



**Bulletin No2 of Rights Violations
of Ukrainian Orthodox Church parishioners and clergy
for the period from 04/04/2019 to 28/05/2019**

Starting from January 6, 2019, after the creation of the so-called Orthodox Church of Ukraine ("OCU") and the granting of the Tomos of Autocephaly by the Ecumenical (Constantinopolitan) Patriarchate to its Primate, an unprecedented campaign was launched in Ukraine against the parishioners and clergy of the Local Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC).

As part of this campaign, representatives of the Ukrainian state authorities are conducting undisguised agitation for the so-called "transition" of religious communities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to the "OCU". They are exerting administrative and military pressure against the clergy and parishioners of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and are assisting the radical militarised groups, the so-called "activists", to seize churches, and itemise its property which belongs to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. They also help to initiate the adoption of changes to national legislation that violate the Constitution of Ukraine and the fundamental rights of believers.

The main goal of this Bulletin is to inform: the clergymen and parishioners from other Local Orthodox Churches, the representatives of foreign governments, the mass media, human rights and expert organisations **about the most blatant violations of the rights of parishioners and clergymen of the UOC in Ukraine and cases of direct interference of the Ukrainian government into the affairs of the Church.**

During the period from April 4 to May 28, 2019, dozens of cases of gross violations of the rights of parishioners and clergy of the UOC in Ukraine were recorded and confirmed:

1. Factual information about the seizure of churches and other cases of the use of physical force and pressure on UOC parishioners in order to forcefully transfer churches and religious communities to the jurisdiction of the "OCU":

- April 4, 2019, around 8:00 PM , supporters of the "OCU" forcibly seized the church of the UOC religious community **in the village of Ptycha, Dubno district, Rivne Oblast'**. According to eyewitnesses, the raiders cut the locks with an angle grinder, **Police, who were at the scene during the crime, did not prevent these actions.**

Read more: <http://news.church.ua/2019/04/04/prixilniki-pcu-zaxopili-xram-upc-u-ptichi/>

- **On 6 and 10 April, 2019**, supporters of the "OCU" made two attempts to seize the churches of the UOC parishes **in the village of Pyatyhory of Zdolbunivskyi district and in the village of Kopyta of the Koretskyi district of the Rivne oblast'**. The UOC parishioners managed to defend their churches, but after long confrontations they were forced to accept the sealing of their churches until court rulings will be made. **On April 11 in the village of Kopyta, "OCU" supporters accused UOC believers of violating the agreements and then proceeded to cut the locks to the St. John the Theologian church.**

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/04/11/v-rivnenskij-jeparxiji-opechatali-dva-xrami-upc-pislya-provokacij-aktivistiv-pcu/>

- Despite the fact that their churches were forcibly seized by the "OCU" supporters, the UOC communities of **the village of Klepachiv and the village of Krasnovolya of the Volyn oblast'** continued their liturgical life in cramped makeshift premises.

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/05/06/na-volini-gromadi-upc-zaxopenix-xramiv-prodovzhuyut-bogosluzhbove-zhittya-ta-svyatkuyut-voskresinnya-xristove/>

- Parishioners of the UOC **Holy Panteleimon community in the village of Lisopil of the Kostopilskyi district of the Rivne oblast' (Poliška eparchy)**, where long-suffering members of the UOC experienced oppression by the schismatics, held a parish meeting **on April 7, 2019**, in which **260 believers** unanimously decided to remain loyal to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and her Primate, Metropolitan Onufriy of Kyiv and All Ukraine.

