



**Bulletin No4 of Rights Violations  
of Ukrainian Orthodox Church parishioners and clergy  
for the period from 11/06/2019 to 16/07/2019**

Starting from January 6, 2019, after the creation of the so-called Orthodox Church of Ukraine ("OCU") and the granting of the Tomos of Autocephaly by the Ecumenical (Constantinopolitan) Patriarchate to its Primate, an unprecedented campaign was launched in Ukraine against the parishioners and clergy of the Local Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC).

As part of this campaign, representatives of the Ukrainian state authorities are conducting undisguised agitation for the so-called "transition" of religious communities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to the "OCU". They are exerting administrative and military pressure against the clergy and parishioners of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and are assisting the radical militarised groups, the so-called "activists", to seize churches, and itemise its property which belongs to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. They also help to initiate the adoption of changes to national legislation that violate the Constitution of Ukraine and the fundamental rights of believers.

**The main goal of this Bulletin is to inform:** the clergymen and parishioners from other Local Orthodox Churches, the representatives of foreign governments, the mass media, human rights and expert organisations **about the most blatant violations of the rights of parishioners and clergymen of the UOC in Ukraine and cases of direct interference of the Ukrainian government into the affairs of the Church.**

During the period **June 11 to July 16, 2019**, dozens of cases of gross violations of the rights of parishioners and clergy of the UOC in Ukraine were recorded and confirmed:

**1. Factual information about the seizure of churches and other cases of the use of physical force and pressure on UOC parishioners in order to forcefully transfer churches and religious communities to the jurisdiction of the "OCU":**

- **June 13, 2019**, at about 6 pm, in the village of **Dorotyshche**, Kovelskyi Rayon, in the UOC Volodymyr-Volynska Eparchy, **"OCU" representatives gathered people to participate in the forcible seizure of the Holy Assumption church.** The instigator of the forced change of jurisdiction of the UOC church to the "OCU" was the **Chairman of the Kovelskyi Rayon Council Andriy Broilo.** Police actually started to lodge a report against the two local residents who had broken the locks to the church, but the perpetrators escaped over the church fence when they were about to be photographed for the police report. **The "OCU clerics" and people dressed in camouflage subsequently got into a car and left the village.** Taking the side of the church raiders were only seven local Dorotyshche village residents but on the side of the UOC parishioners were fifty local villagers who had come to help defend the church.

**Read more:** <https://news.church.ua/2019/06/13/us-dorotishhe-na-volini-viryani-prognalipredstavniv-pcu-yaki-z-bolgarkoyu-prijshli-zaxoplyuvati-jixnij-xram-foto/>

- **Members of the UOC religious community** of the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the **village of Nova Moshchanytsia, Rivneska Oblast', are extremely worried and concerned about the aggressive behaviour of the "OCU" activists in their village.** The family of the parish rector, who lives with his young children are **regularly terrorised and threatened at night by "OCU" activists.** UOC parishioners have resorted to taking turns to guard and protect their priest.

**Read more:** <https://spzh.news/ru/news/62832-verujushhije-novoj-moshhanicy-neuzheli-my-v-svojej-strane-dolzhny-tak-stradaty>

- **On June 15, 2019, in the village of Nuyno** in Volynska Oblast', **"OCU" activists again cut the locks to the UOC Holy Protection Church , which they had managed to forcibly seize.** There are two churches in Nuyno - the Holy Transfiguration in the centre of the village and the Holy Protection church which is on the territory of the village cemetery, but only one priest served in the village. Former parish rector Ivan Fatych had transferred to the "OCU" in February, 2019 after which the chairman of the village

council Vitaliy Yaroshchuk, Fatych himself, and activists of the newly created religious organisation attempted to seize both village churches.

**Read more:** <https://spzh.news/ru/news/62897-v-sele-nujno-aktivisty-pcu-otbirajut-u-verujushhih-upc-oba-selyskih-khrama>

- Under pressure from the head of the so-called "OCU" community Mykola Melnyk, the Chairman of the Buderazh village council attempted to persuade the rector of the UOC church to agree to a system of alternate worship services. The head of the "OCU" community threatened the UOC clergyman Archpriest Vyacheslav Gryshuk, that the Holy Protection Church would be forcibly seized. He blackmailed the priest using the local village head, thus, avoiding personal negotiations.

