

The Dispute between the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow Regarding the Church in Ukraine

On October 11 2018, the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople announced its decision of granting autocephaly to the Church in Ukraine. Autocephaly for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church means the recognition of its legitimacy as a canonical Orthodox church and its self-governance outside of Moscow's jurisdictional boundaries. Constantinople's decision was based on a detailed analysis of the historical documents and decisions regarding the Church in Ukraine. This analysis, titled "The Ecumenical Throne and the Church of Ukraine: The Documents Speak," included in the current issue of CJOC, was published by Constantinople in English in September 2018. On October 11 2018, Constantinople made the following official statement:

The Ecumenical Patriarchate Announcement

Presided by His All-Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Holy and Sacred Synod convened for its regular session from October 9 to 11, 2018, in order to examine and discuss items on its agenda.

The Holy Synod discussed in particular and at length the ecclesiastical matter of Ukraine, in the presence of His Excellency Archbishop Daniel of Pamphilon and His Grace Bishop Hilarion of Edmonton, Patriarchal Exarchs to Ukraine, and following extensive deliberations decreed:

- 1) To renew the decision already made that the Ecumenical Patriarchate proceed to the granting of Autocephaly to the Church of Ukraine.

- 2) To reestablish, at this moment, the *Stavropegion* of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Kyiv, one of its many *Stavropegia* in Ukraine that existed there always.¹
- 3) To accept and review the petitions of appeal of Filaret Denisenko,² Makariy Maletych³ and their followers, who found themselves in schism not for dogmatic reasons, in accordance with the canonical prerogatives of the Patriarch of Constantinople to receive such petitions by hierarchs and other clergy from all of the Autocephalous Churches. Thus, the above-mentioned have been canonically reinstated to their hierarchical or priestly rank, and their faithful have been restored to communion with the Church.
- 4) To revoke the legal binding of the Synodal Letter of the year 1686, issued for the circumstances of that time, which granted the right through *oikonomia* to the Patriarch of Moscow to ordain the Metropolitan of Kyiv, elected by the Clergy-Laity Assembly of his eparchy, who would commemorate the Ecumenical Patriarch as the First hierarch at any celebration, proclaiming and affirming his canonical dependence to the Mother Church of Constantinople.⁴

¹ Historically, *stavropegial* denotes an institution that falls under the jurisdiction of a higher church hierarch rather than a local diocesan bishop. Such institutions are normally monasteries, churches or chapels, but can also be unions. Earlier in Eastern Rome, *stavropegial* was sometimes used synonymously with patriarchal, referring to the Patriarch of Constantinople. In the context of this document, “*stavropegia* in Ukraine” is likely referring to the fact that Constantinople used to have the sole jurisdiction over the Church in Kyiv, and only temporarily and partially transferred this jurisdiction to Moscow in 1686 (editor’s note).

² Archbishop Filaret, known to his followers as Patriarch Filaret of Kyiv, the head of the “Ukrainian Orthodox Church – the Kyiv Patriarchate.” In January 1992, as Ukraine gained independence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Metropolitan Filaret, at that time the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine, convened a church council in Kyiv and requested autocephaly from Moscow. The Russian Church rejected the request, and Archbishop Filaret and his followers unilaterally declared independence from Moscow. Moscow subsequently reasserted its authority over the parishes and the faithful who did not follow Filaret, convened a rival council in Kharkiv in May 1992, created the “Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate,” excommunicated Filaret and his followers, and subsequently anatomized him (ed.).

³ Archbishop Makariy, known to his followers as Metropolitan Makariy, the head of the “Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church.” This uncanonical church group was created soon after the Russian Revolution of 1917, when Ukraine tried to assert independence from Russia. This group was subsequently suppressed by the Soviet authorities in Ukraine, but it was resurrected after the collapse of the Soviet Union (ed.).

⁴ By the current decision, the Holy Synod of Constantinople revoked the 1686 decree. Constantinople has provided detailed reasons for this alongside with a copy of the original letter and its translation. The document is provided in the current issue of CJOC (ed.).

5) To appeal to all sides involved that they avoid appropriation of Churches, Monasteries and other properties, as well as every other act of violence and retaliation, so that the peace and love of Christ may prevail.

