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GEORGIAN CHURCH SUPPORTS GOV'T PLANS TO BAN ONLINE CASINOS



The Georgian Orthodox Church welcomes the government's plans to ban online casinos in the country.

The state has the responsibility to help in the upbringing of a "healthy generation," and the "protection of young people under 25 from gambling will bring immediate results," Archpriest Andria Dzhagmaidze, head of the Georgian Patriarchate's press service, wrote on Facebook on November 22.

Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili announced plans earlier that day to gradually limit gambling, beginning with raising the minimum age to 25.

According to Fr. Andria, the number of workers between the ages of 20 and 25 has been decreasing in recent years, while the number of those addicted to gambling is rising. Therefore, restrictions on gambling are welcome, he writes, with hopes of using other mechanisms aimed at protecting families and young people in the future.

Gambling is one of the leading industries in Georgia today, with about 700,000 gamblers in the country according to unofficial data, reports the Union of Orthodox Journalists.

Also in 2018, residents of the Georgian village of Sarpi protested the construction of a casino next to the village's Orthodox church that was already underway. "Give up this godless venture!" the Orthodox faithful insisted.

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