Ukrainian World Congress condemns adoption of laws curtailing human rights

Ukrainian "Euromaidan" pro-European supporters walk in on Kiev's Independence square on January 18, 2014, as they guard their barricades against an attack of Euromaidan opponents, who have come to dismantle them. Pro-EU Ukrainians were reinforcing barricades in Kiev on January 18 ahead of a new mass rally, defying President Viktor Yanukovych after he approved strict curbs on protests that caused an outcry in the West. The anti-government protesters regarded plans of the so called "For a Healthy Nation" movement to dismantle their barricades as provocation organized by the Ukrainian power. AFP PHOTO/ SERGEI SUPINSKY © AFP

The Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) is deeply disturbed by the adoption of laws that curtail human rights by the Verkhovna Rada on January 16.

The organization said that these laws were aimed "at destroying democracy and establishing a severe authoritarian regime in Ukraine."
"The repressive laws, adopted by the ruling majority in Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada and signed by President Viktor Yanukovych, blatantly curtail basic human rights and fundamental freedoms like freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, and greatly extend the use of harsh forms of punishment, such as imprisonment," the UWC said in a statement published on its Web site.

"The Ukrainian World Congress considers that these laws constitute clear evidence that Ukraine's governing authorities are abandoning democratic principles and are attempting to push Ukraine back to authoritarian times as they existed under the Soviet Union," UWC President Eugene Czolij said.