



## Statement in connection with the prohibition of access of teachers and students of Kiev Theological Schools to the territory of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra



DECR Communication Service, 20.08.2023.

*In recent weeks, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine has repeatedly **confirmed the prohibition of** access of teachers and students of Kiev Theological Schools to the educational buildings located in the Holy Dormition Kiev Pechersk Lavra.*

*Earlier, in July 2023, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' **issued a statement** in connection with attempts to expel believers from the Kiev Pechersk Lavra. At the same time, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church **addressed a message** to religious figures and representatives of international organisations in connection with the persecution of Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl, the Abbot of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra.*

*According to the **Patriarchia.ru**, in connection with the increasingly aggravating uncivilized pressure on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the expulsion of its representatives, including students and pupils of the oldest Orthodox educational institution in Eastern Europe from the walls of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill has blessed the Synodal Department for Relations between the Church and Society and the Media to make the following statement:*

At the end of August 2023, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine confirmed the ban on teachers and students of the Kiev Theological Academy from accessing the educational buildings on the territory of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra.

This decision is part of the state programme, officially announced and approved by the Ukrainian authorities in 2022, to weaken and destroy the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, seize its monasteries and historical shrines, and liquidate religious communities.

This lawless decision of the Government of Ukraine continues the systematic destruction of the thousand-year-old Kiev Pechersk monastery and the spiritual, intellectual, cultural and historical tradition associated with it.

An attempt has been made to obstruct the activities of a theological school with more than four hundred years of history. Future clergymen are deprived of the opportunity to grow spiritually at the ancient Lavra shrines.

The Russian Orthodox Church declares a strong protest against the expulsion of the Kiev Theological Academy from the walls of the Holy Assumption Kiev-Pechersk Lavra.

We appeal to international human rights organisations, the world Orthodox academic and theological community, religious and secular educational institutions all over the world to stand for the oldest Orthodox educational institution in Eastern Europe and to take possible steps to support it.

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