



Metropolitan Hilarion: Engaging in interfaith dialogue, we strive to uphold peace in society

In his report delivered at the grand meeting that took place in Moscow on 19 May 2016 on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of foundation of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of this oldest Synodal institution, noted that interfaith dialogue had gained particular importance. As the DECR chairman emphasized, the Russian Orthodox Church regards traditional religious communities as her allies in defending common moral values, family, and religious freedom. "Engaging in such dialogue, we strive to deepen mutual understanding and uphold peace in society," His Eminence said.

In recent seven years, the Department for External Church Relations has been in charge of interfaith contacts beyond the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church. According to the decision of the Holy Synod of 24 December 2015, the Department was delegated authority to maintain and promote dialogue with traditional religious communities in Russia and CIS countries, as well as with the Interreligious Council of Russia.

"The main item on the agenda of our relationships with leaders and communities of non-Christian religions is the plight of Christians in the Middle East and North Africa," Metropolitan Hilarion also said, "The Russian Orthodox Church raises her voice in defence of persecuted Christians at large international forums and within the framework of bilateral dialogues with religious, political and public leaders. The DECR leadership and representatives constantly raise the issue of our brothers' and sisters' sufferings when interacting with state authorities in Russia and foreign countries."

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