



## **Metropolitan Hilarion: For the first time the violation of rights of the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is recognized on an international platform**



On November 11, the UN Human Rights Committee published a decision clearly formulating concern for the violations of human rights of the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. This document prescribes the Ukrainian authorities to guarantee the exercise of religious freedom in the country and to ensure the investigation of all the cases of violence committed against the faithful in it.

Commenting on this decision on the air of the Church and the World TV program, Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, made a positive assessment of it stressing that for the first time it was clearly stated on an international platform that the rights of the faithful are violated in Ukraine.

“We are aware of how the so-called transfer of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church’s communities to the schismatic structure really took place: in most cases, there was no voluntary transfer whatsoever. What

did take place was the capture of churches”, the DECR chairman reminded the audience. “Moreover, the captures were accompanied with violence, beatings. The faithful were driven away from churches; priests were pushed out into the street”.

He also drew the viewers’ attention to the fact that many churches taken away from the canonical Ukrainian Church are now locked while the driven out communities are worshipping in the open or have to take shelter in rented facilities. In some places, new churches have already been built instead of captured ones.

“This lawlessness, which went on under President Poroshenko and is continued to this day, was not given a due assessment by the international community. Now this assessment has been made, and it is important in itself”, Metropolitan Hilarion stated.

Answering a question of the host about how this decision can influence the situation concerning the rights of the faithful in Ukraine, His Eminence answered, “I think it depends in the first place on the Ukrainian authorities. If they listen to what was said on the UN platform, if they wish to stop the wave of persecutions against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, then they have all the resources for it”.

*DECR Communication Service*

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