



THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Department for External Church Relations

The International Human Rights Alliance has called the ban on the entry of the Serbian Patriarch into Kosovo discriminatory.



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The International Human Rights Alliance "Church Against Xenophobia and Discrimination" has described the refusal of the authorities of Kosovo to allow hierarchs led by Serbian Patriarch Porfirije to enter for worship and official events as a gross violation of international law and an act of discrimination against believers of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

As reported earlier, on May 13, 2024, His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije and a group of seven archpastors, who were heading to the monastery of the Serbian Patriarchate in Peć to perform the Divine Liturgy, with which they, according to tradition, were supposed to open the next Bishops' Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church, were stopped at the Merdare checkpoint on the administrative line separating Kosovo and Metohija from Central Serbia. Without explanation, the Serbian Patriarch and

the accompanying hierarchs were informed that entry into the territory of the unrecognized "Republic of Kosovo" was prohibited for them.

In a statement published on May 16th by the press service of the Alliance "Church Against Xenophobia and Discrimination," attention is also drawn to the fact that this refusal is "not in any way justified" and furthermore, "it was not legally formalized, and at present the formal reason for the entry ban remains unknown."

"We consider it appropriate to organize a legal process to protect rights in this situation in accordance with international law, as well as according to the legislation in force in the territory of Kosovo," the statement said, posted on the website of the human rights organization. In this regard, the Human Rights Alliance "Church Against Xenophobia and Discrimination" will send corresponding proposals and recommendations to the Serbian Orthodox Church Patriarchate, as well as written requests regarding the incident to the authorities of Kosovo.

"On our part, the Alliance will ensure the presence of information on the fact of discrimination, unjustified restrictions on the freedom of movement, and religious activities of the hierarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church at international conferences related to Kosovo, including within the framework of reporting procedures for monitoring compliance with human rights standards," –emphasize the human rights activists.

The International Human Rights Association "Church Against Xenophobia and Religious Discrimination" was established in December 2023 by a group of hierarchs and clergy of Local Orthodox Churches together with non-governmental organizations "Public Advocacy", "VSI Zmogaus teisiu apsauga" and "European institute for religion and law", which have a consultative status within the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

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