At the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the 11th of October, 2018

From the Chief Secretariat
of the Holy and Sacred Synod

This decision was not made without prior talks and consultations between Constantinople and Moscow. The Patriarchate of Moscow did not respond to Constantinople's arguments, but when the decision on autocephaly for the Church in Ukraine was announced, Moscow convened a holy synod session in Minsk, Belarus, and issued the following proclamation:

**Statement by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church
concerning the encroachment of the Patriarchate of Constantinople on
the canonical territory of the Russian Church⁵**

With profound pain the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church has taken the report of the Patriarchate of Constantinople published on October 11, 2018, about the following decisions of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople: confirming the intention 'to grant autocephaly to the Ukrainian Church; opening a 'stauropegion' of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in Kiev; 'restoring in the rank of bishop or priest' the leaders of the Ukrainian schism and their followers and 'returning their faithful to church communion;' 'recalling the 1686 patent of the Patriarchate of Constantinople on the transfer of the Metropolis of Kiev to the Moscow Patriarchate as its part.'⁶

⁵ Moscow Patriarchate <<http://www.patriarchia.ru/en/db/text/5283716.html>>

⁶ According to the 1686 agreement, Constantinople did not transfer Kyiv to the Moscow jurisdiction, but allowed to consecrate the head of the Kyiv church, who was supposed to be elected by local Ukrainians first. Further, according to the 1686 dispensation, the head of the Eparchy of Kyiv, elected by people and consecrated by Moscow, had to be presented to and approved by the Ataman (headman) of Kyiv, the local ruler. This transfer was necessary, as Constantinople was not able to administer Kyiv due to its captivity in the Ottoman Empire, and

These unlawful decisions of the Synod were adopted by the Church of Constantinople unilaterally, ignoring the appeals of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church⁷ and the plenitude of the Russian Orthodox Church as well as sister Local Orthodox Churches,⁸ their primates and hierarchs to hold a pan-Orthodox discussion of the issue.

Entering into communion with those who deviated into schism and the more so with those who are excommunicated from the Church is tantamount to deviation into schism and is severely condemned by the canons of the Holy Church: 'If any one of the bishops, presbyters, or deacons, or any one in the Canon shall be found communicating with excommunicated persons, let him also be excommunicated as one who brings confusion on the order of the Church' (Council of Antioch Canon 2; Apostolic Canons 10, 11).

The decision of the Patriarchate of Constantinople 'to restore' the canonical status and admit to communion former Metropolitan Philaret Denisenko excommunicated from the Church ignores a number of successive decisions of Bishops' Councils of the Russian Orthodox Church, the validity of which is beyond doubt.

By the decision of the Bishops' Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which took place on May 27, 1992, in Kharkov, Metropolitan Philaret (Denisenko), for his failure to fulfil the promises he gave on oath at the cross and the Gospel during the previous Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, was removed from the see of Kiev and suspended.

The Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, by its Resolution of June 11, 1992, confirmed the decision of the Council of Kharkov and deposed Philaret Denisenko depriving him of all ranks of ministry according to the following accusations: 'Cruel and arrogant attitude to the clergy under his jurisdiction, diktat and blackmail (Tit. 1: 7-8; Apostolic Canon 27); bringing temptation to the community of the faithful by his behaviour and private life (Mt. 18:7; the First Ecumenical Council Canon 3, the Sixth Ecumenical Council Canon 5); perjury

many military conflicts that took place between the Russian princes and their allies and the Ottoman Empire and its allies (ed.).

⁷ That is, the Russian Church in Ukraine (ed.).

⁸ The other national autocephalous Orthodox churches, such as Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, etc. (ed.).

(Apostolic Canon 25); public slander and blasphemy against a Bishops' Council (Second Ecumenical Council Canon 6); exercising divine offices including ordinations in the state of suspension (Apostolic Canon 28); causing a schism in the Church (Double Council Canon 15). All the ordinations administered by Philaret in the state of suspension since May 27, 1992, and the suspensions imposed by him were recognized as invalid.

In spite of repeated calls to repentance, Philaret Denisenko after his deposition continued his schismatic activity, also within other Local Churches. By the decision of the 1997 Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, he was anathematized.