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/04/17/na-rivnenshchini-viruyuchi-gromadi-upc-s-lisopil-xram-yakoji-xochut-vidibrati-zalishayutsya-virnimi-kanonichnij-cerkvi-video/>

- Every single concrete situation together with the undeniable and glaring facts of lawlessness were reported by the priests and parishioners, who were the actual victims and direct eyewitnesses to **the forcible seizures of their UOC churches in the Rivne region.**

Details: <https://youtu.be/8p0KleH1J60>

- **Metropolitan Volodymyr of Volodymyr-Volynskiy and Kovel'skiy made a personal Archpastoral visit to the community of the UOC church in the village of Holyadyn, in the Shatskyi deanery of the Volodymyr-Volyn eparchy. This was reported by the rector of St. Nicholas' Church in the village of Pulmo, Shatskyi rayon, Fr. Oleksandr Cherevko on his [Facebook page.](#)**

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/05/06/mitropolit-volodimir-pidtrimav-gromadu-zaxopenogo-prixilnikami-pcu-xramu-v-s-golyadin-video/>

- **On April 14, 2019**, during the Sunday service, "OCU" supporters provoked a fight, and forcibly seized **the Saints Cosmos and Damian church in the village of Rozvazh, Ostrozhkyi rayon of the Rivnenska oblast'.** "OCU" activists actually stormed the above church.

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/04/14/v-s-rozvazh-na-rivnenshhini-prixilniki-pcu-vzvali-shturmom-xram-pryamo-pid-chas-sluzhbi/>

- **On April 20, 2019**, on Lazarus Saturday, "OCU" supporters attempted to capture the **UOC Holy Trinity Church religious community in the village of Kozak of the Koretsky rayon in the Rivnenska oblast'.** The justification for the provocative actions of the activists of the newly formed church structure ("OCU"), was given by **the head of the Rivne Regional State Administration Oleksiy Mulyarenko**, who registered the community of "OCU" using the actual data of the bona fide religious community of the UOC.

Details: <http://pravoslavie.org.ua/2019/04/%D1%80%D1%96%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%B5-%D1%83-%D1%94%D0%BF%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%85%D1%96%D1%97-%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8E%D1%82%D1%8C-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BB%D1%96%D1%86%D1%96%D1%8E-%D1%82%D0%B0/>

- On **April 17, 2019**, "OCU" activists armed with crow bars belligerently stormed **St. Michael's church in the village of Poliśka, Bereznivskiy rayon of the Sarny-Polis'ka eparchy of the UOC**. The **head of the district police department and the village chairman** directly led the illegal actions of the "OCU" supporters.

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/04/17/u-seli-poliske-vidbuvajetsya-zaxoplennya-xramu-nastoyatelya-z-infarktom-vidvezli-v-likarnyu/>

- On **April 16, 2019**, "OCU" supporters using an angle grinder cut door locks to **the UOC church of Archangel Michael in the village of Mikhailivtsi of Vinnytska oblast'**, shouting insults at the UOC priest and faithful, whilst seizing the church.

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/04/18/na-vinnichchini-prixilniki-pcu-zaxopili-xram-upc-zrizavshi-dveri-bolgarkoyu-video/>

- After two months of provocations during church services, drunken nights of depravity, persecution on the basis of faith and religion, "OCU" supporters resorted to making open threats to the parishioners of **the Archangel Michael Cathedral in the village Zadubrivka, Zastavnivskiy rayon of the Chernivetska oblast'**.

An "OCU" cleric warned that **starting from April 20**, members of the religious community of the UOC will be subjected to radically violent methods, in their attempt to seize the church building.

The Parish Rector, **Archpriest Leonid Delikatnyi reported to the Chernivtsi Regional State Administration, Prosecutor's Office, Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) and the Main Administration of the National Police**, that the activists *"Also threatened them by the use of physical force, even threatening them with murder should they offer any resistance, repeatedly emphasizing that they will not allow the village UOC religious community to perform Divine Services during the upcoming Easter celebrations which shall begin on April 20, 2019"*.

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/04/20/xochete-vijni-bude-klirik-pcu-pogrozhuje-pravoslavnim-bukovincyam-nastoyatel-parafiji-zvernuvsya-do-sbu-oda-ta-policiji-za-zaxistom-video/>

- On **May 9, 2019**, in Vinnytsia, celebrations devoted to **Victory Day in the Second World War**, in which traditionally representatives of the local authorities, war veterans and the head of the eparchies of the UOC, "UAOC" and "UOC-KP" take

part, and which never had provoked conflict. However, this year, the authorities, having invited all three "bishops" of the "OCU", ignored the bishops of the UOC, the faithful of which are in the majority in Vinnytsia.

