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## **Archbishop Jovan of Ohrid sentenced to three years of imprisonment, property of the Orthodox Ohrid Archbishopric to be confiscated**

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The latest, politically rigged court process against Archbishop Jovan of Ohrid, Bishop Marko of Bregalnica, Bishop David of Stobi, priest-monks, abbesses, nuns and faithful people of the Orthodox Ohrid Archbishopric, concluded today. The judge Ivica Stefanovski pronounced the verdict: all accused are guilty! The court sentenced Archbishop Jovan of Ohrid to three years of imprisonment, and the other accused are sentenced on probation, if they repeat the same deed in the next five years they will be facing two years of imprisonment! The court also decided that property of the Orthodox Ohrid Archbishopric should be confiscated.

The fact that for many years, in all international reports, the FYROM judiciary is being pointed out as one of the most problematic segments of our society, exactly due to its subjectiveness to corruption and political influences, is already proverbial. This politically rigged court process became an evidence for the abovementioned international reports on FYROM. These kind of staged court processes prove that the courts are being used for political confrontations, thus confirming once again the stance about the state sponsoring and protection of the monopoly of the schismatic so-called "Macedonian orthodox church" and, at the same time, the violation of religious freedoms, and persecution on religious basis of the Orthodox Ohrid Archbishopric. The pronounced verdict is the seventh imprisonment sentence for Archbishop Jovan, who is a political prisoner in FYROM already for a long period of time!

Finally, with this verdict also the so-called "Macedonian orthodox church" loses its chances for solving the problem with the schism it dwells in, at the same time confirming to the orthodox world its image of a religious organization that is a creation of a previous political system, an organization which actively partakes in the persecution of the canonical Orthodox Ohrid Archbishopric in FYROM.

In regard to the media insinuations, we are informing the public that only the superstitious or the ones who do not know the faith, could understand the conditional sentences as curses! The Orthodox Ohrid Archbishopric never cursed anyone, although such examples are known in the history of the Church. Following, we will name one example, as an illustration: St Basil of Ostrog bought land for the Church, and then he was unjustly accused for that land, so the land was confiscated by the local ruler. When St Basil of Ostrog complained about this to

Patriarch Maxim, the Patriarch sent a letter to that ruler, with the following contents: "... and if any one of you, the Christians, attempts to take that land from the monastery named Ostrog, to that violator may God take his home, his life, his sons, his cattle, and may God suddenly destroy his whole property and may his trace and root extinguish forever. Amen." The knowers of the faith are familiar with the subsequent events.

When the earthly judicial laws cease to function, then the spiritual laws come to force! Everybody in the Orthodox Ohrid Archbishopric are praying that the mentioned spiritual laws do not touch anyone, and that the reason would prevail, for the well-being of all citizens, for the well-being of the whole country.

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