

# Ukraine, Prayer for Peace: Peace March of Orthodox Church Reaches Kiev

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*The Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate has carried out with tens of thousands of participants a peace march from the Donbass up to Kiev. Just outside the city the procession was stopped. The government, which considers the march very suspicious, has so far responded with a sense of proportion. However, right-wing extremists might try to escalate the situation through provocations.*

Tens of thousands of people had come to the monument for the baptism of the medieval Kievan Rus, according to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. This Thursday the christianization more than 1000 years ago in the former Soviet Union is remembered. The competing Orthodox Kyivan Patriarchate invites their believers to prayer service as well.



Eyewitnesses reported of up to 20,000 supporters of the church, praying for peace and the preservation of Ukraine. Previously two peace marches with hundreds of pilgrims from the West and East of the country already came together in Kiev.

For the religious peace march the Ukrainian government prohibited people from arriving as a closed group in the capital, the German State broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) reported.

Ukrainian nationalists accusing the participants of the march of “spying activities” for Moscow. On June 27, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate had called for a Christian peace march for the Eastern Ukraine. However, up until now the government has sensibly responded in this case and allowed the march. Participants will be allowed to march in smaller groups to the final event.

The peace march began on July 3rd in the Donetsk region and is performed daily. The march is joined every day by thousands of priests, monks, nuns and families, reports Larissa Voloshin from the online newspaper Kyiv.ua. The photos from the march show that numerous young males participate as well.

While one march started in the eastern part of the country, the other one started in Ternopil Oblast. Ternopil is located in western Ukraine. Both processions were to meet in Kiev on 27 July.

What the protesters want to show that the East and the West of the country are forming the State and that the war in the eastern Ukraine should end.

Voloshin reported that the peace march also has to do with a power struggle in the Ukraine.

The Kiev government wants to get the Ukrainian Orthodox Church “out of the control” of the Moscow Patriarchate, but the Church is defending itself against this and wants to maintain its ties to Moscow.

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