



## **A conference on interreligious relations in Nalchik**

On March 23, 2016, a conference was opened in Nalchik, the capital of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, as part of an enlarged session of the Public Council of the North Caucasus Federal Region (NCFR). The theme of the conference is 'Interreligious Relations and Internal Confessional Dialogue in North Caucasus'. It is organized with the support of the Presidential representation in the NCFR, the Presidential Administration directorate for domestic policy and the Government of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria.

M. Vedernikov, chairman of the NCFR Public Council presidium and deputy presidential envoy to the NCFR, made introductory remarks, which were followed by the messages of greeting brought by Archbishop Feofilakt of Pyatigorsk and Cherkessk, Mufti Ismail Berdiev, chairman of the coordinating council of the North Caucasus Moslem Board, and L. Shabaev, Chief Rabbi of Kabardino-Balkaria.

The conference worked in six issue sections: 'Radicalization of Religion. Ways of Overcoming It', 'Problems of Religious Education', 'Internal Confessional Dialogue', 'State and Religion', 'Inter-Confessional Dialogue', and 'Experience of the Russian Federation Constituent Regions in the NCFR in Preventing and Settling Conflicts on Religious Ground'. In conclusion of the first day, a reception was given by the head of Kabardino-Balkaria Yu. Kokov in honour of the participants.

On March 24, the closing plenary session was opened by speeches of greeting by the Presidential Envoy to the NCFR S. Melikov and Mr. Yu. Kokov. The next speakers were Metropolitan Feofan of Kazan and Tatarstan, who shared the experience of peaceful, positive cooperation between Orthodox and Muslim communities in his metropolia; Mr. A. Omarov, representative of the Republic of Dagestan in the Stavropol Region; Mr. A. Gorbunov, rector of the Pyatigorsk State Linguistic University; Mr. A. Brod, chairman of the coordinating committee of the All-Russia public organization 'Lawyers for Human Rights and Life in Dignity', A. Tlisov, member of the Russian Federation Public Chamber; Archbishop Feofilakt, and Mufti Albir Krganov, Muslim Board of Moscow and the Central Region.

Among the participants were also Archpriest Lev Semenov, head of the religious education center of the St. Tikhon Orthodox University of the Humanities and cochairman of the committee of the Assembly of Russian Peoples for Cooperation with Traditional Religions; P. Lebedev, acting head of the office for work with state structures of the Moscow Patriarchate department for the Church's relations with society and the mass media; Sergey Ryakhovsky, presiding bishop of the Russian Union of Christians of the

Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals); Rabbi Zinovy Kogan, vice-president of the Congress of Jewish Communities and Organizations in Russia; and M. Mirny, adviser to the department for cooperation with religious organizations, Domestic Policy Directorate of the Presidential Administration.

*DECR Communication Service*

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