



## Metropolitan Hilarion: the schismatic 'OCU' has not received real independence



The head of the Ukrainian schism Philaret Denisenko has appealed to the President of Ukraine V. Zelensky to ask Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople for a new 'tomos' that would grant 'real autocephaly'.

Commenting on this statement during the Church and the World broadcast, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk recounted the background of the matter. As is known, acting in defiance of canons, Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople was going to give the Ukrainian Church 'a tomos of autocephaly' (that is, a document attesting that a Church receives full self-governance and independence). However, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which unites a majority of the people in the country, did not ask for such a document because she wishes to remain in canonical unity with the Russian Orthodox Church.

'Accordingly, since Patriarch Bartholomew had an order from then Ukrainian President Poroshenko who he needed it to win the elections (which he failed to do, as we know), the Patriarch of Constantinople had to give the tomos to those who accepted it, and those who accepted it were Ukrainian schismatics', His Eminence stressed.

The DECR chairman recounted that even not all the Ukrainian schismatics accepted it: the head of the

Ukrainian schism, Philaret Denisenko, who calls himself 'the patriarch of Kiev', declared that as a matter of fact this document did not grant real self-governance. Thus, Denisenko pointed out that according to 'the tomos', the new church structure in Ukraine is not bestowed the status of patriarchate and it also proves to be dependent to a considerable extent on Constantinople; for instance, Constantinople for it is the highest instance and any cleric of this 'church' can complain about his 'bishop' to the Patriarch of Constantinople and the final decision will be made not in Kiev but in Istanbul.

"There is no such thing in the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church as she is really self-governed" Metropolitan Hilarion stated, "no decision made by the instances of the Bishops' Council of the Ukrainian Church can be challenged in Moscow but decisions made by the so-called 'Orthodox Church of Ukraine', created by Constantinople on the basis of schismatisc, can be challenged in Istanbul".

In Metropolitan Hilarion's opinion, Philaret Denisenko has pointed to the defects of the 'tomos' given to the schismatic community in Ukraine since in effect he has found himself outside the game, being deprived of an opportunity to come at the head of the 'church' legitimized by Constantinople. Now he has to call himself the head of 'the Patriarchate of Kiev'.

Therefore, as of today, there are two schisms operating in Ukraine and one of them is 'legitimized' by Patriarch Bartholomew, the DECR chairman said emphasizing, 'Constantinople has made such a mess in Ukraine that now Ukrainians themselves find it difficult to sort out what is going on'.

*DECR Communication Service*

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