



## **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill expresses condolences over the demise of Fidel Castro Ruz**

**To General Raul Castro Ruz, Chairman of the State Council and Council of Ministers**

### **Republic of Cuba**

Your Excellency,

With profound sorrow I have learnt about the demise of your elder brother – Fidel Castro Ruz. I extend my sincere condolences to you and the relatives and friends of the deceased as well as to all the Cuban people.

Comandante Fidel was one of the most famous and outstanding state leaders of today. He gained international authority and became a legend already in his lifetime. Being flesh of the flesh of the Cuban people, he devoted all his power to make his homeland truly independent and occupy a worthy place in the world family of nations.

In the Russian Orthodox Church the name of Fidel Castro is always pronounced with respect and gratitude. With Comandante's personal participation, a church dedicated to the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God has been erected in Havana, and Fidel, in his own expression, was 'the commissar of the construction'.

I keep the warm memories of my meetings with Comandante Fidel. I have always been struck by his large-scale and sharp intellect, ability to speak on very diverse subjects with competence. Our last talk took place on February 13, 2016, in his home residence the next day after my meeting with Pope Francis of Rome.

I will always cherish in my heart the good memory of this courageous and charismatic man, a sincere friend of the Russian Orthodox Church.

In these sorrowful days, may the Lord send consolation and fortitude to you and all the Comandante Fidel Castro's family.

With profound condolences,

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