



## Meeting between Patriarch of Moscow and Pope of Rome discussed at Chatham House in London

Moscow, February 9 – Mr. Vladimir Legoida, head of the Synodal Department for Church-Society Relations and the Mass Media, speaking at Chatham House, the British Royal Institute of International Affairs, in London, answered questions from the British public, diplomats and the mass media concerning the meeting between Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Pope Francis of Rome to be held on February 12.

He said that the forthcoming historic meeting is called for by the need to exert joint efforts in giving help to Christian communities in the Middle East countries.

‘Although many problems in relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church remain unresolved, the protection of Christians in the Middle East against the genocide is a challenge that requires urgent united efforts’, Vladimir Legoida stated, adding, ‘The exodus of Christians from the Middle East and North Africa countries is a catastrophe for the whole world.

He also pointed out that the Russian state authorities did not participate in the negotiations for arranging the forthcoming meeting of the Patriarch and the Pope in Cuba.

He reminded the audience that Christians had lived in the Middle East since the time of the Roman Empire. They survived the times of the Islamic Caliphate and the age of Crusades, ‘but in our time declared an age of the protection of human rights and interreligious harmony, they have to leave their homes’, he said.

‘His Holiness the Patriarch and the Holy Father will discuss common challenges faced by the Christendom in the modern world’, Mr. Legoida said in conclusion.