

MONITORING

of xenophobia and intolerance
display in Ukraine during
the election campaign
to the local government

(September 11 – November 7, 2010)



INSTITUTE
OF HUMAN RIGHTS
AND PREVENTION
OF EXTREMISM
AND XENOPHOBIA

INTRODUCTION

In the course of the years of Ukraine's independence the research of xenophobic dispositions and facts of ethnic intolerance display during election campaigns (except of fragmentary monitoring), has not been done yet on a systematic basis. The monitoring of anti-Semitic dispositions, held by the centers by Jewish public organizations or communities of national minorities, has public and investigative interest, which, however, does not give the broad picture about the nature, reasons of formation and channels of distribution of the xenophobia and ethnic intolerance ideas.

One of the long-term monitoring researches is a project of Congress of National Communities of Ukraine "Xenophobia in Ukraine". According to an apt remark of the expert of the Congress Mr. Lihachev, xenophobia *"in an invisible way is present in mass consciousness in the form of stereotypes, that are not being realized by their carriers; is spread in the media in different ways in forms of indecorous expressions made on purpose to the address of one or another group, in forms of unjustified generalizations or direct chauvinistic accusations; is being used in political discourse in cunning multi-way political-technological schemes; at last, is being spurted on the streets in rare, but cruel acts of violence towards unlucky possessors of "non-Slavic" appearance"*¹.

The monitoring of xenophobia and intolerance display during the election campaign to the local government was held from the 11th of September till the 7th of November

2010. The tasks of the monitoring research are determination and analysis of different forms of *ethnic intolerance, xenophobia, anti-Semitism* during the election campaign to the local government. Facts of xenophobia, intolerance, and anti-Semitism emergence were determined via analysis of actions and pre-election agitation of the subjects of electoral process.

Taking into account the tasks of the monitoring research, two main types of ethnic intolerance, determined during the election campaign, were distinguished:

Obvious intolerance – these are the forms of intolerance display which contained direct emphasis of voters on an ethnic background of the candidates and are modeling the political choice according to ethnic criterion.

Conspirological intolerance – these are hidden forms of intolerance display, which did not contain the direct emphasis of voters' attention on ethnic background of the candidates, however in an implicit way led electoral choice to the choice according to ethnic criterion.

According to the results of the monitoring, conspirological intolerance display was basically of a reflexive nature, so it was a reaction of the subjects of electoral campaign (parties, politicians, and media) on competitors' actions. In this respect two things are considered separately in this report: *activities* of the subject of electoral campaign, who was provoking a conflict situation on the level of ethno political relations and the opponent's *reaction* who was *"getting involved"* in the conflict and reacting reflexively on the provocation from the initiator of the conflict.

If we analyze the structure of a conflict situation,

the author of the conflict takes the initiative, producing the intolerance discourse and in such a way becomes a *creator of intolerance discourse* and a *moderator of the conflict situation* development. In the case when a political party or affiliated to it public organization is such kind of creator, then it can be stated that xenophobia is entwining into ideological texture of this party's doctrine.

With the aim of research such *forms of ethnic intolerance* were distinguished:

- **Discursive intolerance** – structuring a problem of intolerance in a public discourse through the perspective of which the events of the election campaign are being described or analyzed be the subjects of electoral process.
- **Projected intolerance** – display of social, economic, and political problems through the perspective of interethnic relations.
- **Emphasized intolerance** – drawing the voter's attention by the subject of electoral process to the ethnic belonging of the opponent as a factor of political choice.

Objects of research:

- Program conditions, statements, and pre-election campaigns of political parties or affiliated to them public organizations.
 - Statements of the politicians of regional and nationwide level.
 - Official position of local government and particular officials.

- Publications in printed, electronic media, and Internet.

- Printed and electronic media, pre-election agitation materials, leaflets, brochures, posters, and Internet-publications.

Levels of ethnic intolerance display:

- Xenophobia – intolerant attitude towards Ukrainian nation, national minorities, and ethnic groups, their particular representatives, culture, and language, which shows itself in illegal actions and infringement of rights of other people. Intolerant statements to the address of any ethnic group or its particular representatives, appeals to violent actions against them, violent actions themselves, discrimination of citizens according to national origin, disrespect display towards cultural heritage, history, traditions, culture, language, etc are facts of xenophobia display.