**Read more:** <https://spzh.news/ru/news/63205-v-sele-buderazh-glava-obshhiny-pcu-ugrozhajet-svyashhenniku-zahvatom-cerkvi>

- **On June 15, 2019**, "OCU" activists attempted to forcibly seize the Holy Transfiguration church in the village of **Luka Meleshkivska** in the Vinnytsia Raion. **"OCU" supporters led by the "priest" Viktor Chverkun, trespassed onto the territory of the church in the morning, when a prayer service was being held in the church.** "OCU" supporters attacked Archpriests Valeriy Shvets and Petro Chaplinskyi, and bashed several parishioners causing bodily harm. Despite this, the clergy and parishioners managed to prevent the seizure of their church. Seeing that the planned provocation had failed, the "OCU" activists made an improvised provocation: leaving the churchyard, they blocked the entrances as well as roads leading out of the village in several places.

**More details:** [http://eparhia.vinnica.ua/item/760-vchyneno-sprobu-sylovoho-zakhoplennia-khramu-v-lutsi-meleshkivskii-onovlyuyetsya.html?fbclid=IwAR0NqQdkrpX7wJ8hOpoTPMzYTBqZxyDpzn\\_HKUp4PF9keQ-vVPMpu7kz1Co](http://eparhia.vinnica.ua/item/760-vchyneno-sprobu-sylovoho-zakhoplennia-khramu-v-lutsi-meleshkivskii-onovlyuyetsya.html?fbclid=IwAR0NqQdkrpX7wJ8hOpoTPMzYTBqZxyDpzn_HKUp4PF9keQ-vVPMpu7kz1Co)

- **30 June**, during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, a **group of local "OCU" activists** who were accompanied by out-of-towners with strong build and **under the leadership of "OCU cleric" from the Vinnytsia-Bar Eparchy Viktor Chverkun**, attacked parishioners of the Transfiguration Church in the village of Luka-Meleshkivska located in the Vinnytskiy Rayon. During this attack, the "OCU" supporters strengthened their

ranks with so-called "titushki" and acted even more harshly and brutally than usual (the priests had already met with these "guest performers" during a provocation in the Kozyatynskyi Raion). Having gathered in sufficient numbers, the "OCU" activists supported by the "titushki" attacked the church, and tried to break down the door. They were prevented from doing so by male parishioners. Even though the penetration by activists into the church was prevented, but soon began to pull out worshippers one by one and beat them. The men were first brought down to the ground, and then kicked. Some defenders of the church suffered serious bodily injuries, and appropriate statements were made to the law enforcement agencies.

Read more: <http://eparhia.vinnica.ua/item/779-vchynenosprobuzakhoplenniakhramuvlutsimeleshkivskii.html>

- **On June 19, 2019, the clergy and faithful of the Vinnytsia, Tulchyn and Mohiliv-Podilskyi eparchies of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church held a prayer vigil in front of the Vinnytska Oblast' Administration building. More than two thousand UOC faithful residing in the Vinnitska Oblast' led by Metropolitan Jonathan of Tulchyn and Bratslav, Archbishop Varsonofiy of Vinnitsa and Bar and Bishop Serhiy of Ladyzhyn offered up their prayers and handed an appeal to the head of the Regional State Administration V. V. Koroviy.**

Read more: <http://eparhia.vinnica.ua/item/765-molytovnestoianniadukhovenstvavirnykhtrokhieparkhiiivinnychchyny.html>

- **June 20, 2019, around 7 o'clock in the evening, in the village of Postiyne, Kostopilskyi Raion in Rivne Oblast', about a hundred aggressive "OCU" supporters in an attempt to forcibly seize the church house, in which the rector of the Peter and Paul parish lives with his small children, brutally beat UOC parishioners. As Archpriest Olexandr Malchuk related to the UOC Legal Department, as a result of the attack, one woman had a broken nose, another had a sustained concussion, while another was taken to hospital in an ambulance after being bashed. The women were beaten by men who were exceedingly drunk. Meanwhile, the police, who were called by an injured victim, stood by on the sidelines and only watched what was continuing to happen in front of them.**

Read more: <https://law.church.ua/2019/06/21/u-s-postijne-na-rivnenshhini-aktivisti-pcu-pobili-viryanoi-upc-zhinki-znaxodyatsya-v-likarni/>

- **On July 5, 2019, the UOC Community of St. Nicholas in the village of Budyatychi was not able to celebrate a service at its chapel**, built on a water spring in honour of the Most Holy Theotokos. Arriving at the chapel, UOC parishioners discovered that someone had placed foreign objects into the door locks so that they could not be opened. About half past seven in the morning, "OCU" representatives had been seen near the chapel. They had brought several people to their "moleben" prayer service, took pictures and quickly dispersed. Later, a report about the "OCU prayer service" in Budyatychi was published on the website on the Volodymyr-Volynska "Eparchy" of the "OCU".

