Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk expresses condolences over plane crash in Black Sea

In the morning of December 25, the Russian Defense Ministry's TU-154 aircraft crashed into the Black Sea. Eight crew members and 84 passengers died. Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, expressed his profound condolences to the relatives and friends of the victims. Among those who died were artists of the Alexandrov Song and Dance Ensemble, journalists, and Yelizaveta Glinka, also known as Dr. Liza, renowned humanitarian worker and charity activist. The text of the message is given below.

I was deeply shocked and grieved to learn about the plane crash over the Black Sea that had claimed the lives of 92 people – eight crew members and 84 passengers, including 68 artists of the Alexandrov Ensemble and nine Russian journalists.

I express my sincere and heartfelt condolences to the relatives and friends of the victims.

Among those aboard was Lieutenant-General Valery Mikhailovich Khalilov, my long-standing and dear friend. It was he who nine years ago conducted at the premiere of my Christmas Oratorio in Washington. Together with him and the Defense Ministry orchestra that he headed at the time we visited several U.S. cities. For many years Valery Mikhailovich was Russia's chief military conductor, leading the Moscow Garrison Orchestra at each parade in Red Square. The whole country would see him and listen to him on those days. It is hard to believe that this highly gifted, kind and cheerful man is no longer with us. Eternal memory be to him!

I cannot but mention one of the leaders of the Alexandrov Ensemble, Konstantin Mayorov, who also was onboard. For many years he was a choirman at the church in Bolshaya Ordynka Street in Moscow, where I serve: he sang there on weekdays and feast days, and often partook of the Holy Communion. I express my sincere and heartfelt condolences to his spouse and to his son Alexander Mayorov, also a choirman and one of the choirmasters of the Moscow Synodal Choir. May the Lord grant rest to His servant Konstantin in the dwellings of the righteous.

Among the passengers was also Yelizaveta Glinka, known all over the country as Dr. Liza. May the Lord reward her for all the good she did to so many people.

May the Lord grant rest to the souls of the victims in the place where there is neither sickness, nor sorrow, nor sighing, but life everlasting, and may He grant fortitude and strength to those who lost their

dear ones.

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk

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