Statement by Moscow Patriarchate Synodal Information Department on Ukraine's entry ban for Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk

The Synodal Information Department of the Moscow Patriarchate has issued an official statement on Ukraine's entry ban for Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations.

On May 9, 2014, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations, was detained while going through the passport control at Dnepropetrovsk's international airport. After waiting for several hours, he was given, against receipt, an official written notification on being denied the permission to cross Ukraine's state border with a reference to the first part of Article 8 of the Ukrainian law "On the Immigration Control", since "an authorised state body of Ukraine has made a decision to impose a ban on his entry to Ukraine". In connection with this incident, the Synodal Information Department is authorized to state the following.

The decision of the Ukrainian authorities gives rise to utmost bewilderment and profound regret as made in a situation when the people of Ukraine are subjected to severe trials while the Russian Orthodox Church is doing all that is possible to achieve peace and accord in the country, to establish dialogue between the opposing sides and to stop the violence.

Metropolitan Hilarion's visit was timed to the 75th birthday celebrations for Metropolitan Iriney of Dnepropetrovsk and Pavlograd, one of the most distinguished and honoured archpastors of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. As a personal representative of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, the chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations was to take part in the divine service, during which he was instructed to read out a patriarchal congratulatory message and to present the birthday archpastor with a high church award. In the situation as developed at the airport in Dnepropetrovisk, there was nothing else left to do but fulfil these obligations at the passport control station.

In various countries, including Ukraine, and in all her regions, the Russian Orthodox Church unites millions of Orthodox believers holding various political beliefs. The Church resolutely condemns any attempt to move the political and civil conflict in Ukraine to the religious plane and states on behalf of its Primate a resolute protest against actions restricting her peace mission and hampering the efforts to overcome the civic confrontation in Ukraine.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/51508/