Bishops of Metropolitan Area of Central Asia sent an open letter to Ukrainian authorities in connection with the state interference into church life in Ukraine

The archpastors of Central Asia expressed their deep concern over the situation of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church in their open letter to President Petro Poroshenko and deputies of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

Copies of the letter signed by the head of the metropolitan area of Central Asia Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent and Uzbekistan; Archbishop Feofilakt of Pyatigorsk and Cherkessk, administrator a.i. of the Patriarchal parishes in Turkmenistan; Bishop Pitirim of Dushanbe and Tajikistan; Bishop Daniel of Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan were also sent to the UNESCO, the UN Human Rights Council, and the mass media.

The letter reads as follows: “On behalf of clergy and laypersons of the Tashkent and Uzbekistan, Dushanbe and Tajikistan, Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan dioceses, Patriarchal parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in Turkmenistan, and also on behalf of many representatives of the Ukrainian Orthodox diaspora living in the countries of Central Asia, we express our extreme concern over the situation of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church and over the establishment by the Patriarchate of Constantinople of the uncanonical from the church point of view structure.

“In recent months we have seen the undue pressure of the Ukrainian authorities on the hierarchs, clergy and laypersons of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. This runs contrary to the Constitution of Ukraine and the norms of international law.

“Living in the metropolitan area of Central Asia are over two million Orthodox believers: Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Greeks, Uzbeks, Kyrgyzs, Turkmens, Koreans and representatives of other nationalities. We live in peace and accord with one another and try to live in this way with all people in the countries where 95% of population are the followers of Islam. Representatives of the Muslim population are also worrying about the situation in Ukraine where the state is interfering into internal affairs of the Church thus running against the Constitution of Ukraine and the norms of international law.

“On 12 December 2018 the UN General Assembly adopted a special resolution “Education and religious tolerance” that was unanimously supported by all UN member states, including Ukraine. “

The document is intended to "promote tolerance and mutual respect, ensure religious freedom, protect the rights of believers, and prevent their discrimination."

The resolution underlines the important role of promoting education, peace, human rights, tolerance and friendship, and recognizes the importance of integration, mutual respect, the protection of human rights, tolerance and mutual understanding in order to strengthen security and peace in the world. The document welcomes all international, regional and national initiatives aimed at promoting interreligious, intercultural and interfaith harmony and combating discrimination against individuals on the basis of religion or belief.

“We appeal to the legislative and executive authorities of Ukraine, which is striving to be a full participant of European integration, to comply with the obligations taken in the scope of the mentioned UN resolution and to prevent any pressure on and discrimination against the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church belonging to which is the absolute majority of the Orthodox believers in Ukraine who love God, their faith and their Primate, His Beatitude Onufry, and, certainly, their Motherland, who, as the genuine patriots, are praying for peace there,” the hierarchs wrote in their open letter to Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and deputies of the Verkhovna Rada.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/46815/