Two parishioners of canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church are injured during a seizure of church building by schismatics

On February 22, 2019, in Zhidichin village, Kivertsy district, Volyn region, Ukraine, a group of raiders in the presence of representatives of the “Kiev Patriarchate” cut the lock off the door of the Church of St. Nicholas belonging to the canonical Church and seized it. As the Information and Education Department of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church reports, citing the Press Service of the Volyn diocese, two women were injured during the conflict.

According to a local cleric, Rev. Roman Geleta, his wife was hit by a stone, and his mother, spouse of the church’s rector, Archpriest Vladimir Geleta, received a head injury. The priest mentioned that the raiders had been well organized. Both local young people and newcomers, including those wearing balaclavas for some reason, were directly involved in seizing the building. A car blocked the entrance to the territory.

When the clashes began, “hegumen” Nikodim of the UOC KP monastery in Lutsk arrived at St. Nicholas Church for unclear reasons. He said an akathistos, joined by supporters of the “transfer.” Among the “guests” were also students of the UOC KP Volyn Academy. Before breaking into the church the raiders demanded keys from the rector, but met with refusal.

After cutting off the lock the supports of the “Kiev Patriarchate” entered the church to “conduct an inventory.” Unidentified individuals made a fire in the territory of the church and started “guarding.” Several more vehicles brought by the UOC KP supporters blocked the entrances to St. Nicholas Church.

Earlier, the local community had confirmed its intention to remain within the canonical Church. On February 10, a lawful parish meeting was held. Its participants expressed their faithfulness to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and its Primate and recorded their decisions in the minutes.

Archpriest Vladimir Geleta has been the rector of St. Nicholas Church in Zhidichin village for some 30 years. As far back as the 1990s he already had to defend his community and church building. Back then representatives of the “Kiev Patriarchate,” in order to influence him, kidnapped for several hours his son, three-year-old Roman, who is now a cleric of this church.

DECR Communication Service

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