

EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

FOURTH SECTION

DECISION

AS TO THE ADMISSIBILITY OF

Applications nos. 40047/04 *et al.*
by Raina PANTUSHEVA and Others
against Bulgaria

The European Court of Human Rights (Fourth Section), sitting on 5 July 2011 as a Chamber composed of:

Nicolas Bratza, *President,*
Lech Garlicki,
Ljiljana Mijović,
Sverre Erik Jebens,
Päivi Hirvelä,
Ledi Bianku,
Zdravka Kalaydjieva, *judges,*

and Lawrence Early, *Section Registrar,*

Having regard to the applications listed in the appendix,

Having regard to the observations submitted by the respondent Government and the observations in reply submitted by the applicants,

Having deliberated, decides as follows:

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

THE FACTS

I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CASE

1. The facts of the case, as submitted by the parties, may be summarised as follows.

2. The thirty-four applications under examination were introduced by eight hundred and fifteen Bulgarian nationals. The names of all applicants, the application numbers and all dates of introduction are listed in the appendix to this decision.

3. Most applications were introduced on 1 November 2004. The complaints in application no. 3713/05, *Barakov and Others* and in application no. 25729/09, *Assenova and Others*, were introduced on 22 December 2004 (the latter application having eventually received a 2009 number for purely technical reasons). Application no. 2044/05, submitted by Mr Mihail Kmetov and 174 other applicants was introduced on 11 January 2005. The application of Mr Stoyan Sarnov (no. 38332/05) was introduced on 6 October 2005 and the application of Mr Georgi Shopov (no. 14973/08) was introduced on 27 February 2008.

4. Eight hundred and thirteen applicants were represented by Mr L. Popov, a lawyer practising in Sofia. Mr D. Karnalov (application no. 40187/04) was represented by Mr M. Neykov, a lawyer practising in Plovdiv. Another applicant, Mr Y. Stoykov (application no. 2176/05), was represented by Mr M. Ekimdjiev, a lawyer practising in Plovdiv.

5. The Bulgarian Government ("the Government") were represented by their Agents, Ms N. Nikolova and Ms M. Dimova, of the Ministry of Justice.

6. The applicants are Christian Orthodox believers who regularly attend church services and participate in the life of their religious community. Most of them are lay believers. Others used to be or still are members of the clergy of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church ("the Church") or staff employed by various bodies of the Church (see the list of applicants). Some of the applicants were members of or presided over local church councils which, according to the Statute of the Church, govern local temples.

7. The applicants complain in their personal capacity with the exception of Mr Y. Stoykov (formerly Bishop Danail) who submitted that his complaints also concerned the Plovdiv Eparchy which he administered until the impugned events and Mr D. Karnalov, a former priest, who also stated that he represented the Plovdiv Eparchy.

8. Since the beginning of the democratic changes in Bulgaria after the fall of communism the Church was divided, with two groups of leaders claiming legitimacy and seeking to unite the believers under their leadership.

9. All applicants supported the "alternative leadership", presided over by Patriarch Pimen until his death in 1999 and thereafter by Metropolitan Inokentiy, and did not accept the leadership of Patriarch Maxim.

10. Following the adoption of the Religious Denominations Act 2002, which entered into force on 1 January 2003, the activities of the "alternative leadership" presided over by Metropolitan Inokentiy were suppressed and the Church was forcibly united under the control of Patriarch Maxim. In a massive police operation ordered by the Chief Public Prosecutor and carried out on 21 July 2004, clergy, staff and believers supporting the alternative leadership were evicted from all churches, monasteries and administrative premises that they controlled. Clergy and staff loyal to Patriarch Maxim took possession of these properties and of documents and archives. Some of the applicants were present and were physically evicted.

11. Some of the ousted religious ministers or representatives of local church councils sought the assistance of the prosecuting authorities against the forceful evictions or appealed against local prosecutors' decisions whereby the police operation of 21 July 2004 had been ordered. Their complaints were rejected by prosecutors' decisions of August and September 2004 and, in some cases, of January and March 2005. The latest decisions submitted by the applicants were dated 24 March 2005 and concerned solely the applicants Mr S. Ivanov, Mr P. Grudev, Mr H. Damyanov, Mr I. Anguelov and Mr L. Dimitrov.

12. The complaints were rejected essentially on the basis of the prosecutors' findings that following the adoption of the Religious Denominations Act 2002 the sole legitimate leadership of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church was that presided over by Patriarch Maxim and that it had been necessary therefore to assist that leadership to regain possession of buildings occupied by persons who belonged to the illegitimate alternative Synod.

13. The complaints were rejected in all cases in which some of the applicants were involved, including complaints submitted by persons lawfully registered as representatives of temples, which had separate legal personality according to the Statute of the Church, or by persons presiding over parishes or eparchies by virtue of appointments made in accordance with the Statute of the Church, in some cases even before the beginning of the conflict within the Christian Orthodox community.

14. These events are described in detail in the Court's judgment in the case of *Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (Metropolitan Inokentiy) and Others v. Bulgaria*, nos. 412/03 and 35677/04, 22 January 2009).

15. In the years after 2004 a number of priests and other ministers, including some of the applicants, made statements of repentance for having supported the "alternative Synod" in order to be allowed to resume service as Church ministers. It appears, however, that none of the applicants who

used to be clergy or staff of the Church was ever allowed by the Church to take up the same duties again.

II. RELEVANT DOMESTIC LAW AND PRACTICE

16. A summary of the relevant domestic law and practice can be found in the Court's above-cited judgment.

COMPLAINTS

17. The applicants complained, relying on Articles 9 and 13 of the Convention and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 that they had been the victims of an unlawful and arbitrary State interference in the internal affairs of the Church, that they had been deprived of property and that they did not have effective remedies. Some of the applicants also complained under Article 6 of the Convention that they had been deprived of access to court in relation to the actions of the prosecuting authorities.

THE LAW

I. PRELIMINARY ISSUES

18. In July and October 2010 and April 2011 the heirs of seven applicants who passed away after the introduction of their applications – Mr E. Iliev (application no. 40176/04), Mr G. Galev (application no. 40212/04), Mr B. Bogoev (application no. 40215/04), Mr P. Dambov, Mr M. Malinov and Mr N. Zagorchin (application no. 25729/09, *Assenova and Others*) and Mr K. Barakov (application no. 40235/04) informed the Court that they wished to pursue the complaints.

19. It has not been disputed that those heirs are entitled to pursue the applications on the deceased applicants' behalf and the Court sees no reason to hold otherwise (see, for example, *Kozimor v. Poland*, no. 10816/02, §§ 25-29, 12 April 2007). For reasons of convenience, the text of this decision will continue to refer to the above mentioned deceased persons as "the applicants", although their heirs are today to be regarded as having this status. The Court further finds unsubstantiated the Government's statement that some of the remaining applicants may have died without their heirs expressing the wish to pursue their applications.

20. The Court further notes that two of the applicants, Mr Y. Stoykov and Mr D. Karnalov, alleged, independently of each other, that their

complaints were submitted both in their individual capacity and as representatives of the Plovdiv Eparchy. Mr Stoykov (formerly Bishop Danail) stated that he used to administer that Eparchy prior to the events at issue. Mr Karnalov, who was a priest but submitted that he also carried the title of bishop, did not clarify why he should be seen as representing the same Eparchy, apart from stating that he had had some "administrative functions".

21. The Court observes that neither Mr Stoykov nor Mr Karnalov have distinguished in any way between claims made in an individual capacity and claims made on behalf of the Eparchy but have, indeed, only stated facts and arguments which relate to their rights as individual applicants. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that their claims for just satisfaction concern only their individual position, not the Plovdiv Eparchy. In these circumstances, the Court finds that it is not necessary to treat the Plovdiv Eparchy as a separate applicant.

II. JOINDER OF THE APPLICATIONS

22. In accordance with Rule 42 § 1 of the Rules of Court, the Court finds it appropriate to join the applications, given their similar factual and legal background.

III. ALLEGED VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION

23. The applicants complained that, in violation of Article 9 of the Convention, they had been the victims of an unlawful and arbitrary State interference in the internal affairs of the religious community in whose life they participated. Article 9 reads as follows:

> "1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.
>
> 2. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others."

