

## Constantinople delegation to visit Serbian Church soon



A high-ranking delegation of the Patriarchate of Constantinople intends to visit the hierarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church sometime in the near future.

His Grace Bishop Irinej of Bačka, the head of the Synodal Information and Publishing Department, noted in a recent interview with the Belgrade newspaper Danas, published online at [borbazaveru.info](http://borbazaveru.info), that a delegation, to be led by Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamom, will visit His Holiness Patriarch Irinej and the hierarchs of the Holy Synod, "in due time."

However, the purpose of the visit has not yet been disclosed.

"What are the reasons for this visit and what will be discussed, really neither I nor anyone else knows now, because we have not been informed... I personally cannot say anything specific because I am not a prophet. After all, time will tell, and then the public will be informed" Bp. Irinej said.

Nevertheless, there are likely topics: “Your speculation that the visit might have something to do with the problems of the Church in Ukraine and Northern Macedonia is not illogical, but it is unverifiable,” the hierarch added.

The Serbian Church is among those that have officially rejected the schismatic “Orthodox Church of Ukraine” (OCU) created by Constantinople in December and granted a tomos of autocephaly in January. Both the Holy Synod and the broader Council of Bishops have refused to recognize the legitimacy of the OCU, affirming they recognize only the Ukrainian Orthodox Church headed by His Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry of Kiev and All Ukraine and that the OCU is a fake church made up of un-ordained schismatics.

The “Macedonian Orthodox church,” which separated from the Serbian Church in the 1960s, is another schismatic group that has appealed to Constantinople for a tomos of autocephaly. Patriarch Bartholomew has sent mixed signals, sometimes indicating that the “Mother Church” would resolve the situation, and sometimes that it is a matter for the Serbian Church to resolve.

However, the Macedonians are still expecting to eventually receive a tomos from Constantinople. Meanwhile, the Serbian hierarchs announced in May that they would be resuming dialogue with the “Macedonian church” to find a canonical resolution to the schism.

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