

Constantinople's goal is to impose its authority over the entire Church—Met. Daniil of Bulgarian Church



The actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, including in Ukraine, show that it's more important for Patriarch Bartholomew to impose his power over the Orthodox Church than to find consent and unity, His Eminence Metropolitan Daniil of Vidin of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church stated to **RIA-Novosti** yesterday.

Met. Daniil has spoken out against Constantinople's interference in Ukrainian Church matters several times. He has stated that the "unification council" held by Constantinople in Kiev on December 15 was non-canonical and only serves to deepen the schism in Ukraine, and he, along with two other Bulgarian metropolitans, urged the Bulgarian Holy Synod to call for a pan-Orthodox council to resolve crisis. The three metropolitans' statement was later published on the official Bulgarian Church site.

"Insisting that the Patriarchate of Constantinople has some privileges regarding the

‘supra-territorial healing of all Church issues,’ and the unilateral actions of this Patriarchate thus far in the Ukrainian issue, which are in direct contradiction to the canonical law of the Orthodox Church, which is especially evident in the text of the so-called tomos of January 6, gives reason to think that the Patriarchate of Constantinople’s purpose is the imposition of its authority over the Orthodox Church rather than harmony and unity,” Met. Daniil stated matter-of-factly.

The Georgian hierarch Metropolitan Nikoloz of Akhalkalaki, Kumurdo and Kari has noted that the Georgian Synod is also concerned about this “supra-territorial claim.” “At the Synod we discussed the letter received from the Patriarchate of Constantinople on the recognition of the autocephaly of the Church of Ukraine. It contains a very dangerous phrase about how the Patriarchate of Constantinople has the exclusive right to interfere in the internal affairs of any Local Church. For me personally, that is unacceptable and could cause many difficulties in the future,” he said.

His Eminence Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral of the Serbian Church has also said that Constantinople’s lust for power is catastrophic for all of Orthodoxy.

Met. Daniil also noted that, in fact, the new schismatic church is essentially autocephalous in name only. “There is practically no autocephaly... It’s not an independent Church, because in the foundational document the headship of the primate of another Church over these territories is directly affirmed,” the Bulgarian hierarch explained.

A comparison of the expansive freedoms accorded to the canonical autonomous Ukrainian Orthodox Church with the limited rights of the “autocephalous” “Orthodox Church of Ukraine” can be found [here](#).

According to the metropolitan, the attempts of one man to override the Church’s age-old canonical tradition “Is dangerous. It cannot be allowed. Therefore, it’s very important that the Local Churches not recognize [the tomos] as canonically valid. It imposes a new teaching about the Church on us.”

With this last phrase, the metropolitan thus pinpoints the larger issue here, beyond a territorial claim, of a new ecclesiology being forced upon the Church, in which Constantinople has the right to act unilaterally where and when it pleases.

Canonically speaking, Met. Daniil explained, a bishop of one Local Church cannot hold primacy over another. However, the tomos granted to the Ukrainian schismatic church states, “The Autocephalous Church in Ukraine knows as its head

the most holy Apostolic and Patriarchal Ecumenical Throne, just as the rest of the Patriarchs and Primates,” though it is not true that any other Orthodox primate confesses the Ecumenical Patriarchate as its head.

Commenting on Constantinople’s cancelation of the 1686 document that transferred the Kiev Metropolia to the Russian Church, Met. Daniil noted: “All this time all the Orthodox Churches accepted the Ukrainian Orthodox Church as part of the Russian Orthodox Church. We have the tradition, a commonly-received custom in inter-Orthodox relations, where everyone recognizes this territory as the canonical territory of the Russian Church. This is confirmed by numerous documents and agreements between Churches.”

“Therefore, on what basis can all this just be abolished and appropriated, saying it’s the territory of the Patriarchate of Constantinople? It’s simply unprecedented! It’s impossible to understand. And it can’t be called anything other than the invasion of someone else’s territory,” the Bulgarian prelate said, concluding on the Ukrainian topic.

He also pointed to Constantinople’s recent decision to allow priests to remarry in certain situations as an example of the Patriarchate’s disregard for canonical order. Noting that the canons of the Ecumenical Councils and even the documents of 2016’s Crete Council speak clearly on the matter, Met. Daniil said: “So this is an illustrative example that confirms that neither the canonical rules nor the conciliar mind of the Church are considered there. Moreover, these actions upset and break the relationships between the Local Orthodox Churches.”

([Source: Orthodox Christianity](#))