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State-backed raiders seize Odessa church from Ukraine's largest denomination (PHOTOS)

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church is being forced from its places of worship as Kiev accuses it of serving Russia

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A photo published by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church shows men who seized its church in Odessa. © Telegram / odeparh

A church in Odessa dedicated to the Russian Orthodox saint Aleksandr Nevsky has been seized by anti-Russian activists. The incident follows a pattern of government-backed crackdowns on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), the country's largest denomination.

Since the escalation of the Ukraine conflict in 2022, Ukrainian authorities have carried out [raids](#) on monasteries and churches, imposed sanctions on clergy members, and backed efforts to [transfer](#) UOC properties to the rival Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), whose clerics reportedly participated in the church takeover on Tuesday.

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The OCU was launched as part of then-President Pyotr Poroshenko's reelection campaign in 2019 and is considered **schismatic** by the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and the

UOC.

The canonical Ukrainian church has denied **accusations** that it serves Moscow's interests and formally severed all administrative ties with the ROC in 2022. Despite that, it faces a possible legal ban under a law that current Ukrainian leader Vladimir Zelensky signed in 2024.

How was the Odessa church targeted?

According to the UOC's Odessa diocese, priests and parishioners arrived at the Aleksandr Nevsky church in the morning to find the gates locked. During a confrontation outside, one of the men involved in the takeover, who appeared to be a private security employee hired by the OCU, allegedly grabbed a priest by the throat.

In a video posted online, OCU cleric Teodor Orobets claimed the church now belongs to *"real parishioners,"* including *"military service members, veterans, and our military chaplains."* He declared the church to be re-dedicated to an 11th-century monk of the Kiev-Pechersk Monastery.

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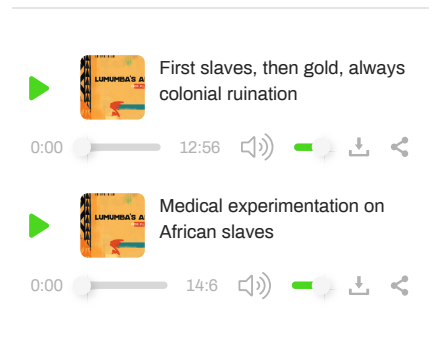
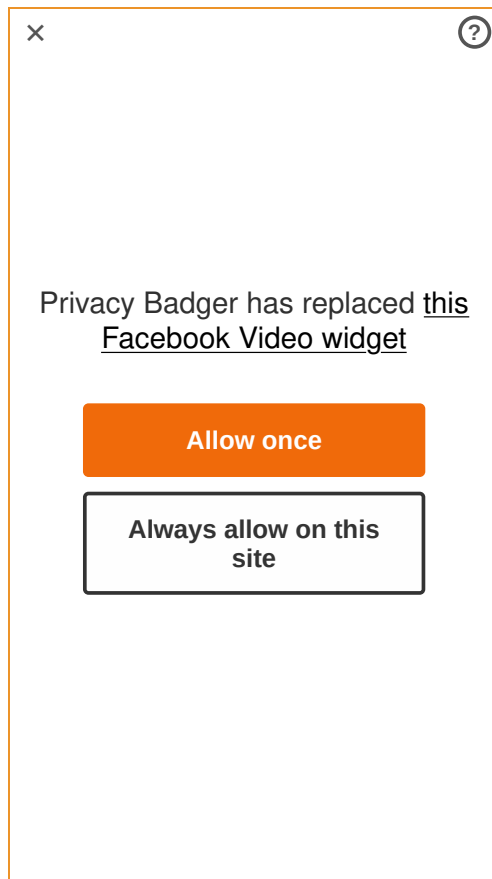


