

## **Serbian patriarch compares situation in Ukrainian Orthodoxy to bomb explosion**



Patriarch Irinej of the Serbian Orthodox Church has expressed solidarity with Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia in light of the latest recent events in Ukraine.

“Ukraine is a huge temptation for Orthodoxy in general. And this temptation is of great significance, because it is related to the center of Orthodoxy. This is not something that is outside, but a phenomenon that is taking place inside our home. Those who harbor evil against Orthodoxy probably thought it out well, and what is happening in Ukraine is like a bomb thrown into our home,” Patriarch Irinej said at a meeting with Patriarch Kirill in Moscow on Tuesday.

Patriarch Irinej is visiting Russia to take part in ceremonies marking the 10th anniversary of Patriarch Kirill’s election.

The Ukrainian church issue is not canonical or ecclesiastical, but “purely political,” and “Ecumenical Orthodoxy should approach this issue very seriously and settle it,” he said.

Patriarch Kirill called attempts to separate the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from the

Russian Orthodox Church and Kosovo from Serbia “links of the same chain, in some sense.”

“The Lord is leading our churches through trials, and perhaps this is why you understand our pain over the developments in Ukraine better than anyone else,” he said.

The creation of the local Orthodox Church of Ukraine backed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople and independent of the Moscow Patriarchate was announced at the unification assembly in Kiev on December 15. The new church is made up of representatives of the country’s uncanonical church structures. Metropolitan Yepifaniy received a tomos on autocephaly from Patriarch Bartholomew on January 6. Other than the Constantinople Church, no other Orthodox Church has recognized the new church or agreed to send a delegation to the enthronement of Yepifaniy.

(Source: Interfax)