Details: <http://eparhia.vinnica.ua/item/713-spilnazaiavamytropolytatulchynskohoibratslavskohoionafanataarkhiiepyskopavinnyskohoibarskohovarsonofiazpryvodudyskryminatsiipovidnoshenniudoarkhiereivuptszbokumistsevoivlady.html?fbclid=IwAR1jgLX1fnfyF89kcxjHvyG2MFDau9IY6jbHoAfzdEd2P8LeRaNKI9k2K2I>

- The rector, Fr. Serafym Simonovych, of the Holy Transfiguration Church of the UOC in the village of Chetvertnya, of Kolkivskyi deanery of the Volyn eparchy, denied false statements made in the media that allegedly, during a scuffle between villagers on the night of May 1, 2019, someone "was beaten by the clergyman" on church territory. Instead, it was precisely the opposite – "OCU" supporters for unknown reasons, had attempted to enter the church at night with clubs in their hands, and that UOC believers had, as a result, summoned the police to the scene of the incident.

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/05/03/na-volini-prixilniki-pcu-sfalsifikuvali-dani-pro-perexid-a-zmi-chinili-naklep-na-svyashhenika-upc/>

- On May 11, in the village of Skobelka in Volyn, "OCU" activists tried to force the priest out of the house where he resides with his children and where he performs church services.

"The main thing that they wanted was to disassemble and dismantle the room in which Father Nazariy performed the Liturgy for the UOC worshipers. Their goal today was to stop the liturgical activities of the UOC community. As for the eviction of the priest and his family, I do not rule out that "OCU" supporters will try to create the conditions that will make it unbearable for the priest and his family to live there. The result of which will be, according to their calculations, is that Father Nazariy will eventually evict himself".

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/05/12/na-volini-aktivisti-pcu-namagayutsya-siloyu-viseliti-svyashhenika-z-budinku-u-yakomu-vin-prozhivaje-z-ditmi-ta-zvershuje-bogosluzhinnya/>

- On May 12, a series of provocations were organised by "OCU" activists resulting in the disruption of Divine services. This took place in the village of Mnyshyn,

Goshchanskyi rayon, and in the villages of Bushcha and Buderazh of the Zdolbunivskyi rayon. In addition to disrupted church services, fights were organised where female parishioners were bashed.

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/05/12/aktivisti-pcu-prodovzhuyut-zrivati-bogosluzhinnya-viryanam-rivnenskoji-jeparxiji-ta-bitu-zhinok-video/>

- **In the Rivne eparchy**, pressure continues to be exerted on the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) as well as the persecution of UOC priests at the hands of "UOC" supporters and bureaucrats. Journalists from Nash.Maksi TV channel continue to highlight the current church situation in the region as of May 17, 2019.

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/05/22/zmi-pokazali-yak-u-rivnenskij-oblasti-pcu-za-dopomogyu-chinovnikiv-zaxoplyuje-xrami-video/>

Video: https://youtu.be/f07LT_Zz5-A

- **On May 18, 2019, at 11:00 am, representatives of the National Police**, created a living corridor leading to the doors of **the UOC Holy Assumption Church in the village of Tovtry, in the Chernivtsi oblast'** - thus providing the "OCU" activists, with the added consent from the chairman of the village council, to cut the locks to the doors of the UOC church and forcibly seize it.

