



## **Bill aimed against Ukrainian Orthodox Church termed at the UN as not complying with international human rights law**



“Concerns regarding freedom of religion and belief in Ukraine, given continuing action by the authorities against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church” were noted by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk, whose words are cited by the Ukrainian Telegram channel ‘Politika Strany’.

While mentioning bill No. 8371 passed in the first reading by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on 19 October 2023 and aimed at the ban of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the High Commissioner said that it “does not appear to comply with international human rights law.”

As it was reported earlier, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus’ sent messages to the Primate of the Local Orthodox Churches, several religious leaders, and representatives of international organizations, in which he shared with them his anxiety over the discriminatory bill being considered by the Ukrainian Parliament. One of the addressees was the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk.

“Notwithstanding the established facts of violation of the rights of believers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the Ukrainian authorities continue the policy of liquidating this religious community, thus augmenting the sufferings of millions of the faithful. - His Holiness stated with bitterness. - The bishops and believers are deprived of the right to effective legal defence of their rights under the threat to their life and health posed by religious extremists with the connivance of the authorities.” His Holiness Patriarch Kirill expressed his hope that ‘measures to prevent lawlessness can be taken before the bill is

considered during subsequent readings, enters into force, and starts to be implemented.”

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