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Deportation of a representative of the Russian Orthodox Church

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HRWF (12.08.2024) - Archpriest Nikolai Lischenyuk, 51, a key ally of Russian Patriarch Kirill and leader of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) in Czechia, has been [expelled](#) by Czech authorities due to national security concerns.

He served as representative of the ROC at its church in Karlovy Vary from 2006 to 2022. Before that, he served at the Church of St. George in the Russian Embassy in the Czech Republic from 2001 to 2006.

[According to the Czech authorities](#), it was decided to revoke his permanent residence in Czechia based on one classified piece of information from the national intelligence services. Archpriest Nikolai Lischenyuk was ordered to leave the country because his activities were said to pose a threat to the state. He was accused of "creating an influence structure with the support of Russian state authorities and could threaten the security of the state," reported [denikn.cz](#). He denied cooperating with the Russian FSB.

A year ago, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia (ROC) [was placed on the Czech Republic's national sanctions list](#).

According to [RIA-Novosti](#), Fr. Nikolai's residence permit was initially canceled in August 2023. He challenged the decision all the way up to the Constitutional Court, which ultimately rejected his appeals in June. He was ordered to leave the country within 30 days.

According to the website of [Orthodox Christianity](#), he had already been serving in Moscow for two years now, having been appointed rector at a church in the Russian capital in [November 2022](#) (he also served as Deputy Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations since [August 2022](#)).

This is the latest in a series of actions in Eastern European and Baltic states against ROC clergymen.

[In September 2023](#), the head of the Russian Church's representation in Sofia, Fr. Vassian (Zmeev), and two others were expelled from Bulgaria, also on national security threats. Fr. Vassian was also banned from entering North Macedonia.

[In February of this year](#), Metropolitan Evgeny of Tallinn and All Estonia was forced to leave the country, having been denied the renewal of his residency permit.