Protestant churches and non-Christian religions should be given the opportunity to work in the army, if they wish.

A military chaplain has to be able to cope with himself and others - from first aid to specialized psychological care, such as the elimination of post-traumatic stress syndrome. Our people are very private. That is why military rectors need to be trained to help them become open in extreme situations. To do this, a priest, who is also a human being, needs to be able to help himself in extreme circumstances. Knowing yourself is necessary to understand how you can help others and find the best way to help. Such training methods are used in joint training of chaplains and crisis psychologists in the EU.

And not only do chaplains help our soldiers on the battlefield, they also take an active part in helping the families of servicemen who ask for help for their son or husband who has returned from the war, to recommend a psychologist, because our heroes often drink, drink non-stop, especially in the first weeks after their return. Because they can't sleep, remembering how explosions tore their friends apart, because they hear moans and see blood in their dreams, because they don't understand how a peaceful, ordinary life can go on here at home if there is a war and Ukrainians are being killed. Then, in some cases, they have to use alcohol, abuse of painkillers and addiction to them. It is also to help the families of children of fallen soldiers.

Of course, soldiers should undergo psychological tests for professional fitness for military service and drug tests before being sent to the army. This should be a prerequisite for service. The tests should be administered at the earliest possible opportunity. But even a healthy person who passes all the tests and passes all the tests with flying colors has a hard time at the front.

One of the challenges for the church and chaplains is post-traumatic stress disorder. After demobilization, this problem requires special attention from priests and psychologists.

Father Andriy Khomyshyn, a military chaplain of the UGCC, shares his memories. He describes his experience in the ATO as follows: "I was not shocked when I came to the ATO. As a military chaplain, I was prepared for what I saw. I remember that I went with the aim of holding at least one Liturgy for our soldiers. I knew that I had to be there." (*Military chaplain Andriy Khomyshyn: we do not pry into soldiers' souls*).

There were very different people where my father served, but most of them were volunteers from the Lviv region. Some had experience in the military, having served before. Others held weapons in their hands for the first time. There were also a lot of activists from the Maidan. They stood in Kyiv and then went to the East. Everyone went to defend their homeland.

It's hard for Father Adrii to say that everyone in the camp was converting or becoming religious, or that there was a huge rush to talk to the priest. Nevertheless, there was a great desire for God. There was a great epiphany, because in such difficult conditions people really become more aware of their spiritual need. All the soldiers had rosaries. It was like a part of their ammunition, like a bulletproof vest or helmet. In the camp where the father served, the soldiers even set up a tent church, but then, when the shelling started, it was destroyed. According to another military chaplain, Father Andriy Zelinsky, the ATO zone is a zone of authenticity. People show their best and worst qualities there, and people do not care about confessional differences (*Military chaplain Andriy Khomyshyn: we do not pry into soldiers' souls*).

Conclusions: Summarizing the above, having analyzed the peculiarities of the activities of military chaplains in the Armed Forces of Ukraine during the ATO/JFO, we emphasize that the service of military rectors in 2014-2015 was a key factor in the formation of the chaplaincy movement. The experience of this period determined the importance of creating a military chaplaincy as an independent structural unit in the Ukrainian army. One of the peculiarities of this time was that chaplains performed their service on a volunteer basis.

Today, military chaplains are essential for the Armed Forces of Ukraine, as their main goal is to provide spiritual support to military personnel and to provide spiritual and moral education. Military chaplains serve as confidential counselors, ready to listen and provide spiritual advice. They participate in various ceremonies, such as funerals, award ceremonies, military rites, etc. They play an important

role in supporting the spiritual aspects of these events, contributing to the formation of servicemen as individuals, fostering values, morality and ethics. This is especially important in combat situations, where military personnel may face ethical and moral challenges. Chaplains also provide support to military families, especially in the absence of family members due to military operations. Military chaplains represent different religious faiths, providing interfaith spiritual support for all military personnel regardless of their religious affiliation. Today, the work of military chaplains is aimed at supporting the harmonious development of military personnel and the formation of their inner strength in the conditions of service for the state.

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ДУШПАСТИРСЬКА ДІЯЛЬНІСТЬ РЕЛІГІЙНИХ ІНСТИТУЦІЙ УКРАЇНИ ПІД ЧАС ПРОВЕДЕННЯ АТО

Сьогодні Україна переживає важкі періоди своєї історії, перебуваючи у процесі становлення незалежної та європейської держави. Починаючи з моменту початку воєнної агресії російської федерації проти України у 2014 році, військове капеланство стало експресією громадської єдності. У статті розглянуто діяльність та функціонування капеланства з початком російської агресії у 2014 році в ході Антитерористичної операції Об'єднаних сил (АТО/ООС). Зазначено, що саме збройна агресія на сході України у 2014 році виступила ключовим фактором у розвитку військового капеланства. Наголошено, що важливим елементом у розвитку військового капеланства є накопичений досвід служіння військових настоятелів під час АТО/ООС. Це відзначається своєю важливістю, особливо після початку повномасштабної війни з боку росії. Визначено, що початком нового етапу відродження капеланського руху у Збройних Силах України (ЗС України) припав на 2014 рік, коли російська федерація розпочала війну проти України. Саме тоді разом із військовими в зоні бойових дій знаходилися військові священники, які стали свідками та учасниками бойових дій на сході України. Тоді ж на волонтерських засадах військові настоятелі виїжджали у зону бойових дій для того, аби забезпечити душпастирську складову формації українського воїна. З 2014 року українське суспільство усвідомило необхідність душпастирської складової у процесі оборони та формування стійкості українського війська. Уряд відреагував, з'явилися офіційні нормативні документи, які регулювали процес душпастирської опіки військовослужбовців. Однак, як правило це виглядало так, що велика кількість волонтерів різних конфесій рушила в зону спершу АТО, а потім ООС. Знадобилось багато років, аби капеланство у ЗС України набуло офіційного статусу. Сьогодні ж душпастирі є офіційно військовослужбовцями та мають соціальний захист з боку держави.

Ключові слова: релігія, капелан, ЗС України, душпастирська служба, війна.