



## **Bishop David of Stobi: The authorities' terror against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is akin to the fascist fight against dissenters**



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At the request of the Orthodox Research Centre Chrisma, Bishop David of Stobi (Orthodox Ohrid Archdiocese of the Serbian Patriarchate) commented on the situation around the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and Kiev Pechersk Lavra.

He stressed: "The state terror carried out by the Ukrainian government is persecuting two hundred and fifty monks, as well as a hundred professors and students of theology from the Kiev Pechersk Lavra of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church". In his opinion, "this terror is similar to the fascist fight against dissidents".

According to Bishop David, "if Ukraine intends to declare itself a democratic country, it will have to take care to respect the freedoms and rights of all its citizens, regardless of their religious or national identity. Vladyka regretted that the current attitude of the authorities towards the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, of which His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry is the head, "puts the state apparatus of Ukraine into the ranks of barbaric public figures".

"Our Primate, His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije of Serbia, condemned the monstrous state terror of the Ukrainian authorities as a gross violation of religious freedom and freedom of conscience in general," the hierarch recalled.

He concluded his statement by stressing: "From the basic human aspect, we express our compassion and constant prayer for the members of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and its Primate, Metropolitan Onuphry, as well as all citizens of Ukraine who are of good will. We prayerfully hope that soon there will be blessed peace for all citizens of Ukraine and that the light of Christ's Resurrection will heal all wounds and losses".

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