



DECR secretary for interreligious relations attends international conference for commemorating Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Taskhiri

On October 1, 2020, Iran's embassy in Moscow held an off-online conference dated to the forty days since the demise of Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Taskhiri (1944-2020), a renowned Islamic spiritual leader, former chairman of the Supreme Council of the World Assembly for the Proximity of Islamic Schools, and adviser to the Supreme Leader of Iran on Islamic peace.

The event organized by Iranian ambassador to Russia Mr. Kazem Jalali was attended by religious and public figures, diplomats and scholars from Russia, Iran and other countries, among them Mufti Ravil Gaynutdin, chairman of the Muslim Board of the Russian Federation; Mr. Ilyas Umakhanov, vice-chairman of the Council of the Federation; Mr. Abuzar Ebrakhimi, head of the Organization for Culture and Islamic Relations; Mr. Artur Suleimanov, rector of the Russian Islamic University in Ufa; Mr. Andrey Filippov, executive director of the Dialogue of Civilization Research Institute; Dr. Mohammad Mahdi Taskhiri, head of the Dialogue of Religions Center at the Iran's Organization for Culture and Islamic Relations and a brother of the late ayatollah.

The Russian Orthodox Church was represented online by Metropolitan Feofan of Kazan and Tatarstan, who is head of the church part of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission for Orthodoxy-Islam Dialogue. and Rev. Dmitry Safonov, secretary for interreligious relations of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations, who has been secretary of the church part of the above-mentioned commission since 2010.

Father Dmitry Safonov quoted in particular the following about Ayatollah Taskhiri from a letter of DECR chairman Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk to the head of the Iranian Embassy Cultural Representation: 'I am sure that the legacy of this without exaggeration great Islamic leader will make a considerable influence on the religious community of the whole world'.

In his speech, the DECR representative spoke about the key participation of Ayatollah Taskhiri in the work of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission, which had been initiated at the meeting between Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad (now His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia) and Ayatollah Taskhiri in September 1995. Relating to the assembly the participation of Ayatollah Taskhir's work in the above-mentioned commission, Father Dmitry dwelled in particular on the history of this dialogue.

The Joint Russian-Iranian Commission for Dialogue 'Orthodoxy-Islam' was established in 1997. It met in Teheran (in 1997, 2001, 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2018) and in Moscow (in 1999, 2008, 2012 and 2016). The meetings considered in particular the place and role of religion in the modern world, the inter-civilizational, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, human rights, globalization, problems of terrorism and extremism, spiritual and moral crisis in society, as well as particular issues of Christian and Islamic theology and anthropology, the attitude of religions to the environment, and the situation of religious minorities in the Middle East.

Father Dimitry Safonov also spoke about the meetings between Ayatollah Taskhiri and Patriarch Kirill and their personal talks during Ayatollah Taskhiri's visits to Moscow in 2012, 2016 and 2019, as well as the meeting with the ayatollah in his residence in 2017. He also made an assessment of the interreligious initiatives put forward by Ayatollah Taskhiri and the importance of his legacy for the dialogue of religions.

DECR Communication Service

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