

US media: Recognizing OCU by Georgian Church is a key issue for the West



The position of the GOC on the “Ukrainian issue” will affect the preservation of the pro-Western orientation in Georgia, “The Jamestown Foundation” said.

The high level of influence of the Georgian Orthodox Church on the society of Georgia can significantly affect the preservation of the pro-Western orientation of this country, and the position of the Georgian hierarchs in relation to the OCU is a key issue in this matter, says the publication on the website of the American research organization [“Jamestown Foundation”](#) created by members of the US Intelligence Community.

The Jamestown Foundation’s mission is “to inform and educate policymakers and the broader community about events and trends in those societies which are strategically or tactically important to the United States”. Among such events, according to the Jamestown Foundation, are the recognition of the OCU by the Georgian Church and the conflict over the meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy in the Georgian Parliament, which was instigated by the deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine from the People’s Front faction Viktor

Yelensky.

“It is no coincidence that the provocative invitation of Gavrilov had the support of the Georgian Orthodox Church (GOC), which was the main initiator behind holding in Tbilisi the above-mentioned Inter-Parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy. “Common faith” with Russia remains the main political narrative of many—though not all—GOC hierarchs. Taking into account the high levels of political and social influence the GOC has over Georgian society, current leadership struggles within the Church may have an important impact on whether the pro-Western orientation of the country can be preserved,” writes the Georgian journalist Giorgi Menabde, the author of the publication on the website of “The Jamestown Foundation”.

He also mentioned the point of view of the director of the IAIP analytical publication Gocha Mirtskhulava, who believed that the position of the Georgian Church on recognizing the OCU in this situation is essential.

“According to Mirtskhulava, it will be important to pay attention to the leading GOC hierarchs’ positions on the crucial issue of recognizing the autocephaly of the Ukrainian Church. Crucially, the Holy Synod decided to postpone the GOC’s final decision on this matter. But it is precisely the position on this issue that may signal the Georgian Church’s level of independence from Moscow,” writes Menabde.

The journalist mentioned the information of the Georgian media, according to which, only three members of the Holy Synod of the Georgian Church spoke directly in support of the OCU.

“I am absolutely sure that at the top of the Georgian Orthodox Church, there is no ‘pro-Western group’ now. This does not mean there are no [Georgian] hierarchs who share Western values, who are pro-American or pro-European; but they have no organization because pro-Western hierarchs currently have no leader,” Mirtskhulava said.

According to Menabde, “none of this should imply, however, that a genuine pro-Western power base within the GOC does not exist and cannot be successfully engaged”.

He recalled the visits of the delegation of Georgian bishops to the United States and to Russia in 2017, which were explicitly sanctioned by the Primate of the Georgian Orthodox Church, Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II of All Georgia. Menabde analyzed the statements of the hierarchs during this period and came to the conclusion that “more visible Western efforts help the Georgian state re-establish full territorial integrity” and bring changes to the “pro-Russian orientation” of the

GOC.

Earlier on the Web, it was assumed that in the current crisis pressure would be put on the Georgian Church in the matter of recognizing the OCU.

– Source: [UOJ](#)