A. The six months' time-limit

1. The parties' submissions

24. The Government invited the Court to reject the complaints of Mr Stoyan Sarnov (application no. 38332/05) and Mr Georgi Shopov (application no. 14973/08), as having been submitted outside the six months' time-limit under Article 35 § 1 of the Convention.

25. In the same vein, apparently referring to the fact that the Court had given a 2009 registration number to the complaints of the applicants in *Assenova and Others*, no. 25729/09, the Government stated that the issues under examination did not constitute a continuing situation and that the Court should not continue to accept additional applications related to the same events.

26. The applicants replied that even today they continued to suffer the consequences of the State action complained of.

2. The Court's assessment

27. The six-month rule stipulated in Article 35 § 1 is intended to promote security of the law and to ensure that cases raising issues under the Convention are dealt with within a reasonable time. It protects the authorities and other persons concerned from uncertainty for a prolonged period of time. In assessing whether an applicant has complied with Article 35 § 1, it is important to recall that the requirements contained in that Article concerning the exhaustion of domestic remedies and the six-month period are closely interrelated. Thus, where no effective remedy is available to an applicant the time-limit expires six months after the date of the acts or measures about which he complains, or after the date of knowledge of that act or its effect or prejudice on the applicant (see *Kolu v. Finland* (dec.), no. 56463/10, 3 May 2011, with further references).

28. Nonetheless the six month time-limit does not apply as such to continuing situations (see, for example, *Agrotexim Hellas S.A. and Others v. Greece*, no. 14807/89; and *Cone v. Romania*, no. 35935/02, § 22, 24 June 2008). This is because, if there is a situation of ongoing breach, the time-limit in effect starts afresh each day and it is only once the situation ceases that the final period of six months will run to its end (see, *Varnava and Others v. Turkey* [GC], nos. 16064/90 et al., §§ 158 and 159, ECHR 2009-...).

29. In the present case the applicants, like the six individual applicants in *Holy Synod and Others* (cited above), considered that they did not have effective remedies at their disposal.

30. With two exceptions, the applicants in the present case, including those in *Assenova and Others*, no. 25729/09, whose complaints were registered under a 2009 number for purely technical reasons, introduced their applications on dates between 1 November 2004 and 11 January 2005, less than six months after the events of 21 July 2004 (see paragraphs 2 and 3 above and the appended list of applicants). This was also the case of the six individual applicants in *Holy Synod and Others* whose complaints had been lodged in time and were examined on the merits (see, in particular §§ 3 and 7 and the operative provisions of that judgment).

31. An issue arises, however, as regards the complaints of two of the applicants, Mr Sarnov and Mr Shopov. They introduced their applications

on 6 October 2005 and 27 February 2008 respectively. Even if account is taken of the dates of the most recent domestic decisions submitted to the Court, the prosecutors' decisions dated 24 March 2005 whereby the complaints of other applicants were dismissed (see paragraph 14 above), the applications of Mr Sarnov and Mr Shopov would still appear to be out of time.

32. On the understanding that the applicants did not have to have recourse to domestic remedies (see *Holy Synod and Others v. Bulgaria* (dec.), nos. 412/03 and 35677/04, 22 May 2007), the Court must determine whether Mr Sarnov's and Mr Shopov's complaints concern an on-going breach of the Convention and have thus been submitted in time, or whether they concern an act or situation which ended more than six months before the date of introduction of their applications.

33. The applicants complained that they had been the victims of an unlawful and arbitrary State interference in the internal affairs of the Church as a result of the operation of the Religious Denominations Act 2002, its implementation in general and the events of July 2004 in particular. Since both Mr Sarnov and Mr Shopov were parish priests and Mr Sarnov presided over the local church council, they also complained that those events resulted in deprivation of property and denial of access to a court. They have not referred to any relevant events occurring after the summer of 2004 and, indeed, do not seem to allege that the State continued to intervene in the internal affairs of the Church after that period.

34. In its case-law the Court has considered that there were "continuing situations" bringing the case within its competence with regard to Article 35 § 1 where, *inter alia*, there were successive relevant events which continued at the time of introduction of the application or ended less than six months before that (see, for example, *Bayram and Yıldırım v. Turkey* (dec.), no. 38587/97, decision of 29 January 2002, ECHR 2002 III; and *Vladimirova and Others v. Bulgaria*, no. 42617/02, 26 February 2009) or where a legal provision gave rise to a permanent state of affairs in the form of a permanent limitation on an individual Convention-protected right, such as the right to vote or to stand for elections (see *Paksas v. Lithuania* [GC], no. 34932/04, § 83, 6 January 2011, with further references).

35. It is clear from the facts established in *Holy Synod and Others* (cited above) and in this case that the State intervention in the internal organisation of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and, consequently, the interference with the applicants' Article 9 rights, began with the adoption of the Religious Denominations Act 2002, in force since 1 January 2003, and culminated in the events of July 2004. Unlike the situation that obtained in *Paksas* (cited above), the 2002 Act did not provide for a permanent limitation on the applicants' rights. The adoption of the Act was a part of, and served as the legal basis for, one-off State action to force an end to the divisions within the Christian Orthodox community in Bulgaria (see, *Holy Synod and Others*

cited above). Following the rejection, in the months after July 2004, of the complaints and actions filed by the central leadership of the "alternative Synod" or by local leaders, there were no new relevant events. In the summer of 2004 the forced unification of the Church was completed and the applicants have not alleged that the authorities continued to intervene in the affairs of the Church after that.

36. It is true that Mr Sarnov and Mr Shopov complained that the State intervention had caused them to lose their livelihood as parish priests and referred to enduring transformations in the Christian Orthodox community in Bulgaria, the results of which persist to the present day. The Court does not consider, however, that this is sufficient for a finding that there has been a continuous situation. There is clearly a difference between, on the one hand, continuing State action or inaction in breach of Convention rights or enduring legal effects thereof, and, on the other hand, the continuing presence of facts that were the consequence of past actions.

37. It is also true that the Court stated in *Holy Synod and Others* that the Religious Denominations Act 2002 continued to be the source of legal uncertainty (see § 157 of the judgment on the merits of 22 January 2009 in that case). The Court indicated to the respondent Government, in the context of Articles 41 and 46 of the Convention, that compliance with its judgment required an appropriate legislative amendment (see §§ 47-50 of the judgment on just satisfaction of 16 September 2010 in the above-mentioned case). The fact that such measures are necessary does not mean, however, that the legal deficiencies in question amount as such to a continuing violation of the rights of persons in the applicants' position. As noted above, the applicants have not argued that the Bulgarian authorities continued to interfere in the internal organisation of the Church after the summer of 2004 or that the deficient provisions of the 2002 Act were used again, as in 2004, for any such interference.

38. In these circumstances, noting that Mr Sarnov and Mr Shopov introduced their complaints more than six months after the events complained of, the Court finds that they must be rejected as time-barred, in accordance with Article 35 §§ 1 and 4.

39. As regards the remaining eight hundred and thirteen applicants, the Court finds that their applications were introduced in time and rejects the Government's objection.

B. The Court's decision concerning the complaints of eight hundred and thirteen applicants under Article 9

1. The parties' submissions

(a) The Government

40. The Government submitted that the applicants could not claim to be victims of violations of Article 9. That was so in respect of both aspects of their complaints: the alleged State intervention in the leadership dispute in the Church and the events of July 2004. In particular, none of the applicants had ever been prevented from manifesting their religion, practising it or associating with others to that end. The events of July 2004 did not affect directly the right to freedom of religion of the applicants whether as believers or staff employed by parishes. In so far as the religious leaders were concerned, the Court had already found a violation of Article 9 in their regard. That was sufficient. It could not be considered that every believer should be able to claim a violation of his or her rights in relation to the choice of leader of their religious community. A distinction must be drawn between the Patriarch, whose election was regulated by canon law, and the priests in local parishes, who were appointed by the Church hierarchy. Similarly, local church councils were collective bodies and had a limited term of office.

