



## **V. R. Legoida: Another court decision aimed at the forced eviction of monks from the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra will only aggravate the schism in Ukrainian society**



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The Kiev Economic Court has legitimized the dissolution of the contract on the free use of 'the religious federally owned property' concluded between the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra of the Dormition and the National Preserve of the same name. The decision was made in the course of the 9 August 2023 judicial day. As is specified, the meeting discussed the facilities of the Lower Lavra, Patriarchia.ru reports with reference to the Pravoslavnaya Zhizn [Orthodox Life] portal.

Thereby the judges have denied a monastery of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church the satisfaction of a plaintiff's claims that the one-sided party of the above-mentioned contract, which had been annulled by the Ukraine's Ministry of Culture as far back as March 29, should be recognized as invalid. As the Lavra's lawyer, Archpriest Nikita Chekman, has reported, the church lawyers are already preparing an appeal.

The court decision was commented by the chairman of the Synodal Department for the Church's Relations with Society and the Mass Media, V. R. Legoida.

'This is another unlawful decision, the number of which is unfortunately growing of late. Obviously, it is aimed not only at the eviction of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra's monks from the walls they hold so dear but it pursues larger-scale aims - the full destruction of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church', he noted.

According to him, 'there are no serious hopes left that this another illegal action of the Ukrainian authorities will be seen and condemned by international organizations called to protect the rights of believers. Most likely, it will be ignored for umpteenth time'.

'It is only possible to speak with confidence that the attempt to evict forcibly the monks of the canonical Church from the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra will provoke a new spiral of the confrontation between the Ukrainian authorities and the faithful and a further schism in society', V.P. Legoida concluded.

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