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## **UKRAINE – RUSSIA : Gap widening between Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox**

### **Gap widening between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church**

HRWF (22.08.2022) – The Ukrainian authorities have allowed Metropolitan Onufry, the head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church/ Moscow Patriarchate, to meet Russian prisoners of war. He gave them a message to share with their families when they are back home: “Tell them we do not want the war being waged

in Ukraine today. It must be stopped, and it can be stopped. We do not want mothers in Ukraine or Russia to meet their dead sons.”

This is however not the message of Patriarch Kirill of the Russian Orthodox Church who prioritizes his condolences in connection with the loss of lives in the road accident in the Turkish Gaziantep and the explosion of a shopping center in Yerevan”, choosing to ignore the innumerable Orthodox Ukrainian victims of the Russian shelling in the last six months and to keep silent about President Putin’s war of aggression. Instead, he claims that “all Orthodox Ukrainians are children of the Russian Orthodox Church.”

### ***His Beatitude Onuphry addresses Russian prisoners of war***

By Yaroslav Nivkin

Union of Orthodox Journalists (20.08.2022) – <https://bit.ly/3K97lJm> – The UOC Primate received Russian prisoners of war in the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra and urged them to tell their families that the war must be stopped and peace established.

On August 18, 2022, **His Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry** received a group of Russian prisoners of war at the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, who were brought by the initiative and assistance of journalist and blogger Vladimir Zolkin. The video of the meeting was published on Zolkin’s **YouTube channel**.

His Beatitude Onuphry led a prayer service in one of the Lavra

churches, after which he addressed the RF prisoners.

“I wish the Lord will return you to your homeland, families so that you can see mothers, sisters, wives, children, brothers, friends. I would like you to tell them the following words: we do not want the war being waged in Ukraine today. We do not want our cities and villages to be destroyed, our people and your people to perish. We do not want mothers in Ukraine or Russia to meet their dead sons and cry bitter, inconsolable tears over them. It must be stopped, and it can be stopped,” said His Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry.

His Beatitude said it is possible to stop the war, but not by the force of arms, not by the force of human truth, but by the force of divine love.

“We need to find a word of love that could silence the guns and stop the rockets. We want peace,” the Metropolitan said. “Our Ukrainian Orthodox Church did everything to ensure that the Russian and Ukrainian peoples lived in peace, harmony and love. It turned out the way it did. But even if evil happened, it must be stopped. May the Lord give our rulers the courage, reason, and wisdom to find the word of love that stops all evil. I want to wish that God protects you and all people who are on the battlefield. War is not the means by which unity between peoples and families can be achieved. Violence cannot create unity, unity is created through love, which is God. The one who prays and fulfills divine commandments is a man of God. May God bless our lands with peace.”

“I don’t know if you understand it or not, but it shouldn’t be like that (participation in the war – Ed.). You can’t kill each other. Death brings no benefit to anyone, but only grief to every home. It is a shame that peoples who came out of a single baptismal font should fight each other. And we must do everything to stop this insanity,” His Beatitude concluded.

**All Orthodox Ukrainians as children of Russian Orthodox Church**

## **Patriarch Kirill says**

Interfax (28.07.2022) –  
<http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=16647> –  
Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia has dismissed reproaches that the Russian Orthodox Church exists only for Russians and noted that all Orthodox Ukrainians, including those who have gone into schism, are children of the Russian Orthodox Church.

“Everything that concerns Donbass, the Lugansk Region, the Kharkov Region – those places where people are suffering today – is very disturbing and hurts my heart, because all the Orthodox people who live there are children of the Moscow Patriarchate,” the patriarch said at a meeting with children who had come to Moscow from Donbass and Ukraine on Thursday.

“Some acknowledge this, gladly confess and participate in the life of our Church, some have gone down the path of illegal schismatic separation from our Church, but God is the judge of everyone, and for the patriarch, all Orthodox people in Ukraine are his children, those close to his heart,” he said.

*Photo : Metropolitan Onuphry urged the Russians to stop the war. Photo: screenshot of V. Zolkin's YouTube channel*

**[Further reading about FORB in Ukraine on HRWF website](#)**

**[Further reading about FORB in Russia on HRWF website](#)**

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