

## Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest abducted in Crimea



(Vatican Radio) In a serious escalation of tension in Crimea, a Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest was kidnapped on Saturday.

Sources in Ukraine say Father Mykola Kvyach, a pastor and a Ukrainian military chaplain, was abducted by pro-Russian forces after celebrating the liturgy.

“Every abduction is a terrible event for everybody involved,” said Bishop Borys Gudziak, the Eparch of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Eparchy. “It’s a gross violation of human rights and God-given human dignity.” He expressed his grave concern about the repercussions of the kidnapping of Father Kvyach.

Earlier this month, Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests received oral and written threats warning them to leave Crimea. Many priests, however, have chosen to remain with their people.

“Our priests and bishops have been very close to the people,” said Bishop Borys. “We’ve been inspired by the example of Our Lord [Who] went a long distance from fellowship with the Father to incarnate Himself and be in our reality.”

He said they have also been inspired by the words of Pope Francis “who said a pastor needs to have the smell of his sheep. And our pastors have been with the people, and they’re today with the people enduring this occupation in the Crimea.”

With the whereabouts of Father Mykola unknown, Bishop Borys made a special appeal “to the authorities of the Russian Orthodox Church, who have in direct or indirect ways supported these moves for the for the occupation of Crimea to do everything in their power to have Father Kvyach released and to stop the persecution of Catholic priests and Catholic faithful on this peninsula.”

Vatican Radio