41. Commenting on the facts of the case, the Government took the position that the Court had erred in its judgment in the case of *Holy Synod and Others v. Bulgaria* (cited above). They explained in detail their view that Patriarch Maxim was the canonical head of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church as confirmed, notably, by the Pan-Orthodox Council held in 1998, and that, contrary to what the Court found in that judgment, the Bulgarian authorities had not interfered with the autonomous organisation of the Church but had only recognised the legitimacy of its canonical Patriarch and its canonical unity.

42. The Government went on to explain that contrary to the Court's findings in *Holy Synod and Others* the prosecuting authorities and the police had acted lawfully in July 2004. The Church and not the State had decided to appoint other priests in a number of churches and those who had resisted the Church decisions had to be removed. The prosecuting authorities had been under a duty to react to the applicants' unlawful conduct and restore legality. The prosecutors had identified the lawful representatives of the Church on the basis of the law, canon law and the decision of the Constitutional Court rejecting the request to declare unconstitutional relevant amendments to the Religious Denominations Act.

43. The Government further stated that many of the applicants who were priests or ministers had in the meantime made statements of repentance and had accepted the leadership of Patriarch Maxim.

(b) The applicants

44. The applicants submitted that the issue of victim status was settled by the Court in the *Holy Synod and Others* judgment (cited above) and its case-law in general. Being members of the Church presided over by the "alternative Synod", the applicants were victims of the State interference complained of. As a result of that State action the "alternative Synod" could not continue any meaningful existence. Those applicants who were employees or clergy instantly lost their livelihood and suffered most, including in terms of pecuniary damage. All applicants, however, were victims. As already established by the Court in *Holy Synod and Others* (cited above), the believers adhering to the alternative Synod and wishing to practise their religion were unlawfully forced, through legislative intervention and a sweeping police action, to worship under the clergy and leadership imposed on them by the Bulgarian Government. The applicants witnessed their clergy and fellow church goers being removed from temples by the police. The Court had held in *Hasan and Chaush v. Bulgaria* ([GC], no. 30985/96, ECHR 2000-XI) that the personality of religious ministers is undoubtedly of importance to every member of the religious community and that arbitrary State intervention in a leadership dispute within a religious community encroaches on believers' Article 9 rights.

45. As to the Government's position that the authorities had done nothing more than enforce canon law, the applicants stated that this was in fact an admission of a State interference with religious freedoms. It was certainly not the role of the Government to enforce canon law against those deemed not to abide by it. The Government's lengthy explanations on the correct reading of canon law were erroneous but above all irrelevant as this case concerned State interference with religious freedoms, not canonical legitimacy of religious leaders. Having regard to Bulgaria's history, upholding the right to religious freedom by the Court was essential.

46. The applicants stated that the possibility for clergy adhering to the alternative Synod to resume their religious duties by making a forced statement of repentance and accepting to serve under the leadership of Patriarch Maxim was not an answer to their complaints which concerned State intervention with the organisation of the religious community, not the actions of Patriarch Maxim.

47. The applicants further stated that the content of the Government's observations demonstrated that they refused to accept the Court's findings in *Holy Synod and Others* and, moreover, continued their policy of discriminating against those adhering to the "alternative Synod". The applicants invited the Court to hold the respondent Government accountable for their actions.

48. Mr Yordan Stoykov (formerly Bishop Danail) stated that the complaints submitted by him under Article 9 of the Convention as an individual and representative of the Plovdiv Eparchy, which he administered

until the impugned events, were identical to those examined by the Court in *Holy Synod and Others* (cited above) and that the Court therefore should find a violation in his case.

2. The Court's assessment

49. The Court notes that the complaints under Article 9 of eight hundred and thirteen applicants in the present case are identical to those of the six individual applicants in *Holy Synod and Others*.

50. Indeed, in *Holy Synod*, for reasons of procedural efficiency, the Court selected for examination the complaints of several out of more than eight hundred individuals who filed cases in 2004 and at the beginning of 2005 in relation to the same events. That was done in order to clarify the relevant principles and deal exhaustively with the relevant issues in one main case, so as to allow for a simplified treatment of the remaining cases.

51. The above approach has often been applied by the Court in situations where a significant number of individuals have filed similar applications (see, for example, *Perks and Others v. the United Kingdom*, nos. 25277/94 et al., 12 October 1999, and *Velikovi and Others v. Bulgaria*, nos. 43278/98 et al., 15 March 2007).

52. The approach has been refined and developed further in pilot-judgment cases, which concern structural or systemic problems in the legal system of a respondent State which give rise or may give rise to similar applications (see, *Broniowski v. Poland* [GC], nº 31443/96, ECHR 2004-V).

53. When dealing with groups of follow-up applications involving an already identified violation of the Convention, the Court has different options. It may decide to adjourn all or part of them pending the introduction of an effective domestic remedy in execution of a pilot judgment (see *Broniowski*, cited above, *Burdov v. Russia (no. 2)*, no. 33509/04, ECHR 2009-... and *Olaru and Others v. Moldova*, nos. 476/07, 22539/05, 17911/08 and 13136/07, 28 July 2009), to continue their examination in order to secure timely relief for the individuals concerned (*Rumpf v. Germany*, no. 46344/06, 2 September 2010 and *Vassilios Athanasiou and Others v. Greece*, no. 50973/08, 21 December 2010, *Velikovi and Others v. Bulgaria*, cited above) or, if the conditions are present, to strike them out of the list of cases in accordance with Article 37 § 1 of the Convention (see *Greens and M.T. v. the United Kingdom*, nos. 60041/08 and 60054/08, ECHR 2010-... (extracts)).

54. In *Greens and M.T. v. the United Kingdom* (cited above), the Court indicated that, in accordance with Article 37 § 1, it would consider striking out of its list follow-up applications from prisoners challenging the voting ban imposed on them by domestic legal provisions. The ban in question had already been held to be in violation of Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 (see *Hirst v. the United Kingdom (no. 2)* [GC], no. 74025/01, ECHR 2005-IX). In

Greens and M.T., the Court noted that, while there was a violation of Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 in respect of every prisoner in the United Kingdom otherwise entitled to vote, the continued examination of every application asserting the same violation was no longer justified. That was so, in particular, in view of the nature of that violation, the fact that no individual examination was required in order to assess appropriate redress and the fact that no financial compensation was payable in such cases.

55. The Court finds that a similar approach is warranted in the present case. Article 37 § 1 of the Convention provides, in so far as relevant:

> "The Court may at any stage of the proceedings decide to strike an application out of its list of cases where the circumstances lead to the conclusion that
>
> ...
>
> (c) for any other reason established by the Court, it is no longer justified to continue the examination of the application.
>
> However, the Court shall continue the examination of the application if respect for human rights as defined in the Convention and the Protocols thereto so requires."

56. In *Holy Synod and Others*, the Court held that in 2003-2004 the Bulgarian authorities interfered with the internal organisation of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in an unlawful and disproportionate manner, in violation of Article 9. The Court clearly established that the events of 2003-2004 gave rise to a violation of Article 9 in respect of every active member of the affected religious community. It further declined to award damages to individual applicants in respect of this violation and decided that no individual measures, such as the requested restoration of the *status quo ante*, or other measures, were called for (see the principal judgment of 22 January 2009 and the judgment on just satisfaction of 16 September 2010).

57. In these circumstances, the Court considers that it has discharged its obligation under Article 19 of the Convention, "to ensure the observance of the engagements undertaken by the High Contracting Parties in the Convention and the Protocols thereto" and concludes that nothing is to be gained, nor will justice be best served, by the repetition of its findings in a lengthy series of comparable or even identical cases, at a significant burden on its own resources and with the resulting impact on its considerable caseload. In particular, such an exercise would not contribute usefully or in any meaningful way to the strengthening of human rights protection under the Convention.

