Statement by the Synod of the Orthodox Church of Moldova with regard to the current tragic situation of persecution of clergy and flock of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church

The statement was adopted at a session of the Synod of the Orthodox Church of Moldova on 19th April 2019.

The Synod of the Orthodox Church of Moldova once again voices its deep concern over the current tragic situation of persecution of the clergy and flock of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church led by its Primate – His Beatitude Onufry, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine.

The episcopate of the Orthodox Church of Moldova resolutely condemns the anti-canonical interference of Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople who granted the "Tomos of Autocephaly" to the so-called "Orthodox Church of Ukraine," artificially created as the result of merger between two schismatic structures. This act has made no contribution whatsoever to the restoration of peace and unity among the Ukrainian Christians, but, on the contrary, has only triggered off even more severe consequences for the whole Universal Orthodoxy.

What is more, the method chosen by the Patriarchate of Constantinople for "resolving the ecclesiastical problem" in the neighbouring country with direct involvement and support of the secular authorities of Ukraine, as well as hostile and discriminatory measures against the clergy and flock of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is a part of the Moscow Patriarchate, compel us to once again declare them alien to the centuries-old life and teaching of our Holy Orthodox Church.

The violation of fundamental rights and freedoms of clergymen and faithful of the canonical Church by depriving the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of its name and the actual legitimization of the practice of seizures of its church buildings and historical monasteries with the support of security and law enforcement agencies, carried out contrary to decisions of religious communities that expressed their wish to remain in the bosom of the canonical Church, clearly indicate the major goal of the newly-created church structure – to liquidate the canonical Orthodox Church in this territory.

On these days of grief for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the Synod of the Orthodox Church of Moldova, joining all the Local Orthodox Churches, in the person of all its bishops, clergy and flock expresses prayerful support to our brothers from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, lifting up prayers to

the All-Merciful God, that He may strengthen them in the sufferings by granting them patience and firmness in confessing the holy Orthodox faith, following the words of St. Paul who repeatedly suffered persecutions for the Lord's sake: "I… beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:1-3).

At the same time the Synod of the Orthodox Church of Moldova calls upon the international community to devote attention to the injustice committed in Ukraine, which results in violations of basic human rights, as well as to the cruel and insulting interference of the state authorities of Ukraine in the life and ecclesial and administrative organization of the local Orthodox Church.

Chisinau, 19th April 2019

*Metropolitan **Vladimir** of Chisinau and All Moldova*

Members of the Synod:

*Archbishopishop **Sava** of Tiraspol and Dubăsari,*
*Bishop **Anatolie** of Cahul and Comrat,*
*Bishop **Petru** of Ungheni and Nisporeni,*
*Bishop **Marchel** of Bălţi and Făleşti,*
*Bishop **Nicodim** of Edineţ and Briceni,*
*Bishop **Ioan** of Soroca, vicar of the Chisinau diocese,*
*Bishop **Siluan** of Orhei, vicar of the Chisinau diocese,*

*Archpriest **Vadim Cheibaş,** secretary of the Synod*

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