



Security service executes a search of the Ukrainian Orthodox hierarch who defends the rights of believers



DECR Communication Service, 27.02.2024.

On February 22, representatives of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) came with a search to the place of residence of Metropolitan Theodosius of Cherkassy and Kanev currently in Kiev, thus disrupting the planned celebration of the Liturgy on the commemoration day of St. Patriarch Tikhon.

During the search, representatives of special services did not find anything illegal, but told Metropolitan Theodosius that in addition to other charges against him he is suspected of illegal public defense of a convent in Cherkassy seized by raiders on November 20, 2023.

The use of force by the SBU and the frustrated Divine Liturgy caused a pre-stroke condition of Metropolitan Theodosius and an acute hypertensive crisis diagnosed by an emergency physician, press

service of the Cherkassy Diocese of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) reports. Hospitalization issue was brought about.

The diocesan press service reports that the search was executed on February 22, the day after a long online talk of Metropolitan Theodosius of Cherkassy and Kanev with Ms Julia Jones, director of the UK Parliamentary Committee on International Freedom of Religion. This committee is composed of more than one hundred and seventy parliamentarians. During the talk, Metropolitan Theodosius informed Ms Jones about the bill banning the UOC prepared for passing by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, about the facts of seizures of churches, criminal cases against metropolitans, decisions of local authorities to cancel the rights of religious organizations of the UOC to land plots, about sanctions against the UOC bishops, and reverse restitution (expropriation) of historical buildings of churches and monasteries, as well as many other things.

As noted in the report, the mentioned facts generated deep interest of the head of the Parliamentary Committee because of the lack of information in UK parliamentary circles about the problems of the UOC believers. "The sides agreed to continue work for finding ways to help believers and religious organizations of the UOC in their human rights activities. Also, a decision was made to meet in Kiev, where Metropolitan Theodosius currently lives under house arrest as a persecuted hierarch who defends the rights and freedoms of believers of the UOC in the international field."

Taking part in the contact work are representatives of the International Human Rights Association "Church against Xenophobia and Religious Discrimination" and representatives of the UK scientific and educational institutions.

The formation of the "Church against Xenophobia and Religious Discrimination" association was announced on December 19, 2023. Metropolitan Theodosius of Cherkassy and Kanev was an initiator of establishing this human rights association and is its co-chairman. The association consists of a number of hierarchs and clergy of different Local Orthodox Churches and some human rights organizations, which have consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council.

An international lawyer, Robert R. Amsterdam, who was in Kiev these days, regarded the fact of the search as intentional pressure by force authorities on the hierarch of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and a human rights defender. This assessment was included in the lawyer's official documents. The incident was reported to the UK Parliamentary Committee on International Freedom of Religion.

A group in the Parliament of the United Kingdom called the All-Party Parliamentary Group on International Freedom of Religion or Belief was formed to raise awareness and profile of international freedom of religion or belief as a human right amongst UK parliamentarians, the media, government and

the general public and to increase the effectiveness of the UK's contribution to international institutions charged with enforcing this human right

Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/91433/>