



## **DECR representative takes part in International Christian Forum at Cathedral of Christ the Saviour**

On 28 August 2017, the opening ceremony of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Christian Forum took part in the Hall of Church Councils of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. The meeting was organized by the “Christian World” Association for Upholding Traditional Spiritual Values.

The central topic of the meeting was the problem of persecutions of Christians in the Middle East and North Africa.

Taking part in the forum were delegates from Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Serbia, and Syria.

In his address, Mr. Alexei Cherkezov, President of the “Christian World” Association, noted that in various regions the plight of Christians was a direct consequence of the past mistakes. “In what is going on in international politics, the small denominations living in the region where the majority of people confesses another religion, are always a coin to exchange,” Mr. Cherkezov said, in particular.

Representing the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations at the meeting was Rev. Dmitry Safonov, secretary for interreligious relations, who read out a message of greetings from the DECR chairman, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk.

In his speech, Rev. Dmitry Safonov emphasized that “for the past six years, the persecution and extermination of Christians in the region of Middle East and North Africa have become a real genocide.” He told about the efforts of the Russian Orthodox Church, aimed at defending those who are being persecuted for their faith in Christ, and expressed his hope that “the forum will make its contribution to the protection of Christians from persecution and to the consolidation of religions and peoples for opposing the terrible plague of extremism and terrorism.”

The conferences on Today’s Threats and Mechanisms of Defending Religious Communities of the Middle East and on the Humanitarian Cooperation of Non-Profit Organizations in the Areas of Natural Disasters and Armed Conflicts were held within the framework of the forum.

*DECR Communication Service*