Rector of Russian Church's Metochion in Beirut takes part in forum on Hagia Sophia



On 24th July 2020, a Forum of Solidarity on "Hagia Sophia – Symbol of World Heritage" was held in Beirut, Lebanon. The meeting was organized by the Lebanese Non-Governmental Association "Orthodox Meeting."

Among the participants in the forum were representatives of the Orthodox Church of Antioch, the Armenian Catholic Church, the Syrian Church, the Melkite Church, the Anglican Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Maronite Church, and the Coptic Church, as well as deputies of the Lebanese parliament, representatives of local political parties and public figures. Participating in the meeting was also Archimandrite Filipp (Vasiltsev), rector of the Russian Orthodox Church's Metochion in Beirut.

During his speech, Archimandrite Filipp read out the Statement of the Russian Orthodox Church's Holy Synod concerning the decision of the Turkish authorities to change the status of Hagia Sophia, and informed all those present about the position on this problem of Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations. As Archimandrite Filipp noted, the community of the Russian Orthodox Church's Metochion in Lebanon is praying for the restoration of the former status of the Cathedral of Hagia Sophia.

The participants in the meeting called upon Ankara to reverse the decision to turn Hagia Sophia into a mosque, because, as the final resolution emphasizes, “this step leads to the fomentation of interfaith and inter-civilizational confrontation” and creates a dangerous precedent that may have a negative impact on the future of various religions’ shrines in the region of the Middle East.

Website of the Beirut Metochion of the Russian Orthodox Church/

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