



Patriarch Kirill's condolences over the crash of an An-26 plane near Khmeimim air base

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia has expressed condolences over the crash of an An-26 plane near Khmeimim air base in Syria.

To Russian Federation Minister of Defense S. K. Shoigu

To the relatives and loved ones of those who died in the An-26 air crash

Dear Sergey Kozhugetovich,

Dear brothers and sisters:

I have been grieved by the sad news about the crash of an An-26 plane near Khmeimim air base. This tragedy has taken the lives of many servicemen who have carried out valorous feats of arms in the Syrian land.

It is difficult to experience as heavy a trial as the loss of a loved one. But despondency and the less so despair should not be instilled in our souls. We are called to live in hope that the Lord, who Himself is *love* (1 Jn. 4:8) will mercifully fold the dead in His paternal arms. This is why the Holy Church teaches us that the end of one's earthly life marks not the end of one's existence but a crossing over the boundary of eternity. Let us ask the All-Generous Lord that He may show mercy for His late servants and forgive them any transgression, voluntary and involuntary.

Sharing with you the bitterness of the loss, I pray to the true Master of Life and Death Jesus Christ for the repose of the souls of the dead in the dwellings of the righteous and for granting their relatives and loved ones the grace-giving consolation and strength to endure their misfortune in a dignified manner.

With profound condolences,

+ Kirill

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

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