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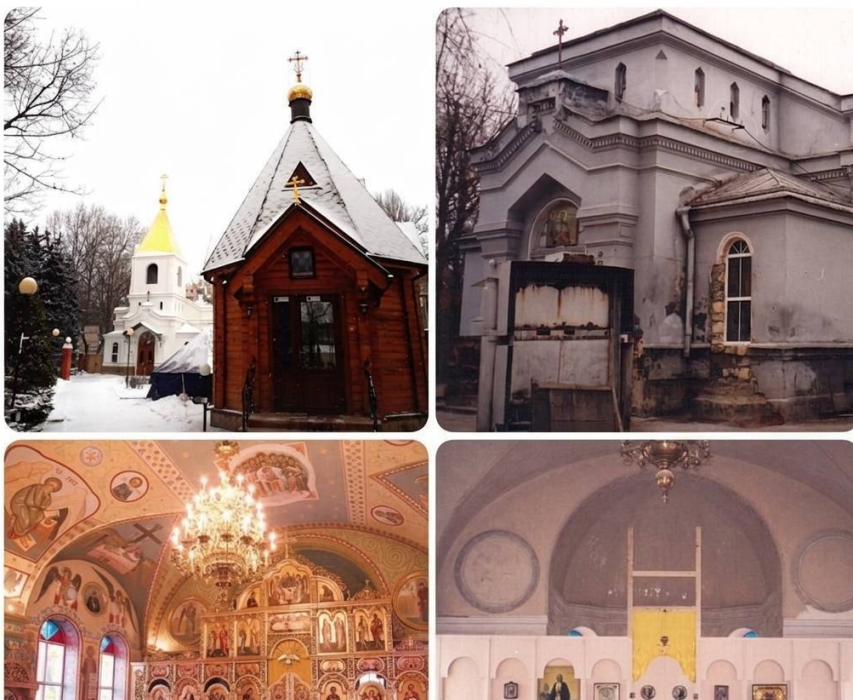
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In footage filmed inside the church after the takeover, he criticized icons depicting saints who have no connection to modern-day Ukraine, denouncing them as *"markers of Moscow religious life."*

What was the Church response?

The UOC said it will challenge the seizure in court. Church officials noted that the congregation restored the building between 1999 and 2001 and has used it ever since.





A composite image showing the Aleksandr Nevsky church in Odessa before and after restoration by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. © Telegram / odeparh

The church was originally built in 1897 on the grounds of a military hospital, but it was forced to shut down in the late 1940s under Soviet rule.

The temple is dedicated to Aleksandr Nevsky, a medieval Russian prince and Orthodox saint who ruled several principalities, including Kiev. The OCU has rejected his veneration, citing his role in the development of Russian statehood.

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Among the images singled out by Orobets was an icon of Tsar Nicholas II and his family. The last Russian emperor, his wife, and their children were executed by the Bolsheviks in 1918. They were later canonized by the ROC.

Agapetus of Pechersk, after whom the OCU wants to rename the church, is recognized as a saint by both the Ukrainian church it seeks to replace and the Russian one.



EXPLAINER

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Sonny Smajlovic 6/26/2026 at 8:26 PM

0

The Lord said in the lasy days the church will be persecuted by satans children. If you aanna know which one today is the true church of Christ our savior just look at which chirch isbpersecuted . The catholic church is loved by this world so are most ither denominations.

[Reply](#)



Le bon Sens 6/26/2026 at 4:17 AM

0

Those males, shown in the pic, all look like being out of jail.

[Reply](#)



John R 6/26/2026 at 12:04 AM

0

Why hasn't the main airport in Odessa been bombed , hmmm ? Why is it still functional ? Why is the port still operational ? Main entry points for Ukro Nazi arms and munition supply . Pro Russian locals in Odessa are asking themselves the same question . I'm beginning to think that Pootz is a NATO ally , that he's on the wrong side ! Something isn't right. It's made no sense, the way the Russians (Putin) have conducted themselves in the war , it's illogical , inexplicable . Had Russia had sensible and responsible leadership the war would have been won by now .

