



First Hierarchy of Russian Church Outside of Russia: Constantinople's actions in Ukraine can lead to bloodshed

The decision of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, with active participation of the Ukrainian government, to grant autocephaly to a new church structure is another political way to divide the peoples of Russia and Ukraine, which can lead to violence and bloodshed. This statement was made on December 17, 2018, by the First Hierarchy of the Russian Church Abroad, Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York, during his talk with the TASS news agency.

'It (the granting of autocephaly) is an absolutely uncanonical action of the so-called Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople; it has violated all the church rules', Metropolitan Hilarion underscored, 'His action only aggravates the situation of discord among the faithful in Ukraine. We can state that it is a political way of further dividing the people of Ukraine and Russia, as the president of the country (Ukraine, Petr Poroshenko) put so strong pressure on the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church, headed by Onufriy, by calling it that of Moscow'.

'Actually, most of the Ukrainian people are parishioners of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church', the archpastor reminded, 'If the government (of Ukraine) commits some violent actions against our Orthodox Church, then it may cause even bloodshed and martyrdom among the flock. This situation is very bad. We are praying that the Lord may give peace to Ukraine, to the people, and that Orthodox Christians may remain faithful to the Church of Christ and not yield to the artificially created church institutions'.

According to Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York, it is possible to rectify the situation and restore the church unity if Constantinople cancels all its previous decisions and actions with regard to the Ukrainian Church. 'Considerable credit in this discord belongs to the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. He should admit his mistake. He will hardly do it, of course, but as long as this pressure by the government there (Ukraine) and the newly created autocephaly last against Orthodox Christians, there will be no reconciliation or peace within the country. There are tough forces inside the country, who will seek to stir up discord'.

There should be no communion with the newly created church structure in Ukraine, His Eminence Hilarion, underscored: 'Con-celebration is impossible; the faithful should not come to these churches if they claim to be Orthodox Christians', 'The canonical Church is the Ukrainian Orthodox Church headed

by Metropolitan Onufriy and his Synod', he noted adding that at present there is no Eucharistic communion with the Patriarchate of Constantinople whose actions have led to a church schism. 'We will not concelebrate until this great mistake is rectified', the archpastor said.

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