



Monasteries of the Russian Orthodox Church express support to abbess and sisters of Pühtitsa Dormition Convent in Estonia



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The third reading of a bill on amendments to the Churches and Congregations Act is to take place in the Estonian Parliament on 9th April 2025. The bill has already been passed in the first two readings by majority vote.

If the law is adopted, the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, renamed Estonian Christian Orthodox Church as was required by the authorities, will have to renounce its ties with the Russian Orthodox Church. It will de facto mean that Orthodox churches and monasteries will not be able to remain subordinate to the governing body located, according to the Estonian government, “in a foreign country that poses a threat to the security” of Estonia.

A particularly complicated situation is unfolding with regard to the Pühtitsa Stavropegic Convent located in Kuremäe village, Ida-Viru county. The Pühtitsa Dormition Convent is not a part of the Estonian Orthodox Church. Its hiero-archimandrite is the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus’.

The convent was being pressurised into changing its jurisdiction, but Abbess Filareta (Kalacheva) and the sisters resolutely refused to do that. “It is the prerogative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus’ to grant or annul the stavropegic status. The convent’s statute also does not imply a possibility for submitting such a request to the Patriarch,” Mother Filareta wrote in a letter addressed to Estonia’s Ministry of the Interior.

On 6th November 2024, in Tallinn, Mother Filareta took part in an International Conference on the Orthodox Church in Estonia—Independence: Development Opportunities, Risk, Consequences. In her speech, the abbess pointed out that the Pühtitsa Convent had fallen victim to a conflict between political forces, which jeopardised its existence.

“We are being forced to violate the church statute, to become outlaws and outcasts, second-class people who can be treated regardless of the law and moral requirements,” she said.

Among the monasteries that have already expressed support to the abbess and sisters of the Pühtitsa Convent are the Valaam Stavropegic Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration, the Solovki Stavropegic Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration, the Optina Pustyn (Hermitage), the Novodevichy Stavropegic Convent, the Stavropegic Convent of the Intercession of the Most Holy Mother of God, and the Holy Trinity and St. Seraphim Convent in Diveyevo, Patriarchia.ru reports citing the Synodal Department for Monasteries and Monasticism.

In their letters to the sisters of the Pühtitsa Convent, the abbots and abbesses of the Russian Orthodox Church’s monasteries wish them spiritual strength, imploring the Lord Jesus Christ, the Heavenly Queen and all the saints to grant them fortitude and courage as they continue to suffer for the faith of Christ.