

Russian Orthodox Church Says Equates Abortion to 'Cardinal Sin' of Murder

December 28, 2023



Patriarch Kirill at the meeting of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. **Sergei Vlasov / patriarchia.ru**

The Russian Orthodox Church [announced](#) it has adopted a document equating abortion to murder amid growing ultra-conservative calls for a nationwide ban and several regions restricting the procedure.

“The Church unequivocally equates arbitrary surgical or medical abortion to murder, regardless of the gestational age and the manner in which it is carried out,” Church spokesman Vladimir Legoyda said in a statement Wednesday evening.

“For that reason, the proclamation of the ‘right to an abortion,’ otherwise the ‘right to murder,’ is unacceptable,” Legoyda said following Wednesday’s meeting of the Church’s Holy Synod ruling body, which is chaired by Church leader Patriarch Kirill.

At least 14 regions in recent months have [banned](#) so-called “coercion” into undergoing abortion or banned private clinics from providing abortion services.

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A federal bill that would ban private clinics nationwide from providing abortions was rejected this month after President Vladimir Putin called to “respect for the rights and freedoms of women” while also urging women to “choose to keep the life of the child.”

Patriarch Kirill [claimed](#) in November that talking women out of abortions would solve Russia’s demographic crisis “like a magic wand.”

Wednesday’s Holy Synod expressed support for the establishment of “crisis centers” to help women go through with their pregnancies and “fulfill their vocation as mothers after childbirth,” according to Legoyda.

“At the same time, without rejecting the women who have had an abortion, the Church calls on them to repent and to overcome the harmful consequences of sin through prayer and penance.”

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