



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill: It is necessary to establish intolerable conditions for any radical group

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church made a special statement to the mass media on the rioting on Manezh Square, the press office of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia reports. The text is given below.

It seems to me that the events on Manezh Square have thrust three problems into the spotlight. I shall begin with the simple one, and conclude with the most complicated.

The first is hooliganism, when a person cannot restrain his emotions, starts to destroy everything around him, and is ready for a fight. This problem should be dealt with as prescribed and order should be imposed. If people do not understand words, the upper hand must be used.

The second and a more complicated problem that has become apparent is a political provocation on Manezh Square along with hooliganism. There are certain forces in our society that have an interest in destabilizing the situation. These forces can enhance their activity towards the 2012 election. Inter-ethnic relations are a godsend for these forces. During the Cold War many people who stood in opposition to the Soviet Union used to say that multinationality was its weak spot and, if a pressure is put on this spot, the country will be destroyed. This is what happened. There are many people today who want to touch this Achilles' heel to destabilize and wreck Russia using various excuses.

The political provocation carried out on Manezh Square is a simple fact that demands considerate and serious attitude towards it on the part of the authorities, including law enforcement bodies. We should not allow the country's return to the chaos of the early 1990s. We should not allow the destabilization of our political system and public life. Many people may not remember the dreadful years that our middle-aged and senior citizens lived through. We were willing to devote anything to stabilize the situation, to stop the disintegration of the country and the collapse of social relations! How happy we were to see the signs of political stabilization in the late 1990s! It would seem that today we have had too much of it and are ready to wreck the country!

I appeal to all those who hear me. Political stabilization in Russia is a precondition for changing our life for the better. We shall not have any economic benefits if we wreck our social life.

And now the most important thing. Interethnic relations are very complicated. World religions have made a great contribution to the life of peace of people belonging to these religions. I would like to mention a

particular contribution of the Russian Orthodox Church to the preservation of interethnic peace both in the Russian Empire and in present-day Russia. The Church has always nurtured the spirit of peace and the ability to share grief with our neighbours irrespective of their religious belief. It was the nurturing of the spirit of peace that has brought about the lack of interreligious and interethnic wars in Russia.

What is happening today? Radicalisms are clashing. Interethnic relations are communicating vessels. One cannot point at the one, while neglecting the other. The emergence of radicalism in the ethnically united groups and, the more so, in the criminal radical ethnic groups provokes a radical response of the majority. Who is suffering? Ordinary people. When I saw the wounded innocent people who were beaten only because their faces are of another colour and their countenance is different, while knowing that they are law-abiding and good people, I felt bitter and ashamed. At the same time one understands that they were victims of the ethnic radical groups existing in diaspora and provoking – I repeat – the disruption of interethnic peace and peace among different nationalities.

Therefore, the struggle against radicalism is the way along which we should go to bring interethnic relations out of their present dangerous state.

It is necessary to create a gap between radical groups and law-abiding people. It is necessary to establish intolerable conditions for all radical groups, both among ethnic minorities and majority population. This task requires the efforts of the authorities, public organizations, the Russian Orthodox Church and the followers of other religions. We should work together to lower the degree of radicalism and to prevent the destruction of interreligious and interethnic peace thanks to which Russia exists as a great state. Any provocation of ethnic discord challenges the very existence of our multinational and great homeland.

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