



УКРАЇНСЬКА ПРАВОСЛАВНА ЦЕРКВА В КАНАДІ
UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA
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The Right Honourable John Baird,
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Regarding Developing Events in Ukraine

The Episcopate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada expresses profound concern at the developing events in Crimea and at the unrest in some regions of Ukraine. We express to you our great alarm at the recent decision by the upper house of the Russian parliament to approve the deployment of the Russian military in Ukraine. We join the international community in evaluating such military action as a threat to the unity and the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Many of our faithful in the Orthodox Church of Canada have cultivated cultural ties and maintain deep family connections with people throughout all of Ukraine. As such, we are deeply concerned for the welfare and security of the peaceful citizens who have only recently taken a difficult step towards building a state according to international democratic principles and rule of law. In the event of further military aggression, we are concerned about human rights violations, particularly towards Ukraine's minority groups and religious jurisdictions.

The Ukrainian people are still recovering from the difficult week of violence in February perpetrated by the former authorities in Ukraine. Thus, we welcome Minister Baird's statement on Canada's support for the new government in Ukraine as the country makes the transition to a genuine democracy. The new Ukrainian government has already demonstrated its will to move towards a transparent civil society and Eurointegration. We also welcome Canada's statement of support for economic and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine which will assist in stabilizing the situation. This support greatly aids the most vulnerable sectors of society, including those wounded in the recent violence, pensioners, orphans and families living below the poverty line.

We urge the Government of Canada to take all measures at its disposal to work towards avoiding further aggression and move toward a peaceful resolution to prevent any further loss of life of the

Ukrainian citizens. The Russian authorities have ignored attempts by Ukrainian authorities and international organizations for dialogue and a peaceful regulation of the situation. We further urge the Government of Canada to work together with its international allies to press the Russian Government to withdraw its military from Ukraine.

We support positive changes for building a civil society in the Ukrainian state based on democratic values, dignity of its citizens and respect for human life. We welcome the Government of Canada's recognition and support of Ukraine's nation-building efforts.

With Hierarchical Blessing,

† **YURIJ**, *Metropolitan*