



УКРАЇНСЬКА ПРАВОСЛАВНА ЦЕРКВА В КАНАДІ
UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA
L'ÉGLISE ORTHODOXE UKRAINIENNE DU CANADA

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March 18, 2014

Statement
Of the Hierarchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
Regarding the Annexation of Crimea, Ukraine

Reverend clergy, venerable monastics and faithful brothers and sisters,

Glory to Jesus Christ!

The Episcopate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada joins the Government of Canada and international community in strongly condemning the unlawful annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation. We also join the international community in expressing non-recognition of the results of the so-called “referendum” in Crimea on March 16. We evaluate these decisions as a direct threat to the territorial integrity of the Ukrainian state and to the unity of Ukrainian citizens.

Furthermore, we express our shock and sadness at the death of a Ukrainian officer during an attack by Russian troops on a Ukrainian military base in Crimea on March 18. This comes as a flagrant violation of the truce reached between the Ukrainian and Russian military commands. We continue to voice our concern for the safety of Ukrainian journalists, ethnic Ukrainian and Tatar minorities and religious workers residing and working in Crimea who are being kidnapped and harassed by Russian troops and unidentified armed individuals.

Our brothers and sisters in Ukraine, our spiritual homeland, require our support during this time of uncertainty. We, the Hierarchs of the UOCC, call upon our faithful to spiritually support our brothers and sisters in Christ through our intensified prayers during liturgical worship and in our homes. Let us pray for peace and unity for the Ukrainian people and beseech the Lord to “protect them from every foe and adversary.” We also encourage our faithful to respond to the appeal from the Ukrainian community to contribute towards material and medical humanitarian assistance for Ukraine.

Furthermore, we call upon all world governments and the leaders of all religious organizations to support Ukraine and to denounce the armed annexation of Crimea. We also call upon the world community, international human rights watch organizations and religious groups to assist in monitoring and protecting the human rights of the ethnic Ukrainians, indigenous Tatars and other minorities residing in Crimea. Let us urge the Government of Canada, a strong champion of human rights, to take all measures available to press the Russian leadership to comply with international principles of democracy and human rights. We also support Canada's efforts to work towards a diplomatic solution to prevent a further loss of life of Ukrainian citizens.

As we prepare ourselves for the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ during these weeks of the Great Lent, let us pray that the Lord may grant wisdom to the new leadership of Ukraine. Let us also pray to All the Saints of Ukraine for their prayerful intercession for the safety and protection of the Ukrainian people and of the defenders of the Ukrainian land.

May the Most Holy Theotokos spread her veil of protection over the Ukrainian people in their great time of need. May the Lord hear our imploring prayers and blesses our free spiritual Motherland Ukraine and its long-suffering people.

With Hierarchical Blessing,

† **YURIJ**, Metropolitan

† **ILARION**, Bishop

† **ANDRIY**, Bishop