

## **MONTENEGRO REJECTS CHURCH'S APPEAL TO REVERSE BAN ON CONSTRUCTION OF STATE-DEMOLISHED MONASTERY**



His Eminence Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro appealed to state authorities to reverse the ban on the construction of a monastery near the southern coastal town of Ulcinj.

However, the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism rejected the Church's appeal, claiming that the sudden destruction of the residence at the Monastery of St. Basil of Ostrog last month has the backing of the law, reports the Serbian site Vijesti.

Met. Amfilohije earlier called the demolition of the monastic buildings a crime against the Church and challenged the relevant decision of the city's planning and construction inspector as illegal. The authorities claim that the monastery was constructed illegally, though the Church testifies that the construction was fully within the confines of the law.

On June 4, the inspector forbade the construction of the 150-square-meter building at the site, but the Church continued construction, prompting the sudden destruction of the residence building at the monastery on June 10.

Having reviewed all the materials of the case, the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism rejected the Metropolitan's appeal. According to the Ministry, the demolition of the buildings of the Monastery of St. Basil of Ostrog near Ulcinj was carried out within the framework of the law.

Earlier it was reported that a backhoe driver, Miroslav Koprivica, quit his job and walked away on foot when he realized he had been sent to demolish the monastery. The buildings were destroyed by another employee, however.

The Church honored Koprivica a month later, bestowing upon him the Golden Order of St. Peter II, the Divine Seer of Lovćen "for his confessional testimony of fidelity to Christ God and the life of St. Basil of Ostrog, whose home he refused to demolish."

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