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## **In Moscow, sentence imposed over a former schema monk accused of vandalism and other crimes**



The evidence gathered by the Main Investigative Department of the Investigative Committee of Russia was found sufficient by the court to pass sentence in the criminal case against Nikolai Romanov (former schema monk Sergii). He was found guilty of committing crimes under Paragraphs C, E of Part 3 of Article 110.1, Part 3 of Article 148, Part 1 of Article 330 of the Criminal Code (inducement to suicide; violation of the right to freedom of conscience and religion; arbitrariness).

The investigation and the court found that in 2020 Romanov was excommunicated, but not agreeing with the decision to ban him from priestly service, he did not leave the monastery and prevented access to the territory of all persons at his discretion, including representatives of the Ekaterinburg diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church. By his actions, he unlawfully prevented the conduct of religious rituals. In addition, Romanov, in violation of the norms of civil law, prevented the inventory of real estate on the territory of the monastery, that is, he committed arbitrariness.

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Later, Romanov publicly called for at least ten nuns living at the monastery to commit suicide. Aware that his calls might be perceived by an indefinite number of people and might entail socially dangerous consequences, he published on the Internet a videotape of his speech containing signs of inciting believers to commit suicide under the guise of Christian religious ideology.

He did not plead guilty to the above crimes. He was previously sentenced to 13 years in prison for murder and robbery, and was released in the late 1990s after serving his sentence.

The court sentenced Romanov to 3.5 years' imprisonment to be served in a general regime penal colony.

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