58. It is true that in its just satisfaction judgment in *Holy Synod and Others* the Court indicated, in order to assist the respondent Government in the execution of their duty under Article 46 of the Convention to comply with its judgments, that the general measures to be taken should include such amendment to the Religious Denominations Act 2002 as to ensure that leadership conflicts in religious communities are left to be resolved by the

religious community concerned and that disputes about the civil consequences of such conflicts are decided by the courts. The Court is not aware of any such amendment having already been introduced. In *Greens and M.T.*, where the pilot-judgment procedure was applied, the Court stated that striking out follow-up applications would be considered in the event of compliance, by the United Kingdom Government, with the indication to amend the impugned legislation. The question arises whether the Court should not await compliance by the Bulgarian Government with the indication to amend the Religious Denominations Act 2002 and only proceed to strike out the present applications after that.

59. The Court notes in this respect that, unlike *Greens and M.T.*, the violation found in *Holy Synod and Others* did not concern a permanent statutory ban on exercising a Convention-protected right but particular events which happened in 2003-2004 and violated Article 9 without giving rise to a continuing situation (see paragraphs 32-38 above). It is clear that, following *Holy Synod and Others*, amendments to the Religious Denominations Act 2002 are necessary as a general measure to prevent possible future violations of the Convention in the event of religious leadership disputes, if they occur, and not as a measure to put an end to a situation violating the rights of the applicants. Furthermore, the applicants in the present case were affected by the State action violating the Convention not because of their legal status (such as the status of serving prisoners, as in *Greens and M.T.*) but simply because they happened to be active members of a religious community at a time when the State interfered with its organisation. In these circumstances, the progress in the Bulgarian authorities' compliance with the Court's judgments in *Holy Synod and Others* in general, and the above-mentioned indications to amend the law in particular, cannot be seen as directly decisive for the approach to be taken to the examination of the Article 9 complaints in the present case. Those are issues to be dealt with by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. No particular reason relating to respect for human rights as defined in the Convention and its Protocols requires the Court to continue its examination of the application under Article 37 § 1 *in fine*.

60. In sum, in accordance with Article 37 § 1(c) of the Convention, the Court considers it appropriate to discontinue its examination of the applicants' complaints under Article 9 and to strike this part of applications out of its list.

IV. ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF ARTICLES 6 AND 13 AND ARTICLE 1 OF PROTOCOL NO. 1

61. The applicants complained that they had been deprived of their possessions, did not have an effective remedy in this respect and that they had been denied access to a court.

A. The parties' submissions

1. The Government

62. The Government's position was that the applicants were not entitled to any proprietary interest in temples or buildings belonging to local parishes and the Church, that they should have filed claims with the domestic courts in respect of loss of salary or other lost income and that their claims in this respect were in any event unsubstantiated.

2. The applicants

(a) Submissions of all applicants with the exception of Mr Yordan Stoykov

63. The applicants submitted that those of them who were clergy or lay employees of the Church and had remained loyal to their convictions, refusing to submit to the arbitrary State action, had lost their livelihood, including salary, pension rights and social cover. Their rights under Article 6 and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 had been violated.

64. Referring to the Court's findings in the case of *Holy Synod and Others* (cited above), the applicants stated that no effective remedies were available to them in respect of the events complained of and that their rights under Articles 6 and 13 had therefore been violated. In particular, as a result of the provisions of the Religious Denominations Act 2002 and the prosecutors' orders, any theoretically available remedy had become inaccessible and illusory. The applicants added that those of them who had been employed by the Church did not have access to the courts because their employment contracts had never been terminated in law. Also, after the events of July 2004 they did not have access to relevant documents.

(b) Submissions of Mr Yordan Stoykov

65. He considered that in *Holy Synod and Others* (cited above) the Court had not found violations of Article 6 and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 because the six individual applicants had formulated their claims in a very specific manner. His claims were different. In particular, unlike the individual applicants in *Holy Synod*, Mr Stoykov did not claim rights over temples or church buildings but only that he had been deprived of his salary and that he did not have access to a court in this respect. Mr Stoykov was not an ordinary employee of the Church but a member of the clergy, holding the title of bishop. Following the events of July 2004 Mr Stoykov had been compelled by the circumstances to repent and seek to reintegrate into the Church presided over by Patriarch Maxim but had been told to assume the functions of a neophyte in a monastery – in reality, a janitor's job. This "offer" had been obviously aimed at humiliating him. Mr Stoykov had thus been deprived of his income and had left the Church. It was not possible for

him to bring an action against the Church claiming a breach of labour rights since there was no clear practice demonstrating that such a claim would be successful.

B. The Court's assessment

66. For the reasons set out above, the Court rejects as time-barred the complaints under Articles 6 and 13 and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 of Mr Sarnov and Mr Shopov (applications nos. 38332/05 and 14073/08).

67. As regards the remaining applicants, the Court finds little difference between the complaints of the applicants in the present case and the complaints it rejected in its judgment in *Holy Synod and Others* (cited above). In that case, in paragraphs 168 and 169, the Court stated:

> "The Court notes that the six individual applicants did not allege that they had a proprietary interest of any kind in the temples, office buildings or other property over which the applicant organisation had lost control as a result of the events complained of. In so far as the applicants claimed that they had suffered a loss of income, the Court notes that none of them has clarified the dates and surrounding circumstances of any termination of their functions. In so far as the applicants may be understood to be claiming that they felt unable to continue to perform their functions, and thus lost income, as a result of the fact that the State forcibly imposed on them leaders whom they did not accept as legitimate, the Court considers that this statement only concerns alleged damage resulting from the violation of Article 9 found in this case and does not disclose a violation of Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 to the Convention. Furthermore, the Court finds that the assertion by the six individual applicants that they could not turn to the civil courts to seek the determination of their own civil rights and obligations is not supported by convincing arguments... [T]he complaints of the six individual applicants that the events at issue violated their rights under Article 6 of the Convention or Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 are unsubstantiated and must be rejected as unproven."

68. Similarly, in the present case, the applicants' argument that they did not have access to the domestic courts to bring actions for salaries or other income is unsubstantiated and unconvincing. There is nothing to indicate that had the applicants brought such actions, the domestic courts would have refused to deal with the merits of the dispute. This applies equally in respect of applicants who were lay staff of the Church and those who were ministers (see paragraph 20 above). As in *Holy Synod and Others* (cited above, § 168), the applicants' submissions under Article 6 and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 concern in reality indirect damage allegedly resulting from the violation of Article 9 rather than genuine issues of access to court or deprivation of property by the State.

69. There being no arguable claim under Article 6 or Article 1 of Protocol No. 1, no issue arises under Article 13 in conjunction with those provisions. In any event, and as regards Article 13 in conjunction with Article 9, the Court refers to its findings in *Holy Synod and Others* (cited above). In that case it found that, in the very special circumstances at issue,

since the State action complained of had been effected through legislative provisions interpreted in the process of their implementation as directly mandating the unification of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church under Patriarch Maxim, Article 13 could not be seen as requiring the availability of a remedy to challenge at the national level the respondent State's laws (ibid., §§ 175-179). The same is true in respect of the applicants in the present case.

70. The Court thus considers that the above complaints must be rejected as being manifestly ill-founded in accordance with Article 35 § 3(a) and 4 of the Convention.

V. APPLICATION OF RULE 43 § 4 OF THE RULES OF COURT

71. Rule 43 § 4 of the Rules of Court provides:

> "When an application has been struck out, the costs shall be at the discretion of the Court. ..."

72. The applicants who were represented by Mr L. Popov jointly claimed EUR 11,510 for the costs and expenses incurred in the preparation of the applications and the proceedings before the Court. The sum claimed included legal fees for 126 hours of legal work and expenses made for translation, copying and office supplies. The applicants submitted invoices. Seeing that the Court rejected as time barred the complaints of two of the applicants represented by Mr L. Popov, the above mentioned claim concerns eight hundred and eleven applicants (see paragraphs 4 and 38 above).

73. Mr D. Karnalov (application no. 40187/04) claimed EUR 2,000 in legal fees. No supporting documents were submitted.

74. The remaining applicant, Mr Y. Stoykov (application no. 2176/05), claimed EUR 4,346.60 in respect of fifty-four hours of legal work on the application before the Court and EUR 215.62 in respect of translation, copying, mailing and office expenses. He requested that these amounts be payable directly into the bank account of his legal representatives, Mr M. Ekimdjiev and Mrs K. Boncheva. The applicant submitted copies of a legal fees and translation fees agreements, a time-sheet and postal receipts.

