



**The Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (UCCRO) calls on Russian religious leaders and the World Council of Churches to promote the release of hostages in eastern Ukraine as a manifestation of mercy.**

Recipient requests were the Interreligious Council of Russia, the Council for Interaction with Religious Associations under the President of the Russian Federation, and the World Council of Churches, reports the Institute for Religious Freedom.

Ukrainian religious leaders state that the worldwide problem of hostages and prisoners is one of the most acute problems of each war conflict. According to the UCCRO "torture of hostages, appalling conditions of detention, delaying the process of release – such brutality can be seen in some areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions in eastern Ukraine, which has been engulfed by war conflict for more than two years."

However, noted in the Appeal, a world filled with pain and suffering requires manifestations of charity.

**In addition to prayers for peace, the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations calls for the following:**

1. Make every possible effort so that hostages and captives in eastern Ukraine are released in the near future;
2. Understand that all "advantage" that can be achieved with the toying of human life and dignity is accursed by God and will not bring long-term positive results for society or governments;
3. If some hostages and captives cannot be released in the near future, ensure appropriate and decent conditions of detention, in accordance with international humanitarian law, confirming the respect and dignity of each person.

*"When the life and health of some citizens becomes a tool by which others exploit to gain political preferences or advantages in military confrontation, it not only cheapens the lives of hostages and captives, it challenges the rights and freedoms of humanity. Furthermore it inflicts pain and humiliation upon precious lives; becoming a tragedy for all humanity"*

, noted in

[the Appeal of the UCCRO](#)

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*"We encourage the World Council of Churches and religious figures of the Russian Federation to support this Appeal and contribute its part for the release of hostages and captives of the war in eastern Ukraine. We believe that with the help of the Almighty God, humanness and peace can fill even the most brutal of human hearts",* urged the Ukrainian religious leaders.

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