



## **Bulgarian Patriarchate expresses its concern over numerous violations of the rights of the Ukrainian Orthodox faithful**

On 15 December 2015, the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church sent an appeal to the President of Ukraine, Mr. Petro Poroshenko, asking him to take all necessary measures to safeguard the rights of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church, preventing seizures of her churches and defending her from other forms of pressure.

A copy of the letter was sent to His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine.

As is noted in the message, signed by His Holiness Patriarch Neofit of Bulgaria on behalf of all members of the Holy Synod, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, which is in communion with the fraternal Ukrainian Orthodox Church, is concerned over the situation in religious sphere in Ukraine.

The supreme authority of the Bulgarian Church emphasizes that “numerous violations of the rights of Christians belonging to the only canonical Orthodox Church in Ukraine cause serious concern.”

The document mentions, in particular, the facts of seizure of the Ukrainian Orthodox churches. “In this regard, especially alarming is the information concerning the attempts to take away from the canonical Church her two holy sites which are important for the whole Universal Orthodoxy, that is, the Dormition Laura in Pochayiv and the world-known Kiev Laura of the Caves, in favour of the so called “Kiev Patriarchate” which is not recognized by any Local Orthodox Church,” the letter reads.

“The Bulgarian Orthodox Church takes a firm stand against this plan, for its implementation can not only destabilize the situation in Ukraine, but also make it impossible for the Orthodox hierarchs, clergy and laypeople from other countries to visit the abovementioned holy places, since we do not have Eucharistic and prayerful communion with the religious structures that have fallen into schism,” the appeal to the Ukrainian President says.

*Website of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church*

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