

PAT. THEODOROS ACCUSES PAT. PORFIRIJE OF DEFENDING KIEV CAVES ABBOT BUT NOT CONDEMNING RUSSIAN CHURCH IN AFRICA



Last week, His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije addressed a number of global religious and secular leaders, including the primates of the Local Churches, calling on them to do what they can to help His Eminence Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod, the abbot of the Kiev Caves Lavra who is being held in a Kiev detention center.

As head of the famous monastery, Met. Pavel is a target for state authorities. After months of house arrest, a judge ordered to move the hierarch to a pre-trial detention center earlier this month.

Pat. Theodoros was once a strong ally of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and even flew to Ukraine in 2018 to offer his support and encourage the people to remain in the true Church as the Patriarchate of Constantinople was preparing to create the schismatic “Orthodox Church of Ukraine.”

However, just a year later, the Alexandrian primate suddenly changed his position and entered into communion with the schismatics. In response, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church established its own African Exarchate in late 2021,

which has been receiving parishes and individual clerics throughout the canonical territory of the Patriarchate of Alexandria ever since.

Against this background, Pat. Theodoros' response to Pat. Porfirije, published by the Patriarchate of Alexandria yesterday, focuses not on the plight of Met. Pavel and the UOC, but on Alexandria's own struggles with the Russian Church.

Concerning Met. Pavel he states: "We immediately respond that we unequivocally stand in favor of the defense of the human rights of every fellow human being."

However, he shows sympathy with the Ukrainian state authorities, clarifying that he supports human rights, "as long as they respect and abide by the legislation of their country, as well as the rights of their fellow citizens." Met. Pavel is being charged with inciting religious enmity for his statements against the schismatics, and for supposedly supporting and justifying the war, which are the same charges brought against any cleric the state wants to detain.

The Patriarch then quickly and deviously moves on to his own concerns, as if there were a valid comparison between the arrest and torture of hierarchs, priest, and laypeople for refusing to join a schismatic and graceless ecclesiastical conglomeration, and the opening of canonical parishes—at the native peoples' insistent request—on a continent that Patriarch Theodoros disputably claims for himself. He states: "Our ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria has been suffering for some time now from the known issue of the unauthorized intrusion of the Russian Church within the boundaries of our Patriarchal jurisdiction."

Pat. Theodoros "observes with sorrow" that Pat. Porfirije has come to the defense of Met. Pavel, but not to the defense of the Patriarchate of Alexandria against the Russian Church, which he writes is undermining missionary labors and spiritual growth throughout Africa and "rending the seamless robe of Christ."

Thus, Pat. Theodoros awaits Pat. Porfirije's "immediate condemnation of these uncanonical and dishonorable actions."

orthochristian.com