



## With the support of a deputy and police in the Khmelnytsky region of Ukraine, the Intercession Church in the village of Zagontsy was seized



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On the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2024, supporters of the "OCU" with the participation of Khmelnytskyi district council deputy Oleksandr Chernievich cut the locks off both entrance doors of the Intercession parish of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the village of Zagontsi (Khmelnytskyi district, Khmelnytskyi region, Ukraine) and took possession of the premises.

The seizure took place in the absence of police officers. It was **reported by** the Union of Orthodox Journalists with reference to the press service of the Khmelnytskyi diocese.

The believers published a video from the scene - it shows that the parliamentarian knocked the bag out of the woman's hands and, snatching her phone, threw it on the ground. "The police did not react in any way, at all. One of the policemen, looking at what was happening, said that he didn't see anything," reports one of the victims. In the video, the man can also be heard forbidding to film the raiders to cut the locks.

The diocese emphasises that the seizure of the church by representatives of the "OCU" is illegal. "Permanent parishioners of the Intercession religious community did not change subordination in organisational and canonical matters, but, on the contrary, by their own will remain in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church with the governing centre in Kiev, according to the decision of the general parish meeting of 14 October 2023", - states their message.

It is noted that the re-registration of the charter and the change of the head of the Intercession parish took place in violation of the constitutional norms and Ukrainian legislation. According to the diocese, the church is still documentedly owned by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church on the basis of a certificate of ownership.

The liturgical and parish life of the religious community of the Intercession parish will continue, the diocesan press service stressed, pointing out that "the rector and regular parishioners hope for the restoration of their constitutional rights to freedom of religion and the real operation of the rule of law in the future."

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