His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with Ambassador of Democratic Republic of the Congo in Moscow

On 29 August 2016, at the Patriarchal residence in St Daniel's Monastery, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with His Excellency Mr. Valentin Nkuman Tavun Matungul, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Moscow.

They were joined at the meeting by Mr. Kindundu Makombo Joseph, assistant to the Ambassador of Congo, and Archimandrite Philaret Bulekov, vice-chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations.

Greeting the high guest, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church shared with him the recollections of his visit to Congo in 1986 and of his meeting with the then President of the Republic, Mr. Joseph-Desiré Mobutu.

As His Holiness mentioned, there are many Orthodox Christians, including the Russian people, living at present in the territory of the Republic of the Congo, which is in the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

Patriarch Kirill emphasized that the Russian Orthodox Church was deeply concerned at the fate of the Christians who often fall victim to radical Islamist groups.

"The Russian Church does all she can to make the world community aware of the terrible situation of Christians and their congregations, including those in Congo," Patriarch Kirill said, "I will not enumerate all the regions where Christians are suffering today, but would like to emphasize that dreadful crimes are often committed in the territory of Nigeria and the Central African Republic, as the result of which great many Christians die," His Holiness continued.

"We raise this issue at the international level. I had the opportunity to discuss it during the meeting with Pope Francis. We signed the Joint Declaration, in which we called upon the international community and all the forces able to influence the situation to make every effort in order to stop this atrocious crime of our times – the mass killings of Christians," the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church added.

The head of the diplomatic mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Russia thanked His Holiness for the meeting and said he was deeply touched to hear the story about his visit to Congo.

As Mr. Matungul noted, Congo has the largest Christian population in central Africa. 70% of it belong to various Christian Churches. “It is our conviction that you can make an important contribution to the improvement of the situation in Congo,” the Ambassador said, addressing Patriarch Kirill.

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