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## Let me tell you a few words about the so-called Ukrainian Orthodox Church allegedly banned by Zelenskyi this week 🧵

First of all, nothing has been banned yet. Today is Sunday, and there were services in all their churches across the country without any interruptions (except for Russian military attacks targeting churches alongside other civilian infrastructure).

So, there was a decision to ask the government to draft a law to ban all religious organizations of Russian origin, which is justified in the current war of genocide with Russia.

The problem is that the so-called Ukrainian Orthodox Church is actually a local branch of the Russian Orthodox Church. It's the most prominent religious organization in Russia, receiving huge donations and privileges from the state in return for ideological service.

So-called Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian church, justified the Russian invasion of Ukraine, saying it was necessary to prevent gay pride in Donetsk city. He proclaimed that Russian KIA soldiers were holy martyrs.

Priests and monks of the so-called Ukrainian Orthodox Church have been hiding Russian militants since 2014 and assisting them. Russian Orthodox priests are following the Russian army in Ukraine and blessing its soldiers despite war crimes and genocidal actions.

This church even has a school of thought that the unity of Ukraine and Russia in one state is God's will, any Ukrainian statehood should not exist, and anyone opposing this is opposed to a God.

It's also important to note that the Russian Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union was operating under direct KGB oversight. All bishops were KGB agents, and nobody could become priest without KGB approval.

The Church's doctrine is radically homophobic, transphobic, opposing gender equality (they even proudly called themselves 'anti-gender'), anti-abortion and anti-divorce.

Their headquarters in Ukraine is located in the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, a UNESCO world heritage site. The Church is persistently violating a monuments protection legislation, effectively destroying Ukrainian cultural heritage.

This is not the only case; it's a policy. They destroy cultural sites, parks, and green zones throughout the country to build their facilities. In the Lavra mentioned above, they even evicted a hospital for people with HIV.

So, this week Zelenskyi decided to ask the Ministry of Culture to scrutinize whether the Church is violating the terms of the agreement under which they are using the buildings of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra owned by the state.

By the way, the church's leadership is hugely corrupted. The metropolitan leading this Lavra even has a nickname, 'Mercedes', for his love for expensive cars.

This guy was sanctioned by Zelenskyi alongside less than ten other priests this week. This is less than nothing for a Church with tens of thousands of priests. But who else was sanctioned?

It's a former pro-Russian and Russian-linked member of Parliament who is also a deacon hugely influential in the Church (but he left Ukraine after the start of the full-scale Russian invasion this year).

All other sanctioned figures are church leaders from the territories occupied by Russia (mainly from Crimea) who were hugely assisting occupational administrations.

The Church's leaders were present (one guy was even sitting next to Kadyrov) in the September ceremony of annexing four Ukrainian regions in the Kremlin. Even these people were not sanctioned yet.

Half a year ago, the so-called Ukrainian Orthodox Church held its assembly and pretended that it decided to become independent from its maternal Russian Church.

The problem is that they don't publish a text of the amended statute even six months after the event. The leaked statute version still references the Russian Orthodox Church's internal documents as the main ground for the so-called Ukrainian Orthodox Church operations.

So Zelenskyi's decision this week was to scrutinize this statute to determine whether they are still part of the Russian Church. Very reasonable, isn't it?

Let me tell you one more story about this Church. Several weeks ago, the Security Service of Ukraine searched some Church administration buildings in Chernivtsi where Russian propagandistic materials were hiding.

While on-site, they found one priest having sex with a 17-year-old boy. What was a church response? Today this priest was ordained as a bishop. Meet his excellency, Nikita. End of the 🧵.



Sorry, there are more facts to uncover. For example, this ordination ceremony was led by the head of the so-called Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Onufriy. He is famous for calling the Holodomor genocide, a Soviet artificial hunger, a God's punishment for Ukrainians.

Several years ago, Onufriy was attending an event in the Ukrainian parliament. There was a moment of silence in honor of fallen Ukrainian soldiers, but this guy refused to stand and was the only person sitting while all the other four hundred people stood up.

The so-called Ukrainian Orthodox Church doesn't communicate with the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, the other major orthodox church in the country, which is independent of Moscow. This independence is a precise reason for the absence of communion.

The so-called Ukrainian Orthodox Church calls the independent Orthodox Church of Ukraine not even a Church and considers participation in its services a sin.

Despite this, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine is recognized as the only legitimate Orthodox Church of the country by the Ecumenical Patriarch, the 'first among equals' of heads of different national orthodox churches.

The Russian Orthodox Church was even trying to corrupt the other national churches to convince them not to recognise the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

The Russian Church cut all ties and communication with all other national churches that recognized the independent Orthodox Church of Ukraine. It's important for them to keep control over Ukraine through its local branch, the so-called Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Why?

This is part of the Russian Church's service to the Russian state. Their task is to legitimate Russian aggression and Russian control over Ukraine. The existence of the so-called Ukrainian Orthodox Church is their tool to achieve this goal.

Please, note that any possible future ban won't be a ban of a religion (a faith itself) but a ban of administrative structure connected to (or even controlled and used by) the Russian Federation, a state waging a war of genocide against Ukraine.

This administrative structure is not even legitimate under orthodox canonical law because of the existence of the independent Orthodox Church of Ukraine. There will be no restrictions to the freedom of faith itself, but there is no freedom to be Russian agents or collaborators.

(There is confusion because of names. There is an independent Orthodox Church of Ukraine and the 'Ukrainian Orthodox Church' which is part of the Russian Church and usually referred to in Ukraine as the 'Moscow Patriarchate' or 'Ukrainian Orthodox Church — Moscow Patriarchate'.)

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