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The President with the Patriarch: Politics interferes with the internal organization of the Church in Montenegro



His Holiness Irinej, the Serbian Patriarch, said after a meeting with President Aleksandar Vucic that it was clear that Milo Djukanovic's plan was that in Montenegro there was no longer the Serbian Orthodox Church or Serbian Orthodox people. President Vucic points out that politics interferes with the internal Church organization and essentially spiritual matters, and even wants to establish a new church in Montenegro.

President Aleksandar Vucic and Serbian Patriarch Irinej discussed the situation of the Serbian people and the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro. Patriarch Irinej said that the situation in Montenegro was more difficult than it had ever been in history.

"It was not so even during the Ottoman Empire or communism, which had more respect for the Church," the Patriarch said at a press conference. According to him, the goal is to apply the method that the Ustashas once used in Croatia, to expel the Serbian people and to destroy the Serbian Orthodox Church there.

"I ask myself and everyone else; whether Mr. Djukanovic has in mind his people and the bad situation that he has gradually created in Montenegro. The plan is that there is no Serbian Orthodox Church or Orthodox people there," says Patriarch Irinej. The Patriarch adds that a new Montenegrin nation is being created, which should remove anything that is called Serbian. "We respect Montenegro as a

state,” says the Patriarch. “Unfortunately, the existence of the Serbian people in Montenegro has not been accepted there, and with a pain in my soul, I call upon Djukanovic to think about what he is doing,” said the Patriarch.

His Holiness Patriarch also asked the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, to protect the Serbian people in Montenegro who have lived there since Montenegro has existed and to protect the Serbian people and the Serbian Orthodox Church and its shrines, which are all Serbian shrines.

“We respect Montenegro as a state and I have never heard anyone say a word against the Montenegrin state,” Patriarch Irinej pointed out.

Vucic: Politics interferes with the Church organization

President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, said that he understood the position of the Serbian Orthodox Church, but that we had to be careful. “We understand the position of the Serbian Orthodox Church, but we must be more careful, we will not do what they have done to us,” President Vucic said.

He reminded that a Montenegrin minister said that Serbia was interfering with the internal affairs of Montenegro, forgetting that they directly interfered by recognizing Kosovo and Metohija. “Besides that, even today they give themselves a right to comment on the relations between Serbs and Albanians, saying what a potential solution should be, as if it had something to do with them. It is a particularly interesting fact for us that politics interferes with the Church organization, even founding a new church,” so Vucic.

“We will fight by all legal means to prove to the international public that someone in Montenegro is trying to create a new church, for one reason, and to call it Orthodox, because the present “Montenegrin Church” cannot gain any popularity, all with the goal of dismatling the Serbian people and so that the word Serbian would not be heard,” said Vucic.

He points out that almost 30% of the population of Montenegro is Serbs, that they are not part of the government, they cannot get their rights, and they cannot influence political and other important matters in Montenegro.

Serbia will respect the request of Patriarch Irinej

Vucic said that Serbia would respect the request of Patriarch Irinej to help the Serbian people, emphasizing that Serbia loves and respects its people. “We will insist on the unity of the Serbian people, we will not allow the tearing of the

national Serbian tissue, because someone might think that they could be assimilated." I hope that the Patriarch is wrong when he talks about the expulsion of Serbs, but I have said many times that we have never threaten anyone, but we will be only with our people, and that there will be no new 'Storms' or persecution of Serbs in the Balkans," Vucic underlined.

He pointed out that Serbia and Montenegro had to be the closest countries. "There is no one else closer to Montenegro than we are and we want no one closer to Serbia than Montenegro. They need to understand how painful this question is for us. If you give yourself the right to interfere with the internal organization of Serbia, please do not forbid us to express our concern and respect for the human rights of our people. We will not endanger you in any way," President Vucic emphasized.

The President said that he had talked with the Patriarch about the completion of the construction of the Saint Sava Cathedral after more than 100 years. "I believe that this year we will finish it, we will do our best in order to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the unification of the Church, in the second half of this October, which will be a great event, with some world leaders present, who have already announced their arrival," Vucic said.

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