



## **Statement of Interreligious Council in Russia on Culture, Freedom of Creative Work and Moral Responsibility**

*On October 24, 2017, the Presidium of the Interreligious Council in Russia met at the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Centre in Moscow. It was chaired by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. It adopted the following Statement on Culture, Freedom of Creative Work and Moral Responsibility.*

The traditional religions in Russia have always borne witness to the high value of the human personality, the personality rights and freedoms including freedom of creative work, which we see as appropriate to the God-given dignity of the human being.

Freedom of creative work and self-expression as any other freedom is not absolute, as its realization should be restricted by the demands of public morality and respect for the rights of other people, world-outlook groups and religious communities.

Regrettably, we have to state that freedom of creative work is quite often used to justify mockery at a holy thing, propaganda of immorality, outrage against religious and national values. While the state cannot act in the sphere of culture and arts by means of coercion, it is called to support in the first place the creative initiatives which promote the strengthening of social unity and interreligious harmony. A true culture contains the moral idea that encourages human souls to seek goodness and truth and generates a person's love of those who are near and who are far.

The creation of works of art deliberately aimed to humiliate human dignity by distortion of facts and defamation of key figures of the national history cannot be justified in any way. We call upon all the figures of culture and art to be responsible for their work and to take into account the influence that works of art make on human souls and the spiritual state of society as a whole. Indeed, the freedom deprived of a moral dimension can be used not for a good course but rather for an evil one; it can lead to the self-destruction of a person and degradation of society, not to mention the suffering of an artist himself.

An important task before us today is to bear witness to the intransient importance of moral values for both for individuals and the whole society. We see in art workers our co-workers in the field of education of people in the spirit of ideals of love and charity and remain open for dialogue with representatives of

the creative community.

Resolutely condemning any unlawful actions, aggression and extremism, we call upon all the members of our society to well-considered evaluations, to readiness for settling arising differences through benevolent dialogue. The future of our country depends on the ability of each of us to show respect for the religious-cultural traditions, historical memory and human dignity of each other.

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