



Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church takes place in Moscow

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On 2 February 2011, the Holy and Sacred Council of the Russian Orthodox Church opened in the Hall of Church Councils of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour.

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According to the Statutes of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia chairs the Bishops' Council. The Presidium includes His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine; Metropolitan Vladimir of St. Petersburg and Ladoga; Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Slutsk, Patriarch Exarch of All Belarus; Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna; Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishinev and All Moldova; Metropolitan Varsonofiy of Saransk and Mordovia; chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations are permanent members of the Holy Synod.

The Presidium also includes participants in the winter session of the Holy Synod: Metropolitan Lazar of Simferopol and the Crimea; Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York, president of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia; Archbishop Prokl of Simbirsk and Melekess; Bishop Aleksandr of Baku and the Caspian Region; and Bishop Daniil of Arkhangelsk and Kholmogory.

217 archpastors have been invited to the Council. The Statute of Russian Orthodox Church stipulates that the Bishops' Council consists of the diocesan bishops and the vicar bishops who are heads of the Synodal institutions and the Theological Academies or who have canonical jurisdiction over the parishes in their jurisdiction. Other vicar bishops can take part in the sessions of the Bishops' Council without the right of a deciding vote.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich sent their greetings to the Council.