



DECR Chairman expresses condolences with assassination of Pakistani Minister for Religious Minorities, Mr. Shakhbaz Bhatti

In his letter to H.E. Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani, Prime Minister Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokooamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's DEpartme nt for External Church Relaitons, expressed condolences with the assassination of Pakistani Minister for Religious Minorities, Mr. Shakhbaz Bhatti. The text is given below.

Your Excellency:

It was with deep sorrow that I have learnt of the assassination of the Minister for Religious Minorities of Pakistan, Mr. Shakhbaz Bhatti. Please accept my sincere condolences and convey the words of my support and sympathy to his family and loved ones.

Many Christian Churches have been encouraged by the appointment of Mr. Bhatti who professed Catholicism to your cabinet of ministers. As a politician, he managed to do a lot for reducing religious tension in Pakistani society and courageously spoke out against initiatives of religious extremists.

A believing heart and religious feelings cannot be reconciled with this crime, which, unfortunately, is not the only act of violence against Christians in Pakistan. Neither simple believers, nor high-ranking officials are not protected today from aggression on the part of people who guise their evil deeds under religious convictions.

I pray to God for such mournful days not to be repeated in Pakistani society and for people of different faiths to live in peace, mutual respect, and accord.

With condolences,

/+Hilarion/

Metropolitan of Volokolamsk

Chairman

Department for External Church Relations

Moscow Patriarchate