- Anti-Semitism is a type of ethnic intolerance, which became a collective symbol of xenophobia and has several types: socio-political (Jews are considered to be a social group, ethnic minority, which has a dominant position and lives off Ukrainians); conspirological (positions Jews as bearers of the idea of global plot with the aim to achieve world supremacy with the help of Zionism ideology); religious, according to which the Jews are being paid off for their guilt in Christian religion with a negative attitude on the part of other ethnos.

XENOPHOBIA DISPLAY

Regional office of All-Ukrainian union “Freedom” in Lugansk held the election campaign under anti immigrant slogans. On the 21st of September Lugansk regional office of “Freedom” initiated signatures collection from people who live in Lugansk in support of local referendum, for which such issues were proposed to consider:

1. Initiation of curfew for foreign students.
2. Initiation of their obligatory medical examination.
3. Obligatory registration in law-enforcement agencies.
4. Initiation of the institution of part-time residence.
5. Formation of the places of compact living for foreigners.
6. Reestablishment of people’s guards which will control and defend the places of compact living of foreigners.

Meanwhile this initiative was motivated by the fact that, *“Lugansk must become a convenient, cozy, safe, and comfortable place for the citizens of Ukraine. And only by ourselves we can make it be so”*².

A xenophobic idea of “Freedom” was represented as a civic initiative, in such a way the party was exonerated from responsibility for the idea and its popularization, and it was shifted on municipal community of Lugansk. It is characteristically that agitation materials, which were accompanying this campaign, did not contain any instructions regarding the nationality of the people or racial group against who this initiative was directed. “Freedom”,

² <http://immigration-stop.org.ua/ru/?p=463>

in such a way, intended to minimize possible image risks, related to accusations of xenophobia and attempts to foment interethnic hostility.

An election campaign for the mayor’s seat in Odessa, that had an obvious evidence of xenophobia and anti-Semitism, was the most scandalous during the election campaign to the local government. The end of October can be considered an apogee of the election marathon, when a demo was popularized in a public surrounding, in which the candidate from the Party of Regions Mr. Kostusev called his opponent from “Front for Changes”, who was the mayor in office at that time Mr. Guvits *“an envoy of otherworldly powers”*. Afterwards the adherents of Mr. Kostusev *proposed to organize for the mayor “a one way excursion to Babi Yar”*³.

Mr. Kostusev continued his thought and promised to solve the “Jewish issue” in this demo as well. At the same time he grounded his intentions with “anthropological” reasoning, that can be treated as a demonstration of pro-Nazi positions, *“His (Gurvits’s) attendants, these evil spirits, are feasting in this building. Their mugs are absolutely non-Russian and non-Ukrainian. Mr. Gurvits’s vassals wish him happy birthday with the blood of our children. If you look carefully at Mr. Gurvits – at his hands, long knotty fingers, weird eyes, pointed ears, you will understand the envoy of what powers he is. But it’s ok, with the faith in God, with a prayer we will drive off these evil spirits from our city, time has come”*⁴.

Apart from an obvious xenophobia, which touches upon Nazi propaganda by its message, this initiative of

³ <http://svobodnaya.odessa.ua/index.php/article/1927-2010-10-150728.html>

⁴ http://od-news.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14625&Itemid=2

the headquarters of pro-authority candidate, as well as the initiative of Regional office of All-Ukrainian union “Freedom” in Lugansk, has a latent juridical implication. Mr. Kostusev acts as an ideological inspirator, “thinker” who walks through certain messages while his adherents, who are not representatives of the candidate’s headquarters formally, generate xenophobic ideas and campaigns, and in such a way “take” the candidate away from accusations in fomentation of interethnic hostility.

ANTI-SEMITISM DISPLAY

The elections of the mayor in Odessa were held in the midst of an active anti-Semitic campaign, which was directed against a mayor in office Mr. Gurvits. In this respect, the projects about “solving the Jewish issue” were offered by other participants of the electoral process and acquired either the form of an emphasized civic journalism, or the form of an ideological position, which most of all showed itself in the peculiarities of Mr. Kostusev’s election campaign.

