

*UN Secretary-General
Ban Ki-Moon*

UN Committee on Human Rights

Stop to eurointegration

Dear Sirs!

Ukraine grossly and systematically violates the fundamental human rights – freedom of conscience and religion. The Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian orthodox Greek Catholic Church (UO GCC) **therefore categorically demands a ban on Ukraine’s integration into the EU scheduled for November.**

UO GCC is no sect but a Christian Church. Proclamation of heresies by Cardinal Husar was the reason for our separation from the UGCC headed by him. Since 2009, our Church has repeatedly applied for registration with state authorities. Department on Religions and Nationalities in the Ministry of Culture denies our registration for fabricated reasons. This is the initiative of Husar’s hierarchy who consequently purposefully label our Church as a destructive sect. They continuously foment religious hatred against our religious minority. State authorities as well as mass media are involved in this physical and spiritual lynching action.

The fruits of discrimination: the deaths of three persons

Our faithful together with our religious priest Roman Shelepko built a small church in the town of Chortkiv (Ternopol Region). Father Roman (40) faced strong psychological pressure from the Chortkiv church and state “Taliban”. On 4 November 2010, in the aftermath of the constant pressures from Husar’s UGCC and the state, he fell down dead a few metres away from the church. A few days later, members of Husar’s group broke into our church and changed the locks. They stole the

church from us and our believers and have not returned it to this day. Our faithful announced beforehand that they would arrive by bus to attend Divine Liturgy in memory of the deceased priest Roman. Husar's UGCC group therefore mobilized about 500 fanatical men. They lynched our faithful at the bus station and they were in danger of being trampled under foot. The police and a member of the Main Department on Matters of Internal Policy, Religions and Nationalities of the Ternopol Regional State Administration, Mr Kulchytskyi, stood by idly. (<http://uogcc.org.ua/ua/video/index.php/article/.3740/>) A few days later, this modern Chortkiv "Taliban" threatened our faithful with death. This psychological terror eliminated our religious minority in this territory.

During the same period, an organized Taliban group physically hurt religious sisters of our Church.

(<http://uogcc.org.ua/ua/video/index.php/article/.3739/>, <http://uogcc.org.ua/ua/video/index.php/article/.3745/>) There was a series of violent acts when they broke into the monastery several times with axes and iron rods. The Sisters sustained injuries and the monastery was stolen from them along with their personal property. These crimes of discrimination against our religious minority have not been properly investigated and punished up to this day.

Another victim of physical and psychological terror was our Archbishop Michael Osidach (†2013), the Head of our Church. Psychological terror at the request of church and state authorities was started by the magazine Express. Editor in Chief and his assistant trespassed on the Archbishop's private land and forced him to answer provocative questions. The Archbishop refused to give an interview because the Express had grossly defamed him before. The journalists created a scandal and attacked his reputation again. Husar's hierarchy in cooperation with state authorities brought psychological pressure to bear on him and manipulated him into releasing our Sisters who cared for him in his old age and illness and protected him against provocateurs. Archbishop Osidach was under house arrest for several weeks, which prevented us bishops, priests, religious sisters and believers from any contact with him. He was found dead not long after.

The third victim of psychological terror on the part of state authorities – Lvov Regional State Administration – was Boris Voznitskyi (†2012), Director of Lvov Art Gallery and Hero of Ukraine. In 2005, he rented a

temple to our Church – a cultural monument in Pidhirtsi. State authorities pressurized him to cancel the contract and thus to prevent us from celebrating Divine Liturgies in the place. A week before his death he complained to me personally about constant psychological pressure. He expressed concern that he might not be strong enough to endure it. Soon after he had a heart attack and died tragically. Immediately after his death, state authorities cynically cancelled the contract and expelled us from the temple.

These are methods of Husar's Taliban hierarchy employed through state structures.

State authorities through the courts hypocritically demanded that the walls of our chapel on Pluhova Street in Lvov should be lowered by one metre. In fact, the purpose was to make the building unusable and to prevent our faithful from performing their religious duties. The matter has not been settled up to the present. It is blatant discrimination by state authorities. For this reason, our faithful have attended Divine Liturgies outside, at the walls of the Church of St Peter and Paul in Lvov, in hot or freezing weather already for two years.

Another manifestation of discrimination was an order issued by the Lvov Regional Council to carry out an inspection of our Church. The aim was elimination of our religious minority.

Another manifestation of discrimination was the circulation of fraudulent petitions under the auspices of the Lvov Regional Council. This was intended to eliminate our Church by cunning as it was deliberately associated with the topical issue concerning the law on the Ukrainian and Russian languages. In fact, it resulted in a mass outbreak of religious hatred in all churches of the UGCC.

Another manifestation of discrimination is mass media smear campaign. The magazine Express and TV channels 12LTB, 1+1, ZIK, ICTV, STB have fomented religious hatred for our Church among the people, which is becoming particularly intense these days. They label us as a destructive sect that steals children and impute us with the use of psychotropic drugs. They have even fabricated a false horror story of ritual murders, and tell it on and on. We have not once been given a

chance to defend the truth. The ongoing campaign is flagrant violation of basic human rights and freedoms in Ukraine. It incites religious hatred and subjects our faithful to severe traumas.

Apart from that, state authorities illegally arrested two believers during our peaceful demonstration and kept them in prison for several days. Only after they served an unjust sentence, the Court of Appeal found them innocent.

Our faithful have built a small chapel on their private land in the town of Brody so as to perform their religious duties. State authorities have taken destructive action with a demand that we must pull the chapel down or else it will be bulldozed.

Since the state does not permit registration of our Church, we founded a civic organization. There is now pressure exerted through the courts with the purpose of dissolving it.

The UGCC hierarchy has already for four years pressurized the employees of the Ministry of Culture by bribery and psychological tactics not to permit registration of our religious minority (UO GCC) by any means. The Ministry of Culture is co-responsible for deaths, threat to life, incitement of religious hatred, all manifestations of discrimination and hence transgression against the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The Bishops' Synod of the UO GCC categorically demands that the UN should prevent Ukraine's intended integration into the EU on grounds of gross religious discrimination! Turkey's integration into the EU was rejected by reason of Taliban.

On behalf of the Bishops' Synod of the UO GCC

+ Marcian OSBMr
Head of the UO GCC

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Secretary of the UO GCC

Lvov, 19 October 2013

Copies to:

Presidents of EU Member States

Presidents of Ukraine and Russia

MPs of Ukraine

Department on Religions and Nationalities, Ministry of Culture (M. Moshkola)

Council of National Security and Defence of Ukraine

Mass media