75. The Government considered that the claims were excessive and, in respect of Mr D. Karnalov, not supported by documents.

76. In so far as the complaints of eight hundred and thirteen applicants under Article 9 of the Convention are concerned, the Court decided to discontinue their examination and strike this part of the applications out of its list of cases (see paragraphs 49-60 above). With regard to this part of the case, therefore, the question of the application of Rule 43 § 4 arises.

77. The Court reiterates that the general principles governing reimbursement of costs under Rule 43 § 4 are essentially the same as under Article 41 of the Convention (see *Pisano v. Italy* (striking out) [GC],

no. 36732/97, §§ 53-54, 24 October 2002 and *Voorhuis v. the Netherlands* (dec.), no. 28692/06, 3 March 2009). According to the Court's case-law, an applicant is entitled to the reimbursement of costs and expenses only in so far as it has been shown that these have been actually and necessarily incurred and were reasonable as to quantum. Furthermore, itemised particulars of any claim must be submitted, together with the relevant supporting documents or vouchers, failing which the Court may reject the claim in whole or in part (see, *Kovačić and Others v. Slovenia* (*striking out*) [GC], nos. 44574/98, 45133/98 and 48316/99, § 276, 3 October 2008).

78. In the present case, regard being had to the documents in its possession and the above criteria, the Court, noting in particular that the preparation of all individual applications must have required significant time and effort given the number of applicants involved, but also the similarity between the present case and *Holy Synod and Others* (cited above), considers it reasonable to award to the eight hundred and eleven applicants represented by Mr L. Popov the sum of EUR 6,000 covering costs under all heads.

79. The Court further notes that the claim made by Mr D. Karnalov was not supported by a single document and rejects it.

80. Finally, it awards EUR 800 in respect of costs under all heads to the remaining applicant, Mr Y. Stoykov, to be paid directly into the bank account of his legal representatives, Mr. M. Ekimdjiev and Mrs K. Boncheva.

81. The Court considers it appropriate that the default interest should be based on the marginal lending rate of the European Central Bank, to which should be added three percentage points.

For these reasons, the Court unanimously

1. Decides to join the applications;

2. Decides to strike out of its list of cases the complaints under Article 9 of the Convention of all applicants, with the exception of Mr Sarnov and Mr Shopov (applications nos. 38332/05 and 14973/08);

3. Declares the remainder of the applications inadmissible;

4. Holds

(a) that the respondent State is to pay the applicants the following amounts in respect of costs and expenses, to be converted into Bulgarian levs at the rate applicable at the date of settlement:

(i) EUR 6,000 (six thousand euros) to the eight hundred and eleven applicants represented by Mr L. Popov, plus any tax that may be chargeable to the applicants;

(ii) EUR 800 (eight hundred euros) to Mr Y. Stoykov, to be paid directly into the bank account of his legal representatives, Mr M. Ekimdjiev and Mrs K. Boncheva, plus any tax that may be chargeable to Mr Y. Stoykov;

(b) that if settlement has not been made upon the expiry of three months from the date of notification of the decision, simple interest shall be payable on the above amounts at a rate equal to the marginal lending rate of the European Central Bank during the default period plus three percentage points.

Lawrence Early
Registrar

Nicolas Bratza
President

APPENDIX

Applications introduced on 1 November 2004 **:**		
	Application N°	**Names of applicants**
1	40047/04	**1. Raina Pantusheva** 2. Stanka Batalova 3. Liliana Valkova 4. Todora Kiryakova 5. Evgelina Ilcheva 6. Stanimir Ilchev 7. Ivan Ilchev 8. Todor Pichurov 9. Vesela Pichurova 10. Dimitar Pichurov 11. Petar Talev 12. Nikola Dandarov 13. Todor Radoev 14. Kostadin Radoev 15. Radoslava Mihaleva 16. Jivko Mihalev 17. Angelina Radoeva 18. Petar Andreev 19. Vaska Kasabova 20. Stanka Rusinova 21. Maria Taleva 22. Hristina Lukanova 23. Yordan Popov 24. Maria Popova 25. Hristina Teneva 26. Ivan Denchev 27. Argir Petkov 28. Maria Pepelanova 29. Liliana Apostolova 30. Boriana Lukanova 31. Georgi Belenozov 32. Lilia Belenezova 33. Margarita Dandarova 34. Maria Ilieva 35. Dimitrina Apostolova 36. Stanka Pantusheva 37. Georgi Pantushev 38. Lubka Sarakoleva 39. Nadejda Kovacheva 40. Shinka Taleva

2	40092/04	**1. Velichka Georgieva** 2. Stefka Doichinova 3. Donka Taseva 4. Angelin Tasev 5. Todor Nekezov 6. Ivanka Nekezova 7. Ruska Bozukova
3	40176/04	**1. Evlogi Iliev** - *bishop* (passed away, heirs wish to pursue the complaints) 2. Dimitar Kutzev - *priest* 3. Svetla Pichurova 4. Keti Mihaleva 5. Kostadin Sarakolev 6. Yanko Pichurov 7. Vladimir Dandorov
4	40179/04	**1. Velichko Kanchev** - *priest* 2. Spas Marinov 3. Apostol Strikov 4. Liliana Koleva 5. Nadejda Dimitrova 6. Shina Milcheva-Garova 7. Dobrina Valcheva
5	40187/04	**1. Dimitar Karnalov** - *priest* 2. Nikola Zahariev - *priest* 3. Dragan Draganov - *priest* 4. Blaga Peneva 5. Maria Kaloferova 6. Damyanka Karnalova 7. Krastyu Iliev
6	40194/04	**1. Violeta Draganova** 2. Antoaneta Draganova 3. Sofia Kutzeva 4. Miroslav Kutzev 5. Nestor Kutzev 6. Vesela Miteva-Nekezova 7. Ginka Ilieva
7	40199/04	**1. Petria Petrova** 2. Emil Petrov 3. Velichko Petrov 4. Velika Paskaleva 5. Mariana Simeonova 6. Atans Simeonov 7. Stoyan Kanchev
8	40208/04	**1. Angel Karpuzov** 2. Slavyan Yanev 3. Pavel Popov 4. Loza Popova 5. Svetoslava Popova

		6. Lybka Dyakova 7. Slave Yanev
9	40212/04	**Georgi Galev** - *metropolitan* (passed away, heirs wish to pursue the complaints)
10	40215/04	**1. Boris Bogoev** - *metropolitan* (passed away, heirs wish to pursue the complaints) 2. Yancho Todorov 3. Iliya Nekezov 4. Yordanka Zaharieva 5. Minko Zahariev
11	40235/04	**1. Kamen Barakov** – *priest* (passed away, heirs wish to pursue the complaints) 2. Bojidar Maslarov - *priest* 3. Stefan Ivanov - *priest* 4. Plamen Asenov - *priest* 5. Lybomir Mladenov 6. Gergana Asenova - *employee*
12	41081/04	**Georgi Velikov** - *priest*
13	41114/04	**1. Spas Kozarev** - *priest* 2. Roza Kozareva 3. Yordanka Kozareva 4. Rumyana Kozareva
14	41161/04	**Georgi Iliev** - *priest*
15	41163/04	**Dimitar Yanev** - *priest*
16	41290/04	**1. Elka Valeva** 2. Kiril Katinin 3. Boris Angushev 4. Siika Galeva
17	41338/04	**1. Magdalena Krumova** 2. Dobrinka Tzekova 3. Verginia Sotirova 4. Vesilka Vodenicharova
18	41342/04	**1. Ivan Kushlev** - *priest* 2. Proletzveta Kushleva 3. Valkan Kuhtev 4. Maya Tyaneva 5. Krum Kushlev
19	41348/04	**1. Emil Tankov** 2. Galya Tankova 3. Marin Tankov 4. Georgi Mutev 5. Tonka Muteva 6. Ruen Kubatov
20	42105/04	**1. Strahil Rashkov** - *priest* 2. Yordan Vasilev - *priest* 3. Djena Yordanova-Rashkova 4. Milka Kutzeva

