

Church Procession Passes Peacefully in Kiev Despite Grenade Threat

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The  **Moscow Times**

A controversial Orthodox church procession and prayer service has passed peacefully through Kiev despite earlier reports that grenades had been laid along the route.

The service, arranged by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, saw over 5,000 people march through the Ukrainian capital. A prayer service dedicated to the Baptism of Kievan Rus at Saint Vladimir Hill, a symbolic landmark near the site of a 10th century mass baptism, was also used to call for peace in the country.

Ukrainian intelligence agencies reported earlier in the week that the Russian special services intended to use the procession to “provoke” Ukraine. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate is the country's only formally recognized Orthodox church, but has faced increasing pressure for its "ongoing allegiance" to Russia.

The procession was originally barred from entering Kiev due to reports that grenades had

been laid along the route, the Associated Press reported  Tuesday.

The march was permitted to proceed amid heightened security measures. Parade participants passed through metal detectors with the help of nearly 6000 law enforcement officers, while bus routes were altered and streets were blocked.

The route of the march was intended to symbolize the unification of Ukraine coming together, with believers moving along two routes across the country to meet each other in Kiev.

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