Statement by Interreligious Council of Russia over terror attack in Grozny

The Interreligious Council of Russia issued a statement over the attack on the Church of Archangel Michael in Grozny on 19 May 2018.

We, heads and representatives of traditional religions of Russia, call attention to the ongoing attempts to destroy interreligious peace in our country by the means of terror attacks. On the 19th of May 2018, during an evening service, terrorists stormed the Church of Archangel Michael in Grozny to massacre its parishioners. This church already suffered from the acts of vandalism committed by terrorists and was destroyed in the 1990s. Its rector, Rev. Anatoly Chistousov, was captured in 1996 and shot down by gunmen. Many parishioners were subjected to violence in the 1990s. And now again terrorists have attacked this long-suffering church.

Over and over again we emphasize that the goal of the terrorists and those standing behind them is to stir up interfaith discord and destroy the centuries-old traditions of peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims in Russia. We, religious leaders of our country, urge to exert every effort to prevent it.

We express appreciation to the state authorities of the Chechen Republic for preventing hostage taking in the church and hope that the Orthodox faithful will feel safe in Grozny. We especially note the courage and fidelity to duty of the police officers who defended the church. The police sergeants Kayrat Rakhmetov and Vladimir Gorskov who laid down their lives to avoid more casualties, committed a real heroic deed.

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