



## **Fund-raising in aid of Orthodox Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija begins at monasteries of the Russian Orthodox Church**

The fund-raising in aid of the Raška-Prizren diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church and of the Orthodox population of Kosovo and Metohija began at the monasteries of the Russian Orthodox Church with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and under the coordination of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations.

On 4 February 2012, the commemoration day of New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov), abbot of the Sretensky Stavropegic Monastery in Moscow, addressed the worshippers after the evening service with a sermon, in which he called upon the faithful to respond to the pain that our Orthodox brothers in Kosovo have been suffering.

“The Serbian land has been undergoing a tragic period for twenty years already. Orthodox people have been expatriated from their native lands. Their churches were destroyed; many of them were burnt down. The same thing happened to the monasteries. But some courageous people, Orthodox Christians, still keep on the candle light of Orthodoxy there. Services are celebrated at some monasteries and churches. Monks who dwell in these old monasteries can not even leave their abodes and live under threat of being killed. In order to buy some necessary things they have to go to Serbia under escort of international forces. But they stay where God wants them to stay. Many of their brothers-monks and sisters-nuns have passed away. They were tortured and killed. And its their commemoration day, of the New Martyrs, we are celebrating today.”

The abbot of the Sretensky Monastery told the parishioners about the Orthodox Theological Seminary being opened recently in Prizren: “This is a real feat committed by the Serbian people. They have sent their dearest children, boys of 15-16 years old, to the Seminary built in the shape of a small fortress within a non-Christian world. These boys can not leave the territory of their educational institution; everything necessary is brought to them. Buildings of the Seminary had been burnt down. They could only restore one room, where they live and study.”

Archimandrite Tikhon called upon the faithful to collect funds in aid of the Orthodox people in Kosovo and Metohija and said that the raised money will be used for restoring the buildings of the Seminary in Kosovo, for supporting its faculty and students, and for developing the net of the hot food pantries, organized by the Raška-Prizren diocese for local needy people.”

In conclusion of his homily, the abbot of the Sretensky Monastery said: “May God help us to render our possible assistance and spiritual support to our brothers and sisters in Kosovo and Metohija, so that the light of Orthodoxy would not be put out there.”

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Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/54534/>