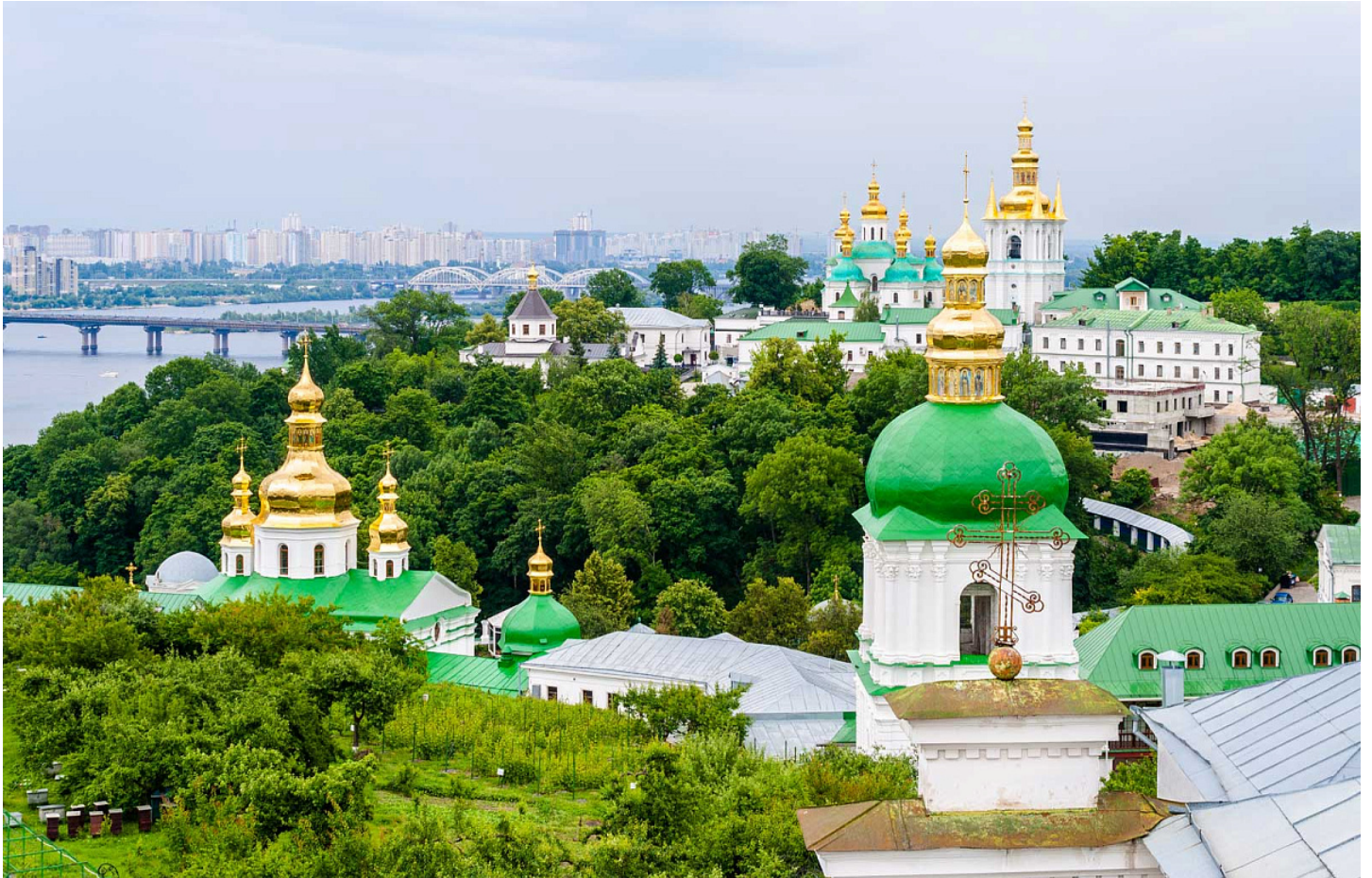




## His Holiness Patriarch Kirill's statement on attempts to evict the faithful from Kiev Pechersk Lavra



**DECR Communication Service, 14.07.2023.**

*His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia has made a statement on the attempts to evict the faithful from the Kiev Pechersk Lavra.*

The Ukrainian authorities have proceeded to forcible actions to achieve the definitive eviction of the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from the Kiev Pechersk Lavra. Violence is also used towards peaceful citizens who have come to the monastery's walls to defend their right to worship in the monastery so dear to their hearts.

The Kiev Pechersk Lavra, the oldest monastery of Russian Orthodoxy, happened to encounter godless persecutions under the USSR. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, theomachists closed the Lavra twice. First in the 1920s, when just as it is today, the monastic community was gradually ousted by a newly created 'State Preserve of History and Culture', which concluded with the full liquidation of the monastery. Some

brethren were executed by shooting and many of them were either imprisoned or exiled while the Lavra itself was ravaged. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century 40<sup>th</sup>, the monastic life revived but the monastery was closed again during the new anti-church persecutions already in the 1960s of the past century.

Over 30 years have passed since the latest revival of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra in the late 80s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, during which the monastery was restored and adorned by the efforts of many believers from various countries. It has become again a real pearl of the world Orthodoxy, while it has to be stated with great regret today that a new, just another attempt is made to put an end to the existence of the monastery as a spiritual center for millions of believers.

All those who seek to take a hand in this lawlessness are making themselves the heirs of the 20<sup>th</sup> century theomachists whatever excuses they may use to justify their actions.

The Russian Orthodox Church just as Primates and representatives of other Local Orthodox Churches have appealed to international organizations, made statements calling to stop the persecutions against the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. It is through respect for the shrine that the path to peace lies, however grave may be the wounds inflicted by the war. But, as the reaction of the world community has shown, the right of the Ukrainian citizens to the free confession of their faith is of no interest for those who publicly state their commitment to human rights.

Beneath our very eyes, terror is employed with impunity and shamelessly against believers. The Church uniting several dozens of millions has been declared an enemy of the state.

Praying for all the victims of the anti-religious persecution in Ukraine we are convinced that responsibility for the suffering of innocent believers, who have become aliens in their own state, will rest on the shoulders of those who have organized this terror or connived at the persecutions.

**+ Kirill**  
**Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia**

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