

26/01/2021

## **PRESIDENT OF MONTENEGRO SIGNS AMENDMENTS TO ANTI-ORTHODOX LEGISLATION INTO LAW**



After being adopted by the nation's Parliament a second time, Montenegrin President Milo Đukanović had to sign the amendments to the scandalous "Law on Religious Freedom" into law.

The nationalistic head of state reported on Twitter yesterday that he signed the amendments, while emphasizing that he still has serious reservations about them.

According to the Montenegrin constitution, the president can veto a bill adopted by parliament and return it for a second vote. If the legislative body adopts the law a second time, the president is then obliged to sign it. Thus, President Đukanović was constitutionally bound to sign the law that represents the overthrow of his ideology after 30 years in power.

The scandalous “Law on Religious Freedom” was initially adopted a year ago, when Đukanović’s party still held majority power in Parliament. In essence, it afforded the state the authority to seize 650 properties from the Serbian Orthodox Church and claim them for its own.

“Centuries old monasteries could be claimed by the state, and with the government’s ownership confirmed by the government itself with no recourse to dispute it in an independent court. It was a brazen plan and plain for all to see: this statute would supply a legal prop for an illegal land grab,” the new Prime Minister Vladimir Leposavić explained in a recent op-ed.

The Orthodox faithful gathered in massive peaceful protests throughout the nation for months, declaring their intention to protect their holy sites.

The President, who supports the miniscule and schismatic “Montenegrin Orthodox Church,” lost his majority in the August elections. The new government came into power on December 4 and immediately set about correcting the government’s stance towards the Orthodox Church.

Although the Parliament adopted necessary amendments to the law on December 29, ending the persecution of the Serbian Church and making all religious bodies equal in the eyes of the law, President Đukanović exercised his veto power and returned the law to Parliament for a second vote. The law was then adopted a second time last week.

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