

Ukraine approves church property law after split from Russia

Україна схвалила закон про церковне майно після розколу з Росією

Парламент України у четвер ухвалив законопроект, який розкриває процедуру передачі церковного майна після набуття незалежності нової єдиної української православної церкви. Законопроект може потенційно вплинути на близько 12 тисяч церков в Україні.

Президент України Петро Порошенко, який очолив зусилля, спрямовані на те, щоб зробити українську церкву незалежною, вітав голосування у Верховній Раді, заявивши, що це запобіжить "кровопролиття". За його словами, понад 100 парафій вже заявили про свій намір приєднатися до нової церкви.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2019/01/18/ukraine-approves-church-property-law-after-split-from-russia>

Ukraine's parliament Thursday adopted a bill spelling out procedures for transferring church property after a new unified Ukrainian Orthodox church was granted independence. The bill could potentially affect some 12,000 churches in Ukraine and vast amounts of property, including the gems of Orthodox Christianity like the vast Pechersk Monastery in the Ukrainian capital of Kiev. The move came after Fener Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I based in Istanbul handed over a formal decree that finalized the recognition of Ukraine's new Church.

The move forces clergy and believers in Ukraine to choose between belonging to Moscow-backed churches or the new Ukrainian one. Until the decree, the Orthodox church that enjoyed wide autonomy under the Russian Orthodox Church was considered legitimate and two others in Ukraine were regarded as schismatic. The new church unites the two formerly schismatic bodies.

Many Ukrainians had resented the status of the Moscow-affiliated church. The push for a full-fledged Ukrainian church was bolstered by Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and fighting in eastern Ukraine between government forces and Russia-backed rebels that has killed at least 10,000 people.

The Supreme Rada yesterday voted for the bill that spells out the procedures for transferring church property if a parish decides to join a new church. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, who spearheaded efforts to make the Ukrainian church independent, hailed the vote at the Supreme Rada, saying that it will prevent "bloodshed." He said over 100 parishes have already indicated their intention to join the new church.

Under President Poroshenko, Ukraine has pushed to establish a national church and thereby sever centuries-old ties with the Russian clergy. Kiev authorities say the step is essential to tackling Russian meddling on its soil. The issue played a key role in Ukraine's presidential elections in March, with incumbent President Poroshenko making independence from the Russian Orthodox Church a key issue as he plans a re-election bid.