



## Schismatics push priests and parishioners out of a Ukrainian Orthodox church in Kiev region



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On July 14, 2022, the OCU supporters led by Anatoly Novichenko, the former chairman of the village council, came to the church of St. Nicholas of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the village of Lubyanka, Kiev region, under the pretence of peace talks about the transfer of the community to schismatic structure. Yet, after a while the “activists” pushed the clergy and parishioners out of the church to the insulting and slanderous shouts, Archpriest Ilarion Shmayun told the Union of Orthodox Journalists.

The aggressively disposed supporters of the schism referred to the document of the Kyiv state registrar, which re-registered the statute of the religious community of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church on the OCU. The Legal Department of the Kyiv Diocese commented on the situation, saying: "Illegal re-

registration had been based on illegal signature collection."

According to Fr. Ilarion, the St. Nicholas community of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church knows that the OCU raiders are seizing church buildings in the neighboring villages using such "registration" as a cover and therefore provided the local authorities with the written notice well in advance that it had taken no decisions on its transfer or re-registration of the statute and will not take them. "But a few days before the forcible takeover of the church by the OCU supporters I was invited to the Lubyanka village council only to be faced with the fact that the statute had been re-registered and 'the church must be handed over'," said the rector. At the same time, the local authorities have washed hands, saying: "This is none of our doing. It had been people who have done it."

After that, the former head of the village council invited the clergy to meet in the church for talks. By deceit and manipulations he managed to assemble his associates and some village residents at the church. Having gone inside, these "activists" blatantly pushed clergymen, the district dean and parishioners out of the church into the street.

In the presence of the police, which did nothing to protect the property of the church from illegal takeover, representatives of the schismatic structure took stock of the icons and church utensils and announced that a "new priest from the OCU" would celebrate a prayer service here on the upcoming weekend.

The "activists" have set up a checkpoint of territorial defense near the St. Nicholas church and thus have deprived members of the only local Orthodox community, which exists not on paper but in real life, of the opportunity to pray in their church.

"None of the members of our community moved to the OCU and has no intention to do it," Fr. Ilarion Shmayun said, adding that the St. Nicholas community of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is going to stand up for its rights in the court of law.