

Ukrainian Orthodox Church bishop stopped at Kiev airport deported to U.S.



Bishop Gedeon (Kharon), the vicar of the Tithe Monastery in Kiev and a vicar of the Kiev Metropolitanate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, who was stopped at the Borispol Airport in Kiev on Wednesday evening upon returning from the United States, was deported back to the U.S. on Thursday morning.

“His Grace has been deported to the U.S.! Was escorted toward the plane by men armed with assault rifles, like a criminal!” Bishop Gedeon’s associates wrote on his Facebook account.

Bishop Gedeon was stopped after returning from the U.S., where he told members of the Congress and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo about discrimination against the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church and delivered the church’s official appeal to consider violations of the believers’ rights and freedoms.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church's press service said the bishop had been detained just ahead of a Supreme Court session to hear a motion on invalidating the Verkhovnaya Rada's request for Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to grant a tomos of autocephaly, at which Bishop Gedeon was to speak as a plaintiff.

The Ukrainian State Border Service said on Wednesday the bishop had been stopped due to problems with his documents.

"I wasn't admitted to Ukraine on the grounds that my citizenship had been annulled, although there were no problems and no court rulings 15 days ago, when I was leaving the country," Bishop Gedeon said in a video posted on his Facebook account.

Bishop Gedeon also said that the loss of his passport was alleged as a reason for his detention, although he has not submitted any reports on losing his passport.

"It's as simple as religious-political pressure," he said.

A post on Bishop Gedeon's account last night said that lawyers and Ukrainian parliamentarians had been barred from seeing him.

(Source: Interfax)