



## **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill: One cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of the Syrian people**

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church has expressed hope that participation of the Russian Federation in the resolution of the Syrian conflict will bring the long hoped-for civil peace to the region.

"The Russian Orthodox Church has more than once called on the authorities of Russia and other countries and international organizations not to remain indifferent to the suffering of civilians in Syria and in other countries of the region," His Holiness said.

"It is not from hearsay, but from personal contacts with religious leaders of the Middle East that we know about the catastrophic situation of the people who have become the targets of extremists and terrorists," he noted.

According to His Holiness, it was with pain in the heart that the Orthodox have learned about numerous cases of violence against Christians in the region, abductions and ruthless killings of bishops and monks, and barbaric destruction of ancient churches.

"Muslims in these places, which are sacred to the adherents of all Abrahamic religions, also suffer," Patriarch Kirill added.

"Unfortunately, the political process has not lead to any noticeable improvement of the situation of these innocent people and they need military protection," the Primate of the Russian Church noted.

"The Russian Federation has made a responsible decision to use the armed forces to defend the people of Syria from the trials caused by the outrage of terrorists. We hope that this decision will bring peace and justice to this ancient land," the Patriarch underscored.

"Wishing peace to the people of Syria, Iraq and other countries of the Middle East, we pray for this dreadful local conflict not to unfold into a major war and for the use of force not to lead to the death of civilians, and for all Russian military personnel to return home alive," His Holiness the Patriarch said in conclusion.