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## Russian Orthodox Church regrets cathedral construction sparked violence in Yekaterinburg



The Russian Orthodox Church calls for peace in society and regrets that violence broke out at the construction site of the St. Catherine Cathedral in the Russian Urals city of Yekaterinburg, Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the Church's External Relations Department, wrote on Facebook on Saturday.

"The Church regrets that violence erupted at the construction site. The Church has always called for peace and accord in society and does its best to consolidate people. The Church stands ready for dialogue with anyone, including those who are currently protesting against its projects," says a post on the archbishop's page.

Metropolitan Hilarion assured the readers that after construction work ends, local residents will not have less space for outdoor activities.

"An aspiration to have a beautiful public park space meets the aspiration of those who calls for reconstruction of the St. Catherine Cathedral. The construction project stipulates larger public park areas for walking, wider opportunities for relaxing, doing intellectual activities and sports. After the end of construction, the area for walking and relaxing will be considerably expanded, grounds for massive city

events will be renovated and green spaces enlarged,” he wrote.

Along with this, Metropolitan Hilarion believes supporters of the church construction outnumber those who opposes it.

“It is worth visiting Yekaterinburg on ‘Czarist days’ (on July 16-17) in order to see the balance of forces in general, and to see how many people will go in for a 20-kilometer walk from the murder site to the alleged burial site of the royal family,” he said.

“Last year, more than 100,000 people did it alongside the patriarch [Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church - TASS],” he added. “Not a single force opposing the church will gather one tenth of that number for their protests.”

### **History of conflict**

Since May 13, Yekaterinburg has been a scene of unauthorized protests over the choice of a site for building a cathedral. Overall, 96 people have been detained since the beginning of protests.

On May 16, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that a survey should be carried out among local residents to find out what they think of the construction of the St. Catherine Cathedral in Oktyabrskaya Square. Currently, the Yekaterinburg authorities are working to organize such a survey.

The St. Catherine Cathedral in Yekaterinburg is to be built by 2023, when the city will celebrate its 300th anniversary. The decision to build a church not in its historic site, but in a nearby public garden was made in February 2019 in conformity with the opinion of local residents and all required procedures. At least 3,309 people took part in discussion, with 3,107 speaking out in favor of construction.

— Source: [TASS](#)