

## Communiqué on the Situation in Ukraine

1. Information concerning religious unrest in Ukraine has recently been increasing to a significant degree. The government there is persecuting the so-called “Ukrainian Orthodox Church” under Metropolitan Onufriy of Kiev. It has issued an ultimatum to the monks of the historic Kiev Lavra to depart from their monastery by March 29 this year, that it might be turned over to a new Brotherhood, acceptable to the government and under the alleged Metropolitan Epifaniy of Kiev of the self-styled “Orthodox Church of Ukraine,” a newfangled ecclesiastical institution which was recognized by Constantinople as an autocephalous Church. Of course, persecutions against the clergy and laity of the “Ukrainian Orthodox Church” began earlier, but they are now coming to a head and are deeply dividing the Ukrainian people when this critical period in the country demands, as at no other time, unity and unanimity on account of the war situation.

2. Persecutions against Christians, but also against people of any religious conviction, wherever and however they may happen, and especially in our time, are unacceptable and a disgrace to civilization, democracy, humanity, and freedom. For this reason, we are addressing an appeal to all people of goodwill who cherish and are dedicated to the struggle for religious tolerance and freedom of conscience and who have the ability to intervene directly, to do so for the sake of putting a stop to persecution in any form. If Ukraine wishes to be considered a free and democratic country, it is obligated first and foremost to respect the right to freedom of religion and not to copy the notorious methods of godless Soviet despotism, which it purports to combat.

3. We offer fervent entreaties to our Lord and the Most Holy Theotokos, especially during this period of repentance in the Great Fast, at the same time calling on and exhorting our flock, as well as every faithful Christian, to supplication on behalf of the persecuted faithful in Ukraine, that they may confront the injustice against them with courage and Christian patience, and that the destructive war may cease as soon as possible.

*From the Holy Synod of  
the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece  
Athens, March 14/27, 2023*