



## **Russian President Vladimir Putin meets with Primate of Local Orthodox Churches**

In the evening of 4 December 2017, at his Novo-Ogaryovo residence, the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir Putin, met with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and the Primate and heads of the delegations of the Local Orthodox Churches who had come to Moscow to take part in the celebrations marking the centenary of the restoration of the Patriarchate in the Russian Orthodox Church.

Taking part in the meeting were His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandria, His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch, His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem, His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia, His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel of Romania, His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos II of Cyprus, His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania, His Beatitude Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland, His Beatitude Metropolitan Rastislav of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon of All America and Canada, Metropolitan Theodore of Akhaltsikhe and Tao-Klarjeti – head of the delegation of the Georgian Orthodox Church, and Metropolitan Gabriel of Lovech – head of the delegation of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

Among those in attendance was also Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations.

Addressing all those present, the head of the Russian state said, in particular, “First of all I would like to cordially greet all of you and to thank you for celebrating together the centenary of the restoration of the Patriarchate in Russia – an event of utmost importance for our country and for the Russian Orthodox Church.”

“It emphasizes the unity of the Orthodox world, which is important both in itself and in view of the fact that you all represent the Churches that play a significant role in the life of your countries, in the life of society. You call for mercy; you work in the sphere of education, which is very important,” Mr. Vladimir Putin said.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia greeted the head of the Russian state on behalf of the Primate and representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches.

As the Primate of the Russian Church noted, participating in the Bishops' Council that took place in Moscow on 29 November – 2 December were almost 400 hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church from twenty countries.

“Today we have three priorities. The first one is education, both theological and religious in general. The second one is social work, and the third one is young people. The Russian Orthodox Church will focus on promoting specific programmes in these three spheres,” His Holiness continued.

“I would like to draw your attention to our deep concern over the situation in the Middle East... The expulsion of Christians and the destruction of the holy sites cause particular pain to the Churches of the Middle East, represented here, and to all of us,” the Primate of the Russian Church said.

“My brothers the leaders of the Local Orthodox Churches were looking forward to this meeting, and we thank you for this opportunity,” His Holiness Patriarch Kirill added.

*Patriarchal Press Service/*

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*Photo by Patriarchal Press Service*

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Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/47894/>