'OCU' supporters have beaten up an elderly parishioner of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church



At the night of March 13, 2021, at the Zadubrovka village, Chertnotsy Region, six supporters of the 'OCU' schismatic structure brutally beat up Vasiliy Khashchijuk, a 63-years-old parishioner of the St. Michael church of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the diocese of Chernovtsy-Bukovina has reported.

Since 2019, the community of the church dedicated to God's Archangel Michael at the Zadubrovka village, Chernovtsy Region, has continued a round-the-clock prayer vigil in defence of their right to confess the Orthodox faith freely and peacefully. It began after some 'activists' aggressively demanded from the rector and parishioners to leave the church and tried to penetrate into the church territory by breaking down the church gates and throwing stones at the faithful. On May 4, 2020, a new attempt was made to capture the church when raiders decided to use the death of the then rector, Archpriest Leonid Delikatny, who together with his flock had selflessly held against the attackers, praying and keeping vigil at the church.

Up to now, the diocesan press service reports, 'each parishioner has had his or her time to keep vigil;

the church has never been left without people because nobody know the day and the time of another assault'.

As Father Vitaly Durov, who now takes pastoral care of the St. Michael Parish, told the Union of Orthodox Journalists, at the night of March 13, Vasily Khashchijuk began his time of night vigil since there were people in the church, but in the morning he had to go to work and was let go home. According to the priest, Vasily is one of the most quiet and harmless villagers and that is why the attack against him looks especially cynical.

'At half past twelve, Vasily came out of the church. At 300 meters distance from the church, he was met by one of the 'OCU' supporters. A verbal conflict flamed up. Five more men came up - all young, under 20-years old. The late grandfather of one of the attackers had used to clash with the then rector Father Leonid. As a result, Vasily had concussion and multiple hematomas', the rector said.

'Hospitalization and a long rehabilitation. For an elderly person, numerous traumas could be lethal', the diocesan press services stressed.

Commenting this, the head of the Legal Department of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Archpriest Alexander Bakhov emphasized, 'This shameful action glaringly shows that the 'OCU' project has brought into our society a division on religious grounds. Actually, the unification so much talked about has not taken place'.

Archpriest Alexander said that churches are captured and people are forced to move to the 'OCU'. Statesmen use fraud decisions presented as decisions of a religious community and re-register it as a 'OCU' structure. 'A question arises, why a community should move to 'OCU'? Indeed, the law allows one to be a member of any church and to confess any faith. The very fact of the creation of the 'OCU' is not a reason for a religious community to change its subjection, the more so that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church did not participate in the creation of this organization', he stated.

'I am sure that attempts will be made to pose this crime as a domestic conflict since it is not profitable for the authorities to have conflicts on religious grounds', the priest highlighted, 'The responsibility for this discreditable crime lies on both the local authority and the law enforcement officials who will have to do with this case'.

In his opinion, 'if the authority continues disregarding the violations of the rights of the faithful and religious communities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, it will lead to a catastrophe'.

DECR Communication Service
With reference to the websites of the UOC Information-Education and Legal Departments

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