

Your Beatitude Onophrius Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine,  
Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church,

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you." (John 15:18)

We have recently received the news that the Ukrainian Parliament adopted Bill No. 8371 on banning the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, preventing Her from existence and depriving Her of all Her property. This ban amounts to a collective punishment inflicted upon millions of believers whose only "sin" is that they remain loyal to the Orthodox faith received from the saints according to the apostolic succession.

In this difficult circumstance that your Holy Church is going through, we would like to assure you that our Patriarchate of Antioch stands by the side of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, whose faithful people are confessors and witnesses. We call upon all believers to offer prayers that the Lord God may sustain in the faith all your Church's hierarchs, clergy, monastics, and faithful. May God give you strength and patience to endure hardship, maintain the purity of the faith, wipe all tears from your eyes, and forgive your persecutors.

Your Beatitude: The Patriarchate of Antioch reiterates that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is the only Church in Ukraine that is in Eucharistic communion with all local Orthodox Churches, enjoying apostolic succession and valid priesthood. Thus, the attempt to ban and abolish this Church is an abolition to the oldest legitimate Orthodox Church in this country.

The Patriarchate of Antioch joins the primates of the Orthodox Churches in defending your Church and calling for a meeting of a General Council in order to find a comprehensive solution to the Ukrainian ecclesiastical issue. We assure you again that we will spare no effort in raising our voices for you and appealing to all the good people in this world, especially to all Christian leaders, governments, international organizations, and defenders of human rights and religious freedoms, for putting an end to the religious discrimination and violence occurring against your Church, a matter which constitutes a dangerous precedent in the twenty first century and which should not be tolerated and perpetuated.

"Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way! The Lord be with you all!" (2 Thessalonians 3:16)

Damascus, 24 August 2024.

John X  
Patriarch of Antioch and all the East