On the 28th of September the organization “Committee *“Jews against Gurvits”* organized a protest action directed to the mayor of Odessa Mr. Gurvits (photo 1). During this action a conflict arose between the activists of the Committee and a group of young people among whom a representative from the public organization “Free Odessa” Mr. Kazakov was present, who is close to the mayor Mr. Gurvits. Mr. Gurvits’ adherents tried to tear off the posters that were on the cars of the Committee’s representatives. The police offered the

activists from the Committee to stop the action, but didn’t interfere into the conflict situation between the mayor’s opponents and adherents.⁵

On the 17th of October publicist Mr. Briman in the Internet publication Izrus published an article “*The party in power splits up because of the most famous Jewish mayor in Ukraine*”, in which is emphasized that the struggle for the seat of mayor in Odessa “provokes “wrangles” inside the Ukrainian party in power. The Prime-Minister and his surrounding move on their appointee, and the Head of President’s Administration decided to support privately the mayor in office – the most important Jew among the mayors of the country”⁶.

On the 29th of October the candidate for the mayor’s seat in Odessa from the party “Solidarity” Mr. Pesetskiy, who didn’t support any of the sides of the conflict, filed a petition to the attorney of Odessa region Mr. Protsenko with a demand to bring Mr. Kostusev to trial “*for fomentation of interethnic hostility, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism*”.



Photo 1
Anti-Semitic slogans during the action of the Committee “Jews against Gurvits”

5 <http://izbirkom.od.ua/content/view/2881/39/>

6 <http://izrus.co.il/diasporaIL/article/2010-10-17/12109.html>

In evidence of xenophobia and anti-Semitism display Mr. Pesetskiy refers to facts when the pins with the sign “For Odessa without Gurvits” were distributed to children. According to Pesetskiy’s words, the necessity of wearing the pins unknown people explained by the reason that it’s necessary to vote for Mr. Kostusev, but not for Mr. Gurvits, such as he is *“a bad person. In particular, he is a bad person because he is Jew, and all the Jews without exceptions are bad people, and this doesn’t call in question. Because everybody knows it, everybody talks about it, including the media”*⁷.

On the 1st of November the TV channel ATB⁸, informing people who live in Odessa about the process and results of the ballot for the candidates for the mayor’s seat, prepares a number of picture shots, in which a “negative” ethnic background of Mr. Gurvits was emphasized. So during the briefing of the mayor Mr. Gurvits the journalist from the TV channel ATB asked a provocative question regarding who he is going to support during the election to Knesset⁹.

Anti-Semitic context of the pre-election struggle was documented in Kharkov as well. On the 22nd of October on the informational portal of the media-publication “Main”/“Glavnoe”, which is controlled by Mr. Avakov, Head of the regional office of “Motherland”/“Bat’kivshchyna” in Kharkov, appeared an article by an anonymous author called “Voices”. An anti-Semitic implication of the article was directed against Mr. Kernes, the main competitor of Avakov. Authors of the article represent Mr. Kernes as

a descendant of Khazar nation which supposedly has a relation to *“the tribe of Dan”* – natives of Judaea. In other words, the relation between Khazars, Jews, and Hebrew is being shown. The anonymous author of the article comes to a conclusion that *“today invisible Khazaria lifts up its snake head and pretends to a non-secret power in lost lands”*. In this regard, Kernes’ striving for victory during the election of the mayor is interpreted as an open revival of Khazaria within the boundaries of Kharkov. The consequence of Kernes’ election win, according to the publication, will be as follow *“everything will be sucked out from Kharkov, camouflaging robbery with a thin layer of asphalt, children’s playgrounds for little goys”*¹⁰. Based on the material of this publication, with addition of a video-collage of anti-Semitic nature, on the TV channel “Fora” in Kharkov, an author TV program “I’m against! ...” of the local journalist Mr. Voitsehovskiy has been broadcasted multiple numbers of times. Characteristically, that Mr. Voitsehovskiy himself acted as an intermediate “technical candidate” of Mr. Avakov and ran for the mayor of Kharkov from the “Progressive socialistic party of Ukraine”.