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/05/18/na-bukovini-za-dopomogyu-policiji-ta-vladiprixilniki-pcu-zaxopili-xram-upc-s-tovtri/>

- **On May 23, 2019**, during the All Eparchial Cross procession and prayer vigil in defence of the rights of Orthodox Bukovins and against the lawless acts of the against the eparchy by the chairman of the Chernivtsi Regional State Administration , namely, for the forced transfer of Ukrainian Orthodox Church parishes into the newly created structure of the "OCU". As a result of the discussions between the official and the hierarchs and the clergy of the eparchy, a statement and a promise was made by M. Pavlyuk to create a working group for the study and rectification of the conflict situation.

Read more: <http://news.church.ua/2019/05/23/tysyachi-bukovincev-vyshli-na-krestnyj-xod-protiv-bezzakonij-vlasti-rezultaty-peregovorov-s-i-o-predsedatelya-chernovickoj-oga-obnovleno/?lang=ru>

- Despite the assurances of **the acting chairman of the Chernivtsi Regional State Administration** that the lawlessness resulting in the forcible seizure of the UOC churches in the region will cease. In Bukovynian village of Zavoloka, aggressive young people attempted to seize the village church from the legal parishioners in favour of the "OCU".

In the press service of the Chernivtsi-Bukovinian eparchy **on May 24, 2019, it was reported that an attempt was made to forcibly raid and seize the Saints Peter and Paul church in the village of Zavoloka, Storozhynetskyi rayon of Chernivtsi oblast'.**

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/05/24/pusti-obicyanki-cherniveckix-chinovnikiv-priamo-zaraz-u-s-zavoloka-molodiki-napidpitku-namagayutsya-zaxopiti-xram-upc-video/>

- **On May 26, 2019, at 11:00, an attempt was made to raid and seize the UOC Holy Assumption Church in the village of Vaslovivtsi, Chernivetska oblast'. "OCU" supporters had smashed open the gates of the church and trespassed onto church territory, in such fashion forcing out the parishioners of the UOC community.**

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/05/26/vidbuvajetsya-zaxoplennya-xramu-upc-u-s-vaslovivci-prixilniki-pcu-znovu-z-bolgarkoyu-zavitali-do-cerkvi/>

Video: <https://www.facebook.com/orthobuk/videos/456432058463171/>

- **Parishioners of the Holy Assumption Church of the UOC in the village of Vaslovivtsi, Zastavnivskyi rayon of Chernivetska oblast' appealed to the President of Ukraine V.O. Zelenskyi with a request that he protect them from the crimes committed by the supporters of the so-called "OCU", who are, in turn, supported by local officials. On May 26, 2019, throughout the whole day, attempts were made to raid and seize the church, in which believers had been praying for 120 days in a round-the-clock Prayer Vigil. The Video address to the President of Ukraine Orthodox was recorded by the Bukovynians in front of the church at 7pm, and posted on the official facebook page and YouTube channel of the eparchy.**

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/05/26/viryuyuchi-upc-s-vaslovivci-zvernulisya-do-prezidenta-ukrajini-volodimira-zelenskogo-video/>

Video: <https://youtu.be/yK9nzHqKohs>

- In Bani Lysovytska, Stryiskyi rayon of Lvivska oblast', where the only Orthodox church of the rayon is located, on the morning of the Annunciation, the head of the village council and the "Right sector" burst into the church during prayer services and did not allow believers to continue the service. At eight o'clock in the morning, the church was captured by members of the "Right Sector" organisation under the leadership of the chairman of the Lysovytska village council Mykola Magas.

Details: <https://spzh.news/en/news/61322-v-bane-lisovickoj-glava-selysoveta-i-pravyj-sektor-zahvatyvajut-khram-upc>

2. Cases of direct administrative and forcible pressure exerted on the clergy of the UOC by the state authorities of Ukraine

- Four official letters from the local village council on April 8, 2019 were received by the **Fr. Pavlo Taran**, the rector of the UOC church of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian which is in the village Krasnosilka, Bershadskyi rayon of the Vinnytska oblast'. After provocations of "OCU" activists, the church was sealed and guarded by the police. The right of the religious community of the UOC to the church and the church building, in an oral contract with local activists of the newly created structure, will be considered in court. It is noted that the priest unexpectedly received an official notice that, "according to *the Executive Committee of the Krasnosilskyi Council*", he, his pregnant wife and two young children have been excluded from the official registration of their place of residence.

