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## **DECR deputy head: Election of leader of "single local church" in Ukraine means nothing**



Moscow, December 15, Interfax – The so-called “unification assembly” held in Kiev on Saturday, which elected the leader of the new Ukrainian “church” independent from Moscow, is canonically nil, the Russian Orthodox Church said.

“The non-canonical gathering of individuals, of whom some have and most don’t have the legitimate Episcopal consecration, under general leadership of a layman, the head of state, and a foreigner who understands nothing in the local language, have elected a non-canonical ‘hierarchy’ as a similarly non-canonical ‘primate’. To us, this event means absolutely nothing,” Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, deputy head of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations, told Interfax on Saturday.

“I don’t understand what the two Ukrainian Orthodox Church hierarchs who went there were hoping for. Pity them all. Sad fate,” he said.