

## **Tepid US State Dept. statement over state persecution of Orthodoxy in Montenegro**



The state-sponsored persecution of the Orthodox Church in Montenegro generated a statement from the US State Department this week, with Washington, however, attempting to keep equal distances in the furor that has erupted since the beginning of the year. The US called on both the government and Church to commence a dialogue and to exhibit self-restraint, avoiding actions that increase tensions.

The Church in the small Adriatic country is bitterly opposed to a controversial law, passed in January, which allows the state to confiscate its assets and relics, if the latter cannot provide ownership titles and deeds prior to WWI.

Peaceful but determined protests by the faithful and clerics continue, while police have even arrested hierarchs on flimsy charges over the past month.