		5. Spas Paskalev 6. Ivanka Ganeva 7. Georgi Ganev
21	42112/04	**1. Lyubka Puleva** 2. Ivan Galev 3. Kostadin Bozdev 4. Verka Bozdeva 5. Maria Bakalova 6. Iliya Dulev 7. Maria Ovcharova
22	42118/04	**1. Boyan Argirov** - *priest* 2. Maria Popova 3. Penka Atanasova 4. Nedyalka Stamenova 5. Dimitar Rosenov 6. Nikola Shopov 7. Zapryana Madjarova
23	42125/04	**1. Lyubomir Papo** - *priest* 2. Mira Petkova-Papo 3. Simeon Simeonov 4. Ivanka Savova 5. Maria Domakinova 6. Katerina Sevrieva 7. Krasimira Kupdurdjieva
24	42129/04	**1. Nikola Zahariev** - *priest* 2. Hristo Bonev 3. Dimitar Draganov 4. Yordan Raichev 5. Rumiana Duraie 6. Milena Paunova 7. Georgi Todorov
25	42134/04	**1. Katerina Obretenova** 2. Krasimir Obretenov 3. Kostadin Tashev 4. Mariika Tasheva 5. Vasil Dyulgerov 6. Vasil Duylgerov 7. Jorjeta Dyulgerova 8. Svetlana Chuchuranova 9. Margarita Veleva 10. Georgi Velev 11. Georgi Kutzev 12. Stefka Kutzeva
26	42156/04	**1. Maria Urumova** 2. Vera Urumova 3. Kostadinka Mohaylova 4. Kostadin Kaninski 5. Tencho Kaninski

		6. Atanas Kaninski 7. Nevena Kaninska 8. Stoyanka Boneva 9. Anka Stavreva 10. Angel Stavrev 11. Maria Raicheva 12. Nikola Raichev 13. Kolyu Mitrev 14. Milko Urumov
27	42157/04	**1. Tzvetanka Tringova** - *employee* 2. Natalia Lashkova 3. Adriana Pobornikova 4. Teodora Pobornikova 5. Lyuben Lashkov 6. Veneta Lashkova 7. Violeta Mihaylova 8. Marin Marinov 9. Margarita Farchalova 10. Svilanka Pashova 11. Dimitar Nanov 12. Yulia Georgieva 13. Ivailo Mavrev 14. Milen Asenov 15. Stoyanka Mitova 16. Boika Asenova
28	42202/04	**1. Anton Dachev** 2. Valentin Bogushev 3. Dimitar Dachev 4. Diana Bojurska 5. Nikolay Stoyanov 6. Alexander Bojurski 7. Daniela Galabova 8. Vesela Andonova 9. Georgi Todorov 10. Roza Blagoeva 11. Milka Hristova 12. Dimitar Georgiev 13. Roza Ilieva 14. Petar Pintiiski 15. Katya Petrevska 16. Maria Palahanova 17. Maria Shopalska 18. Vasilka Andonova 19. Nevena Puleva 20. Spas Vaklinov

Application introduced on 11 January 2005 :		
	Application N°	**Names of applicants**
29	2044/05	**1. Mihail Tihomirov Kmetov** 2. Tsvetanka Angelova Kmetova 3. Stefanka Tihomirova Kmetova 4. Natasha Staikova Georgieva 5. Veneta Kirilova Vulchkova 6. Teodora Mihaylova Paounova 7. Elka Georgieva Dimitrova 8. Raicho Merkov Rangelov 9. Iskra Tselova Petkova (Vulcheva) 10. Petko Kamenov Petkov 11. Lyubomir Raichev Rangelov 12. Plamen Raichov Rangelov 13. Mariyka Todorova Rangelova 14. Hristo Kirilov Damyanov - *priest* 15. Mimi Ferdinandova Koleva 16. Tomi Hristov Madzharov 17. Roumen Alexandrov Sprostranov 18. Ekaterina Stoyanova Sprostranova 19. Nadezhda Dimitrova Radeva 20. Milan Lyubenov Radev 21. Kiril Kroumo Bachev - *priest* 22. Ivanka Todorova Bacheva 23. Kira Todorova Pougyova 24. Kostadin Alexandrov Stankov 25. Ilinka Simeonova Stankova 26. Stoyanka Georgieva Stoyanova 27. Stefan Petrov Stoyanov 28. Stefan Emilov Stoyanov 29. Stefan Petrov Stoyanov 30. Ivanka Kouzmanova Shishkova 31. Kina Vasileva Stoyanova 32. Maria Vasileva Koleva 33. Georgi Mouraveev Radev 34. Atanas Dimitrov Dinchev 35. Mariyka Ivanova Petrova 36. Yakov Georgiev Serafimov 37. Vidka Alexandrova Kableshkova 38. Todor Pavlov Pavlov 39. Harizan Iliev Botev 40. Maria Petrova Koulinova 41. Stiliyana Petrova Koulinova 42. Peter Stoitsov Koulinov 43. Katya Stefanova Koulinova 44. Todor Stefanov Paounov

		45. Nadezhda Todorova Paounova 46. Lidiya Gancheva Rangelova 47. Ivan Dimitrov Rangelov 48. Magdalena Petrova Arabadzhiyska 49. Tanka Nikolova Vulkova 50. Eli Slavcheva Hristeva 51. Ivan Slavchev Lavrenov 52. Veselina Angelova Chakurova 53. Pena Velyova Popova 54. Magdalena Ivanova Stamatova 55. Donka Hristova Ivanova 56. Ivan Vasilev Dobrev 57. Ivanka Krusteva Dobreva 58. Krustinka Ivanova Yankova 59. Vasil Ivanov Dobrev 60. Elena Ivanova Zozikova 61. Ekaterina Stoyanova Lavrenova 62. Yovka Andonova Radeva 63. Tonka Petkova Vasileva 64. Petko Vasilev Vasilev 65. Vasil Todorov Vasilev 66. Anastasiya Stefanova Vasileva 67. Penka Stoyanova Vasileva 68. Bozhanka Petrova Kiryakova 69. Stoika Hristova Georgieva 70. Ivanka Petrova Georgieva 71. Penka Petrova Dishlyanova 72. Raina Dimitrova Filipova 73. Roumen Kostadinov Filipov 74. Diana Boyanova Stoeva 75. Minko Kostadinov Stoev 76. Genko Hristov Keranov 77. Boris Zapryanov Argilashki 78. Hristo Ivanov Souvandzhiev 79. Georgi Borisov Georgiev 80. Ivan Iliev Dimitrov 81. Kiril Hristov Andonov 82. Antoaneta Vasileva Kasabova 83. Nadezhda Pencheva Gouncheva 84. Grozdan Petrov Sendov 85. Raina Grozdanova Sendova 86. Peter Grozdanov Sendov 87. Mariyana Krusteva Popova 88. Rositsa Hristova Mancheva 89. Dimitar Georgiev Dimitrov 90. Todor Vulchev Chobanov 91. Elenka Vasileva Chobanova 92. Lyubka Stavreva Chobanova

		93. Elena Veselinova Chobanova 94. Kalin Todorov Chobanov 95. Veselin Todorov Chobanov 96. Teodora Veselinova Chobanova 97. Kalina Georgieva Sokolova 98. Yordanka Hristeva Shturbanova 99. Shtirka Hristeva Kovacheva 100. Mariyka Dimitrova Sokolova 101. Angel Dimitrov Dikov 102. Stefka Georgieva Ilieva 103. Kostadin Enev Iliev 104. Anka Kuneva Teneva 105. Milka Petrova Ivanova 106. Atanas Genchev Ivanov 107. Desislava Andonova Ivanova 108. Danail Atanasov Ivanov 109. Diana Stefanova Georgieva 110. Krasimira Zhechkova Georgieva 111. Rousi Georgiev Rousev 112. Elena Yaneva Koleva 113. Petya Georgieva Donkova - *employee* 114. Liliya Blagoeva Nikolova 115. Stana Bogomilova Alexieva - *employee* 116. Bogdan Borisov Nikolov 117. Silviya Angelova Tsekova-Neshkova 118. Marin Petrov Neshkov 119. Peter Borislavov Neshkov 120. Alipiy Veselinov Naidenov 121. Mina Vladimirova Doundova-Toushanova 122. Zhan Petkov Toushanov 123. Trendafila Todorova Stoyanova 124. Stoyan Krustev Malinov 125. Georgi Petrov Petrov 126. Nadezhda Stoyanova Staliyanova 127. Yordanka Georgieva Stoyanchova 128. Todor Petrov Stoyanchov 129. Aneliya Todorova Stoyanchova 130. Dimitar Lyubenov Sokolov 131. Iliyana Georgieva Sokolova 132. Tsvetanka Dimitrova Stiliyanova 133. Zlatan Vasiliev Yanev 134. Vasil Mitkov Yanev 135. Todorka Vladimirova Yaneva 136. Lyubomira Vasileva Stanimirova 137. Tencho Georgiev Stoyanov 138. Lyudmila Grogorevna Stoyanova 139. Penka Georgieva Malinova 140. Lyudmila Yoanova Malinova

