



## **Statement adopted at the conclusion of the trilateral meeting of religious leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia**

*The document was signed on September 8, 2017.*

Today we, religious leaders of the peoples of Azerbaijan and Armenia, have once again met in Moscow at the invitation of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to discuss methods of peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Without the settlement it is impossible to achieve peace and ensure security in the Caucasus.

We attach particular importance to the gradual development of the peace-making dialogue and to the continuation of negotiations and mediatorial efforts of the international community that can help reach a comprehensive settlement of the conflict.

It is our conviction that people can overcome their disagreements if they find guidance in the principles of neighbourliness and in the moral values preached by the traditional religions – the values of goodness, love for one's neighbour, mutual forgiveness and mercy.

The Armenian and the Azerbaijani people will always live side by side; therefore there is no other prospect but peace and cooperation. In the face of numerous challenges we, spiritual leaders of our nations, must look for answers together.

We pray for peace to be preserved and for all the conflict-related humanitarian problems to be solved as soon as possible, and we call upon our countries' politicians and public figures to ensure it.

We ought to take care together of the suffering and destitute people, to bear witness to the intransigent spiritual and moral values, and to seek peaceful and fair ways to resolve disagreements. It is vitally important to give up an aggressive and hostile rhetoric.

We call upon all those concerned to help release all the civilians who were not involved in the hostilities and were taken hostage.

We, as religious leaders, are called to protect churches, mosques and other shrines. Therefore it is necessary to guarantee the inviolability of and respectful attitude to religious sites.

We call upon our peoples to educate our youth in the spirit of benevolence, mutual respect, peacefulness and traditional morality.

In our turn, we express willingness to support the peace-making initiatives aimed at settling the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The history of religious leaders' trilateral meetings shows that such contacts have a positive influence on the process of resolving a conflict that must never turn into a religious confrontation. We fervently hope for the success of the negotiation process. Our responsibility and our duty towards our peoples urge us, religious leaders, to exert unceasing and constant efforts in the name of the long-awaited triumph of the ideals of peace and goodness. We are ready to do all we can to establish peace in the region.

We address all members of our communities with wishes of peace, prosperity and success in their good endeavours. We pray to the Most High for the disagreements to be resolved and for our people to be protected from evil and sin. May the blessed peace be established in the ancient and holy land of the Caucasus, and may the peoples of our countries live in peace and in accordance with the God-given moral laws.

The delegations of the Armenian Apostolic Church, led by His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, and of the Caucasian Muslims Board, led by the Esteemed Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshükür Pashazade, express their particular gratitude to the Russian Orthodox Church and its Primate, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, for the organization of this trilateral meeting and for the great contribution to the restoration of peace in the Caucasus, and wish to His Holiness help from the Most High in his mission, pleasing unto God.

*+Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia*

*Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians*

*Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshükür Pashazade, chairman of the Caucasian Muslims Board*