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Moscow Patriarchate sharply criticizes Lithuanian gov’t decision to bar Russian Patriarch Kirill from entering Baltic country



The Russian Orthodox Church on Thursday sharply criticized a decision this week by Lithuania’s interior ministry to bar the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, His Holiness Kirill, from entering the Baltic country. The reason for the ban, according to the Lithuanian ministry, was due to support extended by the Patriarch for Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

In a reaction, a spokesman of the Moscow Patriarchate said the decision marks a rejection of Europe’s legal tradition, as it violates the rights of the Orthodox faithful in Lithuania.

The representative of the Russian Church’s Synodal Department for Church-Society and Media Relations, said this violation was manifested in “… an absolutely undemocratic and politicized manner,” while adding that it shows an impasse in Lithuania’s foreign policy.

According to media reports from Lithuanian earlier this week, the Russian Patriarch was included on the list of personae non grata, which was compiled on June 23, and based on a proposal of the Lithuania’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Based on the same decision, His Holiness is banned from visiting Lithuania at least until June 2027.