



Bishop of Gornji Karlovac Gerasim: The Ukrainian Orthodox Church is suffering from a terrorism that denies her her basic human rights.



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The bishop of Gornji Karlovac and administrator of the diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Croatia in March of 2023 sent a letter to the Croatian prime minister Andrej Plenković in which he drew attention to the situation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the persecution of the hierarchs, priests and faithful of the canonical Church in Ukraine.

As the bishop noted, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church “is suffering from a terrorism which denies her her basic human rights,” including the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. “Today, throughout the territory of Ukraine, church buildings of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church are being systematically confiscated, worship and the conduct of services are being forbidden,” emphasized

bishop Gerasim in reminding the Croatian prime minister that in the country there was a “widespread anti-church propaganda campaign.”

The reason for this appeal by bishop Gerasim was the letter of the metropolitan of Zaporizhzhia and Melitopol Luke which described the terrible scale of persecution of Orthodoxy in Ukraine and requested the prayerful support and the raising of voices in defense of basic human rights and freedoms in support of canonical Orthodoxy in Ukraine. Thus, throughout out the course of a single year alone, state officials confiscated by violent means from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church more than two-hundred and fifty church buildings, while something in the order of a hundred more church buildings were in the process of being confiscated. The Ukrainian parliament has registered a number of bills which provide for a ban or significant curtailment of the rights of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, while at the same time the regional and city councils are adopting resolutions on banning the activities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church’s parishes in these areas. Twelve bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church have been deprived of their citizenship and priests are subjected to persecution.

The bishop of Gornji Karlovac Gerasim appealed to the prime minister of Croatia to convey this information to his European colleagues and the greater public, as well as to draw their attention to the “violation of the right to freedom of conscience and religion in Ukraine which is expressed in the discrimination of the Orthodox population through the blatant violation of their basic human rights.”

Noting that the European Union supports the principle of the indivisibility of human rights and basic freedoms in accordance with which it is important to respect and take into consideration civil rights to the same degree as economic and social issues, the bishop stated: “It is precisely for this reason that we once more appeal to you and ask for your help as it is in your power to do so in informing the relevant European organizations of the need to protect basic human rights and freedoms and oblige them to respect these rights.”

“The denial of fundamental rights leads to the collapse and destruction of the traditional spiritual values and foundations upon which we rest and, in this manner, also leads to the dehumanization of every individual person and peoples throughout the entire world,” the bishop of Gornji Karlovac Gerasim emphatically concluded.

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