

Russian Metropolitan sharply decries Latvian law mandating citizenship for clerics in Baltic country



Russian Orthodox hierarch Hilarion, the Metropolitan of Volokolamsk, this week accused the government of Latvia of attempting to interfere in ecclesiastical matters, with the intent of eventually breaking- off the Orthodox Church in Latvia from the Moscow Patriarchate.

His Eminence Hilarion, who is the head of the Russian Church's external affairs department, commented on a law passed in the Baltic state, which mandates that hierarchs and clerics there must be Latvian citizens in order to continue to serve parishes and dioceses in the country.

Latvia has a large Russian-speaking and Orthodox Christian minority.

In a statement, Hilarion said: "... by what right does a state dictate to the Church who will be its primate? A very rude intervention is taking place in a sphere that is the absolute domain of the Church, which must be free to chose whoever it wants

as its head.”