Using such a "coercive" underhanded tactics, together with exerting moral pressure on the priest, who is also the father of a large family, **the head of the village council Ivan Pustovit** and some of his bureaucrats attempted to force him to change his religious jurisdiction and transfer to the so-called "OCU".

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/04/11/varvarstvo-chinovnikiv-na-vinnichchini-svyashhenika-upc-z-vagitnoyu-druzhinoyu-ta-malolitnimi-ditmi-vistavlyayut-na-vulicyu-dokumenty/>

- On April 6, in **Pyatyhory**, an attempt to forcibly seize the church of the UOC ended with the result that the keys to the church premises were handed over to the chairman of the village council.

After several hours of confrontation, provoked by supporters of the new "church" structure, the church of the Nativity of the Theotokos in Pyatyhory, Zdolbunivskiy rayon of Rivnenska oblast' was officially sealed.

Details: <https://spzh.news/ru/news/61317-hram-rozhdestva-bogorodicy-v-pyatigorah-opechatali>

3. Protection of the rights of clergymen and parishioners of the UOC in the judicial field

- **On April 4, 2019**, the day after the forcible seizure of the church, the Sts. Peter and Paul Religious Community **in the village of Postiye, Kostopilskiy rayon of Rivnenska oblast'** submitted a statement to the Court at the Rivnenska oblast' State Administration. Officials registered with the "OCU parish" using illegitimate documents with the same registration data as for the religious community of the UOC. **On April 3** armed with unauthorised documents, "OCU" activists cut the locks and illegally entered the UOC church building.

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/04/04/parafiya-upc-podaje-v-sud-na-rivnensku-oda/>

- **Courts in the Volynska, Chernivetska, Rivnenska, Khmelnytska, and Kyivska oblast's** during **February-March 2019** reviewed the appeals of the religious communities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) with regards to the refusal to submit applications regarding the seizure of UOC churches and other unlawful actions perpetrated by officials and representatives of the "OCU" onto the Unified Register of Pre-trial Investigations, specifically in connection the so-called "Transfer of jurisdiction" of UOC parishes. According to their ruling, the courts ordered the prosecutors and/or authorised persons to submit to the Unified Register of Pre-trial Investigations, the statements made by the rectors and parishioners of the UOC churches and to commence investigations.

A Lutsk court in Volynska oblast', over a period of two months, **made a ruling on 12 religious communities of the Volyn eparchy of the UOC in the villages of: Sadiv, Shepel, Vesele, Mankiv, Kholopychi, Sirnychki, Semerynske, Zubiylne, Kulchyn, Zhydychn, Krasnovolya, Telchi.**

Details: <http://vzcz.church.ua/2019/04/11/sudi-povsyudno-zobovyazuyut-policiyu-rozsliduvati-situacii-z-perevedennyami-parafij-upc-v-pcu-analitika-onovleno/>

