



The Eastern American Diocese of ROCOR calls on the Ukrainian authorities to stop persecuting the Ukrainian Orthodox Church



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The clergy of the southern parishes of the Eastern American Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia gathered for the Lenten retreat and meeting to pray especially for the brothers and sisters of the “persecuted Ukrainian Orthodox Church led by His Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry of Kiev and All Ukraine”.

The clerics described as deeply personal the pain and concern about the Ukrainian government's ongoing persecution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and its faithful.

"We have watched as crowds have been allowed to harass, jeer, and even physically assault the

faithful at the Kiev Caves Lavra who came to defend the brotherhood and the faculty and seminarians of the Kiev Theological Academy from unlawful eviction by the state. We have also seen the many reports of increased forcible seizures of churches and persecution of the clergy and faithful by the schismatic followers of the so-called "Orthodox Church of Ukraine" in many parts of the country. Last week, we saw the inexplicable and troubling arrest of His Eminence, Metropolitan Pavel, deputy abbot of the Kiev Caves Lavra. These actions and the attempted eviction from the Lavra by the Ukrainian government have drawn condemnation from almost all of the Local and Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, and we join our voices to theirs in entreating the Ukrainian authorities to change their course of action and allow the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to perform its spiritual functions in peace. As patriotic, law-abiding, and dutiful citizens of the United States of America, we also entreat our Congress to take the necessary actions within its power to safeguard the religious freedoms of the clergy and faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church." – reads the statement.

As it was stated in the **resolution** adopted on April 5th, 2023, which was signed by the First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, Metropolitan Nicholas of Eastern America and New York, "these actions and attempts by the Ukrainian government to evict the Lavra have been condemned by almost all of the Local Orthodox Churches, and we add our voice to their request that the Ukrainian authorities reverse their actions and allow the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to carry out its ministry in peace".

"As patriotic, law-abiding citizens of the United States of America, we also ask the US Congress to take all possible necessary action to protect the religious freedoms of the clergy and faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church," the document reads.

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