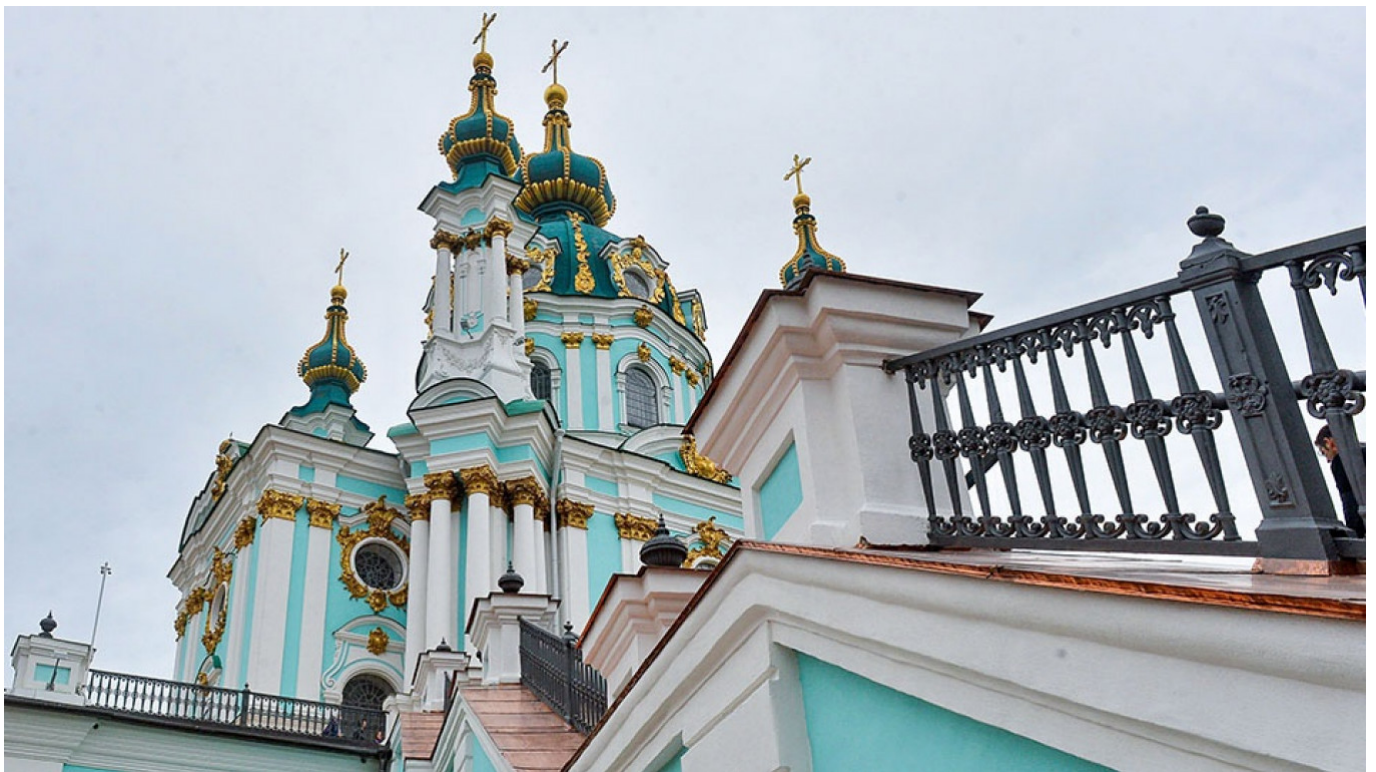


# Ukraine Church Spokesman Accuses Moscow of Petrol Bomb Attack on Kiev Cathedral

By [Reuters](#)

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**Pyotr Sivkov / TASS**

Unknown assailants threw petrol bombs at a historic 18th century Orthodox church in the Ukrainian capital and attacked a priest early on Thursday morning, a church spokesman said, blaming Moscow for the incident.

The attack comes amid rising tensions between Kiev and Moscow over Ukraine's decision to create a new national independent church and severing centuries-old ties with the Russian Orthodox Church.

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The petrol bombs did not explode and no damage was done to St. Andrew's church, a baroque

late 18th century church which sits on a steep slope on one of Kiev's best-known tourist spots.

The church spokesman, Archbishop Yevstraty, said the attackers, whom police said numbered four, used a spray against a priest.

The Kiev authorities handed over the use of St. Andrew's to the Ecumenical Patriarch, the global spiritual leader of Orthodox Christianity who sits in Istanbul, while courting the patriarch's support for Ukrainian church independence.

"We see that Moscow's henchmen are dropping 'clear hints' to intimidate representatives of the Ecumenical Patriarch," Yevstraty said.

Ukraine in October secured approval to set up an independent church from the Ecumenical Patriarch, a move fiercely opposed by the Russian orthodox church and the Kremlin.

Ukraine says the split is an essential step to blocking out Russia's pernicious influence on its soil. Relations between the two countries plunged following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and support for separatist rebels in the Donbass region.

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