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Rights of conscientious objectors in Ukraine threatened

President's bill complicating alternative service adopted

Institute of Religious Liberty (18.02.2016) - <http://bit.ly/20UAF7m> - The Supreme Soviet (Verkhovna Rada) of Ukraine adopted draft law No. 4020, whose provisions may deprive believers of the constitution right to alternative (nonmilitary) service during a special period.

Parliament voted in favor of the legislative changes initiated by President Poroshenko immediately as the foundation and as a whole, without consideration of the bill on second reading, which is required by the law "On the regulation of the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine," the Institute of Religious Liberty reports.

The parliament supported a corrected version of the draft law, which was proposed by the standing committee and whose transcript was read by its secretary, Ivan Vinnik.

"The timing of conducting a draft (drafts) of citizens of Ukraine for compulsory service is determined by order of the president of Ukraine. Such an order is published in news media no later than one month before the end of the year preceding the year of the draft (drafts) of citizens of Ukraine to compulsory military service, except that an order of a draft (drafts) of citizens of Ukraine to compulsory military service in a special period is published no later than one month before the start of conducting a draft (drafts) of citizens of Ukraine to compulsory military service," the transcription of the session of 18 February 2016 says.

That is, in a special period (during mobilization), the president of Ukraine will be granted the right to announce a draft to compulsory service no later than one month before its start. However the rule of part 1 of article 9 of the Ukrainian law "On alternative (nonmilitary) service" requires of believers who want to perform alternative service that they submit the relevant application no later than two calendar months before the start of the announced period of conducting a draft to compulsory military service.

Thus, the president's draft law introduces preconditions by which believers in practice may be deprived of the possibility of exercising their constitutional right to alternative (nonmilitary) service, since they will not be able to submit the relevant application in a timely manner. . . .
