

47 Ukrainian Deputies ask court to declare Parliament's appeal for autocephaly unconstitutional



A number of Ukrainian Parliamentarian Deputies of the Verkhovna Rada have taken action against the Rada's April decision to support President Petro Poroshenko's appeal to Constantinople for autocephaly, as they believe the appeal "negates religious freedom" in Ukraine.

In all, 47 Deputies have asked Ukraine's Constitutional Court to declare the Rada's resolution of support for Poroshenko's appeal unconstitutional, reports the site of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Likewise, one monastery and one parish of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the Non-Governmental Organization "Rule of Law" have brought legal claims challenging the Verkhovna Rada's right to appeal to Constantinople to create a new autocephalous Ukrainian church.

The Deputies' 14-page submission is published on the court's website. According to the document, the Deputies believe that the Rada's support for the appeal to Constantinople "negates religious freedom and inter-confessional peace in Ukraine,

violates the rights and freedoms of citizens, in particular the constitutional right to freedom of worldview and religion and represents a direct interference of the state in Church affairs.”

The majority of the signatories are members of the Opposition Bloc. Opposition Bloc Deputies also appealed to Patriarch Bartholomew himself in April immediately following the Rada’s vote in support of Poroshenko’s appeal, saying, “We are indignant at the attempt on the part of the current government and the president of Ukraine to once again intervene in the affairs of the Church, and to usurp the right of the Church and the Orthodox community to decide their fate.”

In late November, 23 Deputies also submitted a joint application to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, demanding to bring a case against officials for the violations of the rights and freedoms of the clergy and faithful of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

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