The facts of anti-Semitism were also documented during the election campaign in Zhitomir. A pre-election ballot “Soroka” became the main channel of distribution of ethnic intolerance and anti-Semitism ideas. Thus in the publication “Why Mishka needs an Israel passport” is said about supposedly *“dual citizenship”* of the candidate for the mayor’s seat in Zhitomir Mr. Zaslavskiy. The authors of the publication think that Mr. Zaslavskiy got the passport of the

⁷ <http://www.jewish.ru/news/cis/2010/11/news994290351.php>

⁸ The ATB channel is close to the leader of “Rodina” party, I. Markov

⁹ http://atv.odessa.ua/news/2010/10/31/gurvits_7033.html

¹⁰ <http://glavnoe.ua/articles/a4225>

citizen of Israel “through the contacts with ultraorthodox Hasids. And this means that in case if he (Mr. Zaslavskiy) entrenches himself in Zhitomir, he will invite the most radical preacher to the city”.

According to the authors, Mr. Zaslavskiy with the help of the mayor of Vinnitsa Mr. Groisman, who was called by the same newspaper “*Jew-compatriot*”, “will convert Zhitomir into the eastern center of eastern-European Jewry”. The comments given above are an evidence of a purposeful fomentation of anti-Semitic hysteria among the voters of Zhitomir. In such a way, for Mr. Zaslavskiy as a candidate for the mayor’s seat, a PR-legend was worked out, and it linked him to “*Israel*”, “*Hasids*”, and “*radical preachers*”. Thus the publication “Soroka” is modeling public “intimidation” which may appear after the possibility that a Jewish representative might be elected as a mayor. Construction of synagogues and arrival of radical preachers are mentioned among “risks”. As an answer for anti-Semitic publications in the newspaper “Soroka” the representatives of Zhitomir community sent to the public prosecutor of the region a complaint over “*the propaganda of interethnic hostility, anti-Semitism, racism, and fascism*”.

Ethnic intolerance during the election campaign, apart from a public discourse, was also represented on the level of visual images and symbols. In this regard, an anti-Semitic propaganda used by the opponents of the candidate for the mayor’s seat in Vinnitsa Mr. Groisman is worth noticing. On the agitation leaflets (photo 2, 3) which were supposedly worked out by the election campaign headquarters of Mr. Groisman, a Jewish symbol “Star of David” was represented. This symbol was used as a context for pre-election messages:



Photo 2.
Anti-Semitic
agitation
against
Mr. Groisman



Photo 3.
Anti-Semitic
agitation
against
Mr. Groisman

With the help of such leaflets a link between the performance of the candidate and his ethnic background was built in the electoral mind. Such a “black” PR technology is purposefully exploiting anti-Semitic stereotypes, shifting the focus of the election campaign into ethnic background of Mr. Groisman.

Another leaflet, directed against Mr. Groisman's party "Conscience of Ukraine", depicted the mayor's team as composed of the representatives of Negroid and Mongoloid races (photo 4). The people on the photo were represented as "Groisman's team" which "needs the majority".

Photo 4.
Anti-Semitic
agitation
against
"Groisman's
team"



In this leaflet an obvious implication of racial intolerance is clearly demonstrated. Attention of the voters is projected into the candidate's team the majority of which are non-Ukrainians. In this respect the term "majority" has a double context: political context, as majority of deputies in the councils on the local level, and ethnic context, as foreign majority, hostile to Ukrainians.

ANTI-SEMITIC AGITATION AGAINST MR. KERNES

The election in Kharkov also was visualized. On the website "Durdom" during the election campaign an anti-Semitic collage was placed (photo 5), directed against the candidate for the mayor's seat in Kharkov Mr. Kernes¹¹. There is Mr. Kernes surrounded by Hasids in the collage. The emphasis on the "negative" ethnicity is complemented with irony concerning the positioning of Mr. Kernes as "Russian".

¹¹ http://durdom.in.ua/ru/main/photo/photo_id/19984.phtml



Photo 5.
Anti-Semitic
agitation
against
Mr. Kernes

ETHNIC INTOLERANCE DISPLAY

During the election campaign ethnic intolerance became an attribute of public discourse. The subjects of electoral process deliberately were modeling the problem of intolerance. In this context the dispute, initiated and moderated by the deputy of Ukrainian Parliament Mr. Tsarev, is worth attention.

