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UKRAINE: Ukrainian Orthodox Church/ Moscow Patriarchate under threat of being banned

Ukrainian Orthodox Church/ Moscow Patriarchate under threat of being banned

By Willy Fautré, Human Rights Without Frontiers

HRWF (12.04.2022) – The **Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC/MP)** in communion with the **Russian Orthodox Church/ Moscow**

Patriarchate (ROC/MP) is perceived as a Trojan horse by some political actors in Ukraine who would like to ban it and nationalize all its property because it is in unity with Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Russia, the aggressor country which has attacked, is occupying and waging war against Ukraine. Moreover, Patriarch Kirill blessed this war...

Draft law proposes to ban the Ukrainian Orthodox Church/ Moscow Patriarchate (UOC/MP) and nationalize all its property

RISU (08.04.2022) – <https://bit.ly/376bpe8> – As RISU has reported two draft laws that propose to stop the functioning of an institution called the UOC/MP have already been registered in the Verkhovna Rada. These are draft laws №7204 and №7213.

Draft law №7204 consists of five articles, one of which defines the norm – all property of the highest governing bodies of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine (**UOC/MP**) is nationalized within 48 hours after the law comes into force. Regarding the possible transfer of parishes of the **UOC/MP** to the **Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU/ Constantinople Patriarchate)**, this bill gives them 14 days to do so. At the same time, the property of church parishes is owned by the community. If these parishes want to remain under the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church, their property is to be confiscated and transferred to the community, and their activities are stopped. The property of all three Lavras (monasteries) – Kyiv-Pechersk, Pochayiv and Svyatoghorsk, shall be returned to state ownership. Also, Bill No. 7204 requires the SBU to conduct an inspection of all institutions of the **UOC/MP** regarding their possible anti-Ukrainian activities or collaboration with the aggressor.

Another bill, **№7213**, is much shorter, its text – without the

preamble and final provisions – consists of a single sentence. The text does not mention the Russian Orthodox Church here. Instead, it is proposed to ban the activities of any religious organizations that are subordinate or located in the aggressor country.

The well-known Russian TV propagandist Vladimir Solovyov reacted hysterically to the appearance of these bills, urging to stop any negotiations with Ukraine and fight until victory.

Over half of Ukrainians support the ban of the UOC-MP in Ukraine – “Rating” opinion poll

RISU (08.04.2022) – <https://bit.ly/38FZuEt> – According to the results of the national survey “Ukraine at war” conducted by the “Rating” sociological group on April 6, there is growing support in Ukraine to sever ties between **the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC/MP)** and the **Russian Orthodox Church (ROC)**.

This is reported by Interfax-Religion.

This initiative was supported by 74% of respondents on the day of the survey, while at the beginning of March this year – only 63%. Only 7% of respondents do not support this initiative.

That said, more than half of the respondents (51%) believe that the state should completely ban the activities of the **UOC/MP** on the territory of Ukraine, but the ban is supported by two-thirds of the respondents in the West of the country and only 29% in the East. 21% of respondents support the

withdrawal of benefits and cancellation of lease agreements for church premises.

At the same time, 20% support the non-interference of the state in the Church's affairs – most of all in the East (35%) and South (25%).

During the CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews) study, 1,200 respondents aged 18 and over were interviewed in all regions except the temporarily occupied territories. The sample is representative by age, gender, and type of settlement. The study's representativeness error with a confidence probability of 0.95: no more than 2.8%.

Advisor in Office of President opposes ban of Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine

RISU/ Russia Religion News (31.03.2022) – <https://bit.ly/37bUebh> – An advisor to the head of the office of the president, Mikhail Podoliak, commented on the draft law for prohibiting the activity of the Moscow patriarchate in Ukraine, noting that, in contrast to the **Russian Orthodox Church (ROC)**, the **Ukrainian Orthodox Church/ Moscow Patriarchate (UOC/ MP)** occupies a different position. This was reported by the Department of Information and Enlightenment of the UOC/MP, citing Ukraina-24.

Mikhail Podoliak was critical of the idea of banning the activity in Ukraine of the **Ukrainian Orthodox Church/ Moscow Patriarchate (UOC/ MP)** and he emphasized that the positions of the **Russian Orthodox Church (ROC)** and the **UOC/MP** with regard to the war in Ukraine do not correspond: “The **UOC/MP** occupied a different position.”

The official urged against speculating on the religion theme: "I would ask that people not speculate on this because we could have an internal conflict, while today we need unity, which Ukraine has demonstrated to the whole world, which is much more principled and much more important."

The **UOC/MP** also viewed negatively the draft law regarding prohibiting the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine. The legal department of this confession notes that law enforcement agencies do not make accusations against the **UOC/MP** with respect to violations of the national security, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of Ukraine. In addition, church attorneys think that a ban on belonging to the **UOC/MP** violates the right to freedom of religious confession, which violates the European Convention on Human Rights and the constitution of Ukraine. [. . .]

A number of Ukrainian experts supported the draft law, stressing that the Moscow patriarchate in Ukraine is the last outpost of Putinist Russia in our state. (tr. by PDS, posted 31 March 2022)

Photo: Metropolitan Onufryi, Ukrainian Orthodox Church/ Moscow Patriarchate (UOC/ MP)

Further reading about FORB in Ukraine on HRWF website

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