These decisions were recognized by all the Local Orthodox Churches including the Church of Constantinople. In particular, on August 26, 1992, His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople in his reply to a letter from His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia wrote about the deposition of Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev, 'Our Holy Great Church of Christ, recognizing the full and exclusive competence of your Most Holy Russian Church in this matter, synodically accepts the decision on the above.'

In His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew's letter of April 7, 1997, to His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II it is stated that 'having received the notice about this decision, we have informed the hierarchy of our Ecumenical See about it and asked them henceforth to have no church communion with these persons.'

Today, after more than two decades, the Patriarchate of Constantinople has changed its position for political reasons.

In its decision to justify the leaders of the schism and 'legalize' their hierarchy, the Holy Synod of the Church of Constantinople refers to non-existent 'canonical privileges of the Patriarch of Constantinople to accept appeals of hierarchs and clergy from all the autocephalous Churches.' These claims in the form given to them today by the Patriarch of Constantinople have never been supported by the plenitude of the Orthodox Church, as they have no grounds in sacred canons and bluntly contradict in particular Canon 15 of the Council of Antioch: 'If any Bishop... should be tried by all the Bishops in the province, and all of them have pronounced one decision against him in complete agreement with each other, let him no more be tried again by others, but let the concordant verdict of the bishops of the province stand on record.' These claims are also refuted by the practice of decision

of the Holy Ecumenical and Local Councils and interpretations of authoritative canonists of the Byzantine and modern times.

Thus, John Zonaras writes, 'The Patriarch [of Constantinople] is recognized as judge not over all the metropolitans but only those who are subordinate to him. For neither metropolitans of Syria, nor those of Palestine or Phoenicia or Egypt are summoned to his judgement against their will, but those of Syria are to be judged by the Patriarch of Antioch, those of Palestine by that of Jerusalem, while the Egyptian ones are judged by that of Alexandria who ordains them and to whom they are subordinate.'

The impossibility of receiving into communion a person condemned in another Local Church is stated in Canon 116 (118) of the Council of Carthage: 'He who, having been excommunicated... shall go stealthily to overseas countries to be accepted into communion, shall be expelled from the clergy'. The same is stated in the canonical letter of the Council to Pope Celestine: 'Those who were excommunicated in their diocese shall not be taken into communion by your Holiness... Whatever affairs may arise, they should be terminated in their place.'

St. Nicodemus of the Hagiorite in his *Pedalion*, an authoritative source on the canon law of the Church of Constantinople, interprets Canon I of the Fourth Ecumenical Council rejecting the false opinion on the right of Constantinople to consider appeals from other Churches: 'The Primate of Constantinople has no right to act in dioceses and provinces of other Patriarchs, and this canon does not give him a right to accept appeals on any affair in the Universal Church...' Enumerating quite a number of arguments for this interpretation and referring to the practice of the decisions of Ecumenical Councils. St. Nicodemus comes to this conclusion: 'At the present time... the Primate of Constantinople is the first, only and last judge for the metropolitans subordinate to him – but not for those who are subordinate to other Patriarchs. For, as we would say, the last and general judge for all Patriarchs is the Ecumenical Council and none else.' It follows from the above that the Synod of the Church of Constantinople has no canonical rights to cancel court rulings made by the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church.

One's appropriation of powers to reverse court judgements and other decisions of other Local Orthodox Churches is only one of the manifestations of a new false teaching proclaimed today by the Church of Constantinople and ascribing to the Patriarch of Constantinople the right of 'the first without equals' (*primus sine paribus*) with a universal jurisdiction. 'This Patriarchate of Constantinople's vision

of its own rights and powers comes in an unsurmountable contradiction with the ages-long canonical tradition on which the life of the Russian Orthodox Church and other Local Churches is built,' warned the 2008 Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in its resolution 'On the Unity of the Church.' In the same resolution, the Council called the Church of Constantinople 'to show discretion till a common Orthodox consideration of the enumerated innovations and refrain from steps which can undermine the Orthodox unity. It is especially true for the attempts to review the canonical boundaries of Local Orthodox Churches.'