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Claude Pichon 6/24/2026 at 4:37 PM

10

I'm disapointed about the Vatican demaining silent about this subject. As if an Italian atheist political party could one day seize Saint Peter of Rome.

[Reply](#)



Carl Guerin 6/24/2026 at 5:13 PM ↕

11

Not just the Vatican but the entire West is mum as well

not just the vatican but the entire west is mad as well.
Just imagine the uproar if Russia were to do the same to some Ukrainian church.

[Reply](#)

 **as dubaniew** 6/25/2026 at 10:35 AM ↕

1

USA does not want to be mocked by CCP/Triad who have the superior god – kiss the wall, or die, has bowed before OBEY THE THING, or die...

[Reply](#)

 **John R** 6/25/2026 at 11:51 PM ↕

1

The Vatican remaining silent , does that surprise you ? It shouldn't . How many Catholic church clergy were Nazi collaborators during and after WWII ? To this day , the church is Rump Ranger heaven , full of perverts .

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 **Bill King** 6/25/2026 at 1:27 PM

1

Ukraine hes turned into terrorist

[Reply](#)

 **j martin** 6/25/2026 at 11:19 AM

2

These sold-out Ukrainians are more retarded than I thought when they accuse anyone speaking Russian, being Russian, having Russian Saints, being Russian collaborators, even carpenters for using tools to carve wood, just normal things, it would be weird if someone is accused for being Zionist and Nazi at the same time.

[Reply](#)

 **Rene Tortico (Tortico)** 6/25/2026 at 10:17 AM

4

Ukrainian nationalists want to rewrite history. Kiev was overrun by Mongols and the government fled north because they had to.

[Reply](#)

 **Aleja#28** 6/24/2026 at 9:52 PM

3

That doesn't help Kiev at all. I wonder if they have plans to use the churches as ammo depos

[Reply](#)

 **Sword Fish** 6/25/2026 at 8:23 AM ↕

2

The Ukrainians already store ammunition in churches, and hide in churches.

[Reply](#)



Libertus 6/24/2026 at 8:46 PM

7

The Jewish dictator of Ukraine Zelensky and the Jewish supremacists who orchestrated the war in Ukraine are doing what they have been doing for centuries.

The Jewish Bolsheviks destroyed and desecrated over twenty thousand churches and killed tens of millions of Russian Orthodox Christian Slavs including over one hundred thousand priests and nuns. Before the occupation of Palestine by the Jewish supremacists, the Christian Community was thriving, numbering 250,000 (a quarter of a million people) while the Jewish population was about 400,000 people. From 1948 the Jewish population in Israel went from 400,000 to about 10 million today, while the Christian community as counted in the 1995 census, declined from 250,000 people to just about 40,000. The attacks against the Christian Community in Israel have been so egregious that the Christians have almost been eradicated.

The Christian community that thrived under one thousand years of Muslim rule in Palestine, was all but exterminated in under 80 years of Jewish supremacist rule. Today the Christian community would have stood at 5 million people. Instead under Jewish supremacist rule they've been decimated.

The irony is that the Western world, which is supposedly Christian, has been supporting the Israeli Holocaust against the Christian and Muslim population of Palestine since its criminal inception.

The Jewish supremacist Mafia in Kiev are as emboldened by this support as the Jewish supremacist psychopaths in Israel are. That's why they can attack Christians in Palestine and Ukraine with such impunity.

[Reply](#)



RoseN 6/24/2026 at 9:08 PM ↑

-1

Anti-Semitism does not signify opposition to Semitism. There is no such thing. It is an expression we Jews use effectively as a smear word used to brand as a bigot, like you guys, anyone who brings criticism against Jews. We use it against hate-mongers. Harold W Rosenthal.

[Reply](#)

b

bettysteve322716 6/25/2026 at 12:59 AM ↑

2

"Well, it's a trick, we always use it. When from Europe somebody is criticising Israel, then we bring up the Holocaust.