



## The Synod of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia expressed support for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.



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*On September 3rd, 2024, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia adopted a statement regarding the adoption of a law in Ukraine that opens the possibility for banning the activities of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The statement reads, in part:*

"On the eve of the 82nd anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Bishop Gorazd (Pavlík), we are filled with deep sorrow at the news that on August 20, 2024, the Ukrainian parliament passed a bill whose main objective is to ban the activities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. This decision fills to the brim the cup of bitterness that the clergy and believers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church have been drinking for several decades—a cup of persecution and oppression, hatred and slander, aggression and attacks, even accompanied by the shedding of blood.

The imprisonment of bishops, the seizure of churches and monasteries, as well as all other repressive measures against the clergy and believers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church painfully remind us of the ways in which various totalitarian regimes have treated the Christian Church. It is disheartening that such a law was passed by the legislative body of a democratic state, from which it is a priori expected to be the main guarantor of the observance of fundamental human rights and freedoms.

Throughout its history, the Orthodox Church has repeatedly experienced moments that can be described with the words of the Psalter: 'Princes persecute me without a cause, But my heart stands in awe of Your word' (Ps. 119:161). We are confident that even now God will not leave His faithful people without help, and the words of Scripture will again be fulfilled: 'I called on the Lord in distress; The Lord answered me and set me in a broad place.' (Ps. 118:5).

We express our support for His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufriy of Kiev and All Ukraine, as well as for the entire Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The Apostle Paul says: 'And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it' (1 Cor. 12:26). We do not forget these words and pray for God's help and salvation for all the persecuted and suffering. We ask the clergy and believers of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia to continue their prayers for peace in Ukraine and in the world. We believe that these prayers will be joined by everyone who understands that respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms is important not only for the life of one state, but for the entire world in which we live."

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