



Patriarchal Exarch of Africa undertakes first visit to Madagascar



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Metropolitan Konstantin of Zaraysk, Patriarchal Exarch of Africa, has begun his first trip to the Republic of Madagascar. This is the 21st African country Metropolitan Konstantin has visited since he was appointed Exarch a year and a half ago.

On March 18th, the hierarch arrived in the country's capital Antananarivo. Accompanying him are Priest George Maximov, chairman of the Exarchate's Missionary Department, and his personal secretary V.V. Dendyuk.

While in Madagascar, Metropolitan Konstantin will meet with various public officials and visit parishes

in the Southern Africa Diocese. There he will celebrate divine services and preside at clergy meetings, the Exarchate's website **reports**. Besides, the hierarch will interview a number of clerics of the Patriarchate of Alexandria who want to join the Russian Orthodox Church.

On March 19th, the Exarch met with Mr Andrei Andreyev, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Madagascar and concurrently to the Union of the Comoros. The participants in the meeting discussed different issues pertaining to the Russian Orthodox Church's presence in Madagascar and further cooperation.

That day later, the hierarch is going to have several working meetings to discuss prospects of promoting the activities of the Patriarchal Exarchate of Africa in the country.

Metropolitan Konstantin will depart from the Republic of Madagascar on March 28th.

Since the Patriarchal Exarchate of Africa was established three years ago, more than 20 parishes have opened in Madagascar within the Northern and Southern Deaneries, as well as a female monastic community. Serving in the country are 22 priests of the Russian Orthodox Church. Five Malagasy students are currently studying at theological schools in Russia to be later ordained and return to their homeland where they will serve as clergymen.