

RUSSIAN SYNOD REMOVES RUSSIAN PARISHES IN AFRICA FROM JURISDICTION OF PATRIARCHATE OF ALEXANDRIA



The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church met in Moscow today under the chairmanship of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

The hierarchs considered and responded to the decision of Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria to recognize the Ukrainian schismatics, expressing their deep sorrow at his decision that makes it impossible to maintain Eucharistic communion with him.

The Synod also came to decisions regarding the Alexandria representation church in Moscow and the Russian representation and parishes in Africa.

According to Vladimir Legoida, the Patriarchal Press Secretary, the Synod resolved:

1. To express deep sorrow in connection with the anti-canonical actions of Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria, who entered into communion with the schismatics.
2. To emphasize that Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria's decision to recognize the Ukrainian schismatics contradicts His Beatitude's repeated statements in support of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church and its primate Metropolitan Onuphry

of Kiev and All Ukraine, including the statement made during his last visit to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from September 27 to October 1, 2018, three weeks after the Patriarchate of Constantinople's invasion of Ukraine by appointing "exarchs" to Kiev.

3. To note that the decision to recognize the schismatic structure in Ukraine was not made at the session of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Alexandria held on October 7-9, that it was not put to a vote of its hierarchs, and, accordingly, it does not have a conciliar character, but was made by the primate of this Church unilaterally.

4. To confirm the impossibility of commemorating the name of Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria in the diptychs, as well as prayerful and Eucharistic communion with him.

5. To maintain Church communion with the hierarchs of the Alexandrian Orthodox Church, except for those who have supported or will support the legalization of the Ukrainian schism in the future.

6. To suspend the activity of the representation (podvoriye) of the Alexandrian Patriarchate to the Moscow Patriarchal See.

7. To convert the representation of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia to the Patriarch of Alexandria into a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church in Cairo.

8. To withdraw the parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church located on the African continent from the jurisdiction of the Alexandrian Patriarchate, giving them a stavropegial status.

The decision to move the given parishes to the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate is sure to draw serious criticism from the hierarchs of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and to increase inter-Church tensions in world Orthodoxy.

Earlier, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, the Chairman of the Synodal Department for External Church Relations, stated: "I don't want to predict how events will develop, but if the Patriarchate of Alexandria is on the side of the schism, then, of course, we will probably have to create parishes for our believers, because they will not be able to take communion in the churches of the Patriarchate of Alexandria."

Met. Hilarion also noted that it was only in the 20th century that the Patriarchate of Alexandria expanded its jurisdiction beyond northern Africa, which it did with Russian support. In particular, when the Russian Church built parishes in Africa, it did so with the agreement of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, and the churches were placed under the jurisdiction of Alexandria and the priests, who came from Russia, became clerics of the Patriarchate of Alexandria on a temporary basis.

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