		141. Ivan Malinov Malinov 142. Penka Zhechkova Georgieva 143. Maria Dimova Stefanova 144. Stanislav Dimitrov Stefanov 145. Mladen Ventsislavov Mladenov 146. Ivanichka Todorova Hristova 147. Yordan Ivanov Hristov 148. Ventsislav Simeonov Krustev 149. Nadezhda Petkova Simeonova 150. Galya Veselinova Ivanova 151. Ivan Yordanov Ivanov 152. Lyubka Zhelyazkova Ivanova 153. Imela Velinova Markova 154. Stoyan Georgiev Delev 155. Yaninka Dimitrova Angelinkova 156. Dobrin Veselinov Nikolov 157. Dimitar Nedev Ivanov 158. Elena Ivanova Gekova 159. Boris Kirilov Elenkov 160. Verzhiniya Borisova Staneva 161. Angelina Borisova Peleva 162. Nedka Ivanova Stefanova 163. Aneliya Kostadinova Georgieva 164. Kostadin Velikov Georgiev 165. Roumen Georgiev Veselinov 166. Venelin Georgiev Veselinov 167. Miroslav Yoakimov Pantaleev 168. Magdalena Danailova Pantaleeva 169. Pepa Tsvetanova Stankova 170. Veronika Velichkova Kovacheva 171. Spasimir Marinov Stankov 172. Krasimira Slaveikova Petrova 173. Teodora Trifonova Zhelyazkova 174. Todor Simeonov Zhelyazkov 175. Zdravko Donev Nedyalkov
Application introduced on 6 January 2005:		
	Application N°	**Names of applicants**
30	2176/05	**Yordan Stoykov** - *bishop*
Applications introduced on 22 December 2004:		
	Application N°	**Names of applicants**
31	3713/05	**1. Yordan Barakov** 2. Nikoleta Petrova 3. Tzvetan Simeonov

		4. Yordan Krastev 5. Ludmil Mladenov 6. Mariyan Nenov 7. Ivan Ivanov
32	25729/09	**1. Nikulina Asenova** 2. Antoaneta Asenova 3. Elisaveta Mladenova 4. Radoslav Mladenov 5. Ludmila Dobreva 6. Nedelcho Dobrev 7. Rumyana Kostadinova 8. Ivailo Petrov - *bishop* 9. Alexandar Velkov 10. Todor Nikolov 11. Boyan Delchev 12. Mladenka Vatzeva 13. Tzvetan Dimitrov 14. Milanka Dimitrova 15. Angel Kayadjiev 16. Mariana Mukareva 17. Dimitra Mukareva 18. Boika Nikolova 19. Tzvetelina Nikolova 20. Georgi Nikolov 21. Vasil Nikolov 22. Anelia Portokalska 23. Desislava Mehova 24. Alexandar Portokalski 25. Krasimira Portokalska 26. Stefan Hristov 27. Valentina Pintiiska 28. Simeon Velkov 29. Evelina Sherziiska 30. Vladimir Sherziiski 31. Rosen Sherziiski 32. Daniela Ivanova 33. Anton Pupev 34. Mariana Kashaikova 35. Velka Kalenderska 36. Rosen Kalenderski 37. Verka Portokalska 38. Biser Portokalski 39. Nasko Davidkov 40. Rumen Ivanov 41. Roza Drenovska 42. Radka Tzvetkova 43. Lubima Petrova 44. Sedefka Tzvetkova

		45. Elka Umlenova 46. Vladimir Dimitrov 47. Spasuna Hristova 48. Georgi Mirchev 49. Iliana Mircheva 50. Blagoveska Palahanova 51. Nikolay Stoyanov 52. Ivanka Stoyanova 53. Slavenka Georgieva 54. Svilen Palahanov 55. Kapka Bagasheva 56. Spas Georgiev 57. Kameliya Stoicheva 58. Gancho Stoichev 59. Stefan Stoichev 60. Danka Stoicheva 61. Dimitar Stoichev 62. Alexandar Iliev 63. Lilyana Ilieva 64. Sevda Borisova 65. Svetoslav Borisov 66. Zapryanka Shlukarska 67. Slavcho Shlukarski 68. Nikola Zagorchin – *priest* (passed away, heirs wish to pursue the complaints) 69. Zorka Kolchagova 70. Lazar Kolchagov 71. Dimitar Zagrochin 72. Ana Zagorchina 73. Ivanka Kamberova 74. Kostadin Zagorchin 75. Filip Belejkov - *priest* 76. Stefka Zagorchina - *employee* 77. Ivan Angelov - *priest* 78. Stefan Ovcharov - *priest* 79. Konstantin Kostov - *deacon* 80. Vasilka Kostova 81. Nedyalka Ovcharova 82. Ekaterina Ovcharova 83. Grigor Karastoyanov 84. Kapka Angelova 85. Krasimir Dzakov 86. Asya Angelova 87. Todor Kalchev 88. Mariyana Boborachka 89. Kalinka Manolova 90. Milka Kutzarova 91. Georgi Gorganov

		92. Elena Kirova 93. Ivan Kirov 94. Rumen Mitrov 95. Ganka Radeva 96. Vasil Petrov 97. Yordanka Minkova 98. Krasimir Parteniev 99. Stoyan Petkov 100. Dimcho Enchev 101. Dimitar Enchev 102. Yoana Georgieva 103. Galina Georgieva 104. Rumen Rusev 105. Nadya Mihailova 106. Yulia Toshkova 107. Mariika Ivanova 108. Nedyalko Dimitrov - *priest* 109. Stoyan Toshkov 110. Marchela Dimitrova 111. Rozalia Biks 112. Nevena Dyakova-Chavdarova 113. Kostadin Tonkov 114. Vera Dimitrova 115. Stefan Ivanov - *priest* 116. Lilyana Shtereva 117. Jivko Jivkov 118. Slavcho Panov 119. Tzvetanka Kurkchiiska 120. Krasimir Kukrchiiski 121. Dragomir Kurkchiiski 122. Kunka Pancheva 123. Yordan Panchev 124. Zaptyan Pisanov - *priest* 125. Yoan Madjurov - *priest* 126. Todor Todorov 127. Stanislava Staneva 128. Boryana Stoimenova 129. Veneta Metodieva 130. Ivailo Nikolov 131. Kristina Shukova 132. Stanka Baltova 133. Asen Antonov 134. Dilyana Nakova 135. Dimitar Shukov 136. Varban Shukov 137. Anton Koshtrov 138. Nadejda Mitreva 139. Preslavka Velichkova

