



## **Metropolitan Gabriel of Lovech calls the seizure of cathedral in Cherkassy a great tragedy**



**DECR Communication Service, 27.10.2024.**

Metropolitan Gabriel of Lovech, hierarch of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, addressed his words of support to Metropolitan Feodosy of Cherkassy and Kanev in connection with the raider seizure of the Archangel Michael Cathedral in Cherkassy.

The letter published on the website of the Diocese of Lovech says, “We learned with great sorrow of the great tragedy that has befallen your Orthodox city of Cherkassy – the violent seizure of the Archangel Michael Cathedral of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which occurred in two stages following the call from the city mayor. On October 17, at about 3 am, over 100 people in camouflage and balaclava masks broke into the church where Orthodox Christians have gathered and the Divine Liturgy was being celebrated. The faithful led by you, their bishop, managed to prevent the seizure of the church, but in the morning of the same day the attack was repeated. This time, the attackers used not only physical force,

but also tear gas.”

Metropolitan Gabriel specifically mentioned that as a result of the raiders’ actions, the ruling bishop and many faithful of the Cherkassy Diocese of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church were injured: “We also learned that you yourself suffered during the attack having been hit on the head and sprayed with tear gas. As a result, you lost consciousness and had to be hospitalized. Many faithful were also injured, including an elderly monk who was brutally beaten.”

It is also noted in the letter that the police were called, “but did nothing to protect the worshipers in the church from the aggressive and violent actions of the attackers.”

In connection with the incident, the hierarch of the Bulgarian Church recalled the words of Apostle Paul about what a truly just authority should be: “For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is an authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrong-doer” (Rom. 13:3-4).

Addressing Metropolitan Feodosiy of Cherkassy and Kanev, Metropolitan Gabriel wrote that in the churches and monasteries of the Diocese of Lovech, prayers are offered during the Liturgy for peace and for the fraternal Ukrainian Orthodox Church beseeching “God to protect it from violence and give it the opportunity to continue praying in its churches and monasteries for its Orthodox homeland and people and for the whole world.”

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