



## **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with Serbian Minister of Justice Nikola Selaković**

On 28 December 2015, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with Mr. Nikola Selaković and his suite after the Divine service in the Sretensky Stavropegic Monastery in Moscow.

They were joined in the meeting by Bishop Tikhon of Yegorievsk, abbot of the monastery, and Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, secretary for inter-Orthodox relations of Department for External Church Relations.

Minister Selaković thanked the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church for the meeting, congratulated him on the forthcoming feasts, conveyed greetings from the Government of Serbia and the prime minister Aleksandar Vučić and added: As you well know, the Serbian Orthodox Church is the largest church in our country, while the Russian Orthodox Church is the main support for all of us.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill thanked Minister Selaković for his kind words and said: 'We prayed together, and I am very happy about it. I recall our meeting in Belgrade and rejoice that the Orthodox are working with the Serbian government and in ministries because a lot depends on the decisions of the authorities. I wholeheartedly wish the Serbian people God's help, spiritual and physical fortitude, and wisdom for preserving the sovereignty of our fraternal Serbia.'

His Holiness believes that there are very few really sovereign states in Europe today. Those which preserve their sovereignty experience pressure and negative treatment of the European majority. 'I am deeply convinced that one should not pay attention to emotions as the loss of sovereignty, especially in the humanitarian sphere, can do the irreparable damage to the life of people,' the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church underscored.

'Russia today is a sovereign state in full measure and uses the sovereignty for its own defense and for defense of its friends,' he added.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill expressed concern over the situation in Montenegro, which is now on the threshold of joining NATO, and continued to say: 'We worry about the events in Montenegro as we see that people are against the plans of joining and that all the protests are put down.'

It was noted during the meeting that representatives of the Local Orthodox Church have repeatedly asked the Russian authorities to defend Christians in the Middle East. According to His Holiness, these

appeals were very important. 'We hope that Christians, and not only Christians, will return to Syria after the end of hostilities,'

His Holiness said in conclusion. The Primate of Russian Orthodox Church wished the Serbian people to prosper, be steadfast in their faith and preserve the sovereignty of their country.

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