On the 20th of October Mr. Tsarev sent a query to the prosecutor's office regarding the activity of the restaurant in Lvov "Kriyivka". According to the deputy, PR conception of the restaurant is directed to *"fomentation of interethnic hostility"*¹² and that's why the restaurant should be closed. The reason for such a conclusion was an "anti-Russian", within the meaning of the deputy, conception of the caf in which at the entrance a guy with a German gun asks the visitors, *"Are there Moskals?"*. In response the deputies from BYuT (Yulia Tymoshenko Block) Andrey Shkil' and Alexander Gudyma entered into controversy with Mr. Tsarev regarding the determination of the term *"Moskal"*. In the interpretation of the deputies from BYuT "Moskal" is understood as something hostile for Ukrainians and for all Ukrainian – *"occupant"*¹³, *"conqueror"*, *"a creature without nation and tribe"*¹⁴. The context of ethnic intolerance is also evident

¹² http://zadonbass.org/news/politics_other/message_19705

¹³ http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/politics/1129196-antifashistskij-forum-predlagaet-zapretit-vezd-tyagniboka-v-evropejskie-strany?p=5&mode=DESC&field=t_stamp

¹⁴ <http://www.zaxid.net/newsru/2010/10/21/191806/>

in the reactive statement of the deputies to the address of Mr. Tsarev, that on the basis of his (Mr. Tsarev's) logic it's also necessary to close the restaurants "Tsimes" or "Haifa" that are situated in Podol in Kiev.

On the 23rd of September the people's deputy Mr. Yavorivskiy (faction "BYuT-Bat'kivshchyna) commenting upon the Minister of education Mr. Tabachnik's statement that *"Western Ukraine is a cave reservation of nationalism"*, said that Mr. Tabachnik is "politically sick person". According to Mr. Yavorivskiy, he is surprised that *"the representative of a European nationality"* makes such Ukrainophobic, from his point of view, statements. According to the deputy, *Jews should protest and demand dismissal of the Minister of education, such as the minister overshadows the whole Jewish nation*. Then Mr. Yavorivskiy clarifies his thought in such a way, *"today every Ukrainian knows who Tabachnik is, the one who pretends to be a peaceful rebbe"*¹⁵.

Such a statement by Mr. Yavorivskiy, which is a display of conspirological intolerance, is oriented for structuring of two political antinomies: "Ukrainians-Jews" and "Tabachnik-Jews". Furthermore, ironically negative definition of the Minister of education as "peaceful rebbe" in this context may be evidence of a hint for "anti-Ukrainian", according to the deputy, position of Jewish community, and this explains its (community's) secret "support" of the Ministry of education policy.

There also were documented the facts of racial intolerance

¹⁵ [Http://censor.net.ua/ru/news/view/132831/yavorivskiyi_quotya_prosto_udivlyayus_kak_evrei_sami_ne_vosstanut_i_ne_potrebuyut_otstavki_tabachnika_ved_on_brosaet_ten_na_ves_evreyiskiyi_narodquot](http://censor.net.ua/ru/news/view/132831/yavorivskiyi_quotya_prosto_udivlyayus_kak_evrei_sami_ne_vosstanut_i_ne_potrebuyut_otstavki_tabachnika_ved_on_brosaet_ten_na_ves_evreyiskiyi_narodquot)

in Lutsk. On the 23rd of October the posters with the sign “CHIZHIK is a NIGGER” appeared on the streets (photo 6). As it can be seen in the pictures, these signs were glued on the agitation posters of the candidate for the mayor’s seat from the party “Pora” Mr. Chizhik. The aim of the posters is to create a connotation between Mr. Chizhik and “niggers” that shifts the focus of perception of the candidate Mr. Chizhik as an “alien”, “non-Ukrainian”.

Veiled nature of the intolerance was an essential peculiarity of the phenomenon of ethnic intolerance during the election campaign. On this account the evidential basis gives us grounds to say that ethnic intolerance is on the level of political non-manifested agenda of election campaign.

