



Agreement on legal status of the Serbian Orthodox Church is signed in Montenegro



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His Holiness Serbian Patriarch Porfirije and the Prime Minister of Montenegro Dritan Abazović signed a fundamental agreement between the State and the Serbian Orthodox Church on its legal status in the country. The agreement signed in Podgorica on August 3, safeguards the property and other rights of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The document was signed in the presence of Metropolitan Joanikije of Montenegro and the Littoral and Bishops Vasilije of Srem and Fotije of Zvornik-Tuzla, who are the members of the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and Bishops Atanasije of Mileševa, Metodije of Budimlja and Nikšić and Dimitrije of Zahumlje and Herzegovina, the ruling hierarchs of the Serbian Patriarchate's dioceses with

parishes on the territory of Montenegro.

Attending the signing ceremony were also Archimandrite Nektarije (Djuric), the chief secretary of the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and the high-ranking government officials, including Deputy Prime Minister for economic affairs and Minister of agriculture, forestry and water management Vladimir Joković, Minister of Human and Minority Rights Fatmir Đeka, Minister of Health Dragoslav Šćekić, and Minister of Finance Aleksandar Damjanović.

Prime Minister Abazović called the signed document 'a message of peace and tolerance' that opens a new page in the church-state relations in Montenegro.

His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije thanked the Prime Minister and members of his Cabinet for their determination and efforts and pointed out that it took a long journey to be covered towards the agreement on the legal status of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

His Holiness mentioned with gratitude the work done by the late Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral and noted that the legal status of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro has been regulated largely due to his personal historical contribution.

The Primate of the Serbian Orthodox Church addressed all citizens of Montenegro irrespective of their world outlook, religious beliefs or nationality, saying, "centuries have shown that we need one another, that we cannot live without other people and that we can do everything when we are together and when there is a place for the others in our hearts. May God bless Montenegro and all people who live here or visit the country."