News

Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow leads a cathedral consecration service in Moscow

Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow leads a cathedral consecration service in Moscow April 10, 2022. (CNS/Patriarchal Press Service handout via Reuters/Oleg Varaov)

by The Associated Press

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

London — June 16, 2022

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Britain announced a new round of sanctions June 16 against Russia, targeting the head of the Russian Orthodox Church for his prominent support for the war in Ukraine as well as Russia's children's rights commissioner, who Britain said is responsible for the forced transfer and adoption of hundreds of Ukrainian children into Russia.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said Patriarch Kirill, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, has "repeatedly abused his position to justify the war" on Ukraine. Kirill is a longtime ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Truss also targeted children's rights commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova, who has been accused of enabling the taking of 2,000 vulnerable children from the Luhansk and Donetsk regions in eastern Ukraine and facilitating their forced adoptions in Russia.

Others on the list include four colonels from a brigade known to have killed, raped and tortured civilians in the Ukrainian town of Bucha.

Advertisement

Truss also said Britain's government is "taking all steps we can" regarding two British citizens sentenced to death for fighting Russian forces in Ukraine.

She said officials are in regular talks with the Ukrainian government about Aiden Aslin and Sean Pinner, who were sentenced last week alongside a Moroccan, Brahim Saadoun, for allegedly fighting as mercenaries by a court in the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic.

"These people are prisoners of war. They were fighting legitimately with the Ukrainian army," Truss said. "What Russia has done is a complete violation of the Geneva Convention. We are taking all steps we can."