**Read more:** <https://spzh.news/ru/news/63432-v-budyatichah-rejdery-iz-pcu-organizovali-vozle-chuzhoj-chasovni-moleben>

- **June 21, 2019 a meeting was held in the club house of Parafiyivka village, Ichnyanskyi Rayon in Chernihivska Oblast'. In the announcements that were pasted around the village it was reported that an "initiative group" was inviting the village's religious community to this meeting. Since there is only one religious community in Parafiyivka, the one belonging to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church , the parishioners led by their parish rector Archpriest Peter, decided to come and find out who invited them. Since the preparation for this meeting was of a clandestine nature, no one could learn about the planned agenda. Surprisingly, the village parishioners were blocked from attending the meeting by a few dozen drunken radicals. The paramilitaries also did not allow representatives of the media into the meeting room either, which is a direct violation of mass media laws.**

**Read more:** <http://orthodox.cn.ua/2019/06/22/policiya-sprostuvala-zayavi-nibito-v-parafiivci-vidbulisya-zbori-religijnoji-gromadi/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUGSD1fHCKE>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ncENy3SG5p8>

- **On Ukrainian Constitution Day, the believers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from the village of Myrove, Shumskyi Rayon in Ternopil'ska Oblast' appealed to the President of Ukraine , His Excellency Volodymyr Zelenskyi, with a request that he defend their rights which are guaranteed by Basic Law.**

**For more information:** <https://ukranews.com/news/639219-v-den-konstitutsii-veruyushhie-upts-obratilis-k-garantu-konstitutsii>

- **On July 7, 2019, the UOC faithful in the village of Nuyno**, Kamin-Kashyrskiy Rayon, in Volyn, from whom "OCU" supporters had forcibly seized both of their churches, **appealed to the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyi, so that he might defend their right to freedom of religion.** There are two churches in Nuyno - the Holy Transfiguration church in the centre of the village and the Holy Protection church located on the territory of the village cemetery. However, both churches, with the active support of the authorities, were captured by representatives of the "OCU". In their video message, Ukrainian Orthodox Church faithful told the President that they had been collecting money for the repair of these churches for about 30 years, "they were collecting everything for the good of the Church".

**For more information:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1R-eDaUwA8>

- On July 11, 2019, religious communities of the UOC in the Volynska Oblast' are obliged to re-register to the jurisdiction of the so-called "OCU". Possessing knowledge about the current conflicts happening on religious grounds in a number of localities in his Oblast', the **acting head of the Volyn Regional State Administration issued a new order on the "re-registration" of the UOC communities.** The acting head was not even stopped by the fact that representatives from such UOC communities as the Holy Transfiguration parish in the village of Chetvertnia and the Holy Protection parish in the village of Khmelnytske submitted to the RSA relevant appeals and decisions of protocols, which confirm that in these particular villages the so-called transfer to the "OCU" it did not occur, either legally or in actual fact. The same applies to others listed in the order. Particularly cynical was the fact of the re-registration of the UOC community in the village of Nuino, which recently, in order to declare its existence, even blocked the village road.

**Read more:**

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2439927776237882&set=a.1569822266581775&type=3&theater>

- **On July 12, 2019, "OCU" activists illegally replaced the door lock cylinders to the UOC church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary in the village of Lyudvyshe Ternopil Oblast'.** *"We had an agreement for alternate services. After celebrating the*

*festal liturgy on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul we went home as usual. Some time later, "OCU" supporters came and changed the door lock cylinders" said Archpriest Mykhailo Vinnich, rector of the church.*

On Sunday, July 14, 2019, worshippers began to gather for the liturgy, which was to begin at 11:00am. At the church, they were met by "OCU" supporters who started shouting humiliating remarks and curses at their fellow villagers. Believers of the UOC had to perform a divine service that day on the porch of their own church.

**Read more:** <https://spzh.news/ru/news/63639-liturgiju-sluzhili-na-paperti-v-lyudvishhe-aktivisty-pcu-zahvatili-khram-upc>

## **2. Cases of direct administrative and forcible pressure exerted on UOC clergy by Ukrainian state authorities.**

- **On June 19, 2019, a meeting of representatives of the eparchial legal departments of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church** was held at the Holy Dormition Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. The special attention of the UOC Administrator, Metropolitan Antony of Boryspil and Brovary was drawn to the massive re-registration of the charters of parishes by Regional State Administrations, not entering details of criminal offenses into the Unified Register of Pre-Trial Investigations by relevant officials, local manipulations regarding religious community membership, inaction of the police and support for raiders by local authorities.

