

SEARCHES OF UKRAINIAN CHURCH PROPERTY: NEW ALLEGATIONS AGAINST HIERARCHS, ACCUSATIONS OF PLANTED EVIDENCE

Kiev, November 28, 2022

Photo: spzh.news

The Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) continued its searches of Ukrainian Orthodox Church properties last week and over the weekend.

OrthoChristian [previously reported](#) on the searches at the Kiev Caves Lavra and several other monasteries and one diocesan administration last week, in addition to the [searches and accusations](#) against His Eminence Metropolitan Jonathan over the past month.

Further searches were also carried out at the diocesan administrations and cathedrals of the Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernivtsi and Bukovina Dioceses.

Such “counterintelligence security activities” are carried out “to counter the subversive activities of the Russian special services in Ukraine,” reports the [Ivano-Frankivsk branch of the SBU](#).

The SBU also searched His Eminence Archbishop Job, vicar of the Ternopil Diocese and rector of the Pochaev Theological Seminary, finding Russian literature that was allegedly used to “promote Russian values and anti-Ukrainian agitation,” reports the Telegram channel [Babel](#).

Search at the Diocese of Chernivtsi and Bukovina

His Eminence Metropolitan Meletiy of Chernivtsi and Bukovina, head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church’s Department for External Church Relations, [told parishioners](#) about the search at the diocesan administration on Friday following the Divine Liturgy the next day.

The officers arrived with machine guns, shouting and screaming, and broke down the administration doors, His Eminence said.

“They took away phones, disks from the computer, and they didn’t even let my lawyer in. I thought for a minute that I wasn’t in a democratic, free Ukraine, but in some kind of North Korea,” Met. Meletiy said.

The reason he’s being accused of treason, the hierarch explained, is that the SBU found a letter he wrote to His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, head of the Russian Church’s own Department for External Church Relations, asking them not to interfere with the Ukrainian Church establishing diaspora parishes to pastorally care for Ukrainian refugees.

“I said we understand your situation, and you understand ours as well. For these words, I’ve been charged with high treason,” the Ukrainian hierarch explained.

One of the SBU officers offered the hierarch advice on how to avoid such “visits” in the future: switch to the “Orthodox Church of Ukraine,” which is recognized as schismatic throughout most of the Orthodox world. “I turned around and walked away,” Met. Meletiy recalled.

“Thank God no shots were fired, although they threatened it. But we’re not afraid of death,” [commented Archimandrite Nikita](#), the diocesan secretary. “I only note with surprise that the SBU doesn’t just not use the most democratic methods, but uses even the most despotic methods in its work. They could’ve just rung the bell and Vladyka Meletiy and I would’ve opened up for them, and they wouldn’t have had to break down the doors.”

“These are the gifts that every Orthodox Christian in Ukraine can receive if they believe in God and don’t want to renounce the Orthodox faith, the faith of their parents and great-grandfathers,” the diocesan secretary said.

[According to the SBU](#), it found documents confirming the presence of Russian citizenship among the diocesan leadership, as well as communications from the Russian Church containing liturgical instructions. The state agency also claims it “found warehouses with wholesale shipments of pro-Kremlin literature praising the aggressor country and calling for support for the invaders.”

Meanwhile, the [diocese posted an amusing comment](#), reposting the SBU’s photo showing not any “pro-Kremlin literature,” but rather Church literature: “THERE WAS NO SENSATION. They wanted to find a buried tank, an arsenal of weapons, Russian passports—but they found: the basics of the Orthodox faith, a catechism, and a prayer of Patriarch Tikhon from 1917.”

Planted evidence at Korets Monastery?

As OrthoChristian [reported last week](#), Mother Savatia of the Holy Trinity Monastery in Korets, Rivne Province, said that SBU officers inspected people and buildings, but found nothing illegal.

“They were looking for pro-Russian literature there, but no materials about support for the war in Ukraine were found,” Mother further said.

“They were especially interested in and seized the ‘Russian Home’ magazine and the ‘Russky Vestnik’ newspaper, which were published before the war,” the nun told the [Union of Orthodox Journalists](#).

Photo: spzh.news

The SBU officers presented leaflets with Patriarch Kirill that they allegedly found as part of the search, but no one in the monastery knows where they came from, Mother Savatia explained.

Interestingly, the leaflets were supposedly found in a damp, unheated attic, where everything immediately becomes wet and moldy. “But these leaflets were brand new and dry,” [Mother said](#).

The [Union of Orthodox Journalists](#) analyzed the text of the leaflet, demonstrating that the first paragraph is taken from a sermon of Pat. Kirill from February 24 this year and the second from a sermon of April 19, 2014, while the third paragraph, which contains a call to “restore historical justice,” can’t be traced to the Patriarch at all.

“This compilation was made by someone with the obvious goal of slandering the UOC and proving that leaflets calling for treason are being distributed there. And this lie is all the more disgusting because it is woven into real quotes.

“Of course, we’re sure that the SBU couldn’t do this. It remains to be hoped that the security forces will find out who organized this obvious provocation against the UOC,” the UOJ concludes.

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