		140. Evgeni Peichev 141. Vladimir Peichev 142. Velichka Georgieva 143. Ivanka Popova 144. Petra Staneva 145. Vasilka Georgieva 146. Nina Trifonova 147. Elena Krasteva 148. Milka Ivanova 149. Elena Yovcheva 150. Radka Bojikova 151. Natasha Vazleva 152. Stefka Ivanova 153. Dimitar Ivanov 154. Dimitar Vazlev 155. Elena Vazleva 156. Margarita Manolova 157. Veneta Hriskova 158. Ana Malinova 159. Stoyan Malinov - *employee* 160. Marko Dimitrov 161. Verjiniya Shkodreva 162. Evgeni Shkodrev 163. Nadejda Malinova-Dimitrova 164. Anna Furnadjieva 165. Detelina Koleva 166. Nikolay Kolev 167. Traiko Kolev 168. Boiko Kolev 169. Desislava Stoimenova 170. Alexandra Stoimenova 171. Ana Blagoeva 172. Ivan Todorov - *priest* 173. Kadefia Paskaleva 174. Kiril Paskalev 175. Zdravka Marinova 176. Anastasia Buchinska 177. Radka Georgieva 178. Ivan Hadjiev 179. Zapryan Pisanov 180. Atanaska Pisanova 181. Yanka Ignatova 182. Ignat Ignatov 183. Dimitar Pisanov 184. Gergana Tonkova 185. Georgi Tonkov 186. Stefka Shopova 187. Slavcho Shopov

		188. Stanimir Lazarov 189. Margarita Ivanova 190. Sonya Papadopulu 191. Konstantinos Papadopolus 192. Violetka Bonova 193. Ekaterina Marinova 194. Hristo Dimitrov 195. Valentina Dimitrova 196. Martin Dimitrov 197. Violeta Dimitrova 198. Valentin Andonov 199. Luben Dimitrov - *priest* 200. Metodi Spasov 201. Kiril Papadopolus 202. Stoyanka Nedelcheva 203. Velko Nedelchev 204. Violin Nedelchev 205. Irena Nedelcheva 206. Darinka Milanova 207. Stefka Stefanova 208. Antoaneta Bundjulova 209. Mariika Petrova 210. Evridika Tzenkova 211. Stefan Petrov 212. Mariyana Dimitrova 213. Nadejda Kurteva 214. Luba Atanasova 215. Slavcho Shterev 216. Kiril Dankov 217. Temenujka Dimitrova 218. Tzvetanka Stefanova 219. Stoyanka Alexandrova 220. Veneta Metodieva-Krastanova 221. Petar Boyadjiev 222. Elena Nanevska 223. Nonka Stamenova 224. Svetla Grozdanova 225. Tzvetan Grozdanov 226. Lubomir Grozdanov 227. Vasil Ivanov 228. Dimitar Dimitrov 229. Katina Ivanova 230. Gurgiya Nanevska 231. Elenka Petrova 232. Elena Gurkova 233. Anastasiya Stoilova 234. Ludmila Jejova 235. Todor Jejov

		236. Georgi Georgiev 237. Nevena Mihalkova 238. Stoino Pitkov - *employee* 239. Toma Pitkov 240. Hristo Karagitliev - *employee* 241. Ivan Nenov 242. Margarita Pitkova 243. Zorka Dimitrova 244. Ivailo Dimitrov 245. Neiko Georgiev 246. Andrei Georgiev 247. Goritza Georgieva 248. Todorka Petrova 249. Elena Hristova 250. Emilia Nacheva 251. Stoyan Nachev 252. Milen Stankov 253. Mitko Velikov 254. Kaloyan Stankov 255. Ivan Kovachev - *priest* 256. Tzvetislava Stankova 257. Detelin Ivanov 258. Stoika Hristova 259. Lyudmila Tencheva 260. Magdalina Ivanova - *employee* 261. Malin Malinov - *priest* (passed away, heirs wish to pursue the complaints) 262. Kler Zeeva 263. Vishnya Malinova - *employee* 264. Maria Florova - *employee* 265. Lyudmila Dekova 266. Nikolay Ninov - *deacon* 267. Yordan Topalov - *employee* 268. Slavka Topalova 269. Radka Encheva 270. Mariika Nikolova 271. Ekaterina Jabinska-Nikolova 272. Todor Nikolov 273. Anna Nikolova-Kostova 274. Yordan Marchev 275. Vera Boyukova 276. Milena Petkova 277. Milcho Milanov 278. Lilyana Milanova 279. Emil Milanov 280. Boika Georgieva 281. Tzvetanka Stoyanova 282. Gergana Georgieva

		283. Antoaneta Stoyanova 284. Velichka Nikolova 285. Bogdan Nikolov 286. Boris Nikolov 287. Lyubomir Londrev 288. Maria Latinova 289. Simeon Dachev 290. Yordan Dachev 291. Gergana Dacheva 292. Georgi Ivanov - *priest* 293. Stanislava Ivanova 294. Spas Stoilov 295. Boyan Vasilev 296. Bogomilka Stoilova 297. Elizaveta Vasileva 298. Todorka georgieva 299. Maria Vasileva 300. Irina Georgieva 301. Magdalina Dincheva 302. Lilyana Tzvetkova 303. Tihomir Chogolyanski 304. Yavor Antonov 305. Alexander Stoilov 306. Spaska Stoilova 307. Bilyana Vasileva 308. Svilen Tepavicharov 309. Zorka Stoeva 310. Milka Ivanova 311. Tanya Argilashka 312. Todorka Lesova 313. Elenka Georgieva 314. Bonka Toneva 315. Olga Obletova 316. Nikolai Dudin 317. Vasil Vasilev 318. Yordan Lesov - *priest* 319. Olimpi Dimitrov 320. Nikolitza Svilenova 321. Mariika Hristova 322. Diana Koseva 323. Irena Veneva 324. Ivan Andonov 325. Stefan Yordanov 326. Margarita Nikolova 327. Stoyan Patarov 328. Milka Patarova 329. Lyubomir Petzanov - *monk* 330. Mila Petkova

		331. Angel Patarov 332. Lilyana Dobreva 333. Stoyan Chuchev 334. Nikola Daskalov 335. Plamen Kostov 336. Yordanka Ribarova 337. Milena Tzankova 338. Valentin Gadjev - *priest* 339. Angel Gateshki - *monk* 340. Ilianna Georgieva 341. Kostadin Georgiev 342. Tzveta Georgieva 343. Dimitrina Maslarova 344. Petar Maslarov 345. Diana Galabova 346. Lyubomir Maslarov 347. Maria Kostadinova 348. Ivanka Galabova 349. Konstantin Galabov 350. Vasil Vasilev 351. Emilia Vasileva 352. Tzvetelina Vasileva 353. Dobrinka Vatashka 354. Todor Georgiev 355. Georgi Farchalov 356. Iliyana Batembergska-Nenova 357. Dimitar Nenov 358. Stefan Boshnakov 359. Raina Shumelova 360. Gancho Shumelov 361. Simeon Dimitrov 362. Sava Morov 363. Petar Yanakov - *deacon* 364. Svetla Yanakova 365. Ivan Yanakov 366. Iliyan Meramdjiev 367. Milka Karagyozova 368. Hristina Budinova 369. Raina Guneva 370. Grozdan Paterichev - *employee* 371. Elena Patericheva 372. Lyubka Todorova - *employee* 373. Krasimira Dambova 374. Dimitar Dambov 375. Nina Dimitrova 376. Ralitza Dimitrova 377. Indiana Ivanova 378. Otto Bakalov

		379. Violeta Bakalova 380. Luisa Bakalova 381. Lazar Stamov 382. Petar Grudev - *priest* 383. Hristo Damyanov - *priest* 384. Maria Brankova 385. Ivailo Simeonov 386. Ina Boyadjieva 387. Vasil NItov 388. Venetz Tzonev 389. Gencho Mladenov - *priest* 390. Petar Dambov - *priest* (passed away, heirs wish to pursue the complaints) 391. Mladen Mladenov - *employee* 392. Emiliya Mladenova 393. Roza Yotzova 394. Amaliya Koleva 395. Gina Yotzova 396. Georgi Yotzov 397. Atanas Atanasov 398. Margarita Grudeva 399. Kiril Damyanov 400. Stefan Grudev 401. Evlambiya Radeva 402. Evelina Damyanova 403. Georgi Petrov 404. Radoslav Pavlov - *priest* 405. Petar Petrov-Pokrovski - *priest* 406. Georgi Iliev - *priest*
Application introduced on 6 October 2005		
	Application Nº	**Names of applicants**
33	38332/05	**Stoyan Sarnov** - *priest*
Application introduced on 27 February 2008		
	Application Nº	**Names of applicants**
34	14973/08	**Georgi Shopov** - *priest*