



## Archbishop Hilarion visits ruined and restored churches in Kosovo

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Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, on a visit to Kosovo and Metochia, together with Bishop Artemije of Rasko-Prizren and Kosovo-Metochia, came to see ruined and restored Orthodox churches there. They were accompanied by representatives of the International Peacekeeping Force in Kosovo.

The first church they saw was St. Elijah's at the Vucitrn village, one of over 150 churches destroyed and defiled for the last ten years. After St. Elijah's was ravaged a public lavatory was arranged at its place. Now this church is being restored as a cultural object, but there are no longer any Serbs in the village.

In the defiled Orthodox cemetery behind the church, Archbishop Hilarion and Bishop Artemije said the litany for the dead Orthodox Serbs of Kosovo and Metochia.

From there the two hierarchs moved to the 14<sup>th</sup> century Bansko Monastery. Destroyed by the Turkish troops in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it resumed its life in 2004 through the efforts of Bishop Artemije.

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