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## **Poroshenko secretly orders that UOC's leases with Kiev Caves, Pochaev Lavras be terminated, according to state sources**



Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko's administration has instructed the leadership of the Kiev Caves Lavra Museum and the Kremenets-Pochaev State Historical-Architectural Reserve to prepare administrative court claims on the termination of the monasteries' leases to the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

This was reported by a source close to the ex-Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration Rostislav Pavlenko, reports the official site of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church with reference to the Ukrainian site Vesti. The Ukrainian site Strana has independently reported the same concerning the Kiev Caves Lavra, noting that the breaking of the lease is intended to open the way to subsequently seizing it from the canonical Ukrainian Church.

The Ukrainian state continues the communist tradition of owning Church properties, including the Lavras—Ukraine's holiest sites.

Everything is being carried out secretly so as not to create a negative public response in advance, the Vesti source says.

Pavlenko has been directly involved in the process of creating the new nationalist church and receiving a tomos of autocephaly from Constantinople. He personally traveled to Turkey in April to hand Pat. Bartholomew Poroshenko's appeal for autocephaly and he participated in the late November session of the Synod of Constantinople that approved the text of the statutes and tomos for the new Ukrainian church.

He is also in charge of drawing up the list of properties to transfer to Constantinople, which, according to the latest reports, includes 8 monasteries of the canonical Ukrainian Church. It was earlier reported that a list of 24 churches to seize from the canonical Church was also drawn up.

Preparations for evicting the monastery brotherhoods of the canonical Church began in earnest in the leadup to December 15's "unification council" that created the new nationalist church.

On November 19, the Pochaev City Council decided to cancel the transfer of the land plots from the brothers' residential buildings of the Lavra; then on November 23, the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice canceled the decision on state registration of the rights of usage of the complex of buildings; and again, five days later, on November 28, the Cabinet of Ministers canceled its decision from 2003 that moved the given buildings from the usage of the Pochaev Reserve-Museum to the brotherhood itself.

The pressure continued in early December as representatives from the Reserve and the Ukrainian Security Service appeared at the Lavra to inspect the premises and take an inventory of the "artifacts" there—an act of psychological pressure also recently used against the Kiev Caves Lavra.

His Eminence Metropolitan Vladimir of Pochaev, the abbot of the Holy Dormition-Pochaev Lavra, has appealed to Poroshenko to protect the Lavra and the entire canonical Church from the increasing pressure from the state, as Poroshenko has repeatedly promised to do, but such an appeal is, according to all indicators, in vain.

A lawyer representing the Pochaev Museum said in early December that the state is likely to take the monastery from the canonical Church and give it to the new schismatic church.

His Eminence Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl, the abbot of the Kiev Caves Lavra, has also been a continual target lately, with the Security Service of Ukraine conducting a surprise search at his residence and accusing him of preparing provocations against the “unification council.”

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