



Russian foreign ministry official comments on handing over responsibility for Orthodox shrines to Kosovo police

A. Nesterenko, an official of the Russian foreign ministry, has commented on the decision to hand over responsibility for protecting objects of the Serbian cultural and religious heritage to the Kosovo police, the foreign ministry information department has reported.

As a reminder, in July 2010 the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR) commanders decided to hand over responsibility for protecting the most valuable medieval monasteries and churches to the Kosovo police force. This step provoked sharp criticism by the Serbian Orthodox Church. According to Bishop Teodosije of Lipljana, the KFOR's decision has created a serious threat to the security of Orthodox monuments in the region.

Russian foreign policy officials share the concern of the Serbian authorities and Serbian Orthodox Church. The NATO commanders' decision 'made, among other things, without any consent of the Serbian Church, threatens the preservation of Serbian monasteries in the territory of Kosovo and Metochia, many of which are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, and complicates the work of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the region', Mr. Nesterenko stressed.

The Russian foreign ministry official expressed hope that 'the situation around the Serbian shrines in Kosovo will be settled on the basis of dialogue with Belgrade and the Serbian Orthodox Church under the existing international agreements and in full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244'.

DECR Communication Service