

Ukrainian church leaders meeting amid power struggle - media



Epifaniy says the church must be ruled collectively.

Top figures in Ukraine's new Orthodox Church are meeting in a synod amid an apparent power struggle between Patriarch Filaret, an early vocal supporter of the independent Ukrainian church, and the new church's elected head, Metropolitan Epiphaniy. Patriarch Filaret, 90, has said that he should govern the new church that got its independence from the Moscow Patriarchate earlier this year, while Metropolitan Epiphany, 40, should represent it internationally, [Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty said](#). According to Filaret, that was agreed between him, Epiphaniy, and then-President Petro Poroshenko in December 2018.

Epiphaniy has accused Filaret of trying to rule the church on his own, contradicting, according to Epiphaniy, agreements reached in October when Ukraine secured approval from Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople – the spiritual head of Orthodox Christianity – to set up an independent Orthodox church.

According to Epifaniy, who was officially installed as the new Orthodox Church of Ukraine's first metropolitan in February, the church must be ruled collectively. Ukraine's move to obtain independence from the Moscow Patriarchate was fiercely opposed by Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church, under which many Orthodox parishes in Ukraine have pledged allegiance to for centuries. Bartholomew handed over a document establishing the Ukrainian church's independence, known as a "tomos," to Epifaniy at a ceremony in Istanbul on January 6.

— Source: [UNIAN](#)