

## **The Serbian Orthodox Church condemned the continuation of the persecution of the Church by the Montenegrin authorities**



### **Press release of the Holy Synod of Bishops**

The Holy Synod of Bishops, at their session held on June 25, 2020, strongly condemned the continuation of the persecution of the Church by the Montenegrin authorities, manifested by the latest summoning of His Eminence Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral for an informative conversation at the Security Administrative Centre in Podgorica, where he had been detained for six hours, as well as by the arrest of a number of priests and faithful people, as well as by constant threats of deportation of those priests who are not Montenegrin citizens.

The Church in Montenegro and its bishops, clergy and monks, along with the faithful, completely justifiably, have been defending their shrines, avoiding any

politicization of the issue, demanding the necessary amendments to the disputed Law on freedom of religion.

For the umpteenth time the Holy Synod has addressed its appeals to the Montenegrin authorities to stop persecuting the Church and the clergy and to act in accordance with civilized norms and recommendations of all official political and social factors from Europe and the world, and thus enable and guarantee by law the freedom of religion and conscience of every individual citizen of Montenegro. Having abused the corona virus epidemics and the measures taken against it, the latest persecution by the authorities against the entire Church in Montenegro can only lead to even greater social divisions and permanently endanger stability and peace not only in that country but in the entire region as well.

Giving strong fraternal support to our bishops, clergy, monks and devout and Christ-loving people to defend their right of freely confessing their faith, the Holy Synod of Bishops calls upon the President of Montenegro and the Montenegrin authorities to end the persecution of the Church and adjust their future steps to the international law, especially in the field of human rights and freedom of religion, and to show in their action, and not only in their words, that they are part of Europe and the civilized world in general.

We pray to God that peace and brotherly love prevail in Montenegro among all its citizens, regardless of their religion, nationality or political affiliation, and we call upon the faithful to be, as they have been so far, responsible and dignified in the defense of their shrines and their inalienable right of freely confessing their religion.

### **From the Office of the Holy Synod of Bishops**

(translated into English by Sanja Simic de Graaf)

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