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Tenuous situation for Christians in western Balkans



The situation for Christian churches and Christians in the western Balkans over the recent period appears to have worsened, especially in Montenegro. The government in the small Adriatic country last month ignored heightened protests and opposition by the Orthodox Church to push through a law that threatens to confiscate properties and relics for which religious institutions cannot produce proof of ownership and titles prior to WWI.

Persecution of the remaining Christians in Kosovo and Metohija, especially of members of the Serbian Orthodox Church, also continues, while indifference and, at times, outright antagonism by state authorities in Albania often blocks Church institutions from reacquiring their properties and properly maintaining them.

In Montenegro, the Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral, His Eminence Amphilochios, on Monday underlined that he's ready to begin dialogue with the government, in answer to an invitation last week by the country's prime minister, stressing, "… we are ready, in light of decisions by the Holy Synod of the

Patriarchate of Serbia and the Episcopal Council of Montenegro, and with respect to the constitution of Montenegro, to meet with you, hoping you are earnestly ready to begin a substantive discussion towards abolishing this law.”