



## **Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church expresses concern over detention of Archimandrite Ephrem, abbot of the Vatopedi Monastery on Mt. Athos**

*His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia sent a message to H. E. Karolos Papoulias, President of the Hellenic Republic, expressing concern over detention of the abbot of the Vatopedi Monastery of the Annunciation on the Holy Mount Athos. Text of the message is given below.*

**To: His Excellency Mr. Karolos Papoulias**

**President of the Hellenic Republic**

Your Excellency:

It is with a feeling of deep concern that I take the news on the detention of Archimandrite Ephrem, abbot of the Monastery of Vatopedi.

I do not cast doubt on the authority of the justice bodies of Greece and express my hope for their just and impartial ruling on the property of the Monastery of Vatopedi. At the same time, I am surprised at the pretrial detention of the monk who does not constitute any danger to society and who has repeatedly expressed his willingness to cooperate with investigation. Archimandrite Ephrem's failing health causes a particular concern as this was not considered when he was arrested.

Mr. President! Millions of believers in Russia, Byelorussia, Ukraine, Moldavia and other countries, for the people of which the Russian Orthodox Church takes spiritual care, feel anxiety about police measures taken in respect to the well-known in the Orthodox world hegumen of the famed Monastery on the Holy Mountain at the time when the Orthodox Greece celebrates the Nativity of Christ.

I deem it my duty to convey our shared pain to the Head of the state of Greece and ask to release from custody Archimandrite Ephrem, abbot of the Vatopedi Monastery on the Holy Mount Athos.

With deep respect,

**/+KIRILL/**

**Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia**

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