



## Metropolitan Isaiah of Tamassos: Russian Church never interfered in affairs of Church of Cyprus



In an interview to Kathimerini-Cyprus newspaper, Metropolitan Isaiah of Tamassos stated that the Russian Orthodox Church had never interfered in the affairs of the Church of Cyprus.

During the interview Metropolitan Isaiah was asked what he thought about the concern expressed by some people over the Russian Church's attempts to control the Church of Cyprus. "The Russian Church has never tried to interfere in our internal affairs," the hierarch answered.

As Metropolitan Isaiah noted, there is a growing geopolitical conflict between the East and the West. In Cyprus it is observable in all spheres, be it economy, journalism or political activities. The hierarch said: "Our wish is to work with everyone within the framework of mutual respect. The 'concern' that you mentioned was being implanted deliberately, methodically and patiently by different decision-making centres through their bodies. Regrettably, all modern means of propaganda and discrediting one's opponents are being used, such as, for instance, 'investigations' published on various pseudo-websites 'unveiling' conspiracies."

He also pointed out that “while earlier everybody would welcome the Russians in Cyprus, now, due to geopolitical and geostrategic interests, everything Russian is being demonised, and it directly affects those who have church relations with them.”

The interviewer asked Metropolitan Isaiah whether it was true that within the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus there exists a “fifth column” of bishops sympathetic to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. The Cypriot hierarch said in response: “We will not demonstrate patriotism by yielding to the will of the Archbishop [of Cyprus] and those in power in the world in order to live in comfort under the ‘roof and protection’ of the ‘big brother.’ We must fight against attempts to manipulate our Church, against injustice, religious racism and ethnophyletism, no matter at what personal costs, striving for justice and unity of Orthodoxy. Rumours about the ‘fifth column’ are threats, intimidation and blackmail aimed at making us change our opinion on neutrality [in the Ukrainian issue – editor’s note].”

In October 2020, the four hierarchs – Metropolitans Nikiforos of Kykkos, Athanasios of Limassol, Isaiah of Tamassos and Bishop Nicholas of Amathounta – called upon the head of the Church of Cyprus, Archbishop Chrysostomos, to cancel his anti-canonical and invalid decision to recognise the “Orthodox Church of Ukraine.” The Kathimerini-Cyprus journalist asked Metropolitan Isaiah why they had made a public statement against the Archbishop of Cyprus instead of expressing their disagreement with the decision in the Holy Synod.

“It would have been more convenient to many people had we kept silent. It would make it considerably easier to manipulate the autocephaly of the Church of Cyprus. But we publicly stated our disagreement because we cannot reconcile our conscience to something that evidently divides Orthodoxy, as had been stated by the esteemed Archbishop Anastasios of Albania,” Metropolitan Isaiah added.

“The truth must be told and confessed, no matter how bitter it is. The Archbishop acted publicly, without the approval of and outside the Synod, therefore we also reacted publicly and outside the Synod in order to save the independence of our autocephaly,” the hierarch said in conclusion.

*DECR Communication Service*

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