DECR Chairman sent a letter of support to the Synod of the Ethiopian Church due to the latest tragic events in Ethiopia



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Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, sent a letter of support to the Synod of the Ethiopian Church in connection with an attempt of a group of schismatics in Ethiopia to create a church schism.

The letter reads, in part:

"The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church is deeply concerned about the recent disturbing events connected with the attacks on the Ethiopian Church.

The Russian Orthodox Church has always shared the sorrows of the brotherly people of Ethiopia. In 2019, when Ethiopia was experiencing mass attacks on churches, clergy and parishioners, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia addressed the Primate of the Ethiopian Church with words of support and asked the state authorities to help restore law and order. We are continuing to support the Ethiopian Church using all available means.

May the Almighty God grant the ancient land of Abyssinia, its Church and people peace, unity and prosperity!"

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At the end of January of this year, the aforementioned group of schismatics openly opposed the Holy See of the Ethiopian Church and attempted to form their own "ecclesiastical jurisdiction." To achieve this goal, the schismatics have carried out armed attacks on churches, clergy and parishioners of the Ethiopian Church. There have been victims among the defenders of churches.

The schismatics' actions have been rejected by the majority of Ethiopian Christians. Today, with the blessing of Patriarch Abune Mathias, a solemn prayer for the early cessation of division and the restoration of unity in the faith is being offered at all parishes of the Ethiopian Church. On February 12th a special Churchwide Prayer will be said by Ethiopian believers all around the world. The Synod of the Ethiopian Church has also sent letters asking for support from leaders of the largest Christian communities in the world.

The Russian Orthodox Church has never been indifferent to the woes of the brotherly people of Ethiopia and in difficult times has always raised its voice in their defense.

The Ethiopian Church is a member of the family of Ancient Oriental Churches. It is not only the largest body in the Pre-Chalcedonian family, but is also one of the largest Christian communities in the world: the number of its members exceeds 60 million people.

Ties between the peoples of Russia and Ethiopia date back to the fifteenth century. Regular inter-Church contacts were established in the late 19th century. In 1950s-1980s, they reached a particularly high level, largely thanks to the efforts of Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad and Novgorod, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate. These ties are especially strong today and are also carried out within the framework of the Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Church, established in 2018.

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