

Session 6

archbishop Yevstraty Zoria, Representative of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kyiv Patriarchate

Ladies and Gentlemen!

1. In the occupied Crimea, Russian authorities continue persecuting the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate. Using violence, the executive service of the Russian authorities broke into the premises of the temple of the Kyiv Patriarchate in Simferopol, cracked the doors, intimidated Archbishop Clement and applied physical violence to him. Russian authorities without archbishop's consent and presence conducted actions in the temple. There is a real danger that the authorities confiscate the only place of worship and pray of our Church in Simferopol. All this is a continuation of the policy of ousting from the Crimea the Kyiv Patriarchate, Church, which is undesirable for the Russian occupation authorities.
2. In Russia itself, in Moscow region, in the city of Noginsk, the only parish of our Church in this region is also in danger: the court demanded to demolish the temple, built by this parish, and this decision can be executed by the authorities at any time.
3. Russia continues the policy of restricting and ousting religious organizations that are considered by the government to be "unconventional" or "undesirable", including the Kyiv Patriarchate.
4. At the same time, Russia and its government-controlled social and religious structures, constantly accuse both Ukraine and our Church in various violations. We reject these accusations and consider them as a part of a campaign of aggressive propaganda against Ukraine and part of the hybrid war that Russian Federation is waging against our country.
5. Our Church does not capture the churches of the Moscow Patriarchate. In all cases referred to by the Moscow Patriarchate and its proxies, local religious communities freely decided to withdraw from the Moscow Patriarchate and move to the Kyiv Patriarchate. This right is guaranteed both by the Ukrainian law and by the general concept of freedom of conscience, which provides for the possibility to change one's convictions. Accusing us, the Moscow Patriarchate thereby denies the very right of communities to change their jurisdiction.
6. We reaffirm that we are open to dialogue on all issues, including through the mediation of the OSCE, and again we have to state that our opponents refuse to have dialogue and unfortunately prefer to further spread accusations against us and against Ukraine, including during this respected forum.

Thank you for attention.