Metropolitan Antony named the number of illegal re-registrations by state regional administration officials of the charters of religious communities of the UOC to the "OCU": "Specifically, the number of such recorded cases are, in: Volynska Oblast' - 67, Rivnenska Oblast' - 48, Chernivetska Oblast' - 11, Zhytomyrska Oblast' - 15, Khmel'nitska Oblast' - 42, Ternopil'ska Oblast' - 27, Vinnytska Oblast' - 2, Ivano-Frankivska Oblast' - 2, Zakarpatska Oblast' - 5, Poltav'ska Oblast' - 1, Kirovohrad'ska Oblast' - 1, Kyiv'ska Oblast' - 1. In total, the number of illegal re-registrations concerns 222 religious communities of the UOC".

**Read more:** <https://law.church.ua/2019/06/19/u-kijevo-pecherskij-lavri-vidbulisya-cherhovi-zbori-predstavnikiv-jeparxialnix-yuridichnix-viddiliv-upc-2/>

- **July 16, 2019 Acting Chairman Rivne Regional State Administration Ihor Tymoshenko** issued a decree according to which the parishioners of the UOC Holy Protection Church in the village of Ryasniky should allow representatives of the "OCU" to enter their church in order to conduct services on an alternate basis. The reason for this order was an application made by members of the "OCU" community, which was recently re-registered from the UOC-KP. **UOC parishioners in the village of Ryasniki consider such actions of the Rivne Regional State Administration illegal and have already filed a lawsuit with the Rivne District Court** demanding the cancellation of Tymoshenko's order.

**Read more:** <https://spzh.news/ru/news/63664-glava-rovenskoj-oga-trebujet-ot-obshhiny-v-ryasnikah-sluzhity-poperemenno-s-pcu>

### 3. The protection of the rights of UOC clergy and parishioners in the judicial field.

- **On June 14, 2019, the Zbarazhskyi Rayon court initiates proceedings in lawsuit against the inactivity of law enforcement officers**, which was filed by members of the religious community of the UOC Holy Protection Church in the village of Musorivtsy, Ternopil'ska Oblast', whose church was illegally seized by "OCU" 'activists'. The "OCU" activists cut the locks of the church doors with an angle grinder, terrorising local residents by threatening to burn their homes down, whilst police officers idly remain on the sidelines, stated a parishioner.

**Read more:** <https://spzh.news/ru/news/62839-sud-rassmotrit-isk-o-bezdejstvii-policii-pri-zahvate-khrama-v-sele-musorovcy>

- **On June 18, 2019, the District Administrative Court of Kyiv initiated proceedings in the lawsuit** of the Kyiv Metropolis of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church against the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine and the State Register of the CIC" Legal Aid and Registration Centre for the **illegal state registration of the religious centre of the "Orthodox Church of Ukraine" ("OCU")**. In particular, Archpriest Olexandr Bakhov, Chairman of the Legal Department of the UOC, stressed that: "The newly formed, so-called "OCU" has no reason to be called the Kyiv Metropolis of the Ukrainian Orthodox



Church, not only because a religious centre with the same name has been in existence since 1991, but also because the relevant original legal document, "Tomos of Autocephaly" which the "OCU" no doubt respects and complies with, defines only two names - "Orthodox Church of Ukraine" ("OCU") and "Most Holy Church of Ukraine" ("HCU").

**Read more:** <https://law.church.ua/2019/06/19/administrativnim-sudom-bulo-vidkrito-provadhennya-u-spravi-za-pozovom-kijivskoji-mitropoliji-upc-shhodo-nezakonnosti-rejestraciji-religijnogo-centru-pravoslavnoji-cerkvi-ukrajini-pcu/>

### **Brief information about the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC)**

The UOC is the Local Orthodox Church of the people of Ukraine, which is officially recognised by all the Orthodox Churches of the world and is in spiritual communion with them. Spiritual and prayerful unity with the entire Orthodox world is witnessed by the Patriarchs and Primate of all the Local Churches, who repeatedly come to Kyiv to concelebrate Divine services with the Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine.

The UOC is completely independent and self-governing in its administration and structure. The Administrative Centre of the UOC is located in Kyiv, Ukraine. According to the UOC Charter, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church independently elects the Primate and Bishops, ordains priests, and conducts administrative and economic activities. The highest authority in the UOC belongs to the Church Council, which is made up of the bishops, ministers and parishioners of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The UOC is the largest Church in Ukraine, uniting millions of believers in 12,092 territorial church communities. The UOC has 258 monasteries, 4,500 monks and 100 bishops. During the time of Ukraine's independence, thousands of churches and hundreds of monasteries have been erected and restored with donations from believers of the UOC.

The UOC has consistently advocated the unity, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine and unites the Orthodox citizens of Ukraine, regardless of their nationality, political convictions or place of residence. In all its sermons, the UOC blesses Ukraine, the Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian state.