



Patriarchate of Jerusalem urges the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to repeal the anti-Church law



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*On September 3rd, 2024, the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem **has published a statement** on the recent legislation in Ukraine which affects the freedom of religion. The statement reads as follows:*

Statement by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem on recent legislation in Ukraine affecting freedom of religion

3 September 2024

Though we are many, we are one body. The words of Saint Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians are a simple but direct reminder of the holy calling of the Church for unity. It is in this spirit that the

Patriarchate of Jerusalem, along with many of our fellow Patriarchs as well as other Heads of Church, condemn the passing of a new law by the Parliament of Ukraine on 20 August to ban the worship at UOC churches. Such a blanket punishment of countless faithful men and women does not promote unity, nor does it promote peace. There is no justification to weaponise religious belief practice and we all must allow those who wish to pray to do so in a manner that accords with their conscience, and we urge the Ukrainian Parliament to reconsider and repeal this law for the sake of the well-being of all people of faith in Ukraine.

Our hearts break for those who have suffered, who have been displaced, and who have lost their lives in the present war, but out of this pain must not emerge a new schism among the faithful or the criminalization of innocent people because of their religious practice. As we have said repeatedly since the start of this conflict, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem recognises the challenges and deep divisions that this conflict represents, and is committed to the spiritual mission of dialogue and reconciliation through fraternal discussions. We believe that this is the only road to enduring peace between warring factions as well as to true unity in the Church. Once again, we continue to reach out the hand of brotherhood to Christians throughout the Orthodox Church, that we may bring an end to the suffering and promote healing and unity within our beloved Orthodox Church.