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## Montenegrin authorities aiming to demolish baptistery of persecuted Serbian Church



The Montenegro-Littoral Metropolis of the Serbian Orthodox Church suffers great oppression from the authorities, as exemplified by the situation around the planned demolition of a baptistery on the Adriatic coast, His Eminence Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro said on national television, [reports RIA-Novosti](#).

Montenegrin authorities reported on April 2 that the Metropolis' newly-built baptistery on the shore of the Gulf of Tivat near the medieval Monastery of the Holy Archangel Michael was scheduled for destruction. The municipality claims the church was built without permission on a territory not belonging to the Church.

On the morning of April 2, hundreds of local residents gathered at the baptistery. Several police squads were also placed on the site. After negotiations with the parish priest, the police quietly left and the citizens began round-the-clock guard

duty to protect the holy church.

On Friday, legal representatives for St. Michael's Monastery reported that they had filed an application to the prosecutor's office of the city of Kotor about the police who had "besieged the church property without presenting documents justifying their presence." Vladyka Amfilohije also said that he discussed the problem with Prime Minister Duško Marković.

"I told him ... the baptistery should stay where it is because it is the revived baptistery of Emperor Constantine, built in the fourth century," Met. Amfilohije said.

"Now what has happened has happened. People have gathered. And this would be a sin before God and a symbol of the disunity and hatred in Montenegro. Hundreds of people from the Bay of Kotor are continually standing before the church, and no one can demand that we demolished it," the Serbian hierarch explained.

"The people who tried to enter our monastery and destroy the church are not to blame—the people who sent them are to blame. Do not judge anyone, forgive everyone, and we will defend our holy site together," Fr. Miyailo Backovic wrote on his Facebook page, reports RIA-Novosti.

"Unfortunately," he continued, "I must say publicly that the Metropolis of Montenegro-Littoral is the most persecuted Church in Montenegro, and maybe in the Balkans. Our monks and nuns who have come here, including from Siberia, and live in Montenegro, are subject to harassment. They are prohibited from temporary registration and not given citizenship."

News that the residency permits for more than 50 monastics and clergymen of the Serbian Church in Montenegro were not being extended came in the wake of President Milo Đukanović's declaration that the state will take on the responsibility of achieving autocephaly for the "Montenegrin Orthodox Church," a group that splintered from the Serbian Church and is unrecognized by the Orthodox world.

(Source: [orthochristian.com](http://orthochristian.com))