
GEORGIA, THE ORTHODOX CHURCH AT A CROSSROADS

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The death of Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II, who led the Georgian Orthodox Church for nearly 50 years, marks the end of an era for the entire country, as for many he was a symbol of national unity. The next Patriarch will be elected soon.

Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II, who led the Georgian Orthodox Church for nearly 50 years, died on March 17 at the age of 93. The end of the longest tenure in the Church's history marks the end of a defining era in Georgia's modern history.

Widely recognized as the country's one of the most trusted institutions, the Church now stands at a crossroads as it prepares to choose a new Catholicos-Patriarch. The election shall be made within a maximum of two months after the patriarch's death, that is by mid-May. Beyond spiritual leadership, Ilia II's successor is expected to navigate a deeply polarized Georgian society while balancing the country's complex geopolitical stance - caught between the West and Russia.

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