



Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church attend International Conference ‘Islam and Orthodoxy – Religions of Peace’



The International Conference ‘Islam and Orthodoxy – Religions of Peace’ took place in Bishkek on 21 November 2019, with support and participation of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Presidential Administration of Russia, the Kyrgyz State Commission for Religious Affairs, the Russian Orthodox Diocese of Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan, the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, the state bodies, and scholarly and expert community of Russia and the countries of Central Asia.

Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent and Uzbekistan, head of the Central Asia metropolitan area, led a delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. The delegation included Bishop Gennady of Kaskelen, vicar of the Diocese of Astana and chancellor of the Kazakhstan metropolitan area; Rev. Dmitry Safonov, secretary for interreligious relations of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations an executive secretary of the Interreligious Council of Russia.

The international conference was dedicated to the cooperation among Orthodox and Muslim religious communities in Euroasia in countering extremism, and to the defence of traditional moral values and religious education.

H.E. Sooronbay Jeenbekov, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, addressed the participants at the opening of the conference at the Ala Archa State Residence. He underscored that interreligious dialogue is not enough at present and that strategic partnership of traditional religions is necessary.

Greetings from Russian President Vladimir Putin were read out by H. E. Udovichenko, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Kyrgyz Republic.

Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent and Uzbekistan greeted then participants on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

At the end of the official part Bishop Daniel, chancellor of the Diocese of Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan, greeted the participants in the Kyrgyz language.

Among those delivering reports at the plenary session 'Islam and Orthodoxy; interfaith dialogue as the basis of public peace and harmony' was Bishop Gennady of Kaskelen.

Rev. Dimitry Safonov told the participants about the work of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Interreligious Council of Russia for overcoming the ideology of extremism and introduced quotations from the Council's documents pertaining to the topic.

Rev Safonov acted as moderator at the section 'Islam and Orthodoxy in the context of historical development and contemporary threats and challenges.' In his comments on the presentation he reminded the participants of the meeting of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill with representatives of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan in May 2017 during his visit to the Kyrgyz Republic.

The conference being over, the participants attended reception given on behalf of President Jeenbekov at the Ala Archa State Residence.

Bishop Daniel and Rev. Safonov visited the recently opened Bishkek cathedral mosque.

On November 22, before departure to Moscow, representatives of the Synodal departments visited the Bishkek Diocesan Administration where Metropolitan Vikenty entertained them to dinner.