The 1686 Act confirming the Metropolis of Kiev as part of the Moscow Patriarchate and signed by His Holiness Patriarch Dionysius IV of Constantinople and the Holy Synod of the Church of Constantinople is not to be reviewed. The decision to 'repeal' it is canonically negligible.⁹ Otherwise it would be possible to annul any document defining the canonical territory and status of a Local Church, regardless of its antiquity, authoritativeness and common ecclesial recognition.

The 1686 Synodal Deed and other documents that accompany states nothing about either a temporary nature of the transfer of the Metropolis of Kiev to the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate or that it may be cancelled.¹⁰ The attempt of hierarchs of the Patriarchate of Constantinople for political and self-seeking reasons to review this resolution now, over three hundred years after it was adopted, runs contrary to the spirit of the Orthodox Church's canons that do not allow of a possibility for reviewing established church boundaries that have not been challenged for a long time. Thus, Canon 129 (133) of the Council of Carthage reads, 'If anyone... brought some place to catholic unity and had it in his

⁹ The decree of 1686 states: "whenever this Metropolitan of Kyiv celebrates the sacred, holy and bloodless sacrifice in this diocese, he should commemorate among the first the venerable name of the Ecumenical Patriarch as his source and authority, and as superior to all dioceses and eparchies everywhere, followed by the commemoration of the Patriarch of Moscovy as his elder, without any resistance or refusal whatsoever in this, but accepting it as a reasonable and right act" (ed. See "The Ecumenical Throne and the Church of Ukraine" in the current issue). Accordingly, Patriarch of Constantinople was intended to remain the primate, the "source and authority" for the Metropolitan Kyiv – this means that he has kept the right to revoke this letter and the privileges granted by it.

¹⁰ In fact, the decree of 1686 does not state that the Eparchy of Kyiv is transferred to Moscow fully and irreversibly. Instead, it states that "the most holy Eparchy of Kyiv should be subjected to the most holy patriarchal throne of the great and God-saved city Moscovy, by which we mean that the Metropolitan of Kyiv should be ordained there, whenever such need arises..." (ed. See "The Ecumenical Throne and the Church of Ukraine" in the current issue).

jurisdiction for three years, and nobody demanded it from him, then it shall not be claimed from him, if also there was a bishop during these three years who should have claimed it but kept silent.' And Canon 17 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council establishes the thirty years' term for a possible conciliar consideration of disputes over the belonging of even particular church parishes: 'Parishes in each diocese... shall be invariably under the power of bishops who manage them, especially if for thirty years they undoubtedly were under his jurisdiction and governance.'

And how is it possible to cancel a decision that has been valid for three centuries? It would mean an attempt to see it 'like it were non-existent' throughout the successive history of the development of church life. As if the Patriarchate of Constantinople does not notice that the Metropolis of Kiev of 1686, the return of which as its part is declared today, had boundaries that were essentially different from today's boundaries of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and used to embrace only a smaller part of the latter. The Metropolis of Kiev of our days includes as such the city of Kiev and several areas adjacent to it. The larger part of the dioceses of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church however, especially in the east and south of the country, was founded and developed already as part of the autocephalous Russian Church, being a fruit of its ages-long missionary and pastoral work.¹¹ The present action of the Patriarchate of Constantinople is an attempt to hijack what has never belonged to it.

The 1686 Action put a limit to the two hundred years' period of forced division in the centuries-long history of the Russian Church, which, for all the changing political circumstances, was invariably aware of itself as a single whole. After the Russian Church's unification in 1686, nobody has doubted for over three centuries that the Orthodox in Ukraine are the flock of the Russian Church, not the Patriarchate of Constantinople.¹² And today, contrary to the pressure of external anti-church forces, this multimillion flock cherishes the unity of the Church of all Rus and faithfulness to her.

¹¹ It is true that the territorial boundaries of the Eparchy of Kyiv have changed since, but in terms of "missionary" work there by the Russian church, the vast majority of the population in Ukraine had been converted to Christianity prior to 1686, and the only sizable non-Christian minority in Ukraine was the Crimean Tatars, who remain Muslim to this day (ed.).

