

Kiev Patriarchate does not exist, never existed - Patriarch Bartholomew



Philaret Denisenko's "Kiev Patriarchate" (KP) does not and has never existed, Patriarch Bartholomew told a group of Ukrainian journalists in Istanbul last week.

"As for Philaret, he was restored to his episcopal dignity as former Metropolitan of Kiev. The so-called 'Patriarchate of Kiev' does not exist and never existed," the Patriarch told the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine.

The head of the Union, Sergei Tomilenko, wrote about the meeting on his [Facebook page](#) and published the full text of Pat. Bartholomew's English speech.

The declaration comes against the background of Philaret Denisenko's active attempts to garner support for the revival of the KP, which he loudly proclaims never ceased to exist, despite his promise to liquidate it on the morning of the "unification council" in Kiev on December 15.

The Ukrainian Ministry of Justice has confirmed that the KP was never liquidated

and continues to exist, at least in the eyes of the state. Moreover, the “Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church,” which united with the KP to create the so-called “Orthodox Church of Ukraine” (OCU), was also not liquidated before the council.

Thus, there are now three schismatic bodies in Ukraine, rather than the two that existed before the “unification council.”

A battle has begun between Philaret Denisenko, the “Patriarch” of the KP, considered the “Honorary Patriarch” of the OCU, and the primate of the OCU “Metropolitan” Epiphany Dumenko, that only further delegitimizes the OCU in the eyes of the Orthodox world and threatens to tear apart Pat. Bartholomew’s personal creation.

While the Orthodox world has never recognized the legitimacy of the KP, it does not deny its existence.

Moreover, in the same speech, Pat. Bartholomew himself speaks of the separation of Ukrainian Orthodoxy into “three separate entities,” and states that “This reality, the existence of two schismatic groups, was a real agony.”

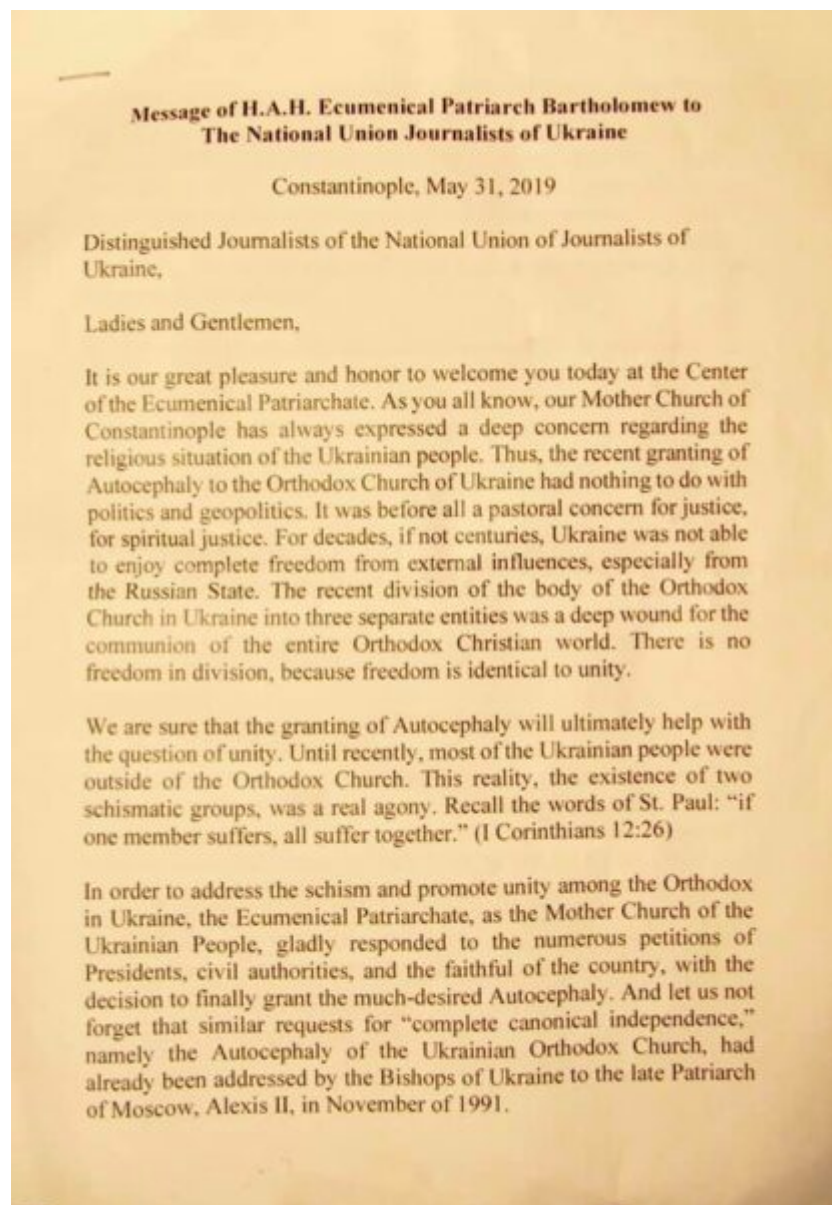
The rest of Pat. Bartholomew’s speech is largely a reiteration of the same points he and other Constantinople representatives have been making since the summer. He states that the granting of autocephaly to Ukraine was a purely pastoral matter on the part of Constantinople, to free Ukraine from the oppression of being part of the Russian Church and to create unity within Ukraine.

The Synods, primates, and hierarchs of other Local Churches have, however, noted that Ukrainian Orthodoxy is only less unified since Constantinople’s interference there.

He also repeats the historical claim that the Kiev Metropolis never transferred to the Russian Church—an assertion that only the Patriarchate of Constantinople accepts. Further, he states that “The issue in Ukraine was timely. That is, the Ecumenical Patriarchate did not suddenly decide to intervene,” although he had denied numerous appeals from schismatic clergy and state authorities over the preceding three decades, changing his mind only after the unsuccessful Crete council in 2016.

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, a hierarch of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, has tied Constantinople’s interference in Ukraine to Pat. Bartholomew’s disappointment that the Russian Church did not participate in the Crete Council.

Pat. Bartholomew further states: “As we have maintained, there are no more schismatics in Ukraine because they have been restored to communion with the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.” However, to date, the OCU is in communion only with the Patriarchate of Constantinople, not with the Orthodox Church as a whole. They have been explicitly rejected as schismatics by several Local Churches.



— Source: [OrthoChristian](#)