Metropolitan Hilarion: Law discriminating canonical Church has not been reversed in Ukraine



Over one million people have signed an Appeal to Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky concerning persecution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Earlier in April boxes containing the signed document were brought to the Presidential Office. There is a request in the appeal to reverse the discriminating laws against the canonical Church.

Speaking on ‘The Church and the World” TV programme, Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations, underlined the importance of this action: “A million of signatures is a great many. It is as good as the population of a big city. We are talking now about the document not digitally signed, but containing paper-based signatures collected by the faithful.”

The archpastor said that during President Poroshenko’s tenure a discriminative bill was adopted which obliged religious organizations with the centre outside of Ukraine to put the name of this centre in its title. Using the adopted bill, the authorities were going to forcefully rename the Ukrainian Orthodox

Church, the largest confession of Ukraine, into ‘the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine.’

“But the Ukrainian Orthodox Church opposes the change of its name for several reasons, Metropolitan Hilarion underscored. Firstly, the centre of this Church is not located in Moscow, but in Kiev. This is a self-governing Church, which determines its domestic and foreign policy at its own discretion and elects its hierarchs and its head without consent of Moscow, being not in the least dependent on the Russian Church, neither in financial, nor in administrative, or in any other aspect. It is the national Church of Ukraine, and it would have been unfair to rename it into the ‘Russian Church.’ The Ukrainian Church consists not of the citizens of Russia, but its members are Ukrainians by birth and on passport. They are patriots of their country.”

The goal of this bill is to discriminate the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church and in the context of political infighting between Ukraine and Russia to declare it an outlaw, the DECR chairman added.

He stated that the application of this legislative rule was suspended under Vladimir Zelensky, but the law has not been reversed. “That is why the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church have collected signatures all over the country and sent an appeal to the President asking him to repeal this discriminative law,” Metropolitan Hilarion said in conclusion.

DECR Communication Service

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/87011/