



PÜHTITSA JUMALAEMA UINUMISE
STAVROPIGIAALNE NAISKLOOSTER

Meie: 10.04.2025.

Nr. 22

**Your Excellency, President of the Republic of Estonia,
Mr. Alar Karis!**

On April 9, 2025, the Parliament of Estonia passed, by a vote of 60, a bill amending the “Churches and Congregations Act.” The newly adopted amendments compel us to sever our canonical ties with the Moscow Patriarchate, as our unity with the Mother Church would henceforth be considered a violation of the law of the Republic of Estonia.

We appeal to you as the guarantor of constitutional order at the final stage of the legislative process. Article 107 of the Constitution grants you the authority to veto the adopted law and refuse to promulgate it.

We have always held in high regard Article 40 of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, which guarantees freedom of religion. For us, this freedom is the very foundation of our monastic life. That foundation is now gravely threatened. Our compliance with this law would mean betrayal of the sacred vows we have made—something we cannot do under any circumstances.

Article 12 of the Estonian Constitution prohibits discrimination based on religion and religious beliefs. It is precisely this article, in conjunction with Article 11, serves as the basis for evaluating the neutrality, proportionality, and fairness of laws being adopted. There is no doubt that the new law fails to meet these standards, as it directly targets a specific religious community. We have always valued obedience to the law. We have never violated a single law of the Republic of Estonia and have continually prayed for the wellbeing of Estonia. The pain we now feel is profound, and its cause is utterly unjust, as the legislative changes have been initiated on a misguided premise.

The arguments supporting the law are profoundly unconvincing. It is clearly aimed at the residents of the Pühtitsa Convent and undermines trust in its legitimacy both in the civic and ecclesiastical spheres. A change in ecclesiastical jurisdiction is a matter of internal Church governance and lies solely within the competence of the Church's hierarchy.

Instead, we **are being forced**—against all canonical norms—to submit ourselves to the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. This bill interferes in a deeply sensitive inter-church matter without adequate consideration of the risks involved. It intrudes into interconfessional relations without a proper understanding of the nuances of confessional dynamics and historical context.

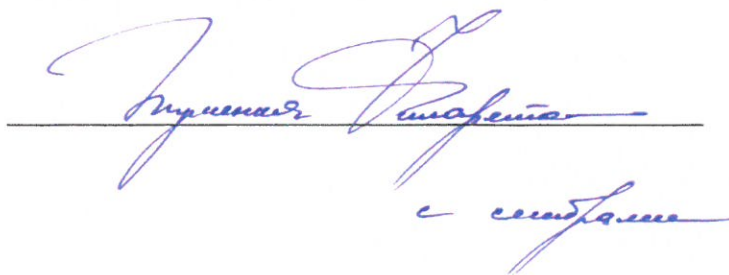
By no means do we deny the state's prerogative to safeguard national security. However, it should never be used as a tool to sow distrust, divide citizens, or exert pressure on religious organizations.

In our daily actions, we do not promote any worldview or activities that threaten or harm anyone's security. We are faithful to the state and to the order in which we live and serve. That is why we kindly ask for nothing more than understanding and protection of our faith and devotion.

We sincerely and wholeheartedly ask that you not promulgate this law, which undermines constitutional principles and violates Estonia's international commitments. We ask that you remain impartial and just.

We earnestly ask that you preserve our sacred monastic life.

With respect and in obedience to the Lord,
On behalf of all 96 sisters of the Pühtitsa Convent,



Abbess Filareta (Kalachyova)

Abbess of the Pühtitsa Dormition Stavropegic Convent