Comments of Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk on the adoption of the WCC statement ‘War in Ukraine, peace and justice in the European region



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Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate and head of the Russian Orthodox Church delegation at the 11th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Karlsruhe, Germany, delivered his comments on the adoption of the WCC document ‘War in Ukraine, peace and justice in the European region’.

The delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church could not support by voting the statement made by the WCC Assembly on ‘War in Ukraine, peace and justice in the European region’.

At the same time, it is with cautious optimism that we evaluate the stand taken by the World Council of Churches. Despite an unprecedented political pressure made on it during the drafting of a document on the Ukrainian conflict - which was expressed, among other things, in the speech of President of Germany F.-W. Steinmeier and in statements of some other persons who called to expel the Russian Church from the WCC- it refused to bring any accusations against the Russian Orthodox Church and

recognized the importance of her large-scale humanitarian mission carried out with a blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to give support to refugees and those affected by the conflict.

Unfortunately, the final document has remained considerably politicized. It has excluded all the proposals made by the Russian Church, which prevents us from supporting it. At the same time, we believe that the discussion, which took place during the Assembly, can become for the WCC a starting point for an objective and unprejudiced study of the causes of the longstanding conflict in Ukraine just as for subsequent peace-making efforts.

We also regret that the drafters of the document did not take into consideration the proposal of representatives of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to condemn the violent mass seizures of churches belonging to the canonical Church carried out by the so-called ‘OCU’. We hope that the World Council of Churches will undertake further actions to study this problem.

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