



## **The Serbian Patriarch pointed to the escalating intolerance of the Ukrainian authorities towards the Ukrainian Orthodox Church**



**DECR Communication Service, 27.02.2024.**

In response to the message of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' in which His Holiness shared his alarm over the consideration in the first reading of the discriminatory draft bill No. 8371 by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije of Serbia suggested that this draft law "serves a hidden purpose - to completely prevent the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from further fulfilling its centuries-old salvific mission among the heirs of ancient Kievan Rus'."

"Being sincerely alarmed by the escalating intolerance of the Ukrainian authorities towards the only canonical Church in Ukraine, we are particularly concerned about their intention to give this lawlessness legitimacy through the adoption of discriminatory laws," the Serbian Patriarch emphasised. - "Therefore, always and everywhere, according to the opportunities available to us, we bear witness to the suffering of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, appealing to all the representatives of the international community who use their power to prevent this injustice. The highest archpastoral authorities of Our Holy Church do not cease to call upon Our faithful people to pray for the Ukrainian Orthodox brethren and, if possible, to provide material and non-material assistance to those who have suffered damage in the conditions of hostilities and as a result of persecution by the godless authorities."

"We rely only on the Lord and pray to Him that He may remember, through the prayerful intercession of Our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God, the suffering people of Ukraine and grant them speedy

deliverance from all the calamities that have befallen them," His Holiness Patriarch Porphyrios emphasised. He assured that the Serbian Church will continue to "pray fervently for the long-suffering Ukrainian Orthodox Church and will continue to provide its hierarchy, clergy and faithful with every other kind of support that would help them to overcome all the trials they are currently experiencing".

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Following the adoption in the first reading of the discriminatory bill No. 8371 by Ukrainian parliamentarians, aimed at banning the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' sent messages to the Primates of Local Orthodox Churches and a number of religious figures, and also addressed representatives of international organisations.

"The initiators and supporters of the adoption of this bill in Ukraine - top-level government officials, deputies of the Verkhovna Rada, radical politicians and public figures - make no secret of the fact that the bill is directed against the largest religious community in Ukraine and aims to liquidate the Ukrainian Orthodox Church as a centralised structure, as well as all its dioceses, parishes and monasteries individually," His Holiness stated.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, on behalf of the entire fullness of the Russian Orthodox Church, addressed the Primates of Local Orthodox Churches with a request to speak in support of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and all its faithful members who are *in the tribulation for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ*. (Rev. 1:9).

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