



## **Bishops want more autonomy for Moscow-governed Belarusian Church**

Belarusian dioceses asked the head of the Belarusian Church, Metropolitan Pavel of Minsk and Zaslavye, patriarchal exarch to Belarus, to apply to the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill, and the Holy Synod, for “the status of a self-governed church to be granted to the Belarusian Orthodox Church within the system of the Moscow Patriarchate on the model of Latvia, Moldova and Estonia,” the dioceses said in a resolution passed at a meeting.

The resolution also suggested setting up new dioceses in the Minsk Region.

The Belarusian Orthodox Church has the status of an exarchate of the Russian Church. The exarch and top Belarusian bishops are elected by the Moscow synod. It is also the Russian synod that is authorized to set up and abolishing exarchates approval by a bishops’ council of the Russian Church is necessary for any such decision.

The Moscow Patriarchate-governed Orthodox churches of Latvia, Estonia, Moldova, Ukraine, China and Japan enjoy more autonomy than the Belarusian Church.