

Trial of Bishop of Niksic, other clerics on flimsy charges by Montenegro authorities rescheduled for July 16



The trial of the Bishop of Niksic, His Grace Ioannicus, and another eight Orthodox priests was reset on Friday for July 16. The nine clergymen were arrested and held for three days early last month by Montenegro authorities on flimsy charges of violating coronavirus-related restrictions against public assembly.

The closely watched trial was rescheduled after one of the defendants, Father Slobodan Yiokic, required medical treatment, with his health problems exacerbated after his arrest.

Hundreds of people had gathered outside a courthouse in support of the Bishop and the other priests.

The Orthodox Church in Montenegro, representing the predominate faith in the small Adriatic country, has faced unprecedented state persecution there over the past few months, after hierarchs, clergymen and the laity stepped up protests against a controversial law that threatens to confiscate the Church's assets and

relics.

The latest provocation includes a threat to deport Protopresvyter priest Alexandr Yanic, who has ministered to the faithful in Montenegro for two decades – ostensibly because he took part in peaceful protests against the law on religious institutions.







In a related development, the British ambassador to the country, Alison Kemp, was received on Thursday by the Metropolitan-Bishop of Montenegro and the Littoral, His Eminence Amphilochios.

According to Church sources, Her Excellency the Ambassador expressed her government's commitment to the rule of law and full respect for human rights, including the right to freedom of religion or belief, expression and assembly.

