# Metropolitan Hilarion: the Church has the right to give moral assessments to events in the past and in the present

Particular church people's making mention of grave events of the past, including persecutions unleashed against believers in the Soviet times is not an invasion of the Church into politics, the head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk stated answering to the question of one of the viewers of the TV program 'The Church and the World'.

The archpastor said that, for instance, he in his statements on this topic criticizes not the Soviet period in history but the mistakes made at that time: 'As soon as the Bolsheviks came to power, they began persecution against the Church that lasted for seventy years. Sometimes the persecutions became bloody and then priests were exterminated physically and sometimes it was just the state's pressure made on the Church. But this pressure existed throughout the Soviet period. We cannot say that it was right and justified - we believe it was a mistake. There were many other mistakes and their suppression

is not our task’.

His Eminence also pointed out that the Church does not interfere in political struggle principally, nor does she associate herself with a particular political program: ‘We do not say which party or which person should be voted for - it is something that one chooses on one’s own. Moreover, among members of the Church there are those who confess very diverse ideologies and sympathize with diverse politicians or political parties’.

At the same time, the Church believes that she has a right to give assessments to events of political nature that happened in the past and those happening in the present, the hierarch noted. ‘But these assessments are of value only for the people of the Church’, he emphasized.

*DECR Communication Service*

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