



Statement of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia on a new aggravation of the civic confrontation in Ukraine

Blood is again shed in Ukraine. The clashes in the Donetsk Region and tragic events in Odessa have led to the death of tens of people and further destabilization of the situation in the country. Many are in despair and fear for their lives and the lives of their loved ones.

In this hardest of times, my heart is with Ukraine, with each of her sons and daughters who are in pain, grief, anger and despair. I am praying that all the victims of the bloodshed may rest in peace, that the lives of the casualties may be saved and that the injured may recover as soon as possible. My ardent prayer is for the healing of the country and pacification of the enmity, so that blood may not be spilt again and violence may be stopped forever.

Responsibility for what is going on lies first of all with those who resort to violence instead of dialogue. Special concern is raised by the use of military hardware in a civic confrontation. The use of force is often provoked by commitment to political radicalism and denial of citizens' rights to express their convictions.

In the situation of today's Ukraine, only one political position cannot be declared the only possible and obligatory for all. It is pernicious to the country. It is my conviction that attempts to assert one's own point of view by force should be abandoned once and for all. I appeal to all the parties to restrain themselves from the use of arms and to settle all problems through negotiations. In a short-term perspective, Ukraine needs at least reconciliation, in a long-term – a lasting and inalienable peace.

Ukraine can be healed and can take the path of building a dignified life for her citizens only if it becomes a common home for people of various political beliefs who differ from one another in many things. There is no alternative to dialogue. It is necessary, while there is still a possibility for it, to hear one another and try not only to resolve today's contradictions but also to renew the commitment to Christian spiritual and moral values, which have formed the Ukrainian people and enriched them with wisdom and love of truth. I trust: precisely these values will help them today to find a way to peace and justice without which a dignified future of the country is unthinkable.

O God, one and great, preserve Rus'- Ukraine!

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