

## **Serbian Orthodox Church facing confiscation of properties in Montenegro, Kosovo**



Ominous developments affecting the Serbian Orthodox Church continued this week, as the latter faces persecution and even confiscation of its property in the Kosovo and Metohija province, as well as in the small west Balkan country of Montenegro.

Cathedrals and even historic monasteries belonging to the Serbian Patriarchate face the prospect of confiscation by local authorities, in many cases despite international agreements safeguarding the sites from such threats.

Relations between the Montenegro government and the Serbian Orthodox Church reached a nadir over the recent period, with an Orthodox hierarch in the country underlining that Orthodox clerics there are ready to defend the Church's properties with their lives, if necessary.

Serbian Orthodox Bishop of Budimlja-Niksic, His Grace Ioannicus, said Montenegrin

authorities behaved towards the Church in a manner that was worse than the old communist regime in Yugoslavia, while accusing the government of planning to legalize what he called the expropriation of Church property.

“...Do not expect us to go peacefully. We will not arm ourselves but we will defend our property with our very lives. When it comes to that, there are no rules. I’m not scaring anyone, that’s just so,” the bishop told a local television station.