¹² In fact, Ukrainians themselves doubted it; hence, the efforts to restore the native church following the Russian Revolution (1917), and the dissolution of the Soviet Union (1992) (ed.).

The attempt of the Patriarchate of Constantinople to decide the fate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church without her consent is an anti-canonical encroachment on somebody else's church possessions. The church canon reads: 'The same rule shall be observed in the other dioceses and provinces everywhere, so that none of the God-beloved Bishops shall assume control of any province which has not heretofore... But if anyone has violently taken and subjected [a Province], he shall give it up; lest the Canons of the Fathers be transgressed; or the vanities of worldly honour be brought in under pretext of sacred office; or we lose, without knowing it, little by little, the liberty which Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Deliverer of all men, hath given us by his own Blood' (Third Ecumenical Council Canon 8). The judgement of this canon also falls upon the decision of the Patriarchate of Constantinople to establish, in agreement with the secular authorities, its 'stauropegion' in Kiev without the knowledge and consent of the canonical supreme authority of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Hypocritically justifying it by a desire to restore the unity of Ukrainian Orthodoxy, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, by its senseless and politically motivated decisions, brings in an even larger division and aggravates the suffering of the canonical Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

To admit into communion schismatics and a person anathematized in other Local Church with all the 'bishops' and 'clergy' consecrated by him, the encroachment on somebody else's canonical regions, the attempt to abandon its own historical decisions and commitments – all this leads the Patriarchate of Constantinople beyond the canonical space and, to our great grief, makes it impossible for us to continue the Eucharistic community with its hierarchy, clergy and laity. From now on until the Patriarchate of Constantinople's rejection of its anti-canonical decisions, it is impossible for all the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church to concelebrate with the clergy of the Church of Constantinople and for the laity to participate in sacraments administered in its churches.¹³

¹³ This is a contradictory statement: it appears that Moscow continues to recognize the validity and canonicity of the "sacraments administered in its [Constantinople's] churches," but forbids its members participating in them. The church historically and normally forbids its members to participate in services with the groups whose sacraments are uncanonical, i.e. schismatics or heretics (ed.).

The move of hierarchy or clergy from the canonical Church to the schismatics or entering in the Eucharistic communion with the latter is a canonical crime involving appropriate suspensions.

With grief we evoke the prophecy of our Lord Jesus Christ about the time of temptation and special suffering of Christians: Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold (Mt. 24:12). In a situation of the deep undermining of inter-Orthodox relations and full disregard for ages-long norms of church canonical law, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church believes it her duty to come out in defense of the fundamental traditions of Orthodoxy, in defense of the Holy Tradition of the Church substituted by new and strange teachings on the universal power of the first among the Primates.

We call upon the Primates and Holy Synods of Local Orthodox Churches to a proper evaluation of the above-mentioned anti-canonical actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and to a joint search for a way out of the grave crisis tearing apart the body of the One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

We express our all-round support for His Beatitude Onufriy,¹⁴ Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine and for the plenitude of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church at a time so hard for her. We pray for the strengthening of her faithful standing in a courageous vigil for the truth and unity of the canonical Church in Ukraine.

We ask the archpastors, clergy, monastics and laity of the whole Russian Orthodox Church to enhance their prayers for our brothers and sisters of the same faith in Ukraine. May the prayerful veil of the Most Holy Heavenly Queen, the honorable fathers of the Kiev Caves, St. Job of Pochaev, new martyrs and confessors and all the saints of the Russian Church be over all of us.

The Patriarchate of Moscow has tried very hard to portray itself as a supranational entity, not as a national church in Russia. However, officially the church also calls itself “The Russian Orthodox Church.”¹⁵ Moreover, it is seen as a purely national entity by the government of Russia: as the current dispute between Constantinople and Moscow unfolded, the Russian government under President

¹⁴ Archbishop Onufriy, Metropolitan of Kyiv, the head of the “Orthodox Church of Ukraine – the Moscow Patriarchate.”

¹⁵ The Russian Orthodox Church, the official site <<https://mospat.ru/en/>>

Putin convened an extraordinary meeting of Security Council to discuss “situation of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine.”¹⁶ To distinguish itself from the other sister Orthodox churches, Moscow Patriarchate has been describing them as “local churches,” an imperial concept, as in the document above, denoting by this the national character of the Orthodox churches in Bulgaria, Georgia, Poland and other countries.

