



**THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Department for External Church Relations

## **Archbishop Jovan (Vraniskovsky) of Ohrid released from prison**

*Statement by the Communication Service of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations and the Information Service of the Serbian Orthodox Church.*

On February 2, 2015, in compliance with the ruling of the Skopje Court, Archbishop Jovan (Vraniskovsky) of Ohrid, a hierarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church, was released from the Idrizovo prison.

His situation and physical condition were considered at the fraternal meeting between His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and His Holiness Patriarch Irenaeus of Serbia on November 15, 2014, in Belgrade.

On December 20, 2014, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and His Holiness Patriarch Irenaeus of Serbia, the chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, visited Skopje and met with Archbishop Jovan.

On the same day, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk met in Skopje with the Republic of Macedonia's state leaders – President G Ivanov and Prime Minister N. Gruevski. Metropolitan Hilarion also met with Archbishop Stephan, head of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, who is outside of communion with the world Orthodoxy at present.

On January 28, 2015, Archbishop Jovan was visited in the prison by Bishop Irinej of Backa, with the blessing of the Primates of the Russian and Serbian Churches. Bishop Irinej was accompanied by Archimandrite Philip (Vasiltsev).

It is expected that within the next few days Archbishop Jovan, in accordance with the invitation of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Irenaeus of Serbia, will come to Russia for medical treatment.

The release of Archbishop Jovan is hailed in the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches with gratitude to God.

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