

Can Holy Synod Vote Fairly Under Pressure from Constantinople?

By [Sophia Iliadi](#)

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*Since **Kyriakos Mitsotakis** was elected Prime Minister, the Church of Greece can breathe a bit freely. Threat of expelling faith from state education system blew over, as did the financial cuts for civilian services provided by the church.*

However, there is another problem, long-standing and very serious one. It's called the New Lands - ecclesiastical territories within the boundaries of Greece - namely Crete, the Dodecanese Islands, and northern Greece - that belonged to the Ecumenical Patriarchate until 1928, but are administered by the Holy Synod of the Greek Church now. That is, bishops of corresponding dioceses canonically report to the Ecumenical Patriarch, but form a part of the Standing Holy Synod of the Church of Greece.

This situation is jeopardized by the fact that the Old Greece and New lands are unjustly represented in parity in representation in the Holy Synod. There [are](#) 64 metropolises, titular metropolises and titular dioceses under the Archbishop of Athens and all Greece and 36 metropolises of the New Lands. However, the latter are disproportionally represented by 6 of the 12 bishops of the Standing Holy Synod.

Of course, that wouldn't be so much a problem, if this situation didn't prompt another Local Church to use it as a leverage of control over our autocephalous Church. Unfortunately, it did: there is nothing easier than lobbying via those under your control when they are overrepresented in the governing body.

For example, as Metropolitan Seraphim of Kythira [wrote](#) for Vima Orthodoxias, in January this year, the New Lands hierarchs received letters from the Phanar explaining that they should agree to the bestowal of autocephaly to the so-called Orthodox Church of Ukraine which formally took place on January 6. So, being under the reign of another Local Church Primate, that is His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, these bishops voted respectively.

In contrast, among members of the Holy Synod who represent the Old Greece, only one believed the Patriarch of Constantinople has the rights in question! The remaining five metropolitans from the Old Greece and the oldest members of the Standing Synod were more cautious about recognizing unlimited rights for Constantinople.

It clearly shows that bishops of the New Lands are constrained in their decisions by the Phanar that use them as a tool against the autocephalous Orthodox Church. Being equal to other bishops who serve in Greece, they don't enjoy the same freedom of thought and can't act accordingly to their conscience. Seems unfair, doesn't it?

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Sophia Iliadi is a freelance blogger from Athens, currently based in US.

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