Another church of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church captured in Chernigov Region



On April 4, 2021, right-wing radicals led by suspended Hieromonk Leontiy Proshchenko, who is ‘a cleric of the OCU’, captured the church of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God at the Priputni village in the Chernigov Region.

As Archpriest Valery Dashko, secretary of the diocese of Nezhin, reported to the UOC Information-Education Department, the OCU supporters arrived at the village before the beginning of the Sunday service.

‘At 7:45, our rector, who lives near the church, saw some arriving cars; first, three and then four more cars and vans. Parishioners counted some 20 men brought by them. There were also a few locals. They drilled out the core lock and entered the church. They did not let our priest with parishioners to come in the church. Later they still let all to come in but then evicted them to the street and shut the church using their own lock’, Father Valery said.

According to the priest, the raiders argued that they had documents for the registration of the schismatic community of the ‘Orthodox Church of Ukraine’.

However, they had no documents confirming their right to the church building. And as for the registration of an ‘OCU’ community, there are several questions; first, there is no such community in the village; secondly, the lawsuit concerning the unlawful registration continues as it was issued on the basis of a fictitious assembly in which the religious community did not take part as it customarily happens’, Archpriest Valery Dashko said.

As the faithful reported, recently about 300 signatures were collected in the village in defence of the church so that it may remain in the fold of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The law-enforcement officers who arrived to the place did not defend the lawful owners but ‘let the radicals take the whole initiative in their hands’. According to the secretary of the diocese of Nezhin, the invaders did not conceal that they were paid and therefore they will be guarding the church as long as necessary.

Archpriest Valery also said that the ‘OCU cleric’ Hieromonk Leontiy Proshchenko, who directed the actions of the right radicals, was sentenced to 3 years to serve on probation and now was serving his term. In the police, there are a great deal of complaints of parents, whose children were subjected to indecent claims on the part of ‘Father Leontiy’.

“He is now working at the plant but in parallel calls himself ‘an OCU cleric’”, the priest said.

The conflict around the church of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God in the village has lasted for about two years. In September 2019, there was a failed attempt to take the church by force: radicals led by suspended Hieromonk Leontiy Proshchenko cut off locks. But when the local priest and parishioners tried to prevent their actions, physical force was used against them, which resulted in the hospitalization of a woman-parishioner with various bruises and suspected brain concussion.

DECR Communication Service

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/86952/