



## **Appeal made in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church for international community to condemn the beating of the faithful in Nezhin**



Bishop Victor of Baryshevka, head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's representation to European international organizations, called upon the international community to condemn another act of violence committed against the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian authorities to make an appropriate response to the violation of the fundamental rights and freedoms of Ukrainians citizens. The hierarch wrote about it in his Telegram Channel after radicals attacked a procession with the cross held by the faithful of the Diocese of Nezhin on June 23, 2021 in the city of Nezhin, Chernigov Region.

His Eminence pointed out that patriotic slogans used by aggressive young men in the beginning very fast changed to insults and an attempt to hamper the procession with the cross by violence. As a result, several believers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church were brutally beat up and clergy were hit too.

Criminal proceedings should be instituted against the culprits, the hierarch of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church emphasized.

He added that prominent signs of a mental disease present in the attackers (one of them carried a swine hoof while another tried to hit holy icons with his own excrements) "shows once again that the greatest enemy of the Church is devil who just uses particular people for manipulation. It is also evident, Bishop Victor said, that today's Ukrainian 'patriots' in their struggle against the Church in fact copy Bolsheviks and Young Communist Leaguers, that is, they can be called followers of Soviet atheists.

“We again call upon the Ukrainian authorities to react in an appropriate way to the violation of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the Ukrainian citizens as the Constitution guarantees them free confession of their religious beliefs”, His Eminence said, “If the authorities fail to react to manifestations of aggression towards the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, who are Ukrainian citizens, then the consequences of this may be irreparable. Already now it is possible to speak about another upsurge of hate and aggression towards our Church. This upsurge is generated by the feeling of impunity entertained by those who claim to be ‘patriots’ and who come out against the Church”.

“Moreover, we call upon international human rights organizations to pay attention to the absolutely inadmissible actions committed by various radical groups against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Any violence toward the Ukrainian Orthodox Church should be strongly denounced by the international community”, underlined the head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church’s representation to European international organizations.

Bishop Victor added that the situations such as in Nezhin substantially undermine the image of Ukraine on the international arena, turning it from a democratic state ruled by law into a territory ruled by arbitrariness and violence.

Union of Orthodox Journalists/  
DECR Communication Service

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Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/87524/>