



Maria Schmid, general secretary of the Council of Europe Marija Pejčinović Burić, UN high commissioner for human rights Folker Türkü, director of the OSCE office for democratic institutions and human rights Matteo Mecacci.

Below is the full text of the message:

“On 14 July 2023, on the basis of the decision made by the Solomensky District Court in Kiev, Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl, a hierarch of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the father superior of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra, who had been under the round-the-clock home arrest, was taken under custody and imprisoned.

The court decision was made in the context of Ukrainian authorities' continued attempts to forcibly and lawlessly withdraw the Kiev Pechersk Lavra from the jurisdiction of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

This court decision, unjust and obviously dictated by the Ukrainian authorities, has as its aim to intimidate the faithful, to force them to give up defending their religious freedom and shrines as a part of the large-scale persecutions deployed by the Ukrainian authorities against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

A religious leader cannot and should not be subjected to such repressive measures for his religious convictions.

With a great anxiety, I note that the change in the preventing punishment of Metropolitan Pavel, an elderly man, from home arrest to incarceration puts him in danger of a serious decline in his health and can lead to his death in pre-trial custody.

I call upon you to draw attention to the persecution of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church going on in Ukraine and to take all possible measures to defend the lawless persecution of Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl”.

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