

Patriarch of Antioch John X receives delegation of Metropolitans of Alexandria Patriarchate; briefed on Russian Church's 'intrusion' into Africa



The Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, His Beatitude John X, on Monday received the Metropolitan of Cameroon, His Eminence Gregory, and His Eminence Metropolitan John, of Zambia, representatives of the Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, His Most Divine Beatitude Theodoros II.

The two Metropolitans of the Alexandria Patriarchate were received at the patriarchal residence in Balamand, Lebanon.

The Metropolitans briefed Patriarch John over recent developments directly affecting the Alexandria Patriarchate, namely, what the latter has decried as an “intrusion” by the Patriarchate of Moscow into its ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Along these lines, the two Metropolitans conveyed a patriarchal letter from the Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria to the resident Patriarch of Antioch.

The Russian Orthodox Church earlier this year announced a controversial decision by members of its Holy Synod to establish an “Exarchate of Africa”, something that the Patriarchate of Alexandria considers as a blatantly non-canonical act.

According to reports, the issue of holding a session of the Patriarchs of the four Apostolic Patriarchates was also discussed, an initiative that has been proposed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople — and with the prospect of the convening of such a session before Holy Week this year.

The Patriarch of Antioch and All the East reiterated to the visiting delegation of hierarchs what he told the envoy of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Elder Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon, namely, that the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Antioch would meet soon to discuss the inter-Orthodoxy developments, as well as to decide over participation in the meeting.

The Elder Metropolitan Emmanuel had previously conveyed an invitation to Patriarch John to participate in a session of the Primates of the four Apostolic Patriarchates, proposed to be held in Constantinople before Great Lent and Holy Week

Russian Church's Metropolitan Hilarion: No such synod scheduled; before held, it must be prepared very carefully



Conversely, and speaking in another part of the world, the Russian Church's Metropolitan of Volokolamsk, His Eminence Hilarion, appeared on a Russian television program this month, where he said there was no scheduled pan-Orthodox synod on the horizon.

Hilarion, who is also the chairman of Department of External Church Relations and a permanent member of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Moscow, responded to question on whether differences between Orthodox Churches can be resolved through the holding of such a synod.

In reply, he merely noted that "...serious differences have arisen within the family of Orthodox Churches, which also include the issue of who, and in what manner, can convene such a pan-Orthodox synod."

His Eminence added that there is, indeed, a need to hold such an assembly, but "...before such a synod is held, it must be prepared very carefully."