



Work of the Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church is declared successful



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This was stated in a **resolution** of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church adopted during its meeting at the Patriarchal and Synodal Residence in St. Daniel's Monastery in Moscow on 24th October 2024.

The Synod members heard a report by Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, on **the third meeting** of the Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church which took place in Addis Ababa on 23rd – 25th September 2024.

The Moscow Patriarchate had been represented at the meeting in Addis Ababa by Bishop Kirill of Sergiyev Posad and Dmitrov, Commission co-chair; Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations; Abbess Yelisaveta (Pozdnyakova) of Saints Martha and Mary Convent of Mercy; Mr. Vakhtang Kipshidze, deputy chairman for the Synodal Department for Church's Relations with Society and Mass Media; and Mr. Danil Arakelyan of the DECR Secretariat for Inter-Christian Relations. The delegation of the Ethiopian Church had included Archbishop Abune Philipos of South Omo, Commission co-chair; Archpriest Elias Abreha, deputy chancellor of the Ethiopian Patriarchate; Professor Abba Hailegebriel Girma, vice-president of the Holy Trinity University in Addis Ababa; Abba Gebrehanna Gebretsadiaq, dean of the College of Distance Education in the Holy Trinity University in Addis Ababa; and Fr. Daniel Seifemichael Feleke, member of the Council of Scholars of the Ethiopian Patriarchate, Commission secretary.

On 24th September, in the Patriarchal Residence of the Ethiopian Church in Addis Ababa, the Commission members met with His Holiness Patriarch Abune Matthias of Ethiopia. Among the issues discussed during the meeting was the plight of Orthodox Christians in Ukraine, especially in view of the law adopted by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, aimed at liquidating the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. On behalf of the Ethiopian Church, Patriarch Abune Matthias expressed solidarity with the Ukrainian Orthodox brothers and sisters and unflagging support for the Moscow Patriarchate.

The participants in the meeting discussed the work the Commission had done since its previous meeting in Moscow on 11th – 16th February 2023, having pointed out the fundamental importance of the two Churches' mutual support at the international level and their concerted efforts in protecting Christians subjected to persecutions in various regions of the world and in upholding traditional moral values. Over the time that passed since the last meeting, the following projects were carried out: Addis Ababa hosted the first round of consultations on the ways to promote bilateral academic cooperation; the Combined Choir of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius Lavra and the Moscow Theological Academy gave two concerts in Addis Ababa; eight seminars on theology, history and liturgical tradition of the Ethiopian Church were organized at the Moscow Theological Academy, the Sretenskaya Theological Academy and Ss. Cyril and Methodius Theological Institute of Postgraduate Studies; contacts between representatives of the two Churches' monastic communities continued; the Easter divine service was organized in Addis Ababa for members of the Moscow Patriarchate; assistance was provided to the Moscow community of the Ethiopian Church; efforts were exerted to facilitate cooperation between the Ethiopian manufacturers of church utensils and "Sofrino" Art Production Enterprise; representatives of the Ethiopian Church took part in the Moscow Festival of the Peoples of the Christian East Religious Music and in other cultural events; consultations took place between representatives of the Russian Church and senior officials of the Ethiopian Church's Department for Children and Family Affairs; the Russian Church delegates developed contacts with the Media Department and the Sunday Schools and Youth Department of the Ethiopian Church.

The Commission presented its suggestions for furthering cooperation in areas of topical significance for the two Churches.

At its meeting, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church acknowledged that the work of the Commission for Dialogue between the two Churches was successful, and emphasised importance of the bilateral projects carried out by the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

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