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Russian Orthodox Priest Claims Migrants Are Coming to 'Replace' Locals

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Metropolitan Evgeny of Yekaterinburg and Verkhoturye. **ekaterinburg-eparhia.ru**

A Russian Orthodox priest claimed during an Easter sermon on Sunday that labor migrants are arriving in the country to "replace" local residents.

Father Yevgeny, head of the Yekaterinburg diocese, said that "many thousands" of migrants entering Russia "view the Holy Russia of the Risen Christ as a relic and an anachronism" and pose a "huge test of strength for our entire Russian civilization."

"Our laws and our experience of gentle inter-religious coexistence are alien to them. Too many of them come not to live with us, but to live instead of us," he said.

He added that migrants "pose no less a danger to peaceful traditional Russian Islam than they do to Christianity."

Though he did not name specific nationalities, the priest appeared to reference migrants from Central Asian countries, who make up the bulk of Russia's labor migrant population.

Known for his anti-migrant views, Yevgeny also accused "corrupt officials" of giving Russian passports to migrants and "corrupt judges" of punishing "those who oppose the radicals" rather than the migrants themselves.

"Will Russia become scorched earth, filled with crying and injustice, like Syria? Will there only be a Wikipedia article about it, that great saints once lived here? Or will we preserve both holiness and Orthodoxy in ourselves and in our children?" he said.

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