

ROMANIAN HIERARCH CONDEMNS REMOVAL OF CRUCIFIX FROM MOLDOVAN MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS BUILDING



On September 15, a crucifix was installed on the wall in the Ministry of Internal Affairs building in Chișinău, Moldova. The ceremony was attended by then-Interior Minister Andrei Năstase, His Eminence Metropolitan Vladimir of Chișinău and All Moldova of the Russian Church in Moldova, and His Eminence Metropolitan Petru of Chișinău and Bessarabia of the Romanian Church in Moldova.

However, this month, the Council for the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Equality in Moldova branded the installation of the crucifix as discriminatory and demanded that the current leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs remove it, reports the Moldovan outlet NewsMaker.

Met. Petru of Bessarabia protests and condemns the decision to remove the crucifix.

According to the Council's staff, the decision to demand the cross's removal came after it received an appeal with a complaint about the installation and the Minister Năstase's speech at the opening ceremony.

"The Ministry of Internal Affairs is a Christian army, and the police, carabineers, and rescue workers are helpless without the power of God and the Holy Cross," Năstase emphasized during the installation ceremony. The Council considers his speech an attempt to impose religious views. "The rejection of such symbols will preserve the neutrality of the state structure," reads the text of the Council's decision.

More than 95% of the Moldovan population identifies as Orthodox, while all citizens are guaranteed equality under the law regardless of religious affiliation.

In a statement posted on the Metropolis of Bessarabia's website, Met. Petru condemns the Council's decision as "an attack on our identity of faith and kinship," and offers several arguments in favor of keeping the crucifix inside the Ministry building.

The hierarch of the Romanian Church notes that the people have been Orthodox for nearly 2,000 years and refers to great heroes such as St. Stephen the Great and St. Constantin Brâncoveanu, and other rulers of the nation, "who sacrificed their lives to remain" Orthodox.

Moreover, Met. Petru fully supports Năstase's statement that nothing can be done without God, and calls on all Ministers and senior officials to promote Orthodox values.

"In no democratic state are you obliged to apologize for promoting a national value, in which more than 95% of the population believes, and the Cross is also a national symbol," Met. Petru writes, referring to the fact that the Cross is depicted on the Moldovan flag.

"Only in the communist period were religious insignia banned and removed from public institutions," the Metropolitan writes, calling on the faithful to gather in prayer for our present times and those that follow.

"This decision is an attempt on our identity of faith and kinship and can set a dangerous precedent," Met. Petru believes. Such Christian symbols are "harmless," and, on the contrary, "can be of great help to a nation that puts its trust in the one

true God.”

The Metropolitan calls on the faithful to pray for all the civil authorities and for the army, as happens at every Orthodox service, and prays that God will protect the nation.

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