- **The Kyiv Regional Administrative Court** suspended the process of forcibly renaming the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) which was to be done **by April 26, 2019**.
Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/04/23/okruzhnij-adminsud-kijeva-zablokuvav-primusove-perejmenuvannya-upc/>
- **The court ordered police to resume the investigation into cases involving the seizure of two churches in Volhynia. The Lokachynskyi District Court overturned the decisions of investigators to close criminal proceedings in matters related to the forcible seizure of churches in the villages of Zybylne and Syrnychky of Volynska oblast', obliging law enforcement officers to resume their investigations.**
Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/04/26/sud-zobovyazav-policiyu-vidnoviti-slidstvo-u-spravax-shhodo-zaxoplennya-dvox-xramiv-na-volini/>
- **Zhovtnevyi District Court in Zaporizhzhya extended to 14 June, 2019, the detention in the Zaporizhzhya pre-trial Solitary Confinement centre, for three young people who are suspected of setting fire to churches of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Zaporizhzhya.**
Read more: <http://news.church.ua/2019/05/07/u-zaporizhzhzi-pidozryuvanim-u-pidpalax-xramiv-upc-prodovzhili-trimannya-pid-vartoyu/>
- **On May 10, 2019, the Shevchenkivskyi District Court of Chernivtsi ordered the National Police to open a criminal case under Part 1 of Art. 366 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine and to initiate an investigation into criminal actions of officials of the Chernivtsi Regional State Administration. False documents were drawn up and issued by an official, according to which the RSA carried out the forced re-registration of religious communities of the UOC to the so-called "OCU" community.**
Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/05/10/vidkrito-kriminalne-provadhennya-za-faktom-vidachi-glavoyu-cherniveckoji-oda-sfalsifikovanix-rozporядzhen-pro-perevedennya-gromad-u-pcu/>

- On May 22, 2019, the Lutsk City District Court of the Volynska oblast' decided to satisfy the complaint of the rector of the church in the village of Staryi Zahoriv concerning the inactivity of the prosecutor of the Volyn rayon to report information regarding the perpetration of criminal offenses to the Unified Register of Pre-trial Investigations, to ask the applicant and witnesses for detailed information, and commence pre-trial investigations.

Details: <http://volyn.church.ua/2019/05/27/sud-zobovyazav-pravooxoronciv-vnesti-do-jedr-dani-pro-namagannya-primusovogo-viselelnya-simji-svyashhenika-z-cerkovnogo-budinku-sela-starij-zagoriv/>

- On May 16, the Chief Investigator of the National Police of Ukraine on the basis of the statement made by UOC Archpriest Vasyl Lavreniuk, who was the rector of the Sts. Kosmas and Damian church that was forcibly seized by "OCU" activists and is located in the village of Rozvazh in Rivne oblast', initiated a criminal case against the head of the Rivne Regional State Administration Oleksiy Mulyarenko. The criminal investigation revealed facts surrounding the official's unlawful instructions given to bureaucrats regarding the illegal transfer of UOC communities to the jurisdiction of the so-called "OCU".

Details: <http://news.church.ua/2019/05/16/chernivecki-chinovniki-ta-predstavniki-pcu-ne-zacikavleni-u-mizhkonfesijnomu-miri-na-bukovini/>

- April 4, 2019, the day after the seizure of their church, the Sts. Peter and Paul religious community in the village of Postiynе, Kostopil'skyi rayon of Rivnenska oblast', filed a lawsuit against Rivnenska oblast' State Administration.

Details: <https://spzh.news/ru/news/61280-verujushhije-zahvachennogo-khrama-upc-podali-v-sud-na-rovenskuju-oga>

Brief information about the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC)

The UOC is the Local Orthodox Church of the people of Ukraine, which is officially recognised by all the Orthodox Churches of the world and is in spiritual communion with them. Spiritual and prayerful unity with the entire Orthodox world is witnessed by the Patriarchs and Primate of all the Local Churches, who repeatedly come to Kyiv to concelebrate Divine services with the Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine.

The UOC is completely independent and self-governing in its administration and structure. The Administrative Centre of the UOC is located in Kyiv, Ukraine. According to the UOC Charter, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church independently elects the Primate and Bishops, ordains priests, conducts administrative and economic activities. The highest authority in the UOC belongs to the Church Council, which is made up of the bishops, ministers and parishioners of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The UOC is the largest Church in Ukraine, uniting millions of believers in 12,092 territorial church communities. The UOC has 258 monasteries, 4,500 monks and 100 bishops. During the time of Ukraine's independence, thousands of churches and hundreds of monasteries have been erected and restored with donations from believers of the UOC.

The UOC has consistently advocated the unity, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine and unites the Orthodox citizens of Ukraine, regardless of their nationality, political convictions or place of residence. In all its sermons, the UOC blesses Ukraine, the Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian state.