On the fact of desecration of an Orthodox church in Kosovo by extremists

The Russian Orthodox Church has received with pain the news of a new extremists's attack against the Orthodox Church of Serbia in the Province of Kosovo.

This time the blashemists attacked the Church of St. Michael in Štimlje. The church building was looted and desecrated. Unidentified vandals damaged fragments of the murals and knocked off paint from the countenances of the saints. Garbage, sewage and dead birds were put within the church building.

The Church of St. Michael was built in Štimlje and decorated by the famous Serbian artist Uroš Predić (1857-1953). In August 1999, the anti-Christian minded extremists set fire to the church, and the iconostasis was destroyed. During 2004, and in the course of the anti-Serbian pogroms in March in particular, it was not once that the foes of the Church set the church building on fire, desecrated it and disfigured the countenances of the saints depicted on church walls.

In 2009, the restoration work began with UNESCO assistance. However, the recent incident compels us to state with regret that the attitude of certain residents of the Province of Kosovo remains as intolerant as it used to be in the past.

Testifying to this attitude is an assault against the Orthodox monk Mitrofan (Bulajić) by some residents of Kosovska Mitrovica on 13 June 2012. He was admitted to a surgery with injuries to his head and arm.

Police of the self-proclaimed republic were not able to prevent either the beating up of the monk, or the act of vandalism in Štimlje. Repeated attacks of the extremists against churches, priests, monks and laymen of the Serbian Orthodox Churches in Kosovo and Metohija cause grave concern in the Russian Orthodox Church as they show the lack of effective measures aimed at their protection by the forces of international presence in the province.

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