

METROPOLITAN TIKHON OF OCA SENDS LETTER OF SUPPORT TO PATRIARCH OF SERBIA CONCERNING MONTENEGRO



His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon of the Orthodox Church in America has addressed his brother primate His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia with a letter of support concerning the recent troubling events in Montenegro, with the Parliament and President adopting a new law that gives the state the authority to confiscate property from the Serbian Orthodox Church.

In the letter, published on the site of the [Orthodox Church in America](#), Met. Tikhon emphasizes the OCA's prayerful support for the suffering Serbian Church and the fact that it does not recognize the schismatic "Montenegrin Orthodox Church," which enjoys the support of the current Montenegrin government.

"Our prayer for all the residents of Montenegro is that they forsake all violent nationalist extremism, and 'run to' the open arms of Christ's Holy Church, finding their true identity in the person of Jesus Christ," the OCA primate writes.

Met. Tikhon's letter reads in full:

Your Holiness, Dear Brother, Concelebrant in the Lord's Mysteries,

In the midst of the joyful celebration of our Lord's Nativity and Theophany, we find ourselves writing to you with sadness due to the troubles befalling our Orthodox brethren in Montenegro.

We wish to make it clear to you and your beloved flock that the Orthodox Church in America prays for, supports, and maintains communion with the Metropolis of Montenegro of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and that the Orthodox Church in America does not recognize as canonical the so-called "Montenegrin Orthodox Church" nor its "clergy" headed by the defrocked Miraš Dedeić. We abhor the laws restricting the religious freedom of the Montenegrin citizens desiring to maintain the unity of our One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, and stand firmly against all and any government actions provoking confrontation and violence against religious believers and seizure of their religious property.

In the Theophany services, we hear the reading from the Prophet Isaiah which says "Hear, that your soul may live, and I will make with you an everlasting covenant... you shall call nations that you know not, and nations that knew you not shall run to you" (Isaiah 55:3,5). Our prayer for all the residents of Montenegro is that they forsake all violent nationalist extremism, and "run to" the open arms of Christ's Holy Church, finding their true identity in the person of Jesus Christ.

With sadness, yet hope in the mercy of our Lord born in Bethlehem and baptized in the Jordan for our sake, I remain,

+TIKHON

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church earlier issued its own message of support for the suffering Serbian faithful in Montenegro.

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