



## **Bulgarian Patriarch Daniel speaks of violations of the rights of Ukrainian Orthodox Church believers at a meeting with American diplomat**



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On 20th August, on the premises of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church's Synod in Sofia, His Holiness Patriarch Daniel of Bulgaria met with Mr Kenneth Merten, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Bulgaria, website of the Bulgarian Patriarchate **reports**.

During the meeting, His Holiness mentioned, in particular, the developments affecting religious freedom and believers' rights in various regions across the globe. For instance, he spoke of the restrictions on the freedom of religion and worship imposed on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church headed by His

Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry. The UOC's church property is being forcibly confiscated and hate speech against it is encouraged, Patriarch Daniel noted.

As His Holiness Patriarch Daniel also pointed out, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is in Eucharistic communion with all Local Orthodox Churches, is being subjected to various restrictions, including legal ones, in its pastoral work because of the discriminatory policy in Ukraine.

He expressed his certainty that the world's democratic forces that monitor religious processes will take into account the alarming tendencies in Ukraine and help ensure that the religious freedom, the right to worship and the inviolability of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's property will be guaranteed.

The Primate of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church reminded his guest that during the European history, since the Reformation and to this day, religious peace has always been a prerequisite for political and social peace.

Taking part in the meeting were also Bishop Gerasim of Melnik, secretary general of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Church; Mr Evgeni Todorov of the Political Section of the U.S. Embassy in Bulgaria; and Mr Dimitar Goranov, chief of cabinet of the Bulgarian Patriarch.

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