Metropolitan Hilarion takes part in official opening of new complex of Moscow Cathedral Mosque



On 23 September 2015, a new complex of the Moscow Cathedral Mosque was officially opened after a large-scale reconstruction. With the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, representing the Russian Orthodox Church at the opening ceremony was Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, accompanied by Rev. Dmitry Safonov, head of the DECR Sector for Interreligious Contacts.

Among those who attended the ceremony were Mr. Vladimir Putin, President of Russia; Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Turkey; Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of Palestine; Mufti Sheikh Ravil Gainutdin, chairman of the Spiritual Board of Russian Muslims; Mr. Ramzan Kadyrov, head of the Chechen Republic; Mr. Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, head of Ingushetia; Mr. Rustam Minnikhanov, President of Tatarstan; Mr. Sergey Sobyanin, Mayor of Moscow; Mr. Alexander Beglov, Plenipotentiary Envoy of

the Russian President to the Central Federal District; as well as Muslim spiritual leaders from various countries and ambassadors of European states.

As Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized in his greeting speech, various peoples coexist peacefully in Russia, thanks, to a large extent, to the Muslim Ummah which “has made its considerable contribution to maintaining unity in our society and always strived to develop intra- and interfaith relations and establish communication based on the principles of religious tolerance.”

Answering to the questions by Russia-1 TV-channel, Metropolitan Hilarion pointed out that representatives of traditional religions, first of all, Orthodox Christians and Muslims, had been living in Russia in the atmosphere of neighbourliness and friendship for centuries, and noted the importance of the event for deepening mutual understanding and developing interfaith cooperation.

After the ceremony, the DECR chairman departed for Khabarovsk, where, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, he will lead the celebrations marking the millennium of the blessed demise of the Holy Prince Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles.

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