Photo 6 Agitation against Mr. Chizhik



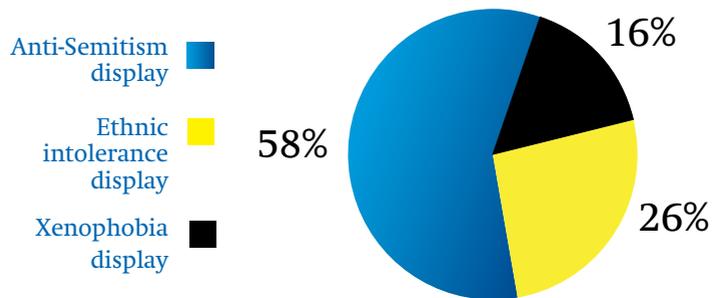
INITIATIVES OF GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES

Government’s initiative to fight against any xenophobia and ethnic intolerance display is a positive result of the past election. On the 14th of September the National expert commission of Ukraine declared the releases of the program “Informal conversation” in April on the “First Sevastopolskiy” TV channel to be the ones that foment ethnic and religious hostility. The reason for the NEK’s decision were the programs on the 14th and 28th of April during which the ancient of Russian Cossack community “Sobol” Mr Hkramov stated that Ukraine supposedly appeared as a result of the fifth (1917-1922) and the seventh (1985-1994) *Russian-Jew wars in which Russia lost.*

CONCLUSIONS

1. Xenophobia, ethnic intolerance and anti-Semitism display during the election to the local government in 2010 was of a sporadic, non-systemic nature.

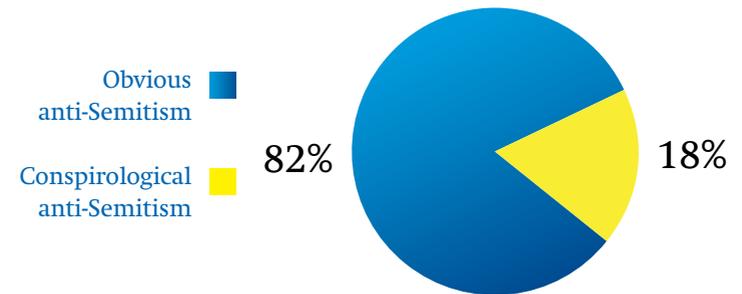
At the same time the regional character of electoral process determined dotted, “local” display of different forms of intolerance as well. The cases of anti-Semitism, ethnic intolerance, and xenophobia display drew the most public response. (Pic. 1).



Pic. 1
Structure of ethnic intolerance display during the election of local government in 2010

The high percentage of anti-Semitism is connected to the peculiarities of the election of the mayor in Odessa, Vinnitsa, and Kharkov, where the election campaign acquired the shapes of anti-Semitic propaganda against the mayors in office of these cities as representatives of Jewish community.

2. If we estimate the facts of anti-Semitism display on-scale “obvious intolerance–conspiological intolerance”, we can say that anti-Semitism during the last election generally was displayed on a conspiological, latent level: (Pic. 2):



Pic. 2
Structure of anti-Semitism display during the election to the local government

The subjects of electoral process, not wanting to be accused in propaganda of ethnic hostility, managed to build in xenophobic, intolerant, and anti-Semitic ideas into PR-technological scenario of the election campaign. Only in two cases – migrantophobia of “Freedom” and anti-Semitism of Mr. Kostusev – xenophobia was used as an ideological criterion of political choice, and in Odessa it was an attribute of the whole election campaign.

3. Last election especially loudly demonstrated the deficit of communal proposition from the side of the subjects of electoral process. A standard agenda was formalized on the level of intolerance discourse structuring, which supposed stoppage of public discussion about reforming of communal economics towards the attention concentration of a potential voter on the peculiarities of ethnic background of the candidates for the mayor's seat.



INSTITUTE
OF HUMAN RIGHTS
AND PREVENTION
OF EXTREMISM
AND XENOPHOBIA

1-B Darvina Str., Kyiv, 01004, Ukraine
tel./fax +380 44 28 41 904
e-mail: info@ihrpex.org
www.ihrpex.org



www.cvu.org.ua