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Moscow Patriarchate fails to commemorate Archbishop of Athens during Divine Liturgy as row over Ukrainian Church autocephaly deepens

The Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, His Holiness Kirill, on Sunday declined to commemorate the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, His Beatitude Ieronymos, in prayers during the Divine Liturgy at Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior, the first time that the Greek Primate's name was omitted since the Holy Synod of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece confirmed the latter's right to handle the issue of autocephaly for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The Church of Greece's permanent Holy Synod, as per the recommendation of Ieronymos, also acknowledged the Ecumenical Patriarch's privilege to grant the Tomos of Autocephaly.

The granting of the Tomos of Autocephaly to the Ukrainian Church by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople last November was, and remains, bitterly opposed by the Moscow Patriarchate. The Russian Orthodox Church

severed full communion shortly thereafter with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and suspended the liturgical commemoration of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew I.

The ill-omened development was more-or-less announced on Saturday by the Russian Church's Metropolitan of Volokolamsk, His Eminence Hilarion, during a television appearance.

"… we (Moscow Patriarchate) said that if the Archbishop of Athens (Ieronymos) officially recognizes the Ukrainian schism, that his name will be deleted from the diptychs of the Russian Orthodox Church. What does this mean? That during Divine Liturgies the (Russian) Patriarch (Kirill) will not commemorate the Archbishop of Athens, just as the Patriarch of Constantinople (Bartholomew) is not commemorated… In other words, we are suspending the Eucharistic communion with the Archbishop of Athens," according to Hilarion, who is also the chairman of the department of external Church relations and a permanent member of the Holy Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate.

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