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DEČANI ABBOT CALLS FOR PROTECTION OF ORTHODOX HERITAGE IN KOSOVO AFTER ANOTHER MONASTERY IS ROBBED



The Serbian Orthodox spiritual heritage in Kosovo is in danger and in need of urgent protection, Archimandrite Sava, the abbot of the famous Dečani Monastery, warned after another attack on an Orthodox monastery.



On February 4, local police detained four Kosovar Albanians for stealing historical values from the St. Peter of Koriša Hermitage near the city of Prizren, which preserves unique frescoes, Fr. Sava reports on Facebook.

The hermitage is an ancient cave dwelling that was abandoned in 1453 after the Turkish invasion. It was declared a cultural monument on December 16, 1950 and registered as a Protected Monument of Culture in 1990 under the protection of Serbia.

According to the police report, the thieves used a metal detector to find and steal 7 lead plates of archaeological value that were then sold to the ironworks.



Suspects in the looting were detained for 48 hours, though one of them managed to escape during transportation. The other three have been taken into custody.

“Serbian heritage needs URGENT protection,” says Fr. Sava. “Serbian Orthodox Church sites situated in areas where Serbs no longer live are exposed to vandalism and looting in Kosovo. St Peter’s heritage was targeted by looters before. It is one of the largest medieval hermitages with remains of medieval frescoes.”

In an agreement with Serbia in September, Kosovar authorities pledged to protect Serbian Orthodox sites. Later that month, His Grace Bishop Teodosije of Raška and Prizren called on his flock in Kosovo and Metohija not to leave their homes and not thereby abandon their holy churches, monasteries, and cemeteries.

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