On November 3 2018, President Poroshenko of Ukraine visited the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and signed a cooperation agreement, according to which the Patriarchate of Constantinople will assist the Church of Ukraine in the process of establishing its autocephaly.¹⁷ Meanwhile, the other autocephalous churches have remained silent: none of them have sided either with Moscow and Constantinople. Individual bishops from Bulgaria and Serbia have expressed their surprise or dismay with such developments.¹⁸ Following Poroshenko’s visit to Constantinople, Serbian Bishop Irinej of Bačka issued a statement expressing his bewilderment with the recent developments around the formerly schismatic groups in Ukraine.¹⁹ The churches in Georgia and North America had issued statements in anticipation of the break between Moscow and Constantinople,²⁰ presumably to excuse themselves from making official

¹⁶ Prezident Rossii, “Soveshchanie s postoiannimi chlenami soveta bezopasnosti,” October 12 2018 <<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58813>>

¹⁷ “Poroshenko i Varfolomiy pidpisali ugodu pro spivpratsiu: pro shcho v niy idetsia,” BBC Ukraine, November 2 2018 <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-46082420?SThisFB&fbclid=IwAR1sSM9_A9Sgy6JuusnTyV2_3zVJyKJUBFLiSuU7kTeT_RhiH6WAL2y-JY4>

¹⁸ “Tri ierarkha Bolgarskoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi vistupili s zayavleniem po povodu situatsii na Ukraine,” The Russian Orthodox Church, October 12 2018 <https://mospat.ru/ru/2018/10/12/news165075/?fbclid=IwAR2o8GBorVRfpzf3SRc7tGIEybMGev6E5reKXa5eM0x_5WH68dvYKIQS-wA>

¹⁹ “Episkop Bachki Ireney: Vaselenski patriarch Vartolomej i ukrajinski predsednik Poroshenko potpisali Sporazum o saradnii,” Srpska Pravoslavna Tsrkva, November 5 2018 <http://www.spc.rs/sr/epsikop_bachki_irinej_vaseljenski_patrijarh_vartolomej_ukrajinski_predsednik_poroshenko_potpisali_sp>

²⁰ “Metropolitan Tikhon issues Archpastoral Letter concerning recent developments in Ukraine,” The Orthodox Church in America, September 26 2018 <<https://oca.org/news/headline-news/metropolitan-tikhon-issues-archpastoral-letter-concerning-recent-developmen>>

statements after the decision. The Church of Georgia pointed out that no change in its position was possible before Constantinople and Moscow made their official positions known.²¹ Also, anticipating the Constantinople decision, the Moscow Patriarchate had issued a statement complaining about the recent events surrounding jurisdictional questions in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; however, they did not address specific reasons for Ukrainian autocephaly provided by Constantinople.²²

In practical terms, if Moscow does not adjust its policies toward Ukraine, its effective jurisdiction in that country may end up limited to the territory currently annexed by Russia (i.e. Crimea) and controlled by the pro-Russian rebels (i.e. the Donetsk and Luhansk districts). Even if Russia manages to maintain its jurisdiction in Ukraine-proper long-term, the President of Ukraine, the political successor of the Ataman of Kyiv mentioned in the 1686 dispensation, is not likely to approve the next Metropolitan presented to him by Moscow. If Moscow does not present the next appointee to the office of Metropolitan of Kyiv to the President of Ukraine, the required condition for the legitimacy of this office which they have neglected for a long time, the appointment will not be valid even according to the most pro-Moscow interpretation of the 1686 document.

²¹ “Clarification of the Position of the Georgian Church on the Question of the Autocephaly of the Ukrainian Church,” The Patriarchate of Georgia, October 10 2018 <<http://patriarchate.ge/geo/clarification-of-the-position-of/>>

²² “Statement of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church concerning the uncanonical intervention of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church,” The Russian Orthodox Church, Department for External Church Relations, September 9 2018 <<https://mospat.ru/en/2018/09/14/news163803/>>