Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 18, 2026

President of Ukraine
Voldoymyr Zelenskyy
Kyiv, Ukraine

Mr. President,

As Members of the United States Congress and steadfast supporters of Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and security, we write with serious concern regarding actions taken against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), including the implementation of Law No. 3894.

Law No. 3894, which provides the legal framework for termination of the UOC's legal identity, restrictions on property ownership, and prohibition of religious activity, raises significant concerns under Ukraine's constitution and international human rights commitments. International observers, including Human Rights Watch, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the US Mission to the OSCE, and major Christian bodies, such as the Church of England, the World Council of Churches, His Holiness Pope Francis and Vice President Vance, have expressed concern regarding the law and its compatibility with international standards protecting religious freedom.

The UOC is one of the largest religious communities in Ukraine, with millions of adherents and parishes deeply rooted in Ukrainian religious and social life. The UOC publicly condemned Russia's invasion at its outset and subsequently declared independence from the Moscow Patriarchate in May 2022. Clergy and parishioners of the UOC have served in Ukraine's defense and have provided humanitarian assistance to civilians and members of the Armed Forces during the war.

Reports indicate seizures of churches, displacement of parish communities, revocation of citizenship affecting religious leaders, and prolonged detention of clergy without timely judicial resolution. This included Metropolitan Arseniy of the Sviatohirsk Lavra, who was held for nearly two years without trial following a sermon defending pilgrims before being released on February
25. While his release is a welcome development, it does not resolve the broader pattern of concern regarding the treatment of clergy and the apparent lack of timely judicial process. Democratic systems address unlawful conduct through individualized accountability grounded in fair judicial process. Measures resulting in the effective dissolution of an entire religious body
underscore the importance of rigorous procedural safeguards and strict adherence to due process.

Particularly troubling are reports that clergy have been subjected to forced conscription and assigned to frontline combat roles. International humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions, recognizes the protected status of religious personnel as non-combatants and prohibits compelling them to perform combatant functions. Ensuring that religious personnel receive the protections afforded under international law is essential to Ukraine's Western re-orientation and democratic future.

For these reasons, we urge your government to halt enforcement of Law No. 3894, cease transfers of religious property, end detention and forced conscription of clergy, and ensure that all Ukrainians may worship freely and peacefully.

Protecting religious freedom and ensuring adherence to the rule of law will strengthen Ukraine's unity, democratic credibility, and moral authority in the international community at this critical time.

Sincerely,

Derrick Van Orden
Member of Congress

Riley M. Moore
Member of Congress

Warren Davidson
Member of Congress

Elijah Crane
Member of